



# Young Women Lead Fife



How to create  
a safe, inclusive and  
welcoming community  
space.

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## Code

Welcoming - ● Safety - ● Inclusivity - ●

## **Who are we?**

We are Young Women Lead Fife, a group of young women and non-binary people who live & work in Fife. We are from a wide range of backgrounds, and all have different lived experiences. Young Women Lead is a programme facilitated by The Young Women's Movement.

## **Why we made this..**

As young women living in Fife we feel like we have something to contribute that could be useful to your space. Whilst we are a group with diverse lived experience, we acknowledge that we do not represent all identities that make up Fife. We want to give you ideas on how to improve rather than completely change your space.



## Welcoming

Making a space welcoming is important for any group/place, but there are specific things you could consider to welcome and bring in young women and non-binary people, as well as improve the space for everyone.

## Physical Space Measures

- Tea and coffee but also the provision of cold water, non-caffeinated drinks and refreshments.
- Map of the space on entry to the building with key information for the building incl. phone numbers/exits etc. ●
- Online map and where possible walk through video to ensure people can have as much information before they go in as possible (good for those with space-related anxiety and additional mobility needs but useful for everyone!)
- Clean bathrooms with additional provisions to make the space welcoming - deodorants, a wide selection of menstrual products, lighting and mirrors.
- Make it clear in front of the building the toilets are accessible to all / without needing to buy something.



## Physical Space Measures

- Accessible toilets and provision of a range of gendered and non gendered toilets, blocks and individual cubicles. ●
- Consider having a comfy reception where groups can meet up before entering meeting rooms or spaces, especially if they haven't been there before (consider tables, low chairs, space for wheelchairs, buggies etc.)
- Blank frames for easily replaceable signs (for groups/meetings etc) to allow the easy finding of your group/meeting, rather than wandering about the building.

## Atmosphere and including young people

- Commission/offer to host young people's art, or local artists' work to reflect the community.
- Ensure some images of the groups that are hosted, and images of young people are clearly displayed.
- Playing music or local radio, if appropriate, playlist/suggestions.
- Consider providing local training around engagement with young people and how to make them feel welcomed.
- Consider including young people in the design of the atmosphere, volunteers to put up the boards, and suggestion boxes for young people's ideas.
- Make the area as open and light as possible to reduce the feeling of being trapped or lost, narrow dark corridors.
- Consider designated quiet spaces and sensory provision – creating corners rather than whole rooms depending on available space. ●



## Safety

Safety is a concern for any space, from fire safety to staff safety and safeguarding – but the following could be considered specifically for women's safety.

### General

- Offer free training wherever possible, to staff and service users.
- Ensure all risk assessments are current and regularly updated if needed.
- Work out who can be leaders on safety matters within the team.
- Lone worker training.
- Consider specifically recruiting a trustee under 25.
- Signposting folder or resources to be kept updated – so users of your space can be signposted to trusted services or charities.
- Having travel information available such as local trusted taxi operators.

### Physical

- Consider the security of the sign-in book – some people won't want to have their name displayed e.g. if doing recovery group work etc – a confidentiality statement on the door. ●
- Photos only taken and shared with permission.
- Asking anyone booking a room or entering the space whether they have any access needs, to make sure the space can be adapted.
- Lighting of paths and routes to the area from the street makes a space less intimidating.



## Emotional

- Safe space agreement for groups/venues – collaborative, never tolerating repeated inappropriate language or behaviour, live document – have on display.
- Consider signage that clearly welcomes people who are often excluded – hearing loop, dementia friendly, LGBT+ friendly, guide dog-friendly, consider what you can add to this without being performative – ensure you're offering provision, rather than just saying you're friendly. ●
- Make sure groups are appropriate for young and adult people to mix OR if separating groups, consider a facilitator to bring people together.
- Trauma-informed training – see Fife Violence Against Women Partnership including domestic abuse, stalking and other gender-based violence relevant free training.
- Staff that feel empowered to challenge inappropriate behaviour, and clear on what that looks like – not to be overburdened or burnt out. Consider relevant training/development days for staff.



## **Inclusivity**

### **It is important to understand what we mean by Inclusivity..**

- Inclusivity is about creating an environment, space, society or culture that allows everyone to feel respected and welcomed. This respect is unconditional of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or any other characteristic.

### **Why does inclusivity matter?**

- An inclusive environment is one in which diversity is recognised as a valuable strength. You will know if your space is an inclusive one if it fosters a sense of belonging and helps create a more equitable and just society.

### **How can I be more inclusive?**

- Acting in more inclusive ways means you have to address the different barriers that stop people from accessing a space or participating fully in an event.
- Inclusivity involves more than just the passive awareness that people face a variety of challenges and barriers in order to feel like their presence is truly welcomed within a given environment.
- That's why it's essential to make sure you promote equal access, opportunity, and rights for all individuals. You can also go one step further in trying to welcome everyone is to embrace diversity as a strength that makes communities and groups that see this diversity as a positive instead of a weakness.



## **Inclusivity**

### **Accessibility**

- Stairs that have illuminated strips at the steps ledges so that those with impaired vision are able to navigate themselves.
- If you have a ramp at the front entrance, it is important to make sure it fits in accordance with regulations as these are essential for the safe handling of wheelchairs.
- If there is no ramp you can consider using the back/service entry ways but you should be aware of how safe it is.
- If this service entryway is located at the back of a dark alleyway it might seem unappealing to young women who could feel especially vulnerable having to go in and out of the space.
- Make sure to advertise the accessibility aspects of your space wherever possible - website/leaflet/advert so that people are aware it is an accessible space.
- Ensure there movability throughout space.
- Make sure that there is enough space for wheelchair users to pass through a width of anything over 1.2 meters should suffice.



## **Inclusivity**

### **Neurodiversity**

Everyone is different and experiences the world in different ways. This is called neurodiversity. Ways in which neurodiversity can be accounted for within a space is by acknowledging that there is a wide range of needs and not everyone's individual needs can always be catered for. However, there are basics that will at least help if you truly want your space to consider neurodiversity.

Consider the following to make your space inclusive for a neurodiverse group of people gathering in a space together:

- A quiet area within your space
- A quiet hour where music is not played

Remember that even if you know that someone is neurodivergent then that doesn't automatically mean that you can guess what they need based off of their diagnosis. Every individual is unique and has a varied set of needs.

- If you are aware of those attending your event/gathering then perhaps consider reaching out to all members and asking if there are any reasonable adjustments they may need.



## **Inclusivity**

### **Identity**

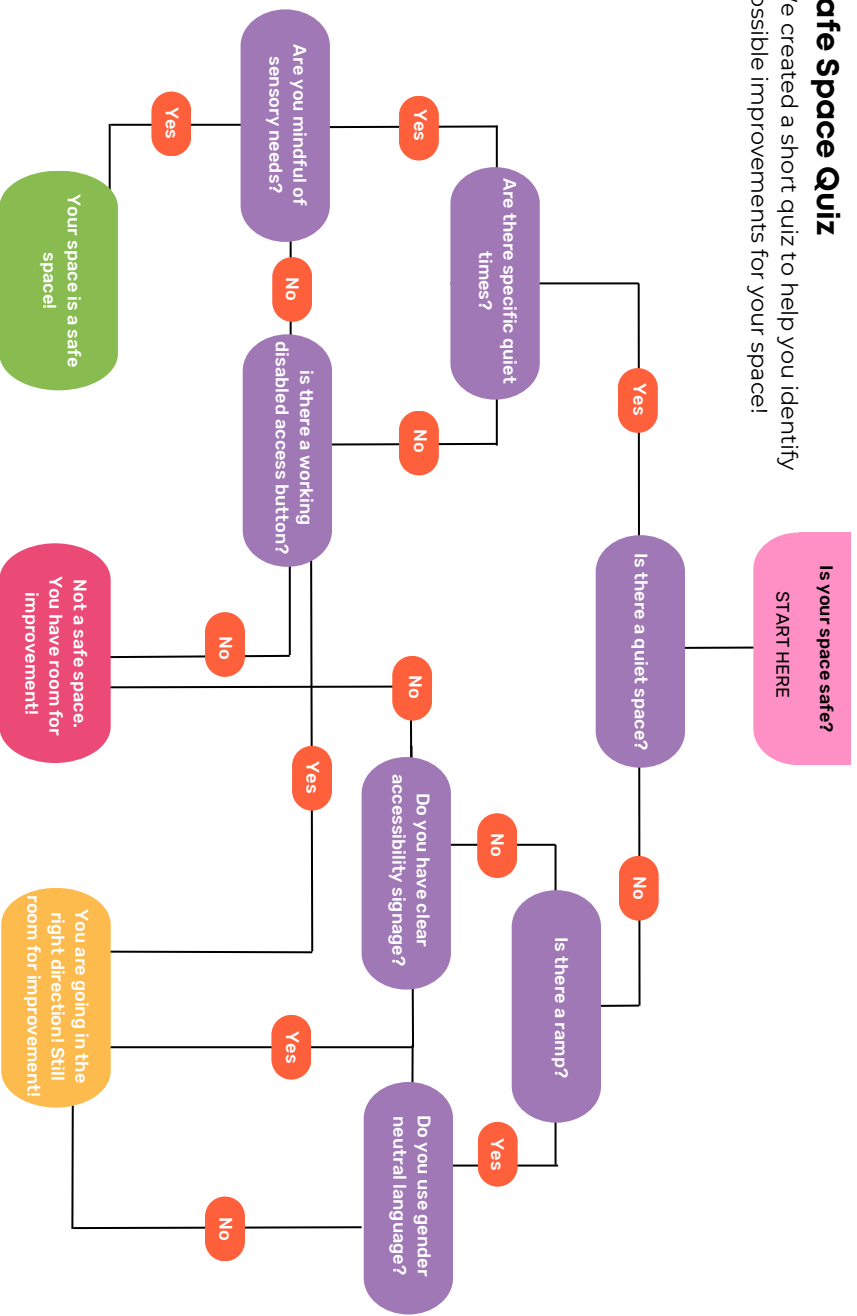
Just as everyone has different brains and so a varied way of engaging with the outside world, a group of people will have varied identities. It is important to make sure that your space demonstrates a willingness and desire to attract everyone regardless of their identity.

Aspects of personal identity such as sexual orientation, race, gender identity or any other protected characteristics are all examples of individual identity.



## Safe Space Quiz

We created a short quiz to help you identify possible improvements for your space!



**We wanted to thank Lauren Morsley for creating the amazing graphics for our toolkit.**

