



## **Commission on the Status of Women - 59th Session**

### **Review of the Progress Made in the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

A Scottish Women's Convention report looking at the progress made in Scotland in relation to the priority theme.

This report is prepared in response to 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).

[http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/national\\_reviews/united\\_kingdom\\_review\\_beijing20.ashx](http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/national_reviews/united_kingdom_review_beijing20.ashx)

## INTRODUCTION

The **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA)** was a resolution adopted by the United Nations (UN) at the end of the Fourth World Conference on Women on 15 September 1995. The resolution adopted to widely promote a set of principles concerning the equality of men and women.

The **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. CSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

During the Commission's annual two-week session, representatives of UN Member States, civil society organisations and UN entities gather at the UN headquarters in New York. They discuss progress and gaps in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and PFA, as well as emerging issues that affect gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The main focus of the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will be on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including current challenges that affect its implementation and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. CSW 59 will take place from 9-20 March 2015.

The Commission will undertake a review of progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 20 years after its adoption at the Fourth World Conference on Women. The review (Beijing+20) will also include the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly, the first five-year assessment conducted after the adoption of the Platform for Action, which highlighted further actions and initiatives.

The session will also address opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda.

## SCOTLAND

Scotland is part of the United Kingdom, occupying the northern third of the island of Great Britain. It shares a border with England to the south and is bounded by the North Sea to the east and the Atlantic Ocean to the north and west. In addition to the mainland, Scotland constitutes over 790 islands including the Northern Isles and the Hebrides.

The land area of Scotland is 78,772 km<sup>2</sup> (30,414 sq miles), roughly 30% of the area of the United Kingdom (UK). The mainland has 9,911 km (6,158 miles) of coastline. Scotland has a population of around 5.2 million people, the majority of whom reside in urban areas.

Scotland has partial self-government within the United Kingdom as well as representation in the UK Parliament. Executive and legislative powers have been devolved to the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood in Edinburgh. The United Kingdom Parliament retains power over a set list of areas explicitly specified in the Scotland Act 1998 as reserved matters, including, for example, employment, welfare benefits, defence and international relations.

On 18th September 2014, people across the country voted on the question:  
***“Should Scotland be an independent country?”***

55% of the country voted No and 45% voted Yes. Consultation is currently taking place in Scotland around the devolution of further powers to the Scottish Parliament in the wake of the referendum result. On 19 September, Prime Minister David Cameron announced that Lord Smith of Kelvin had agreed to oversee the process to take forward the devolution commitments on further powers for the Scottish Parliament.

As well as direct input from members of each of the five political parties represented in the Scottish Parliament, The Smith Commission engaged with individual and organisations throughout Scottish society. On 27 November 2014 the Smith Commission published its report detailing Heads of Agreement on further devolution of powers to the Scottish Parliament<sup>1</sup>.

The UK and Scottish Parliaments will continue to share control of income tax, however the Scottish Parliament will have the power to set the rates of income tax, as well as thresholds at which these are paid. The Scottish Parliament will also take responsibility for the power to charge tax on air passengers leaving Scottish airports. All other taxes, such as National Insurance contributions, Inheritance Tax and Corporation Tax, will remain reserved to Westminster.

Most aspects of welfare benefits will remain reserved to Westminster, with the exception of benefits for carers, disabled people and those who are ill, as well as powers for support for unemployed people, such as the Work Programme, which provides support, work experience and training for up to 2 years to help people find and stay in work.

At present, the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government are not permanent institutions. Legislation will be changed to enshrine both. The Scottish Parliament will be given full powers over elections to the Scottish Parliament and local government, including the ability to give the franchise to 16-17 year olds.

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1. <https://www.smith-commission.scot/smith-commission-report/>

### **The Scottish Women's Convention**

The Scottish Women's Convention (SWC) is funded by the Scottish Government to consult with women in Scotland to influence public policy. The organisation was set up in 2003 to enable grassroots women to discuss issues relevant to them. Since its inception the SWC has engaged with a wide range of women the length and breadth of the country.

The SWC undertakes an annual series of 'roadshows' throughout Scotland. These events are unique. Women are given an opportunity to express their opinions or concerns, in their local area, on issues which directly affect them. Locations from the Shetland Islands to Dumfries have been visited. All information gathered from the women informs SWC responses to Scottish and UK Government consultations. This process ensures that women's voices are heard at the heart of the decision making process.



## WOMEN AND POVERTY

### As part of the Platform for Action's Strategic Objectives, Governments must:

- Provide adequate safety nets and strengthen State-based and community-based support systems, as an integral part of social policy, in order to enable women living in poverty to withstand adverse economic environments;
- Generate economic policies that have a positive impact on the employment and income of women workers in both formal and informal sectors and adopt specific measures to address women's unemployment, in particular their long-term unemployment;
- Introduce measures to integrate or reintegrate women living in poverty and socially marginalised women into productive employment and the economic mainstream;
- Enable women to obtain affordable housing;
- Create social security systems with a view to placing individual women and men on an equal footing, at every stage of their lives;
- Ensure access to free or low-cost legal services, including legal literacy, especially designed to reach women living in poverty.

## THE UK PERSPECTIVE

### Women and Work

- *"The Government believes that work is 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. A child of a lone parent that works full time is over four times less likely to be living in poverty."*
- *"Reforms have been introduced which are designed to remove barriers to work. Women now make up 46% of the workforce, up from 37% in 1971."*
- *"The Government has achieved a 37.4% increase in employment rates for lone parents since 1996.<sup>2</sup>"*

### Pensions

- *"The Government ... 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."*

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2. 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), June 2014 [http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/national\\_reviews/united\\_kingdom\\_review\\_beijing20.ashx](http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/national_reviews/united_kingdom_review_beijing20.ashx) P13

- *“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.<sup>3</sup>”*
- *“Female pensioners on low incomes are also likely to be eligible for Pension Credit.<sup>4</sup>”*

### Welfare Reform

- In March 2012, the Welfare Reform Act 2012<sup>5</sup>, introduced by the UK Coalition Government, received Royal Assent. The Act defines the basics of welfare reform – i.e the new benefits that will be available, sanctions, claimant responsibilities etc. Funds available under these benefits and the conditions associated with them will be laid out in Regulations, which are in the process of being drafted.

## THE SCOTTISH PERSPECTIVE

### Women and Work

From February 2012 until January 2014 the Equal Opportunities Committee of the Scottish Parliament undertook an Inquiry into Women and Work. Activities which formed part of this included a round-table session during the Scottish Parliament’s Trade Union Week (February 2012); leading the Parliament in a debate on Women and Work (June 2012); attending and following the Scottish Government’s summit on women and employment (September 2012) and scrutinising the Draft Budget 2013-14 with a gender perspective (October/ November 2012). The Inquiry also sought views from both individuals and organisations across Scotland through a Call for Evidence. The final report of findings was published in June 2013<sup>6</sup>. The Scottish Government also took the step of appointing a Cabinet Secretary for Training, Youth and Women’s Employment in April 2014.

Through the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 which received Royal Assent in March 2014, the Scottish Government introduced new early learning and childcare entitlements.

From August 2014, 3 and 4 year olds, starting from the first term after their third birthday; 2 year olds from the point that they are looked after, under a kinship care order, or with a parent appointed guardian; and 2 year olds, starting from the first term after their second birthday, (where their 2nd birthday falls on or after 1 March 2014) with a parent in receipt of qualifying benefits; or, the first term after their parent starts receiving qualifying benefits, became eligible for 600 hours per year (around 16 hours per week) of early learning and childcare.

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3. Ibid.

4. Ibid. P14

5. <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-12/welfarereform.html>

6. <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/64971.aspx>

## Welfare Reform

The Scottish Parliament has established a Welfare Reform Committee<sup>7</sup>. The purpose of this Committee is to keep under review the passage of the UK Welfare Reform Act 2012, monitor its implementation as it affects welfare provision in Scotland and consider relevant Scottish legislation and other consequential arrangements. The establishment of this Committee indicates that the Scottish Parliament is committed to monitoring the changes in the welfare benefit system put in place by the Westminster Government.

The Committee has looked into a number of aspects of the UK Government's Welfare Reform measures. A recent report into the sanctions regime made significant findings about the detrimental impact these are having on people across Scotland, including specific gender considerations<sup>8</sup>.

### *What Women in Scotland have told the SWC*

## Women and Work

### *Employment*

The economic downturn has resulted in severe cuts to public and voluntary sector jobs, in which women predominate. Posts are being reduced from full-time to part-time or job-share. Women face taking a cut in hours, wages and associated benefits, or becoming unemployed altogether. While part-time hours – and, by consequence, underemployment - are not desirable, they are often the only real option for many women throughout Scotland.

*"I'm so aware of the impact of cuts and redundancies but to tell you the truth I'm not going to complain about the changes – I'm just glad I still have a job."*

The current economic climate has also contributed to a vast number of redundancies in the private sector. Jobs at the lower end of the scale, where women predominate, have been the first to go. This contributes not only to unemployment, but also underemployment for women. Many have been employed in the same workplace for a number of years and can find it very difficult to find work elsewhere due to a lack of formal qualifications. They also face significant barriers in accessing training and up-skilling opportunities, as well as issues around confidence. More needs to be done in order to support these workers.

Women continue to be clustered into roles in what is known as the '5c's' – catering, cleaning, caring, cashiering and clerical. These jobs offer low wages and little in the way of training, development and progression. This type of employment is often part-time.

7. <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/46339.aspx>

8. <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/46339.aspx>

Women undertake the majority of part-time work in Scotland. For some this is an informed choice, however for many others it is the only option available. Family and caring responsibilities and poor public transport mean that part-time work is often the most feasible means of employment. Low wages are common and can result in women taking on two or three jobs in order to make ends meet.

*“I was a bank manager in a town approximately 30 miles away from where I live before I had my second baby. Travelling there every day plus the cost of childcare meant it was not worth my while to go back. I now work part-time at weekends. It’s crazy how my family are better off now with the help of tax credits than me working 6 days a week as a bank manager.”*

### **Income Assistance**

Many women who work on a part-time basis rely on the money they receive from welfare benefits in order to ‘top up’ their incomes. For example tax credits which are used to cover childcare costs or small amounts of housing and/or council tax benefit.

Working hours thresholds for tax credit entitlement are increasing. Lone parents must work at least 16 hours per week. For couples, joint working hours need to be at least 24 per week with one person working at least 16 hours per week. In a couple where only one person is working, that person must be working 24 hours a week. These changes are causing concern as employers may be unwilling or unable to increase working hours where necessary. Women will therefore be forced to engage in more part-time work and face additional childcare and transport costs.

If infrastructure was put in place to enable women to undertake more hours, and a living wage was paid, there would be less reliance on welfare benefits. More economic activity also means increased Income Tax and National Insurance contributions which would be better overall for the economy.

### **Childcare**

*“If employment is the route out of poverty and onto a better life, then childcare is the bridge.”*

There is not enough accessible, affordable and appropriate childcare in Scotland. The increase of free nursery education to 600 hours per year for 3-5 year olds, as well as extending availability to looked-after two year olds, is welcomed. This does not, however, equate to wrap-around childcare.

Parents have to rely on private nurseries and childminders in order to ‘top up’ their childcare requirements. Those with children under the age of three and over the age of five access private provision, or alternatively seek informal caring from family and friends.

Informal caring is becoming increasingly relied upon, with many women in the *“middle layer of caring, looking after both young grandchildren and elderly parents.”* This can have a detrimental effect on the physical and mental health of these women, many of whom continue to hold down part-time jobs.

The cost of childcare is a huge barrier for women accessing employment or increasing working hours. This is particularly the case for families with more than one child, a disabled child and lone parents.

Changes to working hours thresholds for tax credit entitlements will have a huge impact on women. There is a reliance by many upon the assistance they receive in order to be able to cover the cost of childcare.

*“There are no guarantees my employer will increase my hours so I still qualify for tax credits. I need this money to pay for my childcare. If they can’t increase my hours I really don’t know how I will manage.”*

Middle income families do not qualify for assistance with childcare costs. Sending a child to nursery takes *“a huge chunk”* out of household budgets, particularly if they have more than one child. Women often delay returning to work until their children are at school as it is the only financially viable option.

### **Welfare Reform**

The introduction of a new system of welfare is having a particularly detrimental impact on women.

Universal Credit (UC) will replace a range of benefits currently in existence. It will be available both to those out of work and those in work on low incomes. Applications will be made online and the claimant must manage their claim through an online account. The benefit will be paid to claimants on a monthly basis, in arrears.

Individuals must take responsibility for completing their online benefits applications. Consideration has not been given, however, to those who do not have access to a computer or are not computer literate. Advice and support agency funding cuts have resulted in many services unable to assist vulnerable individuals.

Local Jobcentres, in the past, provided a ‘one stop shop’ where claimants could speak with advisors, complete forms and seek advice. Under the proposed changes, this will no longer be an option. Service points, libraries, internet cafes etc, where computers can be accessed, do not have adequate privacy. Women are uncomfortable completing personal forms in such an open environment.

The Act creates sanctions for those who do not comply with ‘work related requirements’. Those who fail ‘for no good reason’ to undertake work preparation requirements will have their benefits stopped. The Act does not, however, define what will be considered a ‘good reason’.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) will replace Disability Living Allowance for people of working age from 2013. Individuals will have to reapply for the new benefit and will be subject to medical assessments.

Possible reductions in benefit payments could result in disabled people being unable to pay for basic care requirements. There will, therefore, be a greater reliance on unpaid carers, the majority of whom are women. Women, as paid carers, may also lose employment. Set against a backdrop of redundancies across all job sectors, the impact of this on women could be far-reaching.

The availability of affordable, safe and secure housing is further under threat by the removal of council tax and housing benefit brought about by the introduction of UC. The so called 'bedroom tax' will have a significant impact. Any person 'under occupying' their home will see a reduction in their housing benefit if they are deemed to exceed the number of bedrooms to which they are entitled. Those who cannot pay the bedroom tax could face eviction, although a number of Scottish Local Authorities have made clear that they will not evict tenants.

The Scottish Government has given a financial commitment to support individuals and families who are suffering from the effects of the 'bedroom tax'. In the financial year 2014/15, £50 million will be distributed to Local Authorities in Scotland to mitigate the impact of the bedroom tax.

With a greater reliance on high-cost private let homes, women are sourcing unregulated, high interest 'payday' loans or credit cards in order to pay increased housing costs.

*"The Welfare Reform measures are a financial assault on women. All of the cuts are impacting on women more than men due to the inequalities we are exposed to in the first place."*

The rise in the use of foodbanks is considered to be one of the consequences of Welfare Reform measures. More families are forced to turn to these than ever before. Recent Scottish Government research has found a significant increase in demand for food aid provision, which tends to be delivered by local independent organisations, larger national organisations and churches. Most food aid providers have a connection with a religious institution.



## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### **As part of the Platform for Action's Strategic Objectives, Governments must:**

- Take measures to eliminate discrimination in education at all levels on the basis of gender;
- Create a gender-sensitive education system in order to ensure equal education and training opportunities and full and equal participation of women in educational administration and policy and decision-making;
- Promote an educational setting that eliminates all barriers impeding the schooling of pregnant adolescents and young mothers, including, as appropriate, affordable and physically accessible child-care facilities and parental education; Improve the quality of education and equal opportunities for women and men in terms of access in order to ensure that women of all ages can acquire the knowledge, capacities, aptitudes, skills and ethical values needed to develop and to participate fully under equal conditions;
- Make available non-discriminatory, gender-sensitive professional career education programmes to encourage girls to pursue academic and technical subjects in order to widen career opportunities;
- Develop and implement education, training and re-training policies for women, especially young women and women re-entering the labour market, to provide skills to meet the needs of a changing socio-economic context for improving their employment opportunities;
- Provide information to women and girls on the availability and benefits of vocational training, training programmes in science and technology and programmes of continuing education;
- Develop training programmes and materials for teachers and educators that raise awareness about the status, role and contribution of women and men in the family; promote equality, cooperation, mutual respect and shared responsibilities between girls and boys from pre-school level onward and develop, in particular, educational models to ensure that boys have the skills necessary to take care of their own domestic needs and to share responsibility for their household and for the care of dependants;
- Remove legal, regulatory and social barriers, where appropriate, to sexual and reproductive health education within formal education programmes regarding women's health issues.

**Education is fully devolved to Scotland. That means all aspects, from early years and family support, through to schools, post-16 training and higher and further education all come under the remit of the Scottish Government.**

## THE SCOTTISH PERSPECTIVE

The Scottish Government have abolished university fees for Scottish students, sending out the clear message that education should be a right, not a privilege afforded to those who can pay for it.

The Scottish Government have also made an explicit commitment to young people's access to education, training and employment. 'Opportunities for All' is an example. The Scottish Government aims to offer a place in learning or training to every 16-19 year old who is not currently in employment, education or training. The target of 25,000 Modern Apprenticeship starts will increase year by year to 30,000 by 2020, with the additional opportunities focused on higher level apprenticeships.

Relationships, sexual health and parenthood education is an integral part of the health and wellbeing area of the curriculum in Scotland. Children and young people need to gain knowledge appropriate to their age and stage of education. This aspect of the curriculum is intended to enable them to build positive relationships as they grow older. Schools should present facts in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner within a framework of sound values and an awareness of the law on sexual behaviour. The aim is to help young people make informed, responsible and healthy choices about their lives.

## *What Women in Scotland have told the SWC*

### Schools

The Curriculum for Excellence<sup>9</sup> (CfE) provides the framework for learning for all children and young people in Scotland aged 3 to 18. It includes all of the experiences which are planned for learners, wherever they are being educated. While the CfE makes provision for young people to learn and understand their rights and recognise the needs and abilities of others, there is no specific information on tackling gender inequalities.

Gender streaming within schools continues to be prevalent, resulting in young women entering traditional employment roles which offer few opportunities for training and progression. Whilst the constraints on the conditions and opportunities in these sectors need to be addressed, wider choices should be available for all women.

Scotland's young women are often denied the possibility of studying or training for work in new career areas such as technology and renewable energy. Barriers also exist for older women seeking to retrain or return to work.

9. <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/>

The Royal Society of Edinburgh report 'Tapping All Our Talents'<sup>10</sup> provided a number of recommendations for Government and all of those with an interest in STEM subjects. The report highlights the disproportionate number of women graduates who leave the sector, compared to the number of male graduates. At a recent Conference reviewing the Report one year on, delegates highlighted concerns about schools reducing timetabling options for young people looking to study more than once science option.

### **Modern Apprenticeships**

The Scottish Government is to be commended for its commitment to a target of at least 25,000 new starts in Modern Apprenticeships each year. Despite this, which is of course welcomed, there is significant gender imbalance in the apprenticeships undertaken. Statistics published in June 2014 by Skills Development Scotland<sup>11</sup> show that women continue to predominate in what are considered traditionally 'female roles', such as Business and Administration, Children's Care, Learning and Development, Customer Service, Hairdressing and Barbering, Health and Social Care, Hospitality, Retail and Travel Services. Of the 100 available MA frameworks, 19 had no female trainees, whereas 0 had no male trainees. Women were seriously underrepresented in what are considered traditionally 'male' roles, more often than not making up less than 10% of apprenticeships in, for example, Automotive, Construction, IT and Telecommunications and Plumbing.

While the Scottish Government are clear on their commitment to youth unemployment, more needs to be done in order to make young women aware of the possibilities available to them through Modern Apprenticeships, particularly in non-traditional roles.

### **Further and Higher Education**

The Scottish Government is also to be commended for the introduction of free university places for Scottish students. This policy has given more young people and young women in particular, the opportunity to access further education without the barrier of tuition fees.

According to Colleges Scotland's Keyfacts for 2014<sup>12</sup>, women have continuously made up a higher percentage of college students. Care has the largest number of enrolments, with over 18,000 students in the last year. The majority of these are women. There has been significant centralisation of colleges over the last few years, with ten institutions now existing where twenty five previously served Scottish students. The SWC has expressed concern over the impact of these mergers, which have, in many cases, further restricted the opportunities for women to access education and training. Cuts to part-time courses have also had a significantly detrimental impact on women, who made up the majority of students in this type of study. The lack of childcare available in the college setting is a further barrier to participation.

10. [http://www.royalsoced.org.uk/cms/files/advice-papers/inquiry/women\\_in\\_stem/tapping\\_talents.pdf](http://www.royalsoced.org.uk/cms/files/advice-papers/inquiry/women_in_stem/tapping_talents.pdf)

11. <http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/statistics/modern-apprenticeships/modern-apprenticeship-statistics-quarters-1-to-4-2013-14/>

12. <http://www.collegesscotland.ac.uk/colleges-scotland-about-us/facts-and-figures>

## WOMEN AND HEALTH

**As part of the Platform for Action's Strategic Objectives, Governments must:**

- Provide more accessible, available and affordable primary health care services of high quality, including sexual and reproductive health care, which includes family planning information and services;
- Integrate mental health services into primary health care systems or other appropriate levels, develop supportive programmes and train primary health care workers to recognise and care for girls and women of all ages who have experienced any form of violence;
- Establish mechanisms to support and involve women's organisations, professional groups and other bodies working to improve the health of girls and women, in government policy-making, programme design, as appropriate, and implementation within the health sector and all related sectors at all levels;
- Develop policies that reduce the disproportionate and increasing burden on women who have multiple roles within the family and the community by providing them with adequate support and programmes from health and social services;
- Adopt regulations to ensure that working conditions, including remuneration and promotion of women at all levels of the health system are non-discriminatory and meet fair and professional standards to enable them to work effectively.

**Health is fully devolved to Scotland. The Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorate is responsible for delivering the Healthier Strategic Objective. This aims to help people to sustain and improve their health, especially in disadvantaged communities, ensuring better, local and faster access to health care. The Directorate also allocates resources and sets the strategic direction for NHSScotland (National Health Service) and is responsible for the development and implementation of health and social care policy.**

**NHS Scotland is overseen by fourteen regional Health Boards<sup>13</sup>. They have responsibility for the protection and improvement of their population's health and for the delivery of frontline healthcare services.**

13. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/NHS-Workforce/NHS-Boards>

## THE SCOTTISH PERSPECTIVE

The Patient Rights (Scotland) Act 2011<sup>14</sup> was passed by the Scottish Parliament in February 2011 and gained Royal Assent in March 2011. The Act aims to improve patients' experiences of using health services and to support people to become more involved in their health and health care. The Act, which will help the Scottish Government to meet its aspiration for an NHS which respects the rights of patients and staff, came into force in April 2012.

The Scottish Government scrapped prescription charges in 2011, meaning that every person in Scotland is entitled to medication without having to pay. This reiterates the idea that the healthcare should be free at point of access.

Free Personal and Nursing Care<sup>15</sup> is a legal entitlement for people aged 65 or over who have been assessed as having personal care needs that require services to be put in place. Free Nursing Care is similar but is available to people of all ages who are assessed as requiring nursing care services. The policy allows access to personal and nursing care without being charged.

The Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002<sup>16</sup> sets out a detailed list of personal care tasks that cannot be charged for. This includes: assistance with personal hygiene, eating and drinking, immobility problems, management of medication and personal safety. In addition to the above services, various aids may be supplied free of charge by the Local Authority, if deemed necessary, to support a person's health and well-being. These include: specialist equipment such as bath hoists, shower seats, hand rails and other items. Nursing care involves the knowledge or skills of a qualified nurse. Nursing care includes activities such as administering injections and managing pressure sores.

All women aged 20 - 60 across Scotland are invited to have a cervical screening test every three years. Some, but not all, changes found by cervical screening tests may give an early warning sign of the possibility of developing cervical cancer. By dealing with this at an early stage, many cervical cancers can be stopped before they even start. In this way, cervical screening saves around 5,000 lives every year in the UK and prevents 8 out of 10 cervical cancers from developing<sup>17</sup>.

The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine for girls aged 12 to 13 years helps protect against cervical cancer. The HPV vaccine is designed to protect against the two types of HPV that can cause 70% of cervical cancer cases. As it does not protect against all other types, regular cervical screening is important. This combination of immunisation and cervical screening offers the best possible protection against cervical cancer<sup>18</sup>.

14 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/Policy/Patients-Rights>

15 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/Support-Social-Care/Support/Older-People/Free-Personal-Nursing-Care>

16 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2002/5/contents>

17 <http://www.healthscotland.com/topics/health/topics/screening/cervical.aspx>

18 <http://www.immunisationscotland.org.uk/vaccines-and-diseases/hpv.aspx>

Women in Scotland benefit from healthcare support both during and after their pregnancy. The refreshed Framework for Maternity Care in Scotland, published by the Scottish Government in 2011<sup>19</sup>, is designed to address all care from conception, through pregnancy and during the postnatal phase. The term ‘maternity care’ refers to any NHS service providing care to women and their babies – including care provided by midwives, obstetricians, GPs, anaesthetists, paediatricians, neonatologists, nurses, pharmacists, optometrists, dentists and allied health professionals. Effective collaboration and communication between all of these disciplines and services is essential for person centred, safe and effective maternity care.

Scans are given to women at approximately 12 weeks and 20 weeks and those who have complications during their current or previous pregnancy tend to be scanned more often. After birth, healthcare professionals visit homes and check on the health and wellbeing of both mothers and their babies. Children are given a series of vaccinations in the first few years of their lives which protect against diseases such as diphtheria, tetanus, polio, whooping cough, meningitis, measles, mumps and rubella.

Women throughout Scotland are also given access to free contraception through doctor’s surgeries, health centres and specialist sexual health clinics.

The Mental Health Strategy 2012-2015<sup>20</sup> sets out how the Scottish Government intends to improve the mental health and wellbeing of patients as well as preventative measures. The strategy is seen to be “*person centred, safe and effective*”<sup>21</sup> and focuses on seven themes.

### ***What Women in Scotland have told the SWC***

There are a number of health inequalities in Scotland, with women in deprived inner city areas living much shorter lives than their peers in less populated, less deprived parts of the country. Services, such as maternity provision, are not consistent and women in rural areas often have to travel long distances to access basic support.

The Scottish Government’s human rights based approach to providing healthcare to all at the point of need should be welcomed. In particular, its commitment to providing free access to NHS healthcare on the same basis as an ordinary resident to all those who have made a formal application for asylum (whether pending or unsuccessful) is endorsed<sup>22</sup>.

19. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/337644/0110854.pdf>

20. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/08/9714>

21. Ibid. P13

22. [http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/mels/CEL2010\\_09.pdf](http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/mels/CEL2010_09.pdf)

## Mental Health Provision

The support services currently available are highly valued by their users and “*should never be underestimated*”. Those suffering from mental health problems “*should not be a hidden group in society*”. While the introduction of a person-centred strategy is undoubtedly welcomed, the introduction of an on-line portal should not, however, replace the face-to-face support required by women.

Stigmas around mental health are often more acute in rural areas and are more likely to ‘stick’ to a person due to “*small town mentality*”. The role of the family and carers in tackling mental illness is vital. Caring responsibilities are, in the main, undertaken by women. Carers must receive adequate support.

Mental Health issues were a key contributor to women’s offending and to the likelihood of prison as a disposal in the Commission on Women Offenders Report<sup>23</sup>. The Commission identified the need to improve the treatment and support offered to women before, during and after imprisonment.

## Maternity Care Services

In rural areas of Scotland, women often feel isolated in the services offered around maternity care. In some cases, air ambulances are used to uplift women in labour, resulting in women giving birth alone without a family or support network surrounding them.

Rural women also report a distinct lack of health visitor and midwife presence, particularly on Scotland’s islands. Many must leave their island 38 weeks into their pregnancy, creating childcare issues, as well as removing major support networks.



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23. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Review/commissiononwomenoffenders>

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

### **As part of the Platform for Action's Strategic Objectives, Governments must:**

- Provide women who are subjected to violence with access to the mechanisms of justice and, as provided for by national legislation, to just and effective remedies for the harm they have suffered and inform women of their rights in seeking redress through such mechanisms;
- Create or strengthen institutional mechanisms so that women and girls can report acts of violence against them in a safe and confidential environment, free from the fear of penalties or retaliation, and file charges;
- Ensure that women with disabilities have access to information and services;
- Provide well-funded shelters and relief support for girls and women subjected to violence, as well as medical, psychological and other counselling services and free or low-cost legal aid;
- Establish linguistically and culturally accessible services for migrant women and girls, including women migrant workers, who are victims of gender-based violence;
- Raise awareness of the responsibility of the media in promoting non-stereotyped images of women and men, as well as in eliminating patterns of media presentation that generate violence, and encourage those responsible for media content to establish professional guidelines and codes of conduct; also raise awareness of the important role of the media in informing and educating people about the causes and effects of VAW and in stimulating public debate on the topic.

## THE SCOTTISH PERSPECTIVE

For decades Scotland has been at the forefront of work to tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG). Protecting women and children from all forms of violence, providing support and services for those who have or are experiencing violence, and preventing violence from occurring in the first place are national priorities.

### **Statistics**

There were 60,080 incidents of domestic abuse recorded in 2012-13, compared to 59,847 incidents recorded in 2011-12<sup>24</sup>.

24. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0043/00435586.pdf>

The most common crime or offence in 2012-13 was common assault, at 42% (12,778) of all incidents where a crime or offence was recorded<sup>25</sup>.

The number of sexual offences increased by 5% from 7,361 in 2011-12 to 7,693 in 2012-13. Crimes of rape and attempted rape increased by 15% and crimes of sexual assault and other sexual offences each increased by 3%. Offences associated with prostitution decreased by 6%<sup>26</sup>.

### ***Policy and Practices***

The Scottish Government are committed to the eradication of VAWG. 'Equally Safe – Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls' was published on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2014, following extensive consultation with a range of agencies and organisations.

The implementation of this strategy, along with the National Group to Address VAWG and the creation of the Caledonian System<sup>27</sup> (an integrated approach to address men's abusive behaviours and to improve the lives of women, children and men by working with men convicted of domestic abuse related offences on a programme to reduce their reoffending, while offering integrated services to women and children) are all important steps towards the eradication of VAW.

The legal protection put in place by the Scottish Government as a result of lobbying, campaigning and support from the public and third sector organisations is also extremely important. The introduction of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2011 has afforded women who have experienced violence increased access to justice. There was also widespread support for the introduction of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2010, which gives new and wider definitions of rape and other sexual offences. More needs to be done, however, in terms of securing convictions for these offences. Despite the legislation, conviction rates remain disappointingly low in Scotland.

### ***What Women in Scotland have told the SWC***

Women throughout the country have praised the Scottish Government for its commitment to funding VAWG services such as Women's Aid and Rape Crisis. The value of these services is undeniable. The provision of refuge accommodation, as well as assistance, with applications for housing, welfare, benefits and a host of other support mechanisms allow women to recognise, survive and exit abusive relationships. There is a real concern that the current economic climate, in which families are struggling to make ends meet due to job losses, pay freezes and the ever-increasing cost of living, will result in more women becoming victims of violence and abuse.

25. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0043/00435586.pdf>

26. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0042/00427834.pdf>

27. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/violence-women/CaledonianSystem>

Changes to the Welfare Benefits system, introduced by the Westminster Government, will also have a detrimental impact. Under the new system, claims must be made from a household overall. The likelihood is that this will result in the man receiving the money. Women may be put at risk of having little or no financial independence, particularly if they have an abusive or controlling partner. Safeguards need to be considered to ensure that there are no adverse effects as a result of this. It is vital that women have access to money of their own.

Services to support women experiencing VAWG are not always accessible in every part of the country. Many Local Authorities have specialist units, however most are based in main towns and do not extend to outlying villages and remote areas. Rural Scotland accounts for 18% of the population and makes up 94% of the country's land mass. Women who live in remote, rural and super sparse areas are not afforded the same access to services as those living in more urban parts of the country. Services such as Women's Aid run outreach programmes. However, increasingly stretched funding and the sheer distances the workers have to travel leave too many women who have experienced violence without the support they need.

There is also a strong patriarchal culture in Scotland which is especially apparent in rural areas. This can make it extremely difficult for women to 'speak out' and report incidents of violence, often due to fear of repercussions within the community. VAWG is seen as a *"hidden evil"* in many rural areas and a *"behind closed doors"* mentality is often displayed. A lack of female police officers, particularly in more remote areas, can also create barriers for women in reporting domestic abuse, rape, sexual assault etc. Both male and female police officers tend to be known in smaller communities, which can make it even more difficult to disclose incidents of violence.

Prevention work being carried out in schools with young women around issues such as domestic abuse and rape and sexual violence is very important.

There are not enough services available to support BME women. More barriers exist for BME women who seek to access VAWG services. Lack of trust or uncertainty around organisations often prevents those who have experienced violence from accessing support. Help and advice can be complicated by language barriers and a genuine fear that cultural sensitivities may be misunderstood or misrepresented.

Women who come to the UK with their spouse often do so without any knowledge of the rights afforded to them or of the services available to assist. These women have no recourse to public funds (NRPF) due to their immigration status and as a result are unable to qualify for any welfare benefits or other forms of assistance. This makes it extremely difficult to leave an abusive partner, with specialist support for BME women already stretched to capacity. The threat of losing their children is also a major deterrent.

Many BME women are unaware of services because their abusers (in the main husbands/partners or family members) control their movements and all access to communication.

Awareness on wider VAWG issues needs to be raised at this level. The increased sexualisation of young women is an example of gender inequality which both causes and stems from VAWG. Pressure to conform, commercialism and social media are all contributing factors. Many have spoken about the difficulties in challenging stereotypical and unrealistic images presented in the media, as well as peer pressure to conform. The increased use of social media perpetuates views of how young women should look and act. It also allows anonymous comments and images to be posted of impressionable and vulnerable people. This is having a detrimental impact on young women.

'Sexting' (sending sexual images via text message or social media), revenge porn (where sexually explicit images, videos etc are publicly shared by partners or ex-partners without the woman's consent), stalking (both online and in person) are just some of the examples of VAWG which have come about in recent years. With sexting, for example, young women are often unaware of how quickly a sexual image can spread and 'go viral' without the person it involves even knowing.

Pornography is more widely accessible than it has ever been, with extreme images widely available to view on the internet. The use of smartphones, tablets and mobile internet has made it even easier for images to be seen and shared amongst young people. Viewing extreme pornography can have a detrimental impact on young men. Detrimental language towards women is



## WOMEN AND CONFLICT

### As part of the Platform for Action's Strategic Objectives, Governments must:

- Ensure that women take part equally in peacemaking processes;
- Ensure that women are fully involved in the management of refugee detention centres that include female detainees seeking asylum on the grounds of fleeing conflict;
- Recognise the vital importance of reuniting families after conflict;
- Make sure that women refugees are able to see specially trained women immigration officers.

## THE UK PERSPECTIVE

*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)<sup>28</sup>.*

## What Women in Scotland have told the SWC

The management of border, asylum and immigration has undergone significant change in recent years. The UK Border Agency was abolished by the Home Secretary in 2013 and its responsibilities were brought back into the Home Office.

It is not the case that all regional Home Office centres have adequate 'arrangements for childcare during asylum interviews. In Glasgow, childcare has been known not to be available for significant periods of time due to a lack of security clearance for staff.

28. [http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/national\\_reviews/united\\_kingdom\\_review\\_beijing20.ashx](http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/national_reviews/united_kingdom_review_beijing20.ashx) p.38

When it was available, it was only offered on one half day a week, was not available during the school holidays and was only available for children over the age of 1.

Referrals and pathways of care in Scotland for women asylum seekers who have experienced torture, trauma and/or sexual violence in conflict must be improved. Special procedures that exist when a woman reports rape or sexual violence in the criminal justice system should apply. Poor quality interpreting is a barrier to asylum seeking women accessing justice and appropriate support services. There are no national standards for interpreting in Scotland.

Particular barriers to accessing justice and support exist for women who present wishing to make an in-country claim for asylum. Unless these women are identified as having been trafficked, have children or have severe health issues which affect their mobility, they must make an additional journey to Croydon in order to access the asylum process. Until they have lodged an application in person there, they are not entitled to any form of support, accommodation or assistance. Most who seek protection are destitute and must therefore rely on charitable donations to make the journey, alone, from Scotland to Croydon.



## WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

### **As part of the Platform for Action's Strategic Objectives, Governments must:**

- Enact and enforce legislation to guarantee the rights of women and men to equal pay for equal work or work of equal value;
- Adopt and implement laws against discrimination based on sex in the labour market, especially considering older women workers, hiring and promotion, the extension of employment benefits and social security, and working conditions;
- Take effective measures to ensure that pregnant women, women on maternity leave or women re-entering the labour market after childbearing are not discriminated against;
- Seek to develop a more comprehensive knowledge of work and employment through, *inter alia*, efforts to measure and better understand the type, extent and distribution of unremunerated work, particularly work in caring for dependants;
- Facilitate, at appropriate levels, more open and transparent budget processes;
- Eliminate occupational segregation, especially by promoting the equal participation of women in highly skilled jobs and senior management positions, and through other measures, such as counselling and placement, that stimulate on-the-job career development and upward mobility in the labour market, and by stimulating the diversification of occupational choices by both men and women; encourage women to take up non-traditional jobs; and encourage men to seek employment in the social sector;
- Increase efforts to close the gap between women's and men's pay, take steps to implement the principle of equal remuneration for equal work of equal value by strengthening legislation, including compliance with international labour laws and standards, and encourage job evaluation schemes with gender neutral criteria;
- Ensure, through legislation, incentives and/or encouragement, opportunities for women and men to take job-protected parental leave and to have parental benefits; promote the equal sharing of responsibilities for the family by men and women;
- Develop policies, *inter alia*, in education to change attitudes that reinforce the division of labour based on gender in order to promote the concept of shared family responsibility for work in the home.

## THE UK PERSPECTIVE

- *Under this Government there are more women employed in the UK than ever before, with 14.2m women in employment. 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<sup>29</sup>.*
- *Established the Women's Business Council<sup>30</sup>, a business led initiative which aimed to get the best advice on how to support women in the economy from people who are leaders in their sectors.*

## THE SCOTTISH PERSPECTIVE

The Scottish Government, in conjunction with the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC), held a Summit on Women's Employment in September 2012<sup>31</sup>. Over 150 delegates attended the Summit which included commissions on Childcare; Women in Enterprise; Research and Analysis; Multiple Obstacles to Work; Occupational Segregation; and Workforce Issues. In addition rural issues were discussed by satellite from Inverness and Dumfries. The Scottish Government and STUC have identified short, medium and longer terms goals that can be taken forward by Scottish Government, key stakeholders and women themselves. The Scottish Government has also created the Women in Enterprise (WES) Action Framework<sup>32</sup>.

The Scottish Government, alongside Edinburgh Napier University, the Big Lottery and Construction Skills, funds Equate<sup>33</sup>, which is Scotland's expert in gender equality throughout Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM). Equate makes a tangible and sustainable change enabling women studying and working in these key sectors to develop, by supporting their recruitment, retention and progression.

The Scottish Government also funds Close the Gap<sup>34</sup>, which works in a variety of ways with organisations of all types and sizes, to encourage and enable action to address the gender pay gap and occupational segregation.

29. [http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/national\\_reviews/united\\_kingdom\\_review\\_beijing20.ashx](http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/national_reviews/united_kingdom_review_beijing20.ashx) P39

30. <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/womens-business-council>

31. <http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/key-clients/women-and-work/womens-employment-summit-12-september-2012/>

32. <http://www.wescotland.co.uk/framework-and-action-plan-for-womens-enterprise>

33. <http://www.equatescotland.org.uk/>

34. <http://www.closesthegap.org.uk/>

## *What Women in Scotland have told the SWC*

Much of the shift work carried out by women is done on a part-time basis. This can create a number of issues, most often with regards to childcare. There is very little provision in Scotland which caters for those who work before 0730 and after 1800. If and when it is available, this type of private childcare is very expensive. Shift work can also raise issues around temporary and zero hours contracts and agency work. These are all insecure forms of employment and tend to be predominant in areas of what is traditionally seen as 'women's work', such as cleaning, catering and customer service.

Redundancies across both the public and private sectors have resulted in many women applying for full time jobs with lower wages and lower skill requirements, or jobs comparable to their previous however on a part-time or short-term, temporary contractual basis.

*"I have an 18 hour post with a Local Authority which started as temporary in 2010. I was then interviewed and gained this post on a permanent basis. In August I was seconded into a 36 hour temporary post (due to end in June 2013) however if this isn't extended I will only have my 18 hour permanent post. This prospect is both scary and confusing."*

Some women who currently work full time would prefer to work on a part time basis. They are often unable to do so, however, due to a lack of opportunity for this type of employment in the areas they work in. Employers can make returning to work very difficult for women after maternity leave. Despite anti-discrimination legislation having been in place for a number of years, roles can be changed and lines of responsibility altered. Employees are entitled to ask for flexible working arrangements, however employers have the right to refuse such a request. The lack of flexibility shown by employers can lead to underemployment. This can be seriously damaging for a woman's earning potential, as well as having the knock on impact of diminishing skills and making career progression even more difficult.

### **Occupational Segregation**

The glass ceiling undoubtedly still exists and progression within workplaces is often denied. This happens for a number of reasons, including women not being considered for promotion if they work part-time, if they are seen of being of 'child bearing age' or are unable to work longer hours than the standard 9am-5pm because of caring responsibilities etc.

*"Women often find themselves stuck at the 'marzipan layer' at work – they have progressed to a certain level but are unable to be promoted to attain the 'icing' benefits worthy of their talents. In the main, this is due to child bearing and caring commitments."*

The Modern Apprenticeship scheme could be an excellent way to tackle occupational segregation. There are, however, limited opportunities for training through the scheme in many areas of the country. Apprenticeships continue to be very gender specific, with young men entering fields such as construction, joinery, engineering etc and young women taking up careers in areas such as childcare and hairdressing.

Young women are seldom offered information through careers advice in schools and are therefore unaware of the opportunities available to them. Careers in subjects such as engineering tend to be pursued through an academic route, i.e. a university degree; however that option is not suitable for all. Many young women are missing out as a result. While it is important to encourage and steer young women into 'non traditional' roles, it is also vital that the value of the work traditionally carried out by women is fully recognised.

### **The Gender Pay Gap**

According to Close the Gap<sup>35</sup>, Women account for 48% of the labour market. 43% of women employed in Scotland work part-time compared to 13% of men employed in Scotland. Women account for 75% of all part-time workers in Scotland. Despite this, the gender pay gap remains significant. In 2013 provisional results indicated that the gender pay gap in Scotland is 13.3% for full time hourly earnings and 33.7% (when comparing men's full-time hourly earnings with women's part-time hourly earnings). On average women working full-time in Scotland earn £108.30 per week less than men.

### **Older Women in the Workplace**

In 2013 the SWC undertook a consultation on Older Women in Work<sup>36</sup>. The three key findings of this survey were the lack of recognition of caring responsibilities undertaken by older women; rates of pay and ability, or lack of opportunity, to contribute to a pension scheme; and lack of training opportunities provide further disadvantages to older women. One of the questions asked during the consultation exercise was 'how would you define an older woman?'. In some cases, women in their mid-thirties were self-defining as older due to the barriers they face in the workplace.

Older women often work in lower, poorer paid roles, including some middle management roles. Many have been employed in the same workplace for the majority of, if not all of, their working lives. Performance Management Improvement policies are often used and can result in older women being deemed unable to perform their duties. Older women are therefore being dismissed on capability issues, which is a much cheaper option for the employer. Job losses due to 'natural wastage' cost less than paying out voluntary or compulsory redundancy packages.

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35. <http://www.closesthegap.org.uk/content/gap-statistics/>

36. [http://www.scottishwomensconvention.org/userfiles/files/Older%20Women%20and%20Employment%20Report\(2\).pdf](http://www.scottishwomensconvention.org/userfiles/files/Older%20Women%20and%20Employment%20Report(2).pdf)

Over the years, no pay increases and rising inflation has seen standards of living diminish. Many are struggling to live month to month on stagnant salaries.

*“This derisory method of increasing salaries has seen many older women, who have been trapped in lower graded roles since they entered the workplace, receive little to no pay increase for several years.”*

Many older women reduced hours for various reasons, including caring for friends, relatives and children. With the ever increasing cost of childcare, reducing hours is done in an effort to support the younger generation of women workers.

Older women in the public sector are also faced with health issues in their day to day roles. Nurses, for example, are working longer than envisaged when starting their careers.

*“It’s hard to keep up the same physical aspects of a role you’ve been doing for 30 years.”*

Library assistants also experience problems, such as arthritis from kneeling on concrete floors, knee and feet inflammation, chronic pain and ongoing mobility issues.

*“When you’re young you don’t think that what you are doing at work on a daily basis may result in major health issues later on in life.”*



## WOMEN AND POWER

### As part of the Platform for Action's Strategic Objectives, Governments must:

- Commit themselves to establishing the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies and committees, as well as in public administrative entities, and in the judiciary, including, *inter alia*, setting specific targets and implementing measures to substantially increase the number of women with a view to achieving equal representation of women and men, if necessary through positive action, in all governmental and public administration positions;
- Take measures, including, where appropriate, in electoral systems that encourage political parties to integrate women in elective and non-elective public positions in the same proportion and at the same level as men;
- Recognise that shared work and parental responsibilities between women and men promote women's increased participation in public life, and take appropriate measures to achieve this, including measures to reconcile family and professional life;
- Encourage efforts by NGO's, trade unions and the private sector to achieve equality between women and men in their ranks, including equal participation in their decision-making bodies and in negotiations in all areas and at all levels.

### THE SCOTTISH PERSPECTIVE

Women represent over 50% of Scotland's population but are not proportionately represented in political and public life.

In Scotland, political representation is made up as follows:

Representative Body	Percentage of Women Representatives
UK Parliament	22%
Scottish Parliament	33%
Local Authorities	24.3%

The Cabinet of the Scottish Government is made up of 40% women, which is a positive step. However, it is clear that much more needs to be done in order to improve the participation of women in political life.

The recent Scottish Referendum campaign has seen a groundswell of women, from a variety of different backgrounds, becoming involved with and actively engaged in politics. It is hoped that this momentum will continue following the vote, in which Scotland voted not to become an independent country.

At present, there is no requirement to publish gender-specific statistics after elections – either with regards to the number of women seeking election or the number of successful candidates. Publication of these statistics would not only show the percentage of women elected into public office, but would help to identify gaps in representation.

Disabled and BME women should be actively encouraged to become involved in political processes. In 2012, the UK Government launched the ‘Access to Elected Office’<sup>37</sup> campaign, aimed at supporting disabled people seeking election. Through this strategy there have been opportunities for disabled people to participate in online training courses and internships, as well as guidance for political parties regarding the legal requirement to provide reasonable adjustments. There is no such equivalent programme in Scotland.

The Scottish Government also recently consulted on the introduction of Gender Quotas on Public Boards<sup>38</sup>. Scottish women make up 52% of the population and, in October 2013, the level of female employment in Scotland reached its highest level since 1992 at 69%. Women also now make up the majority of University graduates. In spite of all this, there is still significant gender inequality on public boards, with women comprising only 36% of board places and 21% of the current board chairs.<sup>39</sup>

Currently the Scottish Parliament does not have legislative powers to address this issue. The Scottish Government has therefore opened up dialogue with the UK Government on transferring powers by way of an Order under section 30 of the Scotland Act 1998. Such powers would give the Scottish Parliament additional levers for change, should it choose to use them, where other mechanisms are not working, or are not delivering change fast enough.

The consultation set out to gather views from individuals, public bodies and other organisations with an interest in the issue of gender imbalance on public boards, on how mandatory quotas that ensure a minimum of 40% of women’s representation on public boards should be introduced.

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37. <https://www.access-to-elected-office-fund.org.uk/>

38. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0044/00449552.pdf>

39. Scottish Government’s Public Appointments Centre of Expertise (PACE) figures which only include Ministerial appointed, regulated public boards.

## *What Women in Scotland have told the SWC*

The Scottish Women's Convention wholeheartedly supported the proposal to introduce gender quotas on public boards. The only way to ensure that women are represented at the levels they need to be is if quotas are introduced. It is, however, important to recognise that they are only temporary special measures – that is, they are something which should be put in place in the short-term to achieve a longer term aim. Therefore any proposals that the Scottish Government put forward to the UK Government must make clear that mandatory quotas should only be enforced for a certain length of time.

Women often comment on how their lack of involvement in political and public life is not because they do not have the inclination or will to do it. It is because more often than not they have to juggle work, caring responsibilities and running a household.

*"I would like to become involved in things at a higher level, but I just don't have the time. It doesn't help when meetings are in the evenings, because there's no childcare at night so I would have to rely on friends and family. I don't know if I can guarantee the level of commitment that would be required of me."*

Specific consideration must also be given to women in rural areas, for whom issues such as childcare and public transport are exacerbated due to the geography of their local area.

Another aspect is the confidence that women have in themselves and their abilities. Too many will underestimate their capabilities and only look at the negative aspects of a position, rather than the positives.

*"A man will look at the key skills for a role and say 'I can do three out of five of those so of course I'll go for the position', whereas a woman is more likely to say 'I can only do three out of five so there's no point in going for it'. Confidence is key."*

The role of mentors must also be considered. Women have spoken about the importance of having the support of other women across political and public life, employment, trade union involvement etc. The value of having someone who has already been there, who can guide others through the process and give advice, cannot be underestimated.

*"It is the duty of women who are currently in these positions to encourage others to join them."*

The way in which female politicians are perceived also discourages many women from becoming involved. There are vast differences in the way the media portrays men and women. There is much less of an emphasis on age, style and fashion for men. Women will be judged more by the clothes they wear and what they eat at events than the work they do.

*"Women should not be put off from going into public life because we are women"*

## INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

### **As part of the Platform for Action's Strategic Objectives, Governments must**

- Ensure that responsibility for the advancement of women is vested in the highest possible level of government, in many cases, this could be at the level of a Cabinet Minister;
- Based on a strong political commitment, create a national machinery, where it does not exist, and strengthen, as appropriate, existing national machineries, for the advancement of women at the highest possible level of government;
- Provide staff training in designing and analysing data from a gender perspective;
- Seek to ensure that policy decisions are taken and analysis of their impact on women and men, respectively, is carried out;
- Ensure the regular production of a statistical publication on gender that presents and interprets topical data on women and men in a form suitable for a wide range of non-technical users.

### THE SCOTTISH PERSPECTIVE

The Scottish Women's Convention (SWC) was set up by the Scottish Executive in 2003 in recognition of the need to ensure women's voices are reaching policy makers.

The purpose of the organisation is to communicate and consult with women in Scotland to influence public policy. Through consultation, conference and celebratory events the SWC strives to have contact with women and relevant organisations. The SWC aims to provide an effective way of consulting with a diverse range of women in Scotland and has a network of over 300,000 women from throughout Scotland.

There is currently no dedicated Minister for Women in Scotland. At the moment, gender equality falls under the remit of the Cabinet Secretary for Commonwealth Games, Sport, Equalities and Pensioners' Rights. Women have made clear that despite efforts from the Scottish Government to advance gender equality issues; there is a real need for a dedicated Minister to achieve this fully.

## ***What Women in Scotland have told the SWC***

The work of the SWC is highly valued by women across Scotland, who appreciate and welcome the opportunity to discuss issues which are important to them, knowing that they will be used to shape SWC responses to UK and Scottish Government consultations, Scottish Parliament calls for evidence and international reports.

*“I cannot praise the SWC staff on the events they hold and run enough – long may you continue!”*

*“Keep up the good work SWC. I only wish I had all information and advice you provide and make available as a young woman.”*

*“I enjoyed the get-together of women from all walks of life and the fact that they are non-political. The SWC work very hard for women everywhere.”*

*“I found it very informative as I have had no prior understanding of what's going on. I feel that not many people know what's going on...! More events like this should be organised and the way the SWC works really can make things much more understandable. Thanks.”*

*“The standard of the debate was higher than expected and it was good to see mutual respect observed. An excellent choice of speakers and all in all an impressive event. Well done, everyone!”*



## WOMEN AND HUMAN RIGHTS

### **As part of the Platform for Action's Strategic Objectives, Governments must:**

- Set up and fund national institutions which promote women's human rights;
- Train women on equal rights;
- Ensure that disabled women are given access to national reports on CEDAW in a format which is accessible for them, and translate reports into local languages;
- End child prostitution;
- Publish facts about women's rights in a format which is easy for all to understand.

## THE SCOTTISH PERSPECTIVE

Over the past few years, the SWC has sent a delegation to CSW to ensure that the issues raised by women in Scotland around the priority theme are taken to this International arena.

During 2013 / 14, the SWC remained part of the CSW NGO Liaison Group - a group which includes other women's organisations representing the devolved nations, regional women's organisations in the UK and international groups. Meetings are held, in preparation for CSW, with UK Government officials. This dialogue continues during and after CSW. Communication between Group members continues through email, meetings and telephone conferences.

To ensure the voices of women in Scotland are included as part of the debate, the SWC produces a report every year. This document explores the key theme and includes the voices of women who attend SWC events. The reports are forwarded to Scottish and UK Government officials and key decision makers. The reports are also taken to CSW and given to delegates attending the various side events. A copy of each report can be found on the SWC website.

In 2013, the Scottish CEDAW Shadow Report Forum – a partnership of women's organisations from throughout Scotland – produced a Shadow Report. This ensured that the experiences and views of women in Scotland were represented and explored during the examination of the UK Government's Report to the CEDAW Examining Committee.

The report reflected the voices of women throughout Scotland. This was achieved using networks, knowledge of subject areas and the voices of a wide range of women. It contained valuable information from and about diverse groups of women from various geographical locations throughout Scotland.

Following the closure of the Women's National Commission (WNC) in December 2010, women's organisations in Scotland have found it increasingly difficult to engage with the UK Government. There is no direct link with Government officials. Individual organisations and groups, with limited resources and no additional funding, coordinate themselves in order to inform the UK Government of key grassroots issues.

The SWC has worked hard, along with other organisations in Scotland, to raise awareness of CSW and CEDAW. More, however, needs to be done at a Scottish Government level to make women aware of these international gender equality mechanisms. Similarly, more could be done to raise awareness of the positive and important aspects of human rights, particularly with regard to gender equality.

The Scottish Human Rights Commission<sup>40</sup> (SHRC) is an independent public body with a broad remit to protect and promote human rights for everyone in Scotland. This includes the human rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights, which are brought into Scottish law by the Scotland Act 1998 and Human Rights Act 1998. It also includes other human rights guaranteed by international treaties and conventions that the UK has ratified.

The duties, powers and functions of the SHRC are set out in the Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006. Under the Act, the Commission has a general duty to promote awareness, understanding and respect for all human rights - economic, social, political, cultural and civil - to everyone, everywhere in Scotland, and to encourage best practice in relation to human rights.

As part of its work, SHRC has established Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights (SNAP)<sup>41</sup>. SNAP is a roadmap for the realisation of all internationally recognised human rights based on evidence and broad participation. It has been developed by a Drafting Group from across the public and voluntary sectors and is overseen by an Advisory Council whose members reflect the diversity of Scottish civic life.

The Scottish Human Rights Consortium<sup>42</sup> is an independent network of civil society organisations which works together to address the gap in knowledge about human rights. It also works to build capacity on applying human rights principles and standards to the delivery of publicly funded services.

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40. <http://www.scottishhumanrights.com/about>

41. <http://www.scottishhumanrights.com/ourwork/actionplan>

42. <http://hrcscotland.wordpress.com/>

## WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

### As part of the Platform for Action's Strategic Objectives, Governments must:

- Support women's access to all jobs in the media;
- Get equal numbers of women and men onto media watchdogs;
- Oppose sexist stereotypes;
- Support more programmes by and for women;
- Support women's groups who are active in information and communications technology;
- Encourage the use of CT to help women take more part in democracy;
- Make laws against pornography and the projection of violence against women in the media.

## THE UK PERSPECTIVE

The Leveson Inquiry<sup>43</sup> was a judicial public inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the British press. It arose following the phone hacking scandal, which involved the now non-existent News of the World and other newspapers published by News International. Employees of the newspaper were accused of engaging in phone hacking, police bribery, and exercising improper influence in the pursuit of stories to publish. The Inquiry was chaired by Lord Justice Leveson, who was appointed in July 2011. A series of public hearings were held throughout 2011 and 2012. The Inquiry published a report in November 2012, which reviewed the general culture and ethics of the British media. The findings made recommendations for a new, independent, body to replace the existing Press Complaints Commission, which would be recognised by the state through new laws.

"Letting Children Be Children", also known as The Bailey Review, was an inquiry into the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood. It was commissioned by the UK Government in response to manifesto commitments of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties in the 2010 general election. The majority of the recommendations made through the findings of the review have been implemented. The Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) issued tougher guidelines on the use of sexualised imagery in advertising, resulting in the removal of a number of adverts which no longer meet the requirements<sup>44</sup>.

The UK Government's Body Confidence Campaign<sup>45</sup> was established in order to promote positive body images for young people.

43. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140122145147/http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/>

44. [http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/national\\_reviews/united\\_kingdom\\_review\\_beijing20.ashx](http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/national_reviews/united_kingdom_review_beijing20.ashx) p49

45. <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/creating-a-fairer-and-more-equal-society/supporting-pages/body-confidence-campaign>

## *What Women in Scotland have told the SWC*

Sexualised imagery is used to sell everything from computer games to grooming products. This type of advertising introduces people to the idea that women's bodies are commodities from a very young age. The normalisation of this 'hyper sexualisation' and blurred lines between pop culture and porn culture are extremely dangerous.

The media has a huge role to play in the prevention of VAWG. There is continuous use of sexualised images in advertising, with certain newspapers still publishing daily pictures of topless women. Music videos often depict women as nothing more than objects and accompany songs with inappropriate and derogatory lyrics. Magazines aimed at girls as young as three years old focus heavily on looks and image. Toys in these publications enforce the idea of women as passive caregivers, depicting little girls playing with dolls and toy domestic appliances such as washing machines and vacuum cleaners. In contrast, magazines aimed at boys in this age group focus on imagination, fun and adventure. Violence also comes into these themes.

Publications aimed at teenagers include references to sex and sexuality, cosmetic surgery and encourage criticism towards other girls. The self-esteem and self-worth of young women is measured by how they look and not how they feel within themselves.

Women's magazines constantly contain articles on health and beauty and criticism of those who do not appear 'perfect'. In contrast, magazines aimed at young boys and men tend to be centred on sport, with no reference to diets, staying slim and looking young.

The normalisation of lap dancing and glamour modelling portrays the image that it is *"just a bit of harmless fun"* or an *"easy way to make money"*. An increase in the use of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, has served to encourage the objectification of women and promote cyber peer pressure.

*"Demeaning women is becoming acceptable. Social networking is just an extension to main media stereotypes but is arguably more dangerous as so much of what is said and done is carried out anonymously."*



## THE GIRL CHILD

### **As part of the Platform for Action's Strategic Objectives, Governments must:**

- Ensure that girls are educated about the rights afforded to them;
- Prevent child prostitution and forced marriage;
- Ensure that girls are provided with comprehensive sex education;
- Protect girls from sexual abuse and child pornography, and give support to those subjected to violence;
- Educate boys and girls to share family responsibilities;
- Ensure that more girls are lifted out of poverty by enforcing child support laws;
- Provide affordable childcare to young mothers so that they may complete their education.

## THE UK PERSPECTIVE

### Forced Marriage

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU)<sup>46</sup> is a joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Office unit. It was established in January 2005 to lead on the Government's forced marriage policy, outreach and casework. The FMU operates both inside the UK, where support is provided to any individual, and overseas, where assistance is provided to British nationals, including those who hold dual nationality.

One of the functions of the FMU is a helpline which provides advice and support to victims of forced marriage, as well as to professionals dealing with cases. Assistance ranges from basic safety advice, to helping a victim to prevent their unwanted spouse moving to the UK ('reluctant sponsor' cases), and, in extreme circumstances, to rescue victims held against their will overseas.

The FMU undertake an extensive outreach and training programme of around 100 events a year, targeting professionals and potential victims. The FMU also carry out media campaigns, such as 2012's 'right to choose' summer campaign, where the FMU commissioned three short films to raise awareness amongst young people at risk of being taken overseas for forced marriage.

The most recent statistics published by the FMU relate to 2012<sup>47</sup>. During this time, advice or support related to a possible forced marriage was provided in 1485 cases. 82% involved female victims and 18% involved male victims.

46. <https://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage>

47. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/141823/Stats\\_2012.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/141823/Stats_2012.pdf)

## THE SCOTTISH PERSPECTIVE

### Forced Marriage

Protection is available for victims through the Forced Marriage etc (Protection and Jurisdiction) (Scotland) Act 2011, which came into force in November 2011.

The purpose of the legislation is to protect people from being forced to marry without their free and full consent, as well as protecting those who have already been forced into a marriage without consent. The Act introduces Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPO) to protect those forced to marry. It is a criminal offence to breach such an order. FMPOs protect adults, young people and children at risk of being forced into marriage. An Order will last as long as it is required.

There are also a number of services available to support and advise victims, or potential victims, of forced marriage<sup>48</sup>.

### Sexual Health and Relationships Education

The Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Framework<sup>49</sup> sets out the Scottish Government's agenda in relation to sexual health, HIV, hepatitis C and hepatitis B. The Framework looks at all aspects of sexual health and incorporates young people and teenage pregnancy.

*“For the first time, these four policy areas have been brought together into a single integrated strategy. Building on the solid foundations of proven and successful Scottish Government policy, notably Respect and Responsibility (Scottish Executive, 2005) and the Hepatitis C Action Plan (Scottish Executive, 2006a Scottish Government, 2008a). The Framework reflects an ambitious vision for sexual health and blood borne viruses in Scotland. It adopts an outcomes based approach anchored by effective shared ownership and joint working with a strong focus on challenging inequalities.<sup>50</sup>”*

The Scottish Government has also established a website dedicated to all aspects of sexual health in Scotland<sup>51</sup>, which offers information, guidance and support.

48. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/crimes/forced-marriage/Nextsteps>

49. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/08/24085708/16>

50. Ibid. P1

51. <http://www.sexualhealthscotland.co.uk/>

## ***What Women in Scotland have told the SWC***

### **Forced Marriage**

The Scottish Government is to be commended for its commitment to tackling and eradicating forced marriage. The protection of young women from this form of VAWG is of vital importance. The support available from organisations is also considered “*invaluable*” and without specialist advice and guidance, many young women would be left in extremely dangerous and vulnerable situations.

### **Sexual Health and Relationships**

Relationships, sexual health and parenthood education is an integral part of the health and wellbeing area of the curriculum in Scotland. Children and young people need to gain knowledge appropriate to their age and stage of education and this aspect of the curriculum is intended to enable them to build positive relationships as they grow older. Schools should present facts in an objective, balanced and sensitive manner within a framework of sound values and an awareness of the law on sexual behaviour. The aim is to help young people make informed, responsible and healthy choices about their lives.

Despite these aims, there continues to be significant disparities in the content and delivery of sex and relationship education in schools. Provision should be much more uniform across the educational spectrum.

### **The Sexualisation of Young Women**

The SWC held an event attended by approximately 100 young women, aged 16-25, from throughout Scotland, in October 2013<sup>52</sup>. Through speakers and workshops, young women discussed topics such as sexting; attitudes towards sex, relationships and pornography; the link between the exploitation of workers, student debt, and the normalisation of women becoming escorts/prostitutes; and attitudes around sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

Young women today are subject to so many different pressures - whether it is from friends, parents, teachers, the media and even strangers. They are expected to succeed in education, find a good job, be “*pretty, gorgeous or stunning*” and fit in with what is seen as ‘normal’. These pressures can have a hugely negative impact on how young women see themselves and how they think others see them.

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52. <http://www.scottishwomensconvention.org/youngwomen/swcyoungwomenevent>

*“So many young women have spoken about the difficulties in challenging stereotypical and unrealistic images used to advertise everyday products such as mascara, hair dye and foundation.”*

The increased use of social media has undoubtedly contributed to the growing fear that many young women have about *“not fitting in”* with seemingly ideal expectations.

*“Not everyone is perfect. Let’s face it, everyone has something that they don’t like about themselves. But views that everyone must meet certain ‘criteria’ or look a certain way before they are accepted have to stop.”*

Young women today need to know how important it is to be able to say ‘no’ - it’s ok to look or act differently from their peers. Many often make choices about what they do, wear, eat and how they feel through the influence of the media and advertising.

*“We don’t get a lot of choice to be ourselves.”*

Women’s worth is too often determined by their physical and sexual attractiveness, as well as the ability to attract a man. When that is combined with so many objectifying comments and images of idealised beauty (most of which are unrealistic or unattainable), it can be toxic.

### ***The Sexualisation of Children***

*“More often than not there’s no connection between how products are being advertised and the item which is actually being sold.”*

There is a real blurring of the lines between adult and child in many images which are used both in advertising and in magazines.

*“It’s not just desirable to look like a teenager - some companies are using models as young as 4 to sell products such as make up.”*

Products for young children are also often hyper-sexualised. Dolls aimed at young girls are often disproportionate to what real women look like, with cinched in waists, enlarged breasts, big hair, big eyelashes and painted nails. Even toy horses are sexualised, wearing high heels, fake hair and jewellery. Advertising which uses that type of imagery sends the message that this is how women and girls can and should be viewed, regarded and used, and provides commentary on women’s value as a whole.

*“We do not have to be depicted in a picture to be objectified. We are objectified simply by being women in a society where images like this are normal, accepted and widespread.”*



## SUMMARY

The SWC has produced this report using the priorities set out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA).

Reference has been made to the 'Response 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)', which was published in June 2014. This report gives details of the UK Government and devolved administrations achievements in relation to the Beijing Declaration and PFA.

This report also highlights the work being undertaken in Scotland in relation to our priorities.

The SWC has included the voices of women in Scotland who have expressed concerns and opinions at SWC consultation events. Their quotes are in purple italics throughout this report.

