

Biographical notes

The Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Trafford, Councillor Joanne Harding, 2026/2027

Joanne has represented the ward of Urmston since 2011. Urmston has been her home for the last 40 years, and it is the place she is proud to call home.

Joanne has held a variety of roles since her election. She hit the ground running on a campaign to save services at Trafford General Hospital, and the Health Scrutiny Committee became the natural fit for her to continue to raise residents' voices around health issues. She later became the Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee and led work on older people's care and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

In 2018, Joanne was appointed as the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and during the pandemic, she was instrumental in setting up the six community hubs, which now play a vital role in our communities.

She has served as Chair of the Age Well Board and Suicide Prevention Partnership Board. She has led nationally on suicide prevention for the Local Government Association. She has also served as Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Domestic Abuse.

Joanne has a background in addiction and mental health services. Qualifying as an addiction therapist, she worked for the Probation service, working with offenders in custody and those on licence in the community.

Personal experience has meant that she advocates strongly for those with addiction issues and for family members who care and support.

Joanne went on to manage a mental health crisis service, working with blue light services to try to prevent hospital admissions for those in crisis. She worked at a GM level on the Crisis Care Concordat, and the service was recognised as an innovative model providing community support.

Joanne's passion really does lie in advocating for the safety of women and girls. She has led on policy work in this area and continues to use her voice at a local, regional, and national level to support the work of the Violence Against Women and Girls strategy.

She serves as a trustee for Manchester Women's Aid and The Pankhurst Centre and is a former trustee of Trafford Rape Crisis. She hosts the annual Trafford International Women's Day awards and is keen to ensure that women and girls believe that "yes, they can."

More recently, she worked with students at Urmston Grammar School and Meda Cubs to hear the voices of young people around this issue. The video they created was picked up by BBC News and has gone viral on Instagram. This work will help to form the borough-wide work on ending violence against women and girls.

Joanne grew up in the Longsight area of Manchester and moved to Urmston when she qualified as a veterinary nurse and worked as head nurse at Buchanan's vets on Princess Road. She does not miss the days of chasing the geese around Longford Park (actually, it was the other way around!) She made her home in Urmston, and whilst studying for her counselling diploma, she worked in local care homes and restaurants.

She gave birth to her daughter Grace in 2004 and is as proud as punch of all that Grace has achieved, graduating with a Law degree last July and now about to finish her MA in criminology.

Joanne is described by Grace as a real "busybody", she can always be found organising something, running something or trying to help someone sort something!

Joanne believes a hinterland is vital in politics and loves to read books on crime and offending behaviours, or, as her partner Rob describes, "the cheery stuff." She also loves John Steinbeck, and *The Grapes of Wrath* is her favourite book.

She can be found in the gym many times during the week with a newfound love for boxing. She also runs and, over the years, has raised several thousand pounds for charities. Joanne advocates strongly for women's health and wellbeing, hosting monthly Menopause Cafes in Urmston.

Joanne is a real social butterfly and loves her friends from all chapters of her life. She loves music and regularly embarrasses her partner, Rob, with her cheesy playlists. She is a mad Springsteen fan and feels that his songs have accompanied her through many ups and downs of life.

[The Consort to the Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Trafford, Grace Harding, 2026/2027](#)

Grace was born in 2004 at Trafford General Hospital. She attended Urmston Primary School, Flixton Girls' School, and Pendleton College. She then attended Leeds University and graduated with a degree in law in July 2025. She is currently working on her dissertation for her MA in Criminology.

Grace is thrilled to be her mum's consort. She is well used to being involved in community campaigns and events, being a Councillor's daughter!

Grace will start work as a paralegal in September and wants to work in the field of women's safety.