

Response of the Government
of the United Kingdom and its
Devolved Administrations to
the UNECE Questionnaire on
the implementation of the
Beijing Declaration and
Platform for Action (1995) and
the Outcome of the Twenty-
Third Special Session of the
General Assembly (2000)
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Section One: achievements and challenges since 1995

Countries with more gender equality have better economic growth. Companies with more women leaders perform better. Peace agreements that include women are more durable. Parliaments with more women enact more legislation on key social issues such as health, education, anti-discrimination and child support. The evidence is clear: equality for women means progress for all.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

At the Fourth World Conference for Women in 1995, Baroness Chalker, Minister for Overseas Development, reaffirmed the UK's commitment to tackling gender inequality and to ensuring a gender perspective was embedded into all UK policies. Baroness Chalker declared the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA) an impetus for the UK to improve the lives of women and girls everywhere and the two decades since the Beijing 1995 conference have seen real and meaningful advancements in the campaign for gender equality. But there is more work to be done before we achieve a world where women and men are treated equally in the workplace; where women feel safe from violence and abuse; where there are no gendered limitations to education or aspiration; and where cultural representations of women are positive and diverse.

To drive the campaign for gender equality, since 1997 the UK Government appoints a Minister for Women who sits in Cabinet; the current Minister for Women and Equalities is the RT Hon Nicky Morgan MP. Writing this report seems timely as it is nearly 100 years since the granting of a vote to women in the UK¹, women now have more rights in terms of their personal freedom, ability to enter the workplace, and their rights to own property, and are not themselves seen as the property of fathers and husbands as they were a century ago. It is fair to say that women's lives in the UK have changed dramatically in the past century. However, with each advancement towards equality made, we become increasingly aware of what remains to be done and how much we all stand to gain from living in a society that affords equal opportunities and freedoms to all. Therefore this report outlines not only how far we have progressed, but also identifies our next steps in achieving gender equality.

The UK's gender equality work is guided by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing PFA as international commitments to improve the lives and rights of women. The theme for this year's International Women's Day was "Equality for Women is Progress for all"; an ethos that forms the heart of the UK Government's campaign for equality in Britain today. We want the UK to be a global leader in equality and human rights and strive to create a society that is tolerant, and offers freedom and fairness to all. In the past twenty years we have made significant progress in the 12 critical areas identified in the PFA. Today women in the UK influence economic, political and public life to a greater extent than ever which testifies to increased women's empowerment in our legislation, culture and society. The following report details the progress made since 1995 in the UK and its Devolved Administrations of

¹In 1918 women over the age of 30 were granted the right to vote, it would take a further 10 years to abolish the age qualification for women and grant them equal voting rights with men.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland², with a particular emphasis on the years since 2010; challenges that we have overcome or continue to face, and our continuing plans to tackle gender inequality both in the United Kingdom and internationally.

In summary, our achievements under this Government demonstrate that our long-term plan is working for women:

- Our policies are empowering more women than ever before to start up businesses and secure employment - we have more women in employment and we are reducing taxes, giving women greater financial security.
- We are tackling the barriers which stop women working if they want to or hinder their career progression by addressing the gender pay gap, increasing flexible working, introducing shared parental leave and improving the quality, flexibility and affordability of childcare. Our commitment to modernising the UK workplace is demonstrated by the fact that in a recent EU survey “Gender equality in the workforce: Reconciling work, private and family life in Europe” we are named No 1 in Europe on parents’ ability to work flexibly.
- We are protecting more women from violence at home and abroad by allowing them to check their partner’s criminal history and introducing domestic violence protection orders, and prioritising women and girls in our work overseas.

The Government works to make equality for all an integral part of British culture, society, law and politics. The UK published its Equality Strategy in 2010, and prevents discrimination (including discrimination based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation) through work that includes:

- funding the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
- providing information, advice and support on discrimination through the Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS)

We negotiate bilaterally and in the UN, EU, Council of Europe, and the Commonwealth to protect and support the rights of British citizens abroad. We use our influence to change culture and attitudes and support equality, in particular on gender, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LB&T) equality, leading by example.

Key achievements since 1995

Since 1995, we have made real progress in advancing the rights of women both nationally and internationally. The UK’s key achievements in the past twenty years have included progress in our campaign to eradicate violence against women and girls; the introduction of measures to support greater participation of women in the workplace and in positions of power and decision making; increased educational opportunities; and better healthcare for women. Section two details the advancements made in the 12 critical areas since 2009, but some key achievements are briefly outlined below.

² For an explanatory note on Devolved Administrations please see page 61.

a) We are helping women to participate in the economy

Today, women have more employment opportunities than ever before, and more are in work. Women are setting up their own businesses in numbers never seen previously and we currently have the highest ever number of women working in the UK. We continue to reform legislation to enable women with children to work flexibly, and to ensure it is financially beneficial for them to choose to work. We have made significant progress in childcare reform since 1995. In the European Commission's recent report on "Gender equality in the workforce: Reconciling work, private and family life in Europe" the UK is acknowledged to have met the Barcelona targets on childcare and is ranked 1st on parents' ability to work flexibly.

This Government has succeeded in introducing many of its reforms earlier than previously anticipated, an achievement we are extremely proud of as it greatly improves the lives of many of our citizens, particularly those in the lower earner sections of our society. We are also working to eradicate the gender pay gap, which has seen significant reductions in recent years.

b) MORE WOMEN HOLD POWER AND DECISION MAKING POSITIONS

We believe that organisations with both men and women in leadership positions benefit from greater diversity and innovation in decision making. Therefore we continue to encourage organisations to embed an equality agenda in their corporate culture. The Government is particularly committed to increasing women's representation in UK boardrooms and bringing about real and lasting change for the benefit of women, business and the economy. Further information on initiatives we have introduced will be outlined in Section Two of this report. We continue to increase the number of women in public appointments and our aim is that by the end of this Parliament 50% of new public appointees should be women.

c) VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a priority for the UK and we continuously work to strengthen protection for victims and to help women to live free from fear. This includes providing greater funding and support for victims, increasing public awareness of what constitutes an abusive relationship, establishing preventative measures to reduce the risk of violence to individuals, and introducing clear legislative and judicial measures to punish perpetrators.

This Government has introduced several laws to combat VAWG including two new offences of stalking into the Protection of Freedoms Bill, and introducing Clare's Law (Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs). We have launched a hard hitting teenage rape campaign to challenge the myths about rape and sexual assault: <http://thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk/>. The Government is concerned about the high prevalence of harassment in schools and the campaign aims to prevent teenagers from becoming victims and perpetrators of abuse and encourage them to consider their views of abuse and the meaning of consent within relationships. "This is Abuse" is contributing to the

wider cultural awareness that violence is unacceptable, and that it is never the victim's fault. Since we first launched the campaign in 2010, there have been over a million and a half visits to the website and visits have increased significantly during this campaign period. Our collaborations with Hollyoaks and MTV in particular are showing how credible voices can really reach young people. We have also signed up to the Council of Europe's convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (CAHVIO) which includes sexual orientation and gender identity.

The increased presence of the internet in our lives has opened up the world to us, but also offers new ways to inflict violence upon women and girls for example through "Revenge Porn". "Revenge Porn" is a broad term used to describe a range of offending behaviour. Usually this involves an individual (usually an adult ex-partner) uploading onto the internet embarrassing images or material about the "victim", often to cause him/her maximum humiliation or embarrassment. This issue has recently received wide coverage in the press and the UK's Ministry of Justice (MOJ) is currently considering options for criminalising "revenge porn" and is gathering evidence of any gap in current legislation." At present, it is possible for revenge porn to be dealt with under some existing legislation including:

- Cyber-crime legislation, if the images were obtained by hacking;
- The Communications Act 2003 (sec. 127) if the images are grossly offensive, indecent, obscene or menacing.

d) WE ARE INVESTING IN THE FUTURES OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Every child should have the opportunity to fulfil his/her potential, and to live in a society that does not restrict children to traditional gender roles and limitations. We are introducing progressive initiatives to ensure this becomes a reality, by working to alleviate child poverty and ensuring every child has access to an education that does not restrict them according to their gender. Our new National Careers Service encourages girls and young women to challenge stereotypes and to choose from the broadest possible career options. The Inspiring the Future initiative encourages people from all sectors to work with state schools and colleges to help young people achieve their potential. The initiative aims to create 2,500 enterprise champions and role models, including female entrepreneurs.

Going forward, we are committed to:

- Establishing self-sustaining local partnerships between schools and business, to help raise aspirations and improve the workplace skills of young people
- Developing a campaign aimed at providing parents with the tools and information to help their children make well-informed career and subject choices
- Working with leading companies who have agreed to lead the way in increasing the number of STEM apprenticeships for young girls within their organisations, and have set themselves aspirational targets to work towards.

Legislative developments since 2010

The 2010 Equality strategy "Building a fairer Britain", set out the Coalition Government's approach to equality, based on the Equality Act 2010. The strategy set out a new approach, aimed at:

- changing culture and attitudes
- addressing the causes of inequality
- building a stronger, fairer and more cohesive society where equality is for everyone and is everyone's responsibility.

The Equality Act, introduced on 1 October 2010, consolidates over 116 separate pieces of anti-discrimination legislation including the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Equal Pay Act 1970. The Act prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other specified conduct. Combined, they make up a new Act that provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all.

The nine main pieces of legislation that have merged are:

- the Equal Pay Act 1970
- the Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- the Race Relations Act 1976
- the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- the Equality Act 2006, Part 2
- the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

The Equality Act introduced a new integrated Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5th April 2011. The Duty consolidates the previous Gender Equality Duty, and previous Race and Disability Duties, and for the first time extends to cover age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. The Equality Duty ensures that public bodies consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to their own employees.

In July 2013 the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013, which extends to England and Wales, received Royal Assent and the first marriages of same sex couples took place on Saturday 29 March 2014. Same sex couples who got married abroad under foreign law, who were consequently treated as civil partners in England and Wales, are now recognised as being married in England and Wales.

In Scotland, the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2013 received Royal Assent on 12 March 2014 and work is currently underway within the Scottish government to bring the Act into effect.

National Mechanisms and Institutions for Women

The Government is committed to listening to women and responding to their needs and concerns. From 1969 until its closure in December 2010, the Women's National Commission was the official and independent advisory body giving the views of women to the UK Government. The UK's Women's Engagement programme is now run from within Government and this new system means that Ministers have more direct and accountable involvement in engaging with women. Under the current Government the Minister for

Women has overall responsibility for policy on women. The Minister for Equalities has overall responsibility for policy on sexual orientation and transgender equality and is responsible for cross-government equality strategy and legislation. They are supported by Ministers for Women and Equalities and for Sport, Tourism and Equalities.

Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have gender equality units within their own administrations which deal with any devolved issues. In addition to the normal liaison and consultation activities associated with its policy and legislative programme, the Government has established a dedicated engagement programme aimed at women and women's organisations. It also funds the EHRC, which includes consultation with women among its responsibilities.

The Government Equalities Office (GEO) is responsible for equality strategy and legislation across government. GEO works to take action on the Government's commitment to remove barriers to equality and help to build a fairer society, leading on issues relating to women, sexual orientation and transgender equality and is responsible for:

- improving equality and reducing discrimination and disadvantage for all in the UK, at work, in public and political life, and in people's life chances – GEO co-ordinates the Inter-Ministerial Group on Equalities, which works to implement the Equality Strategy
- leads on the Equality Act 2010 and is the lead department on gender and LGBT issues in Government
- supports and implements international equality measures in the UK, including our international commitments to CEDAW, the Beijing PFA, the EU Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015 and the Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action.

In 2011 GEO conducted a National Consultation with Women engagement event. The Government response was published in November 2011, along with a Written Ministerial Statement that promised a modernised direct, inclusive and transparent approach to engaging with women. International Women's Day takes place each year on 8 March and GEO leads on coordinating the activities across government departments. The Ministers for Women and for Equalities are involved in activities around the day.

Working with NGOs and civil society

The UK Government works closely with national and international NGOs to improve the lives of women and girls. We value our NGO's expertise and knowledge and each year we host a pre-CSW National Consultation Event with Women to directly engage with civil society. During CSW we hold daily briefings with our NGOs and work through groups such as the CSW NGO Alliance and the international NGO gender experts grouping. Our NGOs help us to implement public initiatives and policies, as well as participate actively in the public debate in order to promote gender equality between women and men.

International Work to Support Gender Equality

We are committed to advancing the rights of women and girls both nationally and internationally, and we actively campaign for this through relevant UN and EU mechanisms.

Our embassies and high commissions work directly with other countries to support programmes and projects addressing the structural causes of discrimination and violence against women and girls, helping to ensure their equality before the law, and their participation in political and public affairs, in accordance with international standards. In addition, the UK has been effective in utilising its role as a member of the UN Security Council to champion women's rights, for example through its recent work in support of UN Security Council Resolution 1820 to end sexual violence in armed conflict. Since 2009, we have undertaken a wide range of activities on women's rights. Through the FCO's Human Rights and Democracy Programme Fund, we are supporting a number of relevant projects. For example, in Colombia, the fund was used to support the compilation of a handbook to help the Gender Team of the government's Victims' Unit to implement the Protocol for the Participation of Victims. In the Gambia, we funded a project with the Female Lawyers Association of The Gambia to train the police, army and immigration officials in interviewing and investigation skills in dealing with violence against women. We are committed to supporting innovative new projects in the poorest countries, working with international organisations and governments overseas to promote women's rights globally, tackle the underlying causes of violence against women and girls, and reduce the impact of conflict on them.

Improving the lives of girls and women is at the heart of the UK development programme. In 2013 DFID refreshed its 2011 Strategic Vision for Girls and Women which sets out how the UK will unlock the potential of girls and women and to stop poverty before it starts. It drives action to improve girls and women's lives by increasing their:

- **Voice** in decision-making in their household, community and country
- **Choice** to complete education and to benefit from paid work and opportunities to decide whether, when and with whom to have sex, marry and/or have children, ending early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation;
- **Control** over their own bodies and mobility, including their safety from violence; over income, productive assets and other resources (including food, water, energy); with equal legal rights and access to justice; and freedom from discriminatory social norms such as female genital mutilation/cutting.

This frames DFID's continuing emphasis on building strong, open and inclusive economies, societies and political institutions which harness the skills of girls and women. Crucially this means supporting them to challenge the widely held beliefs and practices, within their families and communities that dictate their choices and stifle their voice. As part of this agenda to tackle harmful social norms DFID will be focusing on child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting.

DFID continues to make progress against the four, interlinked 'game-changing' outcomes in its Strategic Vision namely: girls' completion of primary and secondary education; economic empowerment; the ability to live free from violence and universal sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Education:

The UK is supporting over 3.1 million girls in primary and lower secondary school through its bilateral aid programmes. The UK will support 11 million boys and girls at primary and lower secondary level by 2015, of which at least half will be girls. All UK-led education programmes have a focus on girls and young women. In Pakistan, DFID helped to increase girls' secondary enrolment in rural areas by 13% by giving girls cash transfers and textbooks. In Malawi DFID has awarded 13,000 bursaries to secondary school girls since 2012, and supported a new teacher training college that will increase the number of qualified teachers from 65 to 200 each year, of which 70% will be women.

In 2012 the UK launched the Girls' Education Challenge is dedicating £355 million to improving education for up to 1 million of the poorest and most marginalised girls. This is the largest global fund ever dedicated to girls' education. DFID is working with charities and businesses to find new and effective ways to improve education for girls by 2017.

Economic Empowerment:

Our wealth creation programmes are increasingly delivering impressive results for women, particularly in improved access to finance. As at March 2013 the UK had enabled 30.3 million people, including at least 14.6 million women, to work their way out of poverty by providing access to financial services. The DFID Strategic Framework for Economic Development includes ensuring growth is inclusive, and benefits girls and women. For example, increasing employment opportunities and access to jobs for poor women through support for enhancing labour participation and mobility, tackling discriminatory social norms, investing in skills, and supporting active labour market policies. One such initiative is supporting the International Trade Centre to work with governments and customs authorities in East Africa, to improve conditions for female informal traders who face harassment and extortion at borders.

Lives free from violence

DFID launched a flagship Research and Innovation Fund to drive innovation, generate ground-breaking new evidence, and support new prevention programmes on the ground. The £25 million programme is focused on what works in preventing violence against women and girls. DFID is also taking forward specific actions to pursue visible change for girls and women affected by conflict through implementing its new National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (2014 - 2017). The UK has committed to working through a range of programmes to help 10 million women to access justice through the courts, police and legal assistance by 2015. As well as working with partners to provide essential support to survivors of violence, the UK is dedicated to tackling the root causes to stop violence before it starts. We have invested £25 million over five years (2013 – 2018) in a pioneering Research and Innovation Fund, 'What Works for Prevention', which will drive and support innovative programming and generate ground-breaking new evidence on what works to prevent violence against women and girls.

The UK continues to scale up its work on violence against women and girls, with targeted programmes in over twenty countries across the globe.

Respect for universal sexual and reproductive health and rights:

The UK Government emphasised the need for strong commitments at the UN Millennium Development Goals Summit in September 2010 that will result in the saving of lives of 16

million women and children by 2015. This includes a commitment from us to double our efforts on maternal, new born and child health which will save the lives of at least 50,000 women in pregnancy and childbirth, save 250,000 new born babies and enable 10 million couples to access modern methods of family planning by 2015. We co-hosted the 2012 London Summit launching the FP2020 movement, which seeks access to contraception for an additional 120 million women and girls who want it. This would cumulatively result in: more than 100 million fewer unintended pregnancies; 200,000 fewer women and girls dying in pregnancy and childbirth; nearly 3 million fewer babies dying in their first year of life.

DFID is the single largest contributor (£35 million over 5 years) to a seven-donor World Bank trust fund which supports the Health Sector Support Programme. The UK has set out a vision to end female genital mutilation/cutting within a generation supported by a programme to reduce this practice by 30% in at least 10 countries. Since 2011, it has also developed 4 new HIV prevention programmes in sub-Saharan Africa, with a sharpened focus on girls and women where they comprise 57% of people living with HIV. These programmes will help reduce new HIV infections by at least 500,000 among women in sub-Saharan Africa by 2015.

Political participation:

Women's political participation is central to achieving the UK's international development Strategic Vision for Girls and Women. We address long term structural barriers to women's political inclusion through work on elections, parliamentary and political party reform and girls and women's leadership programmes. For example:

- DFID's Leadership for Change programme promotes women's leadership and networks,
- Our support to BBC Media Action encourages women's participation in the media and public debate,
- In Ethiopia, our work with MPs helped improve the gender balance and oversight function of many of the standing committees,
- In Rwanda, DFID supports the Forum of Parliamentary Women to integrate gender into parliamentary deliberations.

International Development (Gender Equality) Act

In March 2014, the UK passed the International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014. The Act means that before providing development assistance, consideration must be given to how it will contribute to reducing gender inequality. Gender-related differences in needs must also be taken into account before the provision of humanitarian assistance. It also introduces a new annual reporting duty on progress towards achieving the MDG 3.

DFID has galvanised international support and attention to key development issues through high level events:

- announced a high level event in July 2014 to galvanise global action, behind developing country efforts to end child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) within a generation

- co-chaired with Sweden, the Call to Action on Protecting Girls and Women in Emergencies in November 2013 which mobilised global leadership to ensure the needs of girls and women are at the heart of the first phase of all humanitarian responses.
- co-hosted the London Summit on Family Planning in July 2012 which launched a global partnership to enable 120 million more women and girls to use contraceptives by 2020.

Section Two: Progress in the implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action since 2009

This section details the advancements made in the UK since 2009 in the 12 critical areas identified by the Beijing PFA. Where responsibility has been devolved to the individual administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, their developments have been included alongside those of the wider UK Government.

1. Women and Poverty

Women and work

The UK Government recognises the often unequal burden of poverty on women, frequently linked to child poverty and despite the challenges brought about by the global economic downturn continues to address both work- and pension-related poverty issues to alleviate this disparity. The Government considers work as the best route out of poverty for most people. Compared to a child of a lone parent who is not working, a child of a lone parent that works part-time is over 2.5 times less likely to be living in poverty and a child of a lone parent that works full-time is over four times less likely to be living in poverty. In the UK, reforms have been introduced to remove barriers to work, resulting in strong growth in the level of female participation in the labour market over the last few decades; women now make up 46% of the workforce, up from 37% in 1971. Our long term economic plan is working for women: we now have more women in employment than ever before: 14.2m, up 315,000 on the year. The Government has achieved a 37.4 per cent increase in employment rates for lone parents since 1996 (when comparable figures began), with over a million lone parents in work, out of which 90 per cent are women.

At Budget 2014 the Government announced further details on help it plans to offer on childcare costs through the new Tax-Free Childcare scheme. Tax-Free Childcare will enable more parents to go out to work, if they want to, to provide greater security for their families. The Government is rolling out Tax-Free Childcare more quickly than previously announced; the scheme will be launched in autumn 2015 and rolled out to all eligible families with children under 12 within the first year of the scheme's operation. This is significantly faster than planned, where children under 12 would have gradually qualified for the scheme over a seven-year period. The Government will provide 20% support on childcare costs up to £10,000 per year for each child via a new simple online system. The cap had previously been set at £6,000. This means that families could receive up to £2,000 childcare support per child, two thirds more than originally planned.

Pensions

The Government recognises the difficulties women have faced in accruing adequate pensions and in recent years has reformed the State Pension system to improve the situation of women. This includes reducing the required number of qualifying years and introducing the carer's credit, to enable people, particularly women who are often disadvantaged by caring responsibilities, to build up entitlement to a full State Pension. Female pensioners will also benefit from the Government's "triple lock" commitment, which

since 2010 has meant that the basic State Pension is increased each year by the highest of the growth in average earnings: price increases or 2.5%. The triple lock means that in April 2014, the full basic State Pension was increased to £113.10 a week. As a result of the triple lock, the full basic State Pension in 2014/15 is around £8.50 a week higher than it would have been if it had been uprated only in line with average weekly earnings growth since 2010.

Female pensioners on low incomes are also likely to be eligible for Pension Credit. This targets help at the poorest pensioners who for whatever reason have been unable to provide for their retirement. The guarantee credit element of Pension Credit tops up a pensioner's income to a guaranteed minimum level, currently £148.35 for a single person or £226.50 for a couple.

At Budget 2013, the Government announced that a new single-tier pension would be introduced for those retiring on or after 6 April 2016. The new State Pension will be a simpler flat-rate state pension set above the basic means test, thus allowing people to save for their retirement with confidence. The State Pension reforms bring forward by a decade the point at which women have equivalent State Pension outcomes to men (by the early 2040s instead of the early 2050s). The reforms will benefit women who have historically fared poorly under the current two-tier system. The Government expects that in the first 10 years after implementation around 650,000 women will benefit from the single tier valuation of their pension at 2016, receiving on average £8 a week more in State Pension. Most women will be able to achieve enough qualifying years for a full single tier pension through paid contributions or credits: by the mid-2030s around 80% of those reaching State Pension age will be getting the full single tier rate.

The Government's future priorities are to ensure that the State Pension system remains fair, affordable and sustainable for future generations in the UK.

Adult Care

Taking further action to protect those most vulnerable in our society, the Government has announced historic reforms to social care funding, including a cap on reasonable care costs set at £72,000 in April 2016 for those above retirement age and an extension of the means test threshold for state support for residential care. Women will be the predominant beneficiaries of this additional state support as more women than men need formal care and support.

Child Poverty

The Government is committed to eradicating Child Poverty; providing support for families with children through the Child Tax Credit, and through Child Benefits for the first child, which has increased by nearly 40 per cent since 1997. The Child Poverty Act 2010 details the target to eradicate child poverty by 2020. It establishes four separate child poverty targets to be met by 2020/21, requires the UK Government and the Scottish and Northern Irish Ministers to publish child poverty strategies, establishes a Child Poverty Commission to provide advice, requires the UK Government to publish annual progress reports, and places

new duties on local authorities and other 'delivery partners' in England to work together to tackle child poverty.

Alongside our Child Poverty Strategy 2014-17, we have published an in-depth evidence review which identifies what leads families to be stuck in poverty and what leads poor children to become poor adults. By identifying and understanding the root causes of child poverty, now and across generations, we can target action effectively. The evidence is clear that work remains the best route out of poverty; children are around three times as likely to be in poverty if they live in a workless family.

Poor children are four times as likely to become poor adults compared to other children. We are breaking this cycle through increasing poor children's educational attainment.

Real progress has been made on the 2011-2014 strategy; there are now fewer children living in workless households than at any time since records began, having fallen by 274,000 under this Government.

Some initiatives introduced to tackle poverty by this Government include:

- the Localism Act, November 2011, has given local government, communities and individuals more freedom to improve outcomes for local people.
- the Pupil Premium was introduced in 2011/12. Entitlement to 15 hours a week of pre-school education for the most disadvantaged 2 year olds was introduced in 2013 and is being extended from 2014.
- the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission was established in November 2012.
- the Public Health Outcomes Framework was published in January 2012.

WALES

Tackling poverty and improving the outcomes of low income families is a key priority for the Welsh Government. The 2012 Tackling Poverty Action Plan sets out what the Welsh Government is doing to help prevent and reduce poverty in Wales. A refresh of this Action Plan "Building Resilient Communities: Taking forward the Tackling Poverty Action Plan" was published in July 2013.

The 2013 Action Plan sets out key milestones and targets that support the delivery of better outcomes for families living in poverty. The targets and milestones included in the Action Plan have a strong focus on three key themes: preventing poverty in the longer term; helping people into work; and mitigating the impact of poverty. The Plan identifies six key priorities for tackling poverty and improving the outcomes of low income families: early years; closing the educational attainment gap; reducing the number of people who are not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET); tackling workless households; addressing the Inverse Care Law; and housing and regeneration.

Scotland

The UK Government retains key policy responsibility for welfare and social security, fiscal and macro-economic policy. Other related areas such as education, health, business support and regeneration are devolved to the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government's revised Child Poverty Strategy was published in March 2014 and sets out three key outcomes: maximising household resources; improving children's wellbeing and life chances; and providing sustainable places. Relevant activities within the strategy include:

- reducing the levels of child poverty by reducing income poverty and material deprivation by maximising household incomes and reducing the pressure on household budgets among low-income families
- improving children's wellbeing and life chances – with the ultimate aim being to break inter-generational cycles of poverty, inequality and deprivation
- introducing, in April 2013, a £33m Scottish Welfare Fund to pay crisis grants for living expenses and community care grants to people on low incomes. The criteria for the fund favour women and children and early statistics show that women have higher success rates and average awards
- Increasing the provision of flexible childcare; boosting parental access to work. Extending free childcare to 600 hours per year for all children from the age of three and to two year olds in workless households from August 2014 and to those who would meet current free school meals criteria from August 2015.

Childcare in Scotland

The Scottish Government is aware of the importance of high quality, flexible, accessible and affordable childcare in supporting parents to work, study or train. The Children and Young People Act, passed by the Scottish Parliament on 19 February, will deliver increased and more flexible early learning and childcare of 600 hours a year for 3 and 4 year olds; and, for the most vulnerable 15% of 2 year olds; from August 2014. This will be expanded to the most vulnerable 27% from August 2015. The Act will also require local authorities to consult with representative populations of parents on patterns of provision that would best meet their needs. This will enable local authorities to develop systems of early learning, childcare and out of school care that meet the needs of all children, parents and families.

The Scottish Government has recently awarded £100,000 of funding to 'Working Families' to support and co-ordinate activity that will allow the partnership to:

- carry out some specific work targeted at Dads in the workplace to ensure they are better supported to manage their dual responsibilities of work and family
- trial and promote a flexible working strapline across a range of employment sectors
- run a range of stakeholder events to promote family friendly working
- develop a network of employer 'Champions' and carry out a "state of the nation" piece of benchmarking/research for publication
- publish a Time Health and the Family Scotland report looking at what is needed from a working parent's point of view; and to develop sensible policy proposals for parental (maternal and paternal) leave for Scotland.

Carers in Scotland

A key Scottish Government manifesto commitment is to create a Caring for Carers Employers Kite-mark. The Scottish Government wants carers who are employed to remain employed and want to make it easier for carers to access employment. The Caring for Carers Employers Kite-mark will recognise those employers who offer the best support to carers.

We have worked in partnership with Carers Scotland, one of the National Carer Organisations, to develop this initiative. The kite-mark launched on 12 June 2014 with a number of employers becoming early adopters of the scheme. The Scottish Government launched its consultation on 22 January on legislation to further support carers and young carers across Scotland. The consultation ended on 16 April 2014. Responses are now being analysed and a summary report will be published in the autumn of 2014.

Northern Ireland

The UK Government retains key policy responsibility for fiscal and macro-economic policy but all other policy areas relevant to child poverty are devolved to the Northern Ireland Executive. The Northern Ireland Executive's aim, as stated in the 2011 Northern Ireland Child Poverty Strategy 'Improving Children's Life Chances' is to provide the opportunity for all children and young people to thrive and to address the causes and consequences of disadvantage.

To achieve this four strategic priorities have been adopted:

- ensure, as far as possible, that poverty and disadvantage in childhood does not translate into poorer outcomes for children as they move into adulthood
- support more parents to be in work that pays, or pays better
- ensure the child's environment supports them to thrive
- target financial support to be responsive to family situations.

Examples of initiatives to reduce child poverty include:

- Extended Schools Programme: in 2013/14 £12m of additional funding to areas of greatest social disadvantage enabling 494 schools to provide additional learning opportunities and a wide range of interventions and support activities
- Free school meals/ Uniform Grants: £40m allocated to provide free school meals and £5.4m for School Uniform Grants.

The first phase of the NI Executive's Bright Start Childcare Strategy was launched in September 2013. This included 15 Key First Actions to address the main childcare priorities identified during consultation and research. The most ambitious of the Key First Actions aim to conserve and increase the provision of low cost childcare places for children of school age by creating or sustaining up to 7,000 school age childcare places. Of these, 3,000 will focus on the needs of disadvantaged communities. These additional childcare services will be a key enabler for parents, and women in particular, who wish to access employment.

2. Education and training of women

The UK Government is committed to ensuring equal access to education, delivering non-discriminatory education and training, and promoting life-long education and training for women and girls throughout the cycle of life-long learning opportunities. We continue to work with delivery partners to tackle gender stereotyping and segregation in education and training and through encouraging boys and girls to consider non-traditional career choices.

The Government is also working to increase the number of girls studying science in both academic and vocational education, thus helping to address the skills shortage in science and engineering.

Higher Education (HE)

Today in the UK, women outnumber men in HE, and across the majority of subject areas, they have lower drop-out levels and better attainment levels. The proportion of women qualifying from first degrees with a known classification of 2:1 and above is 71%, this compares to 68% for men. Female entrants were less likely to drop out of UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) one year after entry compared to male entrants: 5.9 per cent and 7.7 per cent respectively in 2011-12. Although there is some variability in specific subject participation rates, women's representation is higher than men's in most subjects, including some very competitive and highly rewarding subjects including subjects allied to Medicine (80%), Education (77%), Veterinary Science (76%) and Languages (69%). Women therefore are now more highly represented in some science subjects e.g. biological sciences, veterinary sciences and medicine but men still have higher participation in engineering and the physical sciences. HEIs are independent and responsible for their own admissions decisions. However, they have clear duties and responsibilities under the Equality Act to ensure that students do not face discrimination or less favourable treatment whilst applying to, and studying in, higher education. In 2012-13 57% of home students in English HEIs were women. This figure has grown significantly over the last 18 years – in 1994/95 it was 50%.

HE has a successful track-record of providing flexible provision for learners including part-time courses, distance learning, or blended learning to suit different learner needs, including those of lone parents. The Government has put in place a package of financial support for higher education students. The Government has put in place a package of financial support for eligible HE students undertaking a qualification no higher than a first degree. For those entering third level education for the first time, non-repayable maintenance grants are available to full-time students of all ages, and maintenance loans are available to all students up to the age of 60.

There are additional non-repayable grants available to full-time students who have children or adult dependents. As gender identities intersect with race, disability, sexuality and age, direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of race and gender present clear barriers to the education and career progression of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women at all levels and we continue to introduce reforms that recognise the diversity of needs of disadvantaged minority groups.

Primary and secondary education

The Government published a radical reform programme for England in November 2010 which places teachers, and not Central Government, at the heart of school reform. The Schools' White Paper "The Importance of Teaching" and the Education Bill, while not specifically gender-equality legislation, will impact children and young people who experience bullying, including gender-related bullying. Additionally the Equality Duty will ensure that schools think about how they can reduce discrimination because of gender, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) teaches pupils to recognise and challenge prejudice and to understand that prejudice, racism and discrimination must be challenged at every level. We have established a PSHE

and Sex and Relationships Education subject expert group, alongside the national curriculum groups. It will ensure that teachers have the support and resources to deliver high quality teaching, and give PSHE the same prominence as national curriculum subjects. The Equality Act also extended gender reassignment protection to schools, ensuring transsexual girls are protected from discrimination in education.

Careers guidance

In 2010, the Government ended Connexions as a centrally funded, national service and announced their intention to give schools responsibility for careers guidance. This was based on clear evidence from a range of respected sources, including the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions and Ofsted, that careers services provided by Connexions were patchy and of variable quality. The Education Act 2011 placed schools under a new duty to secure independent careers guidance for their pupils in years 9-11 on the range of education and training options, including Apprenticeships. This duty was implemented in September 2012 and extended to cover pupils in years 8-13 from September 2013. An equivalent careers requirement was placed on colleges in relation to young people up to the age of 18 in further education.

The Government wants young people to be inspired about their future careers through more real-life contact with the world of work. More contact with employers who are passionate about their own careers not only inspires pupils, but also challenges pre-conceived ideas about jobs and opens their eyes to the opportunities available to them. To support schools in achieving this vision, Government published revised statutory guidance in April 2014. This states that schools should consciously work to prevent all forms of stereotyping in the advice and guidance they provide, to ensure that boys and girls from all backgrounds and diversity groups consider the widest possible range of careers, including those that are often portrayed as primarily for one or other of the sexes. It also highlights the importance of exposing pupils, particularly girls, to professionals from occupations that require science, technology and maths qualifications.

The National Careers Service provides access to professional, impartial careers advice via an online and telephone helpline offer, available to everyone aged 13 and over and a face to face offer for adults over 19 (or 18+ if out of work and on benefits). Through the National Careers Service we are looking to raise aspirations, encourage girls and young women to challenge stereotypes, and to inspire clients to explore the full range of career options open to them. Careers advisers who work in the National Careers Service are expected to be highly qualified and members of the Career Development Institute. Members are required to sign up to a Code of Ethics which includes working in the best interests of the client; providing impartial support; promoting equality and diversity and helping clients overcome barriers.

The Department for Business (BIS) grant-funds a Women in Prison Education Services project which works in women's prisons in England to provide specialist information, advice and guidance to women wishing to study via distance learning and/or attend college on day release. The funding also supports grants by Women in Prison towards distance learning course fees and materials.

STEM

BIS' key focus is to drive economic growth. The Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) workforce is vital to growth and the economy and our research base misses out when we are not drawing scientists and engineers from as wide a talent pool as possible. The UK Government is committed to ensuring that the STEM workforce is diverse, reflecting wider society, and that it makes use of all the talents available to it. Despite positive progress, there are still too many groups under-represented in this sector. We continue to work to increase the number of girls studying science in both academic and vocational education, to address the skills shortage in the science and engineering sector and to achieve greater gender balance. The STEM Ambassadors Programme encourages students to continue studying science through meeting science and engineering role models. Around 48% of ambassadors are currently women and around 13% identify as BME. Overall the proportion of women in STEM subjects is 53%; this has remained fairly constant over the last decade. The government, via BIS, funds the Royal Society and Royal Academy of Engineering to run a programme of work aimed at understanding and addressing issues of diversity in the STEM workforce.

In May 2014 the Government announced a Call to Action to get educators, industry and Government to commit to boost women's participation in technology and engineering. In addition, a new publicity drive led by successful British entrepreneurs will be launched in September 2014 to change the way 14 to 16-year-olds think about science and technology, and to encourage more to pursue it as a career.

Vocational Education and Further Education

We are funding 250,000 more apprenticeships between 2010 and 2015.

Northern Ireland

Careers Guidance Northern Ireland

The Careers Service in Northern Ireland is an all-age, all-ability service that provides impartial information, advice and guidance to young people and adults in education, employment and training and to the unemployed. Careers advisers are professionally trained to enable clients to realise their aspirations and overcome barriers, including gender stereotyping. Promoting equality and diversity is an integral part of a careers adviser's initial training, ongoing assessment and continuous professional development. The Careers Service Review will consider the issue of promoting STEM subjects including the need to encourage and monitor uptake, particularly of females, studying STEM subjects and, specifically, the physical sciences, computer science and mathematics.

STEM in Northern Ireland

The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) has funded the post of STEM Business Subgroup Coordinator to work with STEM organisations to increase the number of people in the STEM pipeline and improve the gender balance (currently 25% female in higher posts in NI). The STEM Business Subgroup in Northern Ireland recently launched a report called "Addressing Gender Balance- Reaping the Gender Dividend in STEM". The report lays out the business case for increased gender diversity in STEM businesses and offers practical

guidelines, case studies from local employers and a Northern Ireland STEM CEO Charter. The Charter was devised with support from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Vocational and Further Education in Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland offender learning strategy Making Prisons Work: Skills for Rehabilitation (May 2011) highlighted that women offenders have a different profile of risks and needs, including higher levels of problems with drugs and alcohol, and mental health, than men. We also acknowledged that levels of psychosis, anxiety and depression, self-harm and suicidal attempts are considerably greater among women than men and recognised that although employment is important to women offenders, there are a number of steps they may need to take before they are job ready.

We recognised that a range of special provisions, such as motivational activities to help women appreciate that education and employment might be beneficial to them, helps to meet this need, and that decentralised decision-making, as well as opportunities for women to work in prison, will support that development. Thus, through our new offender learning strategy we have ensured that Governors and other key prison staff now have the key role in determining the skills offer in their establishments. This builds on the freedoms and flexibilities for providers and a move to stronger local accountabilities and is linked to the wider commitment across Government to decentralise decision making.

In the 2011/12 academic year, the enrolment, retention and achievement rates for females in Northern Ireland was at the same level as that for males.

Higher Education in Northern Ireland

Women are well represented in HE in Northern Ireland with females accounting for 57% of NI students enrolled at UK HEIs in 2012/13.

The Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS) Northern Ireland

LEMIS is a community employment initiative delivered in targeted areas of disadvantage in Northern Ireland, designed to help unemployed people in the community overcome those issues that may be preventing them from finding and keeping a job, and is also available on an outreach basis. During the period April 2013 to March 2014 £2.1m was spent in case loading 2,789 individuals to the programme with 44% (1,230) representing women, as a result 208 women (16.9%) entered permanent full time employment and 30 (2.4%) entered permanent part time employment.

The Collaboration and Innovation Fund (CIF) Northern Ireland

CIF is part of the Northern Ireland's Executive's 'Pathways to Success' Strategy to help young people aged 16 to 24 who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

The Gateway to Progression Project, delivered by the Training for Women Network, has been awarded funding of £770,067 to support young women aged 18 to 24 in eight disadvantaged areas in NI. The project will use a tailored programme of one-to-one support and group activities to engage and support young women who face a range of issues and personal barriers in their lives. It will work in collaboration with eleven partner organisations to target and recruit the most disadvantaged young NEET women. The project will provide

innovative training in the creative and music industries to help the young women develop personal and social skills required for the work place. The project aims to help 440 young women between Jan 2013 and March 2015 and to date has provided support to over 300.

Disability Employment Service Northern Ireland

DELs Disability Employment Service (DES) continues to support a high number of women with disabilities to move into employment and to stay in work. The most recent participation figures for gender on DES programmes show:

Workable(NI) - 486 participants 299 (62%) male, 187 (38%) female.

Condition Management Programme –60 % female, 40% male.

Access to Work: 655 people,315 (48%) male and 340 (52%) female.

Wales

STEM in Wales

The Welsh Government supported the Get on with Science (GOWS) project from January 2012 - March 2014. Led by CAST Cymru and Chwarae Teg, this work helped schools to tackle perceived gender issues in STEM – and promoted wider engagement by young people in these subjects; in particular, it supported improved approaches to the way science is delivered in primary and secondary schools to better reflect the needs of girls. Encouraging more young people, particularly girls, to continue with STEM subjects in school (for example in Physics, where there is a significant drop-off rate of girls at A-level) is a vital first step in helping to increase the talent pool pursuing careers in the STEM industries – to help meet demand and shortages in this area to support the economic growth and prosperity of Wales.

Scotland

The Scottish Government is committed to improving the uptake and spread of women, as well as all other under-represented groups across all sectors of the workforce. Women outnumber men in both FE and HE in Scotland, representing 52% of entrants to FE in 2012/13 on a full time equivalent basis, with a similar figure of 56% to HE.

The Scottish Government, via the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), are committed to delivering year on year improvements in provision for ‘protected groups’ and specifically, the delivery to women in male dominated subject areas. At FE level, colleges are committed to changing attitudes and encouraging women into traditionally male dominated sectors. The SFC are working with institutions to find ways of addressing gender segregation and identifying examples of best practice across the sector in order to share them wider and embed across the sector. Going forward, the SFC is developing a system of greater requirement for colleges to deliver to women in typically male dominated areas. Students at college are eligible to apply for financial support to support their studies, and women in particular, are supported with funds to assist with childcare costs.

Progress is being made in recent years in the Modern Apprenticeship programme with women Modern Apprenticeship starts increasing from 27% in 2008/9 to 41% in 2013/14. However, beneath these figures, gender splits do continue to vary significantly in certain subjects.

STEM in Scotland

The CareerWise initiative was developed to improve the gender balance and encourage young women to consider careers in STEM subjects, including as Modern Apprentices. It has established a programme of paid student placements that will take place between June and August 2014.

Vocation Education (VE) in Scotland

The Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce is undertaking a review of Scotland's VE system, making recommendations in an interim report published in September 2013. The second half of this Commission will be a focus on equality issues, looking to make meaningful recommendations to improve employment outcomes in relation to gender, disability and ethnicity.

3. Women and health

Women in England today can expect to live, on average, to 83 years of age. Life expectancy for women is expected to continue to rise to 85 years by 2020. We are committed to women's health and have implemented a comprehensive programme of dedicated health services for women in the areas of sexual health, maternity, mental health and violence against women and girls. The 2010 Equality Act Public Sector Duty applies to the NHS and Social Care public body providers. In the Equality Act women are specifically protected under the characteristics of "sex" and "pregnancy and maternity" but may also come under the other protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Lesbian and bisexual women have access to fertility treatment services, and the Equality Act 2010 also protects lesbian, bisexual and transsexual women from discrimination when accessing public and private services, including fertility treatment.

Individuals with gender dysphoria can receive gender reassignment treatment under the NHS, which usually involves hormone therapy and surgery, to help them appear more feminine. Legal gender recognition under the Gender Recognition Act 2004 does not require surgery or sterilisation to achieve legal recognition.

Contraception and teenage pregnancy

Under this Government teenage pregnancy rates continue to decline and they are now at their lowest level for over 40 years. Data on conceptions during the first quarter of 2013 was published by ONS on 29th May. The conception data for women aged under 18 resident in England showed a decrease of 17% in the number of conceptions to women aged under 18 resident in England compared to in the 1st quarter of 2012. The UK has an overall conception rate for women aged under 18 of 25.5 conceptions per 1,000 resident women aged 15-17, compared to 30.3 in the 1st quarter of 2012, a decrease of 15.8 in the rate. Under-18 conceptions have now decreased every quarter since quarter 4 of 2007.

Maternity

The Government has set national priorities for maternity services to improve outcomes in the mandates for NHS England and Health Education England, England's health and healthcare people service. There has been investment in maternity services to increase

choice and improve women's experiences of care. Pregnancy offers a unique opportunity to engage with all women, provide support throughout pregnancy, and improve life changes and tackle social disadvantage from birth. NHS England has established Maternity and Children Strategic Clinical Networks to advise health service commissioners, reduce unwarranted variation in service delivery and encourage innovation.

The NHS has invested to increase the number of midwives to support the objective in the mandate to NHS England that women have a named midwife responsible for ensuring personalised, one-to-one care throughout pregnancy, childbirth and during the postnatal period. There are almost 22,000 qualified midwives working in England and there are a record number of 6,000 midwives in training. 97% of mothers now say they were treated with respect and dignity during labour and birth.

Between 2007 and 2013 the number of maternity units in England increased from 268 to 316. The National Audit Office has estimated that the proportion of women of childbearing age living within a 30 minute drive of both a midwifery-led unit and an obstetric unit increased from 59 per cent in 2007 to 79 per cent in 2013.

The Government continues to improve public health and take action to reduce health inequalities. A review of health inequalities "Fair Society, Healthy Lives", published in February 2010, explored the impact of social determinants of health across a life cycle and reported systematic differences in health outcomes. The Public Health White Paper "Healthy Lives, Healthy People" published in November 2010, responded to the review and adopted its life course approach. In England, the Government has introduced, for the first time, legal duties concerning the need to reduce health inequalities. The Inclusion Health Programme looks at the health outcomes of vulnerable groups such as the homeless, Gypsies and Travellers, and sex workers. It aims to drive improvements through system reform and clinical leadership to ensure that everyone gets the care they need.

Screening

Under the NHS Cervical Screening Programme in England women aged 25 to 49 are invited for free cervical screening every three years and those aged 50 to 64 are invited every five years. Those over 65 are invited if their previous three tests were not clear or they have never been screened. Under the NHS Breast Screening Programme breast screening is offered every three years to all women aged 50 and over. Currently women aged between 50 to 70 years are invited routinely and women over the age of 70 can request free three-yearly screening. The programme is currently being extended to women aged 47 to 49 and 71 to 73.

Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales offer similar services including mobile screening units. In 2010 Wales commenced a three year £15m programme of commissioning advanced equipment used to screen women for breast cancer.

Sexual Health

The UK Government has undertaken a wide range of activities to target sex education for teenage boys and girls including running a programme to improve women's knowledge of and access to contraception between 2008 and 2011.

Scotland

The Scottish Government published its Ministerial Task Force on Health Inequalities report in June 2008, and reviewed the report in 2010. "Equally Well" advocates a collaborative, person-centred approach across different public services to enable response to a range of circumstances that impact the individual's health and well-being. There is already substantial work underway in NHS Boards in Scotland to strengthen the contribution that antenatal health care makes to reducing health inequalities including:

- Implementation of the Refreshed Framework for Maternity Care Services in Scotland, the Improving Maternal and Infant Nutrition Framework for Action and the Reducing Antenatal Health Inequalities: Outcome Focused Evidence into Action Guidance
- The Maternity and Children Quality Improvement Collaborative
- Work towards achieving the antenatal access HEAT target which aims to ensure that at least 80% of all pregnant women in each SIMD quintile are 'booked' for antenatal care by the 12th week of pregnancy by March 2015 to access services
- The Scottish Cervical Screening Programme invites all eligible women in Scotland between the ages of 20 and 60 for a cervical screening test every three years.

Northern Ireland

Following a review of Northern Ireland's public health strategy Investing for Health and consideration of both national and international evidence on health inequalities, work has been taken forward to develop a new Northern Ireland Strategic Framework for Public Health. It is anticipated the new framework will be published during 2014. This will continue to focus on improving population health and reducing health inequalities, including between men and women, through both a social determinants and life-course approach.

Screening in Northern Ireland

Breast and Cervical Screening Programmes have been in place for 25 years in Northern Ireland. Over 80 cervical cancers and around 300 breast cancers are detected through screening each year. Breast Cancer Screening is offered to all women aged 50-70. Since April 2013 the surveillance screening of women at a high risk of developing breast cancer has been incorporated into the Northern Ireland Breast Screening Programme. These women are offered mammography, MRI or both, depending on their age and the reason for their higher risk of breast cancer. Cervical Screening is offered to all women aged 25-64. Women aged 25-49 are invited every three years to be screened and women aged 50-64 are invited every 5 years. In January 2013 testing for high-risk human papillomavirus (HR-HPV) as triage and test of cure was introduced into the Northern Ireland Cervical Screening Programme.

Wales

Maternity in Wales

The Welsh Government's vision for maternity services is a service that promotes pregnancy and childbirth as an event of social and emotional significance where women and their families are treated with dignity and respect. For every mother wherever they live and whatever their circumstances, pregnancy and childbirth will be a safe and positive experience so that she, her partner and family can begin parenting feeling confident, capable and well supported in giving their child a secure start in life.

Sexual health in Wales

The “Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for Wales 2010/2015” focuses on four areas: developing a culture to support sexual health and wellbeing; better prevention; delivering modern sexual health services; strengthening health intelligence and research.

Teenage Conceptions in Wales

Access to and availability of contraception is a major part of the Welsh Government’s strategy to reduce unintended teenage pregnancy:

- Young people aged less than 25 years can access free, confidential sexual health advice and free condoms from the Condom-Card (C-Card) Schemes across Wales. These schemes operate mainly from youth centres and voluntary organisations
- The Empower to Choose project was implemented from April 2012 and consists of two elements (i) awareness raising and education of Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) and (ii) the audit of contraceptive advice given to pregnant teenagers
- A national pharmacy emergency contraception service was implemented in April 2011
- Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) programmes in secondary schools should provide learners with opportunities to understand about contraception within the context of relationships and the benefits of delaying sexual activity
- Personal and social education (PSE) also provides opportunities to equip children and young people with the confidence and skills to enable them to make safe, healthy choices about their sexual health
- ‘A Framework for a School Nursing Service for Wales’ sets the vision for a revised service where school nurses are key to promoting, protecting and improving the health and wellbeing of school-aged children and young people. This includes the promotion of sexual health and the prevention of teenage conceptions.

Screening in Wales

Wales has established screening programmes funded by the Welsh Government and delivered by Public Health Wales. The programmes are offered to women registered with a GP in Wales. Details of the programmes are:

- Cervical Screening: women aged 25-64 are invited to participate in this screening programme on a 3 yearly basis for 25 to 49 year olds and on a 5 yearly basis for women aged 50+
- Breast Screening: offered to women aged 50-70 years old on a 3 yearly basis. In December 2012, Wales became the first fully digitalised breast screening service in the UK
- Bowel Screening: There is a national bowel screening service offered to women and men aged between 60-74 years old on a two yearly basis.

Gypsy and Traveller Women in Wales

Work is underway to develop guidance for healthcare practitioners on how to work effectively with Gypsies and Travellers, of all genders and ages. This guidance is likely to fall in to two parts: an examination of the research and evidence base followed by advice on, and examples of, positive practice across a range of healthcare areas including general

practice, community services and public health. Research shows that female Gypsies and Travellers are generally responsible for meeting their families' healthcare needs as well as their own. The guidance will acknowledge these important roles that are played by them.

Northern Ireland

Sexual health in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland the Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan (2008 -2013) has recently been updated to extend the lifespan of the Strategy and Action Plan to December 2015. Actions include the communication of key sexual health messages, provision of information, delivery of programmes and services to improve, protect and promote sexual health and well-being. The Northern Ireland Executive is also currently in the process of revising its "Termination of Pregnancy" guidance.

Maternity in Northern Ireland

Following a review of maternity services policy in Northern Ireland in 2010, the Strategy for Maternity Care in Northern Ireland 2012 – 2018, was launched on 2 July 2012. The Strategy aims to improve outcomes for mother, baby and the wider family, recognising that maternity services should be responsive to needs, including for those women with disabilities or from an ethnic minority background. Implementation of the recommendations is now being taken forward.

Following a public consultation in 2009, the Northern Ireland Executive widened the criteria by which women could access fertility services. All women in Northern Ireland now have equitable access to reproductive medicine - women meeting the clinical criteria are offered one treatment of IVF / ICSI and, from April 2012, women who meet the clinical criteria are also offered one frozen embryo transfer. Revised NICE guidance on fertility was endorsed by Northern Ireland's Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety in November 2013.

Scotland

Sexual health in Scotland

The Scottish Government operates under an outcomes-based "Sexual Health and Blood Borne Viruses" Framework (2011-15).

4. Violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is an unacceptable crime that the Government is committed to ending. It is a violation of basic human rights, and is an obstacle that prevents many women and girls from leading their own lives and contributing fully to our society and economy. It extracts a huge cost from our health services, our criminal justice system, and in the wasted opportunity of blighted lives, both in this generation and the next.

The scale of the challenge of ending violence against women and girls is considerable. Latest data published by the Crime Survey for England and Wales shows that an estimated 1.2 million women were victims of domestic abuse in the last year. Figures for 2012/13 show that 76 women were killed by a partner or ex-partner, and over 330,000 were victims of sexual assault.

The UK Government published a cross-Government strategy, “A Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls” in November 2010 and a supporting action plan in 2011, which has been subsequently refreshed on an annual basis; the latest was published on 8 March 2014 to coincide with International Women’s Day. The Government’s approach is focused on the guiding principles of prevention; provision of services for victims; partnership working; and risk reduction and improved justice outcomes.

We have made progress but there is still much to do; we continue to actively pursue ways in which we can prevent violence from happening in the first place, do even more to help victims, bring perpetrators to justice and eradicate these appalling crimes. The UK Government is clear that violence against women and girls is not just a matter of concern for the UK, but a global issue. Along with many in the international community, we want to see a world in which women and girls in every country are able to live their lives free from violence.

We have put girls and women at the heart of international development and preventing violence against women and girls is a priority area for action. We have been leading on scaling up work through country programmes, with over 21 countries directly addressing violence against women and girls. We are also investing £25m in a pioneering What Works to Prevent Violence research programme. This will drive innovation, generate ground-breaking new evidence, and support new prevention programmes.

Also, last year, we launched a Call to Action on violence against women and girls in emergencies. International humanitarian agencies, donors and Non-Governmental Organisations all committed to taking action to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls and other at-risk groups from the start of humanitarian emergencies.

In June, the Foreign Secretary and the Special Envoy of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees hosted a Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict in London to bring together all those that have signed the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, to turn political will into practical action.

In July, the Prime Minister and UNICEF will co-host a Girl Summit 2014 on female genital mutilation and child and forced marriage. This will bring together girls and women, community leaders, governments, civil society and the private sector to share lessons and galvanise new commitments to end child, early and forced marriage and Female genital mutilation, within a generation – both in the UK and worldwide.

The Government has ring-fenced nearly £40 million of stable funding up to 2015 for specialist local support services and national helplines. By delivering the Action Plan, the Government continues to demonstrate its commitment to provide national leadership to maintain momentum and drive progress in the right direction. Below is a summary of the actions we have taken since 2010:

Preventing violence against women and girls

- We recognise the need to change attitudes and influence behaviour, starting with the young, who can be more vulnerable to violence. Our national prevention campaign (This is Abuse) encourages teenagers to re-think their views about rape, consent, violence and abuse. Activity includes TV, online, social media and radio advertising across teen-focused channels and programmes which are known to be popular with our target audience. The campaign is supported by a dedicated website where young people can obtain further advice and third party support, and discuss the issue with their peers. Since its launch, the website has had over one million visits and a number of comments posted on discussion boards. The website is moderated by trained experts from Respect and Against Violence and Abuse.
- We know that schools play a vital role in education and safeguarding. We have established a Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Sex and Relationships Education subject expert group, alongside the national curriculum groups. It will ensure that teachers have the support and resources to deliver high quality teaching, and give PSHE the same prominence as national curriculum subjects. The group will look at school-based programmes on domestic violence and other key areas.
- We launched the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative on 29 May 2012 to prevent and respond to sexual violence and end the culture of impunity. As part of this, we also launched the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict which contains a set of practical and political commitments to end the use of rape and sexual violence as a weapon of war, which terrorises and destroys communities during conflict.

Protecting victims

- We have a duty to provide vulnerable people with the best possible protection which is why the Government commissioned Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) in September 2013, to review current practice on domestic violence; their report was published in April which sets out a number of recommendations. The report found that although domestic abuse was a feature in most Police and Crime Commissioners Crime Plans, this did not translate into operational priorities in police forces. There is a frontline culture in which domestic abuse is not understood and often not regarded as a crime. The Home Secretary wrote to Chief Constables and police force leads on domestic abuse, making clear her expectation that every police force will have an action plan in place by September 2014, to improve their response to domestic violence and abuse. She will also be chairing a National Oversight Group to monitor delivery against the recommendations made by HMIC.
- We announced our intention to roll-out Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) across England and Wales from March 2014. This follows the successful conclusion of a one-year pilot in three police force areas in England. DVPOs can prevent the perpetrator from returning to a residence and from having contact with the victim for up to 28 days, giving the victim time to consider their options.

- We also announced plans to roll-out the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS). The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) introduces recognised and consistent processes to enable the police to disclose to the public information about previous violent offending by a new or existing partner where this may help protect them from further violent.
- We extended the definition of domestic violence and abuse to cover 16 and 17 year olds and to capture coercive control.
- We commenced statutory domestic homicide reviews to establish what lessons can be learned from the domestic homicides regarding the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard victims.
- We have criminalised forced marriage in England, Wales and Scotland. The UK is a world leader in tackling forced marriage (including early and child marriage. The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU), a joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and Home Office Unit was set up in January 2005 to lead on the Government's forced marriage policy, outreach and casework. It operates both inside the UK, where support is provided to any individual, and overseas, where consular assistance is provided to British nationals, including dual nationals. The FMU operates a public helpline to provide advice and support to victims of forced marriage as well as to professionals dealing with cases. The assistance provided ranges from safety advice, through to aiding a victim to prevent their unwanted spouse moving to the UK, and, in extreme circumstances, to rescues of victims held against their will overseas.
- We have continued to fund new rape crisis centres, as well as the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) networks.
- We published a new Victim's Code (the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime) which clearly sets out the information, support and services that victims can expect to receive from criminal justice agencies in England and Wales at every stage of the process. The Code provides an enhanced level of service to victims of the most serious crime, which specifically includes victims of domestic violence and victims of sexual offences, to make sure they get the right support at the right time.
- We also created two new stalking offences, "stalking" and "stalking involving fear of violence or serious alarm or distress" which came into force in November 2012.
- Our funding provides for the provision of frontline support to victims of domestic and sexual violence. This includes a commitment to centrally fund the critical services:
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs): local multi-agency meetings that focus on the safety of high-risk domestic violence victims.
- Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs): trained specialists who provide a service to victims who are at high risk of harm from domestic violence, with the aim of securing their safety and the safety of their children.

- Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs): trained specialists who provide victims of sexual abuse advice on counselling and what support services are available to them.
- Rape Support Centres: vital specialist support for women who have been the victim of rape and sexual violence to get the expert support they need to rebuild their lives.
- We published the NHS Public Health Functions Agreement for 2014-15, which included a sexual assault services specification, setting out ambitions for more consistent provision across England.

Reducing the risk to women and girls

- We established dedicated Rape and Serious and Sexual Offence (RASSO) units in every Crown Prosecution Service Area across England and Wales staffed by specialist prosecutors to ensure a consistent service to victims.
- We made legislative changes to the civil orders available to manage risky behaviour by sex offenders, giving the police and courts broader powers to manage registered sex offenders and those who pose a risk.
- We developed operational guidance on the handling of domestic violence cases to include in the standard operating procedures for Magistrates' Courts.
- We launched new training for Crown Prosecution Service lawyers focused on the use of stalking offences under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. In addition, over 1,000 CPS lawyers completed training on cyber-stalking.
- We funded three voluntary organisations (National Working Group, Parents Against Child Exploitation and Barnado's), who are helping to support young women and girls who are at risk, or already victims, of child sexual exploitation.

Female Genital Mutilation

The Government is absolutely committed to tackling and preventing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). On 6 February, Ministers signed a joint declaration to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to end this terrible form of abuse. Prevention is at the heart of the government's work on FGM in the UK – we want to safeguard and protect all girls and women who may be at risk to avoid the severe consequences of their physical and mental health.

In the UK FGM has been a criminal offence since 1985. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, made it an offence for the first time for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out FGM abroad, or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where FGM is legal. The Government is working closely with the Director of Public Prosecutions on her FGM action plan to secure an effective criminal justice system response to FGM. MOJ is now legislating, through the serious crime bill, to extend the reach

of the extra-territorial offences in the 2003 Act to include habitual (as well as permanent) UK residents.

The criminal law is only part of tackling the continuing problem of FGM in this country. Prosecution after the fact does not relieve the victim of the offence from a lifetime of pain and discomfort. We want to prevent the mutilation from happening in the first place and anecdotal evidence has suggested that the 2003 Act has had some deterrent effect. In addition, there have been a number of police investigations which have contributed to interventions to protect girls at risk of FGM.

In October 2012 the HO published the 'Statement Opposing Female Genital Mutilation' leaflet. This pocket-sized document sets out the law and the potential criminal penalties on FGM. This tool is directed at families who have immigrated into the UK and do not want their children to be subjected to FGM, but still feel compelled by cultural and social norms when visiting family abroad. The Government also recognises that religious leaders can play a role in dispelling myths about FGM. No major religion condones FGM and in January 2014 we met with faith groups to look for opportunities to work together to raise awareness of FGM. The Government is committed to pursuing this dialogue and a further meeting has been arranged for 19 June.

Following a successful bid to the European Commission, we were awarded approximately €300,000 in November 2013 for work on FGM. As part of this work, we launched a communications campaign on 2 June to raise awareness of FGM and signpost the NSPCC FGM Helpline. Key messages of the new campaign will include that FGM is child abuse and is a serious criminal offence in the UK. We have also launched a £100,000 Community Engagement Initiative where voluntary sector organisations could bid for up to £10,000 to carry out awareness raising projects within their own communities. We are also developing an e-learning tool for safeguarding professionals to undertake an introduction to FGM. It is important to recognise the links between work in the UK and our international work. FGM is unlikely to end in the UK before it ends in Africa and as a result there needs to be a dual international and domestic approach. The Department for International Development (DfID) flagship programme to support the African movement to end FGM supports multi-pronged interventions to change social norms to end the practice. This includes targeted work with communities to support them to abandon FGM while retaining the positive aspects of their cultures.

Crown Prosecution Service - National Rape Action Plan

Rape and sexual abuse against women, men and children is an appalling misuse of power and control which can have a devastating impact on lives. The vast majority of offences are not reported to the police and more than a third of victims tell no one about their experience. In this context the drop in the number of reported cases that were then referred by police to the CPS in 2012-13 was of particular concern.

On Friday 6 June, the Director of Public Prosecutions and the national policing lead for adult sexual offences announced the publication of a new national rape action plan in which they

set out their clear commitment to address the issues preventing rape cases from successfully progressing through the criminal justice system.

The rape action plan includes:

- Steps to ensure better application of the legislation on consent and that police and prosecutors focus on steps taken by a suspect to seek consent from their alleged victim where this is an issue.
- Updating the joint police and CPS national rape protocol on the investigation and prosecution of rape cases.
- Steps to monitor police decisions to take no further action in rape cases, including the quality of record-keeping and authorisation of decision making.
- New practical guidance for frontline police officers and prosecutors.
- A National Conference later this year with all specialist rape prosecutors and police rape leads to raise awareness of key issues.
- Reviews of the operation of CPS rape and serious sexual assault units and the instruction of appropriate advocates in rape trials.

The action plan is the outcome of more than six months of work and a rape scrutiny panel convened to investigate the fall in the number of rape-flagged cases referred by police to the CPS. New figures already show an 8% rise in the volume of police referrals for 2013-14, compared with 2012-13, and the CPS charged 700 more defendants over the same period, which is an increase of 25% from the previous year. This increase in volume will take time to impact on statistics for completed cases.

Trafficking

The UK Government published its human trafficking strategy on 19th July 2011, with focus on four key areas:

- improving the identification and care for victims
- working upstream to stop the threat early
- smarter action at the border
- coordinating UK law enforcement efforts

Adult victim care arrangements in England and Wales were amended in 2011 to provide trafficking victims with care and support tailored to their individual needs. Gender sensitivities are considered in the needs and risk assessment undertaken to determine a victim's care and support requirements.

Activities include:

- political lobbying and awareness raising activities, including Ministerial engagements and conferences;
- working with foreign governments and other organisations on capacity building projects
- encouraging governments in source and transit countries to take the lead to protect potential victims and reintegrate victims.
- on 29 May 2012, the Foreign Secretary launched the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative to address the culture of impunity for sexual violence crimes that has been allowed to develop.

- the UK is addressing this issue through a high-level political campaign, including the UK's Presidency of the G8 in 2013, supported by a range of practical measures, such as the development of an International Protocol on the Investigation and Documentation of sexual violence in conflict, targeted deployments of the UK Team of Experts to help conflict-affected countries address the issue, and financial support to the UN and other organisations.

Northern Ireland

Key measures to support and protect victims of domestic violence and to bring perpetrators to justice include:

- The Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), for all people who have been sexually assaulted or raped opened to Police referrals in May 2013 and to third party and self-referrals in September 2013. To date there have been 500 referrals to the SARC of which 42% are under the age of 18.
- A Regional Directory of Services was published in March 2010 and updated in 2013. This details all existing services available for children and adults across the voluntary and statutory sectors.
- An Anti-Rape campaign specifically targeting students in further and higher education was re-launched in September 2010 to reinforce the message that non-consensual sex is a crime and to raise awareness of how alcohol can impact judgement.
- Work is ongoing on the commissioning of advocacy services for high risk victims of domestic violence and for victims of sexual violence and abuse.
- The establishment in January 2010 of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARAC) across Northern Ireland. Since then over 6,700 high risk victims of domestic violence have had safety plans put in place to protect them – plans which have included almost 9,000 children.
- In December 2011 a scheme allowing victims of domestic violence to access legal aid quickly was made permanent.
- A new joint “Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse” Strategy is being developed.

Trafficking in Northern Ireland

- All child victims of trafficking are entitled to the full range of services afforded to children under The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. The DHSSPS and the Police Service of Northern Ireland jointly issued guidance, Working Arrangements for the Welfare and Safeguarding of Child Victims of Human Trafficking in February 2011. This guidance sets out the actions to be taken by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in relation to lone or unaccompanied children, children in the care of an unsuitable adult and children who are recovered during Police operations where there is reasonable cause to believe that the child may be the victim of trafficking. This guidance is consistent with existing child protection and looked after children guidance and is aligned with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). HSC Trusts regularly report the numbers of separated/unaccompanied children and

young people who come to their attention and the outcomes for these children and young people.

- In October 2012, the DHSSPS and Department of Justice launched Guidance on Working Arrangements for the Welfare and Protection of Adult Victims of Human Trafficking. The guidance sets out the actions to be taken by the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Health and Social Care Trusts and others, in relation to adults where trafficking is suspected, and where victims of trafficking are recovered during police operations.
- Work is ongoing on a provision which will criminalise forced marriage in Northern Ireland.

FGM in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland a consultation on draft Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines on Female Genital Mutilation has just been completed and the responses to the consultation are being assessed, with a view to identifying any required amendments.

Wales

Legislation aimed at tackling Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAW, DA and SV) was introduced into the National Assembly for Wales in June 2014. The legislation will not seek to address criminal justice issues; rather it will complement existing criminal law, focussing on the social issues within the elements of prevention, protection and support. The legislation will be supported by a number of key policy initiatives. These include the development of a national Healthy Relationship education programme. This will be delivered in all schools in Wales and piloted from September 2014 along with a National Training Framework, which will provide consistent training for all key public sector and specialist service provider professionals across Wales.

Good progress has been made to deliver three priorities areas under the 10,000 Safer Lives Project. All devolved public service organisations in Wales have now implemented or reviewed their workplace policies on DA, VAW and SV. Service User Groups are in place in all but one Welsh region, the establishment of which was supported by Welsh Government guidance and funding. Work is also underway to identify effective information sharing protocols related to crisis and prevention based work in order to share best practice in this area at a national level. We have increased the VAWDA budget for 2014/2015 to £4 million from £3.6m. This funding goes to partner organisations to deliver effective services across Wales, including a 24 hour domestic abuse and sexual violence helpline and healthy relationship lessons in schools. The funding is also used for awareness raising campaigns.

Sexual Assault Referral Centres in Wales

Welsh Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) are a key element of the Welsh Government's six year strategy to tackle domestic abuse and violence against women (The Right to be Safe 2010). There are six SARCs in Wales, which provide one-stop services, medical care and forensic examination following assault/rape, counselling and sexual health services. SARCs are funded to run in partnership between the NHS, police and the voluntary sector. The Welsh Government provides annual funding of £161,000 to support the health aspects of the SARCS work. Taking forward SARC's activity, the Welsh Government has established a

multiagency National SARCs Planning Group to ensure that services across Wales are planned and delivered to a consistent standard to meet the acute needs of victims.

Prostitution in Wales

In Wales, responsibility for prosecutions relating to Prostitution is not devolved to the Welsh Government. However the Working Together to Reduce Harm (Substance Misuse) Delivery Plan 2013-2015 has a key action to “Improve access to substance misuse services for those that are engaged in sex work”.

Slavery in Wales

The response to slavery in Wales has been led by the appointment of an Anti-Slavery Co-ordinator – the only such appointment in the UK. The Co-ordinator’s role is to drive forward change and engage partners in making Wales a hostile place for slavery to exist, as well as to co-ordinate the best possible support for survivors of slavery. Regional Anti-Slavery Fora have been established across Wales and in February 2014 a national TV and poster campaign was run to raise public awareness of slavery.

FGM in Wales

The Welsh Government is calling for zero tolerance of FGM in Wales and has prioritised this work, with officials working closely across Departments and with key stakeholders to make a difference to the lives of young girls in Wales. The Welsh Government has established a new Strategic FGM Leadership Group which is providing oversight and direction on this work. The Welsh Government’s conference held on FGM Zero Tolerance Day (6 February 2014) was the only one in the UK on International Day of Zero Tolerance of FGM. The conference was a significant step forward in raising awareness and encouraging better partnership working.

Scotland

Tackling violence against women is a priority of the Scottish Government and we recognise the need to both invest in measures to prevent violence and abuse, and to respond to violence and abuse as early and effectively as possible where it does occur. Funding for violence against women has been at record levels since 2007 in Scotland and we will continue to address it through action taken at strategic national and local Government levels and across the statutory and third sectors.

Key Actions since 2009

- Funding of £34.5 million to tackle violence against women allocated for 2012-2015;
- Equally Safe: Scotland’s strategy for preventing violence against women and girls to be published in Summer 2014;
- Announced plans to criminalise forced marriage alongside England and Wales;
- A new national police service of Scotland established in April 2013, helping to ensure robust and effective policing of violence against women, including rape and domestic abuse, throughout Scotland. Measures introduced by Police Scotland include the creation of Specialist Domestic Abuse Investigation Units in every Local Policing Division;
- In establishing the National Sex Crimes Unit, the Crown Office has established a team of specialist prosecutors to ensure these cases are given the best available consideration and preparation;

- Police Scotland have established a new National Rape Taskforce and a Rape and Sexual Crime External Advisory Group, which operate across Scotland to continue to inform and improve the investigation of rape;
- Strengthened the law in relation to violence against women, including by introducing: an offence of engaging in threatening or abusive behaviour; a new statutory offence of stalking; the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2011, and the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2014 will give victims of domestic abuse automatic access to measures, such as screens and video links, when giving evidence;
- Supported the establishment of specialist domestic abuse courts
- Soliciting and loitering in a public place for the purpose of purchasing sex is an offence under the Prostitution (Public Places) (Scotland) Act 2007;
- Scottish legislation on human trafficking – including the trafficking of children - will be introduced in this parliamentary session. The exact timing will be announced by Ministers later this year. The aim is to develop legislation that gives our police, prosecutors and other agencies the powers to make Scotland a hostile environment for human traffickers, but also helps to identify and support the needs of victims;
- A Short Life Working Group comprising of key partners from Scottish Government, Health, Police and support organisations is being formed to consider the actions to tackle FGM in Scotland to include actions required in relation to the recommendations from the intercollegiate report “ Tackling FGM in the UK – Intercollegiate recommendations for identifying, recording and reporting FGM”.

The Scottish Government wishes to extend the provisions of the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005 to extend the reach of the extra-territorial offences in that Act to habitual (as well as permanent) UK residents by way of a Legislative Consent Motion (LCM) in the Serious Crime Bill 2014 (in England and Wales the same will be achieved by amendment of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003).

5. Women and armed conflict

The UK Government is committed to ensuring the participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution, and to protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts. The UK played the leading role in the drafting and development of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) and was one of the first countries to have a National Action Plan. Following its commitment to keep its CEDAW reservations under review, the UK Government has recently begun a review of its exemption statement that allows the exclusion of women from certain military posts. The review will ascertain whether women can serve in combat roles, and will conclude by the end of 2014.

Going forward, the MOD will maintain an operational and training focus for the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. The operational focus will be twofold. Firstly to incorporate gender advisers more widely throughout UK Defence. This has been very successful in Afghanistan and led to the development of UK Female Engagement Teams. Female Engagement with specially trained female members of the armed forces allowed dialogue with 50%+ of the Afghan population that had hitherto remained unengaged by the

ground forces. Developing a gender perspective allows issues to be examined from the point of view of women and girls to identify any differences in their needs and priorities; this is essential to building stability. The aim is to ensure that gender is mainstreamed into process to allow any impact to be assessed in the effect it has on women and girls.

The second focus will be on training at all levels to understand the impact of gender on operations and this is being developed by means of serials on exercises and in pre-deployment training. Training will be reviewed to ensure that specific reference is made to the principles of Women, Peace and Security, where appropriate. This will be co-ordinated across many levels of instruction from basic training to sessions within higher staff training and will draw upon the best practice of allies.

The UK Government's ambition is to put women and girls at the centre of all our efforts to prevent and resolve conflict, to promote peace and stability, and to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. Building equality between women and men in countries affected by war and conflict is at the core of the UK's national security and that of the wider world. The UK recognises that gender equality is necessary to build lasting peace.

Actions since 2009

The UK Government completed and reviewed its last National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) 2010 – 2013. Achievements in this period included:

- Better incorporation of WPS into HMG's conflict policy and funding, staff training;
- The scale up of bilateral programmes to address Violence against Women and Girls;
- The launch of the Foreign Secretary's Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative in 2012;
- Practical and political support to support the WPS agenda in Afghanistan, DRC, Nepal and in the Middle East and North Africa;
- The UK's work at the UN Security Council, where it continues to champion the WPS agenda. 2013 saw the adoption of two UN Security Council Resolutions on WPS (UNSCR 2106 and 2122).

The new NAP outlines HMG's combined effort on women, peace and security under a single framework. It pulls together the UK's work on the PSVI, DFID's Strategic Vision for Girls and Women, the Call to Action on protecting women and girls in emergencies, the Girl Summit, HMG's work to prevent conflict and protect civilians, and our policy engagement at the UN Security Council and at the Commission for the Status of Women. It sets out activities in five areas that will take place 2014 - 2017:

- Protection: the protection of women and girls' human rights and the assurance of women and girls' safety, physical and mental health and economic security
- Participation: that women and girls are included and their interests included in decision-making related to the prevention, management and resolution of conflict
- Prevention: of conflict and violence against women and girls, including sexual and gender based violence

- Relief and Recovery: ensuring women and girl's needs are met in conflict and post conflict humanitarian situations
- Building UK Capacity: putting in place the needed resources and expertise to enable the UK to implement its commitments.

6. Women and the economy

Under this Government there are more women employed in the UK than ever before, with 14.2m women in employment. Women's employment increased by 161,000 on the quarter and is now 315,000 higher than one year ago. The employment rate for women has increased by 0.6 percentage points on the quarter to 67.9%. This is the highest rate it has ever reached in the UK. Since May 2010 the female employment rate is up 2.4 percentage points to 67.9%, inactivity is down 2.0 percentage points to 27.5%, and unemployment has decreased by 0.6 percentage points to 6.4% over the same period.

Women are more likely to use all forms of business support, whether public or private sector or informal in origin than men. 38% of women in the UK compared to 3% in Europe take advice from government business support (Delta Economics (2011) 'Challenges and Opportunities for Growth and Sustainability (COGS): A focus on women in the UK and Europe). Welfare reforms such as our shared parental leave and flexible working schemes mean that more women who want to work are able to. A wide range of support is available to unemployed women through Jobcentre Plus, the Work Programme, the Youth Contract and Get Britain Working. The National Careers Service was launched in April 2012 and during its first year over 345,000 (45%) of its new customers were women. From a sample of female customers contacted after 6 months; 27% had progressed into new employment; 65% had progressed into learning and 22% had started voluntary work. We have invested heavily in apprenticeships. In 2011/12 over half (52%) of, or 200000, new apprentices were women.

Women's Business Council

We established the Women's Business Council, a business led initiative, to get the best advice on how to support women in the economy from men and women who are leaders in their sectors. They published their findings and recommendations in June 2013:

- by equalising labour force participation rates of men and women, the UK could increase economic growth by 0.5 percentage points per year, with a potential gain of 10% of GDP by 2030;
- if women started businesses at the same rate as men we could have an extra one million female entrepreneurs; and
- there are over 2.4 million women who are not in work but want to work, and over 1.3 million women who want to work more hours.
- the report made recommendations for government and business in four key areas: Starting Out; Getting On; Staying On; and Enterprise. The Government published its action plan on 7 November 2013 setting out how we will take forward the report's findings and recommendations for government.

On Tuesday 3rd June 2014 the Women's Business Council launched their '1 year on report' which updated progress made against their recommendations; provided a number of

excellent case studies of women who are achieving great things; and also set out the priorities for the WBC going forward.

We are extending the right to request flexible working to all in June 2014 and introducing a new system of shared parental leave by April 2015. We will give employment tribunals the power to require an employer who loses an equal pay case to carry out a pay audit, where there is likely to be systemic discrimination.

Childcare

To make it easier for women to work, we have introduced the following reforms to our childcare system

- Increased free early education places for 3- and 4-year-olds to 15 hours a week – and extended this so that 260,000 two-year-olds from lower income families can also access free early education place from September 2014;
- Announced further help for working families with childcare costs. The scheme will be worth up to £2,000 per child per year and will be introduced in autumn 2015;
- Lower income families can recover childcare costs – 70% of up to £760 for one child, or £1,300 for two or more children per month;
- An additional 100,000 families will be eligible for childcare support under Universal Credit. From 2015, this subsidy will be increased to 85% for all parents eligible for Universal Credit.

Gender pay gap

We have made good progress in our goal to end pay inequality in the UK, though significant work remains to be carried out. The gender pay gap between men and women working full time, and between men and women working either full-time or part-time is narrowing. The gender pay gap has fallen since 2010 and is almost eliminated for full-time workers under 40. The difference between men and women's median hourly full-time pay has fallen sharply from 12.6% in 2008 to 10.0% in 2013.

From October 2010, under the Equality Act Section 77, the Government has stopped pay secrecy clauses in employment contracts from being enforceable to hide unfair behaviours in paying men and women differently. Employees can now discuss their pay freely to discover whether their pay is discriminatory. The Equality Act also extends positive action in recruitment and promotion (Section 159); and protects against discrimination "by association", which is of relevance particularly to carers (Section 13). We are currently taking new legislation through Parliament which would give Tribunals power to order that employers conduct a pay audit where they have been found to discriminate over pay.

The UK Government recognises that it cannot change organisational culture on its own, and we are working with the private sector to achieve equality in the workplace. In addition to our work with the WBC, in 2012 we worked closely with business representatives to launch *Think, Act, Report*, a non-legislative initiative to promote gender equality at work, through greater transparency on pay and other workplace issues. Companies are helped and encouraged to think about gender equality within their companies – on issues like recruitment, retention, promotion and pay; to take action – where the data shows a case for doing so; and to report their progress – sharing data, best practice and case studies.

Response from the private sector to *Think, Act, Report* has been hugely positive: over 200 businesses have signed up to support the initiative, collectively employing over 2.1 million people.

Support for women entrepreneurs

Enterprise growth is central to economic growth, national competitiveness and innovation. We are committed to helping women gain the necessary skills to set up and run their own business by

- Promoting enterprise through education;
- Increasing the availability of inspirational role models;
- Identifying and training 15,000 new mentors to support anyone setting up and growing a business, including 5,000 specifically for new and existing female entrepreneurs;
- Investing £1.6 million over 3 years to support rural women's enterprise;
- Establishing a £2m scheme to provide small grants of up to £500 to childcare providers, including childminders, wishing to set up new childcare businesses;
- Legislating for childminding agencies, to be a hub of practical and business help whilst providing quality assurance for parents;
- Establishing 24 new enterprise zones and introducing the regional growth fund to bring investment to every part of Britain.

Women on Boards

The Government is committed to increasing women's representation in UK boardrooms and bringing about real lasting change for the benefit of women, business and the economy. We are making good progress with the Lord Davies voluntary business led approach and seeing a steady rise of women on FTSE 100 Boards since publication of the Davies Review in 2011. Women now account for just over 22% of women on FTSE 100 boards and 16.5% on FTSE 250. There are now no all-male boards in the UK's top companies, compared to 21 three years ago.

Key drivers of change:

- As of 1st October 2013, quoted companies in UK are now required to disclose the numbers of men and women on boards, in senior management and in the business as a whole;
- The Financial Reporting Council have also introduced changes to company reporting which requires listed companies to report on the diversity of their board rooms
- Lord Davies' 25% target by 2015 for FTSE 100 companies;
- The Voluntary Code of Conduct for Executive Search Firms has played a key role in the progress that we have seen in the numbers of women attaining boardroom positions. Around 70 firms to date have signed the code and between them these firms cover the vast majority of FTSE 350 appointments.

Wales

Equal pay in Wales

In Wales, the Government has introduced a robust "equal pay duty" under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. All public sector employers in Wales with more than 150 employees are required to report annually, not only on gender pay gaps, but

on the gender disparities in grade, occupation and different working patterns (full and part time, permanent/temporary/ fixed contracts) between men and women, that can lead to disparities in pay.

The Welsh Government's Strategic Equality Plan includes an Equality Objective to work with partners to identify and address the causes of the gender, ethnicity and disability pay and employment differences.

Childcare in Wales

Access to high quality, affordable, flexible childcare plays a key role in enabling women to access training and work opportunities. The Strategic Equality Plan contains actions for the provision of affordable and high quality childcare as well as improving the availability of childcare to more vulnerable or disadvantaged children. In July 2013, the Welsh Government launched the 'Early Years and Childcare Plan – Building a Brighter Future'. The plan sets out the Welsh Government's direction for the next 10 years, highlighting its commitment for all children of seven years and younger to have access to affordable, accessible and high quality childcare.

European Social Fund in Wales

One of the key areas for the targeting of the European Social Fund in Wales has been Gender Mainstreaming, in particular tackling the gender pay gap and occupational segregation. This focus has supported both the Agile Nation project and the Wave (Women Adding Value to the Economy) project. With a combined budget of £16m over six years, the projects aim to promote gender equality and support career advancement through targeted support for employees and through working with employers on improvements in Equality and Diversity Strategies including flexible working initiatives. Tackling the underlying issues that contribute to gender pay inequalities in Wales in employment and self-employment; giving a deeper understanding of the gendering process in the labour market and of how women might maximise their opportunities within employment are key objectives.

Scotland

Increasing female participation in the labour market will benefit the Scottish economy and boost tax revenues. The Scottish Government is working to reduce and remove the barriers faced by women to increase employment and earning opportunities, with increased childcare provision as a key policy. They fund and are an active partner in Close the Gap, a project that raises awareness of gender pay inequality and encourages action to close the gap. The Scottish Government also funds Equate Scotland to support the recruitment, retention and success of women where they are significantly under represented. Together with the Scottish Trade Union Congress, the Scottish Government held a Women's Employment Summit in 2012. Following this, a series of workshops were facilitated by the Scottish Government which resulted in the Women in Enterprise (WES) action framework, launched in March this year. £70k over two years has been invested to implement WES as well as providing financial support of £35k for the Women's Enterprise to develop a further mentoring product which was launched concurrently with the Framework. We have also committed £50k of support for the Investing Women initiative designed to help female entrepreneurs to become investment-ready.

Furthermore, steps are being taken to ensure that women have equal opportunities in terms of the quality as well as the number of jobs beginning with the launch of the Women on Board consultation at the end of April 2014.

Northern Ireland

Women's Entrepreneurship

Women remain the largest under-represented group when it comes to enterprise in Northern Ireland and represent a huge pool of untapped potential. Northern Ireland continues to have the lowest ratio of female to male Total Entrepreneurship Activity rate (33%), which is 24% lower than the UK rate.

There is a clear business case for Invest NI to support the work of women's business networks in terms of the untapped potential not only in respect of female business start-ups but also in the context of wider work on economic inactivity. Association with the networks represents a platform to showcase the innovation, leadership and contribution women are making to drive enterprise, business development and growth across Northern Ireland. Anticipated outcomes include:

- More women setting up and running their own businesses successfully
- Promoting opportunities for business growth in export markets, including promotion of Invest NI programmes

The Code of Practice on Equal Pay issued by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) came into effect on 22 July 2013, in accordance with The Sex Discrimination Code of Practice (Equal Pay) (Appointed Day) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013. The ECNI reviewed its 1999 Code of Practice on Equal Pay and decided to replace it with a revised Code of Practice. The aim of the revised Code of Practice is to provide updated, practical guidance to employers and employees (and their representatives or advisers) on how to avoid sex discrimination in pay structures. The Code of Practice includes, as good equal pay practice, a summary of the Commission's guidance on how to carry out an equal pay review. The first phase of the NI Executive's Bright Start Childcare Strategy was launched in September 2013. This included 15 Key First Actions to address the main childcare priorities identified during consultation and research. The most ambitious of the Key First Actions aim to conserve and increase the provision of low cost childcare places for children of school age by creating or sustaining up to 7,000 school age childcare places. Of these, 3,000 will focus on the needs of disadvantaged communities. These additional childcare services will be a key enabler for parents, and women in particular, who wish to access employment.

7. Women in power and decision-making

In 1992 60 Female MPs were elected to Parliament, in 2010 147 women were elected³, this UK Parliament is the most gender diverse ever. We continue to work towards increasing the number of women in public appointments and our aim is that 50% of new public appointees should be women by the end of this Parliament. Our Access to Elected Office Strategy (July 2012) supports disabled people who want to become MPs, councillors or other elected representatives. This includes a fund of £2.6m for 2012-14 to help meet the additional costs that disabled people face compared to non-disabled people. The Government is committed

³ Source: House of Commons Research Papers 01/75, 05/33 & 10/36.

to increasing the diversity of public appointments and has established the Centre for Public Appointments in the Cabinet Office. The Centre is working with Departments to attract a more diverse field of candidates to these important roles, to ensure our public bodies boards represent the communities they serve.

Wales

Welsh Government funding, provided to the Women Making a Difference (WMAD) Project since 2010, came to an end on 31 March 2014. The aim of this project was to increase the number of women who have the skills, ability, confidence and mind set to become 'leaders' in their communities and 'decision makers' at all levels of public and political life in Wales. Three-year Equality and Inclusion Grant funding has been agreed for WMAD for 2014-2017. In 2014-2015, WMAD will receive £66,323 to deliver their Balancing Power project which will be working with women who are furthest away from decision making with the aim of increasing the number of women from different backgrounds in public life.

The Welsh Government's Programme for Government commitments outlines our determination to increase diversity in public life and our Strategic Equality Plan sets out our actions to improve the engagement and participation of under-represented groups in public appointments in Wales. The Government Action Plan supports this programme and includes Ministers writing to Chairs of Public Sector Boards to encourage a proactive approach to increasing diversity and requesting regular progress updates; the sharing of good practice and case studies; the delivery of a seminar to Chairs of public sector Boards in July 2013 and work with Welsh Government officials to provide ongoing support for increasing diversity on our Boards. The Minister for Local Government established an expert group to consider diversity in local government. Its report contains recommendations for political parties, local government and Welsh Government to pursue aimed at ensuring a diverse cohort of candidates at the next local government elections.

Scotland

In Scotland the Public Appointment and Diversity Centre of Expertise has implemented a continuous improvement plan to support fair and effective public appointments. Women are being encouraged to apply for positions on public bodies in Scotland and numbers are improving.

The Scottish Government is aware of the importance of ensuring that women are fairly represented in democratic institutions. We recognise that although significant strides have been made in this area over the past 15 years, we still have some way to go before parity has been achieved. The Scottish Government supports the idea that companies should aspire to at least 40 % female participation on their boards. The Scottish Cabinet leads by example as 40% of Cabinet Secretaries are female.

Furthermore, the Government is currently in discussion with the UK Government to explore the possibility of an Order under Section 30 over balance and diversity on the boards of devolved public bodies. The order would allow the Scottish Parliament's legislative competence to be altered by removing or updating existing legislative reservations, or by adding new ones. To inform our dialogue with the UK Government, we have just launched a

consultation looking at how the Scottish Government would use equality legislation to introduce gender diversity quotas on public boards.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland women account for 22% of Northern Ireland MPs; 18.5% of the members of the Northern Ireland Assembly; and 23% of Northern Ireland councillors. Two of Northern Ireland's three MEPs are female. In 2010, the gender profile of the Northern Ireland Civil Service was reviewed and it was found women were under-represented in some jobs therefore actions are being taken to address this. Women are currently under-represented amongst public appointees and Government has initiatives in place to raise awareness, improve accessibility and encourage more women to apply for vacancies. The independent Commissioner for Public Appointments upholds a Code of Practice that is intended to ensure that the merit principle is applied to public appointments. The Commissioner recently published a report into "Under-representation and lack of diversity in public appointments in Northern Ireland", with a series of recommendations which NICS Departments are currently considering. The Office of the First and deputy First Minister maintains a mailing list of individuals and organisations interested in public appointments and actively targets women's organisations to ensure they are aware of vacancies.

8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

The UK is strongly committed to a wide range of international Human Rights Treaties and its national legislation under the Equality Act 2010. We have established advocacy machinery for the advancement of women such as the Women's Engagement team within GEO and the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). As the "National Machinery for Women" GEO is responsible for ensuring that all Government Departments take responsibility for gender equality objectives in their department policies. GEO also leads across Government on sexual orientation and transgender equality policy. Geo joined DCMS in 2012.

Gender equality is an integral element of the work of all government departments. Departments are held to account through a range of cross-departmental ministerial groups and activities including individual national Parliamentary bodies, annual CSW commitments, EU commitments; Departmental Action Plans; PQs and debates.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, the Office of the First and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) oversees implementation of the cross departmental Gender Equality Strategy (GES) in partnership with the Gender Advisory Panel. The GES is the overarching strategy to deliver gender equality in Northern Ireland. The current strategy runs from 2006 to 2016. In January 2014, following a review of the strategy, approval was granted for the development of a new strategy. This will include a new action plan to deliver the objectives of the strategy. The action plan will address the gaps in gender equality identified by the review and take account of international obligations such as CEDAW.

Wales

Women's Equality Network (WEN)

The Welsh Government has provided funding for WEN since November 2011. Three year funding via the Equality and Inclusion Grant (2014-2017) has been agreed for the network.

In 2014-2015 they will receive £84,110 which will, through the appointment of a director and project coordinator, work to strengthen the presence of the network and increase its membership in organisations and communities across Wales. The network is charged with bringing the issues and challenges facing women from all communities in Wales to the Welsh Government. Recent work includes a report on the impact of welfare reform changes on women in Wales (2013) and a report on the issues facing older women (2014). Funding support was also provided in 2013 and 2014 for their attendance at CSW in New York.

Strategic Equality Plan

The Welsh Government's Strategic Equality Plan contains eight outcome focused objectives. The objectives identify and tackle barriers to equality and strengthen the existing evidence base achieving better outcomes for our citizens. Within the Strategic Equality Plan there are three separate objectives specifically focusing on different areas of gender equality. Objective 2 addresses the causes of gender pay and employment differences, Objective 4 focuses on tackling all forms of violence against women and domestic abuse whilst actions in Objective 7 are working towards improving diversity in our public appointments.

Scotland

The Scottish Government funds the Scottish Women's Convention (£540k for 2011-15) to develop ways to allow women to influence the strategies and policies which affect them. They also fund Engender (£360k for 2012-15) to raise awareness of the cause and consequence of gender inequality in Scotland and its impact on women and girls and on the economy. While a number of countries are developing approaches to gender budgeting, in Scotland, a more detailed process of equality budgeting has developed. Following on from the exploratory work undertaken during the early years of the Scottish Parliament, the first Equality Budget Statement (EBS) was published in September 2009 alongside the 2010-11 Draft Budget, providing a summary of the action taken to ensure equality, including gender equality, had been considered within the Scottish Budget process. The fifth Equality Budget Statement was published in September 2013 to outline the Scottish Government's assessment of the equality impacts of proposed spending plans. It demonstrates that equality considerations are an integral part of the budgetary process and to the drive for improved outcomes for all in society, including women.

Equality Act Regulations in Scotland

The Equality Act 2010 enables Scottish Ministers to place specific duties on public authorities in order to implement the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Scottish Parliament approved a suite of Scottish specific duties which came into force on 27 May 2012. The specific duties require listed public authorities, amongst other things, to publish equality outcomes and report on progress; to report on mainstreaming equality; to undertake equality impact assessments; to gather and use employment information on equality and diversity and publish the results; to publish their gender pay gap and an equal pay statement (if they have over 150 employees).

9. Human rights of women

Women's rights are one of this Government's six key human rights priorities and are mainstreamed into the work of the FCO. We work at the multilateral level to strengthen the normative framework for better implementation of international human rights law. The UK is committed to the success of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism and used the process to recommend that the following countries ratify CEDAW or its Optional Protocol: in 2011: Palau, Oman, Papua New Guinea and Uganda; in 2013: Tonga. Women's rights, together with VAWG, is one of the thematic priorities we report on each year in the FCO's Annual Human Rights Report under each of our 27 countries of concern. Our priority is to encourage legislative and policy reform to address some of the structural causes of VAWG such as political and economic exclusion, lack of access to justice and impunity, weak civil society and lack of political will. We do this through funding projects through the Conflict Pool, Arab Partnership Programme, bilateral post programme budgets and Human Rights and Democracy Programme Fund.

There are a number of key independent bodies within the UK with a mandate to both promote awareness of the importance of human rights and to monitor the implementation of human rights legislation at the domestic level. These are the EHRC in England and Wales; the Human Rights Commission in Northern Ireland (a statutory body set up in 1999 following the Northern Ireland Act (1998)) and the Scottish Human Rights Commission (a statutory body formed in 2008 following the Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006). In addition to promoting human rights domestically, the UK mainstreams human rights throughout its foreign policy and development work, including through efforts to ensure that gender equality is promoted and protected. The UK Government believes that effective women's participation in public and economic life is a pre-requisite for good governance and effective democracy.

Women's rights in the UN

The UK puts great effort into the outcome of CSW. The FCO's contribution each year is a major lobbying and information campaign mobilising the global diplomatic network to secure agreement on a progressive outcome. During March 2014 as in previous years, the UK government ran an active lobbying campaign in support of agreed conclusions at CSW. 2013's CSW theme was "the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls". We were therefore delighted that agreement was reached with conclusions that included good language on sexual and reproductive health and rights, legal frameworks, tackling impunity, the International Criminal Court, conflict and post-conflict situations, femicide, women HRDs and safe abortion. For the first time in a UN document, emergency contraception is mentioned as a health service that should be provided in response to gender-based violence.

These conclusions provided a solid point of reference for the UK and others to take forward international efforts to eradicate violence against women and girls, and agreed standards against which civil society can hold governments to account. Government Departments are already working together ahead of the 59th Session of CSW in 2015. We welcome the agreed conclusions from CSW58 that called for a dedicated goal on gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment and respect for the human rights of girls and women including ending all forms of violence, economic empowerment, leadership and

participation in decision making and ending harmful practices including FGM and early and forced marriage.

The UK is a strong supporter of CEDAW and we will continue to lobby for ratification and full implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocol. Some UN Member States remain reluctant to translate their international commitments into positive changes on the ground. The UK is encouraging efforts to strengthen effective gender mainstreaming throughout the entire UN system, including through actively supporting current proposals to reform the UN Gender Architecture in order to ensure a more strategic, effective and coherent approach to addressing global gender inequality and to progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Arab Partnership

The joint FCO-DFID Arab Partnership Fund, worth £110 million over 2011-15, supports political and economic reform across the Middle East and North Africa, strengthening inclusive political participation, public voice, good governance and economic growth. Over the reporting period, that has included projects that support women's rights, such as outreach to encourage women in rural areas in Tunisia to vote; assistance to women candidates in local elections in Egypt; improving access to employment and vocational training for youth and women with disabilities in Algeria; and strengthening women's participation in the General National Congress in Libya. Two further multi-country projects in the Middle East & North Africa have supported women's participation in local political processes, and helped build the organisational capacity of women's rights groups' networking and advocacy abilities.

Northern Ireland

The Good Friday agreement and subsequently the Northern Ireland Act 1998, task the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) with advising the Government on "the scope for defining, in Westminster legislation, rights supplementary to those in the ECHR, to reflect the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland".

Wales

The Welsh Government is part of the UK State Party which has ratified CEDAW and is fully committed to adhering to its principles.

Scotland

Central to Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights (SNAP), launched on 10 December 2013, is inculcating a better culture for the realisation of rights in Scotland. The Plan also refers specifically to existing gender inequalities in employment and contains a commitment to develop a comprehensive human rights- based strategy on Violence Against Women, which accords with UN definitions and learns from international best practice. The Scottish Government was closely involved in the development of SNAP and is working with the Commission and a range of partners from the public, private and third sectors on its implementation.

10. Women and the media

The important role of the media in the portrayal of women is recognised by the British Government, however, we also believe that a media free from state control is vital to a democratic state. While respecting the independence of the media, the Government welcomes media challenges to stereotypes and the positive representation of women. There are a range of regulatory controls on media and advertising which establish rules on discriminatory treatment in relation to the portrayal of women and the media must abide by discrimination rules. The British Government has committed to taking action on irresponsible advertising and marketing and to take steps to tackle the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood. In 2010 it set up an independent review led by Reg Bailey, Chief Executive of the Mother's Union, to report on the issue and recommend ensuing actions. His report and the Government's response were published in 2011, and the majority of the Bailey review recommendations have been implemented.

Public bodies (or organisations carrying out public functions) are required to follow duties set out in the Equality Act 2010 and the Communications Act 2003. This includes the BBC and some other public service broadcasters (Channel 4 and S4C). It is worth noting the work that broadcasters are taking forward in this area including the BBC Academy's 'Expert Women' programme which has begun to tackle the industry-wide imbalance of female experts on TV and radio, the BBC has also held numerous events to encourage more women to consider technology or engineering roles, working in partnership with Women in Engineering and Tony Hall recently set a target to have half the BBC's local radio stations feature a woman presenting on the breakfast shows by the end of 2014. A number of broadcasters and creative industry organisations are members of the Creative Diversity Network (CDN) including the BBC, Channel 4, Sky, MTV, ITN and Pact. The Creative Diversity Network (CDN) is a forum, paid for by its member bodies, entirely independent from Government. Its role is to convene and facilitate members to work together to promote, celebrate and share good practice across the industry.

Ministers also maintain a regular dialogue with industry on issues relating to diversity and equality. For example on 22 January this year Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries Ed Vaizey chaired a roundtable discussion with leaders in the broadcast, film and performing arts industries to discuss what barriers exist to BAME individuals entering and progressing within the sector, and what more the industries could do, working together, to increase BAME representation. At the meeting DCMS called on industry leaders to be more accountable for driving up the numbers of BAME people employed in their sectors. We have set up a sub group in the interim to discuss issues with the Creative Diversity Network including what more Government can do to help.

Following the publication of the Bailey Review the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) issued new tougher guidelines on the use of sexualised imagery in advertising and has subsequently banned a number of on-street ads that failed to meet these new requirements. There is evidence – from the number of queries to the ASA for copy advice – that advertisers are changing their behaviour in response. The Government recognises the crucial role of education and media literacy initiatives in helping young people understand, critically assess and challenge our media environment. GEO works with Media Smart to produce additional materials focusing on the accurate representations of body images in the media.

Body Confidence

The Government's Body Confidence Campaign works to promote positive body image, and challenge cultural messages that undermine young people's confidence and resilience.

- We work with the media, advertising, retail and fashion industries to encourage more diverse and realistic representation of human bodies. We also help to provide tools for young people and their parents to better understand the types of images they see and how they have been created. We promote and encourage public debate about body image to foster positive cultural change.
- The programme is evidence-based and guided by an expert advisory group drawn from industry, academia and the voluntary sector.
- We have developed evidence-based resources to raise children's media literacy. Our packs for parents and teachers, developed with and funded by the Media Smart Trust, have been downloaded over 35,000 times and continue to be downloaded in their hundreds every month. In July 2014 we will launch a new toolkit for 16-17 year olds that will be primarily promoted through the National Citizen Service.
- We regularly host ministerial roundtable discussions with industry and voluntary sector experts to engage and respond to their concerns about body image issues, and this engagement helps to formulate policy in this area. Recent roundtables have covered fathers' roles in promoting their children's body confidence and black and minority ethnic women and body confidence.
- We have published a rapid evidence review of body image literature to inform the work of the campaign, and a report on body image during pregnancy and after birth. This and other publications are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/body-confidence-a-rapid-evidence-assessment-of-the-literature>

11. Women and the environment

The UK Government recognises that we now face significant challenges to our environment, our economy, and the future security of our energy supplies – and that the decisions we make will affect the planet and our way of life for generations to come. The Government also recognises that the impact of climate change can have differential impacts on women and other groups. To effectively assess and respond to potential differential impacts, the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) is establishing Equality Schemes (including a Gender Equality Scheme), and undertaking Impact Assessments (including on gender) on all environment and climate change policies, as required by the public sector duties. The UK Government is committed to addressing climate change and sustainable development through its international development work carried out by DFID. Women are particularly vulnerable to the risks of climate change yet also have the least access to resources that enable them to diversify their livelihoods in response to climate change.

DFID is currently developing a climate change implementation strategy which aims to establish a 'fair and effective global framework' that addresses inequalities in climate change, including gender inequalities. DFID will be spending £100 million over the next five years to fill knowledge gaps in climate change, including research on its effects on the poorest and most vulnerable people, of which women form the majority. This research will be used to mainstream gender in DFID's climate change work and to influence multilaterals. DFID is working with the multi-lateral climate funds to ensure gender strategies, operational plans and expert oversight are in place so that design and implementation delivers for women and girls. This evidence will be used to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in the Development Bank's work on climate change. DFID has also co-funded analytical work with the World Bank's Social Development Department on the social dimensions of climate change and access to financial services for resilience, of which gender was an important cross-cutting theme. The UK International Climate Fund also supports a range of interventions to improve access to clean energy for women and girls, and particularly to help reduce the extremely high rates of illness and deaths from cooking with dirty fuels.

DFID is also committed to building women's leadership capacity in DFID-funded Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy (RNRRS) projects, which aim to draw women into the management process by equipping them with skills (e.g. literacy, information and leadership training) and by establishing forums and committees in which women are actively encouraged to participate. DFID's work through RNRRS projects has highlighted the challenges in engaging women in decision-making processes where men often prevented women from attending. This highlights the need to also engage men in discussions about the benefits of women's involvement in management processes.

Scotland

The Climate Justice Fund demonstrates Scotland's role in supporting the development of climate adaptation solutions in recognising that climatic factors will have an early impact on water availability and quality and there is an urgent need to take action on this most fundamental resource issue. Following the launch of the Climate Justice Fund in May 2012, a call for funding for was made in June 2012. Applications were invited to the first round for projects that had a climate change adaptation focus and in this first call that adaptation was to include water resource management. Applicants were asked to consider a rights-based approach to programmes and services to promote human rights and the strengthening of civil society. Within this, projects were asked to address gender disparities, reflecting an understanding of the issues facing women and girls and to draw on best practice approaches to address inequality through a focus on institutional reforms that promote equal rights for women and men, support to policies for sustained economic development and active measures to redress persistent gender disparities. Four water-related climate adaptation projects are being funded in Malawi and one in Zambia and a second funding round was opened in May 2014.

12. The girl-child

The UK has demonstrated its international commitment to promoting and protecting children's rights, including the rights of the girl-child, as evidenced through its ratification of

the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1991. We protect the rights of children by making sure UK government policies take account of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Education

In their daily lives, all children must be free from discrimination and harassment of any sorts, including that based on gender and sexual orientation. Such bullying and harassment can have serious effects on children, leading to poor mental health and wellbeing, truancy and lower educational attainment. The White Paper and Education Bill aim to raise awareness of what discrimination is, and to alleviate all forms of bullying, including that based on gender discrimination. PSHE teaches pupils to recognise and challenge prejudice and to understand that prejudice, racism and discrimination must be challenged at every level. We have established a Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Sex and Relationships Education subject expert group, alongside the national curriculum groups. It will ensure that teachers have the support and resources to deliver high quality teaching, and give PSHE the same prominence as national curriculum subjects.

Statistics continue to show that girls at second level are more likely to take arts, languages and humanities subjects while boys take geography, physical education and information technology. Girls continue to outperform boys at GCSE and investment in the futures of girls and young women has the potential to deliver tremendous returns: in fulfilled potential, lasting economic independence, and economic growth. Starting in school and college, girls need access to good information and support to help them make the right choices. They need understanding of the working world and the shape of their own working lives, they need confidence in exploring their potential, and they need to understand the importance of the choices they make in the context of their working lives immediately after leaving school and beyond. Stereotypes about “men’s work” and “women’s work” are a strong influence even at primary school and by GCSE level gendered career ambitions are clearly evident. However, it is a myth that girls are biologically pre-determined not to like certain subjects such as physical sciences.

Over the last two decades girls have made huge progress academically, but this is not always reflected in their subsequent career aspirations or economic success. They outperform boys at GCSE, A level and degree standards. However, there are clear gender differences in the subjects women choose in higher education. For example, of university places accepted, 13% of engineering places, 18% in technology and 22% in mathematics and computer science are taken by women, whilst women make up 89% in nursing, 85% in education, 73% in linguistics and classics and 72% in languages and literature. Following consultations with the Women’s Business Council on how we might increase girl’s aspirations, the UK Government will publish, by Autumn 2014, “Your Daughter’s Future”, an online toolkit for parents and carers of girls aged 12-16. This parent pack will offer information, advice and links to further resources to support parents in their vital role as the primary influencers’ of children’s career choices. The Government has worked with stakeholders to provide guidance on what subject choices their children will make and when, how those choices may translate into career opportunities, and how to broaden girls’ horizons and challenge gender expectations.

Wales

In Wales we have placed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC) in domestic law in line with the recommendations made in the Beijing Declaration.

The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 places a duty on Welsh Ministers to have due regard to the UNCRC. From May 2014 Welsh Ministers must, when exercising any of their functions, have due regard to the requirements of:

- (a) Part I of the Convention;
- (b) Articles 1 to 7 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, except article 6(2); and
- (c) Articles 1 to 10 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

The "functions" of Ministers means:

- Everything that the Welsh Ministers may do because legislation has given the Welsh Ministers the power to do it, and;
- Everything the Welsh Ministers must do because legislation has placed a duty on the Welsh Ministers to do it.

This means the duty applies whenever Ministers use any of their powers to make a decision, or there is a duty upon them to make a decision.

In having due regard to the UNCRC, Ministers will need to consider all articles equally as they refer to all children, whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. It doesn't matter where children live, what language they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they are disabled or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis (article 2).

The Measure has already clearly made a difference with Ministers explicitly referring to the UNCRC in making their decisions and with Assembly Members using the convention as a scrutiny tool.

Section three: future priorities

The UK has made significant progress in achieving gender equality since 1995, and continues to display leadership in promoting the rights of women and girls internationally. However, we continue to live in an unequal world and must not become complacent in tackling discrimination against women and girls. Many of the projects introduced by this Government to advance equality are in their early stages and we will continue to build on the positive results already achieved. The scale of the challenge remains daunting but we will continue to work with national and international partners to ensure equality becomes a reality for all people.

In an increasingly globalised and digitalised world, our realities are changing rapidly and this poses new challenges for parents. Such challenges include: balancing work and family life; fears for safety for children who go outside alone; rises in child obesity as a result of a video/television and fatty food lifestyle; pressures to conform to unrealistic idealised body images; persistent under-achievement for children from disadvantaged backgrounds; children's engagement with the internet, amongst others. The Children's Plan attempts to address some of these concerns including by strengthening support to families, investing in safe places to play, committing to eradicating child poverty by 2020, closing the gap in educational achievement for disadvantaged children, and helping children to develop personal and social skills, among other actions. All this will help to improve the life opportunities of the girl-child. We will also continue to encourage high levels of self-esteem in girls, and continue to campaign against unrealistic and unhealthy stereotypes that create poor body image in our children.

Economic Challenges

In the current economic climate, a major challenge we face is the inevitable reduction of budgets in many areas. The Government is taking difficult decisions in the fairest way possible, protecting services for the most vulnerable and focusing resources where they are most needed and most effective. Failure to tackle our inherited deficit now will result in greater long-term negative impact on women and families and the public services that they rely on. However, we are working to ensure that those most vulnerable are protected in any economic decisions made. For example, the British Government announced reforms to the tax credits system in the June Budget and Spending Review of 2010, to ensure tax credits are targeted at those who need them most.

We are making tangible progress in women's increased participation in the workforce but much remains to be done. We will continue our work to eliminate the gender pay gap, and encourage women to consider non-traditional roles. Our reforms on parental leave and flexible working will make it easier for women to return to work after pregnancy. Full-time male employees are still paid, on average, nearly 10% more than women. There are still not enough women in senior positions in either the public or private sector; no matter how much women are told to "lean in", women cannot fully participate in the workplace until we as a society embed equality into our daily lives and culture.

Continued violence against women and girls

The scale of the challenge of ending violence against women and girls is considerable. Latest data published by the Crime Survey for England and Wales shows that an estimated 1.2

million women were victims of domestic abuse in the last year. Figures for 2012/13 show that 76 women were killed by a partner or ex-partner, and over 330,000 were victims of sexual assault.

Despite the good progress we have made, VAWG prevails in the UK and internationally and its eradication remains a key priority for the UK Government. Discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, class and caste is endemic across the world. In times of conflict it becomes more prominent. Women and girls still suffer in distinct ways to men and boys from the effects of violent conflict. The UN estimates at least one out of three women around the world has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Women and girls are excluded from the processes of preventing conflict, making peace and ensuring recovery. Few peace agreements consider or involve women. Only one in five parliamentarians is a woman, yet women and girls make up half the world's population.

We will not tolerate a world in which women face the threat of violence and abuse; violence against women will not go unpunished and we will work to create a society where women feel safe to speak out about crimes committed against them. The underground nature of FGM makes its prevention difficult, but we are making progress.

Creating an equal society for all

The UK Government is aware that women and girls belonging to some groups, including BAME, disabled, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller women, lesbian, bisexual and transgender women are particularly disadvantaged in our society, and we continue to work to ensure that these groups are offered the assistance they need to fulfil their potential in our society. A priority is to ensure that we create a better society for all our citizens, and recognise the diversity of lives of women and girls in the UK.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Women

In 2010 the UK Government established a Ministerial Working Group to address the poor social outcomes faced by Gypsies and Travellers in areas of health, education, accommodation, employment and the criminal justice system. The Group published a progress report in 2012 which outlined 28 commitments from Government. These included:

- promoting improved health outcomes within the proposed new structures of the National Health Service
- piloting a “virtual headteacher” who will champion the interests of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils across their local authority

Through the decentralisation of services, DCLG has shifted power away from Westminster to local councils and communities. DCLG has a strategic role supporting local authorities, communities, neighbourhoods and individuals through established policy frameworks, however:

- In 2011, the Government committed £448 million from across Whitehall to support delivery of the Troubled Families programme. This funding is available to local councils primarily on a payment-by-results basis, distributed as a contribution of up to 40% of the costs of actions needed. The remaining 60% will be found from the budgets of a range of local bodies

- The programme also funds a national network of Troubled Families Coordinators to drive the programme locally
- The key conclusions that can be drawn from equalities evidence used in the design of the Troubled Families programme is that the impact of the programme on women is likely to be positive, improving access to education, work, reducing Domestic Violence (DV) and their increasing self-esteem. The national independent evaluation we have commissioned will collect evidence on the extent to which troubled families are facing problems like domestic violence, worklessness, mental ill-health, low self-esteem etc. and the outcomes those families achieve – i.e. reductions in DV, etc. and improvements in their aspirations and aptitudes.
- We know that a major barrier to integration, in particular Somali and Bangladeshi women, is poor English ability. Often there is very little opportunity for women at home to speak and develop their English skills. Therefore DCLG recently ran an English Language competition. This two-stage process was designed to uncover new, innovative and financially-sustainable projects to teach English language to those with the lowest levels of English, and who are often hard-to-reach and isolated by their lack of English skills.
- Industrial Cadets is run by the Engineering Development Trust (EDT), this project enthuses secondary age pupils (13-14) about the possibility of a career in industry (engineering, manufacturing etc.). The aim is to encourage more pupils to take STEM projects post GCSE, and to encourage more girls to consider a career in industry.

Lesbian, bisexual and transgender women

In June 2010 the Government published Working for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equality, the first ever cross government work plan on LGB&T rights. This was later followed in March 2011, by an action plan called Working for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equality: Moving Forward. This was the first ever cross-Government action plan on LGB&T equality. It outlined a range of actions for different Government departments to carry out – including tackling homophobic bullying, preventing hate crime, and promoting LGB&T rights abroad. In November 2011 we launched Advancing transgender equality: A plan for action a similar plan specifically focussed on transgender equality. Development of the transgender action plan involved running workshops for stakeholders and carrying out the largest ever UK survey of the transgender community.

This work has helped to ensure that for the fourth year in a row the UK has been identified as being the number one country for lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex rights in Europe by ILGA-Europe (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association). ILGA identified the UK as the best out of 49 countries in terms of legislation and policies that have a “direct impact on the enjoyment of human rights by LGBTI people” across six categories: equality and non-discrimination; family; bias motivated speech/violence; legal gender recognition; freedom of assembly, association and expression; and asylum.

Apart from the Equality Act 2010 providing protection from discrimination because of sexual orientation and gender reassignment; the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 allowed the first marriages of same sex couples to take place in England and Wales in March 2014.

To ensure that further areas of LGB&T inequality are identified and addressed officials and Ministers engage with a broad spectrum of LGB&T non-governmental organisations. This includes direct stakeholder roundtables, and one-to-one meetings, between Ministers and officials with prominent LGB&T activists and non-governmental organisations. Ministers also attend Pride celebrations and events organised by LGB&T organisations.

Rural women

In the UK, the employment rate for rural women is higher than for those living in urban areas. The Government is committed to ensuring good infrastructure links for those living outside cities. An England-wide travel concession exists for older and disabled people who can travel for free at off peak times. This forms part of the Government's wider work to tackle social exclusion as bus travel remains the most used form of public transport, especially by older people.

Disabled women

The UK government is determined to eradicate discrimination and the Equality Act applies the prohibition against direct disability discrimination to areas beyond the field of work such as access to goods, facilities and services; and provides a new form of protection from discrimination that occurs because of something arising in consequence of a person's disability. In 2009 the United Kingdom ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled Women.

Disadvantaged groups in Northern Ireland

The All Ireland Traveller Health Study (AITHS) Reports were launched in September 2010 and a Birth Cohort Follow-Up Report in September 2011. In response, the Public Health Agency (PHA) and Health & Social Care Board (HSCB) established a Regional Travellers' Health & Wellbeing Forum in October 2010. Membership also includes Health and Social Care Trusts and Traveller Support organisations. The focus is to implement key priorities identified within the AITHS and these are reflected in the Forum's annual

Action Plans

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust are involved with an EU funded 'Roma' Project, which involves a partnership of 9 European states committed to challenging the negative stereotypes of the Roma community and willing to campaign and take action locally. A Local Action Group has been established to oversee the delivery of the project and it is made up of governmental, non-governmental and community organisations including the Roma themselves. The overall aim is to promote social inclusion and address issues of discrimination of the Roma community through partnership working to cultivate positive changes in outlook about Roma in Belfast".

Rural women in Northern Ireland

The "Assisted Rural Travel Scheme" provides those elderly or disabled people who have a valid SmartPass with either free or half-price transport on "Rural Community Transport Partnership Vehicles". Since the scheme launched, 75% of the trips made were by rural women. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) is currently working with OFMDFM on the Executive's Bright Start Childcare Strategy and is bringing forward a

Rural Childminder Start-Up Package to create up to an additional 1,000 childcare places in rural areas. This will also provide opportunities, particularly for women, to access training, education and job opportunities.

DARD provides funding to the Department for Social Development (DSD) for the Regional Infrastructure Support Programme (a DSD managed programme) to support women living in rural areas. A consortium of Women's Groups throughout the north has been established and funding is allocated by this consortium to member groups, including the NI Rural Women's Network (NIRWN).

Wales

'Travelling to a Better Future' sets out the Welsh Government's commitments to supporting the inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers in health, education, accommodation and engagement. Some of the actions that have supported women from these communities include:

- Funding to support Gypsy and Traveller women to improve their self-esteem and literacy skills, whilst providing a support group to discuss their issues (through the third sector organisation, Platform 51 – 2009-14)
- Funding to support the development of a Wales National Gypsy and Traveller Youth Forum, which aims to achieve equal representation from male and female members of these communities (through the third sector organisation, Save the Children – 2009 - present)
- Launching Tackling Hate Crimes and Incidents Framework for Action to encourage better hate crime reporting and responsiveness to incidents.
- The Welsh Government will work with Public Health Wales to examine maternity services for 'hard-to-reach' groups, including Gypsies and Travellers, to ensure that services can meet the needs of users.

Scotland

The Scottish Government has a well-established action plan and robust monitoring structures to support implementation of the UNCRC. In addition, earlier this year steps were taken to introduce new legal requirements on Scottish Ministers to actively consider the rights of children in relation to all decisions and to increase knowledge and understanding of children's rights, including amongst children and young people themselves. Those new requirements are due to take effect in May 2015.

Post-2015 Millennium Development Goals

In addition to the review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 2015 will also see a review of the Millennium Development Goals. The UK has emphasised the necessity for a prioritisation of gender equality in the post-2015 goals. It has previously endorsed strong commitments at the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Summit in September 2010 that will result in the saving of lives of 16 million women and children by 2015. This includes a commitment from us to double our efforts on maternal, new born and child health which will save the lives of at least 50,000 women in pregnancy and childbirth, save 250,000 new born babies and enable 10 million couples to access modern methods of family planning, as detailed in DFID's Strategic Vision for Women and Girls.

Challenges continue on the availability of evidence on what works and the most effective way to scale up interventions in order to reach large numbers of girls and women. We are therefore investing heavily in research and evidence around female economic empowerment including through evaluation of DFID programmes.

Section four: data and statistics

Legislation

UK Equality Strategy

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-strategy>

UK Equality Act 2010

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Violence Against Women and Girls

Actions since 2010 can be found on the following links:

- Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, 2010:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97905/vawg-paper.pdf
- Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Action Plan, 2011:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97903/vawg-action-plan.pdf
- Call to End Violence against Women and Girls; Taking Action – the next chapter, 2012:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97901/action-plan-new-chapter.pdf
- A Call to End Violence against Women and Girls – Action Plan 2013:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/181088/vawg-action-plan-2013.pdf
- A Call to End Violence against Women and Girls – Action Plan 2014:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/287758/VAWG_Action_Plan.pdf

Women and poverty; women and the economy

Women and SMEs

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/204184/bis-13-886-small-business-survey-2012-businesses-led-by-women-and-ethnic-minorities.pdf

Women on Boards

<http://www.boardsforum.co.uk/boardwatch.html>

Labour market statistics

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/labour-market-statistics/march-2013/statistical-bulletin.html>

Office for National Statistics

http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_335027.pdf

UK and Childcare

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/document/index_en.htm#h2-4

Women and health

<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB13219/HSE2012-Adult-trend-tbls.xls>

Maternity services

http://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/maternity_report_for_publication.pdf

Carers

<http://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy>

Explanatory note on the UK and its Devolved Administrations

In the UK, devolved government was created following simple majority referendums in Wales and Scotland in September 1997 and in Northern Ireland in May 1998. In 1999, the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales and Northern Ireland Assembly began to exercise their powers. The purpose of devolution is to decentralise power to enable executive decision-making on matters (such as health, education and the environment) that have been transferred to the devolved legislatures and administrations. The UK Parliament (“Westminster”) remains sovereign and retains the right to legislate on all matters, devolved or reserved (such as defence, national security and foreign affairs), but it has chosen not to do so in relation to devolved matters without first seeking the consent of the relevant devolved legislature or legislature(s).

As a consequence of devolution, Westminster has recognised that, in devolved matters, it is for the devolved parliament and assemblies to legislate in relation to matters within their own competence, although it retains the right to legislate if it wishes. Westminster has, however, retained control of foreign affairs, defence and national security, macro-economic and fiscal matters, employment and social security. In the UK devolution has been a positive and empowering process. It has provided more responsive structures for governing regions and countries whose people have much in common, yet who take pride in the diversity emanating from their different histories. There is a common equality legislative framework across England, Scotland and Wales, and devolution does not in any way mitigate the requirement to observe and deliver the equality duties. However, it gives the flexibility to interpret and implement the equality duties in a way which meets local needs and requirements. The situation is different in Northern Ireland, where comprehensive, integrated equality provisions cover nine equality grounds and include anti-discrimination duties in respect of age and race.

To the extent that equality legislation cuts across matters that are devolved (such as health and education), there is a particular interest for the DAs. In addition, there are some areas of equality legislation (such as the Equality Duty) where powers to make secondary legislation rest with the DAs. In Northern Ireland, the Gender and Sexual Orientation Equality Unit is based in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. In Scotland, the Gender Equality team is based in the Scottish Government’s Equality Unit which sits within the portfolio of the Deputy First Minister. In Wales, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Division is based in the Department for Social Justice and Local Government.

List of Frequent Abbreviations

BIS: Department for Business

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CIF: Collaboration and Innovation Fund Northern Ireland

CSW: Commission on the Status of Women

DAs: Devolved Administrations

DEL: Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland

DES: Disability Employment Service Northern Ireland

DFE: Department for Education

DFID: Department for International Development

DVDS: Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme

DVPOs: Domestic Violence Protection Orders

EASS: Equality Advisory and Support Service

EHRC: Equality and Human Rights Commission

EU: European Union

GEO: Government Equalities Office

GOWS: Get on With Science Wales

FCO: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

FGM: Female Genital Mutilation

FMU: Forced Marriage Unit

HE: Higher Education

HEI: Higher Education Institutes

FE: Further Education

HMIC: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

HO: Home Office

LB&T: lesbian, bisexual and transgender

LEMIS: Local Employment Intermediary Service

NEET: Not in Employment, Education or Training

NHS: National Health Service

NI: Northern Ireland

PFA: Platform for Action PFA

PSE: Personal and social education

PSHE: Personal, Social and Health Education

SFC: Scottish Funding Council

SRE: Sex and Relationships Education

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

UNCRC: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

VE: Vocational Education

VAWG: Violence Against Women and Girls