

Women & Girls Health Microgrant

Impact Report



Feb – June 2026



Volunteer Centre
Bexley

Table of Contents

Women & Girls Health Microgrant	1
Impact Report.....	1
Executive Summary.....	3
About the Women & Girls Health (WGH) Microgrant Programme.....	4
Project Highlights.....	6
Beyond Sisterhood Sanctuary.....	6
S.H.E Girls	7
Empowering Refugee and Migrant Women.....	8
The Well Aware Project.....	9
Menstrual Health Essentials.....	10
Emotional & Wellbeing Support After Gestational Diabetes	11
Healthy Relationships & Sexual Health.....	12
Overall Impact	13
Financial Summary	14
Case Studies - Real Stories of Impact	14
Breaking Cultural Barriers to Menopause Support.....	14
Easing Period Poverty.....	15
Understanding Choice and Bodily Autonomy	15
Building Confidence Through Practical Menstrual Education	16
Lessons Learned & Recommendations.....	16
Appendices	17

Executive Summary

The Women & Girls Health Microgrant Programme invested **£12,403** across **seven community organisations** to deliver innovative, community-led projects addressing menstrual health, menopause, sexual health, contraception and pre-pregnancy wellbeing in Bexley.

Collectively, the projects have supported **226 women and girls** from diverse communities, including young people, refugee and migrant women, survivors of domestic abuse, women experiencing financial hardship, mothers, and those facing cultural, language and health inequalities. Through trusted local organisations, participants accessed culturally responsive health education, peer support, practical resources and clear pathways into local health services.

The programme demonstrated that small, targeted grants can have a significant impact. Participants reported increased confidence discussing women's health, improved knowledge of their bodies and available services, reduced isolation, and greater confidence to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing. Alongside education, projects addressed practical barriers by providing menstrual products, multilingual support and safe spaces where conversations could take place without stigma or judgement.

Across all funded projects, participants were signposted to the **Women & Girls Health Hub**, increasing awareness of the service and improving access to ongoing support beyond the lifetime of each project. Equally important, the knowledge, confidence and resources gained by participants are expected to extend beyond those directly involved, creating a ripple effect as women and girls share what they have learned with their families, friends and wider communities.

Beyond individual outcomes, the programme strengthened partnerships between voluntary organisations and health services, improving community engagement and creating sustainable referral pathways for continued support.

Demand for the programme exceeded available funding, highlighting both the need for and value of continued investment in grassroots organisations. Future funding should focus on expanding successful projects, supporting longer-term delivery and strengthening collaboration between community organisations and healthcare providers to ensure more women and girls can access trusted, community-based support.

The Women & Girls Health Microgrant Programme has shown that investing in local communities is an effective way to reduce health inequalities, improve access to information and services, and empower women and girls to take control of their health.

About the Women & Girls Health (WGH) Microgrant Programme

Purpose

The Women & Girls Health (WGH) Microgrant Programme was established to fund community-led projects that improve the health and wellbeing of women and girls across Bexley. By investing in local organisations, the programme aimed to increase awareness, reduce health inequalities and improve access to trusted, culturally appropriate support.

Funding Priorities

Grants of **£500–£2,000** supported projects aligned with one or more of the four priority themes:

- Menstrual Health
- Menopause
- Pre-pregnancy
- Sexual Health & contraception

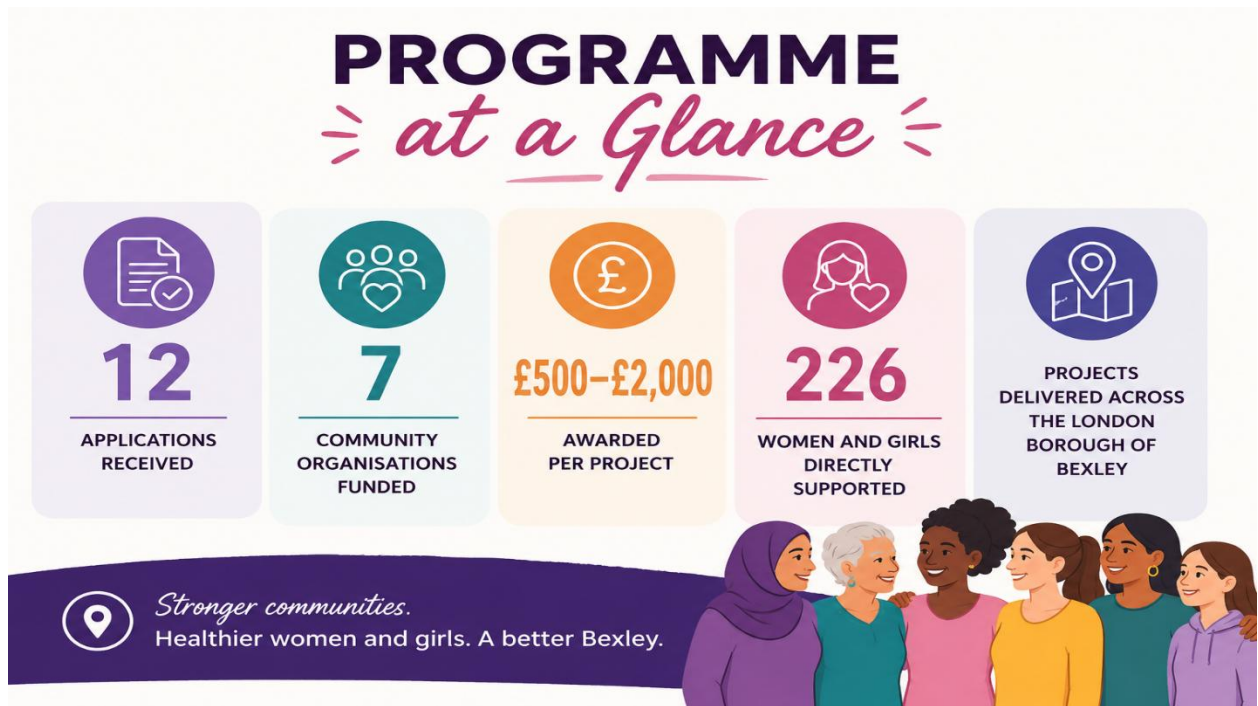
Funded activities included health education, peer support, outreach, wellbeing programmes and initiatives that improved access to services, particularly for communities experiencing the greatest health inequalities.

Eligibility

Funding was open to charities, Community Interest Companies (CICs) and voluntary and community organisations based in Bexley, or those delivering services that directly benefit Bexley residents.

Selection Process

Applications were submitted through a straightforward application process, with guidance available to help organisations understand the funding priorities and eligibility criteria. Proposals were assessed against five key criteria: relevance to the Women & Girls Health Hubs priorities, potential impact, accessibility and inclusion, deliverability, and value for money. Of the 12 applications received, seven projects were successfully funded, representing a diverse range of community organisations working to improve the health and wellbeing of women and girls across Bexley.



Reaching Diverse Communities

The programme successfully engaged women and girls from a wide range of backgrounds, including young people aged 13–18, women of reproductive age, mothers, women experiencing menopause, refugee and migrant women, survivors of domestic abuse, women from low-income households, and women from Black, Asian, Afro-Caribbean, and other ethnically diverse communities. Projects also supported women living with disabilities, those experiencing social isolation, and individuals facing language, cultural and financial barriers to accessing healthcare.

Borough-wide Delivery

Projects were delivered across communities in Welling, Erith, Belvedere, Bexleyheath, Thamesmead, Northumberland Heath, Abbey Wood, Sidcup, Barnehurst and Bostall, ensuring support was accessible to women and girls throughout the borough.

Project Themes

While each project aligned with one or more of the Women & Girls Health Hub priority areas, together they addressed a broad range of women's health and wellbeing needs through:

- Health education and awareness

- Peer support and emotional wellbeing
- Menstrual health and period poverty
- Healthy relationships and sexual health
- Menopause support
- Pre-pregnancy and maternal wellbeing
- Community engagement and reducing health inequalities
- Culturally responsive and inclusive health services
- Intergenerational learning and support between women and girls

Project Highlights

Beyond Sisterhood Sanctuary

Project Lead/Organisation: Beyond Braidz CIC

Grant Award: £1000

Location: Bexley (community-based delivery)

Duration: February – May 2026

Challenge

Many women and girls lack safe, inclusive spaces to openly discuss health and wellbeing. Cultural stigma, limited access to trusted information and a lack of intergenerational dialogue can make it difficult to seek support, particularly around topics such as menstrual health, menopause, mental wellbeing and healthy relationships.

Solution

The Beyond Sisterhood Sanctuary created a welcoming space where women and girls from different generations could come together to learn, share experiences and support one another. Funding enabled the delivery of interactive workshops, group discussions and wellbeing activities designed to increase health knowledge, encourage open conversations and strengthen community connections.

Results

- 25 women and girls participated in the programme.
- Delivered a series of interactive workshops and wellbeing sessions.

- Facilitated intergenerational conversations on key women's health topics.
- Increased awareness of local health services and support available within the community.

Impact

Participants reported feeling more confident discussing women's health, better informed about available support and more connected to others in their community. The project helped break down stigma by creating a safe environment where women and girls could share experiences, learn from one another and build supportive relationships across generations.

Lessons Learned

Creating an informal, community-led space encouraged honest conversations and high levels of participation. Bringing together different generations proved particularly valuable, allowing women and girls to learn from one another's experiences. Future programmes could extend the number of sessions to build on the relationships formed and reach more women across the borough.

Participant Feedback

"The sessions helped me understand that these conversations shouldn't be something we're embarrassed about. It was comforting to hear from other women and learn from their experiences."

S.H.E Girls

Project Lead/Organisation: Active Horizons

Grant Award: £1963.25

Location: Bexley

Duration: February – May 2026

Challenge

Many young girls lack access to accurate, age-appropriate information about menstrual health, puberty and emotional wellbeing. Stigma often prevents open conversations, leaving many to rely on social media for information, where content can be inaccurate, misleading or unreliable.

Solution

The S.H.E (Sexual Health Education) Girls Project delivered interactive workshops that provided a safe space for girls to learn about menstrual health, puberty, self-esteem and wellbeing through engaging discussions and activities.

Results

- **16 girls** participated.
- Delivered a programme of health, body positivity, choice and safety in sexual health.
- Increased awareness of menstrual health and local support services.

Impact

Girls reported feeling more confident discussing periods and asking questions about their health. The project helped normalise conversations around menstruation, contraception, and sexual health while encouraging participants to seek support when needed.

Lessons Learned

Creating a relaxed and interactive environment encouraged participation and honest discussion. Future programmes could involve parents or carers to reinforce learning beyond the sessions.

Participant Feedback

"I learnt things I never knew before and now I feel more comfortable talking about periods."

Empowering Refugee and Migrant Women

Project Lead/Organisation: Afghanistan & Central Asian Association (ACAA)

Grant Award: £1963.25

Location: Bexley

Duration: February – May 2026

Challenge

Refugee and migrant women often face language, cultural and social barriers that limit access to health information and local services.

Solution

The project delivered culturally sensitive workshops covering menopause, menstrual health, sexual health and navigating the NHS, supported by interpreters and multilingual resources.

Results

- **45 women** participated.

- Delivered a series of community health workshops.
- Improved awareness of local healthcare services and support available.

Impact

Participants reported increased confidence in accessing healthcare and a better understanding of women's health topics. The project reduced isolation while empowering women to make informed decisions about their health.

Lessons Learned

Delivering sessions in familiar community settings and using interpreters significantly improved engagement. Continued partnership working will help reach even more women in the future.

Participant Feedback

"Now I understand where I can go for help and I feel much more confident speaking to health professionals."

The Well Aware Project

Project Lead/Organisation: Bexley Women's Aid

Grant Award: £1850

Location: Bexley

Duration: February – May 2026

Challenge

Women experiencing domestic abuse often face additional barriers to accessing health information, support services and opportunities to prioritise their wellbeing.

Solution

The Well Aware Project delivered wellbeing sessions focused on menopause, sexual health and emotional wellbeing within a safe, trauma-informed environment.

Results

- **52 women** participated.
- Delivered health education and wellbeing sessions.
- Increased awareness of specialist health and community services.

Impact

Participants reported greater confidence discussing their health and felt more informed about the support available. The sessions also helped reduce isolation and encouraged women to prioritise their wellbeing.

Lessons Learned

Combining health information with peer support created a trusted environment where women felt safe to engage. Future programmes could increase session frequency to meet demand.

Participant Feedback

"It was reassuring to know I wasn't alone and that support is available."

Menstrual Health Essentials

Project Lead/Organisation: Mama2Mama Baby Essentials

Grant Award: £1963.25

Location: Across Bexley

Duration: February – May 2026

Challenge

Many women and girls experiencing financial hardship struggle to afford menstrual products, affecting their health, dignity and wellbeing.

Solution

The project distributed dignity-first menstrual health packs containing period products, toiletries, comfort items and information about local support services through trusted community partners.

Results

- **60 women and girls** supported.
- Menstrual health packs distributed through community referral partners.
- Strengthened referral pathways with local organisations and health services.

Impact

The project helped reduce period poverty while ensuring women and girls could access essential products with dignity. Participants also received information and signposting to wider health and wellbeing support.

Lessons Learned

Working through trusted community organisations enabled support to reach those most in need. Expanding referral partnerships would increase the project's reach even further.

Participant Feedback

"Receiving this pack took away one less thing to worry about and made me feel supported."

Emotional & Wellbeing Support After Gestational Diabetes

Project Lead/Organisation: The Unlikely Mummy

Grant Award: £1,700

Location: Bostal Community Library, Bexley

Duration: February – June 2026

Challenge

Women diagnosed with gestational diabetes often receive limited emotional support once clinical care ends, leaving many feeling isolated and uncertain about future pregnancies.

Solution

The project delivered peer-led sessions combining lived experience, practical information, mindfulness, creative activities and group discussion to support emotional wellbeing and pre-pregnancy health.

Results

- **18 women** participated, so far.
- **6 sessions** delivered, with additional sessions planned.
- Women attended from across the borough, aged **20–64**.

Impact

Participants felt less isolated, more informed and more confident managing their health between pregnancies. The project fostered supportive peer relationships while encouraging informed decision-making for future pregnancies.

Lessons Learned

Creative activities alongside discussion helped women feel more comfortable sharing experiences. Future delivery would benefit from reunion sessions and stronger referral pathways from healthcare professionals.

Participant Feedback

"I wish something like this had existed after my first pregnancy. Being able to talk to other mums who understand has made me feel more hopeful and less alone."

Healthy Relationships & Sexual Health

Project Lead/Organisation: Thrive Impact CIC

Grant Award: £1963.25

Location: Bexley

Duration: March – April 2026

Challenge

Many women lack opportunities to discuss healthy relationships, consent, sexual health and reproductive choice in a safe, supportive environment.

Solution

The programme delivered two women-only cohorts covering healthy relationships, consent, coercive behaviour, contraception, sexual health and local support services. Participants also received wellbeing resource packs to reinforce learning.

Results

- **2 programme cohorts** delivered, with attendance of 15 women.
- Sessions covered healthy relationships, consent, contraception, reproductive coercion and sexual health.
- Resource packs provided to all participants.

Impact

Participants reported increased confidence, a better understanding of bodily autonomy and greater awareness of local support services. The programme created a safe space for women to reflect on personal experiences and make informed choices.

Lessons Learned

Providing a welcoming environment and practical resources encouraged participation and honest discussion. Running multiple cohorts enabled women who lacked confidence initially to engage when they felt ready.

Participant Feedback

"The programme helped me realise that contraception is my choice and that I have the right to make decisions about my own body."

Overall Impact

The Women & Girls Health Microgrant Programme demonstrated the value of investing in grassroots organisations to deliver trusted, community-led health initiatives.

Collectively, the seven funded projects reached **226 women and girls** across Bexley, and counting, providing accessible information, practical support and safe spaces to discuss topics that are often surrounded by stigma.

The programme increased awareness of menstrual health, menopause, sexual health, healthy relationships and pre-pregnancy care, while improving confidence to access local services and make informed decisions about health and wellbeing.

Projects successfully engaged women and girls from diverse communities, including young people, refugee and migrant women, survivors of domestic abuse, women from ethnically diverse backgrounds, low-income households, mothers, women experiencing menopause and those facing language, cultural or financial barriers to healthcare.

Beyond the numbers, the programme strengthened community connections, reduced social isolation and empowered participants through peer support and shared lived experiences. Many projects also built stronger partnerships with local organisations and health services, creating clearer pathways into ongoing support.

Collective Outcomes

- **226 women and girls** directly supported across Bexley.
- **7 community organisations** funded to deliver tailored, community-led projects.
- Increased knowledge and confidence across the four Women & Girls Health priority areas.
- Improved access to trusted information, local services and support.
- Reduced stigma by creating safe spaces for open conversations about women's health.
- Stronger community partnerships and referral pathways.
- Greater inclusion of communities experiencing the greatest health inequalities.

Financial Summary

Organisation	Project	Grant Awarded
Active Horizons	S.H.E Girls Project	£1963.25
Afghanistan & Central Asian Association	Empowering Refugee & Migrant Women	£1963.25
Bexley Women's Aid	The Well Aware Project	£1850
Beyond Braidz CIC	Beyond Sisterhood Sanctuary	£1,000
Mama2Mama Baby Essentials	Menstrual Health Essentials	£1963.25
The Unlikely Mummy	Emotional & Wellbeing Support after Gestational Diabetes	£1,700
Thrive Impact CIC	Healthy Relationships & Sexual Health Programme	£1963.25
Total		£12,403

Case Studies - Real Stories of Impact

Breaking Cultural Barriers to Menopause Support

The Challenge

Masuda comes from a community where conversations about women's health are rarely discussed openly. When she began experiencing symptoms of menopause, she felt uncertain, anxious and unsupported. Language barriers and cultural differences made it difficult to access information through her GP and other health services.

The Intervention

After attending ACAA's menopause support sessions, Masuda found a safe, culturally

sensitive environment where she could openly discuss her experiences. Being supported by facilitators who understood her language and cultural background helped her feel comfortable asking questions and learning about menopause.

The Impact

Masuda gained a much better understanding of menopause and felt more confident managing this stage of her life. She reflected that she wished a service like this had been available during her pregnancies and now plans to share what she has learned with other women in her community, helping to break down stigma around women's health.

Easing Period Poverty

The Challenge

One mother of two explained that rising household costs had made purchasing menstrual products increasingly difficult. She often had to prioritise food and other essential expenses for her family over her own needs.

The Intervention

Through the project, she received a menstrual health pack containing essential period products.

The Impact

The support eased immediate financial pressure and allowed her to redirect limited household income towards other essentials. She described feeling "seen and cared for" during a particularly challenging time, demonstrating how practical support can also improve wellbeing and dignity.

Understanding Choice and Bodily Autonomy

The Challenge

One participant had spent years blaming herself for her child's disability. During the programme, discussions around consent, reproductive coercion, healthy relationships and contraception encouraged her to reflect on her own experiences.

The Intervention

Through facilitated conversations in a safe and supportive environment, she explored concepts of bodily autonomy, reproductive choice and healthy relationships.

The Impact

The participant came to understand that contraception and pregnancy are her choices, and that being in a relationship does not give another person the right to make decisions

about her body. The programme increased her confidence, strengthened her understanding of consent and bodily autonomy, and helped challenge long-held feelings of self-blame.

Building Confidence Through Practical Menstrual Education

The Challenge

One young participant shared that when she started her period, she had never been shown how to manage menstrual products or dispose of them properly. At school, she often felt anxious and embarrassed, unsure of what to do and worried about being judged.

The Intervention

During the Beyond Braidz workshops, participants received practical demonstrations on menstrual hygiene, free menstrual products and the opportunity to ask questions in a safe, non-judgemental environment.

The Impact

The participant developed practical knowledge and greater confidence in managing her period with dignity. Her story highlights a wider issue faced by many young girls, who begin menstruating without receiving basic practical guidance, leaving them to navigate this important stage of life alone.

Lessons Learned & Recommendations

Lessons Learned

Community organisations are uniquely placed to reach women and girls who may not engage with traditional health services. Small grants enabled trusted, culturally responsive projects that built confidence, reduced stigma and connected participants to ongoing support.

Challenges

Demand exceeded available funding across several projects. While the funding enabled meaningful short-term impact, organisations identified a need for longer-term investment to sustain engagement and reach more people.

Recommendations & Next Steps

- Continue investing in community-led organisations that have trusted relationships with local communities.

- Increase funding to scale successful projects and meet growing demand.
- Prioritise longer-term funding to create sustained health outcomes rather than one-off interventions.
- Strengthen collaboration between community organisations, healthcare providers and local partners to improve referral pathways and share expertise.
- Continue targeting communities experiencing the greatest health inequalities through culturally responsive and accessible approaches.

Appendices

Content from across the projects delivered as part of the women & girls health microgrant.

Feedback - Women & Girls Wellness Events







Supporting Menstrual Health
With Compassion



