



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under
article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms
of Discrimination against Women**

Sixth periodic report of States parties

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*

* The present report is being issued without formal editing.

For the initial report submitted by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, see CEDAW/C/5/Add.52 which was considered by the Committee at its ninth session. For the second periodic report submitted by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, see CEDAW/C/UK/2 which was considered by the Committee at its twelfth session. For the third periodic report submitted by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, see CEDAW/C/UK/3 and its addenda (Add.1 and Add.2) which were considered by the Committee at its twenty-first session. For the fourth periodic report submitted by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, see CEDAW/C/UK/4 and its addenda (Add.1, Add.2, Add.3 and Add.4) which were considered by the Committee at its twenty-fourth session. For the fifth periodic report submitted by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, see CEDAW/C/UK/5 and its addenda (Add.1 and Add.2).



**UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE
ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN**

**6th PERIODIC REPORT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF
GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND**

MAY 2007

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Note by the Secretariat: Annexes to the report will be provided to the Committee in the language in which they were received.

I. Foreward

We are delighted, as Ministers for Women, to present the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women with the UK's 6th periodical report, outlining the measures that this Government has taken since 2003 to eliminate discrimination against women.

This is an issue that is close to the heart of this Labour Government and, as you will see when you read the report, we have been working hard on a number of fronts to improve the lives of women.

We have, for instance, introduced a huge number of legislative changes since 2003, including the Equality Act 2006, which introduces a new Gender Equality Duty. This requires all Public Authorities to actively promote equality of opportunity between men and women and carry out gender impact assessments for all future policy and legislation. It will be a significant gender mainstreaming tool across the public sector.

The Act also paves the way for the Commission for Equality and Human Rights to come into effect, a new body which will not only provide information and advice on all equality and diversity issues but will also be responsible for the promotion of human rights.

Through the Work and Families Act, we have greatly improved the statutory leave and pay available to pregnant women employees whilst introducing a new right for carers to request to work flexibly. And just recently, we extended protection against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation to include the provision of goods and services.

Again on the legislative front, we are pleased to report that the Government has recently decided to adopt gender neutral language as far as possible when drafting primary legislation. We believe that this practice has reinforced gender stereotypes in the past, something that this Government is working hard to resist.

We would draw your attention to the extensive pension reforms which we have introduced, many of which are of direct benefit to women. Also to the strategic approach that we have adopted in tackling violence against women, in all its forms, with national action plans published for all major strands of work and significant legislative improvements. In particular we highlight the success of our specialist domestic violence courts which have managed to secure up to a 71 conviction rate in recorded cases of domestic violence.

We recognise that we still have a long way to go before achieving equality for women, but remain committed to making further progress. We are, for instance, still concerned about the extent of the pay gap (which we have reduced by 4.8 per cent since coming to power in 1997), but it is still too high at 12.6 per cent (full-time median and 17.2 per cent using the mean). The Prime Minister set up the Women and Work Commission in 2004 to investigate the pay and opportunities gap for women. As a result of its report, published in February 2006, the

Government is currently working on a wide range of initiatives to further reduce the pay gap with a particular focus on the part-time pay gap.

As Ministers for Women, we are uniquely placed to ensure that the Government has a gender equality perspective at a strategic level. We sit on a range of cabinet committees, so we can ensure that issues which have significant implications for women are taken into account through policy development and the delivery of services.

In order to help get the extent of our work into perspective, we have written a short summary (see overleaf) of the significant Government achievements since 2003. We hope you find this useful.

II. Introduction

1. This sixth CEDAW report summarises the main legislative, judicial and administrative measures undertaken by the Government since the submission of the fifth report in 2003. It is a detailed overview of action taken and progress achieved, reflecting our commitment to bring about greater equality for women in Great Britain and Northern Ireland in both the public and private sectors.
2. The report has been compiled by the Women and Equality Unit, in close collaboration with officials from every Government department, including the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and the overseas territories. It has also been assisted by input from a number of other agencies, in particular the Equal Opportunities Commission, as well as benefiting from our liaison with the Women's National Commission and through them the network of women's non-Governmental organisations. We very much value our relationship with these bodies in enabling us to incorporate women's views and due consideration is given to the WNC's shadow CEDAW report, alongside all thematic reports submitted.
3. In line with the 70 page limit and CEDAW Committee recommendations, we have not included baseline information on measures to eliminate discrimination against women. Instead we have focussed on detailing only the most significant initiatives adopted since 2003 and the reader is encouraged to refer to the Annex for more details, as well as to previous reports for a fuller picture of action taken by the UK over a longer period of time.
4. It is clear this Government has introduced a significant range of measures between 2003 and 2007, reflecting its commitment to implementing the articles of the Convention, as well as the actions outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action and Beijing +5. We are also fully committed to participating at the Convention on the Status of Women in order to drive this agenda forward, specifically within the 12 critical areas of concern. In particular our acceptance of the CEDAW optional protocol will enable all women in the UK, or their representatives, to appeal to the Committee if they believe that they have been victims of violations of CEDAW.

5. We understand, however, that in themselves, individual actions and measures are not enough to bring about the step changes necessary to mainstream gender equality – the ultimate goal – which is why many of the changes described in the report are being made at a strategic level.

6. Much has moved on in the last four years and the following summary provides an outline of developments in a number of key areas.

III. Summary

Gender mainstreaming to eliminate discrimination against women

Ministers for Women

7. The importance the Government places on eliminating discrimination against women is demonstrated by the appointment of Ministers for Women, currently the Rt. Hon. Ruth Kelly MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Meg Munn MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Deputy Minister for Women and Equality. Ministers for women have a specific role, to raise awareness across Government of the need to, and benefits of, addressing gender inequalities. This involves the Ministers sitting on a broad range of Cabinet Committees covering areas such as Public Health, Children's Policy, Ageing Policy, Asylum and Migration, Violence Against Women and Communities to make sure that the needs and interests of women are fully taken into account in a strategic way when national policies and programmes of action are being developed.

8. This is crucial to ensure that gender equality becomes an increasingly mainstream consideration in the work of all Government departments, at every level. For example, that departments routinely consider the implications that introducing a certain policy might have on women. The Government has recently introduced a number of measures, such as the Gender Equality Duty, which will further assist all Public Authorities in achieving this goal.

Gender Equality Duty

9. Introduced in April 2007 as part of the Equality Act 2006, the Gender Equality Duty imposes a statutory duty on Public Authorities (PAs) to promote equality between men and women in everything they do, and to pay "due regard" to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment between men and women. The new duty basically requires PAs to think differently about how they carry out their public functions and how these could be improved through systematic screening of everything they do. That includes drawing up and publishing three year gender equality schemes detailing specific goals, as well as gender impact assessments of all new policy and legislation, including employment and service delivery changes.

10. In complying with the duty, PAs must fully consult with employees and stakeholders and demonstrate through their actions, their commitment to gender equality. Underpinning the duty, will be the need to disaggregate data by gender, in order to identify areas of concern. The Equal Opportunities Commission will be responsible for enforcing the duty until October 2007, when the Commission for Equality and Human Rights will take over.

Addressing discrimination holistically

Commission for Equality and Human Rights

11. Gender equality is not easy to achieve and a few years ago, the Government decided it was not satisfied with the progress that was being made. It recognized that the world of the sixties and early seventies, when the original equal opportunities and race commissions were set up, was very different from the world at the beginning of the 21st century.

12. It now faced a world of changing demographics, changing patterns of migration, multiple identities, faiths and cultures and changing relationships between men and women, as well as a variety of family formations. This meant that it needed to look again at the barriers that cause disadvantage and ways to deal with difference. In particular, it needed a completely new framework in order to address today's challenges.

13. So after much consultation, the Government set up the Commission for Equality and Human Rights which will come into being in October this year. It replaces the existing gender, race and disability equality Commissions and takes on additional responsibilities for discrimination on the grounds of age, faith or belief, and sexual orientation as well as human rights. It will be in a unique position to help Britain respond to the challenges facing it in the 21st century.

14. This new body will harness the considerable expertise within the existing Commissions, as well as ensure continuity between their current programmes of work and those the CEHR will take forward. To this end, a transitional Commissioner from each of the current bodies, including the EOC will sit on the board of the CEHR and remain in post for up to two years.

Closing the gender pay gap

15. When measuring the UK gender pay gap, the Government uses the median methodology rather than the mean, as the mean can be influenced by extreme values and skewed distribution of earnings data. The median is a value at which 50 per cent of employees fall above and 50 per cent fall below, and is therefore not influenced by extreme values. As a result, the Office of National Statistics in the UK recommends use of the median figures. For consistency with domestic policy, we will therefore use the median figure throughout this report, however, we will also use the mean to enable direct comparison with the last report and other European Union member states.

Examining the causes of the pay gap to find ways of addressing it — Women and Work Commission

16. Since the Equal Pay Act came into effect in 1975, the full-time mean pay gap has narrowed from 30 per cent to around 20 per cent in 2002 (as detailed in the last report) and then to around 17 per cent in 2006. Using the median, this equates to 15.5 per cent in 2002 to 12.6 per cent in 2006. However, this is still far too high. So in 2004 the Prime Minister decided

to ask Baroness Prosser to chair an independent review, the Women and Work Commission, to examine the causes of the gender and opportunities gap and to find practical ways of closing it.

17. The Commission presented its report, *Shaping a Fairer Future*, to the Prime Minister in February 2006. Based on a thorough analysis of all the available evidence, the Commission estimated that increasing women's participation in the labour market and in higher paid occupations and roles could be worth up to 2 per cent of Gross Domestic Product a year to the UK economy. The Ministers for Women agreed an action plan in September 2006 to address these recommendations.

Taking forward Women and Work Commission recommendations

18. The Government has already made significant progress in a number of areas and published a One Year On report at the end of March 2007, highlighting progress on the recommendations and commenting on their effectiveness. So far initiatives include:

- introducing a £500k fund to support initiatives to increase the availability of quality, part-time work ;
- setting up a programme of exemplar initiatives by employers (100 already signed up), which requires employers to give a clear commitment to reducing the gender pay gap through a range of projects;
- investing £10m over the next two years in the Women and Work Sector Pathways initiative;
- establishing the Women's Enterprise Task Force to provide high-profile leadership to help develop women's enterprise, including pilot regional Women's Enterprise Units to encourage the start-up and growth of female-owned businesses;
- pilots to deliver level 3, (roughly equivalent to Advanced levels), Skills for Women announced in the 2006 Budget;
- provided support for Equality Representatives through the Union Modernisation Fund;
- developing an "equality check" – a light touch tool that employers can use to identify the issues that require action to ensure equality; and
- requiring that in complying with the Gender Equality Duty, all PAs must consider whether one of their objectives should address equal pay issues or causes of the gender pay gap.

Action taken by Government departments

19. In 2003 all 88 Government departments and agencies completed equal pay reviews and action plans. Departments are being further encouraged to review their pay systems following implementation of pay awards and to carry out equality proofing of their reward policies and practices every three years.

20. The number of women in top management posts in the civil service increased from 22.9 per cent in 2003 to 25.5 per cent in April 2005, exceeding the first Gender Equality Public Sector Agreement (PSA) target of 25 per cent. A new target of 30 per cent by 2008 was set in the current Gender Equality PSA (the latest figure for October 2006 is 26.8 per cent) and the Government is currently reviewing what action it can take to drive progress more quickly. It has already set in train a number of initiatives at both corporate and departmental level to meet its goals.

The National Minimum Wage

21. The National Minimum Wage also plays a part in narrowing the gender pay gap, so the Government has introduced a strategy of targeted enforcement in certain low paying sectors, as well as increasing the amount to £5.52 per hour from October 2007.

Helping women with caring responsibilities

Family-friendly employment policies

22. The Government is committed to helping mothers and fathers balance work and family life. It therefore introduced a number of rights in 2003, and subsequently in 2006 as part of the Work and Families Act:

- since April 2003, parents of children aged under 6 or parents of disabled children aged under 18 have had the right to apply to work flexibly, and employers have had a duty to consider such requests seriously;
- this right was extended to carers of adults from 6 April 2007;
- from October 2006 maternity leave for all employed mothers with babies due on or after 1 April 2007 was increased from 26 weeks to a full year regardless of their length of service;
- statutory maternity pay and Maternity Allowance were extended from 26 to 39 weeks for women whose expected week of childbirth was on or after 1 April 2007;

- since April 2003 adopters have had the right to 52 weeks' adoption leave, and from October 2006 statutory adoption pay was extended from 26 to 39 weeks in respect of children whose expected date of placement was on or after 1 April 2007;
- since April 2003 qualifying employees have also benefited from two weeks' paid paternity leave in the time around which their partner gives birth to a child;
- the Work and Families Act 2006 contains powers to give eligible fathers a new entitlement to an additional period of paternity leave (up to 26 weeks) which may be paid if his partner returns to work early. The Government intends to deliver this new entitlement before the end of the current UK Parliament.

23. In 2002, just 9 per cent of mothers took six months' maternity leave, with 5 per cent taking one year or more. By 2005, these figures had increased to half of mothers taking six months and a further 14 per cent taking a full year. The proportion of mothers returning to work 17 months after of the birth of their child has remained unchanged between 2002 and 2005 at around 80 per cent. However, in 2002, 41 per cent of mothers returned to a different employer. By 2005, this had dropped to just 20 per cent.

Providing universal high quality, affordable childcare — Ten Year Childcare Strategy

24. The Government wants to give all children the best possible start in life, whilst supporting parents who work, study or train. It believes that parents should have choice in how they balance earning and caring, paid and unpaid work. In other words, it understands that a modern family policy has to be about both childcare provision for children and time for parents to spend with their children.

25. As a result, the Government published its Ten Year Childcare Strategy in December 2004 which made a commitment to deliver universal affordable childcare for 3 to 14 year olds; and a Sure Start Children's Centre for every community. The Sure Start programme is a cornerstone of the Government's drive to tackle child poverty and social exclusion, by improving the health and well being of young children and families before and from birth, so children flourish at home and when they go to school.

Holistic integrated services and information through Sure Start Children's Centres

26. Sure Start Children's Centres are places where children under 5 years old and their families can receive holistic integrated services and information, and where they can access help from multi-disciplinary teams of professionals. Well over 1,000 Sure Start Children's Centres were in place by December 2006, offering services to around 838,000 young children and their families. By 2008, there will be 2,500 of them across England. Sure Start provision formed an important cornerstone of the Gender Equality Public Service Agreement, (discussed in the main body of this report), and exceeded all of the targets set within it, ahead of schedule.

27. In terms of childcare places, the Government doubled the stock of registered places compared to 1997 (over 1.28 million places) by September 2006. In effect, that meant that it created about 644,000 officially registered childcare places. It has committed itself to funding a childcare place for all children between 3 and 14 by 2010, when there will be over 2 million childcare places for children up to 14.

Legislating to give statutory force to the Ten Year Childcare Strategy — Childcare Act 2006

28. The Childcare Act 2006 gave statutory force to the key commitments of the Ten Year Childcare Strategy. It puts the needs of children and their parents at its heart, with local authorities as their champions, ensuring families' views are heard in the planning and delivery of services. It also enshrines in law, a parent's expectation that high quality childcare will be available for all those who want to work.

Tackling the pensions gender pay gap

Reforming the pensions system — the Pensions Commission and Pensions Bill

29. The Pensions Commission was set up by the Government in 2002 to review the UK's pension system. It was explicitly asked to address the problems facing people with interrupted paid work records and caring responsibilities, in particular women.

30. It reported in November 2005. A year later the Government published the Pensions Bill which aims to:

- make it simpler and fairer for women and careers to build up a State Pension by recognising social contributions;
- make the State Pension more generous by restoring the link to earnings for the basic State Pension; and increase the State Pension Age to make the changes affordable.

Increasing the numbers of women entitled to a full basic State Pension

31. As a result of these reforms, about three quarters of women reaching State Pension age in 2010 will be entitled to a full basic State Pension in 2010, as opposed to the current 30 per cent. Without these reforms, only about half of women reaching State Pension age in 2010 would be entitled to a full basic State Pension. By 2025 over 90 per cent of women (and men) reaching State Pension age will be entitled to a full basic State Pension - almost half a million extra women.

Assisting carers to build better pensions

32. Pension reform proposals include a comprehensive package to help more carers, most of whom are women, build better pensions. For example:

- we are reducing the number of qualifying years needed for a full basic State Pension to 30 years for those reaching State Pension age from 2010 and providing more obvious recognition of caring and parenting; and
- from 2010 a new weekly credit will become available to those caring 20 hours or more a week for someone who is severely disabled; with more flexible, weekly credits for parents awarded Child Benefit until children turn 12 and approved foster carers.

Helping black and minority ethnic women

33. Some groups of ethnic minority women, particularly Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, are less likely to be building basic State Pension entitlement through earnings, than women on average. They may face cultural barriers to participating in paid work, but could be contributing in other ways through provision of childcare or care for elderly or severely disabled people. They are more likely to be building up entitlement through Home Responsibilities Protection which reduces the number of qualifying years required for a basic pension. However, currently, minimum contribution conditions must be met and an individual cannot build up basic State Pension entitlement through Home Responsibilities Protection or credits alone.

34. Under the reforms Home Responsibilities Protection will become a positive weekly credit and minimum contribution conditions will be removed. Just one qualifying year through either earnings or credits will build entitlement to the basic State Pension.

Guaranteeing a minimum weekly income — Pension Credit

35. Pension Credit, introduced in October 2003, is a key part of the Government's strategy for combating pensioner poverty. It particularly benefits women - nearly two thirds of people in receipt are women and about 60 per cent are single women. This is because women pensioners are currently less likely to have built up State Pension entitlement than men, and tend to have less private pension income. It ensures that from April 2007, no-one aged 60 or over need live on less than a guaranteed weekly income of £119.05 (£181.70 for couples). Under reform, Pension Credit will continue to help provide a safety net for the poorest pensioners who are unable to build up adequate pension provision.

Saving on top of the state pension — introduction of personal accounts

36. In December 2006, the Government set out proposals to make it easier for people to save for retirement. Personal accounts will help people to on top of the state pension through a low

cost flexible pension savings scheme with an employer contribution. This is likely to help many women who may have fragmented working histories, be in part-time work or on low pay and who may not have access to a suitable occupational pension scheme. Between 2.2 and 3.4 million women are estimated to be likely to participate in personal accounts.

Addressing violence against women

Strategic approach

37. The Government is aware that Violence Against Women is a complex social problem causing poverty, ill health, social exclusion and death and acknowledges that gender based violence is a fundamental abuse of women's human rights. The Deputy Minister for Women and Equality, supported by the Women and Equality Unit, works across Government to ensure that work on Violence Against Women is addressed strategically by actively participating in three inter-ministerial groups covering all aspects of Violence Against Women such as domestic violence, forced marriage, honour killings, female genital mutilation, sexual offending and rape, prostitution, and human trafficking. They provide a strong gender focus to work on all the groups by ensuring that a gender equality perspective is fully taken into account in a co-ordinated way across national policy and programme development.

38. These groups, which comprise Ministers from a number of key Government departments, their joined-up activities and supporting Action Plans ensure that the UK has a strategic approach on policy and in delivery of their services and initiatives. They bring together departments central to tackling Violence Against Women and provide high-level leadership and accountability, driving forward work and reviewing and monitoring progress.

Using the Gender equality duty and high level target setting

39. The Women and Equality Unit has also been raising awareness of how Violence Against Women can be addressed across Government, through monitoring and delivery groups of the Gender Equality Public Service Agreement which has a Violence Against Women indicator and through negotiations for a new cross-Government equality Public Service Agreement, led by Communities and Local Government. It has also been raising awareness of how the gender equality duty can be utilised to tackle Violence Against Women by holding targeted stakeholder events, such as with HM Treasury.

Violence against women Legislation

Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004)

40. The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004) saw the largest overhaul of domestic violence legislation for 30 years, providing additional protection and support for victims and helping bring perpetrators to justice. Provisions implemented include:

- common assault made an arrestable offence; and
- parity for same sex relationships within the Family Law Act.

41. Provisions to be implemented in July 2007 include:

- making the breach of non-molestation orders a criminal offence punishable by up to five year's imprisonment;
- extending the powers on restraining orders to cover all violent offences;
- providing the courts with the power to make an order where a person is charged, pending trial, or where a person is not convicted but the court considers an order necessary to protect the victim.

Sexual Offences Act (2003)

42. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 completely overhauled the legal framework for dealing with sexual offences. It widened the definition of some offences, bringing non-consensual penile penetration of the mouth within the definition of rape, and created new offences for behaviours that were not previously specifically covered, such as paying for sex with a child and voyeurism. It also extended the age of 'children' from 16 to 18 for certain offences against children (e.g. familial sex offences). The law was additionally reformed so that homosexual activity is treated the same as heterosexual activity.

43. Under the 2003 Act, exposure (previously seen as a public nuisance) is now categorised as a sexual offence. This is because research has indicated that exposure can form the early part of a spectrum of more serious offending, particularly where it occurs in isolated or enclosed places, which can leave the victim in fear of very serious harm. The aim is that this stronger legal framework will contribute to achieving more convictions, employed alongside the vulnerable witness provisions of the Youth and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 and the "bad character" provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003.

44. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 came into force on 1 May 2004. The Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Sexual Offending had previously agreed that a full analysis of the statistical data should be conducted and published after the Act had been in force for two years, but that this should be preceded by a more informal stock take, which was completed in 2005 and published in February 2006 (<http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/sexual/sexual24.pdf>).

Consultation

45. There are inherent difficulties in proving that illegal sexual activity took place to the standard required by the criminal law, particularly where only two people were present. This is

particularly the case with sexual activity between adults, which hinges on the question of consent. In March 2006 a consultation paper was published seeking views on a range of measures, including whether or not clarification was needed on the law of consent by introducing a legal definition of ‘capacity’, particularly where the consumption of alcohol has had an impact on the complainant’s capacity to consent to sexual activity. The responses to the consultation are currently being considered, and a summary of outcomes will be produced shortly.

Human Trafficking — the Sexual Offences Act and Council of Europe Convention

46. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 also introduced offences against trafficking people into, within and out of the country for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

47. In addition, on 23 March this year, the UK became a signatory to the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings. This builds on the Government’s strategy to combat human trafficking by setting minimum standards of protection and support for victims of all forms of trafficking. Implementation will be through close co-operation with NGOs and other key stakeholders and will be monitored by the Inter-Ministerial Group on Human Trafficking.

Forced Marriage - a civil, not a criminal, offence

48. Following a consultation in 2005 on whether to make forced marriage a specific criminal offence, the Government decided not to. In addition to exploring ways to make better use of existing legislation, civil remedies and the family courts, the Unit is working closely with Non-Governmental Organisations and other Government departments on new legislation to make forced marriage a civil offence

The Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Act 2003

49. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 came into force on 3 March 2004. The Act repeals and re-enacts previous legislation and closes a loop-hole by making it an offence for UK nationals or permanent residents to carry out FGM abroad or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal.

National VAW Action Plans/Strategies

Domestic Violence Delivery Plan

50. The Government’s National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan was published in March 2005 and updated in March 2006 and March 2007. It is a comprehensive cross-Government response to domestic violence including female genital mutilation, honour killings and forced marriage and provides the strategic framework for delivery. Its aims are to:

- reduce the number of domestic violence-related homicides;
- reduce the prevalence of domestic violence, particularly in high incidence areas;
- increase the rate that domestic violence is reported, particularly in high incidence areas;
- increase the rate of reported domestic violence offences that are brought to justice, particularly in high incidence areas and/or communities as well as in areas with high attrition rates; and
- ensure victims of domestic violence are adequately protected and supported nationwide.

51. The 2006 progress report can be accessed on: www.crimereduction.gov.uk/domesticviolence/domesticviolence61.pdf and the 2007 report on: www.crimereduction.gov.uk/domesticviolence/domesticviolence066.pdf.

Sexual Violence and Abuse Action Plan

52. The 2003 CEDAW report referred to the measures that were being implemented through the Rape Action Plan 2002 to improve the investigation and prosecution of rape. These have been taken forward in conjunction with the police and Crown Prosecution Service and a follow-up inspection of the way in which rape is investigated and prosecuted was published in January 2007. This was carried out to improve the prosecution of rape by the police and Crown Prosecution Service. The recommendations from the inspection are being taken forward through the cross-Government Sexual Violence and Abuse Action Plan (www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/Sexual-violence-action-plan), published in April 2007, with actions for both the police and Crown Prosecution Service.

United Kingdom and European Union Action Plan on Human Trafficking

53. On 23 March 2007 the Government published a UK Action Plan on Human Trafficking (www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/human-traffick-action-plan). This outlines current measures to tackle human trafficking and sets the direction for future work in the areas of prevention, enforcement/prosecutions and protection and assistance for adult and child victims.

54. During the UK's Presidency of the European Union in 2005, the Government made combating trafficking in human beings one of its Justice and Home Affairs priorities. It undertook a wide-ranging EU Action Plan on trafficking which was adopted unanimously in December 2005 by the Council of Ministers and was a major success of the UK Presidency.

Prostitution Strategy

55. The Government's strategy on prostitution, published in January 2006, challenges the view that street prostitution is inevitable. Instead, it focuses on disrupting sex markets by preventing individuals, particularly children and young people, from being drawn into prostitution; by helping those already involved to find routes out; and by ensuring those who control people in prostitution are brought to justice.

56. Key pieces of work this year that are linked to the strategy include the planned update to the Safeguarding Children Involved in Prostitution guidance and the provision of guidance and advice to dedicated support projects and local partnerships to improve access to drug treatment and other mainstream services.

Examples of Specific VAW Initiatives

Specialist Domestic Violence Courts

57. Following on from a series of specialist domestic violence (DV) court pilots, the Government realised that a specialist approach to DV could deliver real benefits by bringing more offenders to justice and putting the safety of victims at the heart of the process. It therefore developed the Specialist Domestic Violence Court Programme (SDVC) which forms the central plank of the national domestic violence action plan. There is now at least one specialist domestic violence court area in every region and in Wales, with Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) who are trained specifically in how to support victims. In December 2005 SDVCs managed to secure up to a 71 per cent conviction rate in recorded cases of domestic violence compared with 59 per cent for non-specialist courts. They have also contributed to a rise in successful outcomes nationally (guilty pleas, conviction after trial and proof in absence), which have increased from 46 per cent in December 2003 up to 65 per cent by December 2006.

Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Violence

58. As of autumn 2006 a Coordinated Community Response (CCR) to domestic violence has been developed across Government, building on the SDVC model, but relying on a broader use of IDVAs and Multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) to identify high risk victims and to ensure their safety. The CCR aims to coordinate services for the victim, perpetrator and any children.

Forced Marriage Unit

59. In 2005, the Home Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office launched a joint Forced Marriage Unit as a one-stop shop to develop policy, co-ordinate projects and give practical advice to people at risk of being forced into marriage. It handles approximately 300 cases a

year. The UK's embassies and High Commissions assist, rescue or repatriate about 200 people a year, about 85 per cent of whom are women.

UK Human Trafficking Centre

60. The UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKTC) was launched in October 2006. The first of its kind in Europe, it will become a centre of excellence for police in dealing with human trafficking. The Government is working with the UKTC, which has appointed a Victims' Co-ordinator to ensure that any enforcement action is victim focused and that identified victims are supported.

Shelter and Support Scheme for Trafficked Women

61. Since 2003 the Home Office and Eaves Housing for Women have developed and run a highly-regarded shelter and support scheme for adult female victims of trafficking into prostitution - The POPPY Project. 2006 saw a 2.4 million funding agreement to continue providing 25 crisis places for POPPY as well as 10 resettlement places and the first ever outreach service for victims of trafficking in the UK. 162 women have been supported to date.

Child Trafficking Steering Group

62. A Child Trafficking Steering Group has been established to raise police awareness of how to combat child trafficking. Joint work is underway between key agencies at principal entry ports to identify children at risk. Initiatives such as locating child protection police officers at ports have enabled greater joint working between the Immigration Service, social services and the police.

Investigation and prosecution of rape and sexual offences

63. To improve the prosecution of rape cases, the Crown Prosecution Service has appointed 520 specialist rape prosecutors who have received training on the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and related issues. Each CPS Area has a coordinator providing expertise to the Area specialists and who links up with other coordinators to share best practice. The CPS has also started accrediting counsel who prosecute rape cases. This requires them to attend a course on sexual offending, and then undergo a rigorous monitoring procedure. The number of successful prosecutions has since increased.

64. To improve the investigation of sexual violence cases, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) issued guidance in 2005 on investigating serious sexual offences. As a result, a national training programme for police is now under development.

Support for victims of sexual violence

65. The Government has provided around £7 million towards improving services for victims over the last three years. This includes:

- extending the network of Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) where victims of sexual assault can have a forensic examination, receive sexual health treatment and access counselling and support;
- supporting the sexual violence and abuse voluntary sector through the Home Office Victims Fund; and
- piloting and evaluating Independent Sexual Violence Advisors who provide vital advocacy services for victims of sexual violence and abuse.

VAW Research

Domestic violence

66. The Women and Equality Unit published research by Professor Sylvia Walby on the economic and social costs of domestic violence in September 2004. The research estimates the cost of domestic violence to services (Criminal Justice System, health, social services, housing, civil legal) as £3.1 billion and the cost to the economy as £2.7 billion. The methodology is based on the Home Office framework for costing crime and develops this to include the specific cost related to domestic violence. The estimate provides an additional financial perspective for examining the devastating consequences of domestic violence for society as well as victims, and is available on: www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/research/cost_of_dv_Report_sept04.pdf

Rape and Sexual Offending

67. Home Office research published in 2005 estimated the total cost of sexual offences committed in England and Wales in 2003-04 as nearly £8.5 billion, 23 per cent of the estimated total cost of crime against individuals and households, with each rape costing £76,000.

Human Trafficking

68. Home Office researchers have been undertaking innovative work on sizing UK organised crime markets and their associated harms. A full report on this study will be published in 2007; however, emerging findings suggest that at any one moment in time in 2003 there were in the region of 4,000 victims of trafficking for prostitution in the UK.

69. The study also attempts to monetise the social and economic costs of trafficking for prostitution in the UK. It conservatively estimates the total social and economic costs in 2003 to be around £1bn.

IV. Reservations to the Convention

70. Following a Government review of international human rights instruments, the UK decided to accept the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women optional protocol. This provides a right of individual petition for women UK citizens who believe they have personally been victims of violations of CEDAW, or to individual representatives of such victims to appeal to the United Nations CEDAW Committee. The Option Protocol was signed by the Foreign Secretary in December 2004.

71. The review also led to the withdrawal of the general reservation relating to immigration and modification of the general reservation relating to the Throne and the Armed Forces. The UK withdrew from paragraph A c) of the reservation the words “to the admission into or service in the Armed Forces of the Crown” and substituted the words: “any act done for the purpose of ensuring the combat effectiveness of the Armed Forces of the Crown” so that paragraph A c) of the UK’s reservation reads:

“In the light of the definition contained in Article 1, the United Kingdom’s ratification is subject to the understanding that none of its obligations under the Convention shall be treated as extending to the succession to, or possession and enjoyment of, the Throne, the peerage, titles of honour, social precedence or armorial bearings, or as extending to the affairs of religious denominations or orders or any act done for the purpose of ensuring the combat effectiveness of the Armed Forces of the Crown.”

V. Institutions promoting the advancement of women and gender equality

Women and Equality Unit

72. The Women and Equality Unit has lead responsibility within Government for policy on women, gender equality, sexual orientation and the co-ordination of equality. It forms part of the newly created Equalities Group within Communities and Local Government and underpins the Department’s commitment to create sustainable communities. WEU contributes to all three areas of work on:

- empowering people so that they have more control over their lives;
- creating economic and social opportunity, especially for the most disadvantaged; and
- building communities which are tolerant, cohesive and allow for fair delivery of the department’s policy and services.

73. The Ministers for Women are the Rt. Hon. Ruth Kelly MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Meg Munn MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Deputy Minister for Women and Equality. Supported by the WEU they are responsible for promoting and realizing the benefits of diversity in the economy and more widely. They develop policies relating to gender equality and ensure that work on equality across Government as a whole is coordinated. Baroness Andrews is spokesperson for equality in the House of Lords. Ministers and officials also work with devolved administrations on areas of joint responsibility.

74. The aim of the Unit is to reduce and remove barriers to opportunity for all. WEU works with officials across Government to bring about measurable improvements in the position of women that benefit society generally and to promote equality for all, particularly in the development and delivery of Government policy and services. Specific roles include:

- leading the development of a more integrated approach across Government and its bodies on equality to increase opportunities for all;
- leading on legislation in the equality areas where the Department has policy lead within Government, including prohibiting discrimination on grounds of religion or belief and sexual orientation in areas outside of employment, implementing the EU Gender Directive and taking forward a review of discrimination law with a view to bringing forward a Single Equality Bill;
- sponsoring other bodies (the Equal Opportunities Commission and Women's National Commission);
- working across Government to help align programmes of work so that they have the maximum impact on vulnerable women. In particular ensuring work on violence against women is addressed strategically (e.g. domestic violence, forced marriage, honour killings, sexual offending, rape, prostitution and human trafficking);
- taking forward work on equal pay, occupational segregation, promoting quality part-time work, non-traditional work experience, support for carers, civic participation and ensuring a focus on ethnic minority women is incorporated across workstreams;
- contributing to the development of new equality policies;
- promoting gender equality across Europe and Internationally ensuring the UK's voice is embedded within gender equality decision-making and our good practice is recognised. Integrate European and International work into core business objectives ensuring it informs domestic policy;
- taking responsibility for gender mainstreaming tools and gender initiatives across Government. These include the gender equality duty; the gender equality public service

agreement; Government action plan implementing women and work commission recommendations; supporting the Ministers for Women who sit on a broad range of high level Cabinet committees (see article 4 for more on mainstreaming).

Women's National Commission

75. The WNC was set up in 1969 as the official, independent advisory body giving the views of women to Government. It is an Advisory Non Departmental Public Body (ANDPB), fully funded by Government and able to comment freely on Government policy.

76. Since 2003, the WNC has facilitated regular meetings between women's organisations, Ministers and senior officials on issues including international trade, health, sport, fiscal policy, violence against women, migration and asylum policy, forced marriage, trafficking, women in public life, the gender pay gap, and gender impact analysis. This has helped to inform Government policy and to mainstream the gender perspective into policymaking. The WNC has held consultations and published the results in reports, on, for example, the issues facing Muslim women in the UK; on Government proposals for legislation on key issues facing women such as the new Commission on Equality and Human Rights; and on violence against women. The WNC also ran a series of internship programmes for young women, including one on leadership for Iraqi women, funded by the British Council.

77. The WNC has an expanded membership of over 500 women's organisations covering the whole of the UK, representing a unique vehicle for presenting women's views, needs, concerns and priorities to the Government. The WNC agrees its annual work programme with the Minister for Women and is accountable to the Minister for the achievement of targets and objectives.

78. It has a Chair and a Board of Commissioners who are appointed as part of the national public appointment system to ensure fairness and transparency. The WNC is located in Communities and Local Government alongside the Women and Equality Unit and is able to liaise with, and is consulted by the Unit, as well as other Government departments.

Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)

79. The EOC is the lead agency, with offices in England, Scotland and Wales, which works to eliminate sex discrimination in Britain. The organisation was established under the Sex Discrimination Act in 1975 as an independent statutory body with powers to:

- work towards the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of sex or marriage;
- promote equality of opportunity for women and men;

- keep the Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act under review; and
- provide legal advice and assistance to individuals who have been discriminated against.

80. The EOC is a Non-Departmental Public Body funded through grant-in-aid. Its sponsor department is the Women and Equality Unit in Communities and Local Government. Although independent of Government, the EOC is responsible to the Minister for Women.

81. Since 2003, the EOC has continued to actively promote equality and reduce discrimination by using its statutory powers to:

- support strategic legal cases and appeals. Of the 100 or so cases supported by the EOC over the last three years, the most significant include - *Igen Ltd v Wong* (2005); *Cadman v HSE* (2006); *Alabaster v Woolwich Building Society* (2005); *Fletcher & Others v NHS Students Grant Unit* (2005). See Annex one for more details;
- carry out legal investigations into public and private sector bodies where there were concerns about their discriminatory practice. Since July 2005 the EOC has carried out 42 preliminary assessments which led to 9 formal agreements with large organisations, employing in excess of 100,000 employees, as well as several major public bodies including the Royal Mail, the Ministry of Defence (see article 8) and the Armed Services. See Annex one for more details;
- research and influencing to drive forward the equality agenda. Between 2004 and 2006 the EOC undertook five statutory General Formal Investigations (GFIs) into the main factors behind the pay gap. All the background research reports and publications can be found on the EOC web site: www.eoc.org.uk. The five GFIs are:
 - occupational segregation of men and women in training and work (2003-5). As a result the Government is now taking action in a number of different ways to open up more choice and opportunity to girls and women both in schools and the workplace;
 - pregnancy dismissal and discrimination (2003-5).). This highlighted the degree of discrimination against pregnant women in the workplace. As a result the Government is now ensuring that women and their employers have more information about their rights and responsibilities; and has said in the Work and Families Act 2006 that employers can ask women to indicate their return dates from maternity leave;
 - flexible and part time working (2004-5). As a result the Government has extended the right to request flexible working to carers in the Work and Families Act 2006;

- transformation of work (2005-7). The interim report was published in January 2007 and Government will respond in due course;
- participation, pay and progression of ethnic minority women (2005-7). The final report was published in March 2007 and the Government will respond in due course.
- See Annex one for more details.
- press Government on its own programme of work. In particular, building support for the Work and Families Act 2006, the reform of pensions legislation, negotiating with Government to change the Jobseeker's Allowance Regulations to extend the period before starting employment from 48 hours to one week; and campaigning successfully for the introduction of the gender equality duty on all public bodies from April 2007. As the body responsible for the promotion and enforcement of this legislation, the EOC is producing statutory and non-statutory guidance for the public sector. See Annex one for more details.

82. The EOC will cease to exist in October 2007, when its functions and responsibilities will be taken over by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights.

Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR)

83. Since the publication of the 5th Periodic Report, which outlined the programme to develop a Single Equality Body, a wide ranging consultation has been undertaken with key stakeholders, including women's NGOs on the equality challenges for the future. In October 2007, a single statutory equality Commission, the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, will be launched. It will take over the functions and responsibilities of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), and take on new responsibilities for discrimination on the grounds of age, faith or belief, and sexual orientation.

84. A transitional Commissioner from each of the existing commissions, including the EOC, will sit on the board of the CEHR. They will be charged with ensuring continuity in the programmes of the CEHR and its predecessor bodies. The transitional commissioners will remain in post for two years after the dissolution of the existing commissions.

85. It will also have responsibility for promotion of human rights as well as encouraging good relations between groups of people in society. The new Commission will be able to:

- provide information, advice and assistance on equality and diversity (including matters relating to gender equality), human rights and good relations issues across the board;
- issue guidance and good practice that will help employers and service providers in the private and public sectors, voluntary organizations and trade unions embrace equality and human rights;

- conduct formal inquiries where there are persistent inequalities, human rights or good relations issues that need highlighting; and formal investigations where there is evidence of unlawful discrimination;
- give strategic support to individuals with anti-discrimination claims, to intervene in cases where equality and human rights arguments need to be made, and judicially review decisions that contravene human rights or equality legislation and where necessary provide conciliation;
- consult all stakeholders in the formation of its strategic plan;
- publish a 'state of the nation' report every three years showing where Britain is failing on equality and human rights, desired outcomes to work towards and benchmarks for progress;
- monitor all hate crime including elder abuse and hate crime against disabled people;
- challenge prejudice against and stereotyping of particular groups;
- establish a regional presence that will address issues relevant to the daily lives of people at the grass roots level;
- promote good relations both within and between members of different communities, and use its regional network in these initiatives;
- provide grants to bodies working towards the objectives of the Commission; and
- establish a strong evidence base and understanding of discrimination to inform future policy development and best practice.

Northern Ireland

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

86. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is a non-departmental public body established under the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Commission works to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity for all and encourage good practice. The Commission has been given a wide range of powers and responsibilities, including advising and assisting complainants, investigation and enforcement, awareness raising and review of equality legislation.

The Northern Ireland Assembly

87. In the Good Friday Agreement, the Northern Ireland political parties affirmed the right of women to full and equal political participation. Following suspension of the devolved administration on 14 October 2002, the Government has continued to publish an annual Priorities and Budget document. In the 2006 – 08 document, one of the key strategic priorities set out was *A Society Based on Partnership, Equality, Inclusion and Mutual Respect*. All the policies were subject to High Level Impact Assessments which ensure that equality, good relations and New Targeting Social Need considerations are taken into account when developing policy proposals, including the rights of women.

Gender, Age and Sexual Orientation Equality Unit

88. The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's Office (OFMDFM) issued a gender equality strategy consultation document *Gender Matters* in September 2004 and the consultation responses were published in summer 2005. The final strategy was launched in December 2006 and focuses on promoting gender equality throughout the work of the Northern Ireland Departments. It will build upon their activities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and will provide a framework under which they can systematically tackle gender inequalities and give a wider picture of what they are doing to promote gender equality.

Scotland

Equality Unit

89. The primary role of the Equality Unit is to promote and extend the ownership of equality issues throughout the Executive and to champion the interests of equality groups. In 2005 the Scottish Executive established a mainstreaming equality team in the Equality Unit in order to take forward work on supporting and enabling Scottish Executive policy teams to embed equality considerations into their work. As part of the work programme to support the implementation of the public sector equality duties, the team developed an Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit (EQIA) which was made available to Scottish Executive staff in October 2006. All Scottish Executive policies which impact on people are expected to have been equality impact assessed across gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, faith and age. The team also organised a series of public sector duties and impact assessment briefings which were delivered to all Scottish Executive departments during 2006 and 2007. A website which contains a number of electronic resources for mainstreaming equality, including gender, was updated in 2006. The Portal to Resources in Mainstreaming Equality (PRIME) was re-launched in September 2006.

Equality Proofing the Budget and Policy Advisory Group (EPBPAG)

90. EPBPAG has been advising the Scottish Executive since 2001. Although the group looks across six equality strands, the focus has tended to be gender. The work to develop tools for a

gender analysis of the budget has been progressed through pilot work with the Scottish Executive's Health Department and with the Sport Division in the Scottish Executive's Education Department. The pilot projects were developed in line with an approach which initially sets out to explore and provide evidence of a public policy issue, and to then apply gender impact analysis to the policy and resource allocation process in respect of this issue. A report on this pilot was published in October 2006 and work is ongoing to implement the lessons learned from that work.

Scottish Women's Convention

91. The Executive has continued to fund the Scottish Women's Convention (set up in 2003) which provides opportunities for women to engage in debate about specific issues of concern and to influence policy decisions in Scotland. This work continues to allow us to disseminate information widely and provide a basis for consultation with women across the full range of the Scottish Executive's policy areas.

The Strategic Group on Women

92. The Strategic Group on Women was established in 2003 as a small, independent, short-duration group of individual women to examine what more the Executive should do to improve opportunities for women. The key issues identified by the group included: - employment and pay, childcare and other forms of caring, poverty and social exclusion, violence and safety, and influence and decision-making. Their report made recommendations for immediate, medium term, and long term action.

93. The Scottish Executive responded to the Strategic Group on Women's report in March 2004 and provided a further update on action in March 2006. As they had highlighted the need to engage with minority ethnic women, disabled women, older women, lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and women from different faith groups, a series of roundtable events was held in Scotland in 2005 and 2006 to further explore the recommendations of the Strategic Group on Women from these diverse perspectives.

94. In October 2006, the Scottish Executive also reconvened a meeting with many of the original members of the Strategic Group on Women as well as other women with an interest in this area, in order to reflect on the original recommendations and consider priorities for further action and change in the context of the gender duty and the recommendations of the UK Women and Work Commission. The group made a number of recommendations to the Scottish Executive which will be taken into account in the development and implementation of the Scottish Executive's gender equality scheme.

Wales

Strategic Equality and Diversity Unit

95. The role of the Strategic Equality and Diversity Unit is to provide support, advice and guidance on mainstreaming equality into the policies, strategies, programmes and practices of the Welsh Assembly Government. It liaises with internal and external groups to identify specific initiatives, including those around gender, to take forward. It has agreed to provide core funding for the Wales Women's National Coalition until 2008 as well as grant funding to support events celebrating International Women's Day.

Welsh Assembly

96. The Welsh Assembly Government has a statutory duty to "make appropriate arrangements with a view to securing that its functions are exercised with due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people" (Section 120 Government of Wales Act 1998).

97. Its commitment to equality of opportunity is emphasised throughout its key strategic documents including *Making the Connections*, *Spatial Plan*, and *Wales: A Better Country*. To support this, it produced a mainstreaming strategy in 2005-06 which is intended to ensure that not only will there be a retrospective annual report on progress on equality issues, but from 2007 onwards, forward looking equality action plans so that objectives and measures of success are set in place at the outset in the action plan, and reported on within the Annual Report.

Gender Equality Scheme

98. In April 2007 the general duty to promote equality of opportunity between men and women came into force in Wales. In June 2006 the Welsh Assembly Government held a series of engagement events around Wales to establish the key issues for men and women. This information has been used to help the Welsh Assembly Government develop its draft scheme which went out to consultation in January 2007. It was also discussed at a series of focus groups in February 2007.

Equality Champions

99. Equality Champions continue to be a key support to staff in the Departments. The role of Equality Champions was reviewed in 2006 at which time new guidance was issued requiring every Department to have a nominated Champion who has a seat on its management team. This will ensure equality is a key consideration in all business decisions.

Committee on Equality of Opportunity

100. The primary role of the National Assembly for Wales's Equality of Opportunity Committee is to audit the work which both the Welsh Assembly Government and the National Assembly for Wales have done to promote the principle that there should be equality for all people, as well as avoiding discrimination against any person on grounds of race, sex or disability.

101. During the past four years the Committee has taken a keen interest in the promotion of equality for women in Wales and the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of sex. It has received annual presentations from Chwarae Teg (a voluntary sector body, see article 11 for more details) on its work to support, develop and expand the role of women in the Welsh economy. In May 2004 the Committee identified the European Commission Report on equality between men and women 2004 for detailed scrutiny and subsequently wrote to the Commission to draw attention to key strategy documents on equality issues in Wales, in particular the Careers Strategy for Wales.

102. In October and November 2004 the Committee considered the Interim Report of the Childcare Working Group and fed its views to the Welsh Assembly Government Minister for Health and Social Services, as Chair of the Group. The Committee has continued to press the Welsh Assembly Government and UK Government to address gender pay inequalities in Wales.

103. In June 2005, the National Assembly for Wales re-established its Cross-Party Working Group on Equal Pay. The group's remit is to provide a scrutiny function for the work being taken forward by the Welsh Assembly Government in respect of the third phase of the Close the Pay Gap campaign, and to provide a steer for the work being taken forward as part of the campaign. The Committee continues to receive progress reports from the Minister for Equalities on the campaign.

104. In June and September 2006 the Committee scrutinised the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Public Authorities)(Statutory Duties) Order 2006 and unanimously agreed to recommend that the Assembly reject the legislation, which it felt did not go far enough to address the issue of equal pay. As a result the Secretary of State removed the Welsh bodies (public authorities operating wholly and exclusively in Wales) from the Order and the Welsh Assembly Government agreed to commence negotiations to secure a Transfer of Functions Order relating to the Gender Equality duty.

Article 1: Elimination of discrimination

105. The UK Government accepts the definition of discrimination set out in article 1 of the Convention and remains fully committed to the aim of eliminating discrimination against women where it can. The provisions set out in this report provide an indication of our continued determination to do so.

Article 2: Obligations to eliminate discrimination

Introducing gender neutral language for legislation

106. For many years primary legislation has been drafted in a way so that words referring to the masculine gender include the feminine. In practice this has meant that male pronouns have stood alone in contexts where a reference to women as well as men was intended, and also that words such as "chairman" have been used for offices capable of being held either by a man or by a woman. Many believe that this practice has a tendency to reinforce historic gender stereotypes.

107. Accordingly, from the beginning of the next Session of Parliament, the Government has agreed that this practice should cease. Parliamentary Counsel has therefore been asked to adopt a practice of gender-neutral drafting for Government Bills so far as it is practicable.

Legislation introduced or amended since the previous report

Equality Act 2006

108. The Equality Act 2006, which established the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, makes a number of significant changes to equality law in Britain. As far as gender equality is concerned, by far the most important is the introduction of a new public sector gender equality duty under Part 4 which from April 2007 amended the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act and required public authorities to actively promote equality of opportunity between women and men.

109. Part 2 of the Equality Act 2006 prohibits discrimination in Great Britain on grounds of religion or belief in the provisions of goods, facilities and services, management and disposal of premises, education and public functions. Enforcement is through the county court (sheriff court in Scotland), and remedies include the award of damages. Discrimination on those grounds in employment was prohibited through the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003.

110. Part 3 of the Act includes a power that allows the Government to prohibit sexual orientation discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services, management and disposal of premises, education, and the exercise of public functions by making Regulations. Parts 2, 3 and 4 of the Equality Act 2006 came into force in April 2007.

111. After it comes into existence (October 2007), the CEHR will exercise its duties in respect of discrimination on grounds of race, disability, gender, religion and belief, age and sexual orientation. The CEHR will, for example, monitor the effectiveness of, and enforce, the legislation, and will be able to undertake investigations in particular cases.

Gender Equality Duty — Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) Order 2006

112. The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) Order 2006 contains specific duties necessary to assist public authorities in their compliance with the new public sector duty on gender equality. From 6 April 2007, public authorities are required to:

- draw up and publish a gender equality scheme (by 30 April 2007) which should identify their gender equality objectives and show the steps that body are taking to implement them. Public authorities are also required to consider whether one of their objectives should address equal pay issues or causes of the gender pay gap;
- ensure that they assess the impact of new legislation by carrying out gender impact assessments on policies, employment and service delivery changes. These assessments must also be published.

113. In complying with the specific duties, public authorities must consult with employees and stakeholders when drawing up gender equality schemes and impact assessments and if tackling the causes of any gender pay gap; publish and be accountable in what they do; and finally through their actions, demonstrate their commitment to gender equality. The Equal Opportunities Commission will be responsible for enforcing the gender equality duty until October 2007, when the Commission for Equality and Human Rights will take over (see article 4 for more details).

EU Employment Directive 2000/78/EC

114. In Great Britain, the sexual orientation and religion or belief strands were implemented in December 2003 (see below). An additional period of three years was allowed for implementation of the age and disability provisions and the UK made use of this. The majority of the disability provisions were implemented on 1 October 2004 through regulations amending the Disability Discrimination Act and the remainder in September 2006 (see below). Regulations prohibiting age discrimination in employment and vocational training came into effect on 1 October 2006, except for those provisions relating to occupational pensions, which started on 1 December 2006 (see below). Similar provisions came into effect in Northern Ireland.

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

115. Introduced in December 2003, these regulations prohibit discrimination and harassment on grounds of religion or belief.

Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amendment) Regulations 2003 and Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Amendment) Regulations 2003

116. On 19 July 2003, regulations came into force amending the Equal Pay Act 1970 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 to take account of rulings of the European Court of Justice.

117. The equal pay regulations:

- extended the six-month time limit within which a woman must bring an equal pay claim before an employment tribunal in cases of ‘concealment’ and ‘disability’;
- extended the previous two-year limit on the period over which an employment tribunal could award back pay up to six years in England and Wales, and up to five years in Scotland. The back pay time limits can be extended in cases of ‘concealment’ and ‘disability’;
- introduced a new rule that enables equal pay claims to be brought during the period of a stable employment relationship or within six months of its end. Previously, separate equal pay claims had to be brought at the end of each individual contract.

118. The sex discrimination regulations:

- make it unlawful to discriminate against someone after the formal relationship with an employer has ended if the discrimination arises out of, and is closely connected to, that relationship;
- make Chief Officers of police liable for unlawful acts of sex discrimination committed by police constables against other police constables in the course of their employment.

119. On 28 April 2004, separate, but broadly corresponding, regulations came into operation in Northern Ireland. These were the Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 and the Sex Discrimination Order 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2004.

Employment Tribunals (Constitution and Rules of Procedure) (Amendment) Regulations 2004

120. These Regulations came into force on 1st October 2004 and added a new Schedule 6 to the main Regulations that contain the Rules of Procedure and apply to all tribunal cases involving the question of whether jobs are of equal value. They also make amendments to the main Regulations that are consequential to the addition of Schedule 6.

121. The key reforms are as follows:

- the use of new powers for the Presidents of the Employment Tribunals to appoint tribunal panels with specialist knowledge of equal value cases;
- standard orders requiring early exchange of factual information, with a requirement that the parties produce a written statement of agreed facts, setting out where they agree, as well as areas of disagreement;
- improvements to case management with the use of equal value hearings to set parameters, agree timetables and deal with delays and disagreements;
- more effective use of independent experts;
- reduction in the time spent on the cross examination and use of experts instructed by the parties at the hearing through early disclosure of written expert evidence and making greater use of written questions.

Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005

122. The 1976 Equal Treatment Directive (76/207/EEC) was amended by Directive 2002/73/EC. In Great Britain (GB), regulations implementing this Directive came into force on 1 October 2005 with implementing legislation coming into force in Northern Ireland on 5 October 2005.

123. The Directive updated the law covering equality between men and women in the workplace to take into account changes to the EU Treaty and developments in European case law since the original Equal Treatment Directive was published. UK law only required a few changes to conform, such as amending the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 to make explicit the fact that discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity leave and sexual harassment and harassment on the grounds of sex are unlawful. Previously the courts had to rely on case law.

Employment (Equality) Age Regulations 2006

124. The Employment (Equality) Age Regulations, which came into force on 1 October 2006, outlaw unjustified age discrimination in employment and vocational training. The Regulations protect workers of all ages and give important rights and responsibilities to employers and employees in Britain in terms of recruitment, promotion and training. Similar provisions also apply to Northern Ireland.

Work and Families Act 2006

125. The Work and Families Act provided the legislative basis for changes to statutory maternity and adoption pay and leave, a facility for fathers to take additional paternity leave

where a mother ends her maternity leave and returns to work, and for extension of the right to request flexible working.

126. Maternity and adoption leave and pay regulations came into effect on 1 October 2006, affecting mothers whose expected week of childbirth was on or after 1 April 2007 and adopters where the child is expected to be placed for adoption from that date. Provision is made for improved contact between employee and employer during leave; and the period of statutory pay rose from 26 to 39 weeks. Corresponding legislation has been introduced in Northern Ireland.

127. The right to additional paternity pay and leave will not be introduced before April 2009. The right to request flexible working was extended to carers of an adult spouse, partner, civil partner, near relative or an adult living at the same address from 6 April 2007 (see article 11 for more details).

Childcare Act 2006

128. The Childcare Act 2006 took forward and gave statutory force to the key commitments of the Government's Ten Year Childcare Strategy (see article 11). The Act enshrines in law a parent's expectation that high quality childcare will be available for all those who want to work.

Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004)

129. The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004) saw the biggest overhaul of domestic violence legislation for 30 years. It includes a range of measures that, once enacted, will provide additional protection and support for victims and help to bring perpetrators to justice.

130. The following provisions have already been implemented:

- common assault made an arrestable offence so that police do not have to rely on 'power of arrest' section being attached to injunction orders¹ (January 2006);
- amending the eligibility criteria in the Family Law Act so that same sex relationships are treated in the same way and to offer the same level of protection to people in relationships who are not living together (via the Civil Partnership Act 2004 , s82, Sch 9).

131. To be implemented in July 2007:

- Section 1 will make the breach of non-molestation orders made under the Family Law Act 1996 a criminal offence punishable by up to five year's imprisonment;

¹ This section has been repealed by the Serious Organised Crime Police Act 2005, subject to the necessary conditions being met.

- Section 12 extends the powers on restraining orders under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 to cover all violent offences. It also provides the courts with the power to make an order where a person is charged, pending trial, or where a person is not convicted but the court considers that it is necessary to make an order to protect the victim. The benefit is that a court may make a restraining order even if a defendant has been acquitted of other charges but the court considers there is sufficient evidence of harassment that it is necessary to protect a person from harassment by the defendant.

Criminal Justice Act 2003

132. This Act contains helpful provisions relating to hearsay evidence and bad character. A defendant's bad character is admissible in criminal proceedings on the basis that it is relevant to an important matter in issue between the defendant and the prosecution. For example where the issue is one of credibility, then previous convictions for perjury in relation to evidence given in a previous domestic violence related case would be very relevant.

133. Evidence of bad character is also admissible to show that a defendant has a propensity to either commit offences 'of the kind with which he is charged' or 'offences of the type charged'. This provision would permit evidence of previous sex offences or domestic violence convictions or convictions for offences of a similar type (even if not for sex or domestic violence). The hearsay provisions have also been clarified, with the court being encouraged to take a more 'inclusionary' approach.

134. The Act sets out the circumstances in which evidence of a victim is admissible where they are unavailable through fear or due to their bodily or mental condition. Previous inconsistent statements or earlier statements of the victim can be admitted in certain circumstances. There is also provision for witnesses to refresh their memories in the witness box.

Sexual Offences Act 2003

135. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 completely overhauled the legal framework for dealing with sexual offences. It widened the definition of some offences, bringing non-consensual penile penetration of the mouth within the definition of rape, creating new offences for behaviour that were not previously specifically covered (such as paying for sex with a child and voyeurism), and extending the age of 'children' from 16 to 18 for certain offences against children (e.g. familial sex offences). It also introduced offences against trafficking people into, within and out of the country for the purposes of sexual exploitation. The law was also reformed so that homosexual activity is not treated differently from heterosexual activity.

136. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, exposure (previously seen as a public nuisance) is categorised as a sexual offence. Research has indicated that exposure can form the early part of a spectrum of more serious offending, particularly where it occurs in isolated or enclosed places, which can leave the victim in fear of very serious harm. It is hoped that this stronger legal framework will contribute to achieving more convictions, employed alongside the

vulnerable witness provisions of the Youth and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 and the “bad character” provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 (see above).

137. However, there are inherent difficulties in proving that illegal sexual activity took place to the standard required by the criminal law, particularly where only two people were present. This is particularly the case with sexual activity between adults, which hinges on the question of consent. In addition to creating a stronger legal framework, there were other reasons for modernising the law, which previously protected boys and girls to different ages and with offences that attracted differing maximum penalties.

138. In March 2006 a consultation paper was published seeking views on a range of measures, including whether or not clarification was needed on the law of consent by introducing a legal definition of ‘capacity’, particularly where the consumption of alcohol has had an impact on the complainant’s capacity to consent to sexual activity. The responses to the consultation are currently being considered, and a summary of outcomes will be produced shortly.

139. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 came into force on 1 May 2004. The Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Sexual Offending had previously agreed that a full analysis of the statistical data should be conducted and published after the Act had been in force for two years, but that this should be preceded by a more informal stock take, which was completed in 2005 and published in February 2006 (<http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/sexual/sexual24.pdf>).

The Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Act 2003

140. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 came into force in March 2004. The Act repeals and re-enacts previous legislation and closes a loop-hole by making it an offence for UK nationals or permanent residents to carry out FGM abroad or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal. See article 12. **Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings**

141. The Prime Minister announced the UK’s intention to sign the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings at the end of January 2007. Implementation will occur in close co-operation with NGOs and other key stakeholders and will be monitored by the Inter-Ministerial Group on Human Trafficking (see article 6 for details).

Northern Ireland

Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002

142. In Northern Ireland, legislative provisions corresponding mainly to Part I of the Employment Act 2002 (statutory leave and pay, maternity, paternity and adoption are contained in the Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002. Provisions corresponding mainly to Parts

II,III and IV of the Act (tribunal reform, dispute resolution, equal pay questionnaires) are contained in the Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

Equal Pay (Questions and Replies) Order (Northern Ireland) 2004

143. This Order, which came into operation on 25 August 2004, prescribes forms which may be used in equal pay cases in NI.

Scotland

Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003

144. This Act substantially increased the penalties for taking and distributing indecent images of children and possession of these images to 10 years and 5 years respectively.

Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Order 2006

145. The Equality Act 2006 also outlined how Scottish Ministers may impose specific duties upon relevant public authorities in Scotland in order to ensure that they may better comply with the general duty. As such, from 9 April 2007 Scottish public authorities are required to:

- draw up and publish a gender equality scheme (by 29 June 2007) which should identify their gender equality objectives and show the steps that body are taking to implement them. Public authorities are also required to consider whether one of their objectives should address equal pay issues or causes of the gender pay gap;
- ensure that they assess the impact of new legislation, policies, employment and service delivery changes. These assessments must also be published;
- draw up and publish an equal pay statement (by 28 Sept. 2007) which sets out that authority's policy on equal pay.

146. In addition, Scottish Ministers will be subject to a duty to set out priority areas across the functions and activities of relevant Scottish authorities that Ministers have identified for the advancement of equality of opportunity between men and women in Scotland. Ministers will be expected to report on progress in these priority areas, every three years.

Forthcoming legislation

Single Equality Bill

147. In order to simplify and modernise discrimination law, the Government announced in February 2005 that it was setting up a Discrimination Law Review to undertake a fundamental review of all equality legislation. This will bring together nine major pieces of discrimination

law, including the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Equal Pay Act 1970 and up to 100 ancillary pieces of legislation. The review includes the various positive action measures in discrimination law.

148. A full and inclusive engagement process has involved 70 or more key stakeholders, including business and financial organisations, equality lobby groups, the Equality Commissions and local Government organisations. Advice has also been sought from a wide range of experts, academics and practitioners on employment, equality and discrimination issues in a number of ways. The proposals will be published for public consultation by summer 2007.

Re-cast Directive

149. The EU Directive 2006/54/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (re-cast version) came into force on 15 August 2006 and Member States have two years within which to implement this Directive within their domestic legislation.

150. The objective of the proposal is to simplify, modernise and improve the law in relation to gender equality by putting relevant Directives into a single text. The text combines seven Directives about equal treatment of men and women. They cover: equal pay; equal treatment relating to access to employment, vocational training, promotion and working conditions; occupational social security schemes (pensions); burden of proof (the standards needed to bring or defend a claim).

Proposals on assisted reproduction

151. On 14 December 2006, the Government published proposals for revised legislation on assisted reproduction. These include proposals relating to the assessment of patients prior to treatment, and parental recognition following the use of donated gametes or embryos. The Government proposes that the current reference in law to the child's "need for a father" will be removed. Recognition of legal parenthood following assisted reproduction will be extended to cover civil partnerships and other same sex couples, broadly mirroring existing provisions relating to married and unmarried couples. Draft legislation is expected to be published in May 2007.

Gender Directive 2004/113/EC

152. This Directive became law on 13 December 2004 and EU Member States have three years to implement it. The Government will transpose the legislative provisions of this Directive into British legislation by regulations amending the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended).

153. The Directive's principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services is already largely reflected in British legislation. It will be strengthened,

however, in terms of discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity and discrimination against transsexual people in the provision of goods, facilities and services. The Government is consulting on draft regulations early in 2007 for implementation by the end of the year. The Directive will be transposed separately in Northern Ireland by regulations amending the Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976.

Working Time Regulations 1998

154. The Government proposes to amend the Working Time Regulations 1998 to increase the statutory holiday entitlement from four weeks to 5.6 weeks (maximum 28 days). Research shows that a number of groups including women will benefit from this initiative. The increase will be introduced in phases, starting in October 2007. Northern Ireland will introduce a similar increase through an amendment to the Working Time Regulations (Northern Ireland).

Implementation of the law — Employment Tribunals (ETs)

Sex Discrimination Claims

155. In 2003-04, the number of claims brought to a tribunal increased to 17,722. Of these, 3 per cent were successful at tribunal, 45 per cent were withdrawn and 24 per cent were conciliated settlements through the Government's Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS). In 2004-05, the number of claims brought to a tribunal decreased to 11,726 of which 2 per cent were successful at tribunal, 58 per cent withdrawn and 19 per cent were ACAS conciliated settlements. In 2005-06, the claims increased to 14,250. Of these, 17 per cent were successful at tribunal, 40 per cent were withdrawn and 13 per cent were ACAS conciliated settlements.

Equal Pay claims

156. Equal pay claims have also varied. In 2003-04, the number of claims brought to a tribunal decreased to 4,412. Of these, 3 per cent were successful at tribunal, 43 per cent were withdrawn and 37 per cent were ACAS conciliated settlements. In 2004-05, the number of claims brought to a tribunal almost doubled to 8,229 of which 1 per cent were successful at tribunal, 38 per cent withdrawn and 40 per cent were ACAS conciliated settlements. In 2005-06, the claims increased dramatically again almost doubling to 17,268. Of these, 33 per cent were successful at tribunal, 39 per cent were withdrawn and 13 per cent were ACAS conciliated settlements. It's worth noting that this year saw an increase in the volume of equal value/equal pay claims.

Legislation that will have a positive effect on disabled women

Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended

157. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) provides the basic framework of civil rights for disabled people. Important new rights came into effect in October 2004, when the Government implemented the final access provisions in Part 3 of the DDA which improve disabled people's access to goods, facilities and services. The new duties require service providers to take reasonable steps to remove, alter or avoid physical features (such as steps or low counters) that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled customer to access a service which is available to the general public.

158. On 1 October 2004 and 1 September 2006 Regulations came into force to implement the disability provisions of the article 13 Employment Directive. These strengthened and widened the DDA's employment provisions. The Regulations which came into force in October 2004 included provisions which:

- ended the exemption of small employers (fewer than 15 employees) from the scope of the employment provisions;
- widened the scope to include police officers, firefighters, prison officers, barristers in chambers (and advocates in Scotland), partners in business partnerships and employees on ships, planes and hovercrafts.

159. The Regulations that came into force in September 2006 implemented disability provisions of the Directive in respect of higher and further education. The Disability Rights Commission revised its Codes of Practice to take account of these extensions of rights and duties under the DDA. Equivalent regulations came into operation in Northern Ireland.

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005

160. The DDA 2005 gained Royal Assent in April 2006 and further extended and improved the provisions in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Measures include:

- new coverage for public bodies, including a Disability Equality Duty which requires them to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and harassment, and to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people;
- bringing people with HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis (effectively from the point of diagnosis) within its scope;
- simplifying the definition of disability in the DDA by removing the requirement that mental illnesses must be 'clinically well-recognised';

- introducing requirements that landlords, and those who manage rented premises, cannot unreasonably refuse consent to a tenant's request to make disability-related improvements, and that they make reasonable adjustments to their policies, practices and procedures, and provide auxiliary aids and services such as accessible versions of documents;
- bringing private members clubs with 25 or more members within scope of the DDA;
- introducing new protection for disabled local councillors;
- new coverage of general qualifications bodies which award qualifications such as A-levels and GCSEs;
- bringing all land-based public transport vehicles, vehicle hire, breakdown services and vehicles used in leisure and tourism transport services within the scope of the Act;
- giving the Government power to set an 'end date' by which time all rail vehicles, including trams, will have to be accessible to disabled people. The DDA 2005 ensures that date will be no later than 1 January 2020.

161. These provisions mainly came into force over the period 5 December 2005 to 4 December 2006, but those relating to qualifications bodies are due to be implemented from September 2007. Similar provisions apply to Northern Ireland.

Legislation that will have a positive effect on lesbian women

Adoption and Children Act 2002

162. The Adoption and Children Act 2002 was implemented in 2004, allowing unmarried couples (regardless of sexual orientation) and civil partners to apply to adopt a child jointly.

Employment Act 2002

163. In April 2003 a new right to two weeks paid paternity leave was fully introduced following the provisions in the Employment Act 2002. This is available to a parent who has responsibility for the upbringing of the child, including a mother's or adopter's same sex partner. In April 2003 a new right for parents of young children to request a flexible working pattern was introduced. Parents and their same sex partners are also able to request to work flexibly if they have responsibility for the upbringing of the child.

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

164. These regulations tackle discrimination in employment and training on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

165. The Government launched a consultation in March 2006 on extending protection against discrimination in goods and services on grounds of sexual orientation. It published its response to the consultation on 7 March 2007 and laid the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 before Parliament. These came into effect in April 2007.

Local Government Act 2003

166. The Government repealed section 28 in November 2003 by the Local Government Act 2003. The DfES *Sex and Relationship Guidance* makes it clear that teachers should be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support, but that there should be no direct promotion of sexual orientation.

Tackling Bullying in Schools

167. The DfES is currently revising their *Don't Suffer in Silence* guidance to schools, originally launched in 1994 and updated in 2000 and 2002, which offers practical help to tackle all kinds of bullying in schools. The new version, likely to be called *Safe to Learn*, became available online in March 2007. In addition, the Department issued specific guidance on tackling racist bullying in March 2006, and later in 2007 aims to issue guidance on tackling homophobic bullying.

Civil Partnership Act 2004

168. The Civil Partnership Act 2004 (which came into force on 5 December 2005) enables same-sex couples to make a formal, legal commitment to each other by forming a civil partnership. This gives them a package of rights and responsibilities, including pension rights, succession rights and family law rights.

Other measures to eliminate discrimination targeting specific groups

Women Offenders

169. Women make up 6 per cent of the overall prison population, and around 12 per cent of offenders on community sentences. The women's prison population increased by 126 per cent between 1995 and 2005, (compared to a 46 per cent increase in the male population), although it decreased by 1 per cent in December 2006, compared with the same time in 2005.

170. Many women prisoners have committed relatively minor offences (40 per cent of sentenced receptions are for theft and dishonesty offences) and a large proportion – around 75 per cent – are serving sentences of less than 12 months. There are also large numbers of women held in prison on remand and almost 60 per cent of those do not go on to receive a custodial sentence. The Government is concerned about the impact of imprisonment, not only

on the women themselves but on the life chances of their children. It also recognises that the criminal justice system responds more to the nature and characteristics of the majority of male offenders.

Taking steps to reduce women's offending

171. In order to tackle women's offending and reduce the numbers of women in prison, the Government launched the Women's Offending Reduction Programme (WORP) in March 2004. This focused on improving community based services and interventions that are better tailored for women, to support greater use of community disposals rather than short prison sentences. An interim review of progress was produced in September 2005. (www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/worp-annual-review-0405). A further review of WORP activities will be linked to the Government's response to the recommendations made in the Corston Report (see below).

172. The National Probation Service has produced a guide on '*Delivering Effective Services for Women Offenders in the Community*' (November 2006). For women in prison, the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) is developing Gender Specific Operational Requirements which will set out what services and provision are required to meet the needs of women in custody. This will underpin the NOMS Service Level Agreements for 2007.

173. To help support a more effective community-based response to women's offending; £9.15 million funding was allocated in March 2005 to establish the Together Women Programme. The Programme is developing an integrated approach to routing women to appropriate services to meet their needs at various stages of their offending history, from prevention and diversion from custody, to resettlement on release. The Programme is being delivered via demonstration projects within two Regional Offender Manager regions – Yorkshire & Humberside and the North West - and will build on the good practice already taking place in existing services.

An independent review of vulnerable women in the criminal justice system

174. Following the tragic series of deaths at Styal prison in 2002-2003, ministers announced an independent review of women in the criminal justice system with particular vulnerabilities by Baroness Corston. "*The Corston Report: a review of women with particular vulnerabilities in the criminal justice system*" was published in March 2007. This called for a greater focus on women in the criminal justice system and highlighted the need to take a radical new approach to address the complex and multiple needs of women who offend and those at risk of offending. The document contained 43 separate recommendations, including:

- creating a 'champion' for female offenders or those at risk of offending within Government;
- developing an inter-departmental ministerial group to oversee women offenders' issues;
- changing the way criminal justice agencies work with women;

- commitment to a 10-year programme to replace women's prisons with small, local custodial units;
- end of routine strip-searching in women's prisons; and
- improved sanitation conditions in prisons.

175. The recommendations made are wide-ranging and propose action by a number of different Government departments and other organisations to address together the complex and multiple needs of women both in the criminal justice system and at the risk of offending. These recommendations will be carefully explored with all the departments and agencies concerned and the Government will develop a detailed response and set out an agreed way forward.

Assessing the needs of young women and girls at risk of offending or involved in offending

176. The Women's Offending Reduction Programme brought together the Youth Justice Board, the National Probation Directorate and the Prison Service to jointly identify and support innovative pilot projects that could best demonstrate how the housing and associated support needs of young women and girls could be met. During 2004 a Working Group financed two pilot schemes that focused on young women at risk or involved in offending for whom there was little evidence of what works in meeting their housing and support needs. On completion of the pilots, a number of factors were identified that may contribute to risk of offending, and from those factors, intervention pathways were developed.

177. Experiences from the pilot schemes in working with young women who become homeless and engage in crime at a young age, disclose serious and complex issues underlying their behaviour. The identified intervention pathways were as follows: violence/abuse counselling; raising self-esteem; resisting peer pressure; substance misuse support; peer mentoring; family mediation; addressing acquisitive crime. The pilot schemes concluded that the young people who received intervention services to address these pathways generally felt they had benefited, but it was also clear that many young people found additional services such as more general advice and practical support helpful.

178. Within the secure estate for young people, dedicated units for 17 year old young women have been set up in five prisons. Special regimes designed by the Prison Service and the YJB are provided in those units to meet the young women's needs.

Setting up gender responsive education and rehabilitation programmes

179. Offenders generally have significantly lower skills and qualifications than the general public and 71 per cent of women offenders have no qualifications. The Government is committed to improving the learning and skills provisions of offenders, and ensuring that they have access to education which enables them to gain the skills and qualifications needed to secure and hold down a job, so it introduced a new learning and skills service in July 2006.

This has been developed to ensure that offenders' specific needs are reflected in an individually tailored programme designed to improve their skills and employability. More detail is provided in the Learning and Skills for Women Offenders section in Annex one.

180. The assessment of individual learners' needs will take into account gender, age, ethnicity, disability, personal & vocational goals, and whether they will serve their sentence in custody in the community. The consideration of gender related issues in the assessment will, by definition, ensure that the specific needs of female offenders are recognised (see Annex one).

Reviewing Mother and Baby Units

181. Seven prisons currently have mother and baby units, providing a total of 75 places. Two are at the new privately managed prisons at Bronzefield and Peterborough. A review of the Management of Mother and Baby Units was published in January 2005 in the light of the Framework for the Assessment for Children in Need and their Families (published in 2000), the recent Judicial Reviews on mothers with their children in prison and the Department for Education and Skill's publications on national standards for crèches and full day care for children (published in 2001).

Article 3: Development and advancement of women

182. A body of work is being undertaken within the UK to implement measures for the advancement of women, underpinned by a cross-Government Public Service Agreement which targets those areas identified by the Ministers for Women as gender equality priorities (see article 4).

General measures

Alleviating poverty of lone parents

183. The Government has undertaken research analysing poverty among women and men, girls and boys. Women face disadvantages partly because they form the majority of both lone parents and single pensioners. Single women are less likely to have qualifications than partnered women, more likely to report a long-standing illness or disability and more likely to have a child below school age.

184. However, by the second quarter of 2006, there were more than one million lone parents in work (82,944 more than in 2003) and the lone parent employment rate up to the same period was 56.5 per cent (up 3.2 per cent since 2003). Since July 2003, the New Deal for Lone Parents programme has helped over 233,290 lone parents into work. Between 1996/7 and 2005/6 1.1 million pensioners have been lifted out of relative low income after housing costs, the majority of which are women.

Making progress in eradicating poverty

185. The Government publishes an annual report on poverty, *Opportunity for all*, setting out its strategy, along with the measures against which the Government will be judged. The eighth annual report was published in October 2006 (to which the WEU contributed on gender issues) and shows that the Government is making real progress in eradicating poverty and its causes. The Government's strategy includes: tackling inequalities by improving public services; increasing employment, constantly improving understanding of poverty and social exclusion, to identify what are the greatest priorities and what will work best to tackle them; tackling current and future poverty including supporting those unable to work; investing in services for girls and boys to break cycles of deprivation; and working in partnership with other stakeholders.

Building on Sure Start programmes

186. In ensuring that childcare does not prove to be an ongoing barrier to women entering the labour market, the Government has invested heavily in services for young children and families. Sure Start Local Programmes offer a range of early learning, health, and family support services, and help expand childcare provision in disadvantaged areas, as well as encouraging and supporting parents considering work. The majority of these have now become Sure Start Children's Centres as the Government moves towards a permanent, universal programme for children under five and their families (see article 10).

Providing additional funding for Sure Start

187. Substantial additional funding for Sure Start was agreed in the Spending Review 2004, and Pre-Budget Report for 2004. Government spending on Sure Start Group programmes will reach £1.8 billion in 2007-08, double the 2004-05 figure. A sizeable element of this allocation, the General Sure Start Grant (GSSG) to local authorities, will fund Sure Start Children's Centres, Sure Start Local Programmes, extended schools, inclusion, workforce development and childcare affordability and sustainability initiatives, and support Local Authorities in gearing up to meet the new duties laid out in the Childcare Act. The GSSG will total nearly £3 billion for the period 2006-08, an increase of £700 million, compared to 2004-06.

Providing help through the tax credit system

188. Childcare costs can have an impact on the family budget, which is why substantial help is being provided (over £2m a day) through the tax credit system. At April 2006, the childcare element of Working Tax Credit (WTC) was benefiting over 374,000 lower and middle income families.

Increasing the National Minimum Wage (NMW)

189. From October 2006 the NMW was increased to £5.35 per hour for 22s and over, £4.45 for 18-21 year olds and £3.30 for 16 and 17 year olds (this rate was introduced in October 2004).

Two thirds of the beneficiaries continue to be women. The full-time median gender pay gap has reduced by 4.8 per cent since 1997, and the National Minimum Wage has contributed to this reduction. In October 2007 the NMW will increase further to £5.52 per hour.

190. In 2005 the Government launched a new approach called “targeted minimum wage enforcement” under which it targeted publicity and enforcement at key low-paying sectors. This approach will enable the Government to raise the profile of the minimum wage in each sector in turn, address their concerns and improve compliance at the same time. The hairdressing sector was chosen in 2005 (87 per cent employees are women) and the childcare sector in 2006 (96 per cent of whom are women).

Improving pay and tackling the pay gap for apprentices

191. From August 2005, apprentices in England (who receive Government funding) are contractually entitled to receive weekly pay of at least £80 (although many get more than that). The Government has taken an active interest in reviewing issues around apprentices’ pay and carried out a survey, *‘Apprenticeship Pay: A Survey Of Earnings By Sector’*, published in October 2005. This showed that those on Government approved schemes were taking home over £500 a month on average. The highest paid in the electro technical sector were netting an average pay of £183 per week.

192. However, the research also identified a £40 per week average pay gap between male and female apprentices. This was mainly because of the high level of gender segregation in many of the sectors. The Government is monitoring the position and will conduct a follow-up survey early in 2007 with the aim of publishing a report by the end of May 2007.

Introducing Pension Credit

193. Pension Credit (introduced in October 2003) is particularly beneficial for women, as of the pensioner households getting pension credit in May 2006, almost 60 per cent were single women and just over 20 per cent were couples. The Pension Credit ensures that no-one aged 60 or over need live on less than a guaranteed weekly income of £119.05 (£181.70 for couples) from April 2007 (see article 13 for more details).

Reforming pensions through the Pensions Commission and the Pensions Bill

194. In December 2002, the Government set up the independent Pensions Commission to review the longer-term challenges faced by the pensions system and make recommendations for reform. The Commission published its conclusions in November 2005, setting out its proposals for providing a fair and adequate retirement income for all in retirement (see article 13).

195. In November 2006, the Government published the [Pensions Bill](#). This legislates for long-term pensions reform, making the state pension fairer and more generous and providing a solid foundation for private saving. The proposals in the Bill will:

- make it much simpler and fairer for women and carers to build up a State Pension by recognising social contributions;
- make the State Pension more generous by restoring the link to earnings for the basic State Pension; and
- increase State Pension Age to ensure that these changes are affordable.

Helping older women

196. The Government set up a Cabinet Sub-committee on Ageing Policy when the Opportunity Age strategy for an ageing society was launched (March 2005), consisting of senior Ministers from key Government Departments to co-ordinate and drive forward action for older women and men. The Government has introduced a range of policies that directly benefit older women:

- just over half of those entitled to Pension Credit are single women (see article 13);
- equalising pension age to 65 gives women more time to build their pensions (see article 13);
- start point for paying National Insurance (NI) contributions, now called the primary threshold, was separated from the lower earnings limit for employees. This has brought more people into the NI system, and has benefited 500,000 women. This means that low earners do not have to pay NI contributions until they earn £100 per week (from April 2007) but their entitlement to contributory benefits starts when they have earnings of £87 or more a week (from April 2007).

Minority ethnic women

Setting up the Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force

197. The Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force co-ordinates Government activity to improve employment and overall labour market achievement for ethnic minority groups. Set up to deliver the Strategy Unit Ethnic Minorities in the Labour Market report in 2003, it commissioned a large scale research project *'Barriers to Employment for Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in Britain'* which highlighted the severe restraints experienced by all Pakistanis and Bangladeshi men and women. The second part of the research focusing specifically on women is due to be published shortly.

Looking at the barriers to work in Government action plan

198. The next phase of the Government Action Plan (published September 2006) in response to the Women and Work Commission report (published February 2006) will also look at the barriers to work faced by black and minority ethnic (BME) women and find practical measures to raise their employment levels. See article 11 for more details.

Partners Outreach for Ethnic Minorities

199. The new £7.5 million Partners Outreach for Ethnic Minorities programme started in February 2007 in the six cities identified by the National Employment Panel's 1995 report². Designed to help women overcome the barriers they face in finding work such as lack of fluency in English, skills training and access to childcare, it targets Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in low income households .

Deprived Areas Fund

200. The Deprived Areas Fund (DAF) combines the funding previously allocated to Action Teams, Ethnic Minority Outreach and the Working Neighbourhoods Pilots and is being distributed across 1043 wards (a mixture of the most deprived wards overall and the wards with the biggest combinations of ethnic minority population and unemployment) starting in 2007.

Invest to Save Budget pilots

201. DWP helped to develop and sponsor three Invest to Save Budget pilots aimed at helping ethnic minorities find work. The pilots run for three years (2005-06 to 2007-08) and are run by ethnic minority voluntary and community based organisations. Most relevant to ethnic minority women is the pilot run by QED-UK looking at economic activity among Asian communities in South and West Yorkshire. This includes working with employers to overcome perceived barriers to employing people from the Asian community. The QED 'World at Work' DVD includes a section on women at work highlighting Asian female role models. This was used by Communities and Local Government when they launched the Government's response to the Women and Work Commission's report (see article 11 for more details).

Telling women about the National Minimum Wage

202. The national minimum wage has been widely publicised since its introduction in 1999. About two-thirds of its beneficiaries are women. Since 2004, the Government has been sending targeted mailings to ethnic community groups, inviting them to order copies of short guides, available in a number of ethnic languages (Arabic, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Tamil, Urdu, Chinese). Alongside this the Government has received editorial coverage in the ethnic press, including media read by recent migrants such as British-based Polish publications.

Civic participation

203. *Together We Can* sets out the Government's plan to enable people to engage with public bodies and influence the decisions that affect their communities (see article 7 for more details). The 2006 report included examples where the department for Communities and Local

² Enterprising People Enterprising Places (2005) NEP, available on www.nationalemploymentpanel.org.

Government has funded Community Empowerment networks which have reached out to diverse communities and also the Department for Constitutional Affairs magistrates shadowing scheme which aims to improve diversity on the bench and enables Black Minority Ethnic groups to shadow and gain an insight into the roles and responsibilities of being a magistrate.

Strengthening the role that Muslim women play within communities'

204. The government's plan: 'Preventing violent extremism: Winning hearts and minds' recognises the vital role that women can play in building strong communities and tackling violent extremism. It acknowledges the importance of enabling their voices to be heard and seeks to empower them to take an active role within their communities through:

- supporting communities to develop local forums that provide a focus for specific groups whose voices are not always heard, such as Muslim women;
- broadening and deepening the range of individuals and groups that government works with, in particular those whose voices have too often been excluded - women and young people;
- funding local initiatives such as leadership training which enables women to develop the skills and build the confidence necessary to be able to influence members of the community more widely;
- supporting the publication of a good practice guide on effective initiatives to strengthen the role that Muslim women can play in their communities by autumn 2007;
- organising a series of roundtables with academics, theologians and community leaders to stimulate debate on the importance of women having access to mosque life in order for them to engage effectively in the community and to gain an understanding of why women are sometimes not allowed access;
- supporting and encouraging local communities to help break down these barriers;
- continuing to work with the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB) to ensure that as the national body with responsibility for mosques and imams, they are committed to making early progress in five core areas including the inclusion of young people and women.

Women in Public Life Today

205. Communities and Local Government funds the Women's National Commission which produces a guide, "Women in Public Life Today", to encourage women (including minority ethnic women) into public life. The publication includes case studies on BME women and was last updated in June 2004.

Becoming a School Governor

206. The DfES supports the charity School Governors' One Stop Shop (SGOSS). Set up in 1999 to work in Excellence in Cities areas, the remit of SGOSS was subsequently extended by Ministers in October 2005 to cover the whole of England in order to encourage more people to become school governors and specifically targets BME groups. This includes innovative work such as the "Breaking Down the Barriers" project in Newham (started in November 2006), which seeks to recruit an increased number of governor volunteers from the groups who are not only currently under-represented but have also proved difficult to engage with, such as ethnic minority women, young people, refugees, disabled.

What Ministers are doing

207. In addition to the on going dialogue with Muslim women, the Ministers for Women co-hosted with the Prime Minister a consultation event at No. 10 Downing Street in May 2006. The aim was to hear directly from Muslim mothers about the issues affecting their families and communities, which was subsequently published as a feedback document. The report can be viewed at: http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/equality/min_eth.htm.

208. As part of this the Government announced that the next phase of the Women and Work Action Plan (see article 11 for details) will take account of the particular issues and barriers facing ethnic minority women in the workplace as a key priority. The Ministers now host an annual reception in the House of Commons as part of Black History Month to celebrate the achievements and contributions that black and minority ethnic women have made to the UK. Approximately 250 women from the regions attend. The event also encourages more BME women into public life, business ownership, social enterprise etc. As part of this a yearly analysis of BME women's position in the UK is published (see Annex one).

Northern Ireland

Setting up Lone Parent Working Group

209. About a quarter of families with dependent children are lone parents in Northern Ireland, over half are divorced, separated or widowed and around 92 per cent of them are women. Only about 41 per cent of lone parents are in employment compared with about 68 per cent of coupled mothers, which puts them at the highest risk of poverty compared to any other household type. The Government established a working group in 2007 to look at promoting social inclusion by identifying and tackling factors that could contribute to it. A draft report outlining findings and recommendations is expected later this year.

Introducing a strategy for children and young people

210. The ten year Strategy for Children and Young People was published on 20 June 2006. It has its basis in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and contains six high level outcomes and indicators of progress for children and young people, including those who are vulnerable or marginalized. The Office of the First and Deputy First Minister is currently in the process of finalising the first children and young people's action plan. Each action will be linked to one or more of the outcomes on which the strategy seeks to deliver. A number of implementation structures will be established to oversee implementation of the strategy over the next ten years. These structures will include a parent's Advisory Group, a Practitioner's Group, a multi-agency Strategy and Planning Review Group and a Research and information Group.

Scotland

Improving the position of women in Scotland

211. In their 2003 report, *Improving the Position of Women in Scotland: An Agenda for Action*, the Strategic Group on Women (SGW) identified that there was a need to look at the diverse experiences of women. Recognising that women's needs are complex, the Executive held five roundtable events, one of which explored issues of concern for minority ethnic women. The Scottish Executive has also funded Amina, the Muslim Women's Resource Centre since 2004 to enable the roll out of their telephone helpline service across Scotland. The Executive also provides assistance to Saheliya, a Black and Minority Ethnic Women's Mental Health organisation, which supports other organisations to provide services to minority ethnic women with mental health issues.

Encouraging Muslim women to talk

212. The 'Muslim Women Talk' (MWT) Campaign was established and organised by a coalition of British Muslim Women in the aftermath of the London bombings. Supported by the Home Office, the campaign was aimed at including the voices of a broad section of women from the Muslim community.

213. The Scottish Executive awarded funding to Amina (see above) to organise a number of events around Scotland, attracting women from different ages, nationalities, and faiths. Three of these meetings were aimed primarily at women in the community, with the fourth being aimed at professional Muslim women and women working closely with Muslim women in the community. MPs, MSPs, Councillors, the Police, the Crown Office, the Scottish Executive Equalities Unit, Local Authority Officials, and relevant black and minority ethnic voluntary sector organisations were invited to attend all meetings in a listening capacity. Interpreters and crèche facilities were utilised at each event to maximise participation and in each of the community events one workshop was held in Urdu/Punjabi.

Wales

Providing funding to the grassroots

214. The following organisations have started to receive funding from the Welsh Assembly Government in the last two years to take forward issues of concern to minority ethnic women. Minority Ethnic Women's Network (MEWN) Cymru (a second tier umbrella body representing ethnic minority women) is receiving core funding of £50k for 2006/07. The Welsh Assembly Government also established the Muslim Women's Forum. In November 2005, the Muslim women 'lets talk' campaign was launched and facilitated by All Wales Saheli. Funding of £17,000 for All Wales Saheli has been agreed for 2006/7.

Focusing on international development

215. The elimination of gender discrimination is a key component of the Government's international development policy. In 2006, the Government published its third White Paper on International Development³, which focused on the need to ensure governance works for poor people, a disproportionate number of whom are women. The White Paper included a commitment by the Government to "give greater priority to ... work in support of gender equality and women's rights" in development assistance.

Evaluating DFID's work

216. In 2005, the Department for International Development (DFID) commissioned an independent evaluation of its work in support of gender equality and women's empowerment over the previous ten years. The evaluation, published in August 2006, identified certain areas of strength in DFID's approach,, particularly in the education and health sectors. The evaluation also noted that DFID had played a strong role in international discussions and negotiations on gender equality, with research funded by DFID having had worldwide influence. However, it concluded that the overall contribution and impact on gender equality had been uneven, and the department needed to ensure that gender equality objectives were integrated more systematically into its programmes.

Review of best practice on gender mainstreaming

217. To complement the evaluation, in 2006, DFID commissioned a review of best practice on gender mainstreaming, which drew examples from a range of international agencies and UK Government departments. The review has provided valuable lessons on successful approaches to gender mainstreaming which will inform future practice. Building on the findings of these assessments, and to respond to the requirements of UK Equalities legislation, DFID developed a Gender Equality Duty Scheme and Action Plan. These set the agenda for achieving faster

³ "Eliminating World Poverty : making governance work for the Poor".

progress towards gender equality outcomes, in line with the commitments in the third White Paper and the findings of DFID's gender evaluation.

Ensuring views of women are heard

218. In-line with an increasing focus on country-led development, DFID has worked to ensure that the views of both men and women are reflected in the national policies and plans of partner Governments. This has involved work to strengthen the role of gender-focused civil society organisations, as well as promoting awareness and responsiveness within Government ministries. It has also involved work at the regional level, for example supporting the African Union to take forward the Protocol on Women's Rights and the 2004 Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. In a number of countries, efforts have centred on promoting women's participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of national Poverty Reduction Strategies. For example, in Uganda, DFID has worked closely with civil society organisations and Government ministries to ensure that gender equality issues were included in the 2003/4 revision of Uganda's national Poverty Eradication Action Plan. DFID assistance is also supporting the Government to account for gender equality commitments in the budget formulation process.

Identifying barriers to women's participation in economic growth

219. In July 2005, DFID started a programme on gender and growth aimed at identifying issues which constrain women's participation in labour markets, such as discrimination or ill health and will look at ways to overcome these constraints. Work is initially planned in four countries and will involve close consultation with a range of stakeholders.

Promoting the rights of women and girls to education

220. DFID supports specific activities to promote the rights of women and girls, including girls' education, maternal mortality and reproductive health, including HIV and AIDS. In the 2005 strategy paper, *'Girls' Education: towards a better future for all'*, DFID pledged to take the international lead on accelerating progress in girls' education. In April 2006, the department announced a further increase in aid to education of £8.5 billion over the period 2006/7-2015/16. A partner Government's long term commitment to achieve gender equality in education is one of the criteria for increased funding from the UK Government. This involves removing costs to primary education (a significant factor in affecting girls' access to school) as well as tackling abuse and violence towards girls, and providing clean water supplies and sanitation facilities. Some progress has already been made. In sub Saharan Africa, the number of girls in primary school has increased from 36 million in 1999 to 48 million in 2004. This is equivalent to more than two million extra girls in school each year. In December 2006, DFID published a progress report on the implementation of its girls' education strategy, which showed that girls' primary school enrolment figures are improving in DFID supported countries in Africa and Asia. However, greater progress is needed, particularly in terms of tackling

violence against girls in school and ensuring that girls have more opportunities to progress beyond primary level.

Other Government initiatives

221. The UK Government has undertaken a number of other initiatives that have achieved results since 2003, these include:

- working to ensure that the needs of women and girls are adequately addressed in conflict and post conflict situations, and that women are given the opportunity to play a central role in peace building and reconstruction. The UK has been one of the main supporters of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and in March 2006 published a National Action Plan on implementation of the Resolution. In April 2003, DFID with the DTI and FCO, established a cross-Whitehall group on women in Iraq. The group developed a joint strategy on support to gender equality in Iraq and successfully influenced the US/UK administration in Baghdad to include Iraqi women in post conflict political processes and reconstruction;
- contributing to a number of international partnerships to promote gender equality in education, such as the Education for All Fast Track Initiative and the UN Girls Education Initiative. DFID's £26m support for the UNICEF Girls' Education project in Nigeria helped to increase girls' enrolments in six states by 10-15 per cent in just 1 year;
- continuing to contribute to global knowledge on gender equality and women's empowerment, in particular, through the funding of two five-year research programmes which started in 2006. Both programmes seek to better understand women's strategies for empowerment. DFID also provides support to BRIDGE, a gender and development resource centre at the University of Sussex.

Work with other organisations

222. The UK has taken a strong position in international fora addressing women's rights and empowerment, including the Beijing plus 10 meeting and the Millennium Review Summit in 2005 and sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women. DFID is the leading provider of core funding to the United Nations Development Fund for Women, and is inputting to United Nations reform processes to create strengthened systems that can deliver positive outcomes for women.

223. DFID has maintained a close and active dialogue with the World Bank on gender and development issues, particularly in development of their own Gender Action Plan, '*Gender Equality as Smart Economics*', published in 2006. The UK also plays a strong role in gender-related work of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which is one of the main fora for donor coordination on gender.

Article 4: Special measures to accelerate equality

224. The Government has introduced a number of special measures to improve equality between women and men and to facilitate gender mainstreaming since the last report.

Introducing a gender equality duty

225. Introduced in April 2007, this imposed a statutory duty on Public Authorities (PAs) to promote gender equality of opportunity in all their functions and have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment between men and women. To ensure effective gender equality outcomes, PAs have to think differently about how they carry out their public functions (e.g. policy formulation, employment practice, service delivery) and how these could be improved by better meeting the individual needs of women and men. This will be done by systematic screening of their functions, drawing up, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders, 3 year gender equality schemes (gender equality objectives and actions plans) and achieving gender equality based outcomes.

226. Officials have been working across the public sector to raise awareness of what the duty entails and how to implement it. This includes a communications strategy, bi-laterals, speaking engagements, meetings and events. Accompanying guidance also exists to aid PAs in implementing the duty. This has been drawn up by the Equal Opportunities Commission working closely with officials in the Women and Equality Unit and provides practical guidance, including a range of web-based guidance. There will also be a code of practice to provide statutory interpretation of the legal requirements.

Gender equality public service agreement (PSA)

Introducing the Gender Equality PSA

227. This is a high level strategic target, introduced for the first time in 2003, to bring about measurable improvements in gender equality across a range of indicators, as part of the Government's objectives on equality and social inclusion. The PSA was underpinned by a report, *Delivering on Gender Equality*, which enabled Departments to demonstrate progress, even if they were unable to sign up to deliverable targets. For instance, they could demonstrate they were engaged on projects or developing strategies that tackled gender inequalities. It is an important feature of mainstreaming gender equality into policy making and public service delivery that these departments have a strategic vehicle to highlight their good practice.

Setting up a Cross-Government Gender Equality Steering Group

228. The WEU set up a cross-Government Gender Equality Steering Group of high-level practitioners dealing with gender issues across Government to monitor and review the progress of the PSA, reinforced by Ministerial bi-laterals.

Running annual Steering Group events

229. Annual Gender Equality Steering Group Events have also been held to both review the PSA and facilitate gender mainstreaming more widely across Government. The 2004 event focused primarily on promoting gender mainstreaming in areas where targets did not exist, raising awareness of issues such as women offenders and the need to attract more young men into careers in the care sector.

230. The 2005 event focused specifically on violence against women, in particular the need for the public sector to address this as part of policy development and service delivery. The event brought together Government Departments, Regional Development Agencies and police forces to tackle domestic violence and sexual offending. It also highlighted the need for robust police data to effectively monitor the PSA's violence against women indicator. The event also allowed discussion of the implications of the forthcoming Gender Duty on tackling violence against women more widely in the public sector.

Moving to a strategic delivery board approach for enhanced PSA

231. Agreement to a further enhanced PSA under Spending Review 2004 (SR04) underlined the Government's commitment to this particular approach to gender mainstreaming. There was also a move from the gender equality steering group to a strategic delivery board to provide a more delivery focused and accountable monitoring mechanism. Taking on board lessons learnt from the previous PSA, this board is designed to oversee management of risks, foster a sense of common ownership, instigate targeted interventions and provide delivery/action plans for individual sub-targets. It also acts as a mechanism for identifying cross-cutting themes/issues and possibilities for synergies with other work streams such as implementation of the recent Women and Work Commission (WWC) report and the gender equality duty.

Make up of expanded PSA

232. While the objective is the same, this PSA comprises an expanded range of 19 indicators or sub-targets. Work to achieve them by 2008 is being led by 13 teams in 7 different departments. The PSA is evaluated four times a year: through a self-assessment exercise; a spring and autumn performance report; and through departmental annual reports. It contains sub-targets in the following areas:

- women's economic participation and advancement (work/life balance; childcare facilities; equal pay reviews; occupational segregation);
- women's social and civic inclusion (improve representation of women in public appointments);

- women's access to and experience of public service delivery including in relation to Violence Against Women - childcare services; domestic violence; second tier pensions and public transport provision.

233. Although the PSA helps improve women's lives indirectly rather than directly, it has nevertheless for the first time provided policy makers across Government with a strategic gender mainstreaming tool, pulling together selected targets in a number of areas that are recognised as key to gender equality. The targets were chosen because they were measurable and challenging rather than quick wins.

Delivery period for PSA

234. The delivery period for the PSA under Spending Round 2002 was 2003-2006. Due to data collection cycles, we are currently assessing data underpinning the final indicator, but progress on the PSA is encouraging. The final assessment can then be made. For the PSA agreed in Spending Round 2004, the delivery period ends in 2008. Progress in relation to a number of 19 sub-targets is encouraging, for example two of the Sure Start targets have already been achieved and we are ahead on one of the flexible working targets. However overall the position remains challenging. Our high-level PSA Delivery Board, with cross-Government membership ensures cross-Government accountability and review risks to delivery.

Plans for Spending Review 2007

235. Negotiations are currently underway to build on the positive benefits of the two previous gender equality PSAs, for a joint equalities PSA for the Spending Review 2007 which contains key measures to help achieve further gender equality. From April 2007, delivery of the current PSA will be reinforced by the gender equality duty (see below and article 2). The focus of this duty will be on outcomes and thus should ensure greater gender equality mainstreaming in the business planning process of public bodies.

Strategic involvement of the ministers for women

236. The Ministers for Women ensure that a gender equality perspective is fully taken into account in a strategic way across national policy and programme development. They sit on high-level Cabinet Committees such as Public Health, Children's Policy, Ageing Policy, Asylum and Migration and Communities.

237. Championing gender equality across Government ensures that data is gender disaggregated wherever possible, and that issues which have significant implications for women are taken into account through policy development and the delivery of services. The Deputy Minister for Women and Equality also actively participates in the three inter-ministerial groups which bring together departments central to tackling violence against women and supporting survivors and children. Her role is to ensure that a gender equality perspective is fully taken into account across policy and programme development.

Publication of the Women and Work Commission report

238. In the summer of 2004, the Prime Minister set up the Women and Work Commission to address the issue of the pay and opportunities gap between men and women (see article 11 for more details). It made its recommendations in a report entitled *Shaping a Fairer Future* published in February 2006. In response to that report, the Government published its Action Plan, *Implementing the Women and Work Commission recommendations* in September 2006 (see article 11 for more details). Both reports can be found in the publications section of the Women and Equality Unit website: www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk.

Publication of the Equalities Review

239. In 2005 the Prime Minister commissioned a review of the causes of some of the most persistent inequalities in Britain. The aim was to:

- provide an understanding of the long term and underlying causes of disadvantage that needed to be addressed by public policy;
- make practical recommendations on key policy priorities for the Government and public sector; employers and trade unions; civic society and the voluntary sector; and
- inform both the modernisation of equality legislation, towards a Single Equality Act; and the development of the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights.

240. The Review, chaired by Trevor Phillips, reported to the Prime Minister in March 2007. The final report "*Fairness and Freedom*" calls for efforts to eradicate the most chronic inequalities to be intensified, for example, tackling the employment disadvantage experienced by women with young children. It makes a number of specific policy recommendations, such as extending the current positive action provisions to the wider limits allowed by EU law. The review states that there is an appetite for taking positive action measures, but that the level of confusion over what is legally permissible is one reason that they are used so little in the UK.

Importance of undertaking gender budgeting

241. Since 1998, the UK Treasury has undertaken some level of gender analysis, primarily in the context of the Budget. It has used analysis of tax incidence by gender when developing both Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise tax policy measures. The UK acknowledges that Gender Budgeting principles can be a useful tool to address areas of gender blindness, at a strategic decision-making level.

242. A pilot project on gender budgeting undertaken jointly by the WEU and Treasury in 2004 had mixed outcomes and there was insufficient evidence to build on the work further at that time. A lack of gender-disaggregated statistics within some departments hindered a full assessment of the gender implications, but the forthcoming Gender Equality Duty should alleviate these difficulties. It will require public authorities to conduct gender assessments

when setting their priorities including strategic business planning, in terms of resourcing service provision. The over-arching requirement involves the disaggregation of statistics by gender for the first time, and the duty will actually go beyond the requirements of gender budgeting alone. The Women and Equality Unit continues to raise awareness of the importance of gender analysis in high level target setting, as part of its on-going series of bi-laterals with Treasury on the monitoring of the Gender Equality Public Service Agreement (see above for more details).

Addressing the role of men and boys

243. At the fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) held in New York from 26 February to 9 March 2007, the Agreed Conclusions from the forty-eighth session on 'Men and Boys' were reviewed. As a result of the light-touch mapping exercise that was conducted to inform the UK position for CSW, the Women and Equality Unit will now seek to review Government progress in this area, in order to assess the extent to which Government departments address the role of 'Men and Boys' in their efforts to eliminate discrimination against women.

244. This will include assessing whether the role of 'Men and Boys' forms part of the strategic target setting exercise for the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 and whether these issues are being fully addressed as part of individual departments' obligations under their Gender Duty schemes, introduced in the UK in April 2007. The WEU will take the opportunity to engage key stakeholders as part of this process, and ensure that the best practice, shared within the EU and by participants at the fifty-first session at CSW, is disseminated where appropriate.

Article 5: Sex roles and stereotyping

245. The UK Government clearly articulated, in the 5th periodic report, its commitment to remove the barriers to gender equality which prevented women from reaching their full potential, reinforced gender stereotyping of career choices and contributed to the gender pay gap.

Government's response to the Women and Work Commission report

246. In addition to setting explicit targets to increase women's economic participation within successive gender equality Public Service Agreements, a significant amount of work is being taken forward in the UK following the establishment of the independent Women and Work Commission by the Prime Minister in 2004 to look into the causes of the gender pay gap and opportunities gap for women at work. They presented their final report *Shaping a Fairer Future* to the Prime Minister in February 2006 (see article 11).

247. The Government took seriously the issues raised in the Commission's report about gender stereotyping, and in its response, *Government Action Plan; Implementing the Women and Work Commission Recommendations* in September 2006, it agreed:

- guidance for early years childcare workers to ensure the career horizons of children in 3-5 year age group were not influenced by stereotypes;
- teacher training that challenges gender stereotyping;
- national standards for careers advice to ensure all young people receive careers information, advice and guidance which challenges gender stereotypes and gives young people an accurate idea of the rewards and challenges of different careers;
- schools to be encouraged to have one of their specialisms in a non-traditional subject;
- consideration of different methods of teaching for girls and boys e.g. computer clubs for girls (see below for more details); and
- government information campaigns to contain positive gender images and encourage broadcasters and advertisers to present non-stereotypical portrayals of women and men at work.

Education

Providing information and guidance for young people

248. Young people receive information advice and guidance (IAG) from a variety of sources including parents/carers, school staff, peers, Connexions Personal Advisers and Connexions Direct Advisers.

249. The Green Paper, *'Youth Matters'*, published in July 2005, sets out proposals for improving IAG for young people and their parents. The subsequent document *'Youth Matters: Next Steps'* details new arrangements for delivering IAG, with funding and responsibility devolved to local authorities, working through children's trusts, schools and colleges. This transition is being phased in, with new arrangements in place by April 2008. Also proposed in Youth Matters was the development of quality standards to give further impetus to the quality and impartiality of young people's IAG. The standards will also cover positive action to tackle stereotyping, inequality and disadvantage. The first draft of the standards was published for consultation in December 2006, and the final version became available in April 2007. They will be implemented in April 2008 in line with the new IAG arrangements.

Challenging Gender Barriers

250. The 'Challenging Gender Barriers' publication was produced on behalf of DfES by the National Association of Connexions Partnerships (NACP) in September 2006, working closely with the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), in response to the EOC's General Formal Investigation into Occupational Segregation (see Annex one). The document responds to two key reports – *'Free to Choose'* (EOC, 2005) and *'Shaping a Fairer Future'* (Women and Work

Commission, 2006) that evidenced gender-related gaps in workplace opportunities. It describes some of the work done by Connexions Partnerships to support young people in challenging stereotypes and achieving their goals.

251. This document is the first stage of a 2 stage approach to meeting the commitment made to pilot, on a small scale, different models and different configurations of delivering more challenging and effective IAG. It provides a number of case studies of effective practice in tackling gender stereotyping and guidance on improving practice. The next stage is to promote the publication, and to encourage Connexions services to use the case studies to improve their practice. The Government is working with NACP on this. The document is available on the www.cegnet.co.uk and www.nacp.co.uk websites.

Does Sex Make a Difference?

252. The Women and Equality Unit, in conjunction with the Department for Education and Skills, produced an equalities resource pack in 2003 and again in 2004 (entitled “*Does Sex Make a Difference*”) to be used by anyone working with young people. The pack – which contains useful statistics and general information – covers a range of topics including occupational segregation, the pay gap, women in public life and domestic violence. It is aimed particularly at teachers to stimulate discussion in class, but can also be used by personal advisers or anyone working with young people.

Opening up apprenticeships

253. Since the Government replaced Advanced GNVQs (General National Vocational Qualifications) with Vocational A levels (taken at 18) in 2000, 47 per cent of apprentices who start training are female and the number of women apprentices has steadily increased. This is particularly the case as more Apprenticeships are offered in more non-traditional sectors. However, there are some major imbalances in different occupations, and the Government is working with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and partners including sector and equality bodies to promote and improve equal opportunities in Apprenticeships.

Improving information and developing a national equality strategy for apprentices

254. For example, in response to recommendations of an EOC investigation into occupational segregation (see Annex one), the Government is improving information (including by publishing ‘*Apprenticeship Pay: A Survey of Earnings by Sector*’, October 2005), broadening choice and exploring more flexible Apprenticeship learning opportunities. This work is part of wider Government action to tackle the obstacles to women's achievement in work outlined in the WWC's report, published in February 2006 (see article 11). The Government is therefore developing a new national strategy on equality and diversity in Apprenticeships to improve participation and success levels of all under-represented groups, and working with the LSC and employers to promote the business case for diversity and inclusion in the workforce.

Addressing inequality of opportunity for apprentices

255. The Government is committed to working with partners to address inequality of opportunity within the Young Apprenticeships programme for 14-16 year olds, including tackling gender segregation and gender stereotyping. . The DfES published an evaluation report on equal opportunities in Young Apprenticeships, “*Young Apprenticeships: Equal Opportunities*” in August 2006. The full publication and executive summary is available along with “*Good equal opportunities practice at Key Stage 4*”, a good practice guide for schools and other partners involved in delivering the programme. Additionally YA taster sessions took place around the country from February 2007.

Introducing Women & Work Sector Pathways Initiative

256. The headline target is to test new recruitment and career pathways for 10,000 women over a 2 year period 2006-7 to 2007-8 into sectors where they are under-represented, and where there are specific skills shortages. Five Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) are taking forward a range of focussed projects involving the recruitment, training and progression of Women in their sector. They are: Construction Skills – construction industry from architects to bricklayers; Lantra – all environmental & land-based industries; Skills for Logistics – freight logistics (moving, handling & storing goods); Skillfast UK – apparel, footwear & textiles & related sector; Improve – food & drink manufacturing.

257. Two projects (ConstructionSkills and Skillfast-UK) started in early November 2006. The Sector Skills Development Agency are working with a further five SSCs to develop their proposals. Links with other delivery partners are in place and plans to tie in other strands of the Women and Work package are being implemented.

Introducing “Train to Gain” for women

258. £10m has been allocated for both 2006-7 and 2007-8 to fund an additional Level 3 (roughly equivalent to Advanced levels) trial in London which will focus on women. This is being delivered as part of Train to Gain (started October 2006). It focuses on training women for occupational areas where they are currently underrepresented at Level 3. The trial offers support through the Train to Gain brokerage network to enable women employees to upgrade their skills and obtain a Level 3 qualification. The training will be delivered flexibly within the employer’s workplace and tailored closely to their needs.

Introducing skills coaching for low-skilled women

259. The Women and Work Commission Report (see article 11) recognised that some women face particular challenges in improving their skills and in progressing at work. So the Budget 2006 announced ‘...doubling the number of existing Skills Coaching pilots to 16 JobCentre Plus districts with a specific focus on helping low-skilled women return to work...’

260. From September 2006 Skills Coaching trials are being delivered in 19 Jobcentre Plus districts. Skills Coaching as part of the New Deal for Skills package. A joint DfES/DWP package of measures which includes the Adult Learning Option (ALO) aimed at improving the skills of individuals for whom lack of skills is the main barrier to securing/sustaining employment. It provides individually tailored support to help low-skilled out-of-work adults develop employability skills by providing personalised advice and guidance, including access to appropriate learning.

The start of skills coaching trials

261. One of the barriers women face on returning to work is a lack of skills and confidence to work in the current labour market. Skills Coaching provides flexible support, tailored to the needs of women; it helps identify appropriate training and raise skill levels focusing on the most effective routes to employability. Skills Coaches link with Sector Skills Councils and employers, particularly those offering Train to Gain opportunities, in order to advise and prepare their customers and provide appropriate support.

262. Trials began with customers on Income Support/Incapacity Benefits/Jobseekers Allowance in April 2005 in 8 JCP Districts. From July 2006 the trials were extended into 11 JCP districts to cover all the Adult Learning Option (ALO⁴) districts and the five cities of greatest need highlighted in the National Employment Panel (NEP) *'Enterprising People, Enterprising places'* Report. Trials started in an additional 8 JCP districts in September 2006, following the announcement in the 2006 Budget as a result of the Women and Work Commission's Report.

263. The Report highlighted that women returning to work after time out of the labour market often find their skills out of date or no longer in demand. £10 million has been committed over two years to ensure Skills Coaching covers all parts of the five cities where challenges for low skilled women are particularly acute. These include London, Birmingham, Manchester, Bradford/Leeds and Leicester. All 19 Skills Coaching trial areas will focus on helping low-skilled women.

Women in Science, Engineering and Technology

Increasing the numbers of women in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET)

264. Although the number of women studying SET subjects at under and post graduate levels is increasing, strong subject divisions are still very evident. Women predominate in medicine and dentistry, subjects allied to medicine, biological and veterinary sciences; whereas men dominate in engineering and technology (see table in Annex one). The low representation of women across all aspects, and at all levels, of SET employment suggests that there are barriers to recruitment, retention and progression, in both industry and academia. About 70 per cent of

⁴ ALO commenced in 5 Jobcentre Plus Districts from September 2006. ALO offers the opportunity for people on JSA, Income Support and Incapacity Benefit to take up free training to gain a Level 2 qualification.

women with SET qualifications are not working in SET professions, translating into a loss of many millions for the economy.

Setting out the Science Engineering and Technology strategy

265. In April 2003 the Government published ‘*A Strategy for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology*’ which included the following initiatives:

- the setting up of a national resource centre;
- improved statistical monitoring;
- using cross-Government machinery to ensure that all Government departments are good SET employers;
- a new role for the Office of Science and Innovation’s (OSI) Science Workforce Team to oversee this development, whilst widening its remit to include issues relating to ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and other socially disadvantaged groups; and
- an independent Implementation Group to oversee the strategy’s progress and impact.

Setting up the UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology

266. The UK Resource Centre for Women in SET (UKRC) was launched in September 2004. It works with British business to help maximise the opportunities for professional women in SET and close the skills gap that is damaging UK competitiveness. For instance, it runs a scheme called Return, that offers skilled women the opportunity to return to a career in SET or the built environment. Aimed primarily at qualified women, Return offers free information and support services to help women return to the workplace. The UKRC is receiving Government funding approaching £7.5 million over the period 2004/05 – 2007/08. Further information of specific schemes and advice run by the UKRC can be found on their website at: <http://www.setwomenresource.org.uk/>.

267. The UKRC also offers advice to individuals or organisations on how to access, set up or improve mentoring and networking schemes to help women get support, develop skills and make contacts. The UKRC has produced a series of Good Practice Guides for employers, each focusing on a recognised gender-critical issue.

Implementing other Science, Engineering and Technology projects

268. The Science, Engineering, Technology and Mathematics Network (SETNET) is a UK-wide charity that promotes Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) awareness, especially among young people. It does this through its UK-wide supporting network of SETPOINTS, which operate at a local level, working with schools and local

businesses to provide and support activities that enhance and enrich the STEM curriculum. The Science and Engineering Ambassadors (SEAs), run by SETNET, are volunteers with an interest in STEM who work with schools, teachers and pupils to stimulate and inspire their interest in these subjects. There are currently over 12,000 SEAs, of whom 50 per cent are under the age of 35 and 38 per cent are women.

269. The WISE Outlook Programme aims to provide 13-14 year old girls with a practical experience of engineering project work, along with visiting a company. The Royal Academy of Engineering is leading the London Engineering Project. This 4.5 year project (launched in 2006), part funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, is part of the 10 year National Engineering Programme, designed to increase participation in engineering higher education by widening the participation of four target groups: women, under-represented minority ethnic students (African-Caribbean boys, Bangladeshi and Pakistani girls in particular), students from families without a tradition of higher education and adult learners.

Women in Information Technology, Electronics and Communications (ITEC)

270. Given that women's participation in ITEC education and employment is lower than that of men, the Government has been working, since the last CEDAW report, to secure a supply of diverse highly skilled people in the workforce ITEC sector by:

- learning lessons from earlier research into international comparisons about gender imbalance in the ITEC sector and communicating these to UK partner organisations and business, as well as encouraging adoption of practice guidelines to promote the numbers of women in ITEC;
- funding a number of studies which examined the business case for diversity, the experiences of older women working in the sector and currently a study by Roehampton University of the recruitment of highly skilled women returners to the sector;
- working closely with the DTI funded UK Resource Centre for Women in SET; and
- working with industry and other stakeholders to help improve the diversity of the ITEC workforce. Key partners include the Intellect Women in IT Forum as well as e-Skills UK (an employer-led body licensed by Government), Science, Engineering and Technologies Manufacturing Alliance and Equalitec (ITEC women returners network).

Setting up Computer Clubs for Girls (CC4G)

271. CC4G comprises out of school clubs (funded in England by DfES) which aim to engage girls in information, communication and technology (ICT) and to attract more women into technology careers across England . Projects are also up and running in Scotland , Wales and Northern Ireland . CC4G will be self-sustaining when DfES funding comes to an end in 2008.

CC4G comprises more than 200 hours of e-learning, including interactive online activities, offline projects and challenges, all mapped to the Key Stage 3 ICT Curriculum in England. To date, 80,000 girls from 2,500 English schools have benefited.

272. Qualitative feedback shows widespread application of skills developed at CC4G both across the curriculum and outside the school environment. 67 per cent of members say that CC4G has made them more likely to consider a career in technology. The retention rate of members, facilitators and schools for 2006/7 is promising with a 90 per cent rate for members, 99 per cent of facilitators expecting their school to continue and 92 per cent of facilitators wanting to stay on. For further information, go to: www.cc4g.net.

Looking at the portrayal of women in the media

273. The role of the media in the portrayal of women is widely recognised by Government, broadcasting regulators and broadcasters. The Communications Act 2003 requires the Office of Communications (Ofcom), the independent regulator, to set licence conditions for all broadcasters who meet the thresholds to promote equality of opportunity between men and women. Section 27 of the Act also places a duty on Ofcom to promote training and equal opportunities in employment by television and radio broadcasters. Previously this was a licence requirement for terrestrial licensees only, but has been extended under section 27, to cable and satellite and radio licensees. In 2004, the BBC volunteered to report to Ofcom on equal opportunities in the same way as other broadcasters.

Considering action on the size zero debate

274. The apparent use of unhealthily underweight models in the fashion industry has received considerable press attention recently both in the UK and overseas. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has met with the British Fashion Council (BFC) and the London Development Agency (LDA), and with leading eating disorder groups, in order to gain a full picture of the issues. BFC, with the support of LDA, is carrying out an enquiry, chaired by Baroness Kingsmill, to look at how the London designer fashion industry promotes health and wellbeing on the catwalk. DCMS will consider carefully the findings and recommendations from this enquiry, which are expected later this year, and on the basis of this and other work and discussions, shall decide what action the Government should take.

Employing women in the broadcast media

275. Ofcom published a review of broadcasters' reports on promoting equal opportunities in employment in November 2006. It also issued formal guidance, in November 2006, for all qualifying broadcasters suggesting minimum standards that broadcasters must put in place to promote equal opportunities. The Department for Work and Pensions is running a pilot called Invest to Save Budget in Yorkshire which is linked to the regional BBC. This uses examples of successful Asian women employed by the Corporation to raise the confidence of others.

276. The OFCOM Report states that across terrestrial television, cable and satellite television and radio sectors, women make up between 45 per cent - 50 per cent of the reported workforce. They represent nearly 70 per cent of people working in administrative and support functions, 57 per cent in marketing and 48 per cent in programmes/programming functions. However, they are still a minority in technical and engineering functions – only 20 per cent. They also make up only 19 per cent of directors at Board level and 34.7 per cent of managers at senior management level (excluding the Board) and approximately 32 per cent across senior management levels (including the main Board).

Article 6: Exploitation of women

Trafficking

Taking action against trafficking of women

277. This year, the UK became a signatory to the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings. This builds on the Government's strategy to combat human trafficking, by setting minimum standards of protection and support for victims of all forms of trafficking. It sets the future framework for enhancing our provisions for victims of sexual exploitation, (which largely affects women) and developing measures for victims of other forms of exploitation (such as trafficking for forced labour).

278. On 23 March 2006, the Government published a UK Action Plan on Human Trafficking (www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/human-traffick-action-plan), following a consultation last year. This outlines current measures and sets the direction for future work in the areas of prevention, enforcement/prosecutions and protection and assistance for adult and child victims. During the UK's Presidency of the European Union in 2005, the Government made combating trafficking in human beings one of its Justice and Home Affairs priorities. It drove forward work on a wide-ranging EU Action Plan on trafficking which was adopted unanimously in December 2005 by the Council of Ministers and was a major success of the UK Presidency.

Setting up an Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group

279. The Government is committed to ensuring an integrated, joined-up approach to combating trafficking and established an Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Human Trafficking to co-ordinate its work on this issue. A Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Stakeholder Group, chaired jointly by the lead Home Office Minister and the Solicitor General has also been established to act as a consultative forum on Government policy on human trafficking and related issues. The Government is committed to raising awareness about trafficking across the board and links are made with other strategies where relevant, including the prostitution strategy (see below) and the Cross Government Sexual Violence and Abuse Action Plan (see article 16).

Funding the POPPY project

280. Since 2003 the Government has funded Eaves Housing for Women to run the POPPY project, which provides accommodation and support for victims of trafficking. In 2006 it was awarded a £2.4 million two-year contract to continue providing twenty-five crisis places, plus ten new 'step-down resettlement' places and the first outreach service to work with front line staff in the identification and treatment of victims.

281. The project provides: secure accommodation; individual needs and risk assessments; one-to-one assistance by trained support workers; help with living and travel costs; mobile phones; access to healthcare; access to counselling services; support with police liaison; access to independent legal advice for immigration matters; support whilst cases progress through the criminal justice system; access to interpreter/translation services; and assistance in repatriation and voluntary returns. So far, the project has supported 162 women.

Raising awareness with Operation Pentameter

282. Operation Pentameter, a multi agency police led national operation to tackle trafficking for sexual exploitation, ran from 21 February to 31 May 2006, raising awareness among the public and key stakeholders and launching a series of enforcement campaigns. It resulted in 84 victims of human trafficking being provisionally identified and 132 people charged with a variety of offences including trafficking, rape, false imprisonment, kidnap, and facilitation of illegal entry. Local police forces were also asked to scope additional possible voluntary and community support services for victims of trafficking and there are now a number of independently funded projects that are able to provide women with accommodation.

Enforcement and prosecution work to tackle trafficking

283. Under the law to criminalise trafficking in human beings, sentences of between 2 to 9 years on specific counts have been given, although convictions for several counts (e.g. rape and immoral earnings) have resulted in sentences of up to 21 years.

284. Reflex, the multi-agency task force established to tackle organised immigration crime has driven forward successful, co-ordinated action to disrupt organised criminal gangs. In 2004/5, there were 149 disruptions of criminal activity, 1456 arrests and seizure of over £5.5million in criminal assets.

285. A new Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) was established in April 2006, which will tackle trafficking as one of its top priorities. SOCA brings together the National Crime Squad, the National Criminal Intelligence Service, HM Customs & Revenue and the Immigration Service.

Set up the UK Human Trafficking Centre

286. The UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKTC) was launched in October 2006 – the first of its kind in Europe. Building on Operation Pentameter, this will become a centre of excellence for police in dealing with human trafficking. The Government is working with the UKTC, which has appointed a Victims' Co-ordinator to ensure that any enforcement action is victim focused and that identified victims are supported.

Developing an on-line Trafficking Tool

287. An on-line People Trafficking tool-kit has been developed to enable front line police, Immigration Service and other relevant personnel to work appropriately and effectively with victims of trafficking, supported by guidance and training.

Training staff to identify and tackle trafficking of girls

288. The Government is aware of the crucial importance of frontline staff at ports of entry being fully trained to identify minors who might have been trafficked into the country. At present, 600 (10 per cent) of border control officers are trained in identifying children who may be at risk and are located at 22 ports of entry. Specially trained multi agency "Paladin" teams of Immigration staff, police and social workers, trained in child protection are being established at 5 locations at major ports and asylum screening units.

289. The Government aims to train all border staff in being alert to identifying unaccompanied minors who may be at risk and recognising the sensitivity of managing their needs. The aim of this training is to identify and transfer any child, who may have been trafficked, into the comprehensive statutory network of protection and safeguarding available to all children thought to be at risk in the UK.

Setting up a Child Trafficking Steering Group

290. A Child Trafficking Steering Group has been established to raise police awareness of how to combat child trafficking. Joint work is underway between key agencies at principal entry ports to identify children at risk. Initiatives such as locating child protection police officers at ports have enabled greater joint working between the Immigration Service, social services and the police.

Developing training for police

291. In 2007/2008 and beyond the UK plans to develop training resources for all police officers (including Special Branch located at ports of entry). These aim to develop an effective means of recording child sponsors who may pose a risk of harm to separated children at ports of entry and asylum screening units; to work to ensure that relevant staff and social services colleagues are fully appraised of the guidance; to develop the National Register of Unaccompanied Minors

(NRUC) as the data base for tracking referrals of trafficking cases to Children's Social Services departments; to launch cross Government multi agency guidance on trafficking; and to launch a national advice line for professionals encountering children they believe have been trafficked (subject to a successful application for match funding from the charitable sector).

Keeping a record of children visiting the UK

292. A change in the immigration rules with regards to children visiting the UK came into force through the establishment of new Global Visa Regulations on 12 February 2006. These new measures ensure that all children who enter the UK do so in a recorded way, and in the case of visa nationals the visa states who they should be travelling with or states that the child will be travelling unaccompanied. Details of who is responsible for the child are recorded. The child's photograph is also on the visa. These measures support the work of immigration officers when trying to establish who is responsible for a child, where they would be staying and with whom, and the relationship of the child to the adult they are travelling with, or in the case of an unaccompanied child, with their sponsor in the UK.

293. The Government is in the process of exploring a process for vetting and approving the private foster care arrangements for unaccompanied children applying to stay in the UK in excess of 28 days, before any visa application is agreed.

Working with carriers to raise awareness of airlines

294. In terms of ongoing work with carriers the Government is also working with over 30 countries to raise airlines' awareness of the potential vulnerability of children travelling into the UK. All newly appointed Airline Liaison Officers (ALOs) will receive additional training before taking up their appointment abroad, and additional advice will be provided to all existing ALOs to help them identify vulnerable children travelling to the UK. Additionally, discussions are taking place with the International Air Transport Association and other countries' Immigration Services to establish best practice guidance on preventing vulnerable people and children being exploited whilst in transit.

Working with Non-Governmental Organisations and other agencies

295. In 2007/08 and beyond the UK will continue to work with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other agencies to maximise awareness of the dangers whilst working to alleviate poverty. It will explore practical arrangements and legal issues associated with the proposed process for vetting and approving addresses and carers for unaccompanied children applying to stay in the UK for more than 28 days. It will also continue to expand the ALO programme of work to include more countries and to have continual evaluation of training programmes for airline staff overseas and in the UK. Further engagement with the airline industry to achieve greater buy-in generally is also planned.

Reviewing in-country child victim protection

296. Work is ongoing to review the "Working Together to Safeguard Children" guidance to include specific guidance on child trafficking and to produce supplemental guidance on child trafficking using the London Child Protection Committee (LCPC) model as a template. The practice guidance was promoted in conjunction with the Department for Education and Skills at the national conference for Local Safeguarding Children's Boards on 13 March 2007.

Arranging accommodation for trafficked children

297. Safe and secure accommodation arrangements for trafficked children who may be at risk from their traffickers are being included within the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Reform Programme. A consultation paper is to be released shortly. Proposals will include developing partnerships with a smaller number of local authorities who will be expected to develop specialist services for UASCs and trafficked children including improved access to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services, GPs and Genito-Urinary Medicine clinics. The Government is also working to develop a National Register for Unaccompanied Children as the means of recording and tracking cases where child trafficking is suspected.

Liasing with international organisations

298. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) works closely with the Home Office (lead department on trafficking in the UK) and through a number of international organisations including the European Union , the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Council of Europe, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the International Organisation for Migration and the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime. The FCO is funding and will continue to fund anti-trafficking projects through the Drugs and International Crime Department (DICD). The Drugs and Crime Fund received £6 million last year and will also be allocated a fund for 2007/08.

Focusing on international development with regard to trafficking

299. The Department for International Development (DFID) is currently providing over £14 million to projects that address trafficking. This includes support to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to reduce the trafficking of women and children in China. In Bangladesh, DFID is working with the Government, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) on a Police Reform Project, a component of which is focused on combating trafficking, particularly of women and girls. The project aims to bring about policy change and increased access to justice for victims.

Addressing prostitution

300. The Government published a coordinated prostitution strategy in January 2006 to address the harms associated with prostitution. The strategy challenges the view that street prostitution is inevitable and here to stay, and aims to reduce all forms of commercial sexual exploitation. It focuses on disrupting sex markets by preventing individuals, particularly children and young people, from being drawn into prostitution; by providing appropriate protection and support for those already involved to find routes out; by protecting communities from the nuisance associated with prostitution; and by ensuring those who control, coerce or abuse those in prostitution are brought to justice.

301. Key pieces of work this year that are linked to the strategy include the planned update to the Safeguarding Children Involved in Prostitution guidance and the provision of guidance and advice to dedicated support projects and local partnerships to improve access to drug treatment and other mainstream services.

302. The Scottish Executive issued guidance for local authorities and community planning partners on tackling street prostitution at the local level. The Scottish Parliament has created new offences for those who solicit or loiter for the purpose of obtaining the services of someone engaged in street prostitution. See article 12 for links between drug use and prostitution.

Legislating against extreme pornography

303. The UK Government is proposing to legislate to make it an offence to possess a limited range of pornographic images depicting scenes of extreme sexual violence and other obscene material. The material to be covered by the ban is already illegal to publish and distribute in the UK under the Obscene Publications Act (OPA) 1959. Such material has become increasingly accessible from abroad via the internet. The new law will ensure possession of violent and extreme pornography is illegal both on and offline.

Article 7: Political and public life

Increasing the numbers of women in political life

At Westminster

304. In 2002 the Government introduced the Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act allowing positive measures towards women's increased participation. This legislation is having an impact and the numbers are rising, particularly in the parties that made use of these measures. As of January 2007, the House of Commons has 646 MPs and of those, 126 are women (19.5 per cent). The proportion is similar in the House of Lords where there are 142 women out of a total 748 (19 per cent). Within the Cabinet, Women make up 8 of the 23 members – 34.8 per cent. There are two ethnic minority women MPs.

In Europe

305. There are 78 UK members of the European parliament in total, 20 of whom are women (25.6 per cent).

In the Northern Ireland Assembly

306. As part of the Good Friday Agreement, the Northern Ireland political parties affirmed the right of women to full and equal political participation. In the 2003 elections women increased their numbers from 15 to 18. In 2004 the first woman was elected as an MEP. In November 2006, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland held a conference to encourage women into political and public life and will be taking forward some of the issues raised during the event.

In the Scottish Parliament

307. Following the May 2003 elections, women Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) increased from 48 to 51 (39.5 per cent of the Scottish Parliament). There are 30 women (41.1 per cent) out of 73 Constituency MSPs; and 21 women (37.5 per cent) out of 56 Regional MSPs, representing an increase of 5.4 per cent from 1999. There are currently four women Cabinet Ministers.

In the National Assembly for Wales

308. The National Assembly for Wales has 60 elected Members. At December 2006, the proportion of women members of the National Assembly was 31 out of 60 members (51.7 per cent). 4 out of 9 women are Cabinet Ministers (44.4 per cent).

At local council level

309. There has been a gradual increase in the proportion of local councillors who are women. 2004 data showed that within England, 29 per cent of councillors were women compared to approximately 52 per cent of the adult population. Following publication of a 2006 Local Government White Paper⁵, the Government set up a Commission on Local Councillors in February 2007. It is working with local business to promote more part-time and flexible working and to encourage employers to provide time off for being a councillor. It is also reviewing the time commitments needed, the timetables of local meetings and encouraging councils to consider better childcare support. It will report in November 2007.

Encouraging women to stand for election as local councillors

310. Other initiatives encouraging a wider range of people to stand for election as local councillors include:

⁵ "Strong and Prosperous Communities: The Local Government White Paper" Communities and Local Government 2006.

- a Government campaign and action plan, launched in June 2005, called '*Together We Can*'. This seeks to empower more citizens and communities to play a role in shaping public policies and the issues that affect them. It has been concerned with citizen engagement as a whole (rather than specifically electoral politics), but strands of work under the initiative including the teaching of citizenship education for adults (the *Take Part* initiative), capacity building work for local community groups (the *Guide Neighbourhoods* programme) and work to support local authorities to be more effective in community engagement (civic pioneers network). This can be accessed on: www.takepart.org/assets/documents/take-part-framework/;
- the Government has given local electoral officers new powers to promote participation in the electoral process under Section 69 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006. This section also allows the Secretary of State to reimburse electoral officers for undertaking such work, and there will be a fund of £2.5million available for this purpose in the 2007/08 financial year.

Using the Disability Discrimination Act to encourage more diversity

311. From December 2006, under provisions in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005, local authorities have been under a duty to make reasonable adjustments for their disabled members. This measure may improve greater participation of disabled women in local political life.

Increasing the numbers of women in public appointments

312. The Cabinet Office launched the Public Appointments Vacancies Website (www.publicappts-vacs.gov.uk) in March 2003 so that information about public appointments opportunities could be found in one place. The Government's aim is to increase women's representation so that by 2008 (under a sub target of the Gender Equality Public Service Agreement – see article 4), a clear majority of departments have over 40 per cent of women in public appointments for which they are responsible.

313. In 2006 departments completed their first Annual Public Appointments plans. These strategic documents set out departments' policy and practice relating to public appointments, including diversity. For instance, the Department for Trade and Industry has plans to ensure that women, people from minority ethnic backgrounds and disabled people are made aware of vacancies. In 2004, the Department for Work and Pensions produced *The Talent Register* which is an electronic database populated with more than 800 diverse registrants who responded to an innovative advertising campaign. It was developed as part of a project to increase diversity undertaken from April 2004 through 2005.

314. The Cabinet Office publishes an annual cross Government summary of the diversity levels achieved by Departments across all appointments to public bodies, (including Ministerial appointments), on their public appointments website (www.publicappointments.gov.uk).

At national level

315. There has been a steady increase in the number of appointments held by women from 26 per cent in 1992 to 35.5 per cent in 2006. The number of appointments held by people from minority ethnic backgrounds has also increased from 2 per cent in 1992 to 6.5 per cent in 2006. 20 per cent of minority ethnic appointees in 1992 were women rising to 39 per cent in 2006. In 2001, at least 197 appointments were held by disabled women, but this figure had risen to 450 by 2006.⁶

At local level

316. Women are already engaged in public life at a local level. Figures from 2003 show 54 per cent of all school governors are women (The Education Network survey for DfES, England); and 49.4 per cent of magistrates are women (Magistrates Association, England and Wales). In 2005, 43 per cent of NHS Trust appointments were held by women.

Increasing the numbers of women on science, engineering and technology boards

317. Aside from a general target for the clear majority of departments to have over 40 per cent of women in public appointments, the gender equality Public Service Agreement (see article 4) also has a separate target to ensure that women make up 40 per cent of the representation on Science Engineering and Tehnology (SET) related boards and councils. This is because women are particularly under-represented in these sectors. Currently, the participation rate of women on SET boards has been calculated at 26 per cent for 2006, an increase from the 2002 baseline figure of 23 per cent.

318. There are 59 SET bodies across eight Government Departments. To meet the target the Government needs to recruit an additional 116 women within 2 years (currently 221 women out of a total membership of 843). This is clearly challenging, so it is funding the UK Resource Centre for Women in SET (UKRC) to implement a strategy working towards the PSA target (see article 5). This strategy has a stepped approach and works on both supply and demand interventions. UKRC is currently in the process of organising a Focus Group of women on SET Boards to discuss issues first hand and inform future interventions.

Building the supply of women in SET eligible to apply and inform them of opportunities

319. A number of initiatives are being taken forward to raise awareness of public appointments amongst women. These include a series of regional seminars around the UK including Wales and Scotland, promoting public body work and the Get SET database for women in SET. This is an on-line tool where women at all stages in their SET career can register. It provides the media and other organisations with access to thousands of women, at various stages in their SET careers who have registered their details and can be approached for promotional and work

⁶ Figures relate to bodies sponsored by UK government departments. Source: *Public Bodies 2006* available on the Cabinet Office website <http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/other/agencies/index.asp>.

related opportunities. This may include speaking at events, acting as a role model, providing comment in scientific news coverage, or sitting on public boards and committees. 637 women have now enrolled. UKRC is also developing a website page to promote and support activity, along with additional marketing and publicity for the scheme.

Working with Government departments to increase applications and appointments of women in SET

320. Interventions to build demand for women in SET have involved building a dialogue with Government department co-ordinators that host SET bodies and confirming agreement of the definitive lists of all bodies, as well as working with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments and the Cabinet Office. A presentation to departmental contacts at the OCPA Seminar in October 2006 provided UKRC with full access to all departments and helped to promote UKRC activity. A meeting was then arranged with the Wales Public appointment Unit to discuss activities in Wales and UKRC has agreed work with DTI and Food Standards Agency boards. In particular, DTI Research Councils & the Renewable Advisory Board are now utilising UKRC to advertise appointments. Other contacts currently being developed include DfES, DEFRA and DfT. Further activities include working with recruitment agencies and supporting departmental contacts and sponsors to share good practice and concerns. Additionally a SET Appointment Good Practice Guide is being written.

Setting up a SET mentoring pilot scheme

321. A mentoring scheme 'Mentoring for Public Life' was launched at an event at Admiralty Arch on 25th January 2007. 22 matches were made for this first, pilot cohort.

Northern Ireland

Appointments in the Northern Ireland Office and Northern Ireland departments

322. The Northern Ireland Office (NIO), a Whitehall Department, is bound by the revised Code of Practice on Ministerial Appointments to Bodies, issued in August 2005 by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for England and Wales. The annual report on Northern Ireland Office public appointments (published in the *Northern Ireland Office 2006 Departmental Report, Expenditure Plans and Priorities* - www.nio.gov.uk) shows that at March 2005, the level of female representation in public bodies stood at just over 35 per cent. Of the 23 publicly appointed bodies listed in the report, 4 Chair and 3 Deputy Chair posts were held by women. The Northern Ireland Office's Public Appointments Plan 2007 – 2008 sets the goal of increasing the proportion of public appointments held by women to 45 per cent by 2009.

323. Separately, the Central Appointments Unit in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister prepares an annual report on public appointments in Northern Ireland (www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/public-appointments). The report sets out in detail the number of applications received and appointments made by each of the Northern Ireland Departments,

including an analysis of these figures by gender. The latest figures for the percentage of women currently serving on public bodies in Northern Ireland is almost 32 per cent. Of the 109 publicly appointed bodies in Northern Ireland in December 2006, 33 Chair and 4 Deputy Chair posts are held by women.

At district council level

324. In 2006, women made up 125 of Northern Ireland's 582 councillors compared to just over 108 in 2003. This represents 21.5 per cent of council seats compared to 18 per cent in 2003.

In the civil service

325. In Northern Ireland, women represented over 54 per cent of all non-industrial staff in the Northern Ireland Civil Service in 2006. The percentage of women at middle management (Deputy Principal) level increased from 28 per cent in 2002 to 42.7 per cent in 2006 and the percentage of women at middle management (Grade 7) level increased from 23 per cent in 2002 to 33.8 per cent in 2006. At senior management level (Grade 5 and above) the figure is 21.4 per cent.

Scotland

Appointments at national level

326. At 1 December 2006, women accounted for 36 per cent of appointees and 16 per cent of chairs. Following legislation to establish a separate Commissioner for Public appointments in Scotland, the new Commissioner took up post in June 2004. One of the key functions is to promote diversity, by drawing up an equal opportunities strategy for public appointments in Scotland. This strategy, which is being developed in collaboration with the Executive, the Parliament and others, will address the issues of raising awareness and running development programmes for under-represented groups, which include women.

327. Other work includes the implementation of the recommendations contained in *Diversity in the Public Appointments Process in Scotland* which was published in October 2003. The Report is available on the Executive's Social Research website at <http://sh45inta/library5/government/dpap-00.asp?mode=view>."

At local council level

328. In 2003, 22 per cent of councillors in Scotland were women. In 2006 the Scottish Executive launched a campaign to encourage more people from under-represented groups to consider standing as candidates in local Government elections. One of the key target groups for this campaign is women.

In the Civil Service

329. At 1 January 2006, women represented 50.4 per cent of staff in the Scottish Executive, its Agencies and associated Departments. Of these, 49 (1.2 per cent) were from a minority ethnic background and 158 (3.9 per cent) were disabled. Women also held 74 (33 per cent) posts in the Senior Civil Service. In order to further embrace and advance diversity and equality, the Scottish Executive reviewed and re-launched its Diversity Strategy in December 2005. In addition, and in support of wider Civil Service initiatives, the Scottish Executive published a Departmental Diversity Delivery Plan in July 2006, which set out how it intends to accelerate diversity progress and facilitate culture change within the organisation.

Policies to promote gender equality

330. Take-up of the Executive's flexible working opportunities continues to increase and, in April 2006 the Executive introduced a childcare voucher scheme to provide further assistance for working parents. 2007 will also see the launch of a revised Dignity at Work policy, which will place a renewed focus on the elimination of discrimination and other unacceptable behaviour. It will also see the publication of a new Domestic Violence policy and the inaugural meeting of a Senior Women's Network to promote gender equality within the Executive.

Wales

Increasing the numbers of appointments at national level

331. The Welsh Assembly Government implemented an action plan in 2002-03 with the aim of increasing the number of applications received from under-represented groups, including women. This strategic approach included research, capacity building and outreach work. In 2005-06 45 per cent of appointments and reappointments to Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies and NHS bodies were women.

Representation on the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council

332. The National Assembly's Voluntary Sector Partnership Council (VSPC) includes a representative of voluntary organisations working on gender issues. As of 1 December 2006, women form a majority of the 21 voluntary sector members on the VSPC. Ten Assembly Members also sit on the Council, seven of whom are women.

333. Each voluntary sector VSPC member is responsible for setting up and maintaining a comprehensive network, and is funded to provide and elicit information and views on their area of responsibility. This process is monitored and provides real opportunity to influence the Assembly Government and for democratic participation by the sector in the affairs of the National Assembly.

Increasing the numbers of women working for the Welsh Assembly Government

334. The Welsh Assembly Government's current specific gender and diversity actions are set out in the Diversity Delivery Plan 2006 which includes the actions that the Assembly Government will take to promote diversity over the period 2006-8. The plan sets equality targets at senior staff levels and requires every member of staff to take responsibility for securing equality and promoting diversity. The proportion of women in the Senior Civil Service at April 2006 was 35 per cent with a target of 45 per cent for April 2008. The proportion of women in the "feeder" grades was 44 per cent at April 2006 with a target of 50 per cent for April 2008.

335. The Welsh Assembly Government also has a comprehensive policy on equal opportunities and diversity, including initiatives on flexible working hours, part-time working, job sharing, compressed hours, special leave, parental leave, nursery facilities and a salary sacrifice scheme. The equal opportunities policy is currently being revised and will be re-launched in 2007. Compressed hours and salary sacrifice were both introduced in 2006.

Introduction of a Shadow Management Board

336. In January 2006, the Welsh Assembly Government introduced a Shadow Management Board (SMB), which operates alongside the Management Board, and comprises one representative from each Department. Applicants have to provide evidence of the ways in which they would bring a more diverse contribution to the group. Membership of the 2007 Shadow Board, which commenced in January 2007, consists of 8 men and 8 women. The Management Board currently consists of 12 men and 3 women.

Pay audits for women and men

337. The most recent pay audit (March 2006) showed that the pay gap for women compared to men in the Welsh Assembly Government had narrowed from 5.4 per cent in 2004 to 3.8 per cent in 2006 (using the mean, as opposed to median figures).

Article 8: Women as international representatives

Taking steps to increase the numbers of women at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)

338. All members of the FCO have a personal objective relating to diversity and there is a Board-level champion for women's issues. The number of women in the Senior Management Structure has doubled over the 2001 -2006 period, and the FCO has set a target to increase the numbers of women reaching it to 25 per cent by 2008. A detailed programme of action to promote gender equality is set out in the FCO's 10 Point Plan and its Gender Equality Scheme. The FCO has already achieved the gold standard in the Opportunity Now benchmarking exercise and is aiming to achieve the platinum standard next year.

339. Every Directorate in the FCO has a diversity action plan and a Directorate Diversity Representative. The FCO runs additional targeted training for women, including the Springboard programme. Mentoring, job shadowing and coaching are also important elements of the FCO's developmental training for women. The FCO's global mobility obligation can pose considerable challenges for women with domestic responsibilities, such as young children or elderly parents. In recognition of this, the FCO encourages flexible working; facilitates joint postings; allows career breaks of up to five years; offers the option to remain in the UK for extended periods to meet domestic commitments; and provides childcare support, including a workplace nursery. The FCO is also reaping the benefits of its investment in IT which enables greater flexible working at home and overseas.

Numbers of women in defence

340. The Ministry of Defence is committed to equality of opportunity consistent with the need to maintain combat effectiveness. The majority of posts within the Armed Forces are open to women⁷ and their contribution to the operational effectiveness of the Armed Forces is essential. Women serve in all specialisations, except those where the primary duty is to close with and kill the enemy. Women therefore continue to be excluded from the Royal Marines General Service (as Royal Marine Commandos), the Household Cavalry and Royal Armoured Corps, the Infantry and the Royal Air Force Regiment.

341. In April 2006 the most senior serving females were: Naval Service - one Commodore, one Captain and twenty-seven Commanders; Army - two Brigadiers, twenty Colonels and seventy-three Lieutenant Colonels; RAF - twenty Group Captains and eighty-two Wing Commanders. Detailed statistics showing the representation of women in the United Kingdom's Armed Forces between 2003 and 2006 are shown in Annex one.

Working with the Equal Opportunities Commission about employment of women

342. During the reporting period, the Ministry of Defence worked with the EOC to examine issues relating to the employment of women in the Armed Forces. In June 2005 the Secretary of State for Defence and the EOC signed an agreement to address the issue of sexual harassment, based on a wide-ranging action plan (see Annex one). This includes: surveys and discussion groups with servicemen and women to understand fully the instances of sexual harassment and to identify the most effective measures to prevent it; ensuring that the Armed Forces' complaints procedure is fair, objective and confidential and seen to be so; increasing awareness of sexual harassment and how it can damage operational effectiveness.

⁷ The proportion of posts open to women is as follows: 71 per cent of posts in the Naval Service, 67 per cent of posts in the Army and 96 per cent of posts in the Royal Air Force.

Offering alternative working patterns

343. During the reporting period, work has also been carried out on alternative working patterns for service personnel. In 2005 career breaks were introduced and guidelines were issued on managing non-standard working hours and home working. In line with new national legislation⁸ the Armed Forces Occupational Maternity Scheme has been revised and servicewomen whose babies were due on or after 1 April 2007 became entitled to 52 weeks' maternity leave, 26 weeks of them on full pay.

344. Following statistical evidence that women were pursuing significantly shorter careers in the Armed Forces than men, a detailed independent study was commissioned into the factors which influenced women's decisions to leave the services. The study was completed in November 2005 and the results have been used as the basis for further work. In particular, action is now in hand to examine the scope for introducing flexible working in non-operational posts. However, this is complicated by the unique pay and pensions schemes which apply to members of the Armed Forces.

Article 9: Nationality

345. UK nationality legislation reflects the principle that men and women have equal rights.

Changing the immigration rules concerning marriage

346. On 1 April 2003 the Immigration Rules were changed so that the age at which a person present and settled in the UK could sponsor a spouse to enter the UK went up from 16 to 18. This was partly to protect young women from marrying before they completed their education and until they were more mature to make this important decision. In December 2004 the age at which a foreign national could make an independent application for leave to enter or remain in the UK was raised to 18.

347. The operation of the domestic violence concession mentioned in the last report has been monitored over its first two years and the findings reviewed. This will include looking at whether the evidence to meet the criteria should be extended.

Developing new measures to support refugees

348. The Government has been developing new co-ordination measures to improve refugees' access to education, healthcare and employment under the auspices of the consecutive Refugee Integration Strategies *Full and Equal Citizens*, launched in November 2000 and *Integration Matters*, launched in March 2005.

⁸ The Work and Families Act 2006.

349. Work is underway to develop a new model of standard refugee integration services throughout England, based around Sunrise, a caseworker programme designed to provide support to refugees in the early period following a grant of asylum for up to 12 months. The new model for refugee integration will be able to assess and tackle the particular challenges facing women refugees and will also include a mentoring programme and an advice and consultancy service for those establishing and running refugee community organisations. The Government will continue to administer the European Refugee Fund which has established a track record in funding projects aimed at enhancing the integration of women and children.

Introducing the Gateway Protection Programme

350. The Government's refugee resettlement programme (Gateway Protection Programme), was launched in 2003 to provide permanent protection to vulnerable refugees from around the world. The UK recognises women at risk as a specific category of refugee in need of protection. For resettlement purposes, the UK defines a woman at risk as a woman or girl who has protection problems particular to their gender, who may be at risk or have suffered from a wide range of protection problems, including expulsion, forcible deportation and other security threats, sexual and gender based violence, intimidation, torture, trafficking for the purposes of sexual slavery or exploitation or forced labour and lack of local integration. As of April 2007 the programme has provided over 50 refugee women at risk, (main applicants), with permanent resettlement to the UK and provided an integration programme of 12 months. Over 300 more women and girls have been resettled as dependants under the Gateway Programme.

Focusing on international development

351. Through the Department for International Development (DFID), the UK Government has supported civil society efforts to improve the protection of refugee and internally displaced women and girls through advocacy and action. DFID also provided £20 million per year in 2005 and 2006 to the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) to strengthen its capacity to provide protection to refugees. In addition, DFID provides support to UNHCR in specific countries. This includes meeting its commitment to refugee women by developing strategies to address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), prostitution and trafficking. Supporting the mainstreaming of age, gender and diversity considerations in UNHCR's programmes is a priority area for DFID's new institutional strategy for working with UNHCR for the years 2007-09.

Article 10: Education

A continuing commitment to education of women and ethnic minority learners

352. The Government will deliver an increase in education spending in the UK of over £10 billion between 2005-06 and 2008 (covering three financial years, as opposed to four in the last report). Since 2003, the Government has introduced a number of national strategies,

policies and initiatives to increase the participation, retention and achievement of women and ethnic minority learners. These include:

- development of a joint DfES/LSC Level 2 Entitlement in marketing and communications strategy to target particular groups of learners such as Asian women who are currently under-represented on NVQ Level 2 courses. This strategy will be implemented from summer 2007;
- working over the coming months with unionlearn to produce both generic and targeted resources for use by Union Learning Representatives to encourage progression by learners to Level 2 and beyond;
- recognising the important issues raised in the Women and Work Commission (WWC) report '*Shaping a Fairer Future*'. The WWC's recommendations set out a system to ensure that actions to promote equality become embedded into the work of all Government departments through Public Service Agreement targets and through a one year on report due to be published in spring 2007 (see article 11). DfES had already taken steps to address some of the Commission's key recommendations through the implementation of the 14-19 Education and Skills strategies as well as the proposals outlined in the 2005 Youth Green Paper;
- the Department's Performance Framework continues to articulate and drive forward the Government's highest priorities and ambitions for delivery. The Department is committed to working with its partners to achieve its PSA targets, so that life chances are improved for everyone, regardless of their gender or background. Data for a number of the Department's PSA targets are disaggregated by gender, as part of the department's performance management and policy analysis/development. e.g. 63.4 per cent of girls achieved five or more A*-C GCSEs in 2005/06 compared with 61.4 per cent in 2004/05;
- the aim of the Gender Equality Duty is to further eradicate discrimination against both sexes and DfES is preparing the ground for its first Gender Equality Scheme published at the end of April 2007.

Increasing the numbers of Sure Start Children's Centres

353. Sure Start Children's Centres are places where children under 5 years old and their families can receive seamless holistic integrated services and information, and where they can access help from multi-disciplinary teams of professionals. The focus is on providing age-appropriate early years/nursery education and access to health services for children. They will build on existing successful initiatives like Sure Start Local Programmes (see article 3), Neighbourhood Nurseries and Early Excellence Centres, and bring high quality integrated early years services to the heart of communities. The emphasis is on moving from Local Programmes - an initiative benefiting only a

minority of disadvantaged children - to a permanent, universal programme of children's centres for all children under five and their families.

354. By 2008, there will be 2,500 Sure Start Children's Centres across England with all young children and their families in the most disadvantaged areas having access to a centre. By 2010, there will be 3,500 centres - one for every community - reaching around 2.9m children under five. Well over 1,000 Sure Start Children's Centres were in place by December 2006, offering services to around 838,000 young children and their families. Sure Start provision formed an important cornerstone of the Gender Equality Public Service Agreement, and the targets were exceeded ahead of schedule.

Making provision for early education

355. All 3 and 4 year olds are now guaranteed a free, part time (12½ hours per week) early education place for up to two years before reaching compulsory school age (the term following their fifth birthday). As a result of increased Government funding, 3 year old entitlement was delivered from April 2004 - 6 months earlier than originally planned. At January 2006, nearly all 4 year olds and 96 per cent of 3 year olds were in some form of free early education. There are over 37,000 settings delivering free, Government funded, early education.

356. A series of progressive extensions to the free early education entitlement was guaranteed in the Ten Year Strategy. From April 2006, the minimum free entitlement was extended from 33 to 38 weeks of the year; and from April 2007, 3 and 4 year olds will gradually begin to receive an enhanced entitlement of 15 hours per week, with all of them receiving it by 2010. The longer term goal is an extension of the entitlement to 20 hours a week. 20 local authority pathfinders began planning in September 2006 how they would deliver the 15 hour entitlement and increased flexibility from April 2007. They will provide best practice models for how local authorities can support providers in delivering the enhanced entitlement.

Developing the Personal, Social and Health Education framework in schools

357. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) are currently conducting a review of the National Curriculum for key stages 3 and 4 (ages 11-16). The secondary curriculum review is revising all secondary subjects and this includes Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE).

358. The current non-statutory framework for PSHE was introduced in 2000. The Department only reviews this framework and other curriculum subjects periodically in order to allow schools to become familiar with the curriculum and the expectations this places upon them. The secondary curriculum review is at the stage of public consultation, which closes on 30 April 2007. This consultation can be contributed to via the QCA's website at www.qca.org.uk/secondarycurriculumreview.

359. The White Paper “*14-19 Education and Skills*” published in February 2005 announced a review of the Key Stage 3 curriculum, with revised Programmes of Study to be introduced in schools from September 2008. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has an ongoing programme of work to ensure that its 11-19 reform programme takes full account of diversity and inclusion issues (including gender, race, special educational needs and gifted and talented provision).

Reducing the numbers of permanent exclusions

360. The total number of permanent exclusions has fallen by 25 per cent since 1996/97 and the number of girls permanently excluded has also fallen in absolute terms. The percentage of girls permanently excluded has been more or less constant over the same period. In 2004/05 (latest figures available) 21 per cent of permanent exclusions from school were girls (or 1,940 girls out of a school population of approximately 7 million). To enhance educational opportunity for all children and to further reduce exclusion rates, there is a ministerial expectation that all secondary schools will be working in partnership to improve behaviour and tackle persistent absence by September 2007. Figures from pathfinder partnerships show that collaboration is having a big effect on the need for permanent and fixed period exclusions.

Providing information through the national curriculum assessment arrangements

361. The National Curriculum assessment arrangements provide information on attainment through tests and teacher assessments. The information is used for school accountability purposes and to monitor the performance of pupils, so that schools can adapt their teaching to suit the needs of their pupils. The results in 2006 of pupils at Key Stage 1 (age 5-7) showed that in all subjects, the percentage of girls who achieved the expected level or above was higher than the percentage of boys. In 2006, at Key Stage 2 (age 7-11), girls outperformed boys in English tests; for both mathematics and science, girls and boys had a very similar percentage distribution. In all Key Stage 3 (age 11-14) core subjects, the percentage of girls achieving the expected level was the same as or higher than the percentage of boys.

Measuring examination achievements at age 15, 16 and 18

362. The proportion of both girls and boys leaving school with a General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE, taken at age 15-16) or equivalent qualifications has increased steadily over the last 25 years, with more girls than boys leaving school with GCSE qualifications. In 2005-06, 97.5 per cent of girls and 95.7 per cent of boys in their last year of compulsory education had graded results (compared to 96 per cent and 94 per cent, respectively, in 2000-2001). Moreover, there has been a marked improvement in achievement at GCSE level overall, with girls consistently getting higher grades than boys. DfES is working with the DTI in supporting initiatives aimed at encouraging more girls to continue with physics and mathematics beyond 16, as well as science and engineering (see article 5 on stereotyping).

Increasing the numbers of women

In Higher Education

363. In 1970-71 there were twice as many men as women in higher education, but by 2004/05 women made up 57 per cent of enrolled students in higher education (see table in Annex one). An increasing emphasis on more flexible learning systems by both further education colleges and universities, including credit accumulation and transfer schemes, part-time studies and summer teaching are particularly beneficial for women returning to the labour market. Women account for around 73 per cent of participants on Access to Higher Education courses. Some courses are designed specifically to help women gain entry into courses in technology and science, information and communication technology and financial management, as well as other subjects where women are traditionally under-represented. Although women are under-represented in certain sciences and engineering, women outnumber men in medicine and dentistry, subjects allied to medicine, biological sciences, veterinary science, and agriculture and related subjects. Moreover, women's participation in sciences has increased in recent years and now stands at 51 per cent in 2004/05.

With Higher Education qualifications

364. From 1990/91 to 2004/05, the proportion of women undergraduate qualifiers increased from 43 per cent to 60 per cent. The proportion of women postgraduate qualifiers also increased from 43 per cent in 1990/91 to 55 per cent in 2004/05. An analysis of the quality of the qualifications obtained reveals that more women achieved 'good' degrees (defined as upper seconds and first class degrees) than men. The Government is working to encourage female students to graduate in Engineering, Technology and Computer Sciences (see article 5).

Who are teachers at all levels

365. Women are very well represented in, and continue to be attracted to teaching. In 2005, 69 per cent of full-time regular qualified teachers in maintained schools in England were women. Women also outnumbered men in higher-level positions (head, deputy and assistant head) and in 2005 60 per cent were women.

366. In higher education (HE), there is an increasing trend of more women in academic posts, with the proportion rising from 27 per cent in 1995-96 to 36 per cent in 2004-05. The highest proportions are in subjects allied to medicine (62 per cent), law (43 per cent), languages (49 per cent and education (58 per cent). The proportion of women professors has more than doubled over this period – although from a low starting point – 9 per cent to 19 per cent.

367. The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) delivers National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), a benchmark qualification designed to prepare candidates for headship and which becomes mandatory for appointment to first headship from April 2009. In 2006 64.7 per cent of NPQH candidates were women.

Who are learners at Level 2

368. The Level 2 entitlement provides free tuition for all adults studying for their first full NVQ level 2 qualification (roughly equivalent to 5 A*-C at GCSE/ordinary level); the entitlement has been trialled over the last two years and has been available nationally from September 2006. In autumn 2005 a lower percentage of women than men held Level 2 qualifications (70 per cent compared with 66 per cent) but this gap is narrowing. Statistics suggest that women are more likely to be studying for a first level 2 than men. In 2005 women accounted for 72 per cent of first level 2 learners.

Providing support for disadvantaged students

Full-time students

369. The Government has introduced a number of grants for mature students with children, and in particular lone parents, to help with the costs of Higher Education. These include grants towards childcare costs (up to 85 per cent of the actual costs of registered or approved childcare, to a maximum of £148.75 per week for one dependent child, or a maximum of £255 per week for two or more dependent children, in 2006/07). In addition the Government continues to provide funding to Higher Education Institutions to assist students with financial hardship during the academic year - the Access to Learning Fund (ALF). £65 million is available through ALF for the 2006/07 academic year. Higher Education Institutions should give priority to students with children when assessing who can receive financial support from ALF.

Part-time students

370. Since 2004/05, part-time students on low incomes, studying at least 50 per cent of a full-time course, have been able to apply for grants towards their tuition fees (to a maximum of £1,125 in 2006/07) and a grant of up to £250 towards course costs, especially the cost of books and travel. This support package is of particular help to women, who are more likely to have responsibility for caring for children. For 2006/07, the amount of funding available through ALF for part-time students increased to £12 million (from £3 million in 2005/06). Part-time students can apply for a grant to help with childcare costs from ALF and they may also be able to get financial help, where needed, to secure childcare at the beginning of their course. Part-time students can also seek help to enable them to meet the cost of their tuition fees through the new Additional Fee Support Scheme which sits alongside ALF.

Providing support through the Learner Support Funding scheme

371. The Learner Support Fund (LSF) is the main source of financial support to help students with the additional costs of learning. The main elements of LSF are the hardship and childcare funds for adults. In 2004/05, nearly 550,000 awards of hardship were made with 63.5 per cent

of recipients being women. A further 55,000 awards of childcare support were made, of which 97 per cent went to women.

Childcare support through the Care to Learn scheme

372. Since 2003, the national Care to Learn scheme has provided childcare support for young parents who wish to go back into education and training. The scheme pays up to £155 per child per week - £170 in London - (2006/07 rates) for childcare, plus associated travel, as long as the young parent uses OfSTED-registered childcare, is following any form of publicly-funded learning and is aged under 20 on the day their learning starts. This scheme supports young parents' participation in learning, and evaluation has shown that nearly 90 per cent of them would not be in learning without the help of Care to Learn. In 2005/06 over 4,800 young parents benefited from the scheme and this is expected to increase to 7,000 in 2006/07. The vast majority of recipients were female, with just 12 fathers receiving funding in 2005/06.

Childcare support for parents attending college

373. For parents over 20 and studying in a sixth form, the national 20+ childcare scheme pays the same childcare benefits as Care to Learn - but on an income-assessed basis - as long as the parent uses OfSTED-registered childcare and has a dependent child under 15. Again, the vast majority of recipients were female, with less than 1 per cent being male.

Helping with costs of learning through the Adult Learning Grant

374. The Adult Learning Grant (ALG) is a programme designed to help low skilled, low income adults with the additional costs of learning. It is available to those aged 19+ studying full time for their first full level 2 or first full level 3 qualification. ALG provides up to £30 per week to learners during term time. It is currently being piloted in 25 LSC areas with full national coverage in 2007/08. Individuals who are receiving out of work benefits are not eligible for the programme.

375. In the first three years of pilots, over 16,300 learners received help from ALG, 53 per cent of whom were women. In 2006/07 the Government expects over 11,000 learners, rising to 28,000 from 2007/08 when the grant operates nationally across England. In the first three years of pilots, there was an age cap of 30 years for full L3 students. This was removed for the 2006/7 academic year, so many women who are over 30 and who wish to study at level 3 will now be able to receive ALG.

Increasing the numbers of non-white learners at Level 2

376. The representation of non-white learners on first level 2 courses is 12 per cent, which roughly correlates with the BME population. Although there is no data to prove this, the proportions of BME women to men on Level 2 courses are probably no different to those within the general population. However, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi learners

are under-represented on Level 2 courses. DfES and the LSC are taking action to improve the statistical base and to target under-represented groups. This includes a new Information Advice and Guidance helpline provided by learndirect and a joint DfES/LSC Adult Level 2 marketing and communication campaign. The campaign will be launched in summer 2007 and will be targeted at under-represented groups such as certain minority ethnic groups.

Northern Ireland (NI)

Ensuring preschool provision

377. The target of providing a funded preschool place for every child in their immediate preschool year whose parents want one has been achieved. The Government has accepted proposals from The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) for a revised curriculum and the relevant legislation, The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, took effect on 1 August 2006. The revised curriculum applies equally to all pupils, regardless of, for example, gender, and includes specific statutory provision for Personal Development from Year 1 onwards. This will provide opportunities for young people to look at issues such as personal health, physical and emotional well-being, relationships and sexuality education. The revised curriculum will be phased in from September 2007 to 2010.

Increasing the number of women teachers at all levels

378. Women in Northern Ireland continue to form the majority of the teaching force. At present, 73 per cent of schoolteachers in Northern Ireland are women. In 2007 women held 49 per cent of principal posts and 71 per cent of vice-principal posts in primary schools, compared with 40 per cent and 68 per cent, respectively, in 1999. In Northern Ireland 57 per cent completed the Professional Qualification for Headship (PQH NI) and 51 per cent the Professional Qualification for Serving Heads (PQSH).

Increasing the numbers of women taking Further and Higher Education

379. Women now account for over 60 per cent of all Higher Education student enrolments, 62 per cent of undergraduate enrolments and 58 per cent of postgraduate enrolments. The number of women enrolling on full time Higher Education courses increased by 8 per cent between 2002-03 and 2004-05 with the majority of domiciled students gaining Higher Education qualifications in 2004 -5 were female. The proportions of male and female first degree graduates attaining first class honours was broadly similar (12 per cent). A larger proportion of women first degree graduates achieved upper second class honours degrees (52 per cent) than their male counterparts (41 per cent). In the 2004 -05 academic year 60 per cent of all enrolments in the Further Education sector were female – a statistic which has been consistent for a number of years.

Measuring examination achievements of girls and boys

380. In Northern Ireland the proportion of girls and boys leaving school with GCSE-level qualifications or equivalent qualifications has consistently been higher than that for boys. Compared to 1987-88 when 84 per cent of girls and 73 per cent of boys left school with GCSE qualifications, the figures had improved to 97 per cent and 94 per cent respectively by 2004-5.

381. At GCSE level, girls again consistently outperform boys. Between 1987-88 and 2004-2005 the proportion of girls gaining at least one GCSE at grades A* to C rose from 67 per cent to 87 per cent, while the figures for boys were 53 per cent and 77 per cent. At the higher level of GCSE attainment (5+ GCSEs A* to C), in 1987-88, 41 per cent of girls attained this higher level, increasing to 71 per cent in 2004-2005, while the figures for boys were 32 per cent and 55 per cent. In 1987-88, 29 per cent of girls left school with at least one A Level or equivalent compared to 23 per cent of boys. By 2004-2005, the figure for girls had risen to 55 per cent; for boys it had risen to 38 per cent.

Providing for the education of school age mothers

382. The Department for Education was allocated additional resources from the Executive Programme Children's Fund in 2001 to develop a regional programme of support for pregnant schoolgirls and school-age mothers (SAM Programme). In 2004/05, 243 young women received support. The programme addresses the educational, social and personal development needs of these young women while they adjust to their changed circumstances. Young women wishing to continue in education after the programme are supported with childcare services. Social support is also given by developing informal peer networks and 'non-judgemental' support and advice. Underpinning the project is the belief that completion of formal education provides enhanced life opportunities for both the young woman and her baby and where the young woman wishes to continue in education on completion of the SAM Programme she should be supported in doing this.

Scotland

Analysing the achievements of girls and boys

383. The 2005/6 analysis of Scottish School Leavers and their Qualifications shows that a higher proportion of females than males leaving publicly funded schools achieved passes at all Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels, except where three or more passes at SCQF level 7 were attained. The Scottish Executive commissioned a research project, which looked at the factors influencing the relative attainment of girls and boys, published in September 2001. A follow up research project was published in May 2006. It found that schools have been using a range of approaches to address perceived differences between girls and boys in achievement, behaviour, self-esteem, confidence and career aspirations. Overall, four characteristics were shared by the more effective strategies: the initiative needs a champion in the school; it needs to become embedded in the culture and practice of the school; staff

development should be undertaken in line with the initiative; and parents should be involved. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/05/02135116/0>.

Providing careers guidance that challenges stereotypes

384. The statutory obligation on Scottish Ministers to secure provision of information, advice and guidance services to school and college students is delivered through Careers Scotland. Since 2003, Careers Scotland has developed some services that are specifically designed to combat stereotypical assumptions or discrimination on grounds of gender. In 2006 the Equal Opportunities Commission conducted research into Careers Scotland's products and services in relation to gender stereotyping. This research commended Careers Scotland's approach in challenging gender stereotypical assumptions as 'proactive' and 'ambitious'.

Increasing the numbers of women in further education

385. In the academic year 2004-05, over 260,000 women were enrolled in programmes of study in further education colleges accounting for 58 per cent of enrolments; and 128,750 women in programmes in higher education institutions (57 per cent of enrolments). This compares with 233,040 further education college (55 per cent) and 101,360 higher education institution enrolments (55 per cent) by women in 1998-99.

Encouraging lone parents into further and higher education

386. In July 2001, the Executive launched a three year (2001-04) £24 million package of initiatives to assist lone parents take advantage of further and higher education opportunities, by making it easier for them to address the difficulties associated with the cost and supply of childcare. This package has now been mainstreamed within the wider support available for higher education students through the Students Awards Agency for Scotland.

387. In Scotland, lone parents in full-time higher education can claim a £1,000 grant per annum towards the cost of registered childcare, from an allocated fund of £8.5 million. To support out of school childcare provision in disadvantaged areas, £8 million was awarded to local authorities. These funds should help to sustain around 1500 to 2000 places. To meet locally identified needs for lone parents, £7.5 million was made available over 2001-04 for further education colleges to widen childcare provision and this has also now been mainstreamed. The Scottish Executive produces an annual guide to the funding for students with dependent children, which covers lone parents. The most recent guide was published in May 2006 and is available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/05/25163137/0>.

Widening access for minority ethnic women in higher education (HE)

388. The Scottish Executive has widened HE access with around 9,770 women from minority ethnic backgrounds enrolling in vocational courses at further education colleges, and 8,235 in higher education institutions, in the 2005-06 academic year.

Wales

Increasing the numbers of women with access to higher education

389. Widening access and participation is a key overall objective for the Assembly. Latest figures show that 56 per cent of Higher Education learners are female and 58 per cent at Further Education colleges. Women have always formed a large part of the teaching workforce - in 1990-91, 63 per cent were female. This increased to 71 per cent in 2005-06. In 1990-91 41 per cent of primary head teachers were female, but this had increased to 56 per cent in 2005-06. For secondary head teachers the figures have more than doubled from 8 per cent to 19 per cent. About 40 per cent of academic staff at Higher Education Institutions are female.

Article 11: Employment

Encouraging women's participation in the labour market

390. The Government recognises that those women who wish to work make a critical contribution to the economy, both in their role as workers and as primary carers, and has made advancements to address the barriers that prevent some women from meeting their full potential. Following a number of initiatives, there has been strong growth in the level of female participation in the labour market over the last few decades. In 2005, 70 per cent of women of working age were in employment, compared to 60 per cent in 1975. Women now make up 46 per cent of the workforce, up from 38 per cent in 1971, with 43 per cent of women working part-time compared to just 10 per cent of men. By 2010 there will be 2 million more jobs, 80 per cent of which are expected to be filled by women.

Introducing more family-friendly employment policies

391. The Government is committed to helping mothers and fathers balance work and family life. It has therefore introduced a further package of family friendly rights in the form of the Work and Families Act 2006, which in turn builds on entitlements for working parents introduced in 2003.

392. The main elements are as follows:

- since April 2003, parents of children aged under 6 or parents of disabled children aged under 18 have the right to apply to work flexibly, and employers have a duty to consider such requests seriously. About 5.4 million employees now work through some form of flexible working, most of whom (3.2 million) are women⁹; and 47 per cent of new mothers now work flexi-time, compared with just 17 per cent in 2002¹⁰. Building on this success,

⁹ Labour Force Survey, autumn 2005.

¹⁰ Maternity and Paternity Rights Survey of Employees, 2005.

the Government has extended the right to request flexible working to carers of adults from 6 April 2007;

- from October 2006, maternity leave for all employed mothers with babies due on or after 1 April 2007 increased from 26 weeks to a full year regardless of their length of service. Statutory maternity pay and Maternity Allowance, available for qualifying mothers, has been extended and is payable for 39 weeks for women whose expected week of childbirth was on or after 1 April 2007. Statutory Maternity Pay is paid at 90 per cent of average weekly earnings for the first six weeks and at a flat weekly rate (£108.85 in 2006/7) or 90 per cent of earnings, whichever is the lesser for the remaining period. Maternity Allowance is the lesser of the flat rate or 90 per cent of the woman's average earnings. The contract of employment continues throughout maternity (and parental) leave. Approximately 380,000 mothers each year will benefit from the increase in maternity pay;
- since April 2003, adopters with a child newly placed for adoption have had the right to 52 weeks' adoption leave. From October 2006, statutory adoption pay was extended from 26 to 39 weeks in respect of children whose expected date of placement was on or after 1 April 2007. This right is subject to a 26 week qualifying employment period and minimum earnings criteria;
- since April 2003, qualifying employees have benefited from two weeks' paid paternity leave in the time around which their partner gives birth to a child. Evidence collected in 2005 estimates that 79 per cent of employees have made use of at least some of their two week entitlement to paternity leave, and 45 per cent have used all of their two week entitlement¹¹;
- the Government took powers in the Work and Families Act 2006 to give eligible fathers a new entitlement to an additional period of paternity leave (up to 26 weeks) which may be paid if his partner returns to work early. The Government intends to deliver this new entitlement before the end of the current UK Parliament.

393. Research indicates that many employers already provide contractual benefits that go further than the statutory minimum. In 2004, 57 per cent of workplaces with 10 or more employees provided fully paid maternity leave and 55 per cent of workplaces with 10 or more employees provided fully paid paternity or discretionary leave for fathers (Kersley et. al., 2005).

394. In 2002, just 9 per cent of mothers took six months' maternity leave; and 5 per cent took one year or more. By 2005, these figures had increased to half of mothers taking six months and a further 14 per cent taking a full year. The proportion of mothers returning to work 17 months after of the birth of their child has remained unchanged between 2002 and 2005 at

¹¹ Statistics from Smeaton, D & Marsh, A (2006) Maternity and Paternity Rights and Benefits Survey of Parents 2005. Employment Relations Research Series Number 50, London: DTI.

around 80 per cent. However, in 2002, 41 per cent of mothers returned to a different employer. By 2005, this dropped to just 20 per cent.

Childcare

Providing high quality childcare

395. In 1997, there was a registered childcare place for 1 in 8 children under 8, now it is 1 in 4. At September 2006, the stock of registered childcare stood at over 1.28 million places (double the 1997 level). Taking into account turnover, at September 2006, around 644,000 new Ofsted registered childcare places (net) had been created since 1997. By 2010, there will be a childcare place for all children aged between 3 and 14 each weekday between the hours of 8am to 6pm, with over 2 million sustainable childcare places for children up to 14.

Following the ten year childcare strategy

396. The Government published its Ten Year Childcare Strategy "*Choice for Parents, the Best Start for Children*" in December 2004 setting out ambitious plans to create a sustainable framework for high quality services for children and families. Key commitments were the delivery of universal affordable childcare for 3 to 14 year olds and a Sure Start Children's Centre for every community, so early years and childcare services became a permanent, mainstream part of the welfare state. A Ten Year Strategy Action Plan "*Choice for Parents, the Best Start for Children: Making it Happen*", published on 4 April 2006, highlighted achievements since the Strategy was published, the challenges ahead, and who needs to do what, by when, to ensure Strategy commitments are delivered.

Introducing the Childcare Act 2006

397. The Childcare Act 2006 took forward and gave statutory force to the key commitments of the Ten Year Childcare Strategy. It puts the needs of children and their parents at its heart, with local authorities as their champions, ensuring families' views are heard in the planning and delivery of services. It also enshrines in law, a parent's expectation that high quality childcare will be available for all those who want to work.

Extended services offered by schools

398. By 2010, all schools will be providing access to a 'core offer' of extended services, including childcare, study support and a range of family learning and parental support. Many primary and secondary schools already offer extended services. A baseline survey of maintained schools in 2005 found that 87 per cent of primary schools, and 95 per cent of secondary schools, were offering regular activities for children or childcare after the standard school day. More than 3,800 schools - 1 in 6 - are now offering the core extended services, and the target of 2,500 schools doing so by September 2006 was exceeded.

399. To support schools in developing extended services, the Government committed, via local authorities, around £50 million in 2003-05 and £110 million in 2005-06. A further £680 million funding is being provided from 2006-2008. Of this, £430 million will go to schools via local authorities, who will be responsible for the strategic development of extended services, whilst a further £250 million will go directly to schools through the School Standards Grant (SSG).

Working to reduce the pay gap

Government response to Women and Work Commission

400. Since the Equal Pay Act came into effect in 1975, the full-time mean pay gap has narrowed from 30 per cent to around 17 per cent in 2006 (around 20 per cent in 2002). The full-time median pay gap was 15.5 per cent in 2002 and 12.6 per cent in 2006. In 2004 the Prime Minister asked Baroness Margaret Prosser to chair an independent review to examine the causes of the gender and opportunities gap and to find practical ideas to close this gap for women at work. The review body was called the Women and Work Commission (WWC).

401. The Commission presented their report, *Shaping a Fairer Future*, to the Prime Minister in February 2006. The report proposed a wealth of practical ideas on how to close the gender pay and opportunities gap, based on a thorough analysis of all the available evidence. The Commission found that there was a strong economic imperative to reducing the pay and opportunities gaps. They estimated that increasing women's participation in the labour market and in higher paid occupations and roles could be worth £15 - £23bn a year to the UK economy. Increased labour market participation of women will also contribute to the UK's overall target employment rate of 80 per cent.

402. On 11 September 2006 the Minister for Women issued the *Government Action Plan: Implementing the Women and Work Commission recommendations* in response to the recommendations made in the WWC's report. Of the 40 recommendations made by the WWC, the Government accepted or partially accepted all but one of the 38 recommendations aimed at Government. It rejected one, the provision of fiscal incentives to small firms to employ part-time and flexible workers, because the use of fiscal measures might add complexity for some Small Medium Enterprise (SME) employers, and could distort decisions about who to employ in a way that was unfair to some workers.

403. Progress on delivery of some of these recommendations is as follows:

- a £500k fund that will support initiatives to increase the availability of quality, part-time work. Employers will be able to apply for match-funded support for specialist advice embedding quality, part-time work in their organisations. The fund opened for bids on 30 January 2007, and closed on 13 March 2007;
- a programme of exemplar initiatives by employers. This requires employers to give a clear commitment to reducing the gender pay gap through a range of projects. Over 100

Exemplar Employers are already signed up from the private and public sectors. Regular e-newsletters produced by Communities and Local Government showcase other programmes of work by exemplar employers. The Government will hold a one day best practice conference in spring 2007 to discuss the impact of the initiatives on workplace practice;

- £10m will be invested over the next two years in the Women and Work Sector Pathways initiative (see article 5), backing projects put forward by Sector Skills Councils which propose innovative ways of helping women make progress in their careers. On 20 November 2006, the funding was announced for projects in 5 sectors to enable women to gain qualifications for entry into non-traditional jobs and management/supervisory positions. Three further schemes were announced on 30 January 2007;
- the aims of the Women’s Enterprise Task Force (see below) are to provide high-profile leadership to accelerate women's enterprise development, and to facilitate and coordinate better delivery of support to female entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs;
- the 2006 budget announced pilots delivering level 3 Skills for Women (see article 5). The Level 3 Trial for women and ethnic minority women commenced in London in November 2006, and will deliver more than 10,000 level 3 qualifications over the next two years. It is integrated with Train to Gain (the new national employer training programme). The cost of the level 3 trial for women will be £10m in 2006/07, and £10m in 2007/08;
- support for Equality Representatives through the Union Modernisation Fund; and
- developing an “equality check” – a light touch tool that employers can use to identify the issues that require action to ensure equality.

404. The Government launched ‘Towards a Fairer Future: Implementing the WWC Recommendations’ April 2007, which is a comprehensive programme of action, one year on from the WWC report. This set out actions being taken forward by Government to tackle the gender pay gap and occupational segregation. At the same time, it announced the successful bidders for the quality part-time work fund, which will support employers increasing the number of quality jobs which are available on a part-time or job share basis.

Investigating barriers to work faced by black and minority ethnic women

405. The Government will also look at the barriers to work faced by black and minority ethnic women and investigate practical measures to raise their employment levels (see article 3). For example, the DWP’s Barriers to Employment for Pakistanis and Bangladeshis (second wave)

will build on the findings of the Barriers to Employment project and is designed to support policy initiatives for encouraging ethnic minority women, particularly Muslim women, to enter the work force. The project will analyse cultural factors faced by women in the home and their community regarding work, and the resources available for 'bridging' the divide between community and employment. It will be published by summer 2007.

Action being taken by Government departments

406. In 2003, all 88 Government department and agencies completed equal pay reviews and action plans. Departments are encouraged to review their pay systems following implementation of pay awards and to carry out full equality proofing of their reward policies and practices every three years.

Women in the civil service

407. The number of women in top management posts in the civil service increased from 22.9 per cent in 2003 to 25.5 per cent in April 2005, exceeding the first Gender Equality PSA target of 25 per cent. A new target of 30 per cent by 2008 was set in the current Gender Equality PSA. The latest figure for October 2006 is 26.8 per cent, so although progress is being made, it may take longer than 2008 to reach this more challenging target. The Government is currently reviewing what action it can take to drive progress more quickly as part of its 10-Point Plan for achieving Diversity in the Civil Service, and it has already set in train a number of initiatives at both corporate and departmental level to meet its goals.

The National Minimum Wage also plays its part

408. The National Minimum Wage also plays a part in narrowing the gender pay gap, so the Government has introduced a strategy of targeted enforcement in certain low paying sectors (see article 3).

Taking steps to increase the numbers of women in business

409. Women-owned businesses contribute about £60 billion to the UK economy. To increase levels of women's business ownership in the UK, the 2006 Budget Report announced that the Government was establishing a Task Force on Women's Enterprise. It is tasked with championing and providing leadership for the women's enterprise agenda across Government and into the regions. It will ensure optimum conditions for longer-term culture change by fully engaging cross-Whitehall policies. In particular, it will:

- work with the Regional Development Agencies (see below) to ensure women have access to high-quality, women-friendly support;
- lead joint action with banks to improve awareness of financing options for women entrepreneurs;

- improve the transition of women from benefit receipt to self-employment;
- embed gender-disaggregated data collection as a principle across Government and the regions;
- provide expert advice on best practice in policy development, implementation and delivery.

410. The Government has announced an initiative (operational from March 2007) to recruit a network of 1000 women entrepreneur ambassadors to advise and support other women in starting their own businesses. The ambassadors, who will be recruited by Regional Development Agencies, will work with women in their communities, through education and in specific industries.

Introducing regional Women's Enterprise Unit Pilots to encourage more women into business

411. Regional Development Agencies (strategic drivers of regional economic development) from five regions are establishing pilot regional Women's Enterprise Units to trial different approaches (such as a virtual Women's Enterprise Unit and mainstream business support), in order to encourage the start-up and growth of female-owned businesses. The purpose is to provide female friendly business support from the pre-start stage onwards.

412. The Agencies involved in the pilot are North West Development Agency, ONE NorthEast, Yorkshire Forward, East Midlands Development Agency and Advantage West Midlands. The initial findings from the evaluation and the lessons learnt in developing future business support were published in spring 2007.

East of England Development Agency (EEDA)

413. EEDA has been the lead partner in developing a Regional Women's Strategy, which has given significant focus to the efforts of the Regional Development Agencies on women's enterprise over the last 12 months. Work is continuing through the Regional Steering Group chaired by an EEDA Board member, and through the current 'Enterprising Women' programme (a £1.3m EEDA-funded programme in the East of England), to develop the different strands of activity in that region. This includes piloting wide-ranging women-focused activities aimed at Black Minority Ethnic groups, science, education and technology, rural, pre-pre start and business growth. A regional directory of business support for women was funded, and over 10,000 copies distributed. For more information, go to: www.enterprising-women.org/.

South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)

414. The SEEDA Network of 22 Enterprise Hubs focuses on nurturing high-tech, knowledge based businesses and entrepreneurs. One of the most successful Hub companies is 'Arieso' a leading provider of advanced optimisation and network planning solutions for cellular

networks. It has raised £1.5million from its first institutional funding round. As the Hub Network grows, specific marketing and promotional activities are being developed to target specific groups of entrepreneurs, including women. Many Hubs host 'Women in Business Networking' events.

415. Enterprise Gateways are a joint SEEDA and Business Link project to encourage and nurture entrepreneurship amongst 'hard to reach groups' - this includes women, Black Minority Ethnic groups, rural businesses, social enterprises etc. There are currently 6 operational Gateways in the region.

London Development Agency (LDA)

416. Since women make up 52 per cent of London's population but own only 11 per cent of the city's businesses, last year the LDA launched a report '*Business Priorities for Women's Enterprise in London*', following consultation with women-owned businesses, practitioners and policy makers. This will now inform the Women's Enterprise Action Plan, launched to help female entrepreneurs access more contract opportunities.

Increasing participation in New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP)

417. The latest econometric analysis of NDLP, published June 2006¹² shows that, of those eligible to be on the programme, an additional 14.26 per cent of participants gain employment compared to non-participants. Participation in NDLP is voluntary with many lone parents joining after having a mandatory Work-Focused Interview (WFI). There is now a wide body of evidence¹³ that shows WFIs are having a positive impact, both in terms of moving lone parents onto NDLP and for the positive responses of lone parents who have experienced them. In his Budget speech of March 2006, the Chancellor announced that, from April 2007, six monthly WFIs would be rolled out to all lone parents who had been on benefit for at least a year and whose youngest child was under 14.

Helping older women in employment — New Deal 50 plus

418. New Deal 50 plus continues to provide a voluntary employment programme for the long-term unemployed and economically inactive women and men over 50 who have been claiming benefits for 6 months or more. Between April 2000 and May 2006 50,000 women returned to work with the support of this programme.

¹² Dolton, P. Azevedo, J.P. Smith, J. (2006) The Econometric Evaluation of New Deal for Lone Parents. RR356. Sheffield, DWP Available from: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2005-2006/rrep356.pdf>.

¹³ Knight, G. and Lissenburgh, S. 'Evaluation of Lone Parent Work Focused Interviews: Final Findings from administrative data analysis', DWP Research Report W182, February 2004; Thomas, A. and Griffiths, R. 'Integrated Findings from The Evaluation of the First 18 Months of Lone Parent Work Focused Interviews.' DWP Research report W184, March 2004.

Jobseekers Allowance claimants

419. The Government has announced proposals to improve back to work support for Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimants and their dependant partners, who are mostly women, aged over 50. This will include work focussed help and support delivered through Jobcentre Plus to those aged 50 to 59. In addition the Government proposes to pilot face-to-face guidance sessions for older workers. This will help women who may think about leaving work due to health problems or caring responsibilities to reconsider options for continuing in work.

420. The employment rate of the over 50s continues to rise and in recent years has tended to increase faster than the overall employment rate. For men aged 50 to state pension age (currently 65), the rate has increased by 4.2 per cent between Spring 1999 and 2006 to 72.8 per cent. For women aged 50 to state pension age (currently 60) the rate increased over the same period by 5.3 per cent to 68.4 per cent, an increase of 1.1 per cent more than the men's rate. (Office of National Statistics Labour Force Survey Spring quarter).

Helping women with disabilities

421. In 2004/05, 5 million people of working age in Great Britain were disabled people, including people with limiting longstanding illnesses, of whom 2.3 million were disabled women. In Spring 2006, 11 per cent of employed people were long-term disabled people, of whom 47 per cent were female (lower numbers reflect the fact that women aged 60-64 are not included in the working-age population).

422. The Government takes the inclusion of disabled people in society, and in particular in the labour market, very seriously. DWP has a specific PSA target to increase the employment rate of disabled people relative to the overall employment rate, and has been successful in reducing the gap since 1998. Since 2003, the department has been piloting Pathways to Work, which independent evaluation shows to have been successful in helping disabled people enter employment, and is currently rolling this out to the whole country.

Supporting the rights of women migrant workers in international development

423. The Department for International Development (DFID) sees migration as an opportunity and driver of change for gender relations that has enormous potential for promoting women's rights and gender equality. An evaluation of DFID's support to gender within migration and development activities was undertaken in 2004 as part of a series of thematic evaluations of development assistance. It noted that much had been done in a short three year period but there was more DFID could do particularly at international and national levels. In 2004, DFID supported the establishment of the Global Migration and Gender Network. In 2005, the Asia Directorate agreed to fund the second phase of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM's) programme for Empowering Women Migrant Workers in Asia. This has contributed to successful lobbying by UNIFEM for the inclusion of an indicator relevant to migrant women workers' rights.

Northern Ireland

Giving support to women in business

424. Invest Northern Ireland has produced a strategic framework to encourage women in business to grow and expand their existing operations, as well as facilitate women's entry into business. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Northern Ireland 2005, 2.8 per cent of women were engaged in early stage entrepreneurial activity compared to 6.9 per cent of the men. Over the last three years, entrepreneurial activity has increased for women from a low base rate in 2002 of 1.4 per cent to 2.8 per cent.

Monitoring female representation on training programmes

425. The Department for Employment and Learning monitors all its major programmes and services by key equality dimensions, including gender, and publishes results of this monitoring in its annual *Labour Market Bulletin* and on the Departmental website www.delni.gov.uk.

426. Monitoring figures for March 2006 show that female participation on the Graduate Management Internship Programme was 63 per cent and 57 per cent on the Business Education Initiative. Female representation on other programmes, such as New Deal for 18-24 Year Olds and New Deal 25+ was lower (31 per cent and 20 per cent respectively). The Department also monitors programme outcomes in terms of gender - 29 per cent of female leavers from New Deal for 18-24 Year Olds in 2005 entered employment whilst the male figure was 27 per cent. The corresponding figure for New Deal 25+ programme was 17 per cent for both males and females. The Department is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in all its programmes and services and carries out regular Equality Impact Assessments on these. Evaluations of Departmental programmes and services also examine gender issues where this is appropriate.

Encouraging women to bid for the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation

427. Under the PEACE 11 Programme (2000-2006) women are encouraged to seek funding for a range of activities. In particular resources are available to improve women's access to and participation in the labour market and to improve entrepreneurship. Women will continue to be a target beneficiary group for the next round of funding in 2007 – 2013.

Scotland

Improving the provision of high quality childcare

428. The Scottish Executive's Childcare Strategy aims to provide affordable, accessible, good quality childcare for children aged 0-14 in every neighbourhood, to help meet the needs of working parents. It is providing over £44 million of Childcare Strategy funding in 2006-07 and 2007-08 to local authorities who are responsible, alongside Childcare Partnerships, for making

decisions on its disbursement to meet local needs. Out of School Care (OSC) has an important role to play in labour market growth and family prosperity by helping enable people back into work. A cross-sectoral working group was set-up to make recommendations on issues affecting the delivery of OSC services, the result of which was a document, “*School’s Out – Framework for the Development of Out of School Care*” published in 2003.

Creating Childcare Partnerships

429. A network of Childcare Partnerships has been created, one in each local authority area, with the public, private and voluntary sectors. The New Opportunities Fund (NOF) made available £14.5 million from 2003-06 in the third round quality childcare programme. A three year evaluation of this programme commenced in 2005. The Executive is funding a Development Worker to promote the sitter service network, which provides home-based childcare to support unusual working patterns for low income families. From April 2003, sitter services were regulated by the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care as childcare agencies and are therefore eligible for assistance through the Tax Credits system.

Setting up the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care

430. Under the *Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001*, the Scottish Executive established the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (Care Commission) in April 2002. New national care standards for early education, childcare and childcare agencies were published by Scottish Ministers and registration of the early education and childcare workforce started in October 2006. From April 2003, inspection of centres providing preschool education that Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) conducted, have been replaced with inspections undertaken by the Care Commission working jointly with HMIE. These inspections apply to all kinds of centres offering preschool education, including nursery schools and classes.

Encouraging more women into business

431. The Scottish Executive, Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, launched a Women’s Enterprise Strategy “*Sharpening the Focus on Women’s Enterprise in Scotland*” in 2005. This strategy was informed by a research programme in 2003-4 which explored women’s enterprise in Scotland and the factors that stimulate or constrain the start-up, survival and growth. The strategy aims to increase the women’s business birth rate by creating more would-be entrepreneurs and helping them to convert their interest into action. It also highlights the services and activities currently provided by the enterprise agencies to assist more women to start-up and grow their businesses.

432. The Strategy for the Enterprise Networks aims to increase the number of women self employed to 28 per cent by 2009, from 26 per cent in 2003. Scottish Enterprise has a programme of initiatives in place to help it strive to achieve these targets, including the National Unit for Women’s Enterprise, established in April 2003, which is supported by an external advisory group of business women and advocates.

Taking steps to reduce the pay gap

433. The Scottish Executive launched the Close the Gap campaign in March 2001 to raise awareness about the pay gap between women and men and encourage activity to close it. Although the power to legislate about equal pay is reserved to the Westminster Parliament, the Scottish Executive continues to work in partnership with a range of organisations. The Executive has committed to funding Close the Gap until December 2007. The main focus of the project is to target large private sector employers, particularly in the Finance Sector, and also to target the Further and Higher Education Sectors.

Wales**Taking steps to reduce the pay gap**

434. The Welsh Assembly Government started an equal pay campaign tackling gender pay inequality in March 2002, with the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Wales Trade Union Congress. Its primary objective is to tackle discrimination in pay systems, but also to raise awareness of the pay gap and encourage employers to do pay reviews.

435. Phase 3 of the campaign, which commenced in April 2005, has focused primarily on the public sector, local Government, the National Health Service and Higher Education which employ over 250,000 women in Wales. This represents more than a third of all working women so the impact of pay inequalities in these sectors is significant. Progress has been reviewed with 100 public sector organisations providing progress reports. Once it comes to an end in March 2007, phase 3 of the campaign will be independently evaluated to determine the campaign's next steps.

Driving forward the childcare agenda

436. In December 2003, the Welsh Assembly Government announced that a new working group would be set up to drive forward the Childcare Action Plan. The group was given a wide-ranging remit and looked at ways of taking the childcare agenda forward in Wales. Starting with childcare from a children's perspective, the issues included regulation and quality; parental choice and affordability; the childcare workforce; business support; childcare and the economy; cultural issues; access issues; children and education and structures to support childcare in Wales. The Group's final report 'A Flying Start' was published in March 2005 and included 77 recommendations under the key areas identified. The Assembly Government considered the Group's recommendations as part of the development of a full plan for childcare.

Updated childcare strategy published

437. In November 2005, the Welsh Assembly Government published an updated Childcare Strategy for Wales which will build on its achievements to date in developing childcare in Wales. “*Childcare is for Children*” supports three broad objectives:

- to ensure that all childcare supports the developmental needs of children in Wales;
- to ensure that childcare is widely available and affordable, to enable parents to train or work and thus raise levels of economic activity in Wales; and
- to provide childcare so that parents can have flexibility and choice in how they balance family, work and other commitments within their lives, and in doing so promote gender equality within the workforce.

438. It will be mainly funded from the Cymorth – Children and Youth Support Fund - 8.5 per cent of which is earmarked for childcare. In 2006-07, growth of £12 million in Cymorth will take forward childcare strategy actions.

439. The Strategy highlights a number of initiatives that the Welsh Assembly Government is taking to promote childcare, including the Flying Start Initiative, which includes free part time childcare for 2 years with £46 million available to March 2008; and the Genesis Wales European Social Fund project which has a combined total of £12.5 million over 3 years under Objectives 1 and 3, for the purpose of increasing the contribution of European Structural Funds to childcare provision across Wales.

Funding for childcare

440. The Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs ESF project provides £3.7 million to August 2007 to increase affordable, quality childcare provision, complementing the Genesis Wales project. The Welsh Assembly Government has also taken over leading the Childcare Wales Learning and Working Mutually (CWLWM) Equal Project, which brings together a number of childcare development interests to tackle childcare challenges in partnership, with an additional £1.2 million of EU funding over three years to June 2007.

Giving help to encourage more women into business

441. From 2000 to 2006, projects such as *Potentia* and *Women's Enterprise Wales*, set up within the *Entrepreneurship Action Plan for Wales*, have provided those in under-represented groups with pre-start support and assistance to start their own business. Both projects have been very successful - since 2003, over 1,300 women have received support and over 400 women have gone on to start their own business. Over the last 18 months, the emphasis of these projects has shifted from working mostly with the client groups to working more closely with mainstream

business support organisations. Current and future work will focus on enabling these organisations to deliver their services in an inclusive and accessible manner.

Providing funding for voluntary sector organisations

442. The Welsh Assembly Government provides financial support for the voluntary-sector body Chwarae Teg to undertake a range of activities to maximise the potential of women in the workplace in Wales working through the themes of Employment; Education & Lifelong Learning; Enterprise, and Equal Opportunities and Public Policy. Project activities to date include provision of enterprise advice for women; diversity training for employers; skills development/awareness raising for women in non-traditional sectors; research and policy development around gender equality; and working in partnership with Welsh Assembly Government to promote Worklife balance.

443. Chwarae Teg's European Funded European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) project Women's Enterprise Wales worked to increase the numbers of women setting up in business in Wales by addressing some of the barriers to participation through outreach work, and highlighting the positive contribution women can make to the Welsh economy through increased entrepreneurial activity. The project came to an end in March 2006 having assisted over 700 women to start new businesses, created more than 1,000 jobs and supported over 2,500 women.

Article 12: Women's health

Meeting the Gender Equality duty

444. The Gender Duty came into force in April 2007. In order to address difficulties in accessing health services experienced by all women and especially by black and minority ethnic (BME) women, the Government is working to facilitate access to health services and quality care by giving women more choice about how, when and where they receive treatment as well as shaping local health systems. The Department continues to fund innovative programmes involving places of worship and voluntary organisations, in order to develop their capacity to undertake a range of health promotion initiatives aimed at engaging and reaching BME groups.

Tackling health inequalities

445. The work of the Health Inequalities Unit (set up in 2001) is shaped by the Public Service Agreement (PSA) target to reduce inequalities in health outcomes by 10 per cent by 2010, as measured by infant mortality and life expectancy at birth. *Tackling Health Inequalities: Status report on the Programme for Action* marks an important stage in the national health inequalities strategy launched by the *Programme for Action* in July 2003. Although the report focuses on the headline indicators, it recognises the importance of other factors in tackling health

inequalities, such as mental health and inequalities experienced by black and minority ethnic and other groups.

Screening

Increasing the numbers attending for breast screening

446. As at March 2005, 75.5 per cent of women aged 50-64 invited for breast screening in England had been screened at least once in the previous three years (74.9 per cent at March 2004) and 1.48 million women of all ages were screened within the programme.

447. All local breast screening services have now implemented 'two-view mammography', resulting in a 40 per cent increase in the number of cancers detected annually and all local programmes are now inviting women aged 65 to 70. About 600,000 more women have been screened since the extension began in April 2001.

448. There is insufficient evidence at the moment for inviting women aged over 70 for screening as part of the national breast screening programme. However, the Government encourages women aged over 70 to self-refer on an individual basis, and, if they do request it, they can have free three yearly screening. Those who have already participated in the programme are informed of this right after the age of 70. The Advisory Committee on Breast Cancer Screening has constantly kept this issue under review, and has commissioned a research study to assess the evidence on inviting women aged over 70 for breast screening.

Increasing the numbers of women invited for cervical cancer and screening

449. As at August 2006, 79.5 per cent of women aged 25-64 had been screened at least once in the previous 5 years. In 2004-05 3.6 million women were screened, the majority after a formal invitation from the screening programme. Laboratories examined an estimated 4.0 million samples.

Other screening tests offered by Government

450. The Government also offers a number of other screening tests (see Annex one for more details), including sickle cell anaemia and Thalassaemia, Down's syndrome screening and Fetal anomaly screening.

Raising awareness of sexual health among young people

451. In November 2006, the Department of Health launched a new awareness raising campaign *Condom Essential Wear* for 18-24 year olds which focuses on the main sexually transmitted infections. This complements existing work for younger people and builds on the previous campaign (*Sex Lottery*) mentioned in the last CEDAW report and includes gender specific materials.

Setting up the Independent Advisory Group on Sexual Health and HIV

452. An Independent Advisory Group (IAG) on Sexual Health and HIV was established in March 2003 to provide a wide range of views from health professionals involved in all aspects of sexual health, monitor progress and advise the Government on implementation of the Sexual Health and HIV Strategy. In 2005, the IAG produced an annual review against a background of profound change in the NHS. This report can be viewed by accessing the following link - <http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/10/44/04121044.pdf>.

Encouraging women to exercise more

453. Public Service Agreement 3 (PSA 3) for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) aims to increase women's sports participation by 3 per cent by the year 2008. Participation rates are particularly low for certain Black Minority Ethnic groups. Sport England works with key partners to deliver PSA 3. In addition, the Equality Standard for Sport is being rolled out across the sport sector as a framework for assisting organisations to widen access and reduce inequalities in sport and physical activity from under-represented individuals, groups and communities, including women.

454. Using the DCMS Taking Part survey to measure progress against PSA3, baseline results published in December 2006, (using data from interviews from July 2005 to July 2006), showed that during the previous four weeks, 48 per cent of women had participated in at least one active sport and 18 per cent of women had participated in moderate intensity level sport for at least 30 minutes on at least three separate occasions.

Tackling osteoporosis in older women

455. To support the implementation of the Government's National Service Framework (NSF) for Older People, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) published clinical guidelines on prevention, management and treatment of osteoporosis in 2004 and its technology appraisal: *The clinical effectiveness of technologies for the secondary prevention of osteoporotic fractures in postmenopausal women* was published in 2005. See Annex one for more details.

Set up the National Programme on Gender Equality and Women's Mental Health

456. The national programme on gender equality and women's mental health was established in 2003/04 to support the *Implementation Guidance: Mainstreaming Gender and Women's Mental Health*. Its focus has been the specific delivery of differentiated high quality services for women service users and the development of a gendered context for mental health and social care.

457. A draft work plan for 2006-2007 was circulated for comment in July 2006. This was presented to, and endorsed by, the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) Board in September. The priorities for 2006/07 were developed from an analysis of progress in

implementing *Women Into the Mainstream* in partnership with the regional leads and following discussion with senior personnel within NIMHE and Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP). Six key priorities were identified for 2006/07 (see Annex one for more details). Sexual safety is a significant concern for women in mental health services, particularly inpatient settings, and £30 million in capital money has been made available for improvements to inpatient areas (see Annex one).

British Women's Heart & Health Study

458. The British Regional Heart Study was originally established to look at a cohort of middle-aged men recruited between 1978-80. In 2000, a cohort of women was recruited and this part of the study is now called the British Women's Heart & Health Study. The study was expanded to try to answer questions about the difference between males and to identify specific implications for women over their life course. This is a longitudinal study so will report at variable intervals. Some of the key findings released in 2003 showed that 16 per cent of women in the study have coronary heart disease; and 20 per cent of women over 60 have cardiovascular disease.

Maternity services

Focusing on women and family-centred maternity services

459. The United Kingdom's maternal, perinatal and infant mortality rates remain amongst some of the lowest in the world. The Department for Health is committed to the principles of woman focussed, family centred maternity services, as set out in the *Maternity Standard* of the *National Service Framework for children, young people and maternity services* (NSF), published in September 2004. The Maternity Standard addresses the requirements of women and their babies for antenatal, intrapartum (childbirth) and postnatal care. It aims to promote every woman's experience of having choice and control in giving birth to her baby, including the place of birth, and having access to a named midwife. Particular emphasis is placed on improving services for vulnerable women from the most disadvantaged communities, to address health inequalities. The NSF is supported by the White Paper, *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say*, published in January 2006, which commits the Government to achieve world-class maternity services by 2009.

Set up the Domestic Abuse and Pregnancy Advisory Group

460. Many cases of domestic abuse start during pregnancy. So the DH set up the Domestic Abuse and Pregnancy Advisory Group in 2005. The Group's recommendations informed the DH publication *Responding to Domestic Abuse: A handbook for health professionals* in January 2006, which gives practical guidance to healthcare professionals on working with service users experiencing domestic abuse.

National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines

461. In addition, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) issued guidelines on routine antenatal care (October 2003), postnatal care (July 2006) and important clinical procedures such as caesarean section (April 2004). Further guidelines are being developed on intrapartum care and antenatal and postnatal mental health. All first time mothers receive a free copy of the *Pregnancy Book* which contains comprehensive information and guidance for a healthy pregnancy, labour and giving birth as well as life with the new baby.

Improving the numbers of women who breastfeed

462. The Government continues to recognise breastfeeding as the best form of nutrition for infants. The interim results from the 2005 quinquennial Infant Feeding survey showed an increase in the number of women initiating breastfeeding across all socio-economic groupings in the UK from 69 per cent in 2000 to 76 per cent in 2005. For further information on Government action in this area, see Annex one. Children's Centres, (see articles 3 and 10), will be working towards a Performance Indicator on the percentage of mothers initiating breastfeeding.

Ensuring the health and safety of expectant mothers

463. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) met regularly with representatives of the Equal Opportunities Commission during 2005 and 2006 to address health and safety issues relating to new and expectant mothers, including ways of highlighting employers' statutory duties. HSE's leaflet "*5 Steps to risk Assessment*" was revised in 2006, and now refers to the specific risk assessment employers are required to carry out once informed of a pregnancy, that a woman has given birth within the previous 6 months or that she is breast-feeding. The new edition of "*The Essentials of Health and Safety at Work*", published in 2006 also includes guidance on new and expectant working mothers.

464. HSE also worked with the Department for Trade and Industry to produce the leaflet "*Pregnancy and Work: What you need to know as an employee and employer*". This covers all aspects of pregnancy and the responsibilities and requirements both the woman and employer should meet, including the requirement for an employer to carry out a specific risk assessment once informed of a pregnancy. It was published in September 2006.

Making progress in reducing the numbers of teenage pregnancies

465. There has been steady progress in reducing teenage pregnancy rates. Between 1998 (the baseline year for the strategy) and 2004 (the latest year for which data is available) the under-18 conception rate fell by 11.1 per cent and the under-16 rate by 15.2 per cent. Both rates are now at their lowest levels since the mid-1980s.

Guidance issued to local agencies

466. Detailed delivery guidance was issued to Local Authorities and Primary Care Trusts in July 2006, setting out what is working in local areas with significant reductions in their under-18 conception rates. This identified the key ingredients of successful strategies:

- active engagement of all of the key mainstream delivery partners who have a role in reducing teenage pregnancies;
- a strong senior champion who was accountable for and took the lead in driving the local strategy;
- the availability of a well publicised young people-centred contraceptive and sexual health advice service, with a strong remit to undertake health promotion work, as well as delivering reactive services;
- a high priority given to Personal Social and Health Education in schools, with support from the local authority to develop comprehensive programmes of sex and relationships education (SRE) in all schools;
- a strong focus on targeted interventions with young people at greatest risk of teenage pregnancy, in particular with Looked After Children;
- the availability (and consistent take-up) of SRE training for professionals in partner organisations (such as Connexions Personal Advisers, Youth Workers and Social Workers) working with the most vulnerable young people;
- a well resourced Youth Service, providing things to do and places to go for young people, with a clear focus on addressing key social issues affecting young people, such as sexual health and substance misuse.

Antenatal HIV testing

467. Rates of HIV diagnosis in pregnant women have continued to increase since the introduction in 2000 of the universal offer and recommendation of an HIV test to pregnant women in the UK as a routine part of antenatal care. In England and Scotland in 2005, it is estimated that about 95 per cent of HIV-infected women were diagnosed before delivery. This is an improvement from 83 per cent in 2001.

468. Antenatal diagnosis allows pregnant women to take advantage of interventions to prevent mother-to-baby transmission, such as antiretroviral drug therapy, elective caesarian delivery and avoidance of breast-feeding. As a result, the proportion of children exposed to maternal HIV infection is decreasing. The improvement in detection rates means that, in England and Scotland, the proportion of children exposed to mother-to-baby transmission of HIV has decreased from about 6 per cent in 2001 to about 3 per cent in 2005.

Contraception and abortion

Contraception

469. To encourage greater use of contraceptives, the Government reduced the rate of VAT on condoms and emergency hormonal contraception to 5 per cent in July 2006, the lowest rate possible. Approximately 4 million people use contraception services each year. In 2005/06 1.2 million women and 103,000 men made about 2.6 million attendances at NHS community contraception clinics. Of these, the proportion aged under 16 has grown over the last 10 years (1995/96 to 2005/06) from just over 5 per cent to nearly 7 per cent. See Annex one for more details.

Review of contraception and abortion services

470. To map service provision and to improve access to contraception and abortion services, the Government undertook its first national baseline review of contraceptive services in 2006 and a best practice guidance was produced in December 2006. This covers access to contraception services, the full range of contraceptive methods, and access to abortion services. A national protocol for women requesting abortion at late gestation is planned to be published in 2007. See Annex one.

Regulation of abortion in England, Wales and Scotland

471. Abortion in England, Wales and Scotland is regulated by the Abortion Act 1967, which is 40 years old this year. Since then, women have been able to access safe, legal abortion services, if two doctors agree there are grounds for an abortion. Prior to the Abortion Act, about 32 women died each year as a result of illegal abortions (estimated at around 20,000 a year). The number of maternal deaths following abortion has fallen rapidly since then; latest figures show about one death a year occurs out of around 200,000 legal abortions.

472. During 2003 – 2005 for women resident in England and Wales the number of abortions each year was around 185,000. For 2005, the age-standardised abortion rate was 17.8 per thousand resident women age 15 – 44 up from 17.5 per thousand resident women in 2003. Eighty-nine per cent of abortions are performed under 13 weeks' gestation.

Improving early access to abortion

473. The *National Strategy for Sexual Health and HIV* (for England), issued in 2001, sets a national goal of a maximum three-week wait from the date of referral to the procedure. The Department of Health has invested £8million to improve early access to abortion services. Data for 2005 shows that progress is being made in England to increase early access: 64 per cent of National Health Service funded abortions took place at under 10 weeks – compared with 51 per cent in 2002. This represents a 23 per cent increase in total number of abortions taking place at

under 10 weeks between 2002 and 2005 compared with a 6 per cent rise in the total number of abortions over the same period.

Tackling crime and disorder, including domestic violence

474. Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) in England became “responsible authorities” within crime and disorder partnerships with effect from 30 April 2004. This means that PCTs now have a statutory responsibility to work in partnership with other responsible authorities to tackle crime and disorder and misuse of drugs issues locally. Routine enquiry and training was implemented across the NHS from April 2005. The Department of Health published a ‘Responding to Domestic Abuse: A Handbook for Health Professionals’ in December 2005 and diagnostic codes for domestic violence are contained within the new Electronic Patient Records, which went live in 2005. This helps with data collection and reporting to give a clearer picture of the impact on domestic violence on the NHS.

Alcohol and drug misuse

475. Government action targeting alcohol and drug misusers includes the ten-year drugs strategy *Tackling Drugs to Build a Better Britain* (published in 1998), the 2004 *Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England*, and the 2004 Public Health White Paper *Choosing Health – making healthy choices easier*. The Strategy recognises that alcohol misuse is linked to 360,000 incidents of domestic violence annually. A key aim is to improve services to victims and witnesses of alcohol-related crime, including domestic violence. It recommends a sensible drinking message be put on alcohol bottles; greater use of fixed penalty fines for anti-social behaviour; and enforcing the existing rules on under-age drinking more strongly.

Taking steps to reduce the link between drug use and prostitution

476. A 2004 Home Office study profiled 228 women involved in street-based prostitution and found that 87% used heroin and 64%, crack cocaine. Anecdotal evidence from Government consultation on prostitution suggested that a high proportion of those involved in street-prostitution use Class A drugs.

477. Drug services are now expected to focus on the client's needs, not just on the misuse of the drug. Treatment services are therefore adopting flexible treatment packages that reflect both the range of drugs used and the complex needs of the drug users - working in partnership with other local agencies to deliver a range of support. The Home Office published commissioning guidance for partnerships and providers tackling drug problems associated with prostitution in 2004. This guidance looks at how to reduce the impact problematic drug misuse has on those involved in street prostitution through primary prevention, harm reduction and drug treatment. The Government's Coordinated Strategy on Prostitution builds on this, and also includes proposals for a new rehabilitative penalty for loitering or soliciting, to encourage those involved to tackle the issues that tie them to the streets, including drug addiction.

Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners Trust

478. The Government has also introduced prison-based drug interventions, such as the Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners Trust (RAPt) 12 Step programme, which offers a medium/high intensity abstinence based programme (see Annex one).

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Introducing further legislation to tackle female genital mutilation

479. FGM became illegal in the UK under the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985. The FGM Act 2003, brought into force at the end of March 2004, made it an offence for UK nationals or permanent residents to carry out FGM abroad or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal. To date no cases have been brought forward for prosecution.

Study funded by Department of Health

480. In 2006, the Department of Health funded a prevalence study undertaken by several bodies including the leading FGM organisation FORWARD (the Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development) which will indicate the likely incidence of FGM in England and Wales. The Department also funded the production of a (well-received) DVD for health professionals in August 2006 which provides both factual and clinical information. There are at least ten specialist clinics in the NHS which treat women and girls who have been mutilated. Women do not need to be referred by their own doctor.

Health Issues in International Development

481. The Department for International Development recognises that the ability of women to make free and informed choices regarding their reproductive lives underpins their self-determination in all other areas and has actively promoted sexual and reproductive health and rights as a fundamental aspect of women's empowerment. In 2004, it produced two publications focused on these issues: '*A Position Paper on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights*', and a strategy paper, '*Reducing Maternal Deaths: Evidence and Action*'. Both publications identify four key priorities: raising the profile of women's health issues, strengthening healthcare systems, addressing wider social and economic barriers, and developing and applying new knowledge. In the same year, the UK published '*Taking Action, the UK strategy for tackling HIV and AIDS in the developing world*'. The strategy recognised the feminisation of the AIDS epidemic and places the needs and rights of women, young people and marginalised groups at its heart. In December 2005, DFID published a progress report on implementation of the maternal health strategy, which highlighted progress, but emphasised the need for greater progress.

Support from DFID to help eliminate FGM

482. The Department for International Development (DFID) indirectly supports measures to eliminate FGM in developing countries, through funding to international organisations such as the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), and the World Health Organisation (WHO), which all operate programmes to tackle FGM and other harmful practices. In July 2006, DFID supported a regional workshop in Nairobi, which explored challenges and opportunities to develop legal frameworks and child protection measures to protect girls from FGM. DFID is also a member of the FGM Donor Working Group, coordinated by the World Bank and UNICEF, and is providing £700,000 to NGOs working on obstetric fistula (which is often linked to FGM) in Africa.

483. The Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC) is taking forward the recommendations of the Nairobi workshop working with legislators and those involved in child protection within the region and in pilot countries, in 2007. DFID provided support to the IAC to organize simultaneous advocacy events on FGM and early/child marriages on International Day on Zero Tolerance to FGM, 6 February 2007, executed by IAC National Committees in 28 African countries.

Northern Ireland

Developing guidance on termination of pregnancy

484. The 1967 Abortion Act does not extend to Northern Ireland. The law for Northern Ireland is found in the *Offences Against the Persons Act 1861*, the *Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland Act) 1945*, and case law. Whilst the issue has not been devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly, the mechanism to do so is contained in the *Northern Ireland Act 1998*.

485. In 2004 the Court of Appeal asked the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety to consider what steps it should take to: inquire into the adequacy of termination of pregnancy services provided in Northern Ireland (including aftercare); and then, after consultation with concerned organisations, issue appropriate guidance. Draft guidance on Termination of Pregnancy in Northern Ireland was issued in January 2007 to interested parties for their comments. A final document will be produced later in 2007.

Inviting women for breast and cervical cancer screening

486. All women in Northern Ireland aged between 50 and 64 are routinely invited for breast screening every 3 years. The current target is an uptake of 75 per cent of women aged between 50-64 at three yearly intervals. The uptake rate in 2004-05 was 74.6 per cent. All women between the ages of 20 and 64 in Northern Ireland are invited for a cervical [smear test](#) every five years. The current target for coverage is set at 75 per cent, and coverage for the five year period ending 31 March 2005 was 70.99 per cent.

Encouraging more women to breastfeed

487. In addition to the “Breastfeeding Strategy” in place since 1999, Sure Start programmes involving breastfeeding, training in breastfeeding management along with the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and peer support programmes are having an impact. Major public information campaigns in 2004 and 2005 have helped promote breastfeeding and encourage public support for breastfeeding mums. This was reflected in the results from the latest UK Infant Feeding Survey which shows that breastfeeding rates in Northern Ireland increased from 54 per cent in 2000 to 63 per cent in 2005.

Developing a sexual health promotion strategy

488. In 2004, the Government set up a working group to develop a Sexual Health Promotion Strategy. This looks at issues such as reducing the rates of sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancies, education and access to information and services. It also builds on sexual health promotion strategies developed by Health and Social Services Boards in the past few years.

Reducing levels of teenage pregnancy

489. Good progress is being made to achieving a reduction of 20 per cent in the rate of births to teenage mothers by 2007 and a reduction of 40 per cent in the rate of births to teenage mothers under 17. Rates have fallen from 19.5 per thousand mothers aged under 19 years (baseline 1998 – 2000) to 16.5 (2002 – 2004).

Scotland

Ensuring gender equality when meeting the health needs of women and men

490. ‘*Fair for All – Gender*’, is a joint initiative with the Equal Opportunities Commission established in 2003. It aims to support NHS Scotland in understanding and responding to the health needs of men and women (including transsexuals) and in meeting their requirements under the forthcoming Gender Equality Duty (Summer 2007). *Fair for All – Gender* has completed scoping work with NHS Boards and is currently developing draft gender equality health guidance which was sent out for consultation in early 2007. Health Boards are required by the Sex Discrimination (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Order 2007 to prepare and publish a Gender Equality Scheme by 29 June 2007.

Taking steps to provide better sexual health services

491. Scottish Ministers launched a strategy on sexual health '*Respect and Responsibility: Strategy and Action Plan for Improving Sexual Health*' in January 2005. This sets out clear challenges for Government, NHS Boards, local authorities and other agencies to deliver better sexual health services across the country. On 21 November 2006, Scottish Ministers published

the first annual report on progress with *Respect and Responsibility*. The Report provides an overview of progress to date, with examples of good practice and innovative approaches to providing better sexual health services to the public. *Respect and Responsibility* and the annual progress report can be accessed at: www.Scotland.gov.uk/sexualhealth .

Taking steps to reduce the teenage pregnancy rate

492. A key aim of the national sexual health strategy, *Respect and Responsibility*, is to reduce the number of unintended teenage pregnancies in girls under 16. The Strategy contains two specific targets which are: to reduce by 20 per cent the pregnancy rate (per 1000 population) in 13-15 year olds from 8.5 in 1995 to 6.8 by 2010 and to reduce teenage pregnancies among 13-15 year olds in the most deprived communities by 33 per cent from a rate of 12.6 in 2000-02 to 8.4 in 2007-09. In 2000/01 the number of teenage pregnancies in 13-15 year olds was 784; by 2003/04 this had fallen to 706. The overall rate per 1,000 women for 13-15 year olds in 200/01 was 8.2 which had fallen to 7.5 by 2003/04.

493. **The Strategy also seeks to ensure that local inter-agency strategies are developed which reflect the key components of the national document including local planning processes such as Integrated Children's Services. Access to free contraception is available from Family Planning Clinics, Pharmacies, GP practices and voluntary organisations. Confidential support for young people is available from the statutory and voluntary sectors across Scotland, e.g. the Executive provides funding to Caledonia Youth, a voluntary organisation, which offers advice and information to young people.**

Abortion in Scotland

494. During 2003 – 2005, for women resident in Scotland, the number of abortions each year was around 12,500. For 2005, the age-standardisation abortion rate was 12.0 per thousand resident women age 15-44. Just over 92 per cent of abortions in Scotland are performed under 13 weeks' gestation.

Study recommended action to improve maternal health

495. The report from the Expert Group on Acute Maternity Services (EGAMS) in 2003 concluded that the configuration of services at that time was not sustainable due to factors including a declining birth rate, demographic change, the increasing complexity of pregnancies and the impact of changes to the NHS workforce including European Working Time Directives, Modernising Medical Careers, and the consultant contract. EGAMS recommended actions to develop services including regional planning, risk management, education and training, workforce development, public information, transport and stakeholder engagement.

Development in four major areas

496. Since then, there have been four major areas of development:

- each Regional Planning Group was given funding for a maternity co-ordinator for one year to initiate implementation of the Framework and EGAMS. The Regions have used different approaches, but each Regional Planning Group now has a dedicated sub-group on maternity services;
- the Scottish Multi-professional Maternity Development Group was established in 2003 to develop, deliver and promote multi-professional education and development for maternity care. This group is fully supported by all relevant Royal Colleges, the Scottish Ambulance Service, NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and NHS Quality Improvement Scotland (QIS) and sits within NES;
- a National Maternity Services Workforce Planning Group, established in 2004, produced *Maternity Services Workforce Plan : Baseline Report* (2005) for use by regional groups in producing work plans. The group has since disbanded and such work will be progressed by the National Workforce Unit;
- in 2005, QIS produced standards for maternity services and Standards for Pregnancy and Newborn Screening and are currently auditing their implementation;
- NHS QIS launched their report of the review of standards in January 2007. It found overall, that quality and comprehensive maternity services were available throughout Scotland, although there were some areas, such as the availability of paediatric anaesthetists and the production by Health Board of strategic plans for maternity services, that required more attention. It is expected that the Ministerial Advisory Group will work with the Scottish NHS to address these and other areas that were less well developed.

Set up a National Maternity Services Support Group

497. The Scottish Executive response to the 2005 'Kerr Report' - *Delivering for Health* - made a commitment to continue delivering the Framework and EGAMS. It recommended the establishment of a National Maternity Services Support Group to oversee implementation. This is now established as the Ministerial Action Group on Maternity Services, with a remit to improve the nature and quality of maternity services from pre-pregnancy through to very early infancy. Its main areas of work are to review neonatal intensive care services, work with regional maternity planning groups, workforce planning and transport and public involvement in maternity services.

Promoting breastfeeding and good infant feeding practice

498. The Scottish Executive continues to work with stakeholders, including infant and breast feeding co-ordinators in each of the 14 NHS Boards across Scotland to promote breastfeeding and good infant feeding practice. All NHS Board areas improved their breastfeeding rates in 2005. Figures from the Child Health Surveillance System show that the average breastfeeding rate for babies in Scotland at 6-8 weeks was 37.7 per cent in 2005 (35.7 per cent in 2004). However, the national breastfeeding target set in 1994 stated that by 2005, more than 50 per cent of mothers should still be breastfeeding their babies at 6 weeks of life.

Introduction of Breastfeeding Act

499. The Breastfeeding Etc (Scotland) Act came into force on 18 January 2005. The act makes it an offence to prevent or stop a person in charge of a child under 2 years old who is permitted to be in a public place or licensed premises, from feeding milk to that child. This is the first legislation of its kind in the UK.

Launch of an Infant Feeding Strategy

500. An Infant Feeding Strategy for Scotland will probably be launched in summer 2007 after lengthy public and stakeholder consultation. This aims to set a challenging framework for action for the Scottish Executive, NHS Scotland, local authorities, voluntary groups, businesses and families to support good nutritional health from pregnancy, to early infancy.

Wales

Taking steps to reduce levels of sexually transmitted diseases

501. The Welsh Assembly Government has continued to fund campaigns to reduce the level of sexually transmitted diseases (STI) through an STI prevention campaign, which includes a campaign to encourage women living in Wales from high-risk countries to come forward for HIV testing. These include information resources, outreach work and in-depth motivational work. Training about HIV health promotion to various professional groups including hospital staff, primary care professionals and youth workers is also offered.

Review of HIV and Sexual Health Services

502. In line with the objectives of the Strategic Framework for Sexual Health, a review of HIV and Sexual Health Services in Wales was carried out, and the outcome published in December 2004. The Welsh Assembly Government announced its intention to introduce a Modernisation Programme for HIV and Sexual Health Service. The overarching aim of the Modernisation Programme is the integration of the existing genitourinary medicine and family planning services into a community-based single health service.

Setting universal standards for maternity services

503. The National Service Framework for Children Young People and Maternity Services, published in 2005, sets universal standards that women and their families are entitled to receive when using the maternity services in Wales. The three standards set key actions in relation to quality of services, access to services and child and family centred services. During the last 4 years home birth rates have risen to be the highest in the UK and in 2005, accounted for 3.6 per cent of total births in Wales. The availability of midwife led care has increased as more women are giving birth in midwifery led Birth Centres.

Implementing the breastfeeding strategy

504. An all Wales breastfeeding coordinator was appointed in 2003 to support the implementation of the breast feeding strategy 'Investing in Better Start'. Nine maternity units in Wales are now fully accredited as UNICEF Baby Friendly Hospitals.

Improving the detection of breast cancer through screening

505. Breast Test Wales (BTW) invites women between the ages of 50 and 64 to be screened once every 3 years, with those over 64 being screened on request. Two views of each breast at each appointment were implemented in 2001 and this has now, compared to pre-2001 figures, delivered a 35 per cent increase in the detection of cancer Automatic invitation up to the age of 70 since April 2006 and breast screening is also available to women over 70 years of age, upon request. Since 2001, Breast Test Wales also offers breast screening, for at-risk women below the age of 50.

Setting up a managed clinical network for antenatal screening

506. In April 2003 the Minister for Health and Social Services agreed that a Managed Clinical Network for antenatal screening should be established in Wales, based on the principles described in the Antenatal Screening Project Report 'Choices'. Antenatal Screening Wales (ASW) is funded by the National Assembly for Wales to support improvements in the standard of antenatal screening offered to women. Women in Wales are offered a number of different screening tests including those for infections (hepatitis B, syphilis, human immunodeficiency virus and rubella immunity), certain blood disorders (such as sickle cell and thalassaemia) and genetic conditions.

Article 13: Social and economic benefits

Taking a look at the social welfare system

Tax credits

507. Introduced in April 2003, the Working Tax Credit (WTC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC), administered by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), are income-related awards designed to improve support for families with children, tackle child poverty and help make work pay. They replace the Working Families Tax Credit, Disabled Person's Tax Credit, the Children's Tax Credit, New Deal 50 Plus Employment Credit and the provision within certain social security benefits.

508. CTC creates a single framework, which supports families with children and tackles child poverty whether or not the adult/s in the family are in work. It generally reaches families with incomes of up to £58,000 a year (up to £66,000 if there is at least one child who is less than a year old). Nine out of ten families with children can benefit from CTC. It is payable to the main carer of the child/ren in addition to Child Benefit.

Child Benefit and Guardian's Allowance

509. Responsibility for Child Benefit and Guardian's Allowance transferred to the Inland Revenue, which is now HMRC, in April 2003. Administering Child Benefit and the Child Tax Credit through the same department minimises the disruption faced by families with children and ensures that the different components of money intended to support children are paid in one income stream, where possible.

Maternity Allowance

510. Maternity Allowance was extended from 26 weeks to 39 weeks for women expecting babies on or after 1 April 2007. Maternity Allowance is paid at the lower of a standard rate (£108.85 in 2006/7) or at a weekly rate equal to 90 per cent of the woman's average weekly earnings. The changes were in the Work and Families Act 2006 and The Statutory Maternity Pay, Social Security (Maternity Allowance) and Social Security (Overlapping Benefit) Amendment Regulations 2006.

Income support

511. Around 774,000 lone parents receive Income Support, the vast majority of whom are women. It is available to people whose resources are below prescribed levels. Families claiming Income Support receive a Family Premium which is paid either as part of Income Support or Child Tax Credit and there is a part-time earnings disregard of £10 a week for a couple or £20 a week for a lone parent.

Pensions

Pensions Commission

512. The Pensions Commission, set up in 2002, (see article 3 for more details), was explicitly asked to recommend how pension system reform could help address the problems which people with interrupted paid work records and caring responsibilities, in particular women, have faced in the past and still face to a degree today.

513. The Commission developed and set out recommendations in its second report (published in November 2005) consistent with the principle laid out in its first report (published in October 2004), that all people, men and women alike, should build up pension entitlements in their own right. The Commission cited several of its proposals as being particularly beneficial for women and carers. For example recommendations on reform to the state system were intended to increase the ability of people to accrue full state pensions through caring responsibilities rather than paid work (see below for more details).

Pension reform and the gender impact

514. The Department for Work and Pensions report *Women and pensions: The evidence*, published in November 2005 provided a clear assessment of women's pension situation and analysed the key influences on the level of women's retirement incomes.

A key objective of pension reform is to deliver fairer outcomes for women and carers, as part of the fairness test. This has guided the development of reforms set out in the White Paper *Security in retirement: towards a new pensions system* in May 2006 which are now starting to be implemented through the Government's Pensions Bill.

515. The Secretary of State committed to undertake a detailed gender analysis of the measures in the Pensions Bill, in advance of the statutory Gender Duty which came into force in April 2007. A report on the gender impact of pension reform was subsequently published alongside the Pensions Bill and regulatory impact assessment on 29 November 2006. This outlined the overall pension outcomes for women compared with men, with particular focus on improvements in State Pension coverage. The key outcomes are outlined below.

Improving State Pension coverage

516. Currently around 30 per cent of women reaching State Pension age are entitled to a full basic State Pension compared with around 85 per cent of men. Without proposed reforms, only about half of women reaching State Pension age in 2010 would be entitled to a full basic State Pension. Under the reforms, the figure rises to around three quarters. By 2025 over 90 per cent of women (and men) reaching State Pension age will be entitled to a full basic State Pension - almost half a million extra women.

Continuing to tackle pensioner poverty with Pension Credit

517. Pension reform will continue to provide a safety net for the poorest pensioners who are unable to build up pension provision. The State Pension Credit Act 2002, provided for the introduction of the Pension Credit from October 2003, which ensures that, from April 2007, no-one aged 60 or over need live on less than a guaranteed weekly income of £119.05 (£181.70 for couples)

518. Pension Credit is a key part of the Government's strategy for combating pensioner poverty. Women are at present more likely than men to be eligible for Pension Credit: nearly two thirds of all those in receipt are women (about 60 per cent are single women). Current women pensioners are less likely to have built up State Pension entitlement than men, and tend to have less private pension income, so are more reliant on Pension Credit.

Introduction of personal accounts

519. In December 2006, the Government published the White Paper, *Personal accounts: a new way to save*, setting out proposals to reform radically the private pensions system to make it easier for people to save for their retirement. Personal accounts will provide an opportunity to save on top of the state pension underpin, through a low cost flexible pension savings scheme with an employer contribution. This is likely to benefit many women currently without private pension provision and who face barriers to saving, for example those with fragmented working histories, in part-time work or on low pay who may not have access to a suitable occupational scheme. These women will be a key part of the target group of moderate to low earners that personal accounts are intended to help.

520. Disproportionate numbers of women employees are found in the group earning between £5,000 and £15,000 and do not have pension provision. Between 2.2 and 3.4 million women are estimated to be likely to participate in personal accounts. The combination of the solid state pension underpin and the personal accounts system (or automatic enrolment into an equivalent 'good' employers scheme), means that savings incentives will be significantly higher under reform than under the current system. This may be particularly important for women on low levels of income closer to the levels of means-tested benefits, for whom savings decisions are more difficult.

Increasing the State Pension Age

521. Increasing the State Pension age forms part of the combination of measures being taken forward under pension reform, along with encouraging people to work longer, and will ensure that the changes are sustainable and affordable in the long term. State Pension age will rise by one year per decade from 2024 to 2046, broadly in line with predicted increases in average life expectancy, with each change phased in over two years. State Pension age will reach 68 by 2046. Taking into account the increases in State Pension age, women are still projected to spend more years in retirement and a greater proportion of their adult life in retirement than

men. This means that they will particularly benefit from the earnings uprating of the basic State Pension as coverage increases.

Considering the impact of reform on black and minority ethnic women

522. Some groups of ethnic minority women, particularly Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, are less likely to be building entitlement to basic State Pension through earnings than women on average, but are more likely to be building up entitlement through Home Responsibilities Protection. Some ethnic minority women who may face cultural barriers to participating in paid work, contribute in other ways through provision of childcare or care for severely disabled people, but these social contributions are not fully recognised in the current scheme. Currently an individual cannot build up basic State Pension entitlement through Home Responsibilities Protection or credits alone. The Government's reforms, which include abolition of the minimum contribution conditions in the basic State Pension, as well as improved and more flexible crediting arrangements for parents and carers, will ensure such social contributions are rewarded through the State Pension alongside paid contributions.

Helping carers

523. Pension reform proposals include a comprehensive package to help more carers, most of whom are women, build better pensions. For example there will be:

- a more universal State Pension scheme – with 30 qualifying years for a full basic State Pension for those reaching State Pension age from April 2010 and more obvious recognition of caring and parenting – that will enable more carers to build decent state pension rights, as a foundation for private saving;
- from 2010, a new weekly credit will become available to those caring for 20 hours or more a week for someone who is severely disabled; with more flexible, weekly credits for parents awarded Child Benefit until children turn 12 and approved foster carers. These proposed reforms would also make it easier for more women and carers to save privately. It is estimated that between 2.2 to 3.4 million women are likely to be automatically enrolled into personal accounts.

524. In addition, because the Government understands how difficult it can be for people to balance their work with caring for someone who is sick or disabled, part of a package of family friendly measures introduced in the Work and Families Act 2006 is the right to request flexible working for carers. This came into effect on 6 April 2007, and covers around 80 per cent of carers, (see article 11).

Providing new policy and delivery arrangements for child maintenance

525. Around 95 per cent of parents with caring responsibilities for children, where the parents live apart, are women. In December 2006, the Government published a White Paper setting out new policy and delivery arrangements for the child maintenance system (as the Child Support Agency, set up in 1993, had fallen way below expectations). The new system will encourage and help parents to make their own arrangements for child maintenance and prioritise the needs of children. The key changes include:

- removing the requirement that all parents with care claiming benefit be treated as applying for child maintenance;
- significantly increasing the amount of maintenance that parents with care on benefits can keep, leading to a substantial reduction in child poverty;
- providing better information and guidance to parents so they can make the best decisions and arrangements for themselves and their children;
- further strengthening enforcement powers including legislation to enforce the surrender of a passport or impose a curfew on people who repeatedly fail to pay maintenance;
- further simplifying the assessment process;
- new institutional arrangements to deliver child maintenance in a new way, including the creation of the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission (C-MEC) as a Non-Departmental Public Body to replace the Child Support Agency.

Providing subsidized affordable housing

526. The UK Government spends £2bn per year on subsidising the provision of affordable housing, including social rented homes and intermediate (low cost affordable) homes for sale. Although policy is not determined on the basis of gender equality, data indicates that women in need of affordable housing derive considerable benefit from Government housing support. Women are likely to benefit from the allocation of social rented homes, prioritised on the basis of housing need, including people who are homeless, (in some cases as a result of domestic violence), and living in overcrowded conditions. 57 per cent of new homelessness acceptances in July to September 2006 were for single women, (usually with children), and almost 50 per cent of overcrowded households were female-headed.

527. Women are likely to benefit from Government help to certain households, including key public sector workers, seeking to access the housing market. Some survey and Government data shows two thirds of those buying an affordable home on the HomeBuy and Key Worker Living schemes were female. In 2005/06, the Government spent £59m through the Supporting People programme on housing related support to over 7,500 women at risk of domestic violence (see article 16).

Northern Ireland

Setting out an anti-poverty strategy

528. *Lifetime Opportunities – Government’s Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland* was launched by the Secretary of State Peter Hain in November 2006. The strategy replaces New Targeting Social Need (New TSN) which was the Government’s former high level policy for tackling poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland. Lifetime Opportunities adopts a life cycle approach with targets and goals specifically aimed at key stages in people’s lives while retaining the key principle of New TSN. The strategy also retains Promoting Social Inclusion as an approach to working in partnership with relevant sectors to tackle exclusion of different vulnerable groups such as lone parents.

529. The two overall objectives of ‘Lifetime Opportunities’ are to:

- work towards eliminating poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland by 2020; and
- end child poverty by 2020, based on the estimate of 130,000 children in Northern Ireland in relative income poverty in 1998/99. This means lifting 65,000 children out of poverty by 2010 on the way to eradication by 2020.

Scotland

Closing the Opportunity Gap

530. Following the General Election in 2003, the Executive decided to re-focus its existing Social Justice Strategy on tackling poverty and disadvantage, on measures that it could directly influence through its own efforts and its own resources. Building on the Social Justice Milestones, and working in partnership with the UK Government, the Executive has developed its Closing the opportunity Gap (CtOG) approach which focuses on the most important issues that we need to tackle through our own activities, in order to overcome poverty and disadvantage in Scotland.

531. The CtOG approach has ten targets that support the Executive’s anti-poverty agenda and underpins its commitment to building safer, stronger communities where people want to live and raise their families. The Scottish Executive recognises that poverty is only partly about low income; it also encompasses a lack of opportunity, low aspirations, facing barriers to participating in social and economic life, and access to appropriate and affordable public services.

532. Through co-ordinated action across all of the Executive’s departments and agencies, and working with our partners, good progress has been made over the period 1997 to 2006, such as:

- over 130,000 children have been lifted from relative poverty - a reduction of 35 per cent;
- over 120,000 pensioners have been lifted from relative poverty - a reduction of 46 per cent;
- over 60,000 working age adults have been lifted from relative poverty – a reduction of 10 per cent.

Tackling crime and the fear of crime on public transport

533. According to a report by the Department for Transport *'People perceptions of personal security and their concerns about crime on public transport'*, published in May 2004, women generally felt more unsafe than men when travelling on and waiting for public transport, although men's concerns for their personal safety are increasing. The report is available on www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/crime/ps/perceptions/researchfindings.

Continuing a programme of initiatives

534. The DfT has continued its rolling programme of initiatives to reduce crime and fear of crime on public transport. While these measures will benefit both women and men they benefit women particularly as they are the main public transport users. Since 2003 the Department has:

- issued guidance on improving personal security on trains;
- relaunched the Secure Stations Scheme to improve personal security at rail stations. This has resulted in over a 100 per cent increase in the number of stations accredited under the Scheme over the past 18 months;
- produced a briefing paper on the links between bus crime and other crimes to help identify how measures to tackle bus related incidents could provide police with a gateway to apprehend perpetrators of other crimes;
- held a conference on tackling bus crime;
- produced guidance on how the legal system can be used effectively to tackle transport crime; and
- produced a briefing paper on reducing graffiti and other environmental nuisance around transport systems.

Making bus travel affordable for older women

535. The Government recognises the importance to pensioners of low-cost public transport and wants to ensure that bus travel remains within the means of those on limited income. From April 2006, the Government has made local bus travel more affordable through an improved statutory minimum concessionary fares provision for pensioners in England of free off peak local bus travel in the person's area of residence. The introduction of the waiver of the fare on local services has helped some eleven million older and disabled people in England. Local authorities now have to offer at least the minimum standard. The new generation of low floor buses has improved access not only for wheelchair users, but also for people with other mobility difficulties, people with small children in buggies, and those carrying heavy shopping or luggage. (See article 14 for information on rural transport).

Northern Ireland

Providing funding to improve bus and rail services

536. As women are generally greater users of both bus and rail services, they will benefit from the introduction of a number of initiatives under Northern Ireland's Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS). The Department for Regional Development has provided significant funding to buy 194 new buses, brought into service in 2005/06 and 23 new trains, all in service by September 2005. The Department for Regional Development has appointed consultants to examine the feasibility of potential Rapid Transit pilots and expects to receive their report by July 2007. Other initiatives under the RTS to benefit women include measures to make walking and cycling easier, traffic calming, investment in car parks, the street lighting capital programme, improved travel information and enhanced facilities for taxis.

Introducing measures to increase women's safety

537. New measures were also introduced in January 2006 to increase women's safety when travelling on public transport. These included: improved lighting for new bus shelters and in all new rail stations and bus depots; radio contact for all late night bus services in Belfast; double-glazed windows on all new buses and trains; and greater use of on-board video on Metro Citybus services. Also, specific buggy spaces were introduced into the Metro fleet from March 2006 and the Ulsterbus fleet from September 2006, together with additional signage to advise that prams and buggies can be accommodated to assist women travelling with small children. In addition to two schemes specifically targeting the needs of women in rural areas, (see article 14), the introduction of new low floor buses on the Quality Bus Corridors in Belfast are improving the transport services available to women across the city. This supports the objective of improving public transport in order to increase social mobility and allows women to enjoy greater access to opportunities for employment, education and training.

Scotland

Taking account of different needs in transport strategy

538. Scotland's National Transport Strategy, published in 2006, outlines ways in which to develop an effective, sustainable and integrated transport system appropriate to the needs of the people, economy and environment of Scotland. This document recognises that the development of transport policy, whether at national, regional or local levels must take into account the six strands of equalities: race, disability, sex/gender, age, sexual orientation and faith or religious belief.

Wales

Drawing up a strategy to improve security

539. The Welsh Assembly Government's plans for an integrated transport system in Wales are set out in its draft Wales Transport Strategy. It is currently analysing the responses to the strategy including one from the Wales Gender Budget Group. The Assembly Government is working towards the outcomes of the Transport Strategy in a number of ways.

540. Together with Crime Concern, local authorities, bus operators and the police, it has established the Secure Bus Steering Group. It commissioned Crime Concern to produce guidance on improving security at bus stations, and sent guidelines out to local authorities in August 2005. It also plans to establish a Public Users Transport Committee in April 2008. The Committee will be an influential body that will represent effectively the interests of public transport users. The Assembly has taken a leading role in the report of the Transport and Employment Working Group, which has assessed what more needs to be done to enhance public transport, where large numbers of unemployed people find this a significant barrier in getting work, including young women.

Article 14: Rural women

Taking women's needs into account when providing rural transport

541. Cars are the main mode of transport for both men and women living in rural areas. Recognising that rural women are more likely to rely on public transport than men, the Government is working to ensure that public transport services take into account women's needs and concerns by improving access and increasing safety. In the summer of 2005 the new 'Kickstart' bus funding scheme started. People aged over 60 and disabled people are able to travel for free on local bus services in their area. Free local bus travel will be extended to a nationwide scheme in 2008, so that anyone eligible can use local bus services anywhere in England.

Surveys and consultations of transport needs

542. The National Travel Survey for 2005, showed that between 1998/00 and 2005, the proportion of households in rural areas that were within 13 minutes walk of an hourly or better bus service (the minimum criteria for the Government's bus availability indicator) increased from 45 to 54 per cent. In August 2004, a survey by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs of rural residents' satisfaction with the provision of services showed that 62 per cent of rural residents were satisfied with the frequency of local transport services, and 70 per cent satisfied with the routes offered.

543. In autumn 2007, the Department for Transport will update the Public Gender Audit which identifies women's transport needs and ways to meet such needs, first published in 2000. The Department's guidance to Local Authorities for the 2006 Local Transport Plans emphasised the importance of consultation and the need to involve a wide range of groups, including those representing women.

Identifying funding for Sure Start Local programmes in rural areas

544. Of the 524 Sure Start Local Programmes in operation by 2003, fifteen were located in identifiably rural areas. Forty-five smaller mini-Sure Start programmes were also set up during 2002 and 2003, based in rural areas and pockets of deprivation not normally covered by the larger, traditional Sure Start local programme model. These programmes have the aim of improving service delivery and addressing disadvantage. Disadvantage is often hidden in rural areas, masked by affluence and occurring in quite small pockets.

545. All the rural Sure Start Local Programmes and mini programmes have, or will become, Sure Start Children's Centres by 2008. In recognition of the higher unit costs of delivering children's centre services in rural areas, the Government identified additional funding for local authorities intending to develop children's centre services, including childcare, for disadvantaged isolated communities. Local authorities also have greater flexibility in developing models of service delivery in rural areas, e.g. childcare provided through childminders rather than centre-based care.

Northern Ireland

Targeting projects at women

546. The Rural Development Programme 2000-2006 (RDP) was a major 5-year policy initiative involving £80 million of EU and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) assistance to develop rural areas with a focus on disadvantage. As agriculture and rural development are traditionally male-dominated areas, women have been specified as a target group for the current Programme. Each of the Programme's component schemes support projects implemented by women's groups or are targeted at women, for example, training, employment and childcare projects.

Funding for projects aimed at women

547. The Rural Community Network delivers “*The Women Participating in Rural Development Programme*”. This programme was awarded funding of £453,750 under the EU Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity (EU PBSP) in September 2004. Grants of up to £7,500 have been made available to community organisations to support the capacity building of rural women and to initiate social, economic and environmental projects designed, delivered and managed by rural women.

Setting up the Northern Ireland Rural Women’s Network

548. In August 2006, DARD also provided funding to help establish the Northern Ireland Rural Women’s Network (NIRWN). This provides a single infrastructure service and complements the community development and capacity building activities that are currently carried out by 12 Rural Support Networks. The NIRWN should deliver effective liaison with Government on policy matters and provide support and policy advice to frontline women’s organisations operating in disadvantaged areas at a sub regional level (Belfast, North West and Rural Regions). The project has been allocated funding of £489,000 until June 2008 (75 per cent by DARD through EU PBSP and 25 per cent by the Department for Social Development). DARD is currently developing the next phase of the Rural Development Programme (2007-13). Women will continue to be an important target group in this phase.

Setting up the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise

549. The DARD College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE), set up in 2004, offers a comprehensive education, training and lifelong learning provision. The customer base for CAFRE is traditionally male-dominated. Examples of courses to meet the needs of women include: floristry (95 per cent women); veterinary nursing (100 per cent); equine studies (82 per cent); communications and business management (66 per cent); and food technology (61 per cent). Participation on programmes is monitored.

Scotland

Funding community transport

550. The Scottish Executive has been helping rural transport services through its Rural Transport Fund (RTF). The Rural Community Transport Initiative, (one element of the RTF), is aimed at funding community transport measures in the more remote areas of Scotland, where there are no scheduled bus services or where services are very limited. A range of schemes have received grants including dial-a-bus, dial-a-ride, community minibuses, social car schemes, training for drivers and escorts and employment of transport co-ordinators and development workers. They are particularly helpful to elderly and disabled people and those with young children, as all minibuses funded are fully accessible. 165 projects have been helped.

Article 15: Equality before the law and civil matters

Modernizing judicial training to include diversity

551. The Judicial Studies Board (JSB) is responsible for training the professional judiciary and for overseeing the training of magistrates. In respect of the professional judiciary the JSB provides induction and continuation training and training to support major changes in legislation and the administration of justice.

552. The last decade has seen significant constitutional change in England and Wales, the modernisation of the justice system which has transformed the judicial role, greater diversity in judicial appointments, and structural changes in the work patterns of the legal professions from which candidates for judicial appointment are drawn. The JSB is working to ensure that its training adapts to the changes that have already occurred and is poised to meet the future needs of those who have followed a non-traditional career path to judicial appointment. The judicial training strategy project was set up in response to those changes and in anticipation of the needs of an increasingly diverse judiciary over the next decade.

Training material on equality and diversity

553. The judicial oath provides that judicial office holders will "do right to all manner of people after the laws and usages of the Realm without fear or favour, affection or ill will." The JSB supports this principle by providing training materials to judges on issues of equality and diversity and ensuring that these issues are integrated into the JSB's seminars. For example, it is a specific requirement that no judge may hear a case involving rape or a serious sexual offence without having first undertaken the appropriate training.

The Judicial Studies Board (JSB)

554. The JSB Equal Treatment Advisory Committee (ETAC) gives support to all judicial office holders in fulfilling the obligations of the judicial oath, and in recognising the many ways in which social, cultural and other differences may have a bearing on the conduct of cases and the wider judicial role. ETAC ensures the integration of fair treatment and diversity issues into relevant aspects of JSB training and provides the Equal Treatment Bench Book to support all judicial office holders in ensuring fair treatment. A copy of the book can be found on the JSB's public website at www.jsboard.co.uk.

Increased role of Judicial Studies Board in magistrates' training requiring diversity issues to be covered at all stages

555. Since April 2005, the JSB increased its role in magistrates' training. Although the JSB delivers only a small amount of training directly to the 28,500 + magistrates in England and Wales, it does prescribe the syllabus. This requires diversity issues to be covered at all stages of a magistrate's training, and a competence framework contains a number of knowledge and

performance elements, requiring all magistrates to demonstrate an understanding of, amongst other things, "Diversity and fair treatment issues, including the use of non-discriminatory language", and "The potential impact of your background and personal prejudices on decision making." In addition to ensuring that elements of diversity are covered in all magistrate training, many areas in England and Wales provide specific training events on diversity issues, as well as providing magistrates with information about recent cases, legislation and research.

Increasing the diversity of judicial appointments

556. Appointments for judicial office are made strictly on merit irrespective of the candidates' gender, ethnic origin, marital status, sexual orientation, political affiliation, religion or disability. A consultation paper "*Increasing the Diversity of the Judiciary*" was published in October 2004 and sought views on the barriers to greater diversity in the judiciary for women and other under-represented groups, and how they might be removed or minimised. The Lord Chancellor then announced a programme of work aimed at increasing diversity in the judiciary. This focused on three main areas: encouraging applications and raising awareness; removing barriers to appointment; and ensuring that judicial office encourages and supports a more diverse judiciary. Initiatives including a booklet and DVD entitled "Step Up to a Judicial Career" were produced along with other awareness-raising information about the work of the judiciary.

Extension of the judicial work-shadowing scheme

557. The judicial work-shadowing scheme, whereby barristers or solicitors interested in applying to be a Recorder or Deputy District Judge can shadow a judge, has been extended to magistrates' courts and tribunals. A mentoring scheme for District Judges offering advice and support and an insight into the role of a Circuit Judge is being piloted. Awareness raising events across the country have taken place to encourage under-represented groups to apply and the recently established Judicial Appointments Commission now leads this important outreach work. Legislative changes to the eligibility requirements for judicial appointment are being taken through the Parliamentary process. These include reducing the qualifying period from 7 to 5 years for various judicial posts.

More flexible work opportunities

558. The Department has introduced a career break scheme for salaried judiciary below the High Court, and has extended a part-time working scheme to the majority of salaried judiciary, allowing an opportunity to work reduced hours and to develop a working pattern better suited to personal circumstances. Improvements have also been made in the area of maternity and adoption leave for fee paid judiciary.

Launch of the Judicial Appointments Commission

559. In April 2006, the Judicial Appointments Commission was launched and is now responsible for the selection of candidates for judicial appointment in England and Wales. The Commission has a statutory role in encouraging a wider range of applicants for judicial office, while maintaining the principle that selection for appointment is on merit. In October 2006, the Commission launched its first High Court selection exercise, open to anyone meeting the eligibility criteria. Information about the appointments criteria and application procedures used by the Commission in their selection exercises can be found on the Judicial Appointments Commission website (www.judicialappointments.gov.uk).

560. In May 2006 the Lord Chancellor, Lord Chief Justice and Chairman of the Judicial Appointments Commission jointly agreed a Judicial Diversity Strategy with the overall aim of bringing about a more diverse judiciary, with particular emphasis on gender, ethnic origin, disability and professional background. The strategy and the measures of progress for this can be found on www.dca.gov.uk.

561. Judicial Appointments Annual Reports have been published since 1999 giving an overall breakdown of appointment figures including gender and ethnic origin, as well as details of changes made to procedures and plans for further initiatives or changes (see www.dca.gov.uk). The figures show a steady upwards trend in the percentage of women judges in England and Wales, 14.1 per cent in 2001 to 18.0 per cent in 2006. Whilst the figures do not reflect the ratio of women to men in society, they are, in part at least, a reflection of the number of women in the profession with the appropriate experience. As more women enter the legal profession, the number of women in the judiciary continues to show a steady increase, with the fee-paid 'feeder' ranks reflecting a higher proportion of women than in salaried judicial office.

Increasing the numbers of women in the Northern Irish judiciary

562. As of January 2007, Northern Ireland had four female county court judges, 2 female district judges and 4 female resident magistrates. Of the Lay Magistrates there were 150 women out of 276 in 2006. Overall, 47 per cent of the judiciary are female.

Increasing the numbers of women in the Scottish judiciary

563. As of December 2006, there were 4 female judges in the Supreme Courts, 25 female Sheriffs (permanent) and 17 female Sheriffs (part-time). There are 1,512 women panel members of Children Hearings, which represents 59 per cent of all panel members. Of the Children's Panel Advisory Committee, 91 are female which represents 52 per cent of all CPAC members.

Granting legal aid to women in family cases

564. In 2005, 70 per cent more legal aid certificates were granted to women than men in family proceedings. Of the certificates issued in this area, the majority of women were plaintiffs and the majority of men were respondents (see table in Annex one).

Special measures

Using special measures in courts to help vulnerable witnesses

565. The Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999, introduced a range of special measures to help vulnerable or intimidated witnesses give evidence in court. These include victims of sex offences and domestic violence. In 2004, the Home Office published key findings from surveys of vulnerable and intimidated witnesses 2000/01 and 2003. In the second phase of the survey 60 per cent of the witnesses interviewed were female - the probable proportion who were victims of a sexual offence.

566. Key points included:

- vulnerable or intimidated witnesses who used special measures were less likely than those not using them to feel anxious or distressed overall. A third of vulnerable or intimidated witnesses who used special measures said that they would not have been willing and able to give evidence without them. For victims of sexual offences, this figure rose to 44 per cent;
- the vast majority of vulnerable or intimidated witnesses who used special measures found them helpful. In the case of victims of sex offences two thirds expressed satisfaction with the measures. Where witnesses fear intimidation, their satisfaction levels rose from 66 per cent to 80 per cent. The value of these measures is further demonstrated by the extensive demand for them among those witnesses not given access to them. (Home Office Research Findings 240 ‘ Key findings from the Surveys of Vulnerable and Intimidated Witnesses 2000/01 and 2003).

Evaluation of use of special measures

567. In January 2006, the Home Office published further research “*An evaluation of the use of special measures for vulnerable or intimidated witnesses*”. This found poor identification of vulnerable or intimidated witnesses by the criminal justice agencies and the Government is taking forward action to improve this.

Extending the use of video-recorded evidence

568. Video-recorded evidence-in chief is currently available to child witnesses and vulnerable adults (i.e. those with a physical or learning disability or mental disorder). In March 2006, the

Government announced that it hoped to extend this measure to adult complainants in rape and serious sexual offences in 2007. The courts have now been notified of the extension which is aimed to come into operation in June.

Article 16: Equality in marriage and family law

Violence Against Women (VAW)

569. We know that VAW is a complex social problem causing poverty, ill health, social exclusion and death:

- domestic violence accounts for 15 per cent¹⁴ of all violent crime and is responsible for approximately two female homicides a week;
- it costs UK services £3.1 billion and the economy £2.7 billion;
- roughly one in four women will experience domestic violence in their lifetime¹⁵ and of victims suffering four or more attacks, 89 per cent of them are women¹⁶;
- less than 6 per cent of recorded rapes result in a conviction; but out of those charged,¹⁷ 53.5 per cent were successfully prosecuted; 67.1 per cent of sexual offences charged were successfully prosecuted;
- for 2003-04, the estimated costs for sexual offences were £8.5 bn with each rape costing £76,000;
- emerging findings suggest that at any one time in 2003, there were approximately 4,000 victims of trafficking for prostitution in the UK;
- current estimates total the social and economic costs of trafficking for prostitution at about £1bn for 2003.

The Women and Equality Unit is working across Government to ensure a strategic approach to VAW

570. WEU is working across Government to ensure that work on VAW is addressed strategically and acknowledges gender based violence as a fundamental abuse of women's human rights. To this end, the Deputy Minister for Women and Equality actively participates in

¹⁴ Walker, A, Kershaw, C. and Nicholas, S. (2006) Crime in England and Wales 2005/06. Home Office Statistical Bulletin. London: Home Office.

¹⁵ British Crime Survey, 2000.

¹⁶ Walby, S. and Allen, J. (2004) Domestic Violence, sexual assault and stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey. Home Office Research Study No. 276. London: Home Office.

¹⁷ April – September 2006 CPS Management Information System.

three inter-ministerial groups which bring together departments central to tackling violence against women and supporting survivors and children. These groups are led by the Home Office and cover all aspects of VAW such as domestic violence, forced marriage, honour killings, female genital mutilation, sexual offending and rape, prostitution, and human trafficking. She provides a strong gender focus to work on all the Groups by looking after the women's human rights elements of the agenda and ensuring that a gender equality perspective is fully taken into account in a co-ordinated way across national policy and programme development.

571. The Deputy Minister for Women and Equality has also been active in European Union and Council of Europe discussions on VAW, sharing the UK's good practice, raising awareness that VAW is wider than domestic violence and gathering evidence on successful initiatives through comprehensive fact finding programmes. This information is then fed into the inter-ministerial groups. These groups, the joined-up nature of their activities and their supporting Action Plans, ensure that the UK has a strategic approach on policy and delivery of services and initiatives.

Addressing VAW through the gender equality duty and high level target setting

572. The WEU has also been raising awareness of how VAW can be addressed across Government, through the gender equality duty by holding targeted stakeholder events, including with Her Majesty's Treasury, and through the development of a new cross-Government equality Public Service Agreement, led by Communities and Local Government.

Examples of innovative cross-Government workstreams to address VAW

573. Some examples of innovative cross-Government arrangements include: the joint Home Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office Forced Marriage Unit; the Specialist Domestic Violence Court Programme across Home Office, Crown Prosecution Service and Her Majesty's Court Service; workstreams to address female genital mutilation and domestic violence across the Department for Health and Home Office; and joint work across Communities and Local Government and the Home Office to provide shelter for victims of violence, as well as a 24 hour national domestic violence helpline.

Poster campaign highlighting VAW offences

574. In March 2006, the Crown Prosecution Service ran a VAW poster campaign, highlighting offences that could be prosecuted ranging from domestic violence, rape, elder and child abuse to honour-based violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, human trafficking and prostitution. The publicity also indicated support services for victims.

Specific Violence against Women workstreams

Domestic violence

575. Long term trends in violent crime, as measured by the annual sweep of the British Crime Survey (BCS), have shown a significant decline in domestic violence; between 1995 and 2005/06 there was a 64 per cent decrease in the number of incidents of domestic violence.¹⁸ Between 2003 and 2005 an average of just over 24,000 civil injunctions a year were made under Part IV of the Family Law Act 1996.¹⁹ Nationally successful outcomes (guilty pleas, conviction after trial and proof in absence) have risen from 46 per cent in December 2003 up to 65 per cent by December 2006. This rise in successful outcomes is the result of improvements in dealing with domestic violence across the criminal justice service, which includes the development of specialist domestic violence court systems.

Specialist Domestic Violence Courts

576. The Government's Specialist Domestic Violence Court Programme was developed from the specialist Domestic Violence court pilots set up by the Crown Prosecution Service to address the high rates of attrition for domestic violence, by bringing more offenders to justice and putting the safety of victims at the heart of the process. It initially introduced 25 Specialist Domestic Violence Court Systems²⁰ by April 2006, and has increased this number to 64 with the systems selected in 2006/07 'going live' by April 2007.

577. A National Resource Manual has been produced to provide guidance on the development of such courts. It can be accessed on: <http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/domesticviolence/domesticviolence59.htm>. The programme has been recognised as innovative for excellent joined-up working across Government departments and with Non Government Organisations²¹.

578. There is now at least one specialist domestic violence court area in every region and in Wales, with Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs)²² to support victims. £2m was made available to fund the IDVAs and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors to cover all Sexual Assault referral centres (SARCS) in Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) Areas. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has developed a system for monitoring SDVC outcomes

¹⁸ Walker, A., Kershaw, C. and Nicholas, S. (2006) Crime in England and Wales 2005/06. Home Office Statistical Bulletin. London: Home Office.

¹⁹ HMCS Management Information System.

²⁰ Options may include:

cluster cases – all domestic violence cases are heard together in a court session **fast-track cases** – domestic violence cases are grouped together only for first hearing, or Pre-trial reviews (PTRs) and then following hearings are fast-tracked into designated slots for domestic violence within usual court sessions.

²¹ The National Steering Group was shortlisted for a Westminster & Whitehall World civil service award.

²² IDVAs are trained specialists whose goal is the safety of their victims. IDVA involvement with victims of domestic violence has been shown to decrease victimisation; increase notification of children at risk, and reduce the number of victims unwilling to support a prosecution. The evaluation report (which was launched in June 2005) on the CPS SDVC rural and urban pilots, found that victims were more likely to participate in the criminal justice system if they were assisted by independent advisors.

and this shows that the courts have played a significant part in the improvement of prosecution outcomes. In December 2005, 71 per cent of recorded cases dealt with in Specialist DV Courts secured convictions, compared with 59 per cent for non-specialist courts.

Coordinated Community Response

579. From autumn 2006, a Coordinated Community Response (CCR) to domestic violence is being developed across Government which builds on the SDVC model, but includes a broader use of IDVAs and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)²³ to ensure victim safety. The CCR aims to coordinate services for the victim, perpetrator and any children at individual and strategic levels.

Background to Specialist Domestic Violence Courts

580. **Historically, seven magistrates' courts across England and Wales developed specialist approaches to domestic violence with two evaluations commissioned by the Crown Prosecution Service published in 2004/05. They showed that while no single system could be recommended as a template, a specialist approach to domestic violence, including effective support for victims delivered real benefits. These included: an increase in the number of guilty pleas and convictions; an increase in the number of domestic violence offences reported to the police that result in prosecutions; enhanced evidence gathering to allow prosecutions to continue if the victim retracts and a reduction in the number of cases lost before trial.**

581. **In response to the challenges and recommendations in these reports a cross-Government 'Specialist Domestic Violence Court Programme' was established. This offers an 'accreditation' process for courts wishing to set up a specialist system for domestic violence. A Task Force of experts underpins the programme and, in conjunction with the panel that oversees the programme, they have published Resource and Guidance Manuals.**

The Specialist Domestic Violence Court Model

582. A Specialist Domestic Violence Court is not simply referring to the practice and procedures of the court. It is a system in which statutory and voluntary agencies all work together to bring more offenders to justice. This is achieved through a co-ordinated community response in which those agencies work together to identify, track and risk-assess domestic violence cases. Through enhanced information-sharing they provide support to victims.

583. **A key advantage of the specialist court system is that there is no fixed model imposed on areas which differ immensely in size, crime rate and economic structure; there is no 'one size fits all'. This means that the core components of the model can be met by tailoring the services**

²³ Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) are key to identifying high-risk victims and ensuring that they are kept safe and that perpetrators are managed effectively. The SDVC Programme funded training on MARACs.

already available in each area to the needs of domestic violence victims, allowing the system to be introduced effectively in every region of England and Wales.

584. To achieve accreditation, each area must demonstrate that it can meet the required core components of the specialist court model. These include:

- ***Special facilities***

Specialist DV Courts have separate entrances, exits and waiting facilities for victims and witnesses or make separate arrangements for their arrival and departure. This ensures that the victim does not have to come face to face with the perpetrator outside of the courtroom. The system takes full advantage of the range of Special Measures that are available including screens and live TV links to make the experience of giving evidence less onerous for a victim of domestic violence crime.

- ***The ‘MARAC’***

Each specialist court system is supported by a multi-agency risk assessment conference – the ‘MARAC’. By sharing information in the MARAC, agencies can focus on high risk domestic violence victims allowing them to develop a tailored response to the individual needs of victims and their children. (Please see Annex one for further information on SDVCs).

Improved Monitoring of Domestic Violence Cases

585. From December 2003 to 2006/7 the successful outcomes for prosecuting domestic violence cases rose from 46 per cent to 65.2 per cent. From April 2006, the gender and ethnicity of prosecuted domestic violence cases – both defendant and victim - was analysed. July to Sept 2006 data recorded that 95 per cent of defendants were male, with 17 per cent from minority ethnic communities. 85 per cent of victims with recorded gender were female²⁴ and 8 per cent from minority ethnic communities, where ethnicity was recorded.

586. An indicator was also used to identify the proportion of successful prosecution outcomes in relation to the number of incidents where an arrest was made (Police Performance Assessment Framework Key Diagnostic Indicator) with quarterly reports. From April to September 2006 the average figure was 17.1 per cent compared with 15.4 per cent for the same period in 2005.

Training for prosecutors and caseworkers and support for victims and witnesses

587. As part of the improvement process for dealing with domestic violence cases the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) revised its domestic violence policy and guidance for prosecutors of

²⁴ Recording of gender and ethnicity of victims was only introduced in April 2006, so the recording of data by September 2006 was poor.

domestic violence in February 2005 and launched a three year training programme for all prosecutors and caseworkers, carried out jointly with the Police. By December 2006, over 2,400 CPS staff had been trained in domestic violence; of whom 1,784 were prosecutors and caseworkers. In autumn 2005, the CPS established further Good Practice Guidance for all prosecutors. By early 2006, the Home Office and CPS had also set up Witness Care Units across England and Wales to provide support for victims and witnesses.

National domestic violence Delivery Plan

588. The Specialist Domestic Violence Court Programme forms a central plank of the Government's National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan published in March 2005 and updated in March 2006 and March 2007. This is a comprehensive cross-Government response to domestic violence which provides the strategic framework for delivery across Government. It has the following key aims:

- to reduce the number of domestic violence-related homicides;
- to reduce the prevalence of domestic violence, particularly in high incidence areas;
- to increase the rate that domestic violence is reported, particularly in high incidence areas;
- to increase the rate of reported domestic violence offences that are brought to justice, particularly in high incidence areas and/or communities as well as in areas with high attrition rates; and
- to ensure victims of domestic violence are adequately protected and supported nationwide.

589. The 2006 progress report can be accessed on: www.crimereduction.gov.uk/domesticviolence/domesticviolence61.pdf and the 2007 report on: www.crimereduction.gov.uk/domesticviolence/domesticviolence066.pdf.

Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic Violence

590. The Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic Violence oversees and performance manages the Delivery Plan. It provides high-level leadership and accountability across Government bringing together Departments central to tackling domestic violence, forced marriage, honour killings and female genital mutilation, along with colleagues from the Devolved Administrations. The group is responsible for driving forward work on all these areas.

Introduction of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004)

591. The National domestic violence Delivery Plan builds on the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004,²⁵ which introduced a number of new powers and made amendments to existing ones to strengthen the victim's case when brought to the attention of the criminal justice system (see article 2 for details).

Providing a guide to the legislation

592. The Department for Constitutional Affairs and Her Majesty's Court Service, have produced a guide setting out the choice of civil remedies and criminal sanctions available through the courts to victims of domestic violence which can be found at: <http://www.dca.gov.uk/family/famfr7.htm#latest>. This is being updated to include the provisions of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 which will continue to be implemented later this year (again see article 2 for details).

Publication of a Domestic Violence consultation paper — Safety and Justice

593. The National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan and the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act were both informed by the consultation paper Safety and Justice: the Government's Proposals on Domestic Violence which the Home Secretary published on 18 June 2003. This set out the Government's strategy for tackling domestic violence through three strands: prevention, protection and justice and support. It included proposals for legislative and non-legislative changes to the way domestic violence is dealt with in England and Wales.

594. In December 2003, the Government published "Summary of Responses to Safety and Justice: the Government's Proposals on Domestic Violence". It accompanied the introduction into Parliament of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill; and set out a number of non-legislative measures, which the Government would be pursuing in the short to medium term.

Cross-Government Domestic Violence officials group

595. Officials from across all Government departments meet regularly to oversee the programme of work around domestic violence, including the National Delivery Plan. This group supports the domestic violence Inter-Ministerial Group and its 7 work objectives planned until April 2007 are as follows:

- (a) increase the early identification of and intervention with, victims of domestic violence earlier by utilising all points of contact with key front line professionals;

²⁵ <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040028.htm>

- (b) build capacity within the domestic violence sector to provide effective advice and support to victims of domestic violence;
- (c) promotion and promulgation of a co-ordinated community response to domestic violence;
- (d) increase reporting and arrest rates for domestic violence;
- (e) increase the rate at which sanction detections are converted into offences brought to justice, particularly in high incidence areas and/or communities as well as in areas with high attrition rates;
- (f) support victims through the criminal justice system and manage perpetrators to reduce risk;
- (g) develop the evidence base to close key knowledge gaps, particularly around (a) understanding the nature and scope of domestic violence and (b) understanding what works in reducing the prevalence of domestic violence.

Providing funding for refuges

596. The Government put £32.1m capital funding (£15.7m through the Housing Corporation and £16.4m from Communities and Local Government's Housing Strategy and Support Directorate) into refuge provision between 2003-06, to create new refuge places and renovate existing ones, resulting in approximately 511 new or upgraded units (bed spaces). In 2005-6, it provided £200,000 to develop minimum service standards for the Women's Aid network of domestic violence services, a programme of accredited training and support for the regional network of women's refuges.

Helping people maintain independence through the Supporting People programme

597. The Supporting People programme is a grant programme enabling the provision of housing-related support services to help people maintain their independence. Established in April 2003, its main aim is to help end social exclusion by preventing crisis, helping people move on from crisis, and preventing more costly service intervention. Supporting People's five-year strategies published at the end of March 2005, set out authorities' plans for service provision from 2005/6 onwards.

598. Supporting People can help domestic violence survivors to live more independent lives in their homes and their communities as well as supporting domestic violence refuges for women who have no recourse to public funds. It can also help meet the needs of certain groups of women who may find it difficult to access services, for example through the provision of domestic violence refuges for specific ethnic minorities. Funding decisions are made at the local level, and there have been successful capital programmes for new refuge provision as

well as for improving the condition of existing refuges. This funding is provided in conjunction with the Housing Corporation and Communities and Local Government's Housing Strategy and Support Directorate homelessness work. Examples include a new refuge in Grimsby and improvements to an existing refuge in Chiswick.

599. In 2003/04, £57.1m of Supporting People funding was spent by authorities on services for 'women at risk of domestic violence'. In 2004/5, £57.4m was spent on housing-related support for domestic violence survivors and £59.3m in 2005/6.

Sanctuary Schemes to enable victims to remain in their own accommodation

600. The Government has also provided funding to local authorities through the Homelessness and Housing Directorate's grant programmes to develop outreach and other innovative models, such as the Sanctuary Scheme, to allow those experiencing domestic violence (and other hate crimes) to remain in their own accommodation where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice and where the perpetrator no longer lives within the accommodation.

601. In response to a September 2005 survey undertaken by Communities and Local Government (previously the Office of Deputy Prime Minister), 120 local authorities said that they already had a Sanctuary Scheme in place and a further 165 plan to have one in place by March 2007. Together with the Local Government Association, Communities and Local Government have produced joint guidance on "Options for Setting up a Sanctuary Scheme", which was published on 19 December 2006.

Twenty-four hour national domestic violence help-line

602. The Government has also invested £1.4m over 3 years, matched by £1m from Comic Relief, to develop a new 24 hour national domestic violence helpline (0808 2000 247). This is delivered in partnership by Women's Aid and Refuge and supported by UKRefugesonline, an internet based UK wide database of domestic violence services.

Central resource for employers - getting more corporate involvement in addressing DV

603. In March 2005, the Government launched the Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence and created a central resource for employers via an interactive website for employers and employees to get information and seek support. The Corporate Alliance is a group of progressive companies and organisations working individually, and collectively, to address the impact of domestic violence at work. The Women and Equality Unit hosted the inaugural meeting in September 2006, where Colm Dempsey's internationally renowned Violence Against Women poster exhibition was showcased.

Developing domestic violence policies to support Government's own staff

604. In 2005, guidance was issued to all Government departments to implement best practice as part of Human Resources policies. By January 2007, six Government departments²⁶ had employee domestic violence policies to support their own staff facing abuse. For some departments e.g. the Crown Prosecution Service, this included addressing perpetrators amongst their own staff.

Conducting research into the costs of domestic violence

605. The Women and Equality Unit published research by Professor Sylvia Walby on the economic and social costs of domestic violence in September 2004.²⁷ The research estimates the cost of domestic violence for the state, employers and the men and women subjected to it. The methodology is based on the Home Office framework for costing crime and develops this to include the specific cost related to domestic violence. The estimate provides an additional financial perspective for examining the devastating consequences of domestic violence for society as well as victims.

606. The Home Office carried out research on perpetrators of domestic violence and police/family disclosure published in April 2006²⁸ (www.bristol.ac.uk/sps/downloads/FPCW/perpetratorsreport.pdf). Further analysis of the findings will be published towards the end of 2007. A qualitative research study aiming to explore the support needs of male, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and some Black Minority Ethnic domestic and sexual violence victims will be commissioned in 2007/08.²⁹

Ensuring delivery of policies at a local level

607. In 2003, the Home Office agreed a joint proposal for a three-year domestic violence project with the Local Government Association to help improve local delivery and share best practice. Guidance on developing domestic violence strategies was issued to Local Partnerships in December 2005, to help them develop their own strategies. As of April 2005, local authority performance on addressing domestic violence has been measured by the Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI225) to assess overall effectiveness of local authority services designed to help victims. This has been followed up by providing support and advice to local authorities on implementation of the BVPI.

²⁶ Home Office; Crown Prosecution Service; Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Department of Education and Science; Department of Trade and Industry; Department of Community and Local Government have policies. Department of Constitutional Affairs and Department of Health are developing policies.

²⁷ http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/research/cost_of_dv_Report_sept04.pdf.

²⁸ Domestic Violence Perpetrators: identifying needs to inform early.

²⁹ Objective 7 in National Progress Report <http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/domesticviolence/domesticviolence61.pdf>.

Raising awareness amongst taxi drivers

608. In April 2003, the WEU started an awareness training programme with the Public Carriage Office and the Transport and General Workers Union to make black cab drivers more aware of domestic violence, which ran for a year as a pilot project. The drivers were trained not to interfere or offer any opinions/advice to anyone, but simply to offer women the helpline number for contacting a refuge or drive them to the nearest police station or hospital, if needed. Domestic violence awareness training is still part of the London Licensed Cab Drivers induction training once they have completed the mandatory 'Knowledge' examinations. New drivers receive awareness training designed to give clear factual information about the extent of domestic violence and a checklist of useful dos and don't's. The Public Carriage Office and Transport for London are currently looking into the feasibility of re-launching the scheme by updating the materials used in the campaign.

Working with offenders

609. Since April 2006, an accredited domestic abuse perpetrator treatment programme has been running in each probation service area in England and Wales. For the first time, targets were set by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) for programme completions. The national target was set at 1,200 completions for 2006/7, and probation areas are on course to meet this target. Women Safety Workers play an essential role in the accredited programmes, working with the victims and current partners of men attending the accredited programme in the community and in prison. To support this role, NOMS has made available additional funding during 2006/07 and run 4 national training events.

610. To provide a national lead for the Probation Service, an interim national domestic abuse policy and strategy was issued in July 2005. This is intended to support the work already undertaken in local probation areas. During 2006, documentation to support the Strategy was produced that provides more detailed guidance on the principles and practice aims which underpin the Strategy. This covers, amongst other topics, working with victims of domestic abuse and supervising women offenders who are current or former victims.

Forced marriage

Pursuing steps to protect people at risk of forced marriages

611. In 2005, the Home Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office launched a joint Forced Marriage Unit as a one-stop shop to develop policy, co-ordinate projects and give practical advice to people at risk of being forced into marriage. The Unit works closely with a wide range of community groups, women's groups, Non Government Organisations and statutory agencies in fighting forced marriage. It handles approximately 300 cases a year. The UK's embassies and High Commissions assist, rescue or repatriate about 200 people a year, about 85 per cent of whom are women.

Legislation to make forced marriage a civil, not a criminal, offence

612. A consultation was held in 2005, on whether to create a specific criminal offence of forcing someone into marriage. As the majority of respondents believed that new legislation would not be the best use of resources, with many fearing that it could drive the practice underground, the Government decided not to introduce specific criminal legislation at the current time. The Unit is now pursuing recommendations for non-legislative measures, including continuing its extensive programme of outreach work, increasing training to professionals, and strengthening work with statutory agencies to implement forced marriage guidelines. In addition to exploring ways to make better use of existing legislation, civil remedies and the family courts, the Unit is working closely with NGOs and other government departments on new legislation to make forced marriage a civil offence.

Making links with community groups

613. The Attorney General and Baroness Scotland met with community leaders in October and November 2006, to address ways that community groups could advise and support victims of forced marriage and so-called honour-based violence. Plans were also developed within the Crown Prosecution Service during 2006/7 to develop four pilots identifying cases of both forced marriage and so-called honour based violence, to inform any future guidance and training of specialist prosecutors.

Honour based violence

614. The Government takes so called “honour based” violence seriously, viewing honour crimes as an abuse of human rights not condoned by religion, ethnicity or culture. An honour crime is defined as one that is, or has been, justified or explained by the perpetrator of the crime on the grounds that it was committed as a consequence of the need to protect or defend the honour of the family. Honour is seen as a concept derived from archaic patriarchal and tribal traditions, where a man’s authority and standing in the community are defined and judged by the conduct and behaviour of his female relatives for whom he assumes a guardianship role. Honour-based violence is rooted in unequal and unjust gender relations where women are denied the right to exercise choice and control over their own lives. It includes forced and early marriage, dowry-related incidents and female genital mutilation. The Government addresses honour based violence through the Domestic Violence Inter-Ministerial Group.

615. In 2004, the UK, in conjunction with Turkey, presented the UN General Assembly Resolution on Working Towards the Elimination of crimes Against Women and Girls in the Name of Honour. We are also working closely with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the National Centre for Policing Excellence to raise awareness of honour based violence and have set up a dedicated Forced Marriage Unit, which deals with around 300 cases per year (see above). Other initiatives include the promotion of a Risk Assessment Toolkit for domestic violence incidents, which includes honour crimes, as well as funding for the first UK wide working group on forced marriage and honour crimes. Funding for this group will continue for 2006/07.

Rape and sexual offending

Addressing sexual offences against women

616. Sexual violence and abuse remains an important cause and consequence of gender inequality and therefore a priority for Government action in England and Wales. Home Office research published in 2005 estimated the total cost of sexual offences committed in England and Wales in 2003/4 as nearly £8.5 billion, 23 per cent of the estimated total cost of crime against individuals and households.

617. The Government published a cross-Government Sexual Violence and Abuse Action Plan in April 2007 (www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/Sexual-violence-action-plan), setting out what the Government and its delivery partners are doing to address sexual violence and abuse in three main areas: prevention, improving access to health and support services for victims and improving the investigation and prosecution of sexual violence and abuse. Since 2003, it has put in place a range of measures in these areas.

Improving the investigation and prosecution of sexual offences

618. To improve the investigation of sexual violence cases, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) issued guidance on investigating serious sexual offences in 2005. A national training programme for police is now under development, based on the guidance. The Government has introduced specially trained officers and specialist rape prosecutors to ensure that cases are dealt with by experts in sexual violence.

Sexual Offences Act

619. The Government also overhauled the legal framework for dealing with sexual offences through the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (see article 2) and an Inter-Departmental Group on Sexual Offending monitors implementation of the Act.

A consultation paper on Convicting Rapists and Protecting Victims

620. As part of its efforts to improve the low conviction rate in rape cases, the Government published, in March 2006, a consultation paper, *Convicting Rapists and Protecting Victims-Justice for Victims of Rape*. This sought views on proposals to amend the law on capacity in relation to consent in rape, the admissibility of general expert evidence concerning the psychological impact of sexual offences upon victims, the relevance of evidence of first complaint and the use of video-recorded evidence in sex offence trials. The Government is considering the responses to the consultation and will publish its response in due course.

Taking forward the Rape Action Plan

621. The 2003 CEDAW report referred to the measures that were being implemented through the Rape Action Plan 2002, to improve the investigation and prosecution of rape. These have been taken forward in conjunction with the police and Crown Prosecution Service and a follow-up inspection of the way in which rape is investigated and prosecuted was published in January 2007. The recommendations from the inspection are taken forward through the Sexual Violence and Abuse Action Plan, with actions planned by both police and Crown Prosecution Service.

Specialist rape prosecutors

622. To improve the prosecution of rape cases, all Chief Crown Prosecutors were requested, in December 2002, to nominate rape specialists. The Crown Prosecution Service now has 520 specialist rape prosecutors who have received training on the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and related issues such as special measures. In each CPS Area, there is a coordinator who acts as a source of expertise to the Area specialists and who links up with other coordinators to share best practice.

Training and accreditation of rape prosecutors

623. In 2005, the CPS published a public policy statement on the prosecution of rape, which explained the prosecution process to complainants. Recently the CPS has begun a system of accrediting counsel who prosecute rape cases. This entails attending a course on sexual offending then undergoing a rigorous monitoring procedure. CPS prosecutions in April to September 2006 indicated 53.5 per cent successful outcomes for rape cases and 67.1 per cent for other sexual offences, compared with 49.2 per cent in 2005/6 for rape and 65.6 per cent for other sexual offences.

Ensuring support for victims of sexual violence

624. The Government has provided around £7 million towards improving services for victims over the last three years. This includes:

- extending the network of Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) where victims of sexual assault can have a forensic examination, receive sexual health treatment and access counselling and support. There are currently 15 SARCs and a further six under development. Funding from 2006/7 will bring the total to over 30 across England and Wales by April 2008;
- supporting the sexual violence and abuse voluntary sector through the Home Office Victims Fund;

- piloting and evaluating Independent Sexual Violence Advisors which provide vital advocacy services for victims of sexual violence and abuse.

625. The Department of Health and the Home Office are currently running a Victims of Violence and Abuse Prevention Programme. This aims to produce evidence-based guidelines on effective preventative and therapeutic interventions in relation to child sexual abuse and rape and sexual assault, as well as other forms of gender based violence. The Government has established a Stakeholder Advisory Group on sexual violence and abuse, which has representation from across the voluntary sector, including organizations who work with vulnerable or hard-to-reach groups.

Raising awareness about prevention of sexual violence

626. In 2006, in order to raise awareness about sexual violence and abuse the Government ran a communications campaign to make men think twice about whether their partner is consenting. The 2006/7 Alcohol Harm Reduction Campaign, 'Know Your Limits', also included messages for women about their vulnerability to sexual assault if they have been drinking and for men about ensuring that the woman has consented to sex.

Work to safeguard children from sexual violence and abuse

627. The Government's work to safeguard children from sexual violence and abuse is included in the Guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, published in 2006. In 2006, it also legislated for a new vetting and barring scheme to ensure that those who work with children and vulnerable adults are safe to do so.

Tracking and managing sex offenders

628. The Government now operates a range of sex offender treatment programmes in prisons and the community, and has a system of Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements to ensure inter-agency co-operation in assessing and managing violent and sexual offenders in England and Wales. It has also introduced arrangements to make it easier to share information about offenders, and is currently reviewing arrangements for the management of sex offenders.

Addressing accommodation and health needs of sex workers through Supporting People Programme

629. The SWAN Nest scheme in Northampton is an example of one of the Supporting People Health Pilots designed to explore the extent to which the Supporting People framework for policy, planning and commissioning could be used to benefit the physical and mental health of the community. The pilot was developed to address some of the accommodation and health needs of sex workers in Northampton and provides an example of a supported housing scheme with housing and health related support working together in assisting people in exiting from the sex industry.

International work to address Violence Against Women

630. The Department for International Development (DFID) works to tackle violence against women, in particular, in areas such as girls' education, maternal and reproductive health, HIV and AIDs and justice sector reform, as well as through some self-standing projects with civil society organisations, Governmental partners and international organisations. DFID funding has enabled the World Health Organisation (WHO) to undertake a major piece of research into the impact of domestic violence on health.

631. At a country level, DFID has carried out a substantial research project in Malawi on gender-based violence in schools. The research project, completed in 2005, found that almost 1 in 5 female children had been sexually assaulted. As a result, a comprehensive national response to gender-based violence in schools is now being developed in collaboration with a number of Government ministries, Non Government Organisations and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). In Ghana, DFID has provided support to the Domestic Violence Coalition, through the Rights and Voice Initiative (a civil society support programme in Ghana), for advocacy work around new legislation on domestic violence.

Northern Ireland

Publication of a strategy to tackle domestic violence

632. Following a consultation process in late 2003, the Government published in October 2005, *'Tackling Violence at Home - a Strategy for Addressing Domestic Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland'*. The strategy acknowledges that while anyone can be a victim of domestic violence, the abuse is mainly perpetrated by men on women. The ultimate goal is to put in place all practical measures towards the elimination of domestic violence and abuse. Progress towards this goal will be achieved through the strategy's aims which are:

- to improve services and support for all victims of domestic violence;
- to develop and deliver a high quality, co-ordinated multi-agency response to domestic violence;
- to further increase and develop awareness generally about domestic violence and the measures in place to help the victims;
- to educate children and young people and the wider general public that domestic violence is wrong and unacceptable and to enable them to make informed choices;
- to hold perpetrators/abusers accountable and provide effective interventions for their behaviour.

Publication of an action plan to tackle domestic violence

633. Also published with the strategy was an 18-month action plan which set out the main issues and actions to be addressed through the 3 key areas of prevention; protection and justice; and support. Good progress has been made across all the agencies involved in implementing the strategy and action plan and a second action plan has been developed covering April 2007 - March 2008. Further action plans will be produced annually to maintain momentum in implementing the strategy.

Achievements under the strategy

634. Achievements under the strategy to date include: the launch of a Free-phone 24-hour Domestic Violence Helpline Service for all victims; the organisation of ongoing high-profile publicity campaigns to raise awareness of the issue and to promote the Helpline; the introduction and distribution of Guidelines for Employers to encourage them to adopt workplace policies to support staff who may be suffering abuse at home; the introduction by the police, the prosecution service and the court service of policies for handling cases of domestic violence and training for staff; the development and widespread distribution of information leaflets for victims to explain how they can seek protection under the criminal and civil law; introduction of routine enquiry within maternity units to encourage pregnant women to disclose abuse; and developing new guidelines for faith communities, and for politicians to assist them in addressing the issues with victims or perpetrators.

Increase in reporting of domestic violence

635. More victims are now reporting domestic violence to the Domestic Violence Helpline (over 20,000 calls per year) and to the police, who responded to over 23,000 incidents in 2005/06. It is expected that as the profile of the problem is raised under the strategy, more and more victims will seek help and support. It is anticipated therefore, that reported incidents will continue to rise over the next few years.

Providing help for victims at court

636. The Northern Ireland Court Service have special arrangements at most court venues to allow women who are attending court as either victims or witnesses to have access to separate and secure waiting facilities. Women using courts are being consulted, through court user groups, to try and identify the assistance and information they need to reduce the fear and anxiety associated with court attendance. There were 3,505 applications for non-molestation orders, 397 applications for occupation orders, and 1,077 combination occupation and non-molestation orders dealt with during 2005. Of these family homes and domestic violence applications, 23 per cent of applications were withdrawn, and 14 per cent were granted orders by consent.

Training specialist domestic violence police officers

637. By January 2007, the Northern Ireland Police Service (PSNI) had over 40 officers deployed in the role of a domestic violence officer (DVO). Following a review of the role of these officers in 2004 and appropriate investigative training, DVOs are trained to investigate all crimes of physical assault and all repeat offences committed within a domestic violence context. In addition to this investigative role, DVOs also provide support and guidance to the victim during the prosecution process, as well as advice to operational officers investigating domestic incidents and if appropriate, assist or undertake the investigation. In relation to child protection matters, DVOs aim to attend all initial Child Protection Case Conferences and Review Child Protection Case Conferences where police have a significant contribution to make.

Drafting a regional strategy on sexual violence

638. The Northern Ireland Office and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety co-chair an interdepartmental group tasked with preparing a draft regional strategy to address sexual violence. The interdepartmental group brings together representatives from the health and criminal justice sectors as well as other Government departments concerned with this issue. A consultation document entitled "*Hidden Crimes, Secret Pain*" was launched on 29 January, with a view to issuing a final strategy at the end of October 2007. The Strategy will consider the issues surrounding sexual violence and its effect on victims, perpetrators and their families and society as a whole and make recommendations for beginning to address the issues under three main themes of Prevention, Protection and Justice and Support for victims.

Developing workplace policies to tackle domestic violence

639. A workplace policy to support staff in all civil service departments was introduced in March 2006 and all Government Departments have joined the Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence (see above). A number of other employers in the public, private and voluntary sectors have also introduced workplace policies and the Regional Steering Group has plans to encourage more employers across all sectors to adopt policies in the future.

Providing housing for victims of domestic violence

640. In Northern Ireland, registered housing associations provide all social housing including for people with special needs and victims of domestic violence. Day-to-day management is carried out by voluntary organisations such as the Northern Ireland Women's aid Federation (NIWAF). By March 2006, associations provided 29 refuges for vulnerable women (with or without children) totalling 510 places. A further 3 refuges with 27 places are planned during the next 5 years.

Scotland

Addressing all forms of violence against women

641. The National Group to Address Violence Against Women, composed of key experts from the areas of the police, education, health, local Government, racial equality, the judiciary and the voluntary sector, is chaired by the Minister for Communities. It has extended its earlier focus on domestic abuse to cover all forms of violence against women and develop a strategic approach to gender based violence, building on the 3 themes of prevention, protection and provision.

Supporting local projects with funding

642. A new Violence Against Women Fund was launched in 2006, providing £3million a year up to 2008, to support 87 local projects working across the violence against women agenda. Further funding has been allocated to develop rape crisis services and to provide support workers for children and young people via local women's aid groups as well as to roll out a national training strategy for domestic abuse. The Executive provides core funding to Scottish Women's Aid, Rape Crisis Scotland; local rape crisis centres and to the Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline.

Setting up the Forced Marriage Network to tackle the issue of forced marriage

643. In March 2005, the Scottish Executive established the Forced Marriage Network bringing together the key statutory and voluntary agencies in Scotland to share expertise and to progress work to tackle the issue. Also that year, the Scottish Executive linked with the UK Government to undertake a consultation which, as well as considering the benefits and risks of a legislative response to forced marriage, aimed to hear directly from those who have been affected by it. Most respondents felt that awareness raising, education and support for those affected were the key issues.

Funding awareness raising events

644. The Scottish Executive is funding a series of awareness raising/consultative events, planned for spring/summer 2007 and in partnership with the Forced Marriage Network, will use these to further develop its workplan in this area. The Executive funds Amina the Muslim Women's Resource Centre's Violence Against Women PPP project and the Council of British Pakistanis (Scotland) to carry out awareness raising work within communities that might be affected by forced marriage. The Executive also plans to further develop its forced marriage webpage: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/18500/Forced>. Additionally, Scotland Children's service planners were asked to consider children and young people experiencing domestic abuse as a priority for service development in the 2005/8 children's service plans.

Setting up a national Domestic Abuse Delivery Group

645. The National Domestic Abuse Delivery Group relating to children and young people experiencing domestic abuse (CYPEDA) was established in December 2006. This group sits between the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) Children's Services Strategy Group, (and thereby the Cabinet Delivery Group for Children and Young People), and the National Group to Address Violence Against Women, chaired by the Minister for Communities. The delivery Group's remit is to produce, implement and monitor a delivery/action plan in relation to children, young people and domestic abuse.

Setting up a domestic abuse pathfinder pilot

646. **The *Getting It Right For Every Child* Domestic Abuse Pathfinder Pilot was also launched in late 2006. The Pathfinder will look to change agency practice and aim to provide longer term solutions to how police and all agencies respond to domestic abuse incidents. Its objectives are to: ensure all agencies place the child's needs and interests at the centre of their activity, to achieve better joint working by all relevant agencies in the interests of the child: to test and refine a framework and tools for a multi agency response which can then be used throughout the country; to evidence success from adopting a unified, timely, and appropriate approach to situations where children are affected by domestic abuse; to provide specialist advice on the Single Assessment, Record and Plan; and to enable sustained and sustainable improvement in the seamless delivery of high quality services once the pilot has ended.**

Providing special measures in court to protect children and vulnerable witnesses

647. The Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2004, received Royal assent in April 2004. The Act aims to provide support and protection for child and adult vulnerable witnesses when they are giving their evidence. It gives statutory effect to the provision of special measures in the High Court and Sheriff Courts for such witnesses, with the objective of ensuring that they are able to give the best evidence they can in both criminal and civil proceedings. In criminal cases, most of the special measures are available equally to prosecution and defence witnesses, as well as an accused person. The Act also strengthens protection of vulnerable witnesses by preventing an accused person from directly questioning a witness in certain types of cases and restricts questioning in sexual offence cases in children's hearings court proceedings.

Relevance of the legislation to women

648. The Act has particular relevance to women, as the special measures may enable female witnesses who have been victims of sexual or other offences such as domestic violence to feel more confident about giving evidence. With regard to sexual offences, the Act makes provision for restrictions on questioning designed to show that a witness is of bad character, sexually or otherwise in children's hearings court proceedings. In certain types of cases, it prohibits an accused person from personally conducting their defence reducing the possibility of the witness being intimidated. The Act also allows for the prosecution to use expert evidence in sexual

offence cases for the purpose of explaining the behaviour of the complainer to rebut any inference adverse to the credibility and reliability of the witness.

649. The definition of a vulnerable witness is extended to include all child witnesses under 16 who have an automatic right to standard special measures (see below), and adult vulnerable witnesses now include anyone where there is a significant risk that the quality of their evidence may be diminished by reason of fear or distress in connection with giving evidence.

Special measures

650. The special measures are:

- use of screens in court (also a standard special measure for child witnesses, but not available to accused persons);
- use of live TV link (also a standard special measure);
- the presence of a supporter (also with a standard special measure, but only when used in conjunction with screens or live TV link);
- use of a prior statement as evidence in chief (not available in civil proceedings); and
- taking evidence by a commissioner (not available in sexual offence cases until 2007).

651. Implementation of the Act is being phased in. Special measures are now available to child and adult vulnerable witnesses in criminal proceedings in the High Court and Sheriff Court jury trials and in children's hearings court proceedings. They will be available to child witnesses in Sheriff Court summary proceedings from April 2007 and to adult vulnerable witnesses in similar proceedings from April 2008, at the latest. It is expected that they will be extended to child and adult vulnerable witnesses in civil proceedings from 1 November 2007.

Reviewing the investigation and prosecution of sexual offences

652. In October 2004 the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) commenced a comprehensive review of the investigation and prosecution of sexual offences in Scotland. A report, which critically examined all aspects of COPFS work in relation to such cases, together with 50 recommendations, was published in June 2006. A three-year implementation programme is now under way.

653. The review recognised that there were aspects of the current legal framework, not least the requirement for corroboration and the limitations of the Moorov Doctrine, which served to inhibit the prosecution of cases. The training structure for prosecution staff; approach to be taken to case preparation; and communication with, and preparation of, victims for court were addressed in the report. In particular, it confirmed that there is to be a presumption in favour

of prosecution, apart from cases with insurmountable weaknesses, in which there is an objective test of “no reasonable prospect of a conviction”. There is to be an emphasis on a case-building approach to identify and overcome weaknesses and early exploration of grave concerns about the quality of the evidence. This will necessitate a willingness to ask difficult questions of victims to overcome those weaknesses. The increased use of feedback systems both within COPFS and between COPFS and the police to ensure learning from case outcomes, is also key to ensuring a high standard of investigation and case preparation.

Wales

Developing an all Wales strategy

654. Lead responsibility for the criminal aspects of domestic abuse in England and Wales rests with the Home Office. The Welsh Assembly Government does, however, have devolved responsibility for a number of cross-cutting issues, including health and social services and child protection. *"Tackling Domestic Abuse: The All Wales National Strategy - a joint agency approach"* was published in March 2005.

655. The Strategy provides an important framework for the development of local action and emphasises the need for joint agency working where information and best practices are shared. The delivery of the Strategy is monitored by the All Wales Working Group on Domestic Abuse. The Welsh Assembly Government have mainstreamed gender and equality issues into the Strategy. To promote equality between men and women an All Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline has been part funded by the Welsh Assembly Government since 2004 and takes calls from men, women and children. The service operates a 24 hour service, providing free confidential advice to all victims of domestic abuse.

Providing funding and support for victims

656. In 2006/07, funding was granted for domestic abuse projects of £1.943 and £1.974m for 2007/08 and 2008/09. All Community Safety Partnerships must consider and take account of the full scope of equality issues including gender. Support services need to be established for all victims of domestic abuse including men, women, children and same sex relationships. The Welsh Assembly Government core funds the Black Association of Women Step Out; £207,569 has been allocated for 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09. The Welsh Assembly Government also fund the All Wales National Domestic Abuse Helpline; £244,410 has been allocated for 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09 from the Domestic Abuse Fund. The Welsh Assembly Government is also funding a Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator in each Community Safety Partnership in Wales, to support victims of domestic abuse.

657. The Welsh Assembly Government have allocated £250k in 2006/09 to Welsh Women's Aid to extend the All Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline into a 24 hour service. The Welsh Assembly Government is recruiting a Forced Marriage secondee to take forward the Forced Marriage agenda and map out the extent of the problem in Wales.

Ensuring refuge provision

658. There are 30 local groups subscribed to Welsh Women's Aid, running 41 refuges and 22 information centres between them. The Welsh Assembly Government provides core funding for Welsh Women's Aid, which amounts to £357,185 in 2006/07 to 2008/09.

Family Law

Responding to family breakdowns

659. More parental couples are separating than ever before. The Government responded by publishing *Parental Separation: Children's Needs and Parents' Responsibilities*, in January 2005. This laid out a broad programme of reform to improve outcomes for the children involved. The Relationship Breakdown Programme consists of a number of individual projects to be delivered by the various delivery agencies including the Department for Constitutional Affairs, the Department for Education and Skills, Children and Family Court Advisory Service and the Legal Services Commission.

Early identification in cases of alleged harm

660. New Gateway forms to aid the early identification of cases where harm is alleged, were introduced in January 2005, by the Adoption and Children Act 2002. This change also clarified the definition of harm, so that it includes impairment from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. Evaluation of the impact of the forms is currently under way.

Revised parenting plans published

661. Revised parenting plans, which should help to encourage co-operative parenting and assist in the difficult situation of parental separation, were published on 2 March 2006. DfES also announced in January 2005, additional funds for child contact services (£3m 2006/07, £4.5m 2007/08). The money will support Child Contact Centres and contact activities, including those arising from the Children and Adoption Act 2006, e.g. parenting programmes and information meetings. £1.2m from that £3m has already been allocated for supervised child contact centres for 2006/7. Proposals for the allocation of the remainder of the funding are expected shortly.

New arrangements for contact applications

662. Arrangements for handling contact applications have been tested by the Department for Education and Skills through the Family Resolutions Pilot Project. This project ended in September 2005 and an evaluation report published in March 2006.

Provision under the Civil Partnership Act for same sex couples to separate

663. The Civil Partnership Act came into force in December 2005 and provides for a court-based process for same sex couples similar to that of divorce and ancillary relief (see article 2).

Amending the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953

664. The Civil Partnership Act (see above) also amended the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953, to allow surviving civil partners to register the death of their partner on the same basis as a surviving spouse. The Government continues to look for opportunities to amend primary legislation to extend the right to register deaths to surviving partners outside of a marriage or civil partnership.

Raising public awareness about the legal status of cohabitation

665. The Department for Constitutional Affairs funded a three year campaign (which ended in March 2007) to raise public awareness about the legal status of cohabitation. The campaign aims to make people more aware of the differences in the rights and responsibilities applying to married and unmarried relationships, and to provide cohabitants with practical advice on how they can protect themselves and their families, should they wish to do so. Three websites provide a range of informative and practical information on cohabitation.:

www.advicenow.org.uk/livingtogether; www.oneplusone.org.uk/marriedornot. The Government has qualitative research from two of the organisations involved in the project, suggesting that the advice schemes have increased the awareness of cohabitants of their rights and obligations.

Law Commission project about rights of cohabitants

666. The Law Commission's ninth programme of law reform which includes a project on the rights and responsibilities of cohabitants started in July 2005. It is considering the law as it applies to cohabiting couples on the termination of their relationship by separation or death. It places special emphasis on reducing potential financial hardship suffered by cohabitants or their children in these circumstances. A consultation paper was published in June 2006 and the Commission is expected to produce their final report in the summer of 2007. The Department for Constitutional Affairs will then consider what action to take following their recommendations.

Northern Ireland

Addressing anomalous areas of family law

667. Under the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Northern Ireland) Order 2005, three anomalous areas of family law which treat men and women differently were addressed, namely the common law rule of maintenance, the rule in relation to housekeeping money and the

presumption of advancement as regards transfers of property between spouses. These provisions came into effect on 15th November 2005.

Scotland

Introduction of new family law

668. The Family Law (Scotland) Act 2006, came into force on 4 May 2006. It includes new rights for cohabitants, (both same sex and opposite sex), on separation or if one of them dies; reduces the periods of non-cohabitation required to demonstrate the irretrievable breakdown of a marriage in divorce proceedings; abolishes the status of illegitimacy; and grants parental responsibilities and rights to all fathers, who jointly register their child's birth from 4 May 2006.

669. Significantly, section 24 of the Act explicitly defines "abuse" or the risk of abuse, (both to the child or to someone who cares for the child), that the courts must take into account when deciding whether to make an order under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, relating to parental responsibilities and rights. The Scottish Executive worked closely with stakeholders such as Scottish Women's Aid and Children 1st, to draft a definition that protected those most vulnerable whilst still giving the courts the flexibility to decide what was in the child's best interests in each individual case.

670. In addition, section 15 allows the court to postpone granting decree of divorce where there is a religious impediment to remarriage. This section combined with Scottish Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 253, seeks to remedy the difficulty when a religious bill of divorce is refused in Jewish law (known as a "get"). This says that a marriage can only be dissolved by a husband voluntarily giving his wife a "get" and his wife's voluntary acceptance of it. A woman can only remarry if she has received a "get". Otherwise, it can have long term consequences for her and any children. The Jewish community worked with the Executive to find a remedy in law. The relevant rules of court will be in place in 2007. If in the future other religious communities faced similar difficulties, Scottish Ministers could make further regulations.

Acronyms

A

ACAS – Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service
ACPO – Association of Chief Police Officers
AIDS – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ALF – Access to Learning Fund
ALG – Adult Learning Grant
ALO – Adult Learning Option

B

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation
BME – Black and minority ethnic
BVPI – Best Value Performance Indicator

C

CA – Carers Allowance
CAFCASS – Children and Family Court Advisory Service
CCP – Chief Crown Prosecutor
CCR – Coordinated Community Response
CEHR – Commission for Equality and Human Rights
CHD – Coronary Heart Disease
CLG – Communities and Local Government
COPFS – Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service
CPAG – Child Poverty Action Group
CPS – Crown Prosecution Service
CSIP - Care Services Improvement Partnership
CSW – Commission on the Status of Women
CTC – Child Tax Credit
CtOG – Closing the Opportunity Gap
CVD – Cardiovascular Disease

D

DAF – Deprived Areas Fund
DARD – Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DCA – Department for Constitutional Affairs
DCMS – Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DDA – Disability Discrimination Act
DfES – Department for Education and Skills
DfID – Department for International Development
DH – Department of Health
DLR – Discrimination Law Review
DRC – Disability Rights Commission
DTI – Department of Trade and Industry
DV – Domestic Violence
DVCV – Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
DVD – Digital Versatile Disc

DVO – Domestic Violence Officer

DWP – Department for Work and Pensions

E

ECHR – European Court of Human Rights

ECJ – European Court of Justice

EEA – European Economic Area

EEDA – East of England Development Agency

EGAMS – Expert Group on Acute Maternity Services

EOC – Equal Opportunities Commission

ERDF – European Regional Development Fund

ESF – European Social Fund

EU – European Union

EU PBSP – EU Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity

F

FCO – Foreign and Commonwealth Office

FE – Further Education

FGM – Female Genital Mutilation

G

GB – Great Britain

GCSE – General Certificate in Secondary Education

GE & WMH – Gender Equality and Women’s Mental Health

GFI – General Formal Investigation

GNVQs – General National Vocational Qualifications

GP – General Practitioner

GSSG – General Sure Start Grant

H

HE – Higher Education

HM – Her Majesty

HMIE – HM Inspectorate of Education

HMRC – Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs

I

IAG – Independent Advisory Group (Article 12 - health)

IAG – Information, Advice and Guidance (Article 10 - education)

IDVA – Independent Domestic Violence Advisor

ILO – International Labour Organisation

INSET – In Service Education and Training

ITEC – Information Technology, Electronics and Communications

ITT – Initial Teacher Training

IWF – Internet Watch Foundation

J

JCP – Jobcentre Plus

L

LBC – Liquid Based Cytology

LEGI – Local Enterprise Growth Initiative

LGA – Local Government Association
 LSC – Learning and Skills Council (Article 10 – education)
 LSC – Legal Services Commission (Article 16 – equality in marriage and family law)
 LSF – Learner Support Fund

M

MARAC – Multi-agency risk assessment conference
 MoD – Ministry of Defence
 MP – Member of Parliament
 MEP – Member of the European Parliament
 MSP – Member of the Scottish Parliament

N

NACP – National Association of Connexions Partnerships
 NCSL – National College for School Leadership
 NDDP – New Deal for Disabled People
 NDLP – New Deal For Lone Parents
 NGO – Non Governmental Organisation
 NHS – National Health Service
 NI – Northern Ireland
 NICE – National Institute for Clinical Excellence
 NIMHE – National Institute for Mental Health in England
 NIO – Northern Ireland Office
 NIRWN – Northern Ireland Rural Women’s Network
 NIWAF – Northern Ireland Women’s Aid Federation
 NMHP – National Mental Health Partnership
 NMW – National Minimum Wage
 NOF – New Opportunities Fund
 NOMS – National Offender Management Service
 NPQH - National Professional Qualification for Headshjp
 NPSA – National Patient Safety Agency
 NSF – National Service Framework
 NSIP – National Social Inclusion Programme
 NVQ – National Vocational Qualification

O

OFCOM – Office of Communications
 OFMDFM – Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister’s Office
 OFSTED – Office for Standards in Education
 OSC – Out of School Care
 OSI – Office of Science and Innovation

P

PA – Public Authority
 PCT – Primary Care Trust
 PSA – Public Service Agreement
 PSHE – Personal, Social and Health Education
 PSNI – Police Service of Northern Ireland

Q

QIS – Quality Improvement Scotland

R

RDA – Regional Development Agency

RDP – Rural Development Programme

RRA – Race Relations Act

RTF – Rural Transport Fund

RTS – Regional Transportation Strategy

S

SARC – Sexual Assault Referral Centre

SGOSS – School Governors’ One Stop Shop

SDVC – Specialist Domestic Violence Court

SEA – Science and Engineering Ambassador

SEEDA – South East England Development Agency

SET – Science, Engineering and Technology

SETNET – Science, Engineering, Technology and Mathematics Network

SR – Spending Review

SRE – Sex and Relationship Education

SSG – School Standards Grant

STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

STI – Sexually Transmitted Infection

T

TSN – Targeting Social Need

U

UASC – Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

UNFPA – United Nations Fund for Population Activities

UK – United Kingdom

UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund

UNIFEM – UN Development Fund for Women

UKRC – UK Resource Centre

UKTC – UK Human Trafficking Centre

V

VAT – Value Added Tax

VAW – Violence Against Women

W

WEU – Women and Equality Unit

WFI – Work Focused Interview

WHO – World Health Organisation

WNC – Women’s National Commission

WORP – Women’s Offending Reduction Programme

WRAP – Welfare Reform and Pensions Act

WTC – Working Tax Credit

WWC – Women and Work Commission