

Press release: More than £400,000 awarded to organisations increasing diversity in politics

- Grant funding will directly benefit over 2000 people across the country
- Over £1.25 million so far this year awarded to projects marking the 100th anniversary of some women winning the right to vote
- Only 32% women MPs sit in the House of Commons

Seventeen large projects have been awarded £406,667 to increase diversity in politics, the Minister for Women announced today.

The new support, from a £1.5 million government fund, will back local projects supporting women and young people, especially disabled people, LGBT people and those from black and minority ethnic groups, to get involved in democracy and politics.

The organisations will set up a range of programmes directly benefitting at least 2347 people – including making documentaries celebrating women's involvement in social groups, participating in a mock House of Commons debate, and building a website encouraging people with learning disabilities to vote.

Minister for Women, Victoria Atkins, said:

The brave women who fought for the equal rights of women and men to vote must be honoured. Today we have the highest number of women in history sitting in the House of Commons. However, at only 32% women MPs we have a long way to go before we see true equality.

By funding these innovative projects we will inspire women and young people across the country to become active participants in our democracy. We want to see a new generation of women raise their voices, get stuck in and see how they can make a difference in their local communities and across the country.

This year, we are not just celebrating the achievements of the women who came before us – we are helping women here and now to take action to benefit the women of the next hundred years

The grant scheme is part of a £5 million centenary fund to open politics to the public – celebrating the centenary, educating young people about its significance, and encouraging more women to get involved and have an equal voice in the decisions that affect them.

The rest of the funding is being spent on:

- the first ever statue of a woman in Parliament Square – Millicent Fawcett
- local events and activities in the Centenary Cities (seven cities and towns in England with a strong suffrage history)
- a suite of education programmes and resources that engage young people with democracy
- initiatives to encourage more people to participate in politics such as an Ask Her to Stand event for potential women politicians
- National events celebrating the centenary including:
 - the suffrage Processions this June in the four capital cities of the UK.
 - the closing ceremony of the Great Exhibition of the North – the North Star

Notes to editors:

The Women's Votes Centenary Grant Scheme's objectives are to fund projects that celebrate the centenary, encourage young people to engage with democracy and increase the number of women participating in politics. It has a total pot of £1.5 million and is administered by Ecorys UK in two funding streams for large and small projects.

The final round of the Grant Scheme will run Tuesday 4th September to Tuesday 16 October and is for small events to celebrate the centenary, particularly the anniversaries of the Act allowing women to stand for Parliament (on 21 November) and the General Election of 1918 (on 14 December). The Scheme is particularly keen to encourage applications from eastern regions in England including the South East, East Midlands, East of England and North East as they are currently underrepresented.

Further details can be found at the [website for the grant scheme](#)

Previously, our grant scheme has awarded around £850,000 to 157 projects.

149 inspiring grassroots events have received over £240,000 and 8 large national and regional projects have been awarded over £600,000

The 8 large projects already funded by the Grant Scheme earlier this year include:

- The Step up to Democracy project led by Saathi House who received around £68,972 earlier this year to offer training and political leadership programme for Bangladeshi and Pakistani women who want to become local leaders in three locations, Birmingham, Bradford and Keighley. The participants are currently halfway through the programme and, as part of their leadership training, will go on to mentor other women in their communities.
- 36 online centres across England which are hosting Voice Box Cafes between July and December 2018. This £124,311 project run by the Good Things Foundation provides sessions for excluded women to gain digital and campaigning skills.
- The Essex Diversity Project which is using their £60,025 grant to run

events across Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk from August to December 2018 celebrating the life of prominent suffragette Sophia Duleep Singh. The events include academic talks, creative writing workshops, a touring exhibition, a new theatre piece, and a women's history conference. Around 10 have taken place already with a further dozen events planned.

- Cinema for All who has a £65,582 grant and is currently producing an archive film chronicling women's political and civic lives over the past 100 years with local groups in Lancashire, Yorkshire, Cheshire, Merseyside and County Durham. There will be screenings of the film from October to December to community groups in Liverpool, Preston, Durham, Sheffield and Huddersfield alongside a series of inspiring debates, discussions, celebration events, and a far-reaching social media campaign.
- National Trust which has opened the three exhibitions and outreach programmes supported by its £114,748 grant (Women & Industry at Cragside runs April to November 2018; Faces of Change at The Workhouse, Southwell runs end of April until August 2018 with workshops May-June with a homeless charity; Soapbox Dramas at Killerton House runs 8 July – 3 November 2018).
- Jacksons Lane's project has a grant of £65,788 to work with 16-18 year old female students in Haringey from September to December developing three art installations showing women, politics and power in 1918, 2018 and 2118. The installations will host debates by young people on women in politics for those times. They have identified the three schools who will partner them in the project, recruited the participants and set up the workshops that start when schools return in early September.
- Young Women's Trust has a grant of £58,350 and is running training courses in October and November for women aged 16-30 building practical skills and confidence to influence conversations at a local and national level.
- Feminist Archive has a grant of £50,780 to work with young rural working class women in the South West who are helping preserve the legacy of the women's political movement by uncovering untold feminist narratives through digital learning and educational workshops. The touring exhibition of their discoveries opens in Glastonbury on 2 September.

Today's winners:

Women's Resource Centres £64,992

Women's Resource Centres (WRC) is the leading umbrella body for women's charities nationally, representing over 500 women-focussed organisations. This project will see the development and delivery of a social leadership programme for BME women engaged in the women's sector, either as employees or volunteers, aged between 20 and 30. The project is a two-day Personal and Organisational Leadership course; establishing a peer support network to discuss learning and engage local MPs; and a showcase event at the Palace of Westminster, organised and led by the peer support network.

Partners in Creative Learning CIC £35,000

This project will engage 60 young women in three post-16 educational settings

in Stoke and North Staffs. They will: * Explore opinions on politics, gender and civic life * Discussions with female leaders and MPs about their own routes into democratic and civic participation * Action learning groups around celebration of an individual or issues participants feel need to be campaigned on * Working with artists to develop a piece (may be a film, production, exhibition) and showcase these to an audience made up of the community and key stakeholders.

Breakthrough UK Ltd £34,246

Breakthrough UK is a Manchester-based disabled people's organisation led and staffed by disabled people. The project is 13 weekly face-to-face workshops for 5 to 10 disabled women in three areas of Greater Manchester. The workshops will facilitate discussions on the women's and disabled people's movements (including disabled suffragettes); support participants to train local, regional and national organisations on removing barriers to participation; build skill development, including placements, shadowing and internship opportunities; and build a sustainable peer support network. The project aims to bring together disabled people from a range of backgrounds, supporting them to understand the importance of democracy and representation. It will also allow individual beneficiaries to consider their own role in civic life, develop self-advocacy skills, and engage wider stakeholders and decision-makers such as MPs, peers and councillors.

Dorset Art £47,125

Dorset Arts Development is a social enterprise leading arts development in Dorset. The project will run a series of 8 workshops for young working class women and young women from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community encouraging greater civic participation through role play and other creative methods and will develop a theatrical performance. This will then be performed at schools in Dorset. Participants will learn about each other, democracy and how to influence decision making.

WILD Young Parents Project £25,890

This project will benefit 50 young mums across Cornwall who will learn about democracy and the basics of campaigning through interactive workshops and matched with local politicians who will mentor and support them. At the end of the project young women will create artwork. The project aims to impact beneficiaries in a number of ways; improved understanding of democracy and voting, increased motivation to engage with local democracy, increased confidence and the children of beneficiaries will have their mums' increased understanding of democracy passed on to them.

Ashiana Community Project is a charity based in Sparkbrook, Birmingham, that aims to improve the social, physical and economic wellbeing of local people. The project will provide research, archiving and film making workshops for 30 young women from BME backgrounds who are disengaged from politics and civic engagements. They will learn about the women's suffrage movement and create short documentaries celebrating BME women in social movements. The films will be shown at community venues and through social media.

Platform Thirty1 Limited £19,991.25 ####Platform Thirty1 Limited is a creative grassroots organisation in Derbyshire that develops participatory art projects. The project will deliver 14 sessions including public speaking training, 'The Chamber' where beneficiaries participate in a fictionalised parliamentary chamber as issue-based political parties of their own debating a bill and sessions creating art work on gender parity for a public exhibition in Ilkeston. A further £11,000 has been secured from other sources.

Warrington Youth Club Limited £19,670

Warrington Youth Club is a registered charity that delivers a range of projects for young people aged 7 to 25. The project has three distinct strands. 'Girl Power' has a programme of activities on the importance of voting and women's involvement in history, politics and business for 220 young women in Carlisle with learning difficulties, mental health issues or in care. 'Brave New World' will deliver weekly sessions to 30 women with disabilities using creative methods to explore women's rights then and now. The third strand is a celebratory event at Chester University to present participants' opinions from the two parts of the project.

Reform Radio CIC is a community voluntary organisation that uses industry standard radio to develop well networked socially active citizens. 40 young women from Gorton, Manchester will develop skills in digital content production and interviewing local politicians. They will broadcast their work on Reform Radio's breakfast show and finish by producing a 30 minute documentary on their experiences for Reform Radio. A celebration event with local MPs will share their achievements and a social media campaign will stimulate debate.

United Multi Cultural Centre £18,490

United Multi Cultural Centre is a registered charity based in Rotherham supporting women to increase their participation in community life. This project will train 30 women to be advocates for female civic engagement in their communities, encouraging voting and participation. There will also be workshops on democracy and women's political history. Participants will also visit their local Councillor's surgeries, Rotherham Town Hall and Parliament to connect to how democracy works.

Hounslow Action For Youth Association £18,000

Hounslow Action for Youth Association is a registered charity for disadvantaged young people. "Agents For Change" weekly writing workshops run by award winning writers to better understand democracy and civic participation. They will also learn public speaking and presentation skills. They will present their work to local schools and youth centres to raise awareness of the issues faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller women. Their stories will be in an anthology to give a voice to marginalised women whose voices are often not heard

Transform Training Ltd £17,393

Transform Training Ltd is a registered charity based in Nottingham that works with young people with learning disabilities or mental health problems. A 12 week programme of activity for young people with disabilities will be delivered focusing on what it means to vote, why voting is important, the practicalities of voting, and how disabled young people can influence political change. They will create a new leaflet and online resource to encourage young people with learning disabilities to vote. They will use various media to raise issues that are important to them with local MPs.

It's Your Life £16,800

It's Your Life is a registered charity based in Tower Hamlets providing mentoring programmes. The project will increase BME women's knowledge of UK democracy and its importance, covering how young people can register to vote, how the government and local democracy works, and the history of voting rights in the UK. The project will visit sites linked to the Suffrage movement as part of this. Participants will be awarded a certificate in 'Understanding Government and Local Democracy' at a celebration event and produce a tapestry depicting the women's suffrage journey.

Friends Of The Ipswich Museums £16,000

Friends of the Ipswich Museums is a registered charity that supports all of the museums in Ipswich. 'Women 100' will show works by 100 women artists from Ipswich and Suffolk. Suffrage campaign workshops will explore why the suffrage campaigns were important and talks with young people will discuss democracy and voting. The project will produce a learning resource for local further education colleges.

Blueprint 22 £15,425

Blueprint 22 is a young people-led voluntary community group that delivers projects to 16 to 25 year old disabled, working class and LGBT young people with emotional and practical needs. The project provides research sessions, mentoring workshops and educational visits about politics and the political history of women to young women distanced from civic life, ending with a women's weekend creative camp to produce an anthology of their learning through the project and celebrating their experiences of being women in 2018.

First Step North East £15,240

First Step North East is a registered charity based in Newcastle-upon-Tyne that delivers learning opportunities to BME women. The structured and accredited training programme of activities will build participants' skills and knowledge, encouraging them to participate more fully in civic life and local decision making. It will examine the suffrage movement, gender parity and the barriers to engagement with themed workshops on 'local women for local politics' led by inspirational local women, and a Citizens Jury panel with invited speakers. The course will be documented on social media and finish with a celebration event.

Xenia £2,864

Xenia is a voluntary community group that helps women, many of whom are BME and/or speak English as a second language, to improve language skills and participate in activities. A series of workshops focus on women role models and political leaders, the centenary of women's voting rights, learning and practicing the structure of how to debate, campaigning and volunteering, and practical guidance on how to respond to an open consultation exercise.