

Full information about the work of the Women’s Group, including general recommendations can be found in the published Women’s report. Below are the core recommendations from the Taskforce following that report.

	Recommendation	Responsible actor/partner
1	Develop services (drug and alcohol services and wider relevant services)	
1.1	Develop and upscale women specific services, spaces, groups. This will need to take account of local need and what is currently available. Consider a showcasing/engagement event where women’s services (previous and present) can present their work, share learning, consider opportunities to upscale and discuss possible barriers.	Services DDTF showcasing/engagement event Scottish Government
1.2	Women should have access to a worker they feel comfortable with including access to a female worker if preferred.	Services
1.3	Where possible an assigned keyworker and individual casework approach should be taken. Recognising the individual’s needs, wishes and priorities including parenting and childcare.	Drugs services
1.4	Take an individualised approach, recognising the importance of maintaining family relationships and parenting responsibilities. Services should consider how they can best support and work with women including appointment location, timings, methadone collection options, women’s safety and options for home visits. Digital contact and telephone calls should be supported where individuals prefer.	Drugs services Scottish Government
1.5	Peer groups should be promoted and supported (both financial and advisory support to assist with safety and governance). When funding projects and services this should be built in.	Scottish Government Funding Organisations Drugs Services
1.6	Promote access to meaningful structured activities for women; providing opportunities for peer engagement, education, training, voluntary work and thus reducing social isolation. Where possible this should draw on existing groups and resources to aid community integration.	Services Scottish Government

1.7	Access to sexual and reproductive health services including reproductive planning education and provision and delivery of long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARC) should be available within drug services through outreach or embedded models. Also consider provision in other services attended by vulnerable women, such as mental health or housing. Women should be enabled to make an informed decision within a framework of reproductive choice, autonomy and respect.	Services Scottish Government
1.8	Rehabilitation services which support family integration (either in a dedicated facility or through community support) should be explored and supported.	Scottish Government and Residential Rehabilitation Development Working Group. Engagement event
1.9	Women should have a choice in treatment when accessing OST – services should ensure women can make an informed choice about long-acting buprenorphine/methadone. Women with children should be able to access their OST in a child friendly environment within services.	Services Scottish Government MAT Implementation group
1.10	When evaluating DDTF projects, implementation of the MAT standards and other relevant projects/policies; the impact on women should be specifically considered.	DDTF MCN evaluation, Scottish Government MIST
2	Unite and collaborate	
2.1	Work with wider policy areas in Scottish Government as well as relevant stakeholders to ensure that work to develop ‘women only’ services and gender mainstreaming does not increase exclusion of trans and nonbinary people. Services should be inclusive and responsive to individual needs.	Scottish Government
2.2	Promote colocation of Mental Health and substance use services. There will be opportunity to evaluate this through MCN group projects and MAT standards implementation. Women should be specifically considered.	DDTF MCN evaluation Scottish Government
2.3	Ensure ‘no-wrong-door’ approach is implemented and go beyond this by considering lower threshold access to Mental Health (MH) services if co-occurring substance use; recognising the added risk and vulnerability.	MH policy / Scottish Government Services
2.4	Cross-sectoral collaboration; including across drugs, homelessness, justice, mental health, education, and children’s services; to support and promote a whole system approach to trauma informed practice. This	Scottish Government

	approach could be supported by the cross-government Multiple Complex Needs (MCN) Network and by the Ministerial Implementation Group.	
2.5	Work with partners to deliver and embed trauma-informed and trauma-responsive policy and practice within drug and alcohol services. The Trauma team within the Mental Health directorate joint with drugs policy are taking this forward and we would recommended that this work specifically considers the unique impact of trauma on women using these services and use lived experience in evaluation.	Scottish Government, services
2.6	Take measures to ensure silos in policy and practice are broken down resulting in greater integration of services and support. A MCN Networking group is welcome and it is recommended that both this group and the Ministerial Implementation group actively consider the needs of women alongside other vulnerable groups.	Scottish Government, services
2.7	Encourage collaborative working between social work and ADPs and consider joint training to help them understand each other's role, its demands and to better understand the challenges patients face.	Services Social work
2.8	The DDTF should actively work with The Promise team and stakeholders to ensure implementation of its principles and recommendations in drug treatment. It is also recommended that drug treatment policies are in line with GIRFEC (Getting it right for every child). Policy development and services should ensure an individualised, whole family approach with mothers at the heart of decision making and a focus on supporting families to stay together and parents to thrive wherever possible.	Women and children's services/policy
2.9	Measures should be taken to enhance support at specific times of vulnerability, such as: Pregnancy Release from prison Bereavements Loss of child custody Consideration of local need and currently available services in developing pathways to enhanced measures of support.	Cross policy/sector working Women's health Criminal justice 3 rd sector/housing/GP Children and families/SW
2.10	Work with partners/cross policy to ensure that women/families undergoing childcare proceedings receive support in their own right; which continues if custody is lost. Recognise bereavement following loss of	Services Scottish Government

	custody. Work closely with Children and Families policy and ensure that the needs of women experiencing drug use who are at risk of losing children to care are given support within drugs policy as well as the additional supports within Children and families policy.	Children and Families
3	Information sources	
3.1	When developing information sources and resources for those who use drugs and their families care should be taken to ensure that information is gender neutral or that where gender specific information is needed both men and women are considered. Those with lived experience should be involved in developing information sources.	Services Scottish Government
3.2	Develop dedicated information sources for families, especially children, that take a compassionate view of substance use. This may help families to stay connected and better understand the complexities of drug use. Consideration of a national resource that covers knowledge base/understanding of the issues but may also need local resource that covers services available in an area.	Scottish Government Drug Services with relevant partners
4	Workforce training	
4.1	Those working with women experiencing substance use either directly or indirectly should be trained in trauma informed care, stigma, women's rights, holistic care, to recognise power imbalance and domestic abuse, barriers to engagement, harm reduction, sexual and reproductive health, blood borne viruses, mental health conditions and neurodiversity. They should know what services and supports are available locally and how to access them.	Services NES and other training providers e.g. SDF Scottish Government
4.2	Navigators and advocates should be appropriately trained, including in gender needs; and supported in their role and legitimacy.	Services and advocacy organisations Scottish Government
4.3	Workers and volunteers should have adequate access to training and supervision with opportunities to debrief in both one-one and group settings. Schwartz rounds are a positive example of this and can be a useful opportunity for staff across all disciplines to reflect on the emotional impact of their work.	Services Scottish Government

4.4	A specific module as part of the NTTP considering the impact of trauma and adverse events on women who use drugs should be considered.	Scottish Government
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The Taskforce advises further engagement with lived experience and services to help understand the diverse needs of women. We would particularly advise engagement with women around:

- Their experience and wishes around 'women' only service vs. mainstream services and how these services could be improved.
- Provision of sexual and reproductive healthcare within drug services.
- How services could be family sensitive.
- Barriers to treatment and how these could be overcome.