

Appendix 5: Life Chances for Girls – Future First Careers Expo 2025



Newark and Sherwood colleagues attending the Future First Careers Expo 2025

Background

Newark and Sherwood District Council, in partnership with the Lincoln College Group host the annual Future First Careers Expo 2025. Now in its eighth year, the Expo continues to be a cornerstone event for students in Years 11 to 13 across the district and Lincolnshire, offering them a unique opportunity to explore a wide range of career and educational pathways.

The idea behind the Careers Expo is to enable businesses to meet and engage with their future work force. To talk about apprenticeship pathways that they may offer as well as raise the aspiration and inspiration of the young people who attend therefore opening up the world of work from many different sectors.

On Thursday 13 November 2025, officers from Newark and Sherwood District Council hosted a stall at the annual Future First Expo 2025, held at the Lady Eastwood Centre, Newark Showground. The Expo is well established and is attended by approximately 1500 students in years 11 to 13 from schools across Newark, Sherwood, and Lincolnshire, providing them with access to a diverse range of career and educational opportunities through various organisations. A team of officers from Newark and Sherwood District Council already attend this event annually to promote apprenticeships, healthy lifestyles and other key messages.

Alignment to the working group

The Life Chances for Girls working group recognised this event as a valuable opportunity to connect with a broad and diverse group of young people from across the district, providing them with resources, guidance, and support specifically aimed at enhancing the life chances and outcomes of girls. As such, one of the recommendations of the working group was to attend and

share key messages about safety, wellbeing and career opportunities in an accessible and engaging manner.

Approach

While preparing for the expo, the team prioritised challenging gender stereotypes by showcasing roles typically linked to a specific gender. To support this, a female staff member from the Housing Maintenance & Asset Management Business Unit, working in a sector traditionally seen as male-dominated, attended the event serving as a real-life example and role model by sharing professional experiences with attendees.

In addition to this, we shared resources and handouts that young people could take away from the event including NSDC branded water bottles, stress balls, notebooks, and highlighters. We also offered customised wristbands, with a QR code linking to the council's apprenticeship webpage.

Reflections

The Future First Careers Expo was established with the aim of empowering students with a clear understanding of the wide range of opportunities available to them after school, and to help them map out a path to future success.

Focusing on life chances for girls, the event showcased real-world career pathways and opened conversations about opportunities, making them feel tangible and achievable.

A key theme was the abundance of opportunities within the district and at the Council itself. Many girls visited the stand, showing interest in fields such as mechanics, construction, and joinery. Having a female staff member in a similar role, demonstrating that women can and do succeed in these sectors, proved both inspiring and empowering for attendees.

Looking ahead

Building on the success of this year's stall, our aspiration is to strengthen efforts that improve life chances for girls, including more interactive opportunities at future events to showcase diverse career pathways and increased representation of female role models from non-traditional sectors to inspire confidence and ambition.

By taking these steps, this is another way we ensure that every girl sees a future full of possibilities.