



Spotlight on

Together for Women & Girls

Norfolk Community Foundation's Together for Women & Girls programme aims to challenge inequality, exploitation and abuse in the home, the workplace and in our communities. While we recognise that many women are able to live safe and fulfilling lives in our county, a significant number are struggling with a spectrum of personal and economic challenges that limit their life chances.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about profound change to all our lives, and it has quickly become clear that women will be acutely impacted by the wider social and economic effects of the crisis.

We are entering a significant economic downturn which will disproportionately impact on women, who are more likely to be in insecure or low paid work. Women are overrepresented in hospitality, leisure, tourism and the arts - industries that are hardest hit as a result of the pandemic. Research shows that women are more likely to have lost their jobs, and more likely to have had their hours cut, and been furloughed.

Women have faced particular pressure while juggling child care, home-schooling and work. Office for National Statistics studies found that one in three women with school-aged children said their mental health had suffered as a result of home-schooling.

Being confined to our homes has presented additional challenges as families come under strain, with a startling rise in domestic violence and abuse. Conditions under lockdown have increased the threat of controlling and coercive behaviours, with measures to contain the coronavirus presenting very real barriers to reaching out for help.

Covid-19 has further highlighted existing inequalities for women, leaving many bearing a burden of work and family pressures, financial insecurity and poor mental health.

For the most vulnerable and at risk, the help and care they need will come from our frontline charities, who can help women and girls navigate their changing circumstances as life beyond lockdown unfolds.

Together, Norfolk shines brighter



Changing lives through our women's mentoring programme

Our Lottery-funded pilot in partnership with The Prince's Trust aims to provide pathways for women to share their professional and lived experience to help raise the aspirations of young women in Norfolk.

13 volunteer mentors are now actively supporting 22 young women, with more than 20 still awaiting help to face challenging transitions into education, training or employment.

Zara, 22, from Norfolk graduated with a BSc (Hons) in Sports Health and Exercise, but with no work experience in health, or care qualifications, found it impossible to get a job in the health and care sector. To help, she joined The Prince's Trust Get into Health and Social Care programme which finished just as initial Covid-19 lockdown measures began.

Having enjoyed the programme, Zara worked closely online with her Together for Women mentor, Rebecca, to find work. Initially she was disheartened as there was no opportunity for face-to-face interviews, and she found online interviews difficult. However, her mentor encouraged her to keep applying and she has now secured a job as a Rehabilitation Support Worker with East Coast Community Healthcare and is looking forward to her new career.



61% of young women surveyed by The Prince's Trust fear they will never be financially stable



YMCA Norfolk works with young people across the county, and has identified a clear need to provide opportunities for gender groups to talk openly about their attitudes to issues such as safe sex and relationships. *'I'm the girl I want to be'* is an established programme for girls aged 11-18 that helps individuals explore matters such as puberty, aspirations and self-esteem, to form friendships, share opinions and discuss issues that affect and interest them.

49% of girls have missed an entire day of school because of their period

DIAL Great Yarmouth is a partner in the Tricky Period project in the borough, helping to provide sanitary products to women and girls affected by period poverty. To further develop this work, they have appointed a Project Worker for women's health to signpost vulnerable women to relevant services, social groups, training opportunities and health information to grow their confidence and wellbeing. Great Yarmouth has some worrying indicators for women's wellbeing, with female life expectancy the lowest in the county.

The Magdalene Group supports vulnerable women affected by sexual exploitation. During the pandemic, the charity took action to help women who due to their chaotic lifestyles were 'sofa surfing' and at acute risk of rough sleeping, yet outside many housing support services. Secure housing is a vital step for women who are coerced and exploited, and the charity advocates for their protection and choice.

£176m estimated cost of domestic violence to mental health services

The Feed supports disadvantaged people facing barriers to employment. Recognising that more men graduate from their training than women, they devised a female-only programme to ensure women feel safe and supported during training. Women taking part have complex needs, and have often experienced physical or sexual violence and abuse from men in their lives. Courses aim to build personal and employability skills to help vulnerable women move forward positively.



Visit our website to find out more about our work, or talk to our team on 01603 623958 / shinebrighter@norfolkfoundation.com

www.norfolkfoundation.com

Registered Charity Number 1110817
Company Registration Number 05234236