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**Committee on the Elimination of
Discrimination against Women**

**Eighth periodic report submitted by the United
Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2017***

[Date received: 16 November 2017]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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Foreword

The document is the eighth periodic report, which the United Kingdom is required to submit to the UN Secretary-General under the article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Report covers the period of 2011 to 2017.

During this period, the United Kingdom was led by a Coalition Government between 2010 and 2015, and a Conservative majority Government from 2015 to the present day. Currently the power-sharing negotiations¹ between the main political parties in Northern Ireland remain ongoing, and in the absence of a functioning devolved government, references to Northern Ireland contained in this report remain subject to review and agreement by future Ministers with responsibility for the issues concerned.

On 23 June 2016, the people of the UK voted to leave the EU. However, the UK remains committed to maintaining its strong global role in relation to human rights and continues to comply with its international human rights obligations.

The document was prepared largely in response to the 2013 *Concluding Observations and Recommendations*² of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women following its consideration of the United Kingdom's seventh periodic report and provides an article by article review of the implementation of CEDAW in the United Kingdom. Where text, throughout the report is relevant to a Recommendation, it has been indicated with an endnote.

Reference should also be made to the United Kingdom's *Common Core Document 2014*³, which provides an overview of the characteristics of the United Kingdom and of the political and legal structures that are in place to ensure the promotion and protection of human rights within the United Kingdom.

The report uses statistics and information provided by the UK's Central Government Departments, the Devolved Administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the governments of the British Overseas Territories and the Crown Dependency of the Isle of Man.

In preparing this report, the UK Government Equalities Office (GEO) with support from the Welsh and Scottish Governments conducted a targeted engagement exercise with a cross-section of women's organisations. The consultation process was largely based on the following stakeholder roundtables: in Wales on 19 June 2017, in London on 26 June 2017 and in Scotland on 14 July 2017. See annex three.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/restoration-of-devolution-a-priority-says-secretary-of-state>

² http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fGBR%2fCO%2f7&Lang=en

³ http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=HRI%2fCORE%2fGBR%2f2014&Lang=en

Introduction

1. This report sets out the UK Government's overarching approach to advancing gender equality and eliminating discrimination. The Right Honourable Justine Greening MP, Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities, leads on delivering the UK Government's gender equality strategy. She is supported by The Right Honourable Anne Milton MP, Minister for Apprenticeships, Skills and Women, and Nick Gibb MP, Minister for School Standards and Equalities.

Institutional mechanisms

2. The Government Equalities Office (GEO) leads work on policy relating to women, sexual orientation and transgender equality, and is responsible for the wider equality framework across government. It leads on the government's international obligations on gender equality and is the "National Machinery for Women", the institutional mechanism responsible for overseeing and promoting the delivery of UK commitments under CEDAW. On September 2015, GEO became part of the Department for Education (DFE), retaining its existing functions.

3. The status of the Devolved Administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (DAs) and the UK's relationship with the Crown Dependencies (CDs) and Overseas Territories (OTs) is explained in annexes one to three of the UK's seventh periodic report.

Reservations to CEDAW

4. The UK Government has reviewed the current reservations (annexed) and concluded that they should not be withdrawn¹.

Extending the UK's ratification of the Convention

5. Noting the Committee's recommendation, the UK Government Equalities Office in partnership with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office led a programme of work to extend the UK's ratification of the Convention to the British Overseas Territories who were not already signatory. As of 2017, UK Government has increased the territorial application of the Convention from three to seven Overseas Territories with Anguilla, Cayman Islands, Bermuda and the territory grouping of St Helena, Tristan da Cunha and Ascension Islands attaining CEDAW's coverage. It is the Government's ambition that the UK's ratification will soon be extended to the remaining Overseas Territories and the Crown Dependencies of Jersey and Guernsey.²

Articles 1-4: United Kingdom approach to tackling discrimination and advancing gender equality

Overarching approach³

6. UK Government recognises the importance of effective coordination and monitoring of the implementation of CEDAW and the CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations, including its recommendations, across the UK and in its CDs and OTs. It has established a network of officials from across central Government Departments and in the DAs as highlighted in the UK's seventh Periodic Report. Following the examination of this report, the 2013 Concluding Observations and Recommendations⁴ were sent to Ministerial Departments across the UK to raise awareness of the Committee's recommendations. A cross-government officials working group led by the GEO was established to monitor implementation of the recommendations. The high level Gender Directors' Network chaired by the GEO Head of Gender Equality and comprising the counterparts from the

⁴ http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fGBR%2fCO%2f7&Lang=en

DAs remains an important forum for exchanging best practice on the implementation of CEDAW.

7. UK Government and the DAs have embedded various strategies to disseminate information on and raise awareness of CEDAW, the Concluding Observations and the Optional Protocol (OP) during the reporting period, including:

- Placing information about CEDAW and the Optional Protocol on the GEO website;
- Funding and hosting nine consultation events to mark the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BpFA) and to raise awareness of CEDAW;
- Membership of UK Treaty Monitoring groups (e.g GEO is represented on the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Treaty Monitoring Working Group);
- Working with the FCO to host the UK's first Overseas Territories human rights conference for OT human rights commissions which included sharing the UK's approach to implementing CEDAW.

Legislative approach

Implementing provisions in the Equality Act 2010

8. The Equality Act (2010)⁵ prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other specified conduct, with certain exceptions permitted as lawful where appropriate. Noting the Committee's recommendation, UK Government does not agree that the Equality Act 2010 should incorporate all the provisions of the Convention. This would make it disproportionate in terms of gender, giving women more rights than others, for example disabled people or people from different BAME groups. This would undermine the rationale for legislation which provides protection to those who have one of the nine protected characteristics; thus the Equality Act 2010 prevents discrimination on the grounds of a number of protected characteristics equitably and without creating a hierarchy of equality⁴.

Public Sector Equality Duty

9. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) should be interpreted consistently with the rest of the Equality Act 2010. UK Government endorses the guidelines contained in the *Equality and Human Rights Commission's Equality Act 2010 Statutory Code of Practice*⁶, which aids in the interpretation of the PSED. Non-statutory guidance is also available to help public authorities understand and comply with their duties. UK Government is committed to making the UK fairer for all and is working to identify and tackle the reasons for socio-economic inequality.⁵ The Northern Ireland Act 1998, Section 75, places a statutory duty on public authorities when carrying out their functions to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between men and women generally.

Public Sector Equality Duty Training

10. Most UK Government departments have lawyers who provide PSED and/or discrimination training to their policy officials so that the front line staff understand what the duty requires. Departments can then ensure they comply with the PSED in the policy and decision making process. They will then be able to assess impacts of their policies on groups with protected characteristics, including women, which will enable them to have due regard to advancing equality of opportunity for women and to foster good relations between women and others with protected characteristics.

11. In Scotland, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 require Scottish public authorities to undertake a range of activities enable the better

⁵ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

⁶ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/employercode.pdf>

performance of the public sector equality duty in the Equality Act 2010. These activities include: reporting on mainstreaming equality; setting equality outcomes and reporting on progress; carrying out equality impact assessment; gathering, using and publishing employee information; publishing their gender pay gap and an equal pay statement setting out equal pay policy and details of occupational segregation.

Gender Pay Gap Reporting

12. UK Government has delivered the Committee's recommendation to require large organisations to publish their gender pay gap data. The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information Regulations) 2017 has been introduced under section 78 of the Equality Act 2010 and apply to large employers in the private and voluntary sectors. The Equality Act (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, introduced under section 153 of the Equality Act 2010, replace the previous Specific Duties regulations in England that underpin the Public Sector Equality Duty.

13. Noting the Committee's concerns, Section 19 of the Employment Act (NI) 2016 in Northern Ireland provides that employers should, in accordance with regulations made by Executive Office, publish information showing whether gender pay disparities exist between employees. The information is to be presented by reference to a series of factors prescribed by regulations. Where gender pay differences are identified, an employer must publish an action plan to eliminate them and provide a copy of the action plan to employees and any recognised trade union. The size of employer to which the requirements apply (determined by the number of employees in the organisation) is to be established by regulations. Regulations under section 19 of the 2016 Act have still to be made. Section 19 of the 2016 Act also provides for the publication of a Strategy and an Action Plan for eliminating gender pay differences⁶.

14. In Scotland, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 require Scottish public authorities to publish their gender pay gap and an equal pay statement setting out equal pay policy and details of occupational segregation.

The United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union and Equalities

15. The UK is preparing to leave the EU in the best possible way for the UK's national interest and is committed to ensuring the United Kingdom emerges from this period of change stronger, fairer, more united and more outward looking than ever before. The UK has some of the strongest equalities legislation in the world, and will ensure that robust protections provided by the equalities acts continue to apply. UK Government will also review all existing EU funding schemes in the coming months and consult with all appropriate stakeholders, to ensure any ongoing funding commitments best serve the UK's national interests.

Implementing the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁷

16. Noting the Committee's recommendation, UK Government led on securing a standalone Sustainable Development Goal on gender. In the report *Agenda 2030: Delivering the Global Goals*⁷, published by the UK's Department For International Development (DFID) in March 2017, each of the 17 goals is addressed and plans for how the Government is going to deliver them at home and globally. The Government has also published a response to the Women and Equalities Select Committee's (WESC) inquiry into the domestic implementation of Goal five of the SDGs. In Scotland, prior to the review of the National Performance Framework's (NPF) national outcomes, officials identified the NPF as the best mechanism through which the SDG should be implemented in Scotland. Scotland's aims and ambitions, such as tackling inequality and ensuring access to high quality education and healthcare, are reflected in the SDGs.

⁷ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/603500/Agenda-2030-Report4.pdf

Measures to eliminate discrimination targeting specific groups:

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) women⁸

17. In August 2016, UK Government launched an audit⁸ of public services to reveal racial disparities and to help end the injustices that many people, including BAME women, experience. Employment support, education and healthcare are in scope. It is a comprehensive audit of the provision of public services, including relevant data that departments and public services currently hold, as well as identifying new information to collect. The findings published in October 2017 will influence government policy at a local and national level. To improve access to employment, the UK Government has built capability in Jobcentres, which helps staff to support BAME women to overcome barriers they may face to gaining work. Fieldwork has been carried out to gain a stronger understanding of what interventions can be effective and Jobcentres are sharing good practices with the wider Jobcentre network.

18. In Scotland, a new £500,000 Workplace Equality Fund aims to address longstanding barriers to accessing the labour market. It is likely to focus on recruitment and progression for women, disabled people, ethnic minority people and older workers.

Women with disabilities

19. UK Government wants to protect the rights of disabled people, including women with disabilities, by ensuring that government policies and gender-specific policies:

- Incorporate the use of the social model of disability to break down barriers and meet the needs of disabled people;
- Take account of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (UNCRDP).

20. Positive action provisions also enable targeted action to help disabled people overcome disadvantage, increase participation or meet specific needs. *The Violence Against Women and Girls: National Statement of Expectations*⁹ requires local areas to provide a broad diversity of provision - considering how services will be accessible to disabled women, and providing specific services to manage learning disabilities.

21. In 2016, Scottish Government published a Disability Delivery Plan (DDP), *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People*, which will work to remove the barriers disabled people can face when it comes to finding and sustaining employment, and developing their careers.

Women Offenders⁹

22. Significant progress has been made since the *Corston Report*¹⁰ of 2007, including the end of mandatory full searching of women in reception, and a move to a risk-based approach that embeds gender-specific standards for women in all areas of prison regimes. In addition, an Advisory Board on Female Offenders was established in May 2013, which brings together key stakeholders from across the British Government to provide leadership and expert advice as we deliver the female offenders' programme.

23. UK Government is developing a strategy for female offenders to improve outcomes for women in the community and custody, which will be set out in due course. Decisions about custodial sentences are a matter for the independent judiciary. The Government is committed to ensuring all suspects and offenders in the criminal justice system are treated equally, whatever their ethnicity. On 31 January 2016, an independent review was set up to understand factors affecting the treatment of, and outcomes, for BAME individuals to

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-orders-government-audit-to-tackle-racial-disparities-in-public-service-outcomes>

⁹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/574665/VAWG_National_Statement_of_Expectations_-_FINAL.PDF

¹⁰ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/docs/corston-report-march-2007.pdf>

identify areas for reform, and make recommendations for improvement, with the ultimate aim of reducing the proportion of BAME individuals in the system.¹⁰¹¹

24. In Northern Ireland, the Department of Justice is current working with statutory partners, and the voluntary and community sector, to develop a new strategy focusing on reducing offending among women. The strategy aims to deliver a gender-informed approach which supports desistance and improves outcomes for women in contact with the criminal justice system. Scottish Government announced the decision to build a new national prison for women and up to five small community based custodial units across Scotland.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equality

25. The UK continues to be recognised as one of the most progressive countries in Europe for LGBT rights by ILGA-Europe. Since the last periodic report, the UK has made significant progress towards equal rights with 15,098 marriages celebrated between same sex couples in England and Wales in the 15 months after extending marriage to same sex couples, and more same sex couples becoming adoptive parents.¹¹ Since the enactment of the Gender Recognition Act 2004, 4,626 Gender Recognition Certificates have been granted in the UK.

26. UK Government has also taken steps to reduce discrimination faced by LGBT people including: increasing the length of sentences for transgender hate crimes, publishing guidance for employers on recruiting and retaining transgender employees and guidance for caseworkers to deal with sexual orientation and gender identity issues in asylum claims. In 2016, UK Government announced a £3 million investment in a programme to prevent and address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools in a sustainable way.

27. UK Government commissioned and published a review of evidence on the inequality among LGBT groups in the UK, and launched a national LGBT survey to assess whether public services in the UK are providing for the specific needs of the LGBT people and understand the ways in which LGBT individuals may face discrimination throughout their lives. The survey closed on October 15th 2017, and the results will be analysed and used to inform UK Government's plans to improve LGBT equality.

28. Northern Ireland Government's approach is subject to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 which requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between men and women generally, and between persons of differing sexual orientation.

29. Scottish Government has a very strong record on LGBTI. For example, Scottish Government made provision through the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014 for same sex couples to marry, uses an inclusive definition of gender identity in its hate crime legislation, and added intersex equality to its approach to sexual orientation and gender identity equality and now uses the acronym LGBTI to support the inclusion of intersex people in Scotland. In order to continue to progress LGBTI equality, the Scottish Government committed in its Programme for Government 2016-17 to "review and reform gender recognition law so it is in line with international best practice for people who are transgender or intersex.

Non-Departmental Public Bodies

30. The Equality and Human Rights Commission remains the independent statutory body with responsibility to eliminate discrimination, promote and monitor human rights and promote equality. Sponsored by the Government Equalities Office and enforces the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland has a statutory role in monitoring the implementation of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2014-to-2015>

Equality Advisory and Support Service

31. The GEO sponsors the Equality Advisory and Support Service which provides high quality expert information, advice and support for individuals who have problems with discrimination. It has a particular focus on finding early and informal solutions and helping with the most complex discrimination problems for vulnerable clients, providing intensive support for those that need it most.

Women and Equalities Select Committee

32. The Women and Equalities Select Committee is a select committee of the House of Commons of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It was established following the 2015 general election to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Government Equalities Office on equalities (gender, age, race, sexual orientation, disability and transgender/gender identity) issues.

*Non-Governmental Organisations*¹²

33. The annual national NGO consultation event, held in the run up to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) serves as one of the main vehicles for UK Government's engagement with women and women's organisations. In October 2014, GEO launched a women's engagement roadshow and an online survey to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action. Women's organisations across the UK were invited to share their views on what progress has been made towards gender equality and priorities for future action. Scottish Government provides funding to a variety of organisations and projects that promote equality of opportunity for women and men in Scotland including Engender, and Scottish Women's Convention. Welsh Government's Equality and Inclusion Funding Programme 2017-20 is supporting Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales to ensure that the voices of women and girls are heard by decision makers in Wales. They will be awarded a grant of £120k per year, over the three-year programme period.

Special measures to accelerate equality

34. The Equality Act 2010 allows measures to be targeted at women, for example to enable them to gain employment or access health services. Such measures can only be taken if they are a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. This is not positive discrimination, which would be favouring someone or a group solely because they have a protected characteristic regardless of other relevant factors. The Equality Act 2010 extended the period during which women-only shortlists are permitted in order to help increase the representation of women in Parliament and specified elected bodies. This will now be permissible up to 2030.

35. Scottish Government has taken action to address the inequalities that women experience in relation to work; representation of women in senior and decision-making roles; gender imbalance in STEM; and violence against women and girls. Scottish Government has also committed to establish an Advisory Council for Women and Girls to champion the rights of women and girls, and act as an advocate for changes that can be made across society to deliver equality.

Accelerating gender equality in the British Overseas Territories and in the Isle of Man

36. In Anguilla, the Domestic Violence Act (2014) came into force providing greater protection for victims of domestic violence by empowering the Court to grant a protection order and for other related matters. In 2012, Gender Equality legislation was introduced in the Cayman Islands and prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of sex, marital status, pregnancy or gender in employment and related matters.

37. The Equality Act 2017¹² has recently been passed and the Isle of Man Government has started to prepare for the implementation phase of this legislation. Under the Equality Act, public authorities will be subject to a Public Sector Equality Duty. Implementation of the legislation Act is a specific outcome within the “Inclusive and Caring Society” Strategic Objective of the Isle of Man Programme for Government 2016-2021¹³. The existing protection under Isle of Man law against discrimination in the field of employment will be expanded by the Equality Act to also cover discrimination in the provision of goods and services. The Act will also fully implement equal pay for work of equal value.

Article 5 – Sex Roles and Stereotyping¹³

38. UK Government is working in partnership with media industries to drive up on- and off-screen diversity. For example, the UK Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is supporting Project Diamond which is an ambitious industry-wide diversity monitoring system created by broadcasters BBC, Channel 4, ITV and Sky, and supported by Pact and Creative Skillset, through the Creative Diversity Network. People working on or off screen on all UK-originated productions will be asked to enter information on their gender, gender identity, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability into the Diamond monitoring system.

Combatting gender stereotyping in advertising

39. The Government welcomed the recent report¹⁴: *Depictions, Perceptions and Harm* from the UK’s advertising regulator (the Advertising Standards Authority), which examined the effect of gender stereotypes in advertising. The report provides evidence to show that adverts that include stereotypical gender roles or characteristics have the potential to cause harm. The Government is considering options for how UK Government can work with the sector to ensure that adverts depict both women and men in a positive way.

Culture, practices and ethics of the press¹⁴

40. Sir Brian Leveson published his report¹⁵ on Part 1 of his Inquiry on 29 November 2012. It contained 92 recommendations on areas including press self-regulation, the police, relationships between the press and politicians, data protection, media plurality and media ownership. The majority of these recommendations have been acted upon and are being delivered. To put in place a new system of voluntary press self-regulation, the Press Recognition Panel (PRP) was established by Royal Charter. The PRP is independent from government and its function is to assess if a press self-regulator meets the criteria set out in the Royal Charter. More than one self-regulator can exist under this system and publishers are free to join or not join a self-regulator.

41. UK Government is committed to defending hard-won liberties and the operation of a free press. The UK’s approach to press self-regulation ensures safeguarding both freedom of expression and striving to prevent issues like discrimination. However, UK Government recognises that challenges remain which must be addressed.

42. The *Royal Charter on Self-Regulation of the Press*¹⁶ was agreed by the Scottish and UK Governments, and was unanimously passed in the Scottish Parliament and by all the major parties at Westminster. The Royal Charter puts in place a process to implement the

¹² https://www.legislation.gov.im/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/2017/2017-0005/EqualityAct2017_1.pdf

¹³ <https://www.gov.im/about-the-government/government/the-council-of-ministers/programme-for-government/>

¹⁴ <https://www.asa.org.uk/resource/depictions-perceptions-and-harm.html>

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/leveson-inquiry-report-into-the-culture-practices-and-ethics-of-the-press>

¹⁶ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/254116/Final_Royal_Charter_25_October_2013_clean_Final_.pdf

recommendations of the Leveson Report. Scottish Government's *Equally Safe* strategy, sets out actions to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls, contains a commitment to engage with the media on gender discrimination.

Women in Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)¹⁵

43. In the UK, girls are just as likely to do well in STEM GCSEs as boys. The Government has taken action to increase the take-up of STEM subjects amongst girls as well as boys, but recognises there is more to do.

44. The number of girls taking STEM A-levels increased by 20% from 2010 to 2017. There are more female entries in chemistry than male for the first time since 2004. STEM careers have a 19% pay premium and the UK Government is spending over £12 million per year on programmes in schools and colleges:

- To increase the take-up of maths and physics;¹⁷
- To support better teaching of these subjects in schools;
- To raise awareness of the range of careers that STEM qualifications offer, through programmes such as STEM ambassadors – and 42% of the ambassadors are women.

45. UK Government is investing £16million over two years on the *New Level 3 Maths Support Programme*¹⁸ to raise the participation of girls in A-level Maths and Further Maths. Additionally, investing half a billion pounds into developing the technical skills of 16-19 year olds taking the new T-level certificate¹⁹. Some T levels (a new technical qualification) will be in subjects such as engineering, manufacturing and digital. Encouraging girls to enroll in these courses and make the most of the valuable skills and experience they offer, is a key priority. UK Government is also investing in programmes to improve the quality of teaching of STEM subjects by training and upskilling these teachers and attracting the best science and mathematics graduates into teaching for example, through initial teaching training bursaries and scholarships.

46. *The Strategy Success through STEM* outlines how in Northern Ireland, the relevant Government Departments intend to take forward the recommendations in the 2009 Report of the STEM Review²⁰ - including addressing gender bias.

47. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) published a five-year Equalities Action Plan for Modern Apprenticeships (MA) in Scotland. It outlines the actions that SDS and its partners will take to improve underrepresented groups' participation in the MA programme. The Action Plan includes activity to address gender imbalance within some MA occupation frameworks (e.g. females in STEM related apprenticeships). Scottish Government's STEM Strategy will be published Autumn 2017 and offers a comprehensive plan to improve STEM learning and teaching in the school curriculum.

48. Welsh Government has accepted all 33 recommendations in the *Talented Women for a Successful Wales* report. The report addresses the under-representation and poor retention of women in STEM careers in Wales.

Dress codes

49. UK Government is clear that discriminatory dress codes are unlawful, outdated and sexist, and cannot be tolerated in the workplace. Employers must meet their legal obligations towards their employees, and the Government will support and challenge them to do so. The EHRC and the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service already provide guidance on avoiding discrimination when setting dress codes. UK Government has worked

¹⁷ <http://stimulatingphysics.org/>

¹⁸ <http://furthermaths.org.uk/2017>

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-secretary-announces-first-new-t-levels>

²⁰ https://www.educationni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/Report%20of%20the%20STEM%20Review%202009_1.PDF

closely with both organisations and the Health and Safety Executive to produce new guidance on workplace dress codes which will soon be published.

Men As Change Agents

50. The GEO has initiated a programme of work to strengthen the engagement of men in policy-making and the delivery of activities promoting gender equality. This included engagement and consultation events with academics and civil society organisations as well as coordination with other Government departments to maximise learning and opportunities for collaboration.

Article 6 – Exploitation of Women

Gendered online abuse

51. UK Government wants to eliminate bullying, intimidation, violence and harassment both on and offline. Women and girls can suffer extreme online abuse, from unacceptable comments about their appearance and views, to intimate pictures shared without their consent, even rape and death threats. There is strong legislation in place to deal with internet trolls, cyber-stalking and harassment, and perpetrators of grossly offensive, obscene or menacing behaviour. The Digital Economy Act will help to ensure that online abuse is effectively tackled through a robust code of practice for social media companies.

Tackling Revenge Pornography

52. UK Government is committed to supporting victims of revenge porn, and has given £178,000 over the last two years to fund the *Revenge Porn Helpline*²¹ which has received over 6,000 calls since it opened in February 2015. A further £80,000 has been awarded this financial year to ensure victims of revenge porn continue to receive the support they need. Since 2015, there has been legislation in place specifically addressing revenge pornography. Courts in England and Wales can now impose immediate custodial sentences on offenders for up to two years.

53. Scottish Government introduced the *Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Act 2016*. It created a specific offence of sharing private intimate images without consent with a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment, which came into force on 3 July 2017.

Combatting human trafficking and slavery

54. UK Government has introduced the Modern Slavery Act 2015, which introduces a maximum life sentence for perpetrators and enhanced support and protection for victims. The *Modern Slavery Strategy 2014*²² sets out a comprehensive approach to tackling modern slavery. In July 2016, the Prime Minister announced a new taskforce to accelerate progress in tackling slavery and pledged £33.5m development funding to prevent slavery, including an £11m Innovation Fund to support new approaches to tackling slavery and a £3m Child Trafficking Protection Fund. UK Government has committed £8.5m to transform the police response to this complex, multi-faceted crime; successfully argued for the establishment of UN Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 to end modern slavery, and ratified the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention.

55. In Northern Ireland, a new legislative framework is now in place centred around the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 (“the Act”). Section 12 of the Act places a requirement to produce an annual strategy on offences under section 1 and 2 of the Act (slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking). The purpose of the strategy is to raise awareness of human trafficking and modern slavery offences and to contribute to a

²¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/revenge-porn-helpline-launched-by-government>

²² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modern-slavery-strategy>

reduction in the number of such offences. The 2014 review of the *National Referral Mechanism* (NRM)²³ made a number of recommendations for reforms which are aimed at improving the decision-making process in respect of cases and enhancing the overall effectiveness of the NRM in terms of outcomes for victims. A number of pilot projects in England finished at the end of March 2017 and an evaluation period began. The Department of Justice Northern Ireland (DOJNI) is continuing to engage with the UK Home Office to determine how any changes would be implemented in Northern Ireland. DOJNI also facilitated a consultation event, in Northern Ireland, for the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner on 20 March 2017 on the future of the NRM.

56. In Scotland, the *Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015* consolidates and strengthens criminal law against human trafficking and exploitation. The offences in the Act now carry a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. It also introduces trafficking and exploitation prevention and risk orders. Scottish Government is working with partners to implement its *Human Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy*²⁴ published in May 2017.

57. The Wales Anti-Slavery Leadership Group provides strategic leadership for tackling slavery in Wales. The Leadership Group co-ordinates collaboration across partners to plan and support delivery, thereby maximising the opportunities for multi-agency solutions to tackle slavery.

Tackling Prostitution¹⁶

58. UK Government is committed to tackling the harm and exploitation that can be associated with prostitution, and believes that people who want to leave prostitution should be given every opportunity to find routes out. The Home Office continues to work closely with the police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), other front-line agencies and wider partners to ensure that legislation achieves these aims. In the Home Office's response to the *Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC) interim report on prostitution*²⁵, the Government recognises the need to gather a robust evidence base on the nature and prevalence of sex work in England and Wales, and believes that we cannot properly assess the impact of the other recommendations until this research has been completed.

59. Scottish Government commissioned a national scoping exercise of advocacy services relating to the criminal justice system for victims of violence against women and girls.²⁶ The exercise included advocacy services for victims of prostitution, human trafficking, rape and sexual assault.

60. A grant of £150k has been given to the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner to commission this research. Academics and researchers will be invited to bid to develop a comprehensive, impartial understanding of the nature, prevalence and composition of prostitution and sex work in England and Wales.

Article 7 – Women's Representation in Political and Public Life

Diversity in political representation¹⁷

61. The UK currently has the most diverse Parliament in its history with its second female Prime Minister and the highest number of women MPs ever. At the June 2017 General Election, 208 women won seats and now make up 32% of all MPs, up from 22% in 2010. At the 2017 election 52 MPs (8%) elected were from BAME, up from 41 MPs in 2015; of those, 26 are women. As of January 2017 207 women, 25.7%, are Members of the

²³ <http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/specialist-capabilities/uk-human-trafficking-centre/national-referral-mechanism>

²⁴ <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/trafficking-exploitation-strategy/>

²⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prostitution-government-response-to-the-third-hasc-report-2016-to-2017>

²⁶ <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/national-scoping-exercise-advocacy-services-victims-violence-against-women-girls/documents/00523297.pdf?inline=true>

House of Lords. In Scotland, 35% of members in the Scottish Parliament are women, 42% of members of National Assembly for Wales and 28% of Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Following the 2014 European Parliament elections, women comprise 41% of UK MEPs. In England, 33% of local authority councillors are women as of 2017. In Scotland, 24% of councillors are women. Women hold 26% of council seats in Wales and in Northern Ireland 22% of councillors are women²⁷.

62. Initiatives exist to improve the representation of women in Parliament, such as the 50:50 Parliament's²⁸ #AskHerToStand campaign, which aims to address the gender imbalance in Parliament and VOTE 100²⁹ Parliament's project to mark the 2018 centenary of some women getting the vote, amongst other key anniversaries. The Government has also created a £5 million fund in England, and other funds in the Devolved Administrations, to celebrate the centenary of women's suffrage. The fund will create a legacy for the future by educating young people about democracy, and inspiring women to engage in politics at all levels. The Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion is a cross party group of MPs set up by the Speaker of the House of Commons. The group's main role is to drive forward actions on the recommendations from *The Good Parliament Report*³⁰, published in 2016, towards a more representative and inclusive House of Commons.

63. Scottish Government has provided funding to the women's organisation *Engender* to collaborate with other equality organisations and the Women 50:50 campaign to produce an evidence based online tool that will allow those involved in political parties nationally and at local level to audit their membership and practices and to create a bespoke action plan to improve accessibility and diversity.

64. Welsh Government's Diversity in Democracy programme aimed to increase the diversity of individuals standing for election to local government and worked through a number of local government initiatives to address the barriers that people from under-represented groups face when entering public life. The project concentrated on mentoring people interested in standing for election, raising the profile of local government through a publicity campaign and financial support for people to enable them to shadow councillors and attend council meetings.

Supporting disabled women to be represented as elected officials (Access to Elected Office Fund)¹⁸

65. In 2012, £2.6 million was made available to help disabled people overcome barriers to becoming an elected official. The fund aimed to help meet the additional costs a disabled candidate may face in standing for election as Police and Crime Commissioners, councillors or MPs, such as extra transport or sign-language interpreters. An evaluation of the Fund is underway and any decision made in the light of that will be published as soon as possible.

66. Scottish Government has an Access to Elected Office Fund Scotland that supported candidates for local authority elections in May 2017 where 15 disabled candidates were successful of which seven are women. This Fund will remain in place until the Scottish Parliament elections in 2021.

Women in Public Life

67. In the UK, there has been some progress made in women's representation in public life. For example:

- In England and Wales and reserved bodies 48.5% of new public appointments went to women in 2016-2017;

²⁷ <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7979/CBP-7979.pdf>

²⁸ 50:50 is a cross-party campaign aiming to encourage, inspire and support political engagement

²⁹ <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/electionsvoting/vote-100/vote-100-project/vote-100-project-info>

³⁰ <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/medialibrary/sites/news/2016/july/20%20Jul%20Prof%20Sarah%20Childs%20The%20Good%20Parliament%20report.pdf>

- 59% of public appointments made in Scotland in 2016 were women. However, more needs to be done to increase women's representation in the following areas:
 - Civil Service Permanent Secretaries (20%);
 - Though the first female Supreme Court president has been appointed, there are still only 27.5% female judges in England and Wales, 23% Scotland, and in 25% Northern Ireland;
 - NHS (34% of Hospital and Community Health Service consultants);
 - Though the Metropolitan Police Force has appointed its first female Commissioner of Police, there are currently seven police forces with a female Chief Constable.³¹

68. The Audit of Inequalities for the former Northern Ireland Department for Regional Development (now the Department for Infrastructure since 9th May 2016), highlighted the under-representation of women on the Boards of bodies linked to the Department. DfI maintains and develops the infrastructure and services that are vital for everyone in Northern Ireland, including roads, rivers and footpaths, water and sewerage networks and public transport services. Specific measures were included in the action plan for the DRD to ensure prospective appointments were widely advertised across underrepresented groups including women's groups. An Audit of Inequalities and action plan for the Department for Infrastructure is being developed. The Northern Ireland Act Section 75 statutory duties are mainstreamed within DfI and, as such, DfI complies with the ethos of the CEDAW.

69. In 2015, Welsh Government launched a Call for Evidence on increasing the representation of women and other under-represented groups on Public Sector Boards. The summary report was published in 2016. This evidence will support the response in Wales to the under-representation of women and other groups in public appointments. In 2015, a pilot development programme for under-represented groups in public appointments was made available to up to 20 people from under-represented groups in Wales.

Increasing women's participation on sporting bodies

70. Women in Sport published their *Beyond 30%* report³² in March 2017 detailing information regarding women on the board and in senior leadership roles within National Governing Bodies (NGBs) in England and Wales. The report showed that there is still some work to do to encourage diversity in senior positions. In England, the *Code for Sports Governance*³³ was published in 2016 and requires each funded organisation to adopt a target of a minimum of 30% of each gender on its board.

Improving diversity in broadcast media

71. The UK has a thriving broadcasting sector, and the government recognises that it is a large and growing part of the UK's economy, and a major source of both jobs and exports which showcase the UK to the rest of the world. Improving diversity is not just the right thing to do, but there is a commercial imperative for broadcasters to reflect the population they serve. The independent regulator for the broadcast sector, has the power to take steps to promote equality of opportunity in employment in the broadcasting sector, with particular reference to gender.

Improving diversity in the judiciary¹⁹

72. UK Government welcomes the appointment of the Rt Hon the Baroness Hale of Richmond - the first ever female President of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom. The Lord Chief Justice and Senior President of Tribunals regularly publish via the Judiciary

³¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2015/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2015>

³² www.womeninsport.org/resources/beyond-30-report/

³³ <https://www.sportengland.org/about-us/governance/a-code-for-sports-governance/>

website,³⁴ the judicial diversity figures for the courts and tribunals judiciary, the most recent being as of 1 April 2017. This provides an overall breakdown of appointment figures, which includes gender and ethnic origin. Senior judiciary are working to increase recruitment of BAME judges and non-barrister (solicitors and legal executives) judges and formed the Judicial Diversity Committee in 2013, chaired by Lady Justice Hallett, to oversee progress. Since 2015, the Judicial Office has run increasingly popular mentoring schemes and application workshops aimed at under-represented groups. These form part of a positive action programme, which is intended to help candidates make stronger applications to the Judiciary. UK Government keeps judicial terms and conditions under review so that where possible, they take account of the needs of diverse groups within the judiciary.

73. Northern Ireland's Judicial Appointments Commission is responsible for the selection of applicants for judicial appointment up to and including High Court Judges. There is an upward trend in the percentage of female applications to, and representation in, the Northern Ireland judiciary. Currently 20% of High Court judges are women. Just under half of tribunal legal offices are held by women, and a quarter of Northern Ireland's County Court and District Judges (Magistrates' Court) were women.

Women, peace, security, and the National Action Plan (NAP)

74. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Women Peace and Security remains an important forum for discussion and analysis on issues relating to Women, Peace and Security. At the High Level Review on women, peace and security in 2015, the UK announced eight new UK commitments on Women, Peace and Security. The United Kingdom's National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security runs from 2014-17 and the successor plan is currently being finalised. The UK Government is committed to working in a focused, consultative and inclusive way and the cross-Government working group on Women, Peace and Security held monthly National Action Plan development meetings with Government partners and representatives of the NGO network Gender Action for Peace and Security. Scottish Government continues to fund the *Women in Conflict Fellowship*. The initiative started in 2015 and was established to train women from areas of conflict around the world so that they can play an integral role in the peace process.

UNSCR1325 and women's participation in the post-conflict process in Northern Ireland²⁰

75. There are no plans to integrate provisions relating to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Northern Ireland into the United Kingdom National Action Plan. Nevertheless, some aspects of UNSCR 1325, such as women's participation in peace building and political processes, are relevant to all states. UK Government will continue to work with all devolved governments towards increasing the representation of women, not only in Northern Ireland but across the whole of the UK in public and political life.

Increasing diversity on corporate boards

76. The final Lord Davies Review (2015)³⁵ celebrated that the 25% target had been exceeded, with over 500 FTSE board appointments going to women in five years. It also recommended an increased target for 33% women on FTSE 350 boards by 2020, and that a new review be established to look into the executive pipeline. In 2016, the British Government appointed Sir Philip Hampton (Chair, GSK) and the late Dame Helen Alexander (Chair, UBM plc) to lead the *FTSE Women Leaders Review*³⁶. This Review continues the work to increase the number of women on boards, as well as a new focus on

³⁴ <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/about-the-judiciary/who-are-the-judiciary/diversity/judicial-diversity-statistics-2017/>

³⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/482059/BIS-15-585-women-on-boards-

³⁶ <https://ftsewomenleaders.com/>

the executive layer in FTSE companies. The Review published its first report in November 2016, including recommending two targets which the British Government supports, for women to account for:

- 33% of FTSE 350 board directors by 2020;
- 33% of Executive Committees and direct reports to the Executive Committees of FTSE 100 companies by 2020.

77. Since 2011, progress has been made:

- More than double the number of women on boards of FTSE 100 and 250 companies;
- Only eleven all male boards left in the FTSE 350, down from 152 in 2011.

78. UK Government wants to see further progress being made in helping women make their way up the career ladder to ensure that business is choosing its leaders from a diverse group of talented people.

79. Scottish Government introduced the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Bill on 15 June 2017. The Bill sets a “gender representation objective” for public boards in Scotland that 50% of the board’s non-executive members are women, and requires certain steps to be taken in the appointing of non-executive members to achieve the objective. The Bill also requires steps to be taken to encourage women to apply to become a non-executive member of a public board. Scottish Government does not have power to legislate in relation to women’s representation on private boards. In June 2015, Scottish Government launched the *Partnership for Change 50/50 by 2020*³⁷ campaign, encouraging companies and organisations from across Scotland’s public, private and third sectors to sign up to a voluntary commitment to work towards gender balance on their boards by 2020.

Article 8 – Women as International Representatives

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

80. UK Government’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is a strong advocate of diversity and inclusion in Government. Overall, the FCO is 42% female. In 2008, the FCO set an ambitious gender target for the Senior Management Structure (SMS) to be 39% female by October 2019. In 2008, the SMS was only 17.5% female; in 2016 year it passed 30%. There are now 59 female Heads of Mission and Posts compared to 22 in 2008. FCO has appointed a number of first ever female Ambassadors to countries including Greece and Italy. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has appointed their first Special Envoy for Gender Equality. This will ensure that foreign policy consciously and consistently delivers for women and girls.

Department for International Development

81. The Department for International Development continues its commitment to diversity and inclusion and is currently reviewing its strategy for 2017 and beyond after the implementation of the Civil Service Talent Action plan. DFID aims to be one of the most inclusive places to work anywhere, supporting the Civil Service vision to be the most inclusive employer in the UK. DFID has made substantial effort over the years, and achieved notable progression of women throughout the organisation. Overall, 56% of DFID staff are female.

Women in the Armed Forces

82. The Prime Minister announced on 8 July 2016 that the exemption on women serving in ground close combat roles would be lifted. From November 2016, women were able to join the Royal Armoured Corps, both Regular and Reserve. The remaining ground close combat roles will open to women in late 2018, once additional health mitigations are in

³⁷ <http://onescotland.org/equality-themes/5050-by-2020/>

place. The Armed Forces are exempt from elements of the employment provisions of the Equality Act 2010 for reasons of combat effectiveness. As at April 2017, female representation in the Armed Forces was 10.2%. This is part of a long-term increasing trend. Female representation in the Reserve Forces has also increased to 14%.

Article 9- Nationality

Supporting refugee and asylum seeking women²¹²²

83. UK Government is committed to ensuring that the asylum process is gender sensitive and have implemented an asylum specific gender action plan. This covers a range of initiatives designed to support women to better engage with the asylum process and prevent discrimination. There is a training programme for all asylum caseworkers, which specifically includes gender based harm and gender sensitive approaches to issues such as trauma and memory loss so that interviews are conducted in an appropriate and sensitive way. Home Office asylum policy guidance on gender issues and domestic violence is currently being updated. Assurance reviews continue to be carried out to monitor the quality of asylum interviews and decisions to ensure gender sensitivity, adherence to current policy and promote continuous improvement.

84. The *New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities*³⁸ provided a clear framework from 2014 to 2017 for all those working towards refugee integration in Scotland. The strategy has assisted in co-ordinating the work of the Scottish Government, its partner organisations and others in the public, private and third sectors. A refreshed New Scots strategy is in development. NHS Scotland provides health services to all asylum seekers in Scotland, including those whose claims have been refused, and asylum seekers in Scotland have access to legal services and legal aid to enable them to pursue their cases. Scottish Government believes that asylum seekers should be able to work while their claims are under consideration.

85. Welsh Government's *Refugee and Asylum Seeker Delivery Plan* was published in March 2016. The aim of the plan is to enable asylum seekers and refugees to have the opportunities to learn, thrive and contribute to the economic, environmental, social and cultural life of Wales. Welsh Government has also provided, via its Equality and Inclusion Grant 2014 – 2017, funding for the British Red Cross South East Wales Refugee Women Support Programme to enable vulnerable refugee women to independently exercise their rights and access local support services. From April 2017, a new, all Wales Support Service for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, funded by Welsh Government, will be delivered by the Welsh Refugee Council.

Domestic violence and the *No recourse to public funds* policy²³

86. Those seeking to establish their family life in the UK must do so on a basis that prevents burdens on the taxpayer and promotes integration. The no recourse to public funds condition applies to those granted limited leave outside of the protection routes, unless the published destitution policy is met. Where an applicant can show that there are particularly compelling reasons relating to the welfare of a child on account of the child's parent's very low income; or where there are exceptional circumstances relating to the applicant's finances, the grant of leave will not be subject to a condition of no recourse. Once granted, those subject to this condition can apply for it to be lifted where there is a significant change in circumstances such that they become destitute.

87. The destitution policy is applied on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the individual facts of the application. Not all women who are subjected to gender based violence and exploitation will meet the destitution policy and it would not be appropriate to apply it on a blanket basis. In other human rights applications, raising grounds such as gender based violence and exploitation will also be taken into account when considering whether a grant of leave outside of the Immigration Rules is warranted. Scottish

³⁸ <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/12/4581>

Government welcomed the Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee's (EHRiC) report, *Hidden Lives – New Beginnings: Destitution, asylum and insecure immigration status in Scotland*.³⁹ The report recommends that the scope of the Destitute Domestic Violence Concession should be extended to cover all women with insecure immigration status, including asylum seekers.

Article 10- Education

Strengthening careers guidance²⁴

88. The Department for Education (DFE) will publish a careers strategy in the autumn, with a clear focus on social mobility. It will include proposals to improve the quality and coverage of careers advice in schools and colleges and give people the information they need to access training throughout their working lives. The careers strategy will include some proposals for how we might promote gender equality by increasing young people's contact with employers - who can demonstrate different job roles and career paths to raise aspirations - especially in relation to STEM where the DFE are planning some pilots. The STEM ambassador network promotes the enjoyment of STEM subjects. DFE are working with partners to encourage more schools and colleges to make use of ambassador organisations and to increase the opportunities for young people to meet STEM employers.

Gender representation in apprenticeships²⁵

89. Apprenticeships are a great route into skilled employment for people of all ages and genders and can offer a real opportunity for women to re-enter the labour market after taking time out. In the UK, women have accounted for the majority of apprenticeship starts in each of the last six years – 52.8% of apprenticeship starts were by women in 2015/16. There remain disparities in gender representation in some sectors that deliver some of the highest returns, such as construction and engineering (where women accounted for only 2.3% and 8.0% of starts in 2015/16). The DFE employer led *Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network*⁴⁰ will champion apprenticeships amongst employers and encourage more people from underrepresented groups to do apprenticeships - including ensuring more women are able to access STEM apprenticeships. The DFE has relaxed the Funding Rules on part-time apprenticeships, enabling more learners, such as those with caring responsibilities and lone parents to access apprenticeships.

90. Through the *Developing the Young Workforce*,⁴¹ Scottish Government set out how they will tackle gender imbalances and promote equality of access in relation to subject and career choices, through the Modern Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan and Scottish Funding Council Gender Action Plan for colleges and universities.

Promoting Relationships and Sex Education²⁶

91. UK Government wants to help schools deliver high-quality Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education, ensuring pupils are taught about healthy and respectful relationships and the knowledge required to prepare for adult life. In England and Wales, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires the Secretary of State to make Relationships Education mandatory in all primary schools, and RSE mandatory in all secondary schools through regulations. The Act also provides for a power to make PSHE, or elements therein, mandatory in all schools, subject to careful consideration. The Department for Education (DFE) will conduct a thorough engagement process on the scope and content of RE and RSE, and on the future status of PSHE. This will involve engagement with stakeholders, followed by a formal consultation on the resulting regulations and guidance. The Department will set out in due

³⁹ <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/103215.aspx>

⁴⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/apprenticeship-diversity-champions-network>

⁴¹ <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/12/7750>

course more details about the engagement process and the work to consider age-appropriate subject content.

92. In Northern Ireland, The Department of Education (DE) requires each school to have in place its own written policy on how it will address the delivery of RSE. In 2015, the Department commissioned the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) to review and update RSE guidance⁴² for schools.

93. Scottish Government's ten year *Mental Health Strategy (2017-27)* commits to undertaking a national review of personal and social education and the role of guidance in local authority schools and also a review of services for counselling and their evidence base for children and young people. Scottish Government published updated guidance for teachers on relationships, sexual health and parenthood (RSHP) education in 2014. Scottish Government also provides funding for Rape Crisis Scotland.

94. In Wales, personal and social education in schools provides opportunities to equip children and young people with the confidence and skills to enable them to make safe, healthy choices about their sexual health. The All Wales Sexual Health Network, in conjunction with the Family Planning Association, has released advice sheets for parents who want to talk to their children about sex and relationships.

Tackling bullying in schools²⁷

95. A new cyberbullying guidance and an online safety toolkit for schools have also been published. Funded by Government and developed by the *UK Safer Internet Centre*, these resources will help provide advice to schools on understanding, preventing and responding to cyberbullying.

96. In Northern Ireland, The '*i-Matter*' programme⁴³ is the overarching vehicle for promoting pupils' emotional health and wellbeing. The Programme is about addressing how the entire school community should be engaged in promoting resilient health for all pupils, what support systems are available for vulnerable pupils and what support is available to schools in the event of a crisis. Northern Ireland's *Every School A Good School*⁴⁴ policy requires all schools to provide equity of access and provision but with flexibility to identify and meet the full diversity of pupil need.

97. Scottish Government is committed to refreshing the *National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People*⁴⁵ to ensure that it remains current. *Respect for All: National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People* will help everyone involved in the lives of children and young people to identify and address bullying, including racist, homophobic and abusive behaviour, whether it happens online or offline. Scottish Government will continue to fund *respectme*, a national anti-bullying service, to build confidence and capacity to address all types of bullying effectively.

Tackling sexual violence in schools

98. In England, the statutory safeguarding guidance *Keeping children safe in education* sets out what all school staff should know and do to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. All school staff should receive child protection and safeguarding training at induction and the training should be regularly updated.

Tackling sexual harassment in Higher Education Institutions

99. In March 2017, the Higher Education Funding Council for England awarded more than £2 million to universities and colleges across the country to address sexual violence and harassment on campus. In July, *Universities UK* published a directory of case studies

⁴² <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/relationships-and-sexuality-education>

⁴³ www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/imatter-programme

⁴⁴ <https://www.atl.org.uk/Images/Every%20school%20a%20good%20school%20response.pdf>

⁴⁵ <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/11/12120420/0>

detailing the innovative projects universities are undertaking to address the issues raised in the 2016 *Changing the Culture*⁴⁶ report as a means to share effective practice across the university sector.

Article 11- Employment

Women in work

100. In the UK, there are close to a record number of women in work. There were 15.1 million women in employment (aged 16+) between June to August 2017. Women's employment increased by 78,000 on the quarter and was 246,000 higher than one year ago. The employment rate for women (aged 16-64) was 70.7 per cent. This is close to a record high and 1.1 percentage point higher than a year earlier. The high female employment rate is partly due to the changes to the state pension age for women resulting in fewer women retiring between the ages of 60 and 65. Since May 2010, there are 1.47 million more women in employment and 1.59 million more men in employment.

101. In Scotland, the female employment rate is 72.0 %, female unemployment rate is 3.4% and the female inactivity rate is 25.4%. Over the last year, the female employment level in Scotland has increased by 26,000 to 1,294,000.⁴⁷

Eliminating the Gender Pay Gap²⁸

102. The UK is one of the first countries in the world to introduce gender pay gap reporting. The overall gender pay gap is at 18.4%. The gender pay gap for full-time employees has decreased from 9.4 per cent to 9.1 per cent - this is the lowest since the survey began in 1997. Gender Pay Gap regulations came into force on 31 March 2017 for the public sector and 6 April 2017 for the private sector. The regulations require any organisation that has 250 or more employees to publish and report specific figures about their gender pay gap via their public-facing website and report their data to government online using the gender pay gap reporting service. The figures to be published annually includes: mean gender pay gap; median gender pay gap; mean and median gender bonus gap; proportions of male and female employees that received a bonus; and salary quartiles.

103. In Northern Ireland, Section 19 of the Employment Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 provides that employers must publish information showing whether any gender pay disparities exist between their employees. Where gender pay differences are identified, an employer will be required to publish an action plan to eliminate them.

104. In Scotland, the gender pay gap for full-time employees decreased from 7.7% in 2015 to 6.2% in 2016. In February 2016, the Scottish Government reduced the threshold for listed public authorities to report their gender pay gap and publish statements on equal pay and occupational segregation, from those with more than 150 employees to those with more than 20 employees. The Scottish Government is providing funding of £205,000 to *Close the Gap*⁴⁸ to challenge and change employment practices and workplace cultures to support gender equality and close the pay gap.

105. Welsh Government introduced a robust public sector equality duty to address pay and employment differences and specifically gender pay differences. All public sector employers in Wales are required to report annually on disparities in pay and address employment or pay differences.

⁴⁶ <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/changing-the-culture-final-report.aspx>

⁴⁷ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/october2017>

⁴⁸ <https://www.closesthegap.org.uk/>

Women's Business Council

106. The Women's Business Council (WBC) was established to advise the Government on how to maximise women's economic contribution to the economy. In 2013, the WBC produced a report which included 96 recommendations for both government and the business community. The WBC was expanded in 2016 to increase the number of male leaders and include industries and sectors where women are largely under-represented. The WBC is self-funded and has reached a potential audience of 30 million through social media, and has delivered over 1000 activities/products to promote their recommendations to maximise women's economic potential.

Women in Enterprise

107. There are now around 1.2 million women-led small and medium-sized businesses in the UK, which contribute an estimated £115 billion to the economy. UK Government wants to encourage more women to set up and grow their own businesses. Government-backed Start-Up Loans are helping women to realise their talents, create jobs and bring a boost to both the local and national economy. Scottish Government is doubling the overall support from £200,000 in 2016/17 to £400,000 in 2017/18 into actions delivered through the *Women in Enterprise Action Framework*.⁴⁹

National Living Wage

108. UK Government's National Living Wage (NLW) was introduced on 1 April 2016 for all working people aged 25 and over and is currently set at £7.50 per hour⁵⁰, with women among the biggest winners. Around two-thirds of those expected to benefit from the NLW are women. Scottish Government promotes payment of the real Living Wage of £8.45⁵¹ per hour, which it pays to all its employees aged 18 and over.

Increasing access to employment for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) women²⁹

109. UK Government is committed to taking action to address disparities highlighted by its *Race Disparity Audit*⁵². This includes an overarching commitment to increasing the level of BAME employment by 20% by 2020. There has been growth in the number of BAME women accessing the labour market, and the employment rate gap between BAME females aged 16-64, and females aged 16-64 in the general population, has decreased from 14.2% in 2010 to 13.6% in 2015. The Audit is being used to refresh BAME training and awareness material to help BAME women overcome barriers to employment. UK Jobcentres have available a locally controlled budget that can be used to tailor support and forge community partnerships to help BAME women access employment. Support is also provided to help improve language skills by covering the full cost of English language classes for those who have been in the UK for at least three years and are in receipt of out of work-related benefits.

Improving access to employment for women with disabilities³⁰

110. UK Government provides support to employers to help them recruit and retain disabled people and women and men with health conditions. There are around 4.1 million disabled working age women in the UK, of which almost 1.9 million are in employment. The employment rate for disabled working age women is around 48%.⁵³ UK Government's proposals for improving work and health outcomes for disabled people and people with long-term health conditions, including how we can further drive and support employer action, were set out in: *Improving Lives - The Work, Health and Disability Green Paper*. UK Government is now reviewing the consultation responses and deciding on next steps. It

⁴⁹ <https://www.wescotland.co.uk/framework>

⁵⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-living-wage-nlw/national-living-wage-nlw>

⁵¹ <https://beta.gov.scot/news/living-wage-set-at-8-45/>

⁵² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/race-disparity-audit>

⁵³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-facts-and-figures/disability-facts-and-figures>

is also reviewing employment discrimination laws against women and men with mental health conditions in the workplace to ensure they are properly supported.

111. In 2016, Scottish Government launched *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Our Delivery Plan to 2021 for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*⁵⁴. The plan represents the culmination of over two years of detailed discussion, negotiation and co-production with disabled people's organisations and with individual disabled people. Implementation of the plan is now under way across Government.

Combatting pregnancy discrimination at work

112. In the UK, discriminating against women in the workplace because they are pregnant is illegal. There are clear regulations in place which every employer must follow. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is exploring options to enhance protection against redundancy for pregnant women and women returning from maternity leave. The GEO is also funding the Equality Advisory and Support Service, which is an entirely free advice helpline open to anyone in England, Scotland and Wales who feels that they may have been the victim of unlawful discrimination, including because of pregnancy and maternity. Scottish Government is working with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to tackle pregnancy and maternity discrimination.

Supporting women returning to work

113. In the 2017 Budget, a £5 million fund was announced to increase the number of programmes for returners in the public and private sector. UK Government will be working with employers across the public and private sector to understand how returners can be supported back into permanent employment. The GEO is co-ordinating new public sector programmes for returners across the country, in a wide variety of roles. These include initiatives to support social workers, teachers, health professionals, cyber security professionals and civil servants. On returning to work, women earn around 2% less on average for every year spent out of paid work. Scottish Government has approved seven projects to date with a total value above £235,000. Projects will address under-representation of women in key sectors including STEM, manufacturing, finance entrepreneurship, security and improve the number of women in senior positions and men in childcare.

Childcare³¹

114. UK Government is supporting working families and since September 2017, has doubled the childcare entitlements for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds, from 15 to 30 hours a week. Around 390,000 working parents will benefit from the new 30 hours entitlement, saving them around £5000 a year. The Government also announced record funding of £1 billion extra per year by 2019/20, meaning the government will then spend over £6 billion a year on childcare. Tax-Free Childcare was introduced in April this year. It gives working parents a 20% top-up on childcare costs up to £10,000, which gives them up to £2,000 per child per year, or £4,000 per child if that child is disabled. The new *Childcare Choices* campaign provides parents with information about all of our childcare offers in one place. They can also pre-register for both the 30 hours offer and Tax-Free Childcare on the website.

115. Scottish Government funded entitlement is increasing from 600 to 1140 hours a year by 2020, for all 3 and 4 year olds and around a quarter of 2 year olds (based on statutory eligibility requirements). Local authorities are already starting to phase in this expansion and have been asked to prioritise phasing in the areas of highest deprivation. The total public sector investment in delivery of early learning and childcare is expected to reach £840 million by the end of this Parliament (2021-22).

116. Welsh Government's childcare offer will provide working parents with 30 hours of government-funded childcare and early years education for 3 and 4 year olds for up to 48

⁵⁴ <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/12/3778/3>

weeks of the year. This includes term time and holiday provision. Seven local authorities in Wales will become early implementers of the childcare offer from September 2017, with full roll-out across Wales in 2020.

Increasing family-friendly policies: flexible-working and shared parental leave³²

117. Flexible working regulations came into force in the 2014 and now gives all employees with 12 months service or more the legal right to request flexible working. Since the UK Government has introduced legislation, the number of people who have the right to request flexible working has doubled. 97% of UK companies now offer some form of flexible working and the benefit to business is estimated to be around £55 million per year. The UK Civil Service is leading the way in its approach to flexible working in recruitment practices. Shared Parental leave regulations came into force in 2014 and apply to eligible parents where a baby is due, or a child is placed for adoption, on or after 5 April 2015. It gives parents more flexibility in how to share the care of their child in the first year following birth or adoption.

118. Scottish Government awarded £169,000 funding to the *Family Friendly Working Scotland Partnership*⁵⁵ for 2017-18 and work with other organisations to support and promote the development of family-friendly workplaces across Scotland.

Supporting older women workers

119. In February 2017, UK Government published *Fuller Working Lives: A Partnership Approach*⁵⁶. It sets out how working longer can benefit businesses, individuals and the economy. That report also sets out the key actions this Government is taking to support older workers to remain in and return to the labour market.

State Pension Reform

120. UK Government is committed to equalising state pension outcomes between men and women. It has made a number of changes to the State Pension system to improve coverage, while ensuring it remains sustainable and affordable and that increases in life expectancy are taken into account in setting state pension age. Most recently, it has reformed the State Pension system primarily through the introduction of a new State Pension for those reaching State Pension age on or after 6 April 2016. The new State Pension reforms are forecast to equalise State Pension outcomes for men and women by the early 2040s, over a decade earlier than they would have done under the old state pension system. The new State Pension builds on the coverage reforms of the Pensions Act 2007, which simplified contribution conditions and improved coverage for women in particular.

Increasing women's economic empowerment internationally

121. DFID are tackling the specific barriers faced by girls and women such as lower human capital and access to assets; discriminatory behaviours and laws; and the unequal distribution of care work. DFID will build on the recommendations of the UN High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment (HLP)⁵⁷, to which the UK has been central. Over the next five years DFID will work in partnership with British and international businesses to support implementation of the HLP recommendations through a Work and Opportunities for Women programme.

⁵⁵ <https://www.familyfriendlyworkingscotland.org.uk/>

⁵⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fuller-working-lives-a-partnership-approach>

⁵⁷ <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/1/wee-high-level-panel-launch>

Article 12 – Women’s Health

Tackling health inequalities

122. In 2012, the Health and Social Care Act introduced legal duties so that the Secretary of State for Health, NHS England and clinical commissioning groups are required to have regard to the need to reduce inequalities in access, outcomes and experience of health services. These duties are underpinned by annual assessment and reporting requirements. Under the Scottish specific duties (commenced May 2012) Scottish Ministers, health boards and other relevant authorities must publish equality outcomes and report on progress, set out how they are integrating equality into their functions, undertake equality impact assessments and gather and use employee data. These activities must include all of the protected characteristics, including sex and pregnancy and maternity.

Screening and vaccinations

123. As part of the NHS Cervical Screening Programme in England, women aged 25 to 49 are invited for free cervical screening every three years and those aged 50 to 64 are invited every five years. Women over the age of 65 are invited for screening if they have not been screened since age 50 or if they have had recent abnormal results.

124. Under the NHS Breast Screening Programme, breast screening is offered every three years for all women in England aged 50 and over. Currently, women aged between 50 to 70 years are invited routinely and women over the age of 70 are still eligible for screening and can request free three yearly screening. The programme is being extended as a trial to women aged 47 to 49 and 71 to 73.

125. The NHS continues to provide a human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme for girls aged 12-13, primarily to protect them against cervical cancer. Uptake of this programme is high, currently around 85%. DH reports that there is already a reduction in HPV infections in young women in England since the introduction of this programme and it is estimated that about 400 lives could eventually be saved every year.

126. Wales has established national population screening programmes delivered by Public Health Wales: Cervical cancer screening: women are invited to participate on a 3 yearly basis for those who are 25 to 49 and on a 5 yearly basis for women aged 50 to 64. Breast cancer screening: offered to women aged 50-70 on a 3 yearly basis. Bowel cancer screening: offered to women aged between 60 to 74 on a two yearly basis. Diabetic retinopathy screening: offered to all women with diabetes on a yearly basis.

Raising awareness of sexual health

127. UK Government has set out its ambition for improving sexual health and wellbeing in: *A Framework for Improving Sexual Health in England (March 2013)*. The Framework addresses all aspects of sexual health and wellbeing across the life course and sets out the mechanisms by which sexual health services and treatment are commissioned and delivered. Teenage pregnancies are at the lowest rates ever recorded - the under 18 conception rate in 2015 was 21.0 conceptions per thousand women aged 15 to 17⁵⁸.

128. The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) carried out a review of specialist sexual health service in NI in 2013. All 16 recommendations were accepted, and progress has been made in implementing a number of them at a local level; including progress on staff training, arrangements for partner notification, provision of information about accessing services and endorsement of NICE guidance on long acting reversible contraception (LARC)³³.

129. In Scotland, the *Pregnancy and Parenthood in Young People Strategy (PPYP)* published in 2016, specifically mentions the importance of supporting positive relationships, high quality sexual health education, as well as the need for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services in relation to young people.

⁵⁸ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?..../birthsdeathsandmarriages/conceptionandfertilityrates/.../q...>

130. The *Sexual Health and Wellbeing Action Plan for Wales 2010-2015* resulted in a number of service and outcome improvements for women such as reduction in rates of teenage conceptions and the delivery of integrated sexual health services across Wales.

Supporting access to abortion services for women in Northern Ireland

131. Abortion remains a criminal offence in Northern Ireland unless it is necessary to preserve the life of the woman or there is a risk of real and serious adverse effect on the woman's physical or mental health, either long-term or permanent. Last year 724 women from NI travelled to England and Wales for an abortion, according to official figures. On the 29 June 2017, UK Government announced that women from Northern Ireland would be able to receive a publicly funded abortion in England. In Scotland, a statutory instrument was laid in Parliament on 21 September 2017, which will provide a legal basis for NHS Boards to provide free abortion care to women from Northern Ireland. Welsh Government has committed to explore how provision of abortion services for women ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland can be achieved in Wales.

Provision of abortion in Northern Ireland³⁴

132. The Committee is aware that the law on abortion as it relates to fatal foetal abnormality has already been subject to Ministerial attention. A working group paper on that subject was provided to Ministers in October last year and proposals were due to be presented to the Northern Ireland Executive Committee in January for a decision. However, political events meant that the Executive ceased to function in January and it has not yet been re-established.

Maternity services

133. The Report of the NHS England commissioned National Maternity Review, *Better Births*⁵⁹ was published on 23 February 2016. It set out a clear vision: for maternity services across England to become safer, more personalised, kinder, professional and more family friendly; where every woman has access to information to enable her to make decisions about her care; and where she and her baby can access support that is centred on their individual needs and circumstances. *Safer Maternity Care: next steps towards the national maternity ambition*, published in October 2016, described the actions needed at national and local levels to build on the progress already made to improve the safety of maternity services and achieve the UK's national ambition.

134. In Scotland, *The Best Start: A Five Year Forward Plan for Maternity and Neonatal Care* in Scotland 2017 contains 76 recommendations that will reshape services to put the mother, baby and family at the centre of service planning and care delivery, and to keep mother and baby together as much as possible. Implementation of the recommendations is underway and early changes will include a move to a continuity of carer model of care. All newborn babies born on or after 15 August 2017 will receive a box of essential items⁶⁰. Scotland's *Baby Box* ensures that families have access to essential items in the first few months of a child's life. It has been awarded British Safety Standard accreditation as a crib for domestic use and, as well as health care items for babies, contains breast pads and maternity towels.

Mental health

135. The *No health without mental health: implementation framework*, published in July 2012, emphasised that the Government had introduced a duty on NHS bodies to reduce health inequalities under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 – including inequalities in mental health access and outcomes. *The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health*, published in February 2016, identified that one in five mothers suffers from depression,

⁵⁹ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/national-maternity-review-report.pdf>

⁶⁰ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216870/No-Health-Without-Mental-Health-Implementation-Framework-Report-accessible-version.pdf

anxiety or in some cases psychosis during pregnancy or in the first year after childbirth. A phased, five-year transformation programme, led by NHS England and backed by £365 million in funding, is underway.

136. Scottish Government has a Ministerial post dedicated to mental health. The *Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027* was published in March 2017 and contains a vision of a Scotland where people can get the right help at the right time, expect recovery, and fully enjoy their rights, free from discrimination and stigma.

137. *Together for Mental Health* is the Welsh Government's 'all-age' 10-year strategy for improving mental health and well-being and improving the care and treatment of people using mental health services, their carers and families. The 2016-19 Delivery Plan is the second of three plans which sets out the actions that need to be taken to ensure the strategy is implemented. One of the goals of the 2016-19 Delivery Plan is to provide better outcomes for women and families at risk of perinatal mental health problems. The Welsh Government has made £1.5m of recurrent funding available to develop community-based specialist perinatal services within every health board in Wales.

Mixed- Sex wards

138. UK Government has made it clear that providers of NHS-funded care are expected to eliminate mixed-sex accommodation, except where this is in the overall best interest of the patient, or reflects their personal choice. Any hospital that places patients in mixed-sex accommodation can face fines of £250 per patient, per day. The NHS Constitution (first published in March 2012) introduced a pledge under "Respect, consent and confidentiality":- "that if you are admitted to hospital, you will not have to share sleeping accommodation with patients of the opposite sex, except where appropriate, in line with the details set out in the handbook to the NHS Constitution".

Increasing access to healthcare for women from marginalised groups⁶¹

139. The Inclusion Health programme produced a series of reports on key issues affecting disadvantaged and vulnerable groups including practical steps towards inclusive Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies and commissioning for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma, homeless people, sex workers and vulnerable migrants (2013); improving access to health care for Gypsies and Travellers⁶¹, people and sex workers (2014); and the impact of insecure accommodation and the living environment on Gypsies and Travellers (2016).

140. The 2014 report provides guidance for Clinical Commissioning Groups, local authorities, NHS England and Public Health England (PHE) aimed at widening access to health services and contributing to improving the health outcomes of vulnerable and marginalised groups, including Gypsies, Travellers and Roma, in line with the 2010 Public Health White Paper commitment to improve the health of the poorest fastest. The 2016 report which sets out the education and training that health professionals need, and also receive about Inclusion Health, to enable them to work effectively with vulnerable people who are homeless, Gypsies and Travellers, Roma, sex workers and vulnerable migrants.

141. Anyone living in Scotland legally, and for a specific purpose is able to register with a GP practice to receive NHS general medical services. This includes asylum seekers, refugees, migrant workers, Gypsy and Travellers, students and those joining their families. Asylum seekers who have made an application to the Home Office to remain in the UK are entitled to the full-range of NHS care and services while in Scotland, regardless of the status of their application.

⁶¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/national-inclusion-health-board>

Improving healthcare and social services to support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) women³⁶

142. Each National Health Service commissioner and provider is subject to statutory duties under that Act which prohibits them from unlawfully discriminating against service users on grounds of their protected characteristics. To assist organisations, NHS England has developed a Equality Delivery System toolkit that aims to help local organisations to improve the services they provide for their communities across all groups including ethnic minority women. In Northern Ireland, a scoping report examining the maternity needs of BAME women in Northern Ireland was produced in 2014 by the group established to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the Strategy for Maternity Care in Northern Ireland 2012-2018⁶². The report is used as the basis for a proposal for regional service development for the BAME population for which funding options are currently being explored.

Disabled women's access to reproductive and antenatal health services³⁷

143. In the UK, Royal College of Midwives guidance sets out that every pregnant woman should receive individualised, safe and high quality maternity care regardless of her physical or mental condition. It is therefore the responsibility of commissioners and providers of maternity services to develop services that maximises control and autonomy for the wishes and decisions of pregnant disabled women and their families in consultation with them. The needs and care of disabled women regardless of ethnicity should be explicitly acknowledged in maternity units' philosophy and policies. The same options and choices available in antenatal care, place of birth and analgesia should be made available to disabled women unless contraindicated by an existing medical condition.

144. In Northern Ireland, work has also been carried out to scope a regional pathway to improve pre-conceptual and antenatal care for women with epilepsy to improve outcomes for mothers and babies. An investment proposal is currently being developed by one of the local health trusts for consideration by commissioners.

Increasing the provision of healthcare in prisons³⁸

145. The Health & Social Care Act 2012 provides that NHS England has a legal duty to commission health services or facilities for all people who are detained in prison or in other secure accommodation and for victims of sexual assault. Commissioners will require service providers to demonstrate that they are responding appropriately to meet women's needs. NHS England is committed to ensuring the delivery of high quality equitable healthcare provision within prison settings. All services are commissioned in line with clinical guidance and best practice. Prison Mental Health services are also Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered. The CQC monitors, inspects and regulates health and social care in the criminal justice system to ensure that people who use services in secure settings receive the same quality of care as the rest of the population.

146. Healthcare services in custody are provided by NHS Scotland, and NHS standards for health care provision, including primary care, apply within the prison setting. Scottish Government expects health boards to act appropriately to meet these standards.

Health issues in international development

147. The *London Summit on Family Planning*⁶³ in 2012 galvanised global political and financial commitments. It resulted in a new goal of supporting an additional 120 million adolescent girls to use voluntary family planning by 2020. Between March 2011 and March 2015, UKaid:

- Helped save the lives of 103,000 women in pregnancy and childbirth;
- Helped save the lives of 187,000 newborn babies;

⁶² <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/strategy-maternity-care-northern-ireland-2012-2018>

⁶³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/family-planning-london-summit-11-july-2012>

- Enabled 9.9 million additional women to use modern methods of family planning;
- Helped the Global Fund keep 9.2 million people alive with HIV therapy and protected over 3.6 million babies from becoming infected by their mothers.

Article 13 – Social and Economic Benefits

Increasing women’s participation in sport

148. UK Government’s sport strategy *Sporting Future* and Sport England’s strategy *Towards an Active Nation* sets out plans to get more people active, in particular in under-represented groups, including women. There are various obstacles which put women off sport and UK Government are keen to continue to break down these barriers. Sport England developed *This Girl Can*, a behaviour change campaign, which aims to encourage women and girls to get active and help narrow the gender gap in the number of men and women regularly taking part in sport and being physically active. Latest evaluation shows that *This Girl Can* is already having an impact with 2.8 million women and girls having been inspired to get active by the campaign and of these, 1.6 million women saying they have started or restarted activity.⁶⁴ Sport England launched the second phase of *This Girl Can* at the beginning of 2017 and have extended the age range of the campaign to women in their sixties.

149. The Department for Communities NI has funded a number of initiatives to support female participation in sport and to support the development of capacity within female sport. The Department has invested £250,000 into the delivery of the women and girls in sport *Active, Fit and Sporty strategy*⁶⁵. Over 3,000 women were involved in the project over the six-month period. Additional funding of £120,000 has also been secured to provide legacy opportunities and capacity building work to support increases in female participation. Scottish Government has established a women and girls in sport advisory board to provide independent advice to the Minister for Public Health and Sport on female participation and awareness raising in all areas of sport and physical activity. Sport Wales, through their Calls for Action programme, has awarded over £1.5m to a number of organisations to fund programmes that tackle inequalities and barriers to women and girl’s participation in sport.

Assessing the impact of austerity measures on women’s rights

150. UK Government notes the concerns of the Committee and civil society and has considered the impact policy measures have on protected equality groups, including on women, throughout the policy development and decision-making process of the 2015 *Spending Review*.⁶⁶ As with all spending reviews, government departments take careful account of the gender implications for women when developing and implementing the policies for which they are responsible.³⁹ A report to the Scottish Parliament on the impacts on the people of Scotland of the Act and other welfare measures passed since 2010, Welfare Reform (Further Provision) (Scotland) Act 2012 - Annual Report – 2017, was published on 29 June 2017.

Support for low income families⁴⁰

151. UK Government has put in place a number of measures to support families on low income including the introduction of the National Living Wage (NLW), tax-free childcare, flexible-working and increasing programmes to support women’s return to work.

152. DH is currently developing a new national Carers Strategy. It will seek to raise awareness among public and professionals of carers and their caring roles; to build ‘Carer

⁶⁴ (Sport England Evaluation 2016 -TNS BMRB)

⁶⁵ <http://www.sportni.net/news/330k-investment-announced-to-help-women-girls-get-active-fit-sporty/>

⁶⁶ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/447101/a_country_that_lives_within_its_means.pdf

Friendly Communities' in which employers, businesses and services identify, recognise and support carers; and to ensure that the NHS England and Social Care services provide the right support to those in the most intense caring roles and at moments of crisis. UK Government will be significantly increasing spending on carers benefits over the next few years and more women will benefit from this than men. Overall, 59% of carers in Scotland are women. Scottish Government is increasing Carer's Allowance to the level of Jobseekers' Allowance from summer 2018, backdated to April 2018, an increase of £10.40 a week.

153. Universal Credit (UC) claimants who have responsibility for a child(ren) may be eligible to receive support with their childcare costs, ensuring that those who can work do work. A lone parent or parents with responsibility for a child(ren) can be reimbursed for 85% of the eligible childcare costs which enable them to work. This financial support will benefit up to 500,000 families by around £60 a month once UC has fully rolled out and will ensure that childcare costs do not form a barrier to parents returning to work or increasing their working hours.

154. *The Scottish Welfare Fund* provides a safety net to people on low incomes by the provision of Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants. From April 2013 to 31 March 2017 more than 254,000 individual households in Scotland have been helped with awards totalling £132.6 million from the Scottish Welfare Fund. Of the 254,000 low income households, almost 137,000 were single person households and more than 84,000 were families with children. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 increased the amount of funded early learning and childcare to 600 hours per year for all 3-4 year olds. This has been extended to over a quarter of 2-year olds who may benefit most, including those with a parent in receipt of out of work benefits or on low income; and those who are looked after, the subject of a kinship care order, or with a parent appointed guardian. Welsh Government's 2015 *Child Poverty Strategy* specifically recognises the need to support those groups who are most at risk of living in poverty – which includes lone parents.

Welfare Reform: Child Tax Credits Limits

155. Limiting support to two children in *Child Tax Credit*⁶⁷ and UC was announced in the 2015 Summer Budget⁶⁸, and was debated and voted on during the passage of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. The policy has been in place since 6 April 2017. This measure is a necessary part of restoring the Government's public finances, but it also ensures fairness. Before this change, benefit entitlements adjusted automatically to family size. The policy is projected to save £1.3bn in 2020/21. Children born as a result of non-consensual conception will be exempt from this. UK Government has adopted a "third-party model" so that women do not have to describe the details of their ordeal to a Government official but, instead, can talk to healthcare professionals, a social worker or an approved rape charity. This third party will then relay the relevant information to Government officials to ease the burden on the woman.

Domestic violence survivors access to welfare⁴¹

156. Under UC, couples living in the same household make a joint claim for benefit. UC is paid as a single monthly payment and includes a housing cost element. It is for the family to decide whose account UC is paid into or whether it should be paid into a joint account. It is for them to decide how to manage their finances in a way that best meets the needs of the family. The decision to pay UC as a single payment is in line with evidence to suggest that only 7% of cohabiting couples and only 2% of married couples keep their finances completely separate. UK Government has put safeguards in place within the UC policy and design to protect against this type of abuse, including the ability to split the UC payment between members of a couple. Jobcentre staff can also consider paying any housing costs included in a UC payment direct to the landlord to reduce the risk of homelessness for women who may experience exploitation by abusive spouses. Another measure that can

⁶⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/child-tax-credit>

⁶⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/budget-july-2015>

prevent or support victims of abuse is the ability to make more frequent payments to claimants, to help them through periods of financial hardship. Women who have left their homes as a result of this type of abuse can also apply for a short-term, UC advance.

157. Through the 2016 Act, Scottish Government will receive flexibilities in relation to the administration of UC, including the splitting of UC payments between individual members of a couple. Scottish Government recognises that payment of UC to households, not individuals, is likely to perpetuate asymmetrical power relations between couples, and put women at greater risk of financial abuse.

Increasing support for Gypsies and Travellers⁴²

158. Local authorities are responsible for the provision of an adequate number of Gypsy and Traveller sites provided through the planning system. UK Government's *Planning Policy for Traveller Sites* sets out that local authorities should objectively assess their traveller needs and identify a suitable five-year supply of sites to meet their needs, taking account of national planning policy in doing so. Local authorities are making progress and in July 2016, 84% of traveller caravans were on authorised sites, significantly greater than in July 2007 when 77% of caravans were on authorised sites. In November 2016, the Government announced an expansion of the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016-21 by an additional £1.4bn for a further 40,000 housing starts by 2021, increasing the overall Affordable Homes Programme capital budget to £7.1bn up to 2021. Traveller pitches can be funded through the Affordable Rent element of the Programme.

159. In Scotland, local authorities are required by law to produce a Local Housing Strategy, that sets out its, priorities and plans for the delivery of housing and related services, including for Gypsy and Travellers. Welsh Government's Housing (Wales) Act 2014 introduced new duties on local authorities to properly assess the mobile home pitch needs of Gypsies and Travellers and then ensure sufficient sites are created.

Article 14- Rural Women

Supporting rural women's businesses

160. In 2014, UK Government allocated £1.6 million of funding to projects dedicated to supporting women to overcome the specific problems they face when starting a business in rural areas. This was part of a £15 million package of support given to five Rural Growth Networks (RGN) by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). It helped to create more than 3,000 new jobs and 700 businesses.⁶⁹

Improving access to Broadband

161. In 2014, UK Government established the *Women and Broadband Challenge Fund*⁷⁰ and committed £1million to help women grow their business online. This fund gave women the practical help needed to get their businesses on-line and take advantage of superfast broadband. The fund was part of the Government's Superfast Broadband rollout and was aimed to help women take full advantage of all the opportunities superfast broadband can bring to business. Scotland's *Digital Future: Infrastructure Action Plan* outlines Scotland's commitment to a world-class, future-proofed infrastructure that will deliver digital connectivity across the whole of Scotland by 2020. So far, over £240 million of public sector funding has been committed to taking forward the Infrastructure Action plan.

⁶⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-business-hubs-to-promote-rural-economic-growth>

⁷⁰ Women and Broadband Challenge Fund: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/female-entrepreneurs-set-to-benefit-from-superfast-broadband>

Supporting rural women in Scotland

162. Scottish Government responded to the *Women in Farming and the Agricultural Sector Research Report* in 2017⁷¹ and announced the establishment of a task force to take forward the recommendations. The National Rural Mental Health Forum has been established to help people in rural areas maintain good mental health and wellbeing. This forum will help develop connections between communities across rural Scotland so that isolated people can receive support when and where they need it. Scottish Government has made available £1.85m over three years to Rape Crisis Scotland to safeguard the existing National Sexual Violence Prevention Co-ordinator post to expand capacity of the existing network of 14 rape crisis centres across Scotland, and establish a rape crisis service on Orkney and Shetland in partnership with Women's Aid and the Highland Centre.

Taking women's needs into account when providing rural transport

163. UK Government is keen to promote a range of transport solutions in rural communities, not just rural buses. These include "Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Buses" and Community Transport Services such as "Dial-a-Ride". The British Government gives local authorities the freedom to make the right decisions for their own communities and to assist Local Highways Authorities to produce their Local Transport Plans. In 2009 guidance was produced which placed a strong emphasis on better connecting transport and local services. In 2014, the Government launched a £25 million Community Minibus Fund, which has since provided over 380 minibuses to community groups across England. UK Government is committed to maintaining an England-wide travel concession for older and disabled people who can travel for free at off peak times when using buses locally and when visiting other parts of the country. This supports the Government's wider work to tackle social exclusion. Bus travel remains the most used form of public transport, especially by older people.

164. On 25 August 2017, Scottish Government launched a consultation on the future of the national concessionary travel scheme. Scottish Government wants to hear views on the options to safeguard the longer-term sustainability of the existing free bus travel scheme and on providing free bus travel to young modern apprentices to support their travel costs.

Article 15- Equality before the law and civil matters

Family Legal Aid - Domestic Violence⁴³

165. In England and Wales, legal aid is available to those seeking protection from an abuser in domestic violence cases, and was granted in over 12,000 cases last year. Legal aid is also available to domestic violence victims with family law problems where objective evidence is provided.

166. In Scotland, legal aid is available to victims of domestic and gender-based violence seeking protection through civil actions, where they meet the statutory eligibility criteria. There is no residency test and no requirement to demonstrate that domestic abuse has taken place. In criminal cases, the state investigates offences and prosecutes alleged offenders. Victims of domestic and gender-based violence have the status of 'complainer' and can access advice and assistance on the criminal process. Scottish Government has provided funding, through the Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB)⁷², to support the Scottish Women's Rights Centre, which offers free legal information and advice to women who have experienced gender-based violence, including a national helpline. Scottish Government has also made available publicly funded legal assistance for those seeking representation in

⁷¹ Women in Farming and the Agricultural Sector Research Report 2017:
<https://beta.gov.scot/publications/women-farming-agriculture-sector/pages/2/>

⁷² <http://www.slab.org.uk/>

recovery proceedings where sensitive records are sought, following the judgment in *WF v Scottish Ministers [2016] CSOH 27*.⁷³

Review of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO)

167. Previous Justice Ministers agreed to submit a post-legislative memorandum for the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act to Parliament and to begin a post-implementation review of recent legal aid reforms shortly afterward. The Government has had a long-standing commitment to doing this review and publishing it by April 2018. The Lord Chancellor is considering the case for a review and will make an announcement in due course.

168. Scottish Government announced an, independent review of legal aid on 1 February 2017 to fulfil the commitment to maintaining access to public funding for legal advice and representation in both civil and criminal cases alongside measures to expand access to alternative methods of resolving disputes⁷⁴. With legislation in Scotland dating back nearly 30 years, the review will explore how best the legal aid system can contribute to improving people's lives now and in the future.

Protecting women from informal community arbitration systems

169. UK Government action to protect women from informal community arbitration systems is set out in the follow-up report submitted in November 2015⁷⁵.

Employment Tribunal Fees⁴⁴

170. On 26 July 2017, the Supreme Court handed down judgment in the case of *R (Unison) v Lord Chancellor*,⁷⁶ in which they found the Employment Tribunals fees regime was unlawful and quashed the relevant fees Order. UK Government took immediate steps to stop charging fees and are making arrangements to refund those who have paid the fees in the past. The judgment is being considered further and any proposals for futures fees will be set out in due course.

171. The 2015 Programme for Government committed to abolishing the fees in Scotland when the management and operation of employment tribunals were devolved. Scottish Government will continue to work with stakeholders, to ensure that the new employment tribunal system in Scotland provides access to justice.

Addressing historical institutional abuses⁴⁵

172. As required by its terms of reference, the NI Executive's Inquiry into *Historical Institutional Abuse*⁷⁷ examined if there were systemic failings by institutions or the state in their duties towards those children in their care between the years of 1922-1995. The Inquiry Report was formally published on 20 January 2017, detailing the findings of the statutory inquiry panel and its recommendations, as required by the Inquiry's terms of reference. The publication of the Report brought to a conclusion the Inquiry's investigation into historical institutional abuse. Noting the Committee's concerns, the NI Executive agreed in October 2016 to establish an independently chaired inter-departmental working group to look further into both Mother and Baby Homes/Magdalene Asylums (Laundries) and clerical child abuse. *The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry*⁷⁸, is looking into abuse of children in care and is expected to report within four years of starting work on 1 October 2015.

⁷³ <http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/search-judgments/judgment?id=2af906a7-8980-69d2-b500-ff0000d74aa7>

⁷⁴ <http://www.gov.scot/About/Review/legal-aid-review>

⁷⁵ http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en

⁷⁶ <https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2015-0233-judgment.pdf>

⁷⁷ <https://www.hiainquiry.org/>

⁷⁸ <https://www.childabuseinquiry.scot/>

Limitation Period in Civil Cases⁴⁶

173. Scottish Government introduced the Limitation (Childhood Abuse) (Scotland) Bill in 2016, removing the three year limitation period for personal injury actions arising out of childhood abuse. In the Bill, “abuse” is defined to include sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. The removal of the limitation period will apply whether the abuse occurred before or after commencement of the new provisions and it allows a previously raised case to be re-raised if the reason for its disposal was the limitation period.

Corroboration Reform⁴⁷

174. In Scotland, future consideration of corroboration reform needs to await the findings of jury research (one of the recommendations of Lord Bonomy’s post corroboration safeguards review) and be considered in the wider context of that and the other recommendations of Lord Bonomy’s group and any other related reforms. The Jury Research project started in Autumn 2017 and is expected to take 2 years to complete.

Judicial training on diversity and fair treatment issues

175. The Lord Chief Justice is responsible for the training of the judiciary in England and Wales and this is exercised through the Judicial College. The training provision is for judicial office holders in Courts (including magistrates and their Legal Advisers), Tribunals and Coroners. Both induction and continuation training are provided and the social context of judging (which includes equal treatment and diversity issues) is woven into all seminars in line with the Judicial College Strategy. The Judicial College continues to provide an Equal Treatment Bench Book⁷⁹ (ETBB) which is periodically reviewed and updated. Its contents support all judicial office holders to fulfil their judicial oath and ensure that all those who attend court are treated equally. The Judicial Studies Board for Northern Ireland (JSBNI) and the Judicial Studies Committee in Scotland (JSC) are separately responsible for training the professional judiciary and the lay magistracy in those countries. Both Bodies adopt the same broad approach to diversity and equality as the Judicial College, with which they maintain a close working relationship.

Article 16- Equality in marriage and family law**Strengthening legislation on forced marriage⁴⁸**

176. UK Government has introduced anonymity for victims and forced marriage protection orders. A range of materials to support professionals in understanding these issues have also been developed, including multi-agency guidance and free e-learning for frontline professionals. The Forced Marriage Units are carrying out ongoing programmes of outreach to support professionals and communities.

177. The Forced Marriage etc. (Protection and Jurisdiction) Scotland Act 2011 introduced a civil Forced Marriage Protection Order, breach of which is a criminal offence. From 30 September 2014, section 122 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014⁸⁰ made it a criminal offence to force a person into marriage.

Equal protection for women and men’s property rights⁴⁹

178. The law on property rights is gender-neutral, and there is therefore equal protection for women’s and men’s property rights under the law that applies to a particular relationship (family law on divorce or the dissolution of a civil partnership, and civil law on property, contracts and trusts where couples had cohabited but were not in a legal union). UK Government is considering whether further reform to the family justice system in England and Wales is needed to make sure it is delivering the best outcomes for children

⁷⁹ <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/publications/equal-treatment-bench-book/>

⁸⁰ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/12/contents/enacted>

and families, and protecting the most vulnerable users of the system. The Scottish Government is considering whether similar changes are required in Scotland.

Corporal punishment⁵⁰

179. In England and Wales, violence towards children is not condoned and there are clear laws to deal with it. The “reasonable chastisement” defence is only available when the charge is one of common assault; it cannot be used when someone is charged with assault causing actual or grievous bodily harm, or with a child. In Northern Ireland, the law on physical punishment has been in line with England and Wales since September 2006. Legislation and standards are also in place to ensure that corporal punishment is prohibited in children’s homes, day-care and fostering settings. The existing legislation in Scotland makes it illegal to punish children by shaking, hitting on the head or using an implement. Scottish Government is opposed to physical punishment of children and intends to support a proposed member’s Bill in the Scottish Parliament. This would remove an existing defence which parents and carers can use, and would have the effect of banning all forms of physical punishment of children.

Eliminating violence against women and girls:

Violence against women and girls strategy⁵¹

180. UK Government’s *Ending violence against women and girls 2016-2020 strategy* was published in March 2016 and provides an overview of the wide range of actions the government will be taking towards eliminating violence against women and girls. It also details how the government intends to build on the previous action plan to end violence against women and girls. A new *National Statement of Expectations⁸¹* which sets out, for the first time, a clear blueprint for local action on VAWG” has also been published. Since 2012, UK Government has introduced new laws and tools to protect victims of VAWG including: the criminalisation of forced marriage, two new stalking laws, and the national roll-out of Domestic Violence Protection Orders and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, and a new offence of domestic abuse covering controlling and coercive behaviour.

181. To support the Government’s commitment to tackling VAWG, £100 million in funding has been pledged between now and 2020. This will help to deliver the UK Government’s goal to work with local commissioners to deliver a secure future for rape support centres, refuges and female genital mutilation and Forced Marriage Units. UK Government’s *This is Abuse⁸²* campaign encourages teens to rethink their views of violence, abuse, controlling behaviour and consent. Funding is provided for the *National Respect Helpline⁸³* to support male and female perpetrators to address their abusive behaviour.

182. UK Government is also taking steps to introduce a new civil stalking protection order to support victims of stalking at an earlier stage and address the perpetrator’s behaviours before they become entrenched. A new Domestic Abuse Bill will protect and support victims, recognise the life-long impact domestic abuse has on children and make sure agencies effectively respond to domestic abuse. It will include measures to consolidate civil and criminal prevention and protection orders to create a clearer pathway of protection for victims⁵².

Implementing legislation to eliminate Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)⁵³

183. In 2015, UK Government introduced a number of provisions to strengthen the law on FGM to help break down barriers to prosecution. These provisions included:

- extending the reach of the extra-territorial offences in the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (the 2003 Act) to habitual (as well as permanent) UK residents;

⁸¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/574665/VAWG_National_Statement_of_Expectations_-_FINAL.PDF

⁸² <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/this-is-abuse-campaign>

⁸³ <http://respect.uk.net/>

- Providing life-long anonymity for victims of alleged offences of FGM;
- Creating a new offence of failing to protect a girl from the risk of FGM. This makes those responsible for a girl answerable in law for how the FGM happened and may reduce the need for the girl to give evidence in court - something which young and vulnerable victims may be reluctant or scared to do;
- The introduction of a new civil protection measure – FGM Protection Orders (FGMPOs) - which offer a specific legal means to protect and safeguard victims and potential victims of FGM;
- The introduction of a mandatory reporting duty which requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers to report ‘known’ cases of FGM in under 18s to the police.

184. The Northern Ireland Executive has issued Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines on Female Genital Mutilation which provide advice and support to frontline professionals who are responsible for safeguarding children and protecting adults from the abuses associated with female genital mutilation. The Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005 re-enacted the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 and extended protection by making it a criminal offence to have FGM carried out either in Scotland or abroad by giving those offences extra-territorial powers. The Act also increased the penalty on conviction on indictment from 5 to 14 years’ imprisonment.

Supporting vulnerable groups⁵⁴

185. UK Government’s VAWG strategy identifies that some sectors of society can experience multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage or additional barriers to accessing support. This includes women and girls from BAME communities, disabled and LGBT victims. The increased funding of £100m and support for areas to improve commissioning will help ensure their needs are met through specialist support. The National Statement of Expectations (NSE) makes clear to local partnerships what good commissioning and service provision looks like. It also sets out that Commissioners should have access to a broad diversity of provision, considering how services will be accessible to BAME, disabled, LGBT and older victims and survivors.

Devolved Administrations

186. The NI Executive published in March 2016 a seven-year strategy *Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland*. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 makes FGM illegal. The Serious Crime Act 2015 provides for FGM Protection Orders. Health and Social Care professionals operate in accordance with the Multi-agency Practice Guidelines on FGM, published in July 2014. The Supporting People Programme provides 13 refuges throughout Northern Ireland; total funding is over £4.6 million per year. A 24-hour Domestic and Sexual Violence Helpline is in operation

187. Scotland’s National Action Plan, published 04 February 2016, to prevent and eradicate FGM, sets out an agreed range of actions and associated activities to be taken forward by Scottish Government and its partners to prevent and ultimately eradicate FGM.

188. Scottish Government is investing significant levels of funding to tackle violence against women and girls including nearly £30 million over 2017/2020 from the equality budget to support a range of projects and initiatives to tackle VAWG. This includes direct provision for front line domestic abuse and sexual assault services, as well as funding for the National Domestic Abuse, Forced Marriage and Rape Crisis Helplines. Invested an additional £20 million over 2015-18 from Justice budgets, which includes increased support for advocacy provision. There are currently 477 refuge spaces in Scotland for women and their children affected by domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Bill will, provide for a specific offence of domestic abuse and strengthen the law, introducing a new offence criminalising a course of abusive behaviour towards a partner or ex-partner which will appropriately and effectively criminalise the type of pernicious coercive and controlling behaviour that can constitute domestic abuse. Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Act 2016 modernises the law on domestic and sexual abuse.

189. In Wales, the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 is intended to focus the public sector on the prevention of these issues. The Welsh Government has created the National Training Framework for Wales on VAWG and a *National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence - 2016 – 2021*⁸⁴ was published in November 2016.

*Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence
“Istanbul Convention”*⁵⁵

190. The Coalition Government signed the Istanbul Convention on 8 June 2012 signalling its strong commitment to tackling VAWG and this Government remains committed to ratifying the Convention. The Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Ratification of Convention) Act 2017 which requires the Government to lay annual reports in Parliament on the measures being taken to enable the UK to ratify the Convention. The UK Government will lay the first report by 1 November 2017. In most respects, the UK already complies with, or goes further than the Convention requires. However, the Government cannot ratify the Convention until the UK is fully compliant with it, and there remains outstanding issues, including in relation to extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ), which must be addressed before the UK can be considered to be. UK Government will introduce the ETJ measures necessary for compliance in England and Wales as part of the Domestic Abuse Bill and is engaging with the Devolved Administrations on the measures necessary to ensure compliance in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Tackling VAWG internationally

191. The UK was instrumental in securing dedicated targets within the Sustainable Development Goals on ending all forms of violence against women and girls. DFID nearly doubled its programmes on violence against women and girls, from 64 programmes in 2012 to 127 in 2016. DFID’s £8 million commitment to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women provides grants to women’s rights organisations and other small grassroots organisations. DFID support is already helping the fund to reach over 110 initiatives around the world. In 2015 alone, the Fund reached over 1 million people. In 2013, the UK made the largest ever donor commitment to tackling FGM, with £35 million to support the Africa-led movement to end FGM over five years.

Endnotes: Recommendations made to the United Kingdom by the CEDAW Committee in 2013

- ¹ 2013 recommendation, Para 11: *State Party withdraw and narrow current reservations.*
- ² 2013 recommendation, Para 15: State Party extends its ratification of the Convention to include all its territories, including Guernsey and Jersey.
- ³ 2013 recommendation, Para 29: State Party ensure that the Government Equalities Office has a dedicated section for the co-ordination of gender equality matters in all parts of the State Party. That the State Party develop and adopt a unified, comprehensive and overarching strategy for the implementation of the Convention throughout its territory.
- ⁴ 2013 recommendation, Para 13: State Party to continuously review its legislation with a view to incorporating all the provisions of the Convention therein.
- ⁵ 2013 recommendation, Para 17: State Party take advantage of the review of the Equality Duty to ensure that the gender equality component of the Duty is properly prescribed for public authorities
- ⁶ 2013 recommendation, Para 19: State Party revise its legislation in Northern Ireland to ensure that it affords protection to women on an equal footing with other women in the State Party’s Administrations.
- ⁷ 2013 recommendation, Para 67: Calls for the integration of a gender-perspective, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, into all efforts aimed at the achievement of the Millennium

⁸⁴ <http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/commsafety/161104-national-strategy-en.pdf>

- Development Goals and into the post-2015 development framework.
- 8 2013 recommendation, Para 61 a): State Party to step up efforts to eliminate discrimination against ethnic minority women and improve access to social services, including health care, education and employment.
 - 9 2013 recommendation, Para 55 a): State Party to vigorously pursue efforts to implement the recommendations made in the Corston Report, including those contained in the report of the House of Commons Justice Committee published on 15 July 2013.
 - 10 2013 recommendation, Para 55 b): State Party to continue to develop alternative sentencing and custodial strategies, including community interventions and services for women convicted of minor offences.
 - 11 2013 recommendation, Para 55 d): State Party to introduce measures aimed at tackling the root causes of the overrepresentation of black and ethnic minority women in prison.
 - 12 2013 recommendation, Para 29: State Party should also assess the impact of the new approach to engaging with women's organisations and introduce measures to mitigate the negative impact on women's ability to engage adequately.
 - 13 2013 recommendation, Para 33 a): State Party to engage with the media to eliminate stereotypical imaging of women and their objectification in the media, especially in advertising.
 - 14 2013 recommendation, Para 33 b): State Party to implement the recommendations of the Leveson Inquiry, including those that seek to give powers to a regulator to intervene in matters of discriminatory reporting.
 - 15 2013 recommendation, para 45 d): State Party to take co-ordinated measures to encourage increased participation by girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and in apprenticeships.
 - 16 2013 recommendation, Para 39: State Party to advise its legislation by shifting the burden of proof from the prosecution to the purchaser of sexual services. The Committee recommends that, once the prosecution proves that the child was over 13 years of age and under 18 years of age, and that the accused purchased sexual services from the child, the purchaser should be required to establish that he or she did not reasonably believe that the child was under 18 years of age.
 - 17 2013 recommendation, para 43 a): State Party to continue to take specific targeted measures to improve the representation of women, in particular black and ethnic minority women and women with disabilities, in Parliament and the judiciary.
 - 18 2013 recommendation, para 43 a): State Party to continue to take specific targeted measures to improve the representation of women, in particular black and ethnic minority women and women with disabilities, in Parliament and the judiciary.
 - 19 2013 recommendation, para 43 a): State Party to continue to take specific targeted measures to improve the representation of women, in particular black and ethnic minority women and women with disabilities, in Parliament and the judiciary.
 - 20 2013 recommendation, Para 43 b): State Party to ensure the participation of women in the post-conflict process in Northern Ireland, in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).
 - 21 2013 recommendation, Para 57 b): State Party to provide access to justice and health care to all women with insecure immigration status, including asylum seekers until their return to their countries of origin.
 - 22 2013 recommendation, Para 59 a): State Party to continue to provide training on gender-sensitive approaches in the treatment of victims of violence to officers who are in charge of immigration and asylum applications.
 - 23 2013 recommendation, Para 57 a): State Party to extend the concession under the 'no recourse to public funds' policy.
 - 24 2013 recommendation, Para 45 c): State Party to step up career guidance activities to encourage girls to pursue non-traditional paths and improve the gender awareness of teaching personnel at all levels of the education system.
 - 25 2013 recommendation, para 45 d): State Party to take co-ordinated measures to encourage increased participation by girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and in apprenticeships.
 - 26 2013 recommendation, Para 45 a): State Party to consider introducing mandatory age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive rights in school curricula, including issues such as gender relations and responsible sexual behaviour, targeting adolescent girls in particular.
 - 27 2013 recommendation, Para 45 b): State Party to enhance measures to prevent, punish and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls, including bullying and expressions of racist sentiments in educational institutions.
 - 28 2013 recommendation, Para 47 b): State Party to continue to take proactive and specific measures to eliminate occupational segregation and to narrow the gender pay gap.
 - 29 2013 recommendation, Para 59 b): State Party to take targeted measures to facilitate the access of black and ethnic minority women to the labour market in order to alleviate their concentration in low-paid jobs.

- ³⁰ 2013 recommendation, Para 47 c): State Party to create greater opportunities for women with disabilities to gain access to employment.
- ³¹ 2013 recommendation, Para 49: State Party to provide affordable childcare and to mitigate the impact of the proposed reforms to the welfare system on the cost of childcare for low-income families and the increased burden of care that this places on women.
- ³² 2013 recommendation, Para 47 a): State Party to step up its efforts to promote the use of flexible working arrangements and introduce shared parental leave to encourage men to participate equally in childcare responsibilities
- ³³ 2013 recommendation, Para 53 c): State Party to provide equal access to reproductive treatment for all women in Northern Ireland, without discrimination.
- ³⁴ 2013 recommendation, Para 51: State Party should expedite the amendment of the anti-abortion law in Northern Ireland with a view to decriminalizing abortion. The State Party should also ensure that legal abortion covers not only cases of threats to the life of a pregnant woman but also other circumstances, such as threats to her health and in cases of rape, incest and serious malformation of the foetus.
- ³⁵ 2013 recommendation, Para 53 a): State Party to strengthen the implementation of programmes and policies aimed at providing effective access to healthcare for women, especially women with disabilities, older women, women seeking asylum and Traveller women.
- ³⁶ 2013 CO – recommendation, Para 61 a): State Party to step up efforts to eliminate discrimination against ethnic minority women and improve access to social services, including health care, education and employment.
- ³⁷ 2013 recommendation, Para 53 b): State Party to pay special attention to the health needs of women with disabilities, ensuring their access to prenatal care and all reproductive health services.
- ³⁸ 2013 recommendation, Para 55 c) State Party to improve the provision of mental health care in all prisons.
- ³⁹ 2013 recommendation, Para 21: State Party to mitigate the impact of austerity measures on women and the services provided to women, especially women with disabilities and older women. It should also ensure that spending reviews continuously focus on measuring and balancing the impact of austerity measures and women’s rights. It should further review the policy of commissioning services wherever this may undermine the provision of specialized services for women.
- ⁴⁰ 2013 recommendation, Para 49: State Party to provide affordable childcare and to mitigate the impact of the proposed reforms to the welfare system on the cost of childcare for low-income families and the increased burden of care that this places on women.
- ⁴¹ 2013 recommendation, Para 63: State Party to adopt measures to prevent the potential exploitation of the Universal Credit system by an abusive male spouse.
- ⁴² 2013 recommendation, Para 61 b): State Party to provide adequate sites designated for use by Traveller women and members of their families.
- ⁴³ 2013 recommendation, Para 23: State Party: a) To ensure effective access by women, in particular women victims of violence, to courts and tribunals; b) To continuously assess the impact of the reforms of legal aid on the protection of women’s rights; c) To protect women from informal community arbitration systems, especially those that violate their rights under the Convention.
- ⁴⁴ 2013 recommendation, Para 47 e): State Party to ensure access by women to justice in employment-related cases, including those pertaining to discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and motherhood.
- ⁴⁵ 2013 recommendation, Para 25: State Party: a) To extend the mandate of the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry to include women who entered the Magdalene Laundries at the age of 18 years and above; b) To provide adequate redress to all victims of abuse who were detained in the Magdalene Laundries and similar institutions.
- ⁴⁶ 2013 recommendation, Para 27: State Party to: a) To consider the recommendations made by Lord Carloway regarding the removal of the corroboration requirement in criminal cases relating to sexual offences.
- ⁴⁷ 2013 recommendation, Para 27: b) To extend the limitation period for filing civil claims involving sexual abuse, especially of girls, so that victims can still initiate proceedings when they are adults.
- ⁴⁸ 2013 recommendation, Para 35 a): State Party to criminalise forced marriage
- ⁴⁹ 2013 recommendation, Para 65: State Party to expedite efforts to undertake reforms with a view to protecting the property rights of women upon the breakdown of marriage or of de facto unions, in line with general recommendations No. 29 on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution, and article 16 of the Convention.
- ⁵⁰ 2013 recommendation, Para 35 e): State Party to revise its legislation to prohibit corporal punishment of children in the home.
- ⁵¹ 2013 recommendation, Para 35 c): To continue public campaigns to raise awareness of all forms of violence against women, including black and ethnic minority women.

- ⁵² 2013 recommendation, Para 35 d): To step up efforts to train police officers in order to eliminate prejudices concerning the credibility of victims of domestic violence
- ⁵³ 2013 recommendation, Para 37: State Party should ensure the full implementation of its legislation on female genital mutilation. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that the Crown Prosecution service is provided with support necessary to effectively prosecute perpetrators of this offence, including by supporting the action plan on improving prosecutions for female genital mutilation released by the Director of Public Prosecutions in November 2012.
- ⁵⁴ 2013 recommendation, Para 35 b): State Party to increase its efforts to protect women, including black and ethnic minority women, against all forms of violence, including domestic violence and so-called 'honour killings'
- ⁵⁵ 2013 recommendation, Para 35 a): State Party to ratify the Istanbul Convention.