

# Women and girls in Buckinghamshire

## A status report





51% of the county are females

This equals 273,300 women & girls

12% are from ethnic minority groups

60% are of working age

79% are economically active

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# Introduction

The aim of this project is to understand the barriers, needs and required support for girls and women in different stages of their lives in Buckinghamshire. The extensive research identifies the areas that are vital to the health and wellbeing of women and girls and finds the gaps occurring due to gender differences, which in turn have an effect on our society itself.

Nationally, many research projects have been carried out on the issues that modern women face, but never have women's issues at a regional level been covered.

We hope that this research will become a primary resource for anyone working towards improving the lives of girls and women in Buckinghamshire, and will present an opportunity for community dialogue, more collaborative working and targeted intervention on the identified gaps.

In this report we will look at the life long journey of being a woman during three different development stages:

*Childhood (from birth to 16 years)*

*Adulthood (17 - 64 years)*

*Retirement (65 years and above)*

Many of the issues overlap, continuing onto the next phase of a woman's life. The purpose of this research is not just to find the shortcomings, but to help us become aware and be able to evaluate both the strengths and weaknesses.

The last section of the report is entirely based on findings from a community consultation. This has enabled us to better understand the needs of girls and women from the viewpoint of those who are regularly working alongside them.

**To download the full research report, which includes further local and national data please visit our website:**

**[heartofbucks.org/research](https://heartofbucks.org/research)**

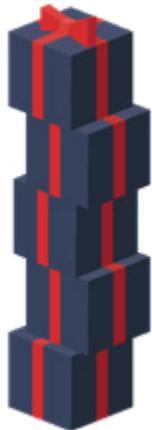
# Childhood (birth - 16)

20% of the total female population of Bucks is aged between 0 and 16. The health of young girls is a concern with 1 in 6 girls aged 4-5 and 1 in 4 girls aged 10-11 having excess weight. As young girls move from primary to secondary education, a large number of them stop taking part in PE and other sporting activities. Bucks girls are attaining higher grades than the national average, but aspiration gaps lead them to gender based careers and lower salaried jobs. Nationally, social media expectation is high, with young girls bombarded with up to 5,000 digitally enhanced images a week that suggest how they should look.

More awareness is required during these early stages of life on leading an active lifestyle and improving physical and mental health. Access to local role models can enhance their self-confidence and raise aspirations.

# 85 YEARS

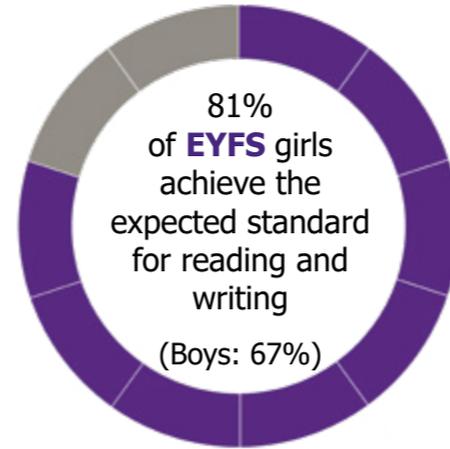
Average female **life expectancy** at birth  
(national average: 83)



A female living in an affluent area will celebrate **5 more birthdays** than someone living in a deprived area



45% of girls fail to achieve one hour of **exercise each day**



At the end of **KS2**, girls continue to perform better with 67% reaching the expected standard  
(Boys: 60%)



63% of girls achieved **GCSE** grades 5-9 in English and Maths  
(National average: 46%)

The Family Resilience Service supported

# 1870

children who had experience of **domestic abuse**

(During the year 2016-17)



104 children **used refuges**. A further 203 couldn't be placed due to a lack of spaces

(During the year 2015-16)



58% of **young carers** are female

# Adulthood (17-64)

The majority of the total female population fall into this age group. Teen births are decreasing but so are health screening rates in all four districts. The employment rate is high with the majority of females in employment, however they are earning less than males. Domestic abuse is increasing at an alarming rate in deprived areas with younger women more at risk.

Childcare, networking support, access to job clubs and low cost vocational courses have been identified as barriers for working age women in Bucks. Accessible childcare, needs-based activities and setting up a social enterprise are amongst many recommendations to solve these barriers.



79% of women are in **employment**. The highest rate in the whole of the UK



3/4 of women don't **participate in sports**



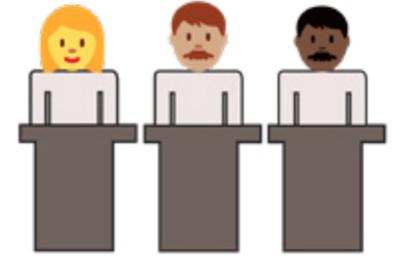
101 women **used refuges**. A further 187 could not be placed due to a lack of spaces  
(During the year 2015-16)



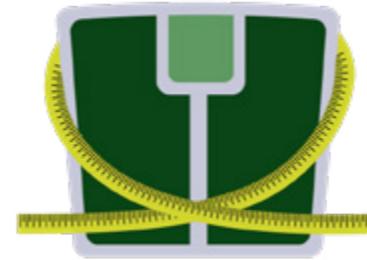
**Domestic violence** offences have increased 118% in Walton Court and 175% in Quarrendon (2017-2018)

Women working full time **earn** nearly **£4000**

**less** than men, per year



Just over 1/3 of **county councillors** are women



More than half of adults are **obese or overweight**



75% of **adult carers** are female & the highest proportion are aged 50-64

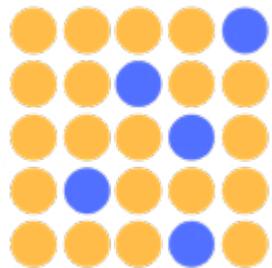


Girls aged 16-19 are more likely to be **sexually assaulted** than any other age group

# Retirement (65+)

20% of the total female population in Bucks are aged 65 and over. Healthy life expectancy is five years better than the national average, however, at the age of 65 a woman will spend on average 47% of the rest of her life in poor health. A quarter of people aged 85 and over are considered 'frail' in Buckinghamshire. Older women are also at high risk of isolation and loneliness, particularly those aged 75 and above.

Engaging older women in social activities of their choice may improve many of the conditions they are facing. Intergenerational activities and neighbourhood projects are recommended to help reduce isolation and loneliness.



20% of the female population are **aged 65+**



In Chiltern wards, women live 14 years in **ill health**, on average



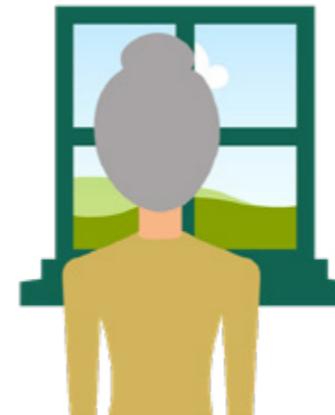
Over 1/4 of women aged 95-99 have **dementia**



Over 6,000 older women **need help** in looking after themselves



The average age of those affected by **doorstop crime** is 77 years. 54% of victims are female & 57% live alone



The risk of **loneliness** is higher in urban areas



Older women are more **likely to fall** and injure themselves than men

# Community consultation

As part of our research we carried out a county-wide consultation to better understand the needs of girls and women from the viewpoint of those who are regularly working alongside them. The participants selected were from a range of women's groups and organisations and included group leaders or coordinators, youth club leaders, council officials, councillors and professionals working with diverse community groups. A simple questionnaire was developed to collect information on local issues and barriers, local needs, the support required, and suggestions to improve the lives of girls and women. As a result we were able to identify marginalised groups and their needs.

## Needs identified & support required



A safe place for regular meetings



Advice on and provision of cost-effective childcare



Practical workshops and training for self-employment



Access to role models in their community

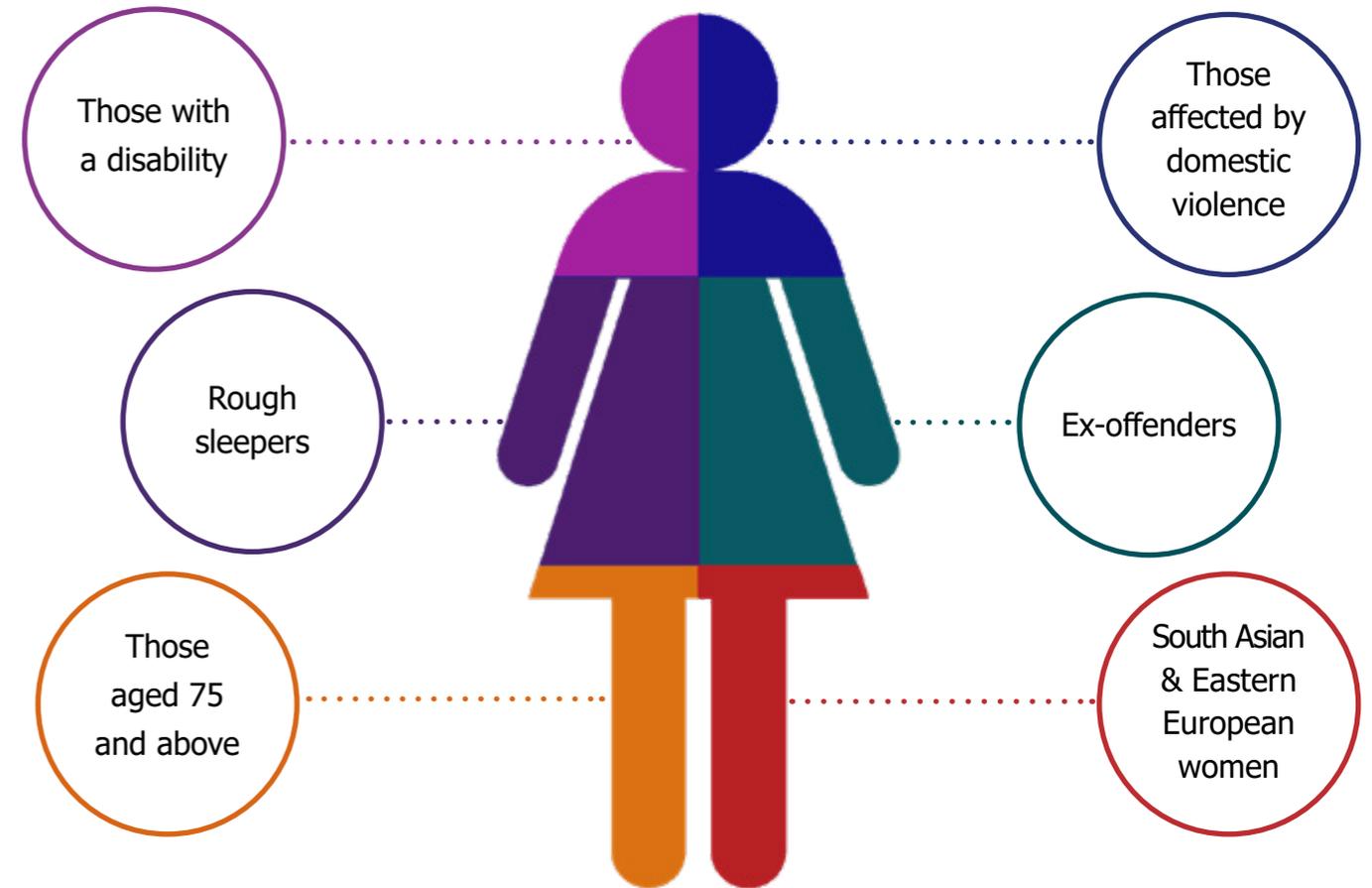


Intergenerational activities for elderly women



Peer mentor support to increase confidence

## Identified marginalised groups



# Recommendations for Buckinghamshire



Setting up a women's social enterprise



Facilitating programmes of intergenerational activities



Mapping of services available in Bucks



Annual events for women

## Our next steps

The needs of women and girls are significant and the creation of a dedicated fund that meets these needs will be a unique asset for Heart of Bucks and for Buckinghamshire. A women's fund can serve to expand women's philanthropy and empower women as philanthropists. If you are interested in supporting this fund then please get in touch.

Women's Fund

# Acknowledgements

*With thanks to:*

All of the professionals and organisations that supported this research project

All of the participants who kindly took part in the community consultation

For the full list of acknowledgements, please refer to the long report

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*Visit our website: [heartofbucks.org](http://heartofbucks.org)*



UK COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS  
GIVING FOR LOCAL GOOD

“

AS LONG AS GIRLS AND WOMEN ARE  
VALUED LESS, FED LESS, FED  
LAST, OVERWORKED, UNDERPAID,  
NOT SCHOOLED AND SUBJECTED TO  
VIOLENCE IN AND OUT OF THEIR  
HOMES – THE POTENTIAL OF THE  
HUMAN FAMILY TO CREATE A  
PEACEFUL, PROSPEROUS WORLD WILL  
NOT BE REALISED

”

- Hillary Clinton