Evaluation summary

About the evaluation

The University of Sussex worked with the Network of International Women for Brighton & Hove (NIWBH) to learn about its impact, how it supports women, and how it can improve. The evaluation took place between **January and July 2026**.



We wanted to understand:

- How NIWBH supports women's wellbeing
- How it helps women make friends and feel connected
- How women access support and information
- How women build confidence and take part in community activities
- How NIWBH can continue to grow and improve



The evaluation included:

- 10 interviews with NIWBH members
- 5 interviews with partner organisations
- Discussions with an Experts by Experience Group
- Review of attendance records, activities, and services

During the time of the evaluation

🌍 700+ women were members of NIWBH

🌎 Women came from 78 countries

🗣️ Women spoke 69 languages

👋 46 new women joined NIWBH during the time of the evaluation

🏠 49 community sessions were delivered

💜 1,323 attendances were recorded across Wednesday Library and Friday Sanctuary sessions

🤝 34 women received one-to-one casework support

📋 96 referrals were received from organisations and NIWBH activities

💡 118+ information and support referrals were provided through Cost of Living activities

🎨 36 activities were delivered with partner organisations

What our members told us

Women described NIWBH as:



- Safe
- Friendly
- Welcoming
- Supportive
- Inclusive

Many women said the Network felt like a "Second Home". Women said they felt accepted and respected regardless of their background, language, or culture.

Support and Information



Women received support with:

- Housing
- Cost of living challenges
- Benefits and finances
- Health and wellbeing
- Employment and volunteering opportunities
- Accessing local services

Many women said they would not have known where to go for help without NIWBH.

Wellbeing and Confidence



Many women said that being involved in NIWBH helped them:

- Feel less lonely
- Feel happier
- Feel more confident
- Improve their mental wellbeing
- Feel stronger and more hopeful

Women spoke about how important it was to have somewhere they could go, meet others, and feel supported

Friendship and Belonging



Many women made new friends through NIWBH.

Women said they enjoyed meeting people from different countries and cultures.

NIWBH helped women:

- Build friendships
- Feel part of a community
- Learn from each other
- Feel more connected to Brighton & Hove

Activities Women Enjoyed



🧵 Sewing and embroidery

🌿 Ecotherapy and nature activities

🚶 Walking groups

🎨 Art and creative activities

📚 English language support

🤝 Volunteering opportunities

🎉 Community events and celebrations

👩‍🍳 Cooking and food events

Many women said these activities helped improve their wellbeing and confidence.

Our partners say we are:

⭐ Trusted

⭐ Welcoming

⭐ Accessible

⭐ Community-focused

Partners said NIWBH helps women access support in ways that feel safe and comfortable.

They also said NIWBH is an important link between women and local services.

Challenges for NIWBH

- More long-term funding is needed to continue and expand support
- Demand for support is increasing
- Some women face language barriers to access support
- Some women experience isolation, discrimination, or housing difficulties

Conclusions

The evaluation found that **NIWBH makes a real difference in women's lives.**

The evaluation found that NIWBH helps women feel **supported,** build **confidence,** access **information**, and take part in their **communities.**

Women valued the **safe spaces, friendships, opportunities,** and **support** NIWBH provides.

The evaluation shows that **NIWBH is an important part of the Brighton & Hove community** and continues to make a positive difference for women from many different backgrounds.

Thank you to all members, volunteers, staff, trustees, and partner organisations for sharing their experiences and helping make this evaluation possible.



This summary report has been authored by Ms Khulood Al-Labani with the support of Professor Linda Morrice and Dr Synne Dyvik.

The full report can be accessed at www.niwbh.org

The Network of International Women for Brighton and Hove

The Network of International Women for Brighton & Hove is a predominantly volunteer-led organisation that provides a platform for women to meet, share experience and knowledge and support one another. We meet in different venues across the City to share information, exchange ideas, learn and build friendships.

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Charity number: 1191407