



National
Council of
Women GB

August 2026 Member Newsletter

All our work needs funding. You can donate here ([Donate - National Council of Women](#))

Next online event: Combatting the Manosphere, 1st September at 12.30pm, see page 4 for details

President's Message

Dear member and supporter

I do hope you have been ok in the heatwaves. It helps that NCW is doing something about it. Besides our general campaigning on climate, it's a focus at our international conference on 2 November. Let us know if you'd like to join our climate study group - or the women's leadership and digital safety groups also preparing for 2 November.

Concerned about online misogyny? Do get your tickets for our combatting the manosphere event on 1st September at 12.30pm (see page 4 for booking). We are really delighted to have secured Simon Bailey CBE, Lee Chambers and White Ribbon to speak. Simon is a former chief Constable who now chairs the International Policing and Public Protection Research Institute. Lee founded and runs the very impactful Male Allies.

Quite a few memberships are due about now so do sign up if you get a reminder. There's also an opportunity to recognise or commemorate a woman important to you on [our supporter's wall](#)

Given financial realities, the UN is proposing a merger for UN Women. We agree with reform and efficiencies but want it to remain standalone. We have signed a joint letter with other women's organisations.

Finally, the government has indicated it will raise the age at which tech companies can access youngsters with harmful social media. To reinforce their resolve, [please do sign our petition.](#)

Thank you again for your support.

All the very best

Ann Davison
National President



Members news

Please give a warm welcome to new members:

- Susannah Matschke
- Chantel Chinemelum Mbaegbu – Greater Manchester
- Sarah Baily – Devon
- Reverend Valerie Lohomari – Essex
- Uloaku Ojiaku, Swanscombe, Kent
- Professor Harriet Over – York
- Sarah Adenaike

We look forward to seeing you at future NCW meetings and events.

DIARY DATES

August 2026

11	Commonwealth Women's Network core group
27	NCWGB Management Committee meeting

September 2026

1	Combatting the Manosphere (see page 4)
17	NCWGB Management Committee meeting

Adult social care

National Council of Women GB is committed to the improvement of adult social care [[Adult Social Care resolution](#)] and the Prime Minister has now made it a priority. We have also set up a study group on health. Do let us know if you would like to work on this topic, info@ncwgb.org

Do you want to honour or commemorate a woman important to you?

You are now able to donate to add a brick to our supporters' wall - this can be in memory of someone close to you personally, a woman from NCW's vast history who you admire, or to support the continuation of the work of NCW.

Check out our Donate page to find out more and see some of the bricks already in place  .
<https://ncwgb.org/donate/>

Visit to Darlington Office



National Council of Women GB trustees and management committee members met in Darlington on Tuesday to review the archives. We were so impressed with the work of our predecessors. Many themes continue today - child safety online, Afghan women, water use, Fairtrade, depiction of women in the media. We noted some great successes - on antibiotics in farming, getting a Food Standards Agency and a children's Commissioner and of course many more women in Parliament. The Science and Technology Committee had worked closely with the department for environment farming and food on foot and mouth, GM foods and BSE.

In some way those were more innocent times with complaints against demeaning women in various adverts. We were depressed that this is so much worse now because of the online environment. We continue to campaign for the same protections online as offline.

Pictured are Gillian Weston, Jilly Rogers, Jackie Taylor, Gail Bishop and Ann Davison

New Management Committee member – Beth Button

National Council of Women GB is thrilled to announce that Beth Button is a new member of its management committee.

Beth has extensive experience in influencing policy and campaigning for change, having held communications and public affairs roles in a number of UK and international representative bodies. Currently Director of External Affairs at the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), Beth leads advocacy efforts with governments, funders, and stakeholders across the Commonwealth, and is responsible for the ACU's global network of over 400 member universities across more than 40 countries.



Beth will lead our climate study group, bringing her experience in advocating internationally on sustainable development including at the UN and Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings. Passionate about climate action, Beth is currently leading initiatives that help Commonwealth Governments to address challenges including food security, oceans preservation, and sustainable urbanisation.

Beth started her career in the student movement where she was president of the National Union of students in Wales, and on the executive of the European students union, where she set up a women's campaign to support shared learning and solidarity across Europe.

Beth says:

"At a time when it is easy to feel despondent - amid a global rollback of women's rights, growing online harms, and systemic violence against women, not to mention impending climate collapse- getting involved with the National Council of Women offers a hopeful forum to drive meaningful change. I'm looking forward to learning from this powerful network of changemakers, as we work together to advance action on issues affecting women and secure a fair and inclusive society for all"

Dementia

We were delighted to host a Dementia Friends session on Wednesday 29 July, an Alzheimer's Society initiative that helps people learn more about dementia and how they can support those affected by it. Many people living with dementia often feel isolated and left out because dementia is still so misunderstood.



This lack of understanding can make it harder for people with the condition to stay independent and feel connected to their communities. Dementia Friends help to change that by using their awareness to do simple, everyday things that matter—helping people with dementia live their lives to the fullest. Alzheimer's Society volunteer Louise explained to NCWGB members that simple things like showing patience and understanding can mean the world. Visiting someone you know living with the condition or someone who's caring for a loved one can too. People with dementia can then feel better connected to the community. Contact the Alzheimer's Society if you would like to hold a face-to-face session with friends in your locality.

Children and screens

Our Associate member Health Professionals for Safer Screens is excited to share with us the new and free six-module education programme produced by clinicians. It is mainly for clinicians but may well be of wider interest.

They have developed 'Screens, their content and their effect on children', a free, six-module educational programme designed by healthcare professionals, for healthcare professionals.

Grounded in the latest evidence, the series explores how screens influence:

- Sleep
- Language and cognitive development
- Mental health
- Neurodivergence

Alongside practical assessment tools and intervention strategies that can be incorporated into everyday clinical practice.

Each module is concise, practical and designed to fit around busy clinical schedules, helping you build confidence in discussing screen use with children, young people and their families.

This [video](#) is a short intro from Dr Caspar Wood.

Please feel free to sign up / share.

<https://learn.healthprofessionalsforsaferscreens.org/>



UK Civil Society Women's Alliance

National Council of Women GB member Hana Mosavie chaired a meeting of the U.K. Civil Society Women's Association on Thursday with great aplomb! NCWGB President Ann Davison was speaker on the topic of digital safety.

Ann described NCW's part in the successful campaign to Raise the Age at which tech companies can access U.K. children with harmful social media. The new ministers look set to introduce protections as promised to us by Sir Keir Starmer.

The issues of online misogyny and abuse remain very much to be addressed. New NCW efforts call for safety by design for online platforms and services. In other words regulation should prevent release onto the market unless pre testing has addressed any safety concerns. A joint NCWGB roundtable in Parliament with AIUK sponsored by the inspirational Jess Asato MP served to highlight this.

The meeting agreed that NCWGB should follow up with letters to government ministers for other women's organisations to co-sign.

Parliamentary roundtable and UKAI event

National Council of Women GB congratulates Minister Kanishka Narayan MP on his appointment as Minister of State (Minister for Artificial Intelligence) jointly in the Cabinet Office and the Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade.

In July we held a parliamentary roundtable jointly with UKAI and hosted by the inspirational Jess Asato MP, to discuss 'Safety by Design: Protecting Women and Girls. We were delighted that Minister Kanishka took time out of his busy schedule to join us.

NCWGB will be continuing to make the case for aligning tech with other sectors in having to ensure the safety of their products and services before releasing them onto the market.

Photo show Professor Shweta Singh, convenor of NCWGB's digital safety study group and Ann Davison President with the Minister at the July event.



United Nations



The UN80 reform process is streamlining operations with the aim to make the UN deliver more effectively for the people it serves. We support that goal. However, the proposed merger of UN Women with the UN population fund would dismantle two distinct mandates at the very moment they are most needed.

So, led by the Africans, women's rights organisations around the world are signing on to a collective letter to UN Secretary-General António Guterres, calling on him to withdraw the proposed merger. Do sign as an individual if you would like to.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeN3BOL1Wh3Y6-UvhAfvqL-NLyUYrESwwSk8RPdiLURLEbA/viewform>

Combating the Manosphere

Online event Tuesday 1 September 12.30pm to 2.15 pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/Combating-the-Manosphere>

National Council of Women's seminar will consider the impact of the underregulated online environment and the 'manosphere'. How it undermines positive relationships between women and men, girls and boys.

The role of algorithms in encouraging extreme content. The way this spills into real lives, including violently. We will look at solutions including regulation, enforcement, education and awareness raising. And we will welcome your contributions in the Q and A.

Speakers

Lee Chambers is the founder and CEO of [Male Allies UK](#). After a diverse career, from corporate finance to building and exiting tech company, he is now focused on supporting organisations to engage men in inclusion and promote effective allyship.

Simon Bailey CBE DL is a former chief constable, Norfolk, and recipient of the Queen's Police medal. He chairs the International Policing and Public Research Institute.

Lynne Elliot, CEO of White Ribbon - campaigning to end men's violence against women. White Ribbon challenges the attitudes and behaviour that make violence possible and build allyship to prevent it.

Study Groups

Women's Health Study Group



Our health study group is busy preparing practical resources, position papers, and briefing notes on inequalities in treatment, intersectional inequalities, access to services, and women's voices and experiences.

The group's chair is Maria Karvela of Imperial College, London. Dr Hannah Nazri, speciality registrar in obstetrics and gynaecology, will highlight red flags in women's health, and Charity Mafuba, an international lawyer will work particularly on intersectional inequalities.

Do let us know if you'd like to join the group - we need laypeople as well as experts!.

Climate Study Group

At the first meeting of National Council of Women's Climate change study group in London on Monday members agreed to prioritise an international focus. We are all in this together and need to be seen to act together. So, the group prepared for NCWGB's international Women conference on 2 November. We will invite women leaders from other members of the International Council of women to indicate the harms of climate change in their own countries plus any best practice they can share. Then we will work together on action plans to increase the will to act each in our own countries.

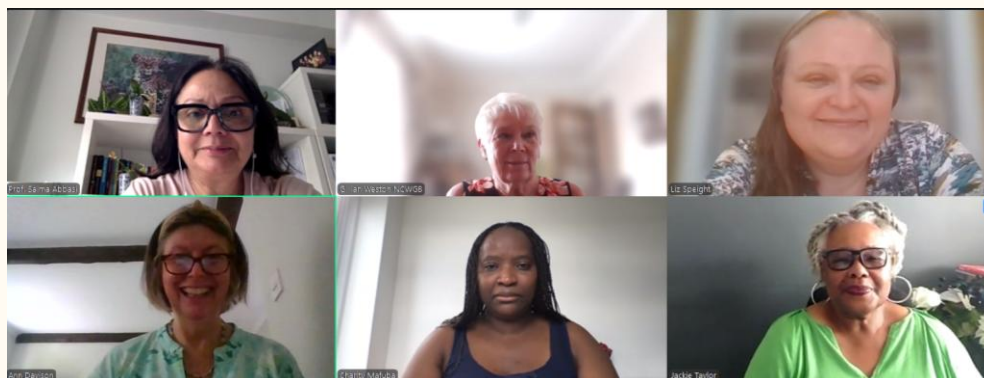


Issues raised by the group were food security and soil erosion, water shortages, plastic pollution and the oceans, fast fashion, AI - resource use but also its potential for finding mitigations, and the role of wars. They drew attention to the work done by the big plastic count [Results 2026 \(Home Page\)](#) | [The Big Plastic Count](#)

The study group will consider how women's leadership can help address these enormous challenges. Please let us know if you would like to join.

The study group of Professor Husna Ahmad, Donna Achara, Saima Rasool and Ann Davison, was chaired by Beth Button.

Women's Leadership Study Group



Some leading members of National Council of Women GB met last Thursday to prepare for the visit of 120 women leaders from across the world in November. The joint NCWGB/International Council of Women conference will encourage women's leadership in digital safety and climate change especially. Professor Salma Abassi will be a keynote speaker on women's empowerment. The meeting emphasised the need to protect women leaders from bullying and abuse, including online. This could be even worse for ethnic minorities. Aggressive behaviour has a chilling effect on democracy and the willingness of women to stand for office. The Representation of the People Bill is currently going through Parliament providing an opportunity to strengthen protections in UK.

Darlington Branch news

Gail Bishop

Remembering the Canary Girls: Britain's Forgotten Wartime Workforce

Valerie Weltie from the Canary Girls Memorial Project gave a powerful and illuminating talk on the women known as the "Canary Girls." When the First World War began in 1914, Britain had only a handful of munitions factories, producing shells mainly for the Royal Navy in exclusively male workplaces. As fighting intensified on the Western Front, the army's demand for shells soared. Production fell far short, and many shells that reached the front were defective, creating the "shell scandal" that exposed Britain's lack of industrial preparedness. In response, the new Ministry of Munitions under Lloyd George urged women "to fill the shells," commissioning vast new munitions factories, including the enormous Gretna site. Built by 10,000 mainly Irish navvies, Gretna stretched two miles wide and nine miles long, with shops, schools and medical facilities but no health and safety. It employed 12,000 single women and girls—many teenagers—who left home for billets near the factory. Pay was better than in textile mills, though still only half that of men, even into WWII. Across Britain, existing factories were commandeered and rapidly converted to produce shell cases, bullets, detonators, pyrotechnics and poison-gas canisters. With men at the front, women made up around 90% of the munitions workforce, despite prejudice about women doing "men's work." They lived in prison-like conditions and the jobs were dangerous. Factories were flattened by bombing and daily exposure to toxic chemicals and the threat of fatal explosions were constant. Amputation risks were high. Women were banned from wearing anything that might spark such as nylon and silk, and were stripped to check for metal fasteners, jewellery and hair grips. Fines were issued for breeches. Detonator workers were grimly called the "suicide squad," and twelve-hour shifts handling 50-kilogram shells were routine. One of the most hazardous tasks was making cordite, mixed by hand and known for turning workers' skin, hair and nails yellow, earning them the name "canary girls." Many later suffered severe illnesses, including bone disintegration, dermatitis, throat damage and toxic jaundice. Hundreds of "canary babies" were born with yellow-tinged skin. But these so-called "munitionettes" remain largely forgotten. The Canary Girls Memorial Project works to raise public awareness and now seeks a permanent national monument at the National Memorial Arboretum to honour the two million women who worked in munitions during both world wars.

Member News

Meet the Member!



Susannah Matschke

I'm very excited to be joining an organisation that has achieved so much positive change for women. Working in tech and more specifically AI, I think it's more important than ever that women come together to make sure that their voices are heard on a national level. I'm keen to contribute in any way that I can.



Rowena Castillo-Nicholls

I join NCWGB to be part of an organisation who champions, empower and inspire women and girls.



Professor Marie Griffiths

I would like to contribute to the National Council of Women of Great Britain by championing and amplifying women's voices in AI, technology and other traditionally male-dominated sectors, helping to ensure women are represented in shaping our digital future. I am particularly keen to foster supportive networks, mentor younger women and create opportunities that build confidence, visibility and pathways for women to participate, lead and influence within AI and technology.



Tsholofelo Knepscheld

I look forward to being a helping hand in developing change for young women with NCWGB as well as learning as much as I can from dynamic and inspiring women.

Building a Lasting Legacy for NCWGB

The work of NCW has always been sustained by the commitment and generosity of its members. From advancing our mission today to preparing for the challenges of tomorrow, long-term financial stability is essential to ensuring that NCW can continue to connect, challenge and change, and lead for generations to come to empower women and improve quality of life for all.

One of the most meaningful ways to support the future of NCW is through legacy giving. A legacy gift, which is often made through a bequest in a will, allows members to make a lasting impact beyond their lifetime, helping to secure the resources needed to fund ongoing campaigning, support innovation, and respond to emerging needs aligned with NCW's mission.

These gifts are especially powerful because they provide continuity. They enable NCW to plan with confidence, invest strategically, and protect the work that members care deeply about. Importantly, a bequest does not affect one's financial circumstances today and can be structured to reflect personal values, priorities, and family considerations.

In this, our 130th year, we invite members to consider including NCW in their estate planning. By leaving a gift in your will, you affirm your belief in NCW's work and help ensure that this continues to make a difference well into the future. Even a modest bequest, when combined with others, can have a profound and lasting effect.

Your legacy can help shape the next chapter of NCW's story. We are deeply grateful for the dedication of all our members and for the thoughtful ways you support the future of our organisation.

