

Woman of the North Charter

We pledge to work together to promote a fairer, healthier place for women living in the North of England. Signatories that sign up to this Charter pledge to use their powers to create fairer opportunities across education, work, welfare and health for women.

We commit to raising awareness and mobilising action for women throughout our work, whether it is policy action, public campaigns or developing new services.

Purpose

We recognise that women who are living in the North of England are facing unfair inequalities across their lives. They experience poorer health outcomes, are more likely to work greater hours for less pay, to be an unpaid carer, to live in poverty and to have fewer qualifications than women living elsewhere in the country.

It is not right that girls who are born in the North can expect up to four years less of good health than the national average.

We know that these inequalities are not inevitable. We stand together to address the challenges faced by women living in the North and to work towards a fairer and healthier future.

Education and work

Women living in the North of England experience strong inequalities from their education through to their careers, from the types of work available to the amount they are paid. Ensuring that women have access to good quality work will have a significant impact on their quality of life.

- We will ensure all girls and women have access to education and training opportunities throughout their lives. We will use powers such as the Adult Education Budget to make education more accessible to all.
 - We will make sure that women who experience more barriers into the labour market get the additional support that they need to access training opportunities.
 - We pledge to offer comprehensive careers support to young women in schools, helping them to better understand the range of opportunities available to them.
 - We will work with employers from across the North of England to develop working environments that foster good health and help keep women in the workplace.
 - We will support economic development across the North of England, such as the upcoming Industrial Strategy, that bring new work opportunities to women, encouraging the growth of jobs with better pay and working arrangements.
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Care

As many as 1 in 5 women aged 55-59 provide unpaid care in the North of England. Unpaid carers provide approximately £57 billion of care per year and we estimate that women in the North contribute £10 billion of care, which is disproportionately higher than other regions of England.

- We will commit to supporting carers throughout the region to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. We will work with local carers services in our areas to ensure carers have access to specialised support.
- We will advocate for employers to take better consideration of carers needs in the workplace, including improved flexibility, access to leave for caring responsibilities, and supportive environments to help carers balance their lives.

Health

The needs of women are not adequately met by our current health and care system. We need bold ambition to boost the health outcomes for all women and girls, offering the right care at every stage of their life. We need tailored care for marginalised women, including minoritised ethnic women, women who have experience of the criminal justice system, women experiencing homelessness, women who are care leavers, sex workers, and neurodiverse women.

- We are committed to ensuring that all women in the North of England have access to the healthcare that they need, regardless of their background.
- We support work done by local health systems to provide services that offer support sensitive to the needs of women in the North, especially women from marginalised groups.
- We will put health at the heart of our government, recognising the health impacts of policies from across our work and support policy that will positively impact the health of Northern women.
- We will work with the wider system of devolved government to strengthen our public health systems and ensure that the needs of women are considered when developing and commissioning services.

Signed by:
