

One Million Women and Girls

Maximising the potential of women and girls in the North East

In 2022, the economic exclusion of women caused an estimated annual loss of economic output (GVA) of **£1 billion** in Tyne and Wear and Northumberland (3.15% of total GVA). The loss to County Durham and Teesside was **£1.7billion** (7.59% of total GVA).

Centre for Local Economic Strategies & Women's Budget Groupⁱ

When the new North East Mayoral Combined Authority (NEMCA)ⁱⁱ comes into being in 2024, it will be responsible for the aspirations and life chances of over one millionⁱⁱⁱ women and girls living in County Durham, Sunderland, South Tyneside, Gateshead, North Tyneside, Northumberland and Newcastle. NEMCA will have responsibility for key areas of policy including: economic development; adult education and skills; transport; housing and regeneration.

This major change in decision making in our region brings a unique opportunity to do things differently. It can be tempting for policy makers to think that women and men use public services in the same way, but this is often not the case. Considering the specific needs of women and girls from the beginning results in better policy making, that works for everyone.

Why think about women and girls and the economy?

Women carry out more unpaid work (including caring^{iv} for children and older people), which helps society but means they are less able to take on paid work.^v We know fewer women are working in the North East than anywhere else in England.^{vi} Nationally, women are more likely than men to be identified as **economically inactive**^{vii}; in the North East in 2021 25.3% of women were economically inactive (compared to 20.5% of men)^{viii}. Some women face additional barriers, for example Bangladeshi women are 2.5 times less likely to be economically active than white British women^{ix}. Few small and medium-sized businesses are led by women^x and women entrepreneurs find it harder to access investment^{xi}. Women are more likely to be paid the National Minimum Wage^{xii} and in 2019 the gender pay gap was 17.3%.^{xiii} In the North of Tyne area, women are paid on average £82.50 a week less than men.^{xiv} They are more likely to work in low-paid sectors, have insecure employment and are the majority of low-paid, part-time, temporary, zero-hours and self-employed workers:^{xv} Together these factors mean women are more likely to live in poverty, with fewer assets and lower incomes over their lifetimes.^{xvi}

Regional economic policy that considers women might seek to understand the barriers facing them (e.g. lack of affordable childcare, access to social care) and develop local interventions.

Any investment in care in the UK would produce 2.7 times as many jobs as an equivalent investment in construction: 6.3 times as many jobs for women and 10% more for men.

Women's Budget Group^{xvii}

Why think about women and girls in adult education and skills?

The sectors where women are most likely to work are some of the lowest paid, including health and social care, retail and education.^{xviii} In its current Strategic Economic Plan, the North East LEP describes four areas of strategic importance: digital, advanced manufacturing, health and life sciences, and energy, on which 'we can build a stronger North East economy'.^{xix} With the exception of health, women are far less likely to be employed in these areas^{xx}. It also describes four service sectors 'that support the wider economy and offer significant opportunity for more and better jobs in the North East': construction; education; financial, professional and business services; transport and logistics. Again, with the exception of education, women are far less likely

to work in these sectors.^{xxi} This is a national trend: ‘Government’s focus on shovel-ready projects, hard hats and hi-vis jackets suggest a focus on jobs that historically have been more likely to be done by men’.^{xxii} However, the LEP recognises ‘it will be important to ensure that women are able to reskill given that evidence suggests women’s roles are at greater risk of automation than men’s over the next 10 years’.^{xxiii} Such re-skilling will not be achieved without deliberate, sustained action.

Regional education and skills policy that considers women might invest in the sectors such as social care, where women work, whilst taking concrete steps to remove barriers to women and girls choosing careers in sectors such as digital, energy, transport and logistics.

The IMF projects 11% of jobs currently held by women are at risk of elimination as a result of digital technologies – a higher percentage than for jobs held by men.

World Economic Forum^{xxiv}

Why think about women and girls and transport?

Transport doesn’t immediately stand out as a policy area where gender should be considered, however, women travel more by bus, and less by rail than men.^{xxv} Overall, women travel shorter distances,^{xxvi} and are less likely to have a driving licence, take trips by car and cycle;^{xxvii} women are more likely to journey on foot. This is, in part, because women are more likely to have caring responsibilities, and may make multiple short journeys^{xxviii} during a day (e.g. to take children to school, visit an elderly parent, shop for food) and travel with dependents.^{xxix} Public transport systems are usually built on a ‘hub and spoke’ model, carrying people in and out of town centres, and are more suited to longer commuting journeys instead of multiple short journeys^{xxx} And women and girls often feel unsafe when using or waiting for public transport which can limit their ability to travel for work and education.^{xxxi}

Regional transport policy that considers women and girls might prioritise investment in bus services, safety measures^{xxxii} and low fares for multiple, short journeys.

Why think about women and girls and housing?

Women are doubly impacted by the housing crisis as a result of their disadvantaged economic position and their disproportionate responsibility for care work. As women earn less and are able to save less than men, they are less likely to be able to afford housing. In England, women need over 12 times their annual salaries to be able to buy a home in England, while men need just over eight times.^{xxxiii} The situation for disabled women, single parents, women with no recourse to public funds and from minoritised communities is even worse.^{xxxiv} Whilst the majority of people recorded sleeping rough are men, women make up the majority of statutory homeless people.^{xxxv} Many of these are fleeing abuse^{xxxvi} and a lack of affordable accommodation can prevent women and children leaving an abusive situation.^{xxxvii} Shelter reports that in 2021/22, domestic abuse was the second most common trigger of homelessness in the North East, accounting for 15% of cases.

In the North East, 55% of families in temporary accommodation (TA) are headed by a lone mother. Lone mothers are overrepresented in TA – they make up 55% of families in TA but only a fifth (20%) of families in the national population.

Statutory Homelessness Statistics July-September 2022 and ONS Population Data^{xxxviii}

Regional housing policy that considers women and girls might prioritise safety and affordable housing development, with access to local services and good public transport links^{xxxix}.

Seizing the opportunity to do things differently

*'I raise up my voice – not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard.
... we cannot all succeed when half of us are held back.' Malala Yousafzai*

Across the UK and around the world^{xi} local authorities, devolved administrations and national governments are recognising that when women and girls are equal, everyone benefits, and are taking steps to achieve this. Learning from what works in other places^{xli} we propose all those involved in the development of the new Combined Authority seize this opportunity and put in place the structures and representation^{xlii} that can deliver real change for one million women and girls:

Leadership^{xliii} to create a high-status gender equality body within NEMCA, led by a senior officer with sufficient resource to:

- operate effectively across all areas of NEMCA activities
- to consult via multiple methods of inclusive and accessible engagement with women and girls at all stages of policy development^{xliiv}
- set benchmarks, monitor progress and take action to address under-performance

Comprehensive toolkit and methodology^{xliv} to enable true change, including:

- audit, analysis, gender-responsive budgeting, and equality training for all staff, to ensure meaningful integration of an equalities perspective into all systems, structures, and policies

Building intersectional gender competence

- systematically and comprehensively listen to and understand the impact of race, faith, age, disability, sexuality, and gender identity have on women and girl's space for action and capacity to thrive and to ultimately act on this knowledge

Collect and share data disaggregated by gender

- in all areas of NEMCA's activities and using that data to develop policies and programmes that work for women and girls

Accountability

- resource an external, independent body of women and girls from all walks of life, and to include regular reporting to them, and the wider community on the progress made

Representation^{xlvi}

- assess, publicise and address NEMCA's own gender pay and representation gaps^{xlvii} to increase women and girls' active participation in the democratic process.

Investing in this comprehensive framework for gender equality, will give NEMCA the tools and expertise to ensure all areas of its work respond to the needs of the whole community, resulting in better policy making, a more prosperous region and a just transition to a zero carbon future.

*We advocate taking an intersectional approach to maximising the potential of **all** women and girls which means listening to the lived experience of any marginalised group, including: disabled women; lesbians, bi-sexual and trans women; migrant women; older and younger women; pregnant women; racially minoritised women; working class women, and developing policy responses that meet their needs. This campaign is trans-inclusive.*

For further information go to: [LinkedIn](#) or [Facebook](#)

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- ⁱ WBG & CLES [£88.7bn per year: the cost of barriers to paid work for women – Women’s Budget Group \(wbg.org.uk\)](#)
- ⁱⁱ [Devolution Deal - North East Combined Authority \(northeastca.gov.uk\)](#)
- ⁱⁱⁱ Estimated population of the area covered by NECA is 1,970,000; women and girls are 51% of the population.
- ^{iv} [Caring in a complex world unpaid carers.pdf \(kingsfund.org.uk\)](#)
- ^v ONS (2016). Women shoulder the responsibility of unpaid work. <https://bit.ly/2KBdnG9>
- ^{vi} [Labour market statistics: UK regions and countries \(parliament.uk\)](#)
- ^{vii} <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06838/SN06838.pdf>
- ^{viii} [LFS: Economic inactivity rate: North East: Aged 16-64: Female: %: SA - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)
- ^{ix} ONS (2019). Ethnic pay gaps in Great Britain: 2018. <https://bit.ly/32ZIRhv>
- ^x <https://bit.ly/42elygl>
- ^{xi} [EIB survey: Evidence for why it makes sense to support female entrepreneurs in Europe](#)
- ^{xii} <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06838/SN06838.pdf>
- ^{xiii} WBG (2020). Women, employment and earnings. <https://bit.ly/2R4d4pj>
- ^{xiv} When comparing full-time equivalent earnings - Looking at the issue of sex in the labour market in NTCA, May 2023, NTCA Data and Insights
- ^{xv} Ibid.
- ^{xvi} WBG (2020) Spirals of Inequality: How unpaid care is at the heart of gender inequalities. <https://bit.ly/32YITHz>
- ^{xvii} Dr Jerome DeHenau and Professor Susan Himmelweit [Care-led-recovery-final.pdf \(wbg.org.uk\)](#)
- ^{xviii} <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06838/SN06838.pdf>
- ^{xix} [The Plan - North East Local Enterprise Partnership \(northeastlep.co.uk\)](#)
- ^{xx} <https://technation.io/diversity-and-inclusion-in-uk-tech/#inclusiveness-in-tech> <https://www.pwc.co.uk/who-we-are/women-in-technology/time-to-close-the-gender-gap.html>
- ^{xxi} [SN06838.pdf \(parliament.uk\); Green-Caring-Eco-Key-Messages-FINAL.pdf \(wbg.org.uk\)](#)
- ^{xxii} Mary-Ann Stephenson, Director of Women’s Budget Group (WEC 2020)
- ^{xxiii} [The Plan - North East Local Enterprise Partnership \(northeastlep.co.uk\)](#)
- ^{xxiv} [Why we need to reskill women for future of work | World Economic Forum \(weforum.org\)](#)
- ^{xxv} Department for Transport (2020). Statistical data set: mode of travel. <https://bit.ly/307xJNV> NTS0702
- ^{xxvi} Department for Infrastructure (2019). Report 2015-2017. <https://bit.ly/3iWD9Tj> p.21
- ^{xxvii} Department for Transport (2019). <https://bit.ly/2HrFM1v>; Transport Scotland <https://bit.ly/2RTGdUt> Fig. 19; Sustans (2018). <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/2930/2930.pdf>
- ^{xxviii} [Exploring gender and active travel - Sustrans.org.uk](#)
- ^{xxix} Gill, R. (2019). Public transport in a gender-equal economy. <https://bit.ly/33Zv75M>
- ^{xxx} Ibid
- ^{xxxi} [How can we make public transport safe for women and girls? | CIHT](#)
- ^{xxxii} [Convention](#) on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence
- ^{xxxiii} Reis, S. (2019). A home of her own: housing and women. UK Women’s Budget Group <https://bit.ly/3n0jc0q>
- ^{xxxiv} Ibid
- ^{xxxv} Ibid
- ^{xxxvi} [Women-and-girls-who-are-homeless 2020-Agenda-Briefing.pdf \(agendaalliance.org\);](#)
- ^{xxxvii} [The-Domestic-Abuse-Report-2020-The-Hidden-Housing-Crisis.pdf \(womensaid.org.uk\)](#)
- ^{xxxviii} [Statutory Homelessness Statistics, July to September 2022](#) and [ONS population data](#).
- ^{xxxix} [Rethinking-Housing-Supply-and-Design-FINAL.pdf \(wbg.org.uk\)](#)
- ^{xl} <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-human-rights-work/monitoring-and-promoting-un-treaties/convention-elimination-discrimination>
- ^{xli} [DAWR \(engender.org.uk\);](#)
- ^{xlii} [power-to-the-people-summary-september-2017.pdf \(ippr.org\)](#)
- ^{xliiii} [women-in-the-north-april21.pdf \(ippr.org\)](#)
- ^{xliiv} Transforming Services [TSWF Final Report \(agendaalliance.org\)](#)
- ^{xlv} UN Sustainable Development Goals 5c1 [Goal 5 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs \(un.org\)](#)
- ^{xlvi} [WLC CSW Events Report.pdf \(d1n2xttr94otou.cloudfront.net\)](#)
- ^{xlvii} UN Sustainable Development Goals 5.5 Ibid