National Council of Women GB

For a fair and inclusive society

Toolkit for events supporting young women from disadvantaged backgrounds

A practical guide for youth workers, educators, community organisations, and volunteers

November 2026



Introduction

Welcome to this toolkit!

At the National Council of Women GB (NCWGB) we're delighted to bring you this toolkit. NCWGB embraces and represents women of all ages. We believe that engaging with girls and young women at an early age, and empowering them to become engaged in lifelong activism, is a priority for strengthening the future of women's activism and influence over policy. We recognise that it's particularly important to ensure we can hear and celebrate the voices of young women from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We are very grateful to the International Council of Women for awarding us a Lydie Rossini grant which has enabled us to develop ways to engage effectively with young women from diverse backgrounds and then to develop this toolkit to share our experience and knowledge.

Many people have contributed to this work and the speakers at our event 'Celebrating Underrepresented Voices' are listed in the case study. A special mention must go to NCWGB members Penny Bennett, Gillian Weston, Gail Bishop, Ann Davison, Jackie Taylor and Barbara Maddison who have been instrumental in driving forward our engagement with young women. Ruth Batty played a vital role in making the event happen. We are very grateful to them all.

Using this toolkit

This toolkit is available as a printed copy for a small fee and as a free download on our website www.ncwgb.org/resources

We also have free event management templates on our website for you to download. These are marked in the toolkit with this icon T
Use the link in the copy to download them from our website.

Let us know what you think!

We really want this toolkit to be an up-to-date resource. Please let us know what you think, how you use it, what you find useful and what could be added so we can update it for future editions. Email us at info@ncwgb.org with your feedback.

We sincerely hope that you find this toolkit useful and that your events encourage more young women to make their voices heard.

Jilly Rogers
Immediate Past President
November 2026

Ann Davision
President



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SECTION 1

Introduction and purpose

Why we've prepared this Toolkit

Events for young women from disadvantaged backgrounds can be transformative. They can foster confidence, expand horizons, and create new networks of support. Yet planning such events can feel overwhelming especially for teams with limited time or resources.

This toolkit draws on real experience and participant feedback from previous workshops run by the National Council of Women GB (NCWGB). We hope it will help you create safe, inclusive and powerful events. It offers practical steps, templates, and examples that can be adapted to different contexts.

Making everyone welcome

At NCWGB we have a commitment to make our events accessible to women from all backgrounds. The experience reflected in this Toolkit comes from our work with young women from minority ethnic backgrounds, from rural and poor urban communities, from LGBTQ+ backgrounds, and young women who are deaf or hard of hearing. Young women from any of these backgrounds often face significant barriers to participation in mainstream events and may have fewer opportunities to engage in advocacy and networking.

There are women with other needs to consider too. For example physical disabilities, sensory impairments and neurodiversity. When organising an event seek advice to ensure you are including women whatever their access needs. When accessibility is mainstreamed rather than treated as an add-on, all women can make their voices heard.

NCWGB has been working with SignHealth, a charity supporting deaf people's health and wellbeing. Throughout this Toolkit we've highlighted the needs of deaf and hard of hearing women as well as creating a guidance sheet 'Making deaf people feel welcome: A guide to planning your event' which you can download here.

Purpose of this Toolkit

This Toolkit is for groups working with young women from disadvantaged backgrounds and who want to plan and run events that will meet the needs of young women who face challenges.

This Toolkit is designed to help you:

- **Plan events with clarity and confidence**
- **Understand and respond to the needs of young women**
- **Create programmes that are inclusive, empowering, and practical**
- **Build safe, trauma-aware environments**
- **Design activities to help young women to share experiences**
- **Evaluate impact and build long-term legacy**

It is deliberately flexible; you can take what is useful, adapt what you need, and add your own insight and creativity.

How to use this Toolkit

- Start with a planning checklist (Section 3)
- Choose the event format that best suits your context (Section 4)
- Use the programme templates to save time (Resources section)
- Follow the guidance on creating a safe, inclusive environment (Section 6)
- Use the evaluation tools to build long-term impact (Section 10)

You can treat it as a step-by-step manual or a pick-and-mix reference.

SECTION 2

Understanding your audience

Recognising experiences and barriers

Young women from disadvantaged backgrounds or who have hearing loss often face one or more challenges. These could include:

- Low confidence or lack of self-belief
- Limited access to relatable role models
- Practical barriers (transport, cost, caring responsibilities)
- Social pressures (fear of judgement, peer dynamics)
- Experiences of marginalisation or trauma

Understanding these factors helps you design events where young women feel safe, respected, and empowered.

Young women bring huge strengths to an event:

- Creativity and resilience
- Insight into their communities
- Determination and adaptability
- Curiosity and ambition

A strengths-based approach avoids negative stereotypes and builds trust.

> Participant reflection:
>
> **I liked that we could choose different activities, it made me feel more confident.**



Principles for achieving a successful event

- Use clear, friendly communication
- Offer choices wherever possible
- Prioritise psychological and physical safety
- Involve young women in planning
- Value participation in all its forms
- Build trust gradually
- Celebrate small achievements

SECTION 3

Laying the foundations

Planning checklist: getting started

Planning an event for young women from disadvantaged backgrounds requires care, collaboration, and clarity. This checklist is designed to help you move step by step from idea to impact.

Step 1: Set clear objectives

Think about the key aims of your event. What will participants gain in skills, connections, knowledge and inspiration? You should include measurable outcomes that you can evaluate afterwards. Your objectives could include:

- Building confidence and self-belief
- Inspiring young women through role models
- Developing skills (communication, teamwork, goal setting)
- Making accessibility central
- Strengthening community connection or peer support

Think about what success would look like.

Tip: Write a short statement you can share with partners e.g.

'We aim to create an inclusive space where young women feel inspired about their future and connected to supportive role models.'

Step 2: Know Your participants

It's important to identify who you want to reach for your event. Consider for example:

- Age range and life stage (e.g. school leavers, college students, Not in Education or Training (NEET) young women)
- Specific barriers they might face (financial, social, cultural, geographic)

How will you reach them?

- Partner organisations (schools, youth groups, charities)
- Peer networks and social media
- Trusted local connectors

Participant reflection:

I came because someone I trusted invited me. It made all the difference.

Step 3: Build your team

A successful event rests on effective early planning. Your planning team should ideally include people who can cover a number of roles. These include:

- Lead organiser / coordinator
- Safeguarding lead
- Logistics / venue coordinator
- Communications / outreach lead
- Volunteer or mentor coordinator
- Involve young women in planning, even in small ways, to ensure authenticity and relevance

Step 4: Plan the practicalities

You can't start too early to plan the practicalities.

Venue: Accessible, welcoming, affordable or free, easy to reach by public transport

Date and time: Avoid exam periods, holidays, religious holidays and cultural celebrations, peak work periods

Budget: List all expenses (venue hire, catering for all dietary needs, marketing and communications, materials for activities, transport, speakers' fees and expenses, printing)

Funding and support: Identify potential sponsors, donors, community foundations, or in-kind help (e.g. free space, refreshments)

Allow enough lead time: minimum 3-4 months for planning, 4-6 months for a large event, build in flexibility for rescheduling. Interpreters, to support BSL users or people with English as a second language, need to be booked early

Safeguarding and risk assessment: Check requirements for consent forms, supervision ratios, and emergency contacts

Tip: Always plan for contingencies
e.g. if a speaker cancels, or if weather affects travel.



Step 5: Programme planning

Draft an outline agenda to include a good balance of:

- Icebreakers and creative activities
- Skills or learning sessions
- Role model talks
- Reflection and celebration
- Build in breaks and informal time. Connection often happens over lunch or in small conversations.

Step 6: Communication and invitations

Create clear, friendly invitations explaining:

- What the event is
- Why it's for them
- That it's free and welcoming

Use multiple channels: social media, posters in community settings, WhatsApp groups, partner organisations, personal invitations.

Make sure you have consent and photo permissions forms where needed.

Step 7: Evaluation and follow-up

Decide in advance how you'll measure success:

- Participant feedback form (page 38)
- Facilitator reflections
- Stories or quotes that capture change

Plan a follow-up message or thank-you note within a week of the event

Consider how to keep participants connected afterwards e.g. mentoring, alumni network, next steps email.

SECTION 4

Designing the event

A good event combines structure with flexibility, offering young women space to learn, connect, and feel valued.

Choosing the event model

Possible formats include:

One-day summit: Inspiration, role models, workshops

Half-day workshop: Focus on skills (confidence, leadership)

Series of sessions: Deeper engagement, creative projects

Mentoring event: Pairing with adult mentors

Choose based on resources, aims, and participants' needs.

Consider accessibility and inclusion

- Choose easy-to-reach venues
- Provide free travel, food, and materials
- Use clear signage and warm reception
- Avoid overly formal or intimidating spaces
- Ensure step-free access
- Provide quiet breakout spaces

Programme flow

Think about the flow of your overall programme and try to alternate between:

- High energy sessions
- Reflection
- Hands-on activities
- Peer connection
- Guest speakers or role models

This keeps energy balanced and ensures all learning styles are supported.

Speakers and facilitators

Choose speakers and facilitators who are:

- Relatable to your audience (age, experience, background)
- Passionate and authentic, not overly polished
- Willing to share personal journeys including challenges
- From diverse pathways (not all from one sector)
- Comfortable working with interpreters (if relevant)
- Able to use visual aids to support their points

Be bold in your choice of speakers! If you want high profile speakers to inspire your participants, approach them. Explain the purpose of your event and the impact you anticipate it will have. You'll be surprised how successful you can be!

Consider featuring:

- Peer speakers close in age to participants
- A progression from local to national work
- Different types of activism and leadership
- Female speakers who are deaf (with an interpreter for a hearing audience)
- Personal stories alongside professional achievements

Brief them clearly and emphasise inclusive, non-judgemental communication.

Offering choice

Choice builds autonomy and safety, so consider:

- Optional breakout groups
- Varied activity types
- Alternative seating arrangements
- Quiet zones

SECTION 5

Programme ideas and structures

Designing an inspiring and inclusive programme

Below are adaptable programme ideas with participant reflections and practical tips for replication.

Sample programme structures

Full-day format (6-7 hours):

- Morning: Interactive workshops in small groups (2-3 hours)
- Lunch and informal networking (45mins - 1 hour)
- Afternoon: Speaker programme with Q&A (2-3 hours)
- Closing session and feedback (20-30 mins)

Note: Add approximately 20-30% extra time if BSL interpretation is being used

Example of a one-day future pathways event

Aim: Inspire confidence and broaden horizons through role models and skills workshops.

Time	Session	Purpose / Notes
09:30-10:00	Welcome & icebreaker	Create a safe, upbeat environment. Example *One word check-in* (each person shares one word about how they feel arriving).
10:00-10:45	Opening inspiration	Short talk from a relatable woman leader or alumna focus on her story, challenges, and lessons.
11:00-12:00	Skills workshop 1: Confidence in action	Interactive session using activities like *What I'm Proud Of* (see page 12) or mini role plays on speaking up.
12:00-13:00	Lunch & networking cafe	Informal chat time: facilitators and role models mingle at tables.
13:00-14:00	Skills workshop 2: My future map	Guided reflection activity: participants create a vision board or draw their future pathway.
14:15-15:15	Panel: Real voices, real journeys	3-4 women share diverse life paths (education, careers, community roles).
15:30-16:00	Reflection circle & celebration	Group sharing, certificates and closing message about next steps or mentoring.

Download this as a template

> Participant reflection:
>
> **I realised success can look different for everyone, it made me think about my own story.**

Half-day format (3-4 hours):

- Welcome and icebreaker (30-60 mins, allowing for interpretation)
- Main workshop or presentation (45-120 mins)
- Break with refreshments (20-30 mins)
- Interactive activity or discussion (30-60 mins)
- Wrap-up and next steps (15-20 mins)

Example of a half-day confidence & connection Workshop

Aim: Build self-belief and belonging in a shorter format.

Time	Session	Purpose / Notes
10:00-10:15	Welcome & ground rules	Co-create expectations of respect, confidentiality, and participation.
10:15-11:00	Icebreaker: Who inspires you?	Share an inspiring woman and what she represents.
11:00-11:45	Activity: Strengths in me	Each participant identifies three personal strengths and shares examples in small groups.
11:45-12:15	Break & informal chat	Encourage socialising and confidence in networking.
12:15-13:00	Activity: Goal setting ladder	Draw steps towards one small, achievable goal.
13:00-13:15	Closing reflection	Write one takeaway and one message of encouragement for another participant.

Download this as a template

Engaging workshop methods

Small group discussions:

- Keep groups to 6-8 people for genuine dialogue
- Ensure deaf participants can see all group members
- Use prompts or questions to guide conversation
- Provide visual tools (flip charts, post-its) to capture ideas
- Allow time for interpreted exchanges

> Participant reflection:
>
> **I never thought of myself as confident but I saw strengths I didn't notice before.**

Creative exercises that work well with visual communication:

- Timeline activities (past → present → future mapped visually)
- Voting/prioritisation on key issues (visual and democratic)
- Visual mapping (mind maps, body maps, journey maps)
- Colour-coded comments for different themes
- Story-sharing in pairs or small groups with written summaries

Interactive elements:

- Live polling or voting on issues raised by organisers and/or participants (visual results)
- Q&A sessions with speakers (using microphones and clear turn-taking)
- Structured introductions with visual aids
- Skill-sharing circles
- Collaborative problem-solving with visual recording



Activity templates

Activity A: What I'm proud of

Purpose:

Build confidence and self-recognition.

Materials:

Post-it notes or cards, pens, a wall or board.

Instructions:

1. Ask each participant to write something they're proud of big or small.
2. Invite them to stick their notes on a shared 'Wall of Pride'.
3. Encourage volunteers to share one aloud.

Debrief questions:

- How did it feel to share something positive about yourself?
- What did you notice about others' achievements?

Activity B: My future map

Purpose:

Encourage goal setting and envisioning future possibilities.

Materials:

Large sheets of paper, magazines, glue, markers.

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to create a visual map of what they'd like their life to include: career, wellbeing, learning, community.
2. Facilitators circulate, supporting discussion of possibilities and next steps.

Adaptation:

For shorter events, this can be a 'Future Postcard' instead – participants write a note to their future selves.

Activity C: Real voices panel

Purpose:

Inspire through authentic, diverse stories.

Tip: Include at least one younger or early-career speaker participants can easily relate to.

Guidance for organisers:

- Select speakers who reflect participants' backgrounds and aspirations
- Brief them to be honest about both struggles and successes
- Allow time for Q&A and informal chat
- Enable participants to submit questions beforehand

Tips for successful delivery

- To keep energy high alternate between active and reflective sessions
- Make some sessions hands-on: drawing, movement, group discussion
- Use inclusive language, avoid jargon, celebrate diversity
- Always build in moments of recognition and celebration

Facilitator tip: End each section by asking people for one word they're taking away with them to sum up their experience. It helps embed learning and closes on a positive note.

Optional add-on: creative reflection corner

Create a quiet space for participants to journal, doodle, or write messages to their future selves. This can be displayed afterwards (with consent) or returned to them later as a reminder of their growth.

> Participant reflection:
>
> **Hearing someone who came from my kind of school made me believe I could do it too.**



SECTION 6

Creating a positive environment

Atmosphere really matters so think about it carefully and well in advance.

A positive environment starts the moment young women arrive.

From the start:

- Welcome people warmly as they arrive
- Introduce interpreters and explain how they'll work
- Use friendly, inclusive language
- Make the purpose and programme clear visually and verbally
- Create a relaxed but purposeful environment

Ground rules to establish:

- Listen respectfully without interrupting
- One person speaks at a time (essential for interpretation)
- Share the space (balance participation)
- Challenge ideas, not people
- Maintain confidentiality about personal stories
- Right to pass (no pressure to share)
- Respect all voices and communication styles
- Let people know they're free to leave a session for whatever reason and return when they're able

Establishing ground rules creates shared ownership.

Pacing the day

Balance:

- Active participation with listening/ absorbing time
- Serious topics with uplifting moments
- Structured sessions with informal networking
- Group activities with individual reflection

Warning signs of poor pacing:

- Participants frequently checking phones
- Rushed wrap-ups
- Skipped or shortened breaks
- Lack of time for questions
- Facilitators running over time
- Interpreters looking stressed or rushed



Build in buffer time:

- Add 20-30% extra time when interpretation is involved
- Don't pack the schedule too tightly
- Allow for organic conversations to develop
- Have flexibility to adjust on the day
- Remember breaks are especially important for interpreters

Trauma-aware practice

- Never force participation
- Provide time-out areas
- Use sensitive language
- Avoid topics that may be triggering or provide a warning beforehand
- Brief staff on signs of distress and escalation pathways

Encouraging participation

- Use pair and small group work
- Provide creative methods (drawing, writing, objects)
- Offer multiple ways to contribute
- Use positive reinforcement

Inclusivity means valuing quiet participation as much as spoken contributions.

Food and catering

Good food creates a welcoming atmosphere and shows you value participants' time and wellbeing. It is important to be aware that different dietary needs, which may be religious or cultural, should be catered for so be sure to ask participants about dietary needs in advance.

Essential considerations:

- Provide substantial, quality food (not just biscuits)
- Cater for all dietary requirements without fuss
- Include vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, halal options
- Label all food clearly with ingredients
- Provide adequate quantities
- Include healthy options alongside treats

Timing:

- Serve breakfast items if starting before 10am
- Mid-morning break with tea/coffee and light snacks
- Proper lunch with varied options (buffet works well)
- Afternoon break with refreshments



SECTION 7

Networking opportunities

Why networking matters

Young women consistently rate networking as one of the most valuable aspects of events.

They appreciate:

- Meeting others who share their interests
- Hearing diverse perspectives and experiences
- Making connections for future collaboration
- Finding mentors and role models
- Feeling less isolated in their goals

Facilitating connections

Structured approaches:

- Speed networking (allow extra time for interpreted conversations)
- Small group introductions with prompts
- Table hosts who facilitate discussions
- Activity-based mixing (move for different sessions)

Informal opportunities:

- Extended lunch and break times (especially important for deaf participants)
- Comfortable seating areas for chatting
- Evening social events or drinks
- WhatsApp or social media groups for ongoing connection

Make it easier by:

- Providing clear name badges (include organisation/interest)
- Icebreaker activities early in the day
- Creating reasons for people to move and mix
- Introducing people with common interests
- Pre-sending or following up with contact lists (with permission)
- Ensuring interpreters are available during networking time



SECTION 8

Communication, promotion and outreach

Reaching and engaging young women from disadvantaged backgrounds

Effective communication and outreach is about trust, relatability, and accessibility. Many disadvantaged young women may not respond to formal invitations, may lack confidence to attend unfamiliar events, or may face practical barriers. This section helps organisers build inclusive, welcoming communication that ensures no one is left out.

Principles for effective promotion

Reach potential participants through:

- Partner organisations and networks (including deaf organisations)
- Social media (Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn) with accessible content
- Email lists and newsletters
- Educational institutions
- Word of mouth from previous participants
- Deaf community networks and groups
- Posters in relevant locations

Key information to include:

- Clear purpose and benefits of attending
- Date, time, and location with accessibility details
- Who the event is for
- What to expect (programme outline)
- How to register and deadline
- Statement that interpreters will be provided
- Any costs or what's covered (travel, food, interpreters)
- Contact details for questions or accessibility requests

Be clear, accessible and friendly

Avoid formal or institutional language. Messages should feel personal and reassuring.

Use warm, direct phrases like:

- You're invited
- This space is for you
- Free event, everyone welcome

Also make sure that you:

- Use clear, plain language
- Include visual content (photos, graphics, video)
- Consider creating promotional video content, including subtitles in BSL
- Provide information in multiple formats
- Ensure website and materials are accessible
- Respond promptly to all questions

Reduce barriers

State clearly:

- The event is free
- Transport support is available (if offered)
- Food is included
- No prior experience or preparation is needed
- Childcare provided (if offered)

Partner with trusted connectors

Engage people and organisations who already have strong relationships with your target group:

- Schools and teachers
- Youth workers
- Community groups
- Refugee or migrant support teams
- Social prescribing link workers
- Women's organisations
- Faith or cultural community leaders

Their personal encouragement carries far more weight than a flyer alone.



Outreach channels

Personal invitations

Where possible, ask trusted adults (teachers, mentors, youth workers) to personally invite young women who would benefit most.

Personal invitations help overcome self-doubt or anxiety about attending.

Social media & digital outreach

Keep it simple and friendly.

Best channels for younger audiences include:

- Instagram
- WhatsApp
- TikTok (short, positive video messages)

Tips:

- Use real photos of past activities (with consent).
- Keep messages short and visual.
- Highlight what participants enjoyed or gained

Printed Materials

Use posters or leaflets in:

- Schools
- Libraries
- Community centres
- Youth hubs
- GP surgeries or health centres

Focus on vibrant, youth-friendly design and simple language.

What to include in all communications

- Clear description of the event
- Who it's for (in a welcoming tone, not a limiting one)
- Date, time, venue, and map or transport info
- Accessibility features (e.g. free travel, step-free access, childcare if provided)
- What participants will gain (confidence, inspiration, connection)
- Reassurances: Come as you are, no experience needed
- Contact details for questions
- How to book

Example messaging:

A free, friendly day for young women to explore future opportunities, meet inspiring women, and build confidence in a supportive space.

Supporting sign-up and attendance

Registration process:

- Keep it simple (don't ask unnecessary questions)
- Ask about access requirements and preferred communication
- Confirm registration immediately in accessible format
- Send reminders closer to the date
- Provide joining instructions clearly with visual directions
- Make it easy to ask questions or raise concerns

Use easy sign-up options:

- Short online form
- Text or WhatsApp reply
- Paper sign-up via schools or youth groups

Avoid asking for too much information; keep barriers low.

Pre-event welcome message

Send a short reminder:

- We're looking forward to seeing you tomorrow! (make them feel like they're expected)
- What to bring (usually nothing)
- Reassurance about the atmosphere: Everyone is friendly – you'll be warmly welcomed

Address practical barriers

Where possible:

- Offer travel passes
- Provide clear directions
- Start slightly later in the morning
- Provide childcare (depending on the participants)
- Provide lunch or snacks
- Ensure staff know how to welcome nervous or late arrivals



Creating a welcoming first impression

Communication doesn't stop once they arrive. Make the entrance experience feel:

- Warm
- Supportive
- Calm
- Non-judgemental

Use friendly greeters and clear signage.

Participant reflection:

I was nervous coming in, but everyone was so welcoming that I relaxed straight away.



SECTION 9

On the day

Before participants arrive

- Set up registration
- Test all equipment
- Walk through the venue
- Brief all staff and volunteers
- Prepare name badges and materials
- Ensure safeguarding leads are visible and known

Welcome and opening

- Warm greeting
- Clear overview of the day
- Easy icebreaker
- Reassure participants that the space is for them
- Explain ground rules

Managing the event flow

- Stay flexible
- Adjust timings if energy drops
- Provide regular breaks
- Check in quietly with participants as needed
- Make transitions smooth and clearly signposted

Supporting participants

- Keep water and snacks available
- Ensure dietary needs are met
- Staff circulate gently
- Provide a quiet space
- Offer support discreetly if someone is anxious

Closing the event

- Short reflection activity
- Celebration of participation
- Signpost next steps (mentoring, follow-up events)
- Support participants getting home safely
- Thank everyone

After participants leave

- Quick team debrief
- Collect feedback
- Note learning for next time
- Follow up safeguarding if needed



SECTION 10

Evaluation and follow-up

Why evaluation and follow-up matter

Evaluation helps you understand the impact of your event and ensures that the voices of young women are heard and valued. Follow-up ensures the experience lasts beyond the event, supporting continued confidence, connection, and opportunity.

Evaluation and follow-up create a cycle of learning, improvement, and lasting support. Here are ideas for timing your follow-up activity.

Immediate follow-up (within 1 week)

- ☐ Send thank you message to all participants (in an accessible format)
- ☐ Share key takeaways or outcomes
- ☐ Provide any promised resources or links
- ☐ Process expense reimbursements quickly
- ☐ Request brief feedback while fresh
- ☐ Thank interpreters and ask for their feedback



Sustaining momentum

What works:

- ☐ Create WhatsApp or social media groups between participants for ongoing discussion (with permission)
- ☐ Plan follow-up events or regular meetups (with interpretation as needed)
- ☐ Share opportunities for involvement
- ☐ Feature participant achievements in communications
- ☐ Connect people who wanted to collaborate
- ☐ Maintain commitment to accessibility in all future events

What doesn't work:

- Relying on initial enthusiasm without organisational support
- Expecting participants to organise everything themselves
- Long gaps before next contact
- No clear next steps or opportunities
- Providing accessibility only for one-off events rather than sustained inclusion

Measuring success

Track:

- Number and diversity of participants
- Satisfaction ratings and qualitative feedback
- Connections made and maintained
- Follow-up actions taken by participants
- New initiatives or groups formed
- Continued engagement with your organisation
- Success of deaf inclusion (attendance, feedback, sustained participation)

Building long-term deaf inclusion

Sustainable approaches:

- Establish a deaf women's subcommittee or advisory group
- Host dedicated events specifically for deaf women
- Provide BSL interpretation at regular general events
- Develop ongoing partnerships with deafness charities
- Include deaf women in planning and leadership roles
- Seek dedicated funding for deaf inclusion initiatives
- Share learning with other organisations about deaf inclusion



How to evaluate your event

Evaluation doesn't have to be complicated. Aim for methods that are simple, accessible, and empowering, especially for young women who may be less confident in formal feedback processes.

What to explore

Consider gathering insights on three areas:

Experience

- Did participants feel welcomed, safe, and included?
- Which parts of the programme were most enjoyable or useful?

Impact

- Did the event increase confidence, motivation, or sense of belonging?
- Did they connect with role models or peers?
- Was anything unexpectedly powerful or challenging?

Practicalities

- Was the venue easy to reach?
- Were materials, timings, and activities appropriate?

Example reflection: *I felt like my voice mattered – that doesn't happen often.*



Tools for collecting feedback

Use methods that reduce pressure and feel natural for young people.

Quick feedback form

A short form containing:

- One thing I enjoyed
- One thing I learned
- One thing I would change
- How the event made me feel (confidence, motivation, belonging)
- Anything else I want to say

Use simple scales or emoji faces for accessibility.

Reflection cards

Hand out small cards asking:

One word I'm leaving with or

One thing I'm proud of today

Creative wall

Invite participants to stick notes on a 'What I'm taking away' wall.

This works well for those who struggle with writing longer responses.

Facilitator debrief

Hold a 20-minute meeting with facilitators and volunteers immediately after the event:

- What worked well?
- Any barriers we didn't anticipate?
- What did we hear or notice from participants?
- What will we change next time?

Making sense of the feedback

When reviewing your evaluation materials:

- Look for themes (confidence, aspirations, connection, inclusion)
- Pull out short, anonymised quotes for future reports
- Identify quick wins for improvement and bigger picture lessons
- Celebrate successes – even small shifts are significant



Creating a lasting legacy

Legacy doesn't require large resources. Small, thoughtful steps help young women stay connected and supported.

Immediate follow-up (within one week)

- ☐ Send a thank-you message celebrating participation
- ☐ Share key takeaways or photos (with consent)
- ☐ Provide links to any resources, slides, or follow-up opportunities
- ☐ Offer simple certificates they can use for CVs or personal portfolios

Extending opportunity

Share a short, practical list of local opportunities, such as:

- Youth groups or safe community spaces
- Mentoring programmes
- Apprenticeship or training opportunities
- Creative, sport, or wellbeing activities for young women

Building an ongoing community (optional but impactful)

If feasible:

- ☐ Create a moderated WhatsApp group or email list
- ☐ Host a small reunion or follow-up workshop
- ☐ Invite past participants to co-design the next event

Participant reflection:

Coming back a second time made me feel like I belonged.



Empowering participants to carry the legacy forward

Give each participant simple prompts for personal next steps, such as:

- One thing I want to build on
- One goal for the next month
- One person I can ask for help

This reinforces their ownership and achievements.

Legacy for organisations

Make legacy part of your organisational practice by:

- ☐ Documenting lessons learned
- ☐ Storing quotes and stories (with proper consent)
- ☐ Strengthening partnerships developed through the event
- ☐ Using evidence to secure future funding or sponsorship



SECTION 11

Key success factors

What do successful events have in common?'

Events that work well have:

- Clear purpose and well-communicated objectives
- Accessibility built in from the start, not added on
- Mix of inspiration and practical interaction
- Relatable speakers who share authentic stories
- Adequate time for networking and connection (including interpreted conversations)
- Attention to logistics, comfort, and sightlines
- Energising pacing with variety and buffer time
- Strong follow-up and sustained commitment to inclusion

Participants leave feeling:

- Inspired and motivated
- Connected to others across different backgrounds
- Valued and heard
- Equipped with new knowledge or skills
- Part of something larger
- Confident that future events will also be accessible
- Ready to take action

Deaf participants specifically appreciate:

- Being able to participate fully in all activities
- Not having to request or justify accessibility provision
- Meeting other deaf young women
- Being part of events where their communication needs are centred
- Organisations that demonstrate sustained commitment to inclusion

Remember: Including deaf women successfully requires more than booking an interpreter. It means designing events where visual communication is valued, sightlines are clear, timing is adequate, and deaf women are welcomed as full participants. The investment in accessibility benefits everyone and demonstrates genuine commitment to inclusion.



SECTION 12

Common pitfalls and solutions

PITFALL 1:

Overambitious programme

Risk: Packing too much in, leaving everyone rushed and exhausted. Especially problematic when interpreters are required as this adds time.

Solution: Prioritise depth over breadth. Do fewer things well. Build in 20-30% buffer time when interpreters are required.

PITFALL 2:

Poor logistics

Risk: Constantly moving furniture, unclear directions, late starts, poor sightlines.

Solution: Plan logistics meticulously. Visit venue in advance. Have clear signage and schedule. Ensure clear sightlines for deaf participants.

PITFALL 3:

One-way communication

Risk: All lecture and presentation, no interaction or dialogue. Particularly limiting for deaf and neurodiverse participants

Solution: Make at least 50% of time interactive. Use discussion, visual activities, and structured Q&A.

PITFALL 4:

Accessibility as afterthought

Risk: Choosing a venue with no step-free access, booking interpreters late, poor positioning, not briefing speakers, forgetting visual aids.

Solution: Build accessibility into planning from day one. Choose the venue wisely, brief everyone on working with interpreters and signposting to quiet spaces. Prioritise visual communication.

PITFALL 5:

No follow-up

Risk: Event ends and momentum dies immediately.

Solution: Plan follow-up before the event. Commit to accessibility in ongoing work, not just one-off events.

PITFALL 6:

Ignoring practical needs

Risk: Inadequate breaks (crucial for interpreters or people with additional needs), poor food, uncomfortable seating, poor lighting.

Solution: Remember participants and interpreters are people with physical needs. Make comfort a priority.

CASE STUDY:

NCWGB event celebrating under-represented voices

The National Council of Women GB has a strategic objective to engage with young women in schools, through the network of 18-30 year-old women. On 9 November 2024, we hosted an event for young women at the Friends House, Euston Road, London.

NCWGB are grateful for grants from the Lydie Rossini Fund via the International Council of Women, and the Grace Wedekind Fund which made this event possible.

The event topic was a result of discussions with NCWGB's Young Women's Steering Group, made up of members from two young participants' groups. Their aim was to consider the barriers and opportunities for engagement with excluded groups of young women.

The event focused on four areas, BAME, Deaf and Disabled, LGBTQ+ and those living in rural or poor urban areas. The event included a series of workshops to gather young participants' views. Participants also heard from a team of inspiring women, most from the under 30 years peer group, who shared their journeys to working towards community advocacy and change.

The aims of the event were to:

- Engage with communities of young women who are normally hard to reach, to understand their barriers
- Enable young women to identify and create new solutions to reduce the identified barriers
- Encourage young women to become active participants in campaigning, lobbying and policy change
- Provide a relaxed opportunity for younger women to meet with inspirational peers



A number of inspirational speakers highlighted issues they faced in their journeys to advocacy and activism.

Baroness Carmen Smith of Llanfaes, the youngest life peer in the House of Lords. Despite her rapid rise in politics and public life, a political career was not always in the cards. Growing up on a council estate in Llanfaes, a small village in North Wales, she didn't previously have an interest in politics.

Kate Willoughby actor and part-time suffragette, looked back at the Votes for Women campaign and explored why she believes that all our voices matter at the ballot box today.

Cici Manwa, one of the youngest councillors in England spoke of her journey into local politics and how she became a voice for her community.

Abby Hunt described her experiences as a delegate representing NCWGB to the UN Convention on the Status of Women in New York and how this influenced her commitment to making women's voices heard.

Helena Trenkić told delegates about her work to establish a society for young women's reproductive rights at university. This built in her own activism as a member of the NCWGB Council for Young Women.

Husna Ahmed, founder of Global One described her journey from being a wife and mother of six children to founding the leading multi-faith organisation to make women's voices heard worldwide.

Victoria Brown from Teesside University spoke about the LGBTQ+ movement and the struggles it faced in being recognised.

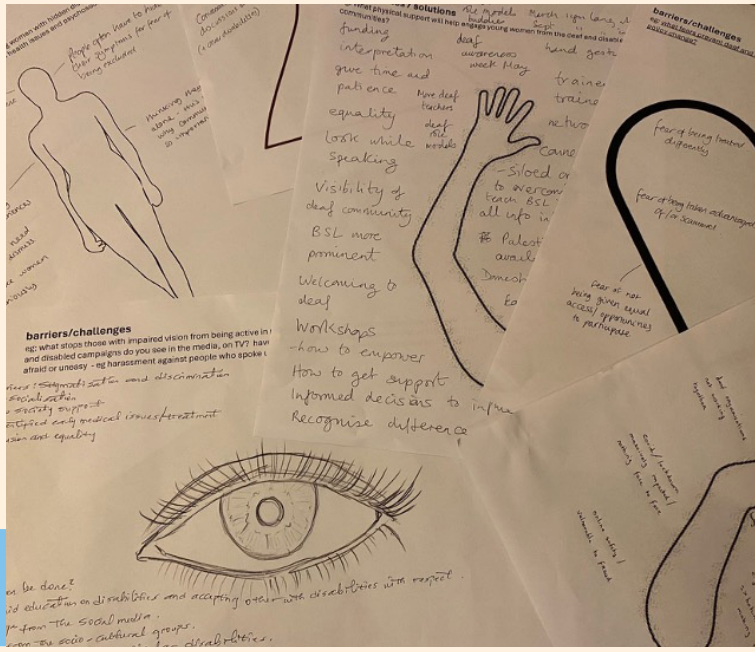
The group activities concentrated on young women's communities who face disadvantage and/or barriers to participating in campaigning/policy change.

- black and ethnic minorities
- deaf and disabled communities
- LGBTQ+
- living in rural and poor urban areas

A small team from each of the four communities above hosted a round table, where young women considered the barriers and identified solutions together. This took the form of friendly discussion and used interactive tools to record experiences of disadvantages and ways we can work to overcome them.

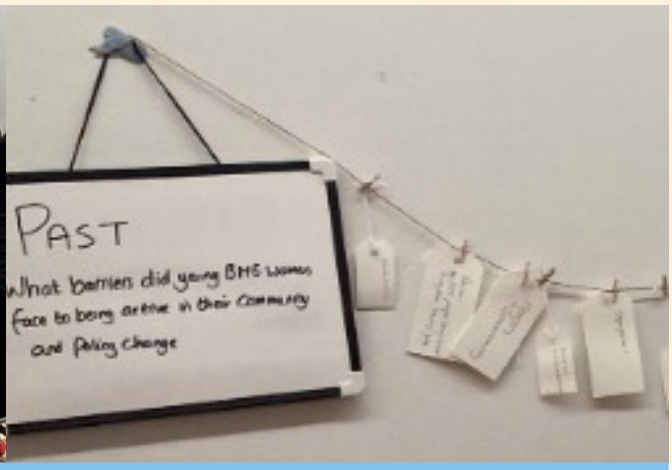
Throughout the day we carried out information gathering on the issues impacting groups of young women who were likely to be most disadvantaged.

In the small groups, we used a number of prompts to encourage sharing of ideas and challenges.

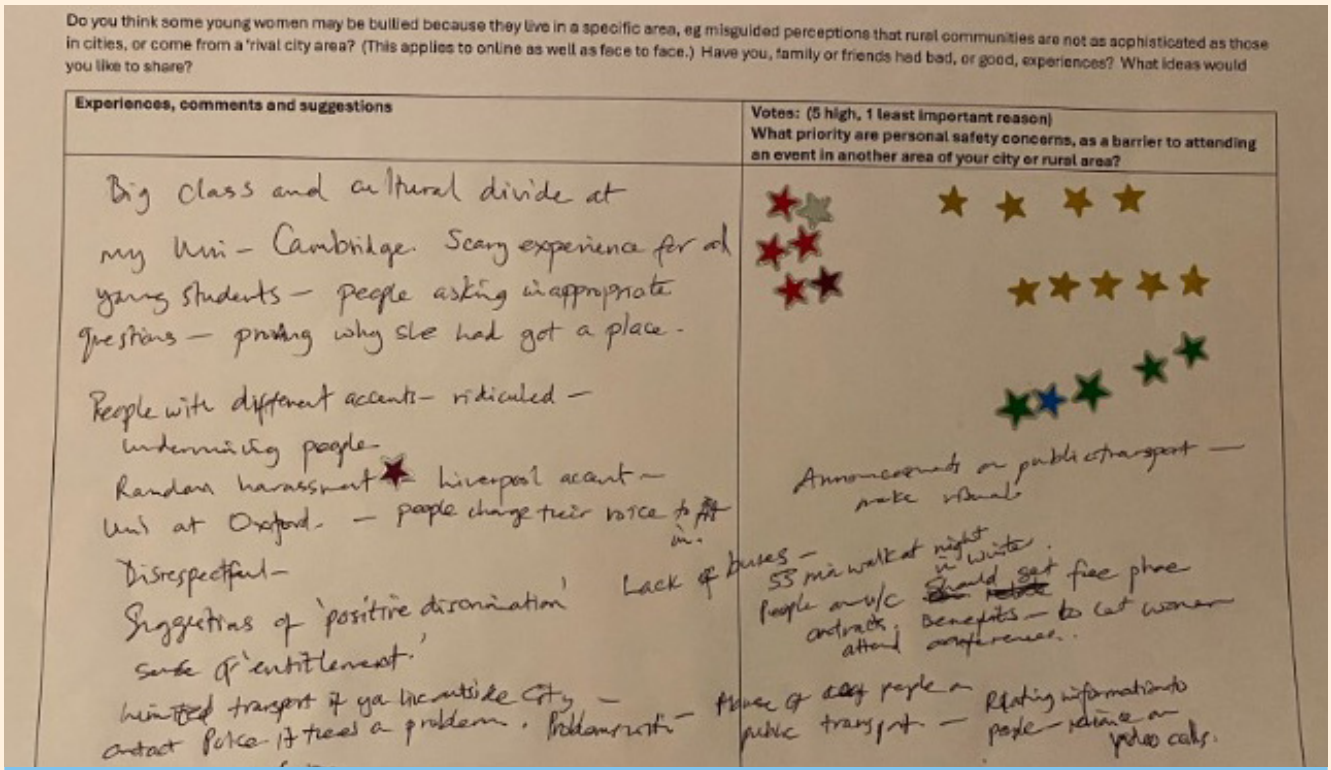


We created a body map for issues impacting deaf and disabled communities.



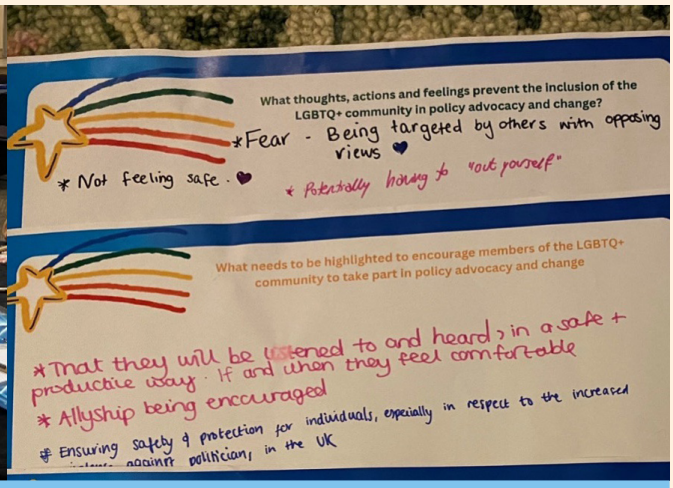


We set up a time line to discuss the issues impacting the BME communities, looking at past influences, current and worst and best futures.



We asked them to comment and vote on the barriers to becoming involved in policy advocacy for those young women living in rural or poor urban areas.





Victoria Brown, Chair of Teesside University LGBTQ+ group talked to us about the development of the colours and flags representing the LGBTQ+ community. So, we asked our attendees to create rainbow coloured comments, concerns and ideas on the barriers impacting young women belonging to this community.







We also had lots of time for networking, rebuilding connections, and making new ones!

The feedback showed we had achieved the impact we wanted:

Inspirational speakers

Enjoyed talking to people from different backgrounds

Met inspiring women

Interesting range of speakers

Enjoy

Loved the different perspectives

Girl/woman power

Enjoyable

Enjoyed today's event

Different life experiences

Liked diverse backgrounds and thoughts

Inspired

Empowering

Templates and checklists

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Event planning checklist

12 weeks before

- Define objectives
- Identify target age group
- Secure accessible venue
- Confirm date and time
- Draft budget
- Recruit facilitators and speakers
- Book all interpreters
- Develop safeguarding plan
- Begin outreach strategy

4-6 weeks before

- Finalise programme outline
- Produce accessible materials
- Arrange catering, including for dietary needs
- Confirm AV needs
- Brief interpreters on topics and vocabulary
- Send information packs
- Check dietary and access requirements

1-2 weeks before

- Confirm attendance list
- Print badges, worksheets, signage
- Prepare facilitator briefings
- Confirm interpreter positioning and needs
- Review safeguarding protocols
- Test presentations and videos
- Send final joining instructions with accessibility details
- Confirm numbers with caterers
- Print materials and prepare packs
- Create day-of schedule for team

Day before

- Pack equipment including emergency supplies, markers, scissors, Sellotape, first aid etc
- Check venue access
- Confirm volunteer rota
- Test interpreter positioning and lighting
- Communicate final schedule
- Send participant ‘See you tomorrow’ message

On the day

- Arrive early
- Set up room/s
- Registration desk staffed
- Run welcome briefing
- Welcome and introduce interpreters
- Point out key areas, including toilets and quiet area
- Monitor wellbeing
- Manage timings carefully
- Capture photos and key moments
- Thank everyone (including interpreters)
- Distribute feedback forms (accessible format)
- Share next steps

After the event

- Team debrief
- Analyse feedback
- Capture key outcomes
- Plan legacy actions
- Send thank-you messages

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Example text for an email invitation

Subject: Invitation to a free empowerment event for young women

Message:

Hello

We are pleased to invite young women aged [insert range] to a free, uplifting event designed to build confidence, explore future pathways, and connect with inspiring role models.

The event includes:

- Interactive workshops
- Creative activities
- Free lunch and refreshments (including for dietary needs)
- A supportive, welcoming environment

Details: [More information about your event]

Date: [Day, date and month]

Time: [Start and end time]

Venue: [The location where the event will take place]

Travel support and all materials are provided at no cost.

We hope you can join us.

[Add information about how they can accept the invitation or who to contact for more details]

Kind regards

[Your name and organisation]

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Example event budget

Sample budget for 30 participants (Full day event including deaf participants)

Venue and catering	
Venue hire (accessible, good lighting)	£720-1,200
Lunch and refreshments	£500-600
Accessibility	
BSL interpreters (2 interpreters, full day)	£1,000-1,200
Speakers and content	
Speaker fees/travel	£400-600
Materials and printing	£250
Optional costs	
Participant travel expenses	£50 × 30 = £1,500
Photography/documentation	£350
Marketing materials	£200-400
Staff time	
Planning and coordination	in-kind or £1,200-2,500
Day-of facilitation	in-kind or included above
TOTAL without participant travel	**£4,620-7,100**
TOTAL with participant travel	**£6,120-8,600**

Note: BSL interpretation adds approximately £1,000-1,200 to event costs but significantly increases accessibility and reach.

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Evaluation form template

Thank you so much for attending [name of event] today.

We'd love to know how you've found the day so that we can keep improving.

How was today for you?

Circle one: Loved it Good Okay Not great

What did you enjoy the most?

What could be improved?

Did you feel included and supported?

Circle one: Yes Mostly Not sure No

One thing you're taking away from today:

Thank you

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Facilitator briefing template

Event purpose:

[Goal of your event]

Key messages (examples)**:**

- Supportive
- Inclusive
- Youth-centred
- Trauma-aware

Your role today (examples)**:**

- Encourage participation
- Use positive, non-judgemental language
- Watch for wellbeing and alert safeguarding lead if needed

Safeguarding lead

Name: [Name]

Contact: [Phone number and email address]

Let us know...

We'd love to hear from you about how you use this toolkit. What do you find useful, what could we add to improve it and what sorts of events have you run. With your feedback, we can continue to improve the toolkit, so do let us know!



Call: 01325 367375

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