

Gender Justice Portfolio Review 2025: Invitation to tender

1. Summary

We are looking to work with an external consultant from October – December 2025, to carry out a short review to inform our work on Gender Justice. We estimate the work will take 12 days and have a budget of £9,000. We're looking for someone with strong analytical skills, who is good at listening, comfortable working with varied sources of information, and can summarise their findings clearly and simply. Knowledge of the gender justice sector (including violence against women and girls, gender equality and trans rights) is essential.

If you are available to do 12 days work, beginning in October 2025, please send a CV (including day rates) and links to your work to communications@esmeefairbairn.org.uk by 5pm on Wednesday 1 October.

2. Background and context

Esmee Fairbairn Foundation's strategy was launched in October 2020, setting out ten year impact goals and five year priorities. These priorities were revisited and relaunched in 2022, with Gender Justice as one of five A Fairer Future priorities. In 2023 we decided to extend the strategy and funding priorities to the end of 2027. As we reach the midpoint, and look to the direction of the strategy beyond 2027, we want to: assess where we are in 2025 and how well our funding is meeting our stated funding outcomes; revisit the context for Gender Justice work in the UK and to what degree our outcomes are meeting the challenges seen by the sector. We will use what we learn about the changing context for Gender Justice, and what progress our work and funding has made so far, to inform our future work.

Esmee Fairbairn Foundation's 2022 Gender Justice strategy

Gender justice requires changes to systems, policy and practice so that everyone's rights are recognised and protected.

We will work with others to ensure that women and girls can live in safety and fulfil their potential, and that transgender and non-binary people's voices are heard.

Long-term outcomes

- Gender based violence is reduced through the delivery of preventative work.
- Trans and non-binary people's rights are recognised and protected.
- Policy, practice, and the law better meets the needs of women experiencing multiple challenges and discrimination.
- The negative impacts of the criminal justice system on women and their families are reduced.

We have 53 active grants and investments under our Gender Justice priority. The majority of grants are for unrestricted or core costs over a multi year period (generally 3 years).

Further information:

Esmee Fairbairn's strategy: <https://esmeefairbairn.org.uk/about-esmee/strategy/>

Gender Justice priority: <https://esmeefairbairn.org.uk/our-aims/fairer-future/gender-justice/>

Further guidance on our long term outcomes for Gender Justice: <https://esmefairbairn.org.uk/apply-for-a-grant/a-fairer-future-guidance/#gender-justice>

Blog reflecting on delivery of the Fairer Future strategy so far: <https://esmefairbairn.org.uk/latest-news/working-towards-a-fairer-future-reflections-so-far/>

Blog reflecting on report mapping the UK women and girls sector and its funding: <https://esmefairbairn.org.uk/latest-news/funding-uk-women-and-girls-sector-where-does-money-go/>

3. Review questions

- a. A brief review of the changing context for our goals: what levers for change or blockers to progress exist in 2025 that have changed since we launched the strategy? (Desk research)
- b. To what extent does the current portfolio meet our stated Gender Justice outcomes (Learning review and group discussions)
 - i. What difference has our work and funding made since 2020 and where is it struggling?
 - ii. What is missing? What work would you expect to see represented to meet our funding outcomes but is not present?
 - iii. Where is there the most potential for intersection or connection across the current Gender Justice outcomes, and how might we better utilize these areas of strength?
- c. How does Esmee's Gender Justice funding fit alongside other funding? (Desk research and group discussion)
 - i. How does Esmee's work sit alongside other major Gender Justice funders? Where is there the greatest overlap or potential for deeper partnerships?
 - ii. Based on the current external context, and the areas the Gender Justice portfolio intersects most strongly with other Esmee priorities, what issues might present strong potential for more proactive work or exploration?

4. Audience and use

Esmee wants to use what we learn from this review to make changes in how we deliver our strategy, and inform how we take our Gender Justice work forward in our next strategy, so the main audience is our staff and trustees. We will also share the review with any organisations consulted as part of the process.

5. Method and approach

We are looking for a consultant to act as a critical friend, providing external challenge and a fresh perspective on where our funding is meeting our stated outcomes and where there may be opportunities we are missing.

The review will involve:

- **Desk research:** this should identify any significant changes in the external context since the launch of the Gender Justice strategy in 2022 eg key changes to national policy and regulation, to data availability and collection etc. It should also summarise what has changed in the funding situation for Gender Justice from 2020 to 2025. (2 days)
- **A review of key learning** from Esmee's funding (using a summary of learning from all grants awarded 2020-2025) (3 days)
- **Two group discussions** with key stakeholders including Esmee staff and funded organisations, plus up to 3 individual interviews if required (3 days)

- **Report writing** (3 days)
- **A debrief session** to discuss the report with Esmee staff (1 day)

6. Esmee's role

The review will be managed by Hannah Lim, Funding Manager Lead for A Fairer Future. The communications and learning team at Esmee will provide mid and end of grant learning from grants and social investments, along with funding recommendation documents and progress reports, where useful. We will identify the key stakeholders in advance of the kick off date, make introductions and help with setting up meetings.

7. Deliverables and budget

We estimate the work will take a minimum of 12 days and our budget is £9,000.

- Report for staff and trustees
- Powerpoint deck or executive summary giving key learning points
- Anonymised notes from interviews, and other relevant useful research shared in rough form.

8. Suggested timetable

Week beginning	
Monday 22 September	Invitation to Tender out
Wednesday 1 October	Deadline for responses
2 Oct and 6 Oct	Assess bids
Thursday 9 October	Interviews and reviewer appointed
13 October	Kick off meeting and document sharing
Monday 1 December	Delivery of report
4 December	Discussion session with Esmee staff

9. Confidentiality and conflicts of interest

As Esmee wants to learn as much as possible from the interviews or group discussions with stakeholders, we will need to agree a suitable format so that interviewees can respond honestly, but Esmee can fully understand the detail of progress being made. We would discuss this with the reviewer at the kick-off meeting.

If you have any involvement with work in the Gender Justice sector, or are involved in any work funded by Esmee, let us know so that we can think about how any conflicts of interest can be managed.

10. Registering your interest

If you are available for this project from October – December 2025, email your details, including any potential conflicts of interest, and attach a CV (including day rates) and links to examples of your work to communications@esmeefairbairn.org.uk by 5pm on Wednesday 1 October 2025.