



AN EQUAL WORLD OF WORK

Young Women's Trust
strategy 2023-2028

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About Young Women's Trust

Young Women's Trust champions young women aged 18 to 30 on low or no pay. We're here to create a more equal world of work and raise young women's incomes.

We offer young women free coaching, feedback on job applications and information to help them get where they want to be. We bring together a network of thousands of young women to support each other, build their self-belief, and have their voices heard. We work with young women and anyone who experiences misogyny and sexism to campaign for equality in the workplace. And our research provides insight into what young women's lives are really like, fuelling our campaigns for change.

FOREWORD

Young Women's Trust helps support women like myself who may have caring responsibilities, or experiences on low or no pay.

When I found Young Women's Trust, I was in a confusing point in my life where I felt I had nothing to offer. I knew where I wanted to go - I just didn't know how to do it with the roles and responsibilities I had as a young woman.



Accessing Young Women's Trust's coaching meant that I had the confidence to apply for a new job in a different industry. Because of this, combined with their CV feedback, I was able to progress into full-time, better paid work.

Young Women's Trust are campaigning for fairer financial conditions for young women. If this was achieved it would mean people like me would have the financial freedom to reach our goals. We'd be able to feel safe. We'd be able to thrive in a world that doesn't see the value in the unpaid work carried out by young women.

As an advisory panel member, one of the opportunities I've had was speaking at an event for HR professionals so that they could see the value in investing in flexible working, and supporting young women trying to get into work that they can progress in. I was able to share my lived experiences as a woman with caring responsibilities and how flexible working has been able to provide me with the opportunity to enter full-time work.

A world where women have the same if not more opportunities for better pay is what Young Women's Trust is striving for in their new strategy. By making space to hear young women's voices we hope that we can create an equal world of work so that young women like me can thrive.

Daniella Adelusi

Young Women's Trust Advisory Panel Member

CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

From a pandemic straight into a cost of living crisis – the last few years have laid bare how, despite surface-level progress, gender inequality combined with youth have left young women exposed to the impact of economic shocks and social upheaval.

Young women tell us they are struggling. “Stuck in the mud”. Surviving, not thriving. Using all their energies on getting through each day, when they should be learning, growing and setting themselves up for their future.



We know that young women are entitled to more – and that we will all benefit from their talents, energy and skills being unleashed. Older women and future generations – as we know the gap in women and men’s incomes only grows over a lifetime. The economy, which is crying out for skills. Men, who are too often themselves trapped in breadwinning roles.

From our roots in the YWCA, set up to support young women during the upheavals of the industrial revolution, Young Women’s Trust has a proud heritage of supporting young women to navigate the changing world of work.

In developing this strategy and looking at the challenges young women face in 2023, we’ve returned to our core territory of the world of work – but sharpened our focus on tackling the persistent inequality that still leads to young women earning less than young men.

We’ll mobilise young women, who we believe are a powerful driving force for change. But we need a collective response – from business, politicians, the media, and individual men and women who can make a difference in their roles as line managers, colleagues, parents, campaigners. We hope you’ll be part of that.

Jo-Ann Robertson
Chair

WHY WE ARE NEEDED

Young women face inequality from the very start of their working lives. On average, a young woman will earn a fifth less each year than a young man of the same age.

This gap only grows over the course of a lifetime - so starting to close it early will create fairer financial futures.

For some groups, such as those from racially minoritised communities, the income gap is even larger.

WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

Young women are more likely to be in lower paid jobs and sectors of the economy and are more likely to get stuck there.

As a result of sexism and misogyny, young women and people of marginalised genders face discrimination in the workplace, and this is holding them back from progressing, reaching their potential, and earning what they should.

They're taking on more unpaid work, such as childcare, and are more likely to be in part-time work.

At a time in life when young women should be growing, learning, and taking chances, they're too often trapped in a struggle just to get by.

This isn't fair. As we embark on our new strategy, we're determined to close this income gap that's setting young women back before they've even got started. But we can only do it together. We hope you will join us.



"I feel anxious about my future and how hard it's going to be for me to achieve the things I want in life."

42% of young women in our annual survey said they had experienced discrimination at work or when looking for work.

Around a quarter had been paid less than male colleagues for the same or similar work.

1 in 10 decision makers admitted to thinking that men make better senior managers than women.

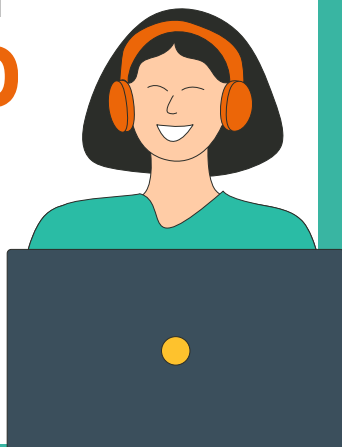


OUR IMPACT SO FAR

We have supported

19,000

young women with coaching and job application feedback since we launched Work It Out in 2014.



54%

of young women who'd had coaching and

56%

who had had feedback said they had a new job or internship, were in training, volunteering or self-employed within 6 months.



56%

of young women who used our coaching and feedback services said their income had increased a year later.



80%

of young women said they felt more confident after having coaching.



We have built a community of more than

10,000

young women and people of marginalised genders across our networks who have opportunities to be involved and have their say.



Since the Research Centre was established in 2021, we have worked with

28

peer researchers to publish two annual 'state of the nation' surveys of over

8,000

young women, as well as research into young women's experiences of the benefits system, missing data, and the power of peer research.



More than

1,400

young women have helped to shape our work and have their voices heard in the media and with decision makers.



Our vision

A world where young women are **valued**, can **make choices** and look forward to a **fairer financial future**

Our purpose

To create an **equal world of work** and **raise young women's incomes**

Principles

Young women at the heart

We believe young women are a powerful force for change. Young women are at the heart of Young Women's Trust, shaping both our strategy and day to day work. We will give young women a platform so their voices can be heard and they can build their own power and influence.

Champion young women facing the greatest financial penalty

We are working for a fairer financial future for all young women. Wherever we can, we will champion young women who face the greatest inequalities in relation to finances, employment and unpaid work - especially working class young women, racially minoritised young women and disabled young women, in line with the evidence.

Tackle the structural barriers as well as changing individual lives

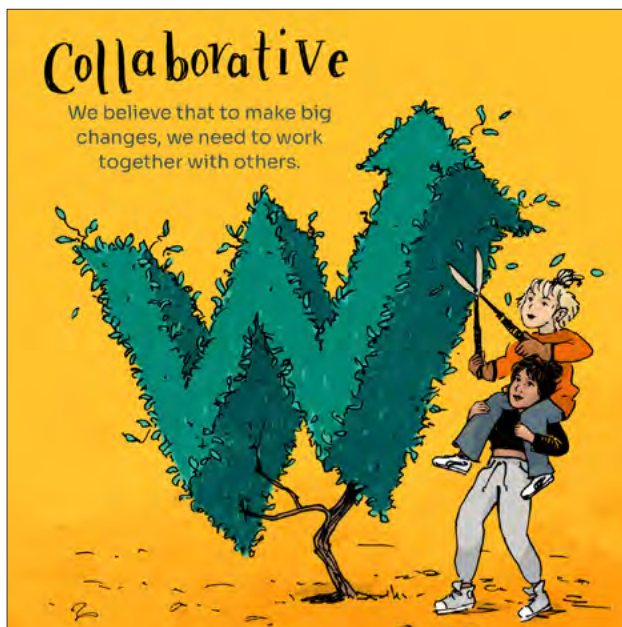
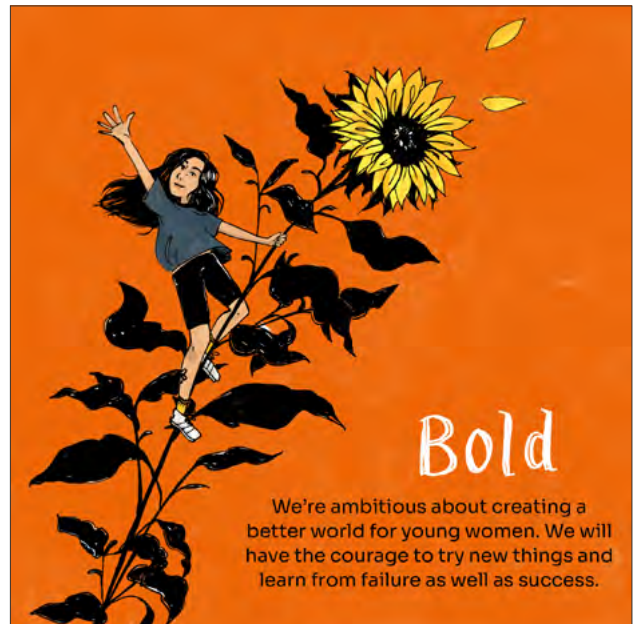
We aim to influence both the external environment which holds young women back, as well as providing direct support to young women to increase their knowledge, networks and self-belief.

Value young women's choices

We want young women to be able to have real options about what to do with their lives, and to make choices without facing judgement. Whether they choose to look after young children at home, work full-time or part-time, and whatever work they choose to do - all of these choices are valid.

OUR VALUES

Illustration: Kat Williams



OUR GOALS

Our ultimate goal is to close the income gap between young women and young men.

This 5 year strategy lays the foundations for this by focusing on two key goals:

1. Visibility, voice and power

2. A more equal world of work

The first goal influences the second: we believe that giving greater visibility, voice and power to young women is an essential first step towards a more equal world of work.



“We’d feel safer because we wouldn’t be so financially vulnerable. We’d have freedom to get out of difficult situations.”



“You wouldn’t need to nurture your survival skills, you’d be able to live, you’d be able to get out of the mud.”



“We could make choices, take chances, it would be safe to take risks.”



“We’d have the freedom to learn, freedom to fail, freedom to experiment.”



“We’d be thriving, not just surviving.”

1. Visibility, voice and power

We will give young women a platform to raise their voices and build their power.

We will ensure widespread visibility of the financial penalty that young women face.



2. A more equal world of work

We will raise young women's incomes, satisfaction with their jobs and future prospects.

We will influence government and employers to take action to bring about equality in the workplace.

VISIBILITY, VOICE AND POWER

OUR 5 YEAR GOALS

We will give young women a platform to raise their voices and build their power.

We will ensure widespread visibility of the financial penalty that young women face.

WHAT WE WILL DO

1 Establish a robust evidence base about the challenges young women face and their solutions, to influence change and put the income gap squarely on the agenda.

There are 1 million young women living on low or no pay, whose lives we can improve by putting evidence of the realities they face and the changes they need in front of decision makers.

Young women's unique experiences are often missing from official statistics. We have set up an effective Research Centre to build the evidence base on young women's lives and identify changes that young women need to raise their incomes and achieve an equal world of work. Building on its success, we will:

- Develop and promote an evidence base on the income gap between young women and young men, its causes, solutions, and how it changes over time.
- Carry out and publish research on the discrimination young women experience in the workplace, and use this to campaign for changes to policy, practice, attitudes and behaviour.
- Continue to run our annual 'state of the nation' survey into young women's working and financial lives.
- Develop research partnerships with think tanks, research institutes and others who can contribute to and benefit from the evidence base on young women's experiences in the labour market.

- Continue to train young women as peer researchers who shape and conduct research with other young women to understand their experiences and the challenges they face.

HOW WE'LL ASSESS OUR PROGRESS:

- Research findings regularly cited in the media and parliament, with Young Women's Trust recognised as a respected expert
- Partnerships with influential think tanks to build the evidence base.
- The 'income gap' is talked about in the media, by politicians and other organisations, with more widespread recognition of its impact on young women.
- Evidence that our research has catalysed change in public opinion, legislation, and/or employer practice.



“Being listened to is a start towards creating change.”

WHAT WE WILL DO

2 Mobilise young women in all their diversity to lead change.

There are around 5 million young women aged 18 to 30 in England and Wales. We believe they have the power and potential to lead change. We have an active network of around 10,000 young women who have used our services and shared their views and experiences to shape our work and advocate for change. But we need to grow our reach amongst young women in order to support them to influence change at scale. To do this, we will:

- Strengthen and grow our brand and profile so we can reach more young women.
- Invest in our digital infrastructure and digital tools to mobilise young women – and then scale these to grow our community of young women who are challenging discrimination on the path to and through work.
- Work with young women to build their skills to lead change, including through developing our Influencing Planning Group of young women who design and lead our campaigns, and building our network of young women acting as media spokespeople and ambassadors.
- Mobilise young women around the General Election, encouraging them to speak to candidates and use their votes.

HOW WE'LL ASSESS OUR PROGRESS:

- Increased awareness of Young Women's Trust amongst young women age 18–30, who see us as their champion for equality at work.
- Thousands of young women actively involved in campaigns.
- Thousands of young women have been empowered to challenge discrimination through our campaigns and information.



“Young Women’s Trust helped me to find my voice – it gave me the confidence to challenge the fact that I was being paid less than a male colleague and negotiate a higher salary.”

A MORE EQUAL WORLD OF WORK

OUR 5 YEAR GOALS

We will raise young women's incomes, satisfaction with their jobs and future prospects – by working directly with young women to build their knowledge, networks and self-belief.

We will directly influence government and employers to take action to bring about equality in the workplace and tackle the drivers of the income gap.

WHAT WE WILL DO

1 Influence policy and public attitudes by running campaigns which address the causes of the income gap.

Structural and societal barriers such as lack of affordable childcare, an unfair distribution of unpaid work, widespread sexism and misogyny, and the segregation of young women into low-paid, poorly valued and precarious jobs, cause the income gap. We must tackle these in order to create change – for the million young women living on low pay now and for future generations of young women. To do this we will:

- Publish young women's 'Wish List' showing what they need to happen for the world of work to be truly equal, and use this to inform campaigns for change, bringing the solutions it presents to the attention of politicians and decision makers.
- Launch a campaign mobilising young women to challenge discrimination and know their rights.
- Continue campaigning on the cost of living crisis – to ensure young women aren't left even further behind.
- Influence political priorities in the build-up to a General Election.
- Develop and test community organising models to support young women to build their own grassroots campaigns.

HOW WE'LL ASSESS OUR PROGRESS:

- Thousands of young women actively involved in campaigns and challenging discrimination.
- Issues that matter to young women on General Election manifestos, leading to changes in policy and practice.
- Young women reporting higher levels of confidence to challenge discrimination.
- Young women reporting less discrimination in the workplace.



“There aren't enough jobs out there with flexible working hours. There's nothing convenient or accommodating to work around children, and childcare is so expensive. There aren't enough paid jobs to afford childcare. Most employers cannot discriminate face-to-face but they do not want to take on single parents or mothers to be as they have childcare responsibilities.”

WHAT WE WILL DO

2 Advocate for changes to workplace policy and practice and help employers to take action.

Employers have the power to transform young women's experiences at work and to make pay, job security and progression prospects fairer. Through our research with managers and HR decision-makers, we know that many employers want to do more to tackle gender pay gaps and attract more young women. We will harness this energy for change by:

- Running campaigns to reach employers and support them to make changes to their policies, practices and culture.
- Working with employers and commissioning research to understand the barriers to change and the solutions.
- Developing, testing and scaling a programme of practical support for employers.
- Developing partnerships with organisations already working with employers, to bring an age and gender lens to their work.

HOW WE'LL ASSESS OUR PROGRESS

- Evidence of improved employment practices.
- Young women reporting better pay, progression and experiences in the workplace.
- New partners working with Young Women's Trust to champion change.



“Managers would offer tasks to employees who were older than me and never considered giving me a chance to prove that I could do it. The manager felt that he could shout at me and demand that I do things, but when he spoke to the boys about the same issues he spoke in a normal tone and with respect.”

WHAT WE WILL DO

3 Support thousands of young women a year through our coaching, job application feedback, information and webinars; and innovate to meet young women's changing needs.

We provide free coaching and job application feedback to 4,000 young women a year. Young women who have benefited from this report increased self-belief, and positive outcomes including new jobs and better pay. In a recent survey over half of young women who had used these services had increased their incomes. To build on this we will:

- Continue to provide coaching and feedback to support thousands of young women per year to increase their confidence and make plans to progress in their careers.
- Trial new innovations to further increase young women's knowledge, networks and self-belief, and improve their incomes and prospects.
- Continue to provide employment-related information and inspiration.

HOW WE'LL ASSESS OUR PROGRESS:

- Increased incomes for young women.
- Young women get into work, get a better job or begin training.
- Young women report increased self-belief.



“100% if it wasn't for my coach I wouldn't be in my current role now. My coach was a real lifesaver – I don't know how else to express it. I was a different person back then and I wouldn't be where I am today without her.”

WHAT WE WILL DO

4 Harness the power of peer and professional networks by developing new group-based programmes, enabling young women to find work and progress.

Our evidence and experience has shown the importance of knowledge, networks and self-belief in helping young women to improve their job prospects and raise their incomes. Networks and relationships can be crucial in navigating into and through the world of work.

While our existing coaching, feedback and webinars focus on knowledge and self-belief, we will develop a new programme which supports young women to build and make the most of peer and professional networks. We will:

- Work with young women to co-create concepts for a programme of support that extends young women's peer and professional networks and enhances their self-belief.
- Pilot and scale the new service.

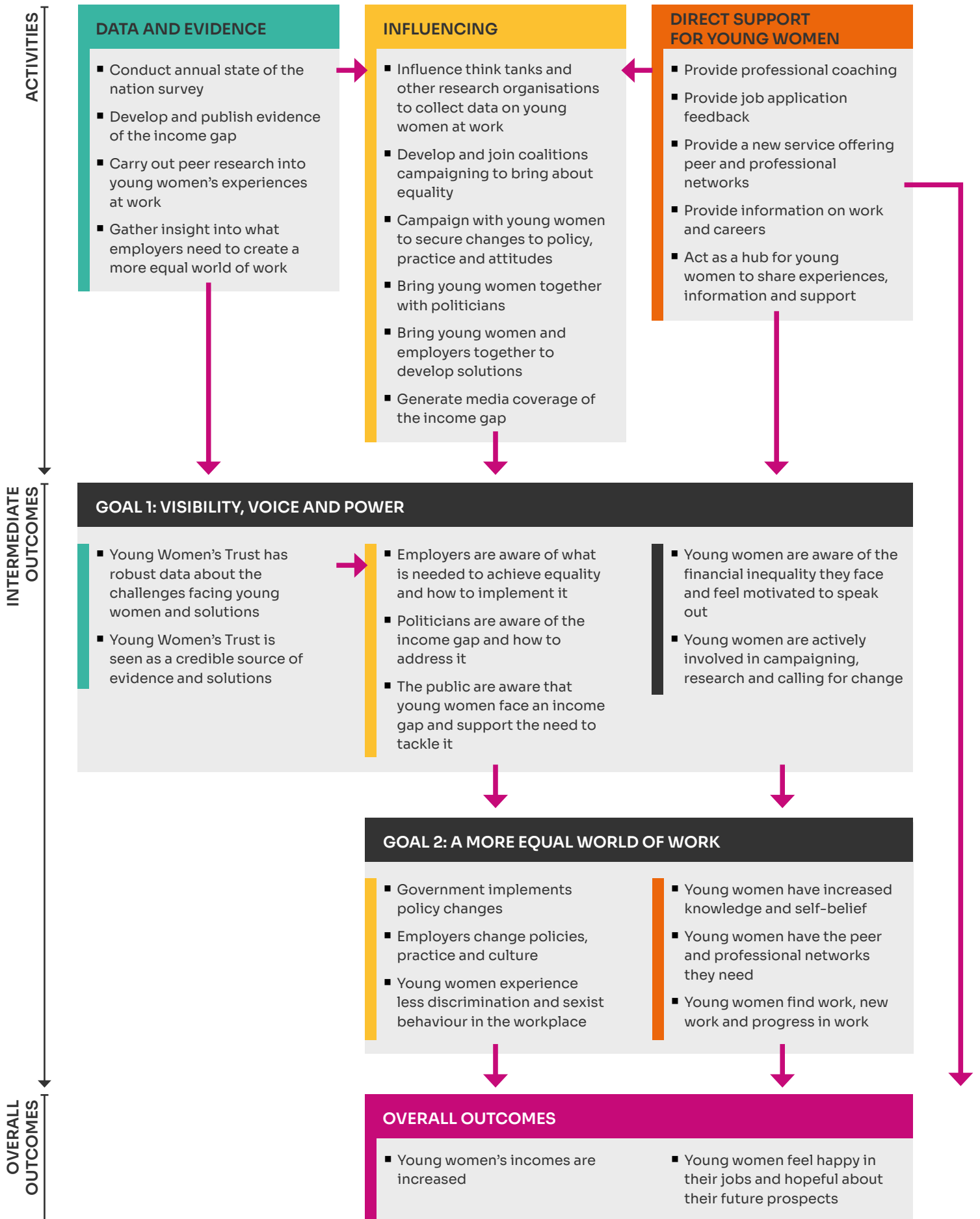
HOW WE'LL ASSESS OUR PROGRESS:

- We will have increased young women's knowledge, networks and self-belief, leading to them getting into and progressing within work – and ultimately raising their incomes.



“Networks can be powerful in breaking these barriers that exist to push back women’s developmental growth. A new service could tear down some of these barriers and provide networks to support women to achieve better in the workplace.”

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE



FUNDING OUR STRATEGY

We have set ambitious goals in this strategy to achieve our purpose – and this requires an equally bold funding strategy.

We will use our endowment to invest in real change for young women while growing our fundraising income to ensure the long-term stability of the charity, so we can continue to champion future generations of young women.

Our permanent endowment provides annual returns that allow us to cover a proportion of our charitable activities as well as core costs, while a planned use of our charitable funds allows us to continue to invest in enhancing our impact, as we grow our fundraising income.

Over the next five years, we plan to spend down our funds by a net total of £2.3m to fund our long-term ambitions, underlying our confidence in our strategic plans and the need to bring about a step change for young women.



EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We know that different groups of young women experience inequalities in different ways. Factors such as ethnicity, disability and socio-economic status create specific experiences of discrimination and come together to compound economic inequality for young women.

We have identified race equity and anti-racism as a particular priority for us. Our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion action plan will underpin our organisational strategy, with these key goals:

1. Organisational culture

We will create an inclusive work culture with equity, diversity and inclusion as a central organisational value.

2. Diversity within staff team and board

We will recruit, retain, develop and support a diverse workforce and ensure we have a diverse board.

3. The young women we engage with

We will ensure services are accessible to all young women on low or no pay and with particular attention to those facing the most discrimination.

We will ensure that a diverse group of young women play a central role in strategy and governance, and that we support them to have their voices heard.

4. Influencing

We will ensure that our communications, research and campaigning reflects the priorities and structural barriers facing the diverse group of young women we are here to support.

GENDER DIVERSITY AT YOUNG WOMEN'S TRUST

We are here to create a world where young women are valued, have choices and can look forward to a fairer financial future. We tackle sexism and misogyny, with and for anyone who has experienced this - including trans and non-binary people.

We primarily use the gendered language of 'young women' because our focus is on the misogyny and sexism which causes young women to earn less, and have poorer work and financial prospects, than young men. However, we include within this people with marginalised gender identities who are also on the receiving end of misogyny and sexism.

JOIN US

One organisation alone can't close the persistent income gap that young women face, but if we all pull together we can make a difference.

CAMPAIGN WITH US

Join us in campaigning for a more equal world of work.

PARTNER WITH US

If you have got a passion for raising young women's voices and building fair workplaces, we want to hear from you.

DONATE

Help us support more young women to build a fairer future.

GET FREE SUPPORT

If you are a young woman aged 18-30 who needs help finding work or making the next step in your career, get in touch.

SPREAD THE WORD

If you know young women who would benefit, please spread the word.



“Everyone has the power to make a difference in a small way. It could be in your own home, at work or in the community. We hope you will use your power to make change, no matter how big or small.”

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