

WOMEN IN THE SHADE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS 2025-2029



CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE BLACK WOMEN'S
TALENTS, UNIQUE EXPERIENCES, AND PERSPECTIVES
ARE ACKNOWLEDGED, RESPECTED, AND VALUED."

ABOUT WOMEN IN THE SHADE

At Women in the Shade, our vision is unwavering: to foster an environment where the talents, lived experiences, and unique perspectives of Black women are not only acknowledged but celebrated and valued.

We reject the status quo that allows systemic barriers and obstacles to persist, hindering the progress and professional journeys of Black women in uniformed services.



Together, we can create a future where Black women in uniform services are celebrated, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential. Join us in our mission to drive meaningful change and foster a culture of inclusivity within uniformed services.

OUR VISION AND MISSION



OUR VISION

OUR VISION

“Creating an environment where Black women’s talents, unique experiences, and perspectives are acknowledged, respected, and valued.”

Empowering Black women in uniformed services to thrive, lead, and drive lasting change through equity, representation, and inclusive leadership..

COMPANY MISSION



OUR MISSION

OUR VALUES



- We are Empowering – We uplift and support Black women in uniformed services to lead, thrive, and challenge barriers.
- We are Advocates for Equity – We push for fair representation, inclusion, and lasting change within uniformed professions.
- We are Courageous – We engage in bold, necessary conversations and challenge systemic inequalities with confidence.
- We are Authentic – We create a safe space where lived experiences are valued and drive meaningful transformation.
- We are Stronger Together – We build networks of solidarity, fostering sisterhood, mentorship, and collective success.



STRATEGIC THEMES

Empowerment Through Community

01

Building Leadership and Thought Leadership

02

Trusted Services and Advocacy

03

Inclusion and Representation

04

Innovation and Growth

05

01

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY

Focus on building a supportive, connected community for Black women in uniformed services, offering mentorship, resources, and a sense of belonging.



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02

BUILDING LEADERSHIP AND THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Create opportunities for Black women in uniformed services to develop leadership skills, become advocates, and share their expertise.



TRUSTED SERVICES AND ADVOCACY

Focus on offering services that are reliable, impactful, and truly supportive of Black women in uniformed services.



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INCLUSION AND REPRESENTATION

Prioritise fostering inclusive spaces where Black women are visibly represented, both in the workforce and within WITS



INNOVATION AND GROWTH

Focus on evolving and expanding WITS' reach, services, and programs through creative approaches, digital engagement, and regional growth.



FIVE-YEAR STRATEGY FOR WOMEN IN THE SHADE (2024–2029)

Before outlining the strategic priorities for the next three years, it's important to acknowledge and document the significant progress already made.

What we referred to informally as our "strategy" in 2024 was in fact a vital foundation phase — focused on vision-setting, relationship-building, and piloting key initiatives.

By capturing these milestones, we establish a clear trajectory that the new strategic plan can build on.





YEAR 0: FOUNDATION & SEEDING (2024)

Key Focus: Vision setting | Relationship building | Testing ideas

- Established WITS mission and values
- Held the 2nd WITS conference, cementing purpose and community
- Built early partnerships and support base ("Friends of WITS")
- Ran pilot sessions and began scoping out products and services
- Built online presence and early brand recognition
- Initiated research scoping and programme design



YEAR 1: STRENGTHENING THE CORE (2025)

Theme:

- Consolidation, Visibility, and Community Building
- Focus on solidifying the brand, testing scalable ideas, and building engagement.

Strategic Objectives:

- Annual Conference: Maintain quality and relevance, attract strong speakers
- Community Offer: Formalise Empowerment Circles (virtual + regional pilots)
- Research Foundations: Begin 1–2 key research projects with academic partners
- Brand Visibility: Attend high-profile events, grow mailing list, start merchandise
- Social Media Strategy: Appoint a part-time Social Media Manager, develop calendar
- Membership Launch: Pilot individual and corporate membership schemes



YEAR 2: REGIONAL EXPANSION & PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT (2026)

Theme:

- Reach, Research, and Programme Maturity
- Expand geographically, refine programmes, and begin to influence practice.

Strategic Objectives:

- Regional Growth: Active outreach and events in Liverpool, London, and pilot Wales/Scotland
- WITS Development Programme: Launch full offering with sector-specific pathways
- Research Publication: Share first research findings – influence conversations
- Consultancy Services: Refine and grow diversity & inclusion offers
- Digital Expansion: Grow LinkedIn and YouTube with meaningful content
- Membership Growth: Refine tiers, increase benefits and retention strategies

A photograph of a woman with curly hair, wearing a dark blue turtleneck, speaking into a microphone. She is seated at a table with other people, some of whom are partially visible in the foreground and background. The setting appears to be a conference or meeting.

YEAR 3: INFLUENCE & THOUGHT LEADERSHIP (2027)

Theme:

- Policy Engagement, Leadership, and Advocacy
 - Strengthen WITS' voice as a changemaker, focusing on impact and influence.
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Strategic Objectives:

- Flagship Conference: Position WITS conference as a national must-attend
- Policy Influence: Use research to create campaigns and influence decision-makers
- Leadership Development: Deliver high-impact programmes, mentoring and networks
- Brand Partnerships: Collaborate with aligned bodies and influencers
- Media & Advocacy: Secure media coverage, write op-eds, shape the narrative
- Membership Integration: Launch mentorship, member-led spaces, exclusive resources



YEAR 4: CONSOLIDATION & NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE (2028)

Theme:

- Depth, Sustainability, and Building
 - Ensure strong internal structures, consistent delivery, and lasting impact.
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Strategic Objectives:

- National Reach: Embed presence in all UK nations – build local leadership groups
- Sustainable Model: Refine revenue streams (conference, consultancy, membership)
- Accredited Programmes: Explore certification for development/leadership pathways
- Alumni & Network Building: Develop community among past participants
- Evaluation & Impact: Embed M&E systems to track long-term success
- Strengthen Operations: Review governance, staff growth, and financial planning



YEAR 5: LEGACY & SCALE (2029)

Theme:

- Scaling with Integrity and Preparing for the Future
 - Plan long-term legacy, explore global collaboration, and embed systemic change.
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Strategic Objectives:

- Global Dialogue: Invite international voices, explore global partnerships
- Policy Legacy: Use research & lived experience to shape national guidance
- Self-Sustaining Chapters: Enable WITS chapters to run independently with support
- Investment Readiness: Explore funding for long-term infrastructure and innovation
- Digital Academy: Launch an online learning hub for members and partners
- Five-Year Review & Vision 2035: Evaluate impact and shape the next strategic cycle

CONTACT INFORMATION

For More Information



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