



SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Greater Manchester VCFSE Leadership Group

JULY 2026

ISSUE 1

Dear member,

So... quite month then in Greater Manchester eh! Nothing really happening eh.

Don't forget to vote in the upcoming Mayoral Elections on 30 July 2026. Contrary to The Guardian, candidates are NOT hoping to become the next Manchester Mayor, but the next GREATER MANCHESTER Mayor. You'd think from a national newspaper that was originally called *The Manchester Guardian* (see People's History Museum for some good history on that) that they would understand the importance of a name!

Oh, and if you hadn't noticed, our previous GM Mayor, Andy Burnham has become the Prime Minister and moved half his new office to the City of Manchester! Number 10 of the North is all very exciting and dramatic (if you're passing by the Town Hall when the Prime Minister is 'working from home' as there's lots of blacked out SUVs with blue lights whizzing by).

If you have any news for this newsletter, please do drop me a line at ceo@wearesurvivors.org.uk

The next edition will be out w/c 24th August

Duncan Craig OBE

Chair

GM VCFSE Safer & Stronger Communities Leadership Group



Greater Manchester
Victims' Services

Greater Manchester Victims' Services

delivered by Catch 22 can be found at www.gmvictimsservices.org

Helpline: 0800 876 6155 | Text Relay: 1800 2080 087 6615

Mon to Fri 8am - 6pm | Wed 8am - 8pm | Sat 9am-5pm



Changes at GMCA within the Safer and Stronger Communities Directorate. Executive Director, Neil Evans, has shared with us the changes in the team as follows:

- Vicky Sugars has taken up the new position of Deputy Director.
- Carol Judge-Campbell has been promoted to Assistant Director.
- Kate Smith is stepping up on a temporary basis as Principal for Victims & Vulnerability.
- Isabelle Kennedy will temporarily step into Kate's old role as Senior Policy and Partnership Officer

of course, Kate Green remains in the role of Deputy Mayor leading responsibility for Safer and Stronger Communities until a new GM Mayor is elected and they will then create their leadership team.



MASH's 35th Anniversary wish is to find 35 friends who can donate monthly. It's 35 years since a small collective of volunteers ventured into Manchester city centre with flasks of hot coffee, free condoms and time to listen to women out working.

One thing that hasn't changed in 35 years is the power of community. MASH state that it feels like they need this just as much as they did in 1991, maybe even more.

If you can help them then click here:

[https://app.donorfy.com/form/GGH2DIHYE5/MASH35?ct=t\(mashgift2024_COPY_01\)&mc_cid=e08531c144&mc_eid=a334640126](https://app.donorfy.com/form/GGH2DIHYE5/MASH35?ct=t(mashgift2024_COPY_01)&mc_cid=e08531c144&mc_eid=a334640126)



ONS have just published their latest newsletter which you can see here:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKONS/bulletins/42162fc>



The Statutory Independent Inquiry into Grooming Gangs has launched the first stage of its National Listening Project and updated its Victims & Survivors Hub, providing new opportunities for victims and survivors to share their experiences and help shape the Inquiry's work.

The National Listening Project provides an opportunity for people affected by grooming gangs to share their experiences, perspectives and views with the Inquiry. It is open to:

- Victims and survivors of grooming gangs.
- Family members and friends.
- Survivor groups.
- Others affected by the abuse and its consequences.

People can now share their experiences through an online submission form: www.grooming-gangs.independent-inquiry.uk/victim-survivors-hub/share-your-experience



We Are Survivors brand new edition of 'Beyond the Silence' is hitting the shelves.

In this edition the team are celebrating something very important to them... male survivors! This issue is packed full of real-life stories and experiences from the people they support, and the people who support them. We Are Survivors has always been about the male survivor who inspire the organisation every single day, making it a real privilege to be here for male survivors.

Inside the magazine there is a feature on the new **LOUD VOICES** project, which is based on the amazing Positive Speakers from www.ght.org.uk/get-involved/positive-speaking, and a project the team want to take national!

The team hope that readers enjoy this edition, and as they always say... **there's no conversation about us without us!**

Read it here: <https://www.wearesurvivors.org.uk/breakthesilence/beyond-the-silence/>



The Independent Review of the Prison System has launched its call for evidence on:

www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/independent-review-of-the-prison-system-in-england-and-wales

The call for evidence seeks views on what needs to be done over the next five to fifteen years in order to secure the long-term sustainability and resilience of the prison system. It invites respondents' reflections on the biggest risks facing the prison system, and the main opportunities to address these risks and improve outcomes.

The review is keen to hear from a wide range of voices, including the victim's sector, and the call for evidence will run until 23.59 on Monday 31 August 2026.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with IndependentReviewPrisonSystem@justice.gov.uk if you have any questions.



Offenders who kill their partner, or ex, could face an additional 10 years in prison, under a change announced by Government.

Under the current law, most domestic murders have a 15-year sentencing starting point, because they take place in the home with a weapon most likely already at the scene. However, for other murders where a weapon is taken to the scene with intent, the starting point is 25 years.

The Government has announced it intends to close this 10-year gap so that domestic murders are dealt with the same severity as other murders - regardless of whether they happen at home or anywhere else.

Domestic murders are among the most devastating crimes and often represent a culmination of prolonged trauma and abuse.



The Sentencing Act 2026 introduces a new Progression model for standard determinate sentences, which creates a three-stage sentence: time in custody, a period of intensive supervision in the community, and a final licence stage. Under the Model, those currently eligible for automatic release at

40 or 50 percent of their sentence will instead be eligible for release at one-third, while those currently eligible at two-thirds will instead be eligible at 50 per cent.

Offenders who behave badly in prison can be kept in for longer; we are doubling the maximum number of days that can be added for bad behaviour.

On release, all offenders released will be subject to strict licence conditions and can be recalled to custody if they breach them. We will introduce a presumption that all prison leavers will be tagged on release as part of the intensive supervision period. We are also introducing new restrictive licence conditions, including restriction zones, which will be applied where necessary to manage risk.

The release point change is being implemented in phases between September 2026 and June 2027, supported by updated guidance and operational changes across probation and prisons.

New restrictive licence conditions will be implemented in September 2026, and a further factsheet will be issued in due course.

The reforms are based on recommendations from the Independent Sentencing Review.

Victims of serious sexual or violent offences where an offender receives a custodial sentence of 12 months or more are eligible for the Victim Contact Scheme (VCS).

Victims who are eligible and opted into the VCS will continue to be able to make representations as to conditions they would like to see in the offender's licence, such as exclusion zones and no-contact conditions.

Once released, offenders will be managed under strict licence conditions in the community - including restriction zones for the most serious sexual and violent offenders where appropriate, and new powers which will allow the Probation Service to prohibit offenders from driving, attending public events, or entering pubs, clubs and bars.

Where an offender released on licence breaches their licence conditions or if they cannot be safely managed in the community, the Probation Service has a full suite of options for managing this, including recall to prison.

These arrangements apply to standard determinate sentences and do not include extended or indeterminate sentence cohorts; around 17,000 prisoners serving extended or indeterminate sentences are therefore not eligible for changes under the progression model.

Victims registered with the VCS who may potentially be affected will be contacted by their Victim Liaison Officer in two stages to ensure they receive timely and accurate information.

- Initial notification (from 15 June 2026):
A standard letter will be issued to all potentially affected victims registered with the VCS, informing them that changes to release arrangements may affect the offenders release date in their case. This early communication is intended to ensure victims receive information directly and are aware that a review is taking place.
- Follow-up confirmation (from mid-July 2026):
Following sentence recalculation activity, targeted letters will be issued in phases up to the end of August 2026 to inform victims if their case has been affected. If there has been a change to the offender's release date, these letters will set out any confirmed changes to both the release date and arrangements. Where there has been no change, victims will be informed accordingly.

STOP PRESS: The Prime Minister has announced he is pressing pause on the Prisoner Early Release scheme, until a review has taken place. Hear what Victims Commissioner has to say: www.victimscommissioner.org.uk/news/prime-minister-pauses-prisoner-early-release-scheme/



Manchester City Council launch their new Community Safety Strategy (2026-2029) which you can download a copy here: www.manchester.gov.uk/crime-antisocial-behaviour-and-nuisance/community-safety-strategy-2026-2029



Beyond Equality (www.beyondequality.org) and End Violence Against Women Coalition (www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk) along with a growing coalition of partner organisations are have launched **Building Bridges: Principles for work with men and boys to end violence against women and girls.**

The group of organisations are committed to bridging work to address both violence against women and girls (VAWG) and men and boys' wellbeing.

At its root, VAWG is driven by harmful gender norms arising from gender inequality and intersecting structural inequalities such as those based on race, disability, wealth and social class, and sexuality. These same gender norms and systems of power are also harming men and boys in myriad ways, including fuelling boys and men's engagement with harmful misogynistic content online, contributing to high rates of male suicide, and creating stigma around help-seeking.

Building bridges means creating the space for understanding, accountability and meaningful change. As we look toward long-term prevention, we must ensure the work is done right.

Read the principles here www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/EVAW_boysGuideWeb.pdf and sign up to implement them.



HMCTS have published their annual report and accounts for the financial year 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

The report sets out our performance over the year, how they have spent public money and their vision, objectives and priorities. It also includes information on their staff, senior management and governance arrangements.

See it here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/hm-courts-tribunals-service-annual-report-and-accounts-2025-to-2026



Funding will see a consistent, national Independent Child Trafficking Guardians service for child survivors of modern slavery and trafficking.

Support for child victims of modern slavery will be strengthened as the Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTG) service is rolled out across all local authorities in England and Wales, backed by £25 million.

The ICTG service is for children who may have been victims of trafficking, exploitation, or modern slavery. A child's guardian is an independent supporter who can speak up for them, explain complex decisions and processes, and get them the right help at the right time.

Read more here: www.gov.uk/government/news/25-million-to-deliver-vital-support-for-child-trafficking-victims



Adrian Usher, the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, has used the publication of his annual report to call for an independent body to scrutinise staff conduct.

The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) has used the platform of his annual report laid before parliament yesterday (9 July 2026) to call for the creation of an independent body to scrutinise prison staff conduct. In his 2025 to 2026 Annual Report, the Ombudsman raised his most serious concern around the lack of independent oversight of staff conduct within HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS).

He said:

*“HMPPS is the largest public service body that I can bring to mind
that has no independent oversight of staff conduct,”*

*“Investigations into staff conduct, and any subsequent disciplinary hearings...
take place within the very institution where the member of staff works.”*

He went on to highlight the contrast with policing, noting a “very stark and obvious difference between the consequences for police officers compared to prison officers who are facing investigations, often for actions taken in very similar circumstances”.

You can see the report here: <https://ppo.gov.uk/?s=annual+report>



Climbing on Memorials Offence is being added by the Home Office from recommendations to the Crime and Policing Act 2026.

The Crime and Policing Act 2026 introduces a new offence of climbing on specified memorials and allows the Secretary of State to add further memorials to the list of specified memorials through secondary legislation where there is significant public interest.

The Home Office will use a time-limited application process to invite public recommendations to add to the list where there is a clear need to consider further additions.

Any application window will be opened only when necessary and will not operate on a continuous basis.

Recommendations will be assessed against a clear, non-exhaustive set of criteria to ensure consistency and proportionality while preserving ministerial discretion.

Mandatory requirements include that the memorial must have a commemorative purpose, be permanent, and have the consent of the owner or responsible body.

Supporting factors, such as protest-related risk, public significance, and location or vulnerability, may be considered but are not required.

Submitting a recommendation does not guarantee that a memorial will be added to the list.



Solicitor General announces national rollout of Early Victims' Right to Review scheme

Following a successful pilot, rape and sexual assault survivors across all of England and Wales will have the right to ask for their cases to be reviewed before a final decision to offer no evidence is made.

A year on from its launch in the West Midlands in June 2025, the Early Victims' Right to Review (VRR) scheme is now being rolled out to every CPS Area across England and Wales from 13 July 2026, the Solicitor General, Ellie Reeves KC MP, has confirmed.

Following the successful expansion across four CPS Areas, West Midlands, North West, Yorkshire and Humberside, and Cymru-Wales, the national rollout marks the next step in transforming how the justice system treats victims of rape and serious sexual offences.

The national rollout gives victims of rape or serious sexual abuse the right for their case to be reviewed by a different prosecutor before any final decision is made, meaning the chance to continue proceedings is still available. If that prosecutor disagrees with the original decision, the case will continue.

The national rollout follows positive feedback from victims who have been involved in the pilot. This includes those who did not ultimately request a review, who said they valued having the opportunity for their case to be reconsidered before a final decision was reached.

The scheme forms a central part of the government's Violence Against Women and Girls strategy, which sets out its commitment to halve VAWG within a decade.



Churchill Fellowship applications open from 1 September to 20 October

A Churchill Fellowship is a chance to follow your passion for change, learn from people and projects around the world, and use those insights to make a difference in the UK.

Thinking about applying? They'll be running informal online sessions from August to October to help you learn more about the process. Whether you already have an idea in mind or are still exploring whether a Fellowship could be right for you, you'll have the chance to ask questions and hear practical advice from our team before you submit your application.

Places are limited, and new dates will be added over the coming weeks, so they recommend checking back and booking early.

They also have our first webinar on 6 August with a chance to hear directly from Fellows Faith Yimnyi and Marina Logacheva, who will be sharing their Fellowship experience.

Book here: www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/the-churchill-fellowship-51606110653