

Tower Hamlet's

WOMEN'S NETWORK



Tower Hamlets Women's Network Consultation Report June 4th 2026

1. Introduction

To ensure the Tower Hamlets Women's Network is shaped directly by the lived experiences, priorities and aspirations of local women, we carried out an open, participatory consultation during our community event. Women were invited to share their views on what the Network should focus on and what support they most need. This report summarises the consultation method, the themes identified, the voting results, and the programme ideas suggested by participants.

Attendees:

Total Attendance

- 62 attendees in total
- 40 residents
- 22 organisational representatives

1. Locality (Postcodes)

Residents came from across Tower Hamlets, with strong representation from **E1, E2, E3, E14, and E1W**. This shows strong reach across **Whitechapel, Shadwell, Stepney, Wapping, Poplar, Bow, Limehouse, and Isle of Dogs**

2. Age Groups Represented

The event successfully reached women across **five generations**, including:

- 18-30 years/ 6 attendees
- 31- 50 years/ 23 attendees
- 50- 80 years/ 29 attendees
- 80+ years/ 4 attendees

This demonstrates that the consultation captured a **wide age spectrum**, ensuring intergenerational representation.

3. Ethnic Backgrounds Represented

The resident group was **highly diverse**, reflecting Tower Hamlets' demographic profile. Ethnicities included:

- **Bengali** (majority group represented)
- **African**
- **Caribbean**

- **Irish**
- **White British**
- **Indian**
- **Other Asian**

4. First-Time Engagement

27 of the 40 residents were **first-time attendees** who had not previously engaged with the Tower Hamlets Women's Network.

Organisations Represented

The event included **22 organisational representatives**, covering:

Local charities & community organisations

- SocietyLinks (host organisation)
- Sister Circle
- Beyond the Bias
- Connect to Work
- THCVS
- THVCS
- Tower Hamlets Carers Centre
- Keolis- DLR
- Stepney Community Trust
- VAWG- Domestic Violence team at LBTH
- E1 Community Gardeners
- NHS- Tower Network
- Eastend Homes
- Ensign Youth Club

- Harry Gosling Primary School
- Blue Gate Fields School
- Linkage Plus
- Look Ahead

2. Consultation Method

We used a **Talking Wall** approach to create a safe, inclusive and accessible space for women to express their priorities. As participants arrived, they were invited to write down what they felt should be the key focus areas for the Women’s Network. This method ensured that every woman—regardless of confidence, language level or literacy—could contribute equally.

Women shared a wide range of ideas, including *“education on health”, “how to navigate through NHS systems, our rights as users”, “employment opportunities and safety”, and “financial independence and literacy education and agency”*. These contributions reflected the diverse challenges women face in Tower Hamlets.

Once all ideas were collected, we **grouped them into themed categories**. Participants were then given **three voting stickers** to select the issues they felt were most important. This democratic, visual method allowed women to clearly express their priorities and ensured the final themes reflected the collective voice of the group.



3. Themed Priorities Identified

The Talking Wall generated a broad set of themes, which were grouped into the following categories:

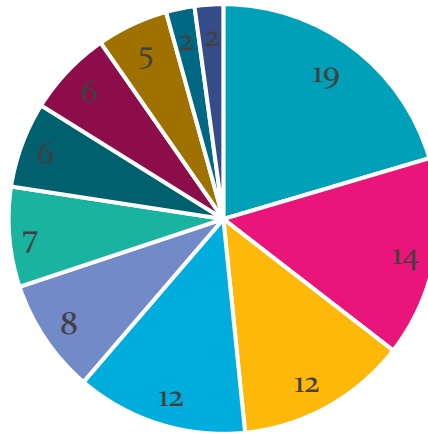
- Health education, including gynaecology and menopause
- Safety and violence prevention
- Access to therapeutic support, childcare and employment
- Cost of living pressures
- Postnatal mental health support
- Housing support
- Environmental impacts on women and children
- Navigating the NHS and understanding user rights
- Financial independence and literacy
- Employment opportunities and workplace safety

These themes highlight the intersectional nature of women's experiences and the need for holistic, accessible support.

4. Voting Results

After grouping the themes, participants used their three stickers to vote for the issues they felt were most urgent. The results were:

Priority Areas



- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| ■ Employment & Training | ■ Mental Health Awareness | ■ Women's Safety |
| ■ Housing | ■ Navigating NHS | ■ Financial Independence |
| ■ Cost of Living | ■ Female Health | ■ More Activities |
| ■ Volunteering | ■ Environmental Impacts | |

5. Key Findings

The consultation revealed several clear priorities:

Top Priorities

1. **Employment and training** Women want accessible pathways into work, skills development, and support to secure stable employment.

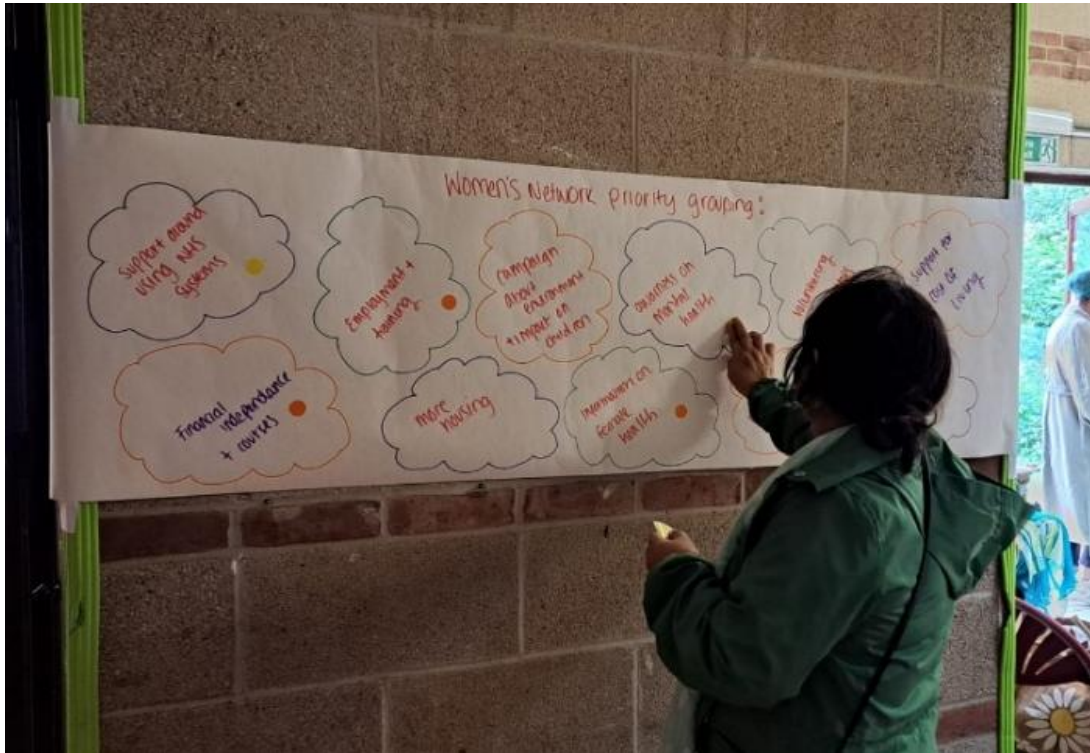
Response: Work in partnership with Connect to work, Ingeus and other employment agencies to understand how to tackle the barriers that women face when looking for work as well as giving access to support services and pathways into employment. We will be hosting an employment event in March.

2. **Mental health awareness and support** Many women highlighted the need for culturally sensitive, accessible mental health information and services.

Response: workshops and event planned for October for a Women's health event. Will liaise with Talking Therapies and attend the Women's Health event in Maryam centre in July to make connections. Planning menopause podcast session in September at Queen Mary University.

3. **Women's safety and housing stability** Safety in public spaces, at home, and for women wearing hijab was raised repeatedly. Housing insecurity also emerged as a major concern.

Response: Invite SNT to attend future meetings and events- share their advice. Share information about support available and promote strategies and campaigns.



Other Significant Needs

- Support navigating the NHS
- Cost of living support
- Female health information (including gynaecology, menopause, postnatal mental health)
- More community activities
- Financial independence and literacy
- Volunteering opportunities
- Environmental concerns affecting women and children

Overall, the findings show a strong demand for **economic empowerment, safety, mental health support, and accessible services**, alongside opportunities for connection, learning and community building.

6. Programme Ideas Suggested by Women

Participants also shared the types of activities and programmes they would like the Women's Network to offer. These included:

- Tea and coffee mornings
- Health and wellbeing education
- Swimming and exercise classes
- Lunch clubs for elderly women
- Knitting and sewing classes
- Healthy cooking sessions
- Parent engagement activities
- Online services
- Volunteering opportunities
- Community safety initiatives
- Support for *“walking alone safely for women”*



These suggestions demonstrate a desire for both **practical support** (health, safety, skills) and **community-building activities** that reduce isolation and strengthen peer networks.

One off activity sessions and workshops will be integrated into the forward plan to address these findings including creative workshops and drop-in sessions held at the Nari Centre and SocietyLinks Centre.

7. Conclusion

The consultation has provided a clear, community-driven foundation for the development of the Tower Hamlets Women's Network. Women identified employment, mental health, safety and housing as their most urgent needs, while also expressing interest in activities that build confidence, wellbeing and social connection.

These insights will directly inform the Network's priorities, programme design and partnership development, ensuring that the support offered is relevant, responsive and rooted in women's lived experiences.

8. Next Steps

In direct response to the priorities identified through the consultation, the Women's Network is planning:

- a dedicated event focused on **career pathways for women and girls**, bringing together **women-led representatives from a range of industries** to inspire, inform and support women into meaningful employment through mentoring, practical advice, access to networking and providing information.
- We will also be hosting **information stalls at local employment days with Ingeus**, and strengthening partnerships with **Connect to Work** and **WorkPath programmes funded by LBTH** to create clearer, more accessible routes into training and jobs.
- Alongside this, we are developing a **menopause podcast session** which initially will be only one session however depending on the response we will look into creating a series addressing different health issues and a **women's health event**, both designed to address the strong demand for better health education, female-specific support and accessible wellbeing information. These activities directly reflect the priorities women shared—employment, health, safety and empowerment—and demonstrate our commitment to building a responsive, community-led programme.

