

Project Evaluation

Project:

Girls: Designing Our Space

Date:

August 2026



address: Fullcircle nw CIC
2 Clipsley Crescent
Oldham
OL4 2TG

website: www.fullcirdenwcic.co.uk

email: info@fullcirdenwcic.co.uk

Community Interest Company Registered in England No: 07610753

1. About Us

Fullcircle NW CIC (hereafter referred to as *Fullcircle*) is a not-for-profit organisation based in Oldham. We operate as a Community Interest Company (CIC) limited by guarantee and are officially registered in England with Companies House and the CIC Regulator under registration number 07610753. As a CIC, we are legally bound to uphold an asset lock, ensuring that all profits are reinvested to create a meaningful and lasting impact within the communities we serve.

Fullcircle was established in response to growing concerns about the effects of the current economic climate on local communities. In the face of significant cuts to government spending, many local service providers have been unable to maintain essential support for children, young people, and wider communities. Our mission is to address these challenges head-on by working in partnership with public and third sector organisations to meet increasing demand. We are committed to delivering innovative, collaborative, and high-quality services that make a real difference.

Our work focuses on three core areas:

1. Community Development
2. Children and Young People
3. Alternative Provision

Fullcircle has built a strong reputation for providing professional, innovative, and community-focused services that are both responsive and effective, tailored to the unique needs of local neighbourhoods.

Our key aims are to:

- Inspire and empower individuals to actively engage with issues affecting their communities
- Deliver innovative, responsive, and effective services that meet community needs
- Offer young people the best opportunities to reach their full potential



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2. Project Summary

The Girls: Designing Our Space project was developed by Fullcircle nw CIC as an innovative youth engagement project designed to give girls an opportunity to explore creativity, technology and urban design while developing their confidence and having a genuine voice in relation to the spaces and communities around them.

The project was delivered in partnership with Inclusive Bytes CIC and Ridge, with funding and support from First Choice Homes Oldham (FCHO). Participants used GIS (Geographic Information System) mapping to assess how safe their local area felt, backed up their observations with real data and criminological theory, and turned their findings into concrete proposals for improvement, which they then presented directly to officers from First Choice Homes, Oldham Council, and their own parents.



The project was particularly significant because it brought together youth work, housing, digital technology and community consultation. Rather than young people simply being consulted about their community, the programme aimed to give participants practical tools and experiences through which they could explore, analyse and propose improvements to the spaces around them

The project set out to answer two central questions:

- Whether a housing association could work effectively with young people through place-based consultation and community design.
- Whether meaningful involvement in shaping local places could also generate awareness of, and interest in, careers within the built environment, including areas such as planning, architecture and construction.

The project positioned girls not as participants in a youth activity, but as researchers, analysts and advocates for their community. equipped with evidence, ideas, and the confidence to present them to decision-makers.



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3. Project Aims and Objectives

The project aimed to:

- Give girls a meaningful opportunity to influence the design of their local environment.
- Develop confidence and self-expression.
- Introduce participants to digital technology and creative digital tools.
- Develop practical STEM and technology skills.
- Encourage teamwork, communication and problem solving.
- Increase awareness of careers linked to the built environment.
- Strengthen relationships between young people, community organisations and housing partners.
- Test a model of youth-led consultation that could potentially be replicated in future community projects.

4. Delivery

The project was delivered at Nelson Way Community Centre, (Chadderton South) for girls aged 12–18, and was structured around a clear, progressive methodology that moved participants from observation through to evidence, theory, ideas, and finally a public presentation to decision-makers.

GIS Mapping - How Our Places Feel

Participants were introduced to GIS (Geographic Information System) mapping as a way of capturing and communicating how their local area felt to them. Using a colour-coded pin system, girls mapped their community according to three categories:

- Red pins - areas that felt unsafe, with notes on why
- Green pins - areas that felt safe
- Amber pins - areas that depended on context, for example somewhere that felt fine during the day but unsafe after dark

The amber category proved particularly insightful: It showed the young women's true experiences of public space, the fact that the same street or park can feel completely different depending on the time of day, who else is there, or the level of lighting. This is the kind of lived, experiential knowledge that rarely makes it into formal planning processes, and the project created a structured way to capture and communicate it.



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Drone Workshop - Ridge and Partners



The second session opened with Freya from Ridge and Partners, a building surveyor and specialist drone operator whose involvement was made possible through Ridge's social value commitment to First Choice Homes Oldham. Before anything else, Freya shared her personal story: how she came to work in the built environment, what it feels like to be one of very few women in a male-dominated profession, and why she is passionate about changing that. For a group of girls thinking

about their futures, this was a powerful and honest starting point.

Freya then introduced participants to how she uses drones in her professional work, bringing the technology to life not as a gadget but as a genuine tool of the trade. She also introduced colleagues from Vibe Immersive, who gave the girls direct, hands-on experience with 360 scanners, drones and VR headsets. This combination of personal story, professional context and practical technology made for a session that was as much about career possibility as it was about kit and set the tone for everything that followed.



Backing Up Our Views - Evidence, Data and Theory

One of the most distinctive elements of the project was the way it challenged participants to go beyond opinion and find evidence and theory to support their observations. If the girls said an area felt too dark, they questioned how to measure light levels. If they identified somewhere as dangerous, they looked at how to access and interpret crime statistics for that area.

The girls also engaged with the Broken Window Theory, the criminological concept that visible signs of neglect and disorder (broken windows, unused notice boards, faded and tired signage) signal that a space is uncared for, which in turn can lead to further deterioration and reduced feelings of safety. They used it as a framework in their presentations, pointing to specific examples in their local area, such as neglected notice boards and worn-out signage, and explaining what those things communicate to the people who use those spaces.



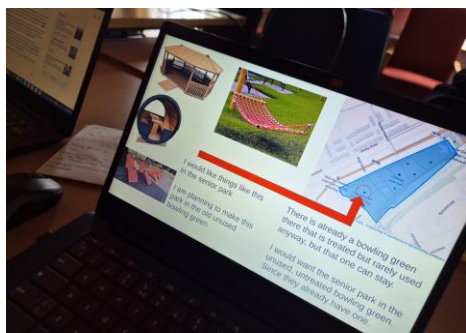
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Ideas for Change and Presentation to Decision-Makers



Participants added 'change' pins to their maps, each with a specific proposal attached. They then presented their findings to officers from First Choice Homes Oldham and Oldham Council, and their parents. Their recommendations included:

- A dedicated dog park
- Improved seating near the bowling green
- Additional lighting throughout the park
- CCTV coverage
- Refreshed notice boards and signage, addressing visible signs of neglect
- An interactive digital map for the park, linking to community challenges, games, local history talks and videos



5. Partnership Working

Partnership working was central to the project's success and to what made it distinctive. Each partner brought something different to the table, and together they created an offer that none could have delivered independently.

Fullcircle acted as the lead organisation, managing the project overall and bringing more than a decade of experience working with children and young people in Oldham. Our role was to create a safe, supportive environment in which participants could engage confidently and to ensure the project was rooted in genuine youth work practice throughout.

Inclusive Bytes brought specialist digital and STEM expertise to the programme. Their organisational model is built around making digital skills genuinely accessible and creating practical opportunities for young people to learn through doing, a natural complement to Fullcircle's youth work expertise.

First Choice Homes Oldham (FCHO) involvement was particularly meaningful because the project was designed around the relationship between young people and the places where they live. As a housing association operating in the same communities as our participants, FCHO brought both funding and a genuine stake in the outcomes.



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FCHO's role extended beyond funding: their officers formed part of the audience at the final presentation, receiving the girls' proposals directly. This created a genuine line of accountability, young people's ideas reaching the organisations best placed to act on them. The project also demonstrated how housing associations can engage young residents as active contributors to community development, rather than simply as recipients of services.

Ridge and Partners joined the project through their social value commitment to First Choice Homes Oldham, a commitment that directly enabled one of the programme's most distinctive elements.

Ridge donated the time of Freya, a specialist drone operator, to deliver careers talk and a hands-on drone workshop with the girls. Freya's contribution amounted to an in-kind contribution of £2,193.75 to the project.

This is a significant example of social value in action: a professional consultancy leveraging its expertise and its client relationships to directly benefit young people in the communities those clients serve. Ridge's involvement also gave participants a direct, personal connection to careers in the built environment, helping to make professions like surveying, planning and design feel real and accessible.

6. What Worked Well

Several aspects of the project were particularly successful:

- **A genuinely different youth offer**, the project gave girls access to drone technology, GIS mapping, data analysis and criminological theory. This depth and novelty was a real strength in building engagement and sustaining it.
- **Evidence-based methodology**, the combination of GIS mapping, data tools and the red/green/amber pin system gave participants a structured, rigorous way to capture and communicate their experience of public space. moving beyond opinion to advocacy backed by evidence.
- **Creative and forward-thinking recommendations**, alongside practical proposals (lighting, CCTV, seating), the girls suggested an interactive digital map linking to challenges, games, history talks and videos, a innovative idea that reflects how young people think about public space and community engagement.
- **Youth voice with real purpose**, participants produced evidence-based proposals and presented them directly to FCHO officers, Oldham Council officers and their parents.



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- **A strong and complementary partnership**, Fullcircle, Inclusive Bytes, FCHO and Ridge each brought something distinct. The combination created an offer stronger than any partner could have delivered alone.
- **Ridge's social value contribution** demonstrated how professional firms can contribute genuinely to community projects through social value commitments and gave participants a direct, personal connection to careers in the built environment.

7. Challenges and Learning



As with any pilot project, Girls: Designing Our Space generated useful learning that will help shape future delivery.

- Project length and pacing - some sessions felt very full. A longer project with end-of-day recaps and start-of-day refreshers would give young people more time to absorb and consolidate what they have learned.
- Participant recruitment - reaching the girls who would benefit most requires continued investment in targeted outreach through trusted referral routes.
- Evaluation and impact measurement - A more structured pre- and post-project evaluation framework would better capture changes in confidence, civic awareness, and career interest.

8. Overall Impact and Conclusion

Ten young people aged 11–15 took part in Girls: Designing Our Space and what they produced, and said, speaks for itself.

The project delivered value across three areas:

- Young people - Building confidence, critical thinking, digital skills and the experience of presenting evidence-based proposals to real decision-makers.
- Communities - Producing specific, actionable recommendations for their local park and public spaces, grounded in lived experience and supported by data and theory.



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- Partners - Testing and validating a collaborative model for youth-led community consultation with clear potential to grow.

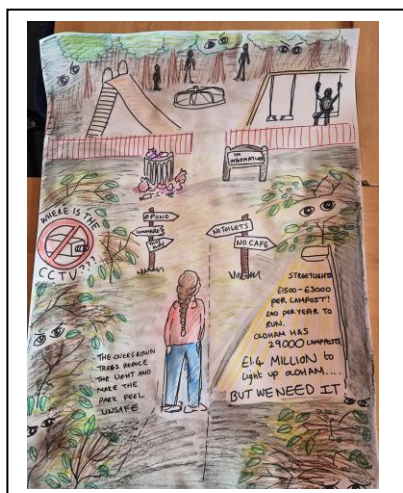
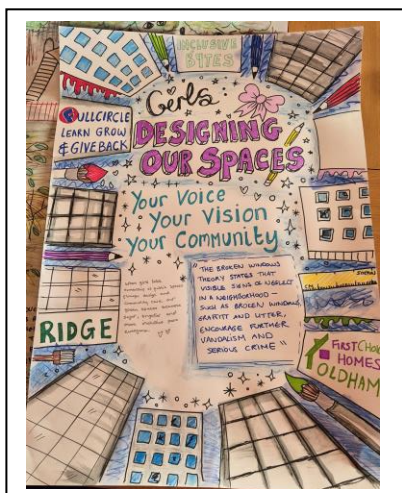
The impact of the project is perhaps best captured in the young people's own words:

"I loved the drone session, I just wish we had more time." Young person, aged 12

"I never realised it was trees that could make me feel unsafe, simple things like keeping them cut back can help improve the park and make it feel safer." Young person, aged 11

"I never thought I could stand up and present in front of important people." Young Person aged 15

This project is a strong foundation for a longer-term Girls' Youth Voice and Place-Making programme. The girls' proposals will be formally shared with Oldham Council and the Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board, ensuring their ideas enter the right conversations and that they hear what comes of them.



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