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**Strategic Plan 2024-2027**

WISH is a Community Interest Company; we are a social enterprise and a not for profit organisation which means that the money we generate through memberships and sponsorships funds the activities we carry out to further inclusivity and gender balance across the UK housing sector. We hold no assets and achieve all that we do with very low operating costs so that we can invest the maximum resource into achieving our vision of a housing sector where everyone can flourish.

We are a membership based organisation for women who work across the breadth of roles connected to social housing from front line housing professionals to architects, lawyers and developers and we currently operate in 10 regions in the UK. We provide networking events and online sessions to inspire, inform, support and provide opportunities for women to come together.

Our purpose at WISH is to empower women through our networking activities, championing equality across every discipline of the housing sector. We have three strategic objectives around networking, career development and positive influence.

**Our VISION** is a housing sector where everyone can flourish.

**Our PURPOSE** is to empower women through our networking activities, championing equality across every discipline of the housing sector.

**Our OBJECTIVES** are:

1. **Networking** – To empower and inspire women, supporting and enabling them to succeed through our regional and national networking events.
2. **Career Development** – To build confidence and motivation for women at every stage of their career in the sector; from starting out to progression.
3. **Positive Influence** – To be thought leaders in the sector, championing equality through our campaigns and collective voice.

**Why WISH is Important**

We have, without doubt, come a long way in terms of gender equality over the past decade BUT without doubt there is still much more to do:

* The latest Chief Executive salary survey data compiled by Inside Housing in 2023 highlighted a continuing gender pay gap between men and women in the sector which widens significantly when total pay (including bonuses, car allowance etc) are considered.
* In the construction side of social housing we are continuing to see very low levels of females in the workforce and the percentages have hardly moved over the past decade, currently standing at around 14%.
* More than half (53%) of the respondents to our annual WISH survey 2023, felt there are barriers preventing women progressing in their careers in housing.
* The annual WISH survey also found that more than a third of respondents (39%) said they have experienced sexism in the workplace over the past three years, up from 28% last year.
* Furthermore, a staggering 78% of those questioned felt they had to assert themselves more than male colleagues to be heard in a professional environment, while 55% said they had to work harder than their male counterparts to get the same opportunities – which is a 5% increase on last year’s results.

It is evident that there continues to be a real need for WISH to empower women, to champion equality and support career progression.

**How we are Addressing these Key Challenges**

Through our three core objectives around networking, career development and positive influence we are and will continue to work to address inclusivity and gender imbalance. The Action Plan provided below details the action we will be taking over the next three years to progress our objectives and meet these challenges.

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| **Strategic Priority** | **Action** | **Role of the Central Team** | **Role of the Regional Boards** | **Timeframe** |
| **Networking**  To empower and inspire women, supporting and enabling them to succeed through our regional and national networking events.  **Our Ambition**  For 80% of social housing providers across the UK to have WISH membership by 2027 | **In Person Regional Events**  Provide in-person networking events across all of our regions. With the purpose of:   * providing the opportunity to network, * inspiring confidence, * augmenting knowledge, * promoting wellbeing and career development * and increasing knowledge and understanding about sector issues | To support the Regional Boards to deliver in-person events. | To consider and decide upon relevant WISH events for their region based on regional knowledge and insight obtained from the annual WISH survey.  To organise and deliver, with WISH central support and external sponsorship (where relevant), the above events | Ongoing |
| **Online Events**  Provide a programme of online events to achieve the aims as detailed above | To organise and host WISH online events centrally, identifying relevant content and speakers | To organise and host WISH online events with the support from the Central Team | Ongoing |
| **National Networking Events**  Provide national networking events aligned to the major housing conferences | To organise and host WISH national events, liaising with sponsors and the national conference organising bodies | Regional Board Member support to assist with the delivery of national networking events being held in their locality | Ongoing |
| **Expanding the WISH Regional Network**  Establish WISH Regions in areas where we have identified a demand/potential demand | Work with women in those areas where an interest has been shown to develop a WISH region.  Work to establish WISH Ireland | --- | Ongoing  December  2024 |
| **Expanding the WISH online presence**  Continue to grow the WISH profile across our (relevant) social media platforms | Establish a SMART target for growth and review the use of our channels to determine where we should focus our efforts | --- | December 2024 |
| **Expanding Membership**  Target marketing of the WISH offer to organisations who are not yet members | Scope out the options and resources available to recruit for a WISH Business Development position  Devise a target marketing campaign to attract new membership | --- | December 2024  April 2025 |
| **Encouraging Members to Network with WISH**  Improve the information and advice we provide to member organisations to encourage the widest engagement | Create a ‘welcome’ pack for new WISH members, outlining the benefits for the whole organisation and how they can get the best value from membership. Ensure the WISH value is articulated in ways to appeal to different organisational priorities.  Individually contact all existing lead members to explore how they can make the most of their membership | Share the ‘welcome’ pack across regional networks  --- | December 2024  August 2025 |
| **Social Media Networking Campaign**  Launch a campaign to promote the value of networking and how women network differently from men | Create and launch a campaign across our social media cannels to promote WISH networking and the value of women’s networks and to tackle any ‘fear’ associated with the thought of networking | Like, share, comment on social media activity | July 2025 |
| **Women’s Networks Collaboration**  Explore the potential to collaborate with other women’s networking organisations on events and learning opportunities, promoting the value of female networking | Research has been completed in terms of the other (related) networks out there. Further conversations to be held and collaborative priorities determined | Support a collaborative approach, across our own WISH regions and with other women’s networking groups | September 2024 |
| **Oline Community and Matrix Membership**  Establish an online WISH community, enabling members to collaborate and connect via a branded app. Within this provide the option for matrix membership | Investigate the potential platforms which could be utilised (Mighty Networks for example) and whether these provide the potential for a WISH branded app and matrix communities of interest | --- | December 2024 |

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| **Career Development**  To build confidence and motivation for women at every stage of their career in the sector; from starting out to progression.  **Our Ambition**  That by 2027 females currently working or wishing to work in the housing sector will know about our membership and the career development opportunities we provide. | **Confidence & Motivation Events**  Provide networking events and online activities to build confidence and motivation for women | Work with training providers to provide a paid for programme of skills and confidence building sessions for members, review the success on an annual basis  Provide a range of free for members bite-size confidence building online sessions. | Organise and deliver, with WISH central support and external sponsorship (where relevant), in person and online events that build confidence and motivation | October 2024/25/26  Ongoing |
| **Career Journey Events**  Create a specific and dedicated programme of online events about career paths in housing – from early career journeys through to senior leadership roles | Design the programme, enlist speakers, generate publicity and encourage the relevant audiences from member organisations to attend through targeted communication | --- | July 2025 |
| **WISH Career Mentoring**  Establish a free for members WISH Career mentoring programme. Women supporting women to further their careers in the sector | Continue the collaboration with Page Executive to launch year 1 of the WISH mentoring programme  Review the success of the programme, collecting stories from participants to evaluate success  Launch years 2 and 3 of the Career Mentoring programme | --- | June 2024  September 2025  June 2025/26/27 |
| **University Offer**  Launch a WISH membership offer for Universities; enabling female students to start networking before starting their housing careers | Work with the Universities to launch this WISH membership  Work with sponsors to explore the option for collaboration  Review success a year after launch | Support the inclusion of University students at regional events | September 2024  April 2024  September 2025 |
| **WISH Succession Planning**  Devise succession plans for the key roles for the central WISH team. | Work with HR consultants to create succession plans and 360 appraisal systems for employees and CIC Board Directors |  | April 2025 |

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| **Positive Influence**  To be thought leaders in the sector, championing equality through our campaigns and collective voice.  **Our Ambition**  For WISH to be the ‘go to’ organisation for commentary on gender equality in the housing sector and beyond | **Presidential Campaign**  Through our Presidential Campaigns raise awareness and champion equality | Launch the #HearHerVoice in the Workplace guidance and work with Hough Bellis to ensure this reaches the widest social housing audience  Collaborate with other women’s networks to share this work and expand our positive influence  Launch Presidential Campaign for 2025-27 (as above) | Share, promote all social media activity | May 2024  August 2024  April 2025 |
| **Strategic Partnerships**  Create and maintain strategic partnerships with key organisations to further our collective voice | Maintain collaborative and reciprocal support arrangements with external organisations with influence in the sector, including Ocean Media, CIH, Nat Fed, UKREiif, NIFA, London Build and SFHA etc | Support and add weight through individual and regional networks | Ongoing |
| **Speaking at External Events**  Ensure our voice is heard at externally organised sector events | Volunteer to speak at relevant national and local sector events to promote our objectives and opportunities | Contributing through the promotion of WISH and gender equality at external events/opportunities | Ongoing |
| **Sponsors Engagement**  Regular engagement with WISH sponsors to amplify our voices in championing equality | Regularly communicate with WISH corporate sponsors, providing updates and the opportunity to contribute to our newsletters | --- | Ongoing |
| **Annual WISH Survey**  Using information gathered and insight obtained from the annual WISH survey to shape action for following year | On an annual basis devise and launch the WISH survey  Analyse results, create infographic and share  Utilise insight gathered to shape IWD press release/external media content | --- | November 2025/26  January 2025/26  March 2025/26 |
| **Press/External Media**  Utilise the opportunities that arise on a cyclical basis to positively influence the sector – annual CX salary survey, IWD etc | Work with external providers, Hough Bellis, to realise opportunities to positively influence the sector through press releases and blogs aligned to key cyclical events | --- | November 2025/26  February 2025/26 |
| **Inspiring Women Campaign**  Design a campaign, utilising a range of media options, to share and promote stories form inspiring women working in the sector | Launch ‘Inspiring Women – If I had a WISH’ campaign podcast series. Highlighting and sharing stories from inspiring women.. | Promote, share, like | July 2024 |