

# UN QUESTIONNAIRE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

## Part One

### **Overview of trends in achieving gender equality and women's advancement**

The election of the Labour Government in May 1997 brought a determination by the new administration to improve the position of women. Central to this aim was the establishment of a new Women's Unit to support the Ministers for Women. These are the Rt. Hon. the Baroness Jay, Leader of the House of Lords and a member of the Cabinet, and the Rt. Hon. Tessa Jowell who is Minister for Public Health and the House of Commons spokesperson on women's issues.

The Women's Unit, based in the Cabinet Office at the heart of government, ensures the contribution of the women's perspective to the wider government agenda. Its aim is to listen to women's concerns, to reflect and promote their concerns within Government and in turn to communicate effectively what the Government is doing to meet those concerns. The UK Government's agenda for women is carried out under the banner *Better for Women, Better for All*. This reflects the commitment not to marginalise women's interests and concerns and to recognise that progress for women is progress for the whole of society. The agenda for women reflects the gender mainstreaming approach, in that its goal is to integrate the needs and aspirations of women into policy development from the outset. The style of the Women's Unit is to add value to existing initiatives and to act as a taskforce within Government, not to act as a separate lobby for women.

Equality for women and equal treatment are at the heart of Government thinking and delivery in every area. In health, education, financial policy and social security, radical changes have already been made to ensure that the impact on women of any policy is not only recognised but taken into account. Of course there is no room for complacency and the UK is striving ever harder for more and better. The Government is realistic in its approach to tackling the problems that women encounter daily. It is still the case that many women face barriers that men do not.

In summary, the aims of the Ministers for Women and Women's Unit are:

- to listen to women's concerns, views and aspirations;
- to feed those views into the Government process; and
- to communicate with women and publicise what the Government is delivering for women.

The agenda for women sets out a practical programme of action designed to deliver these aims. For the year 1999/2000 these are:

- a major *Listening to Women* exercise consisting of a qualitative research programme, a series of twelve Ministerial roadshows around the country, a meeting of national NGOs and a 'talkback' postcard campaign, widely distributed and designed to elicit views from women of all kinds;
- four focused projects, designed to address cross-cutting issues of particular concern to women that do not fall within the remit of any single Government department and have therefore been neglected in the past. These are:
  - violence against women;
  - family friendly employment;
  - women's incomes over a lifetime; and
  - teenage girls
- a 'mainstreaming' programme designed to:
  - feed the women's perspective into other cross-cutting Government initiatives, under the banner of *Better Government for Women*
  - inject the women's perspective into policy initiatives being carried out right across the spectrum of Government activity to deliver practical benefits for women;
- a proactive communications programme, including with and through women's NGOs;
- a research programme, to provide authority and credibility for the work.

In the first quarter of 1999 the Women's Unit in its project areas has:

#### *Women's incomes over a lifetime*

- fed ideas into the 1999 Budget, working closely in the process with HM Treasury officials;
- published a document demonstrating the magnitude of the disparity between men's and women's incomes over their lifetimes;

#### *Family friendly practices in the National Health Service/retail sectors*

- initiated a new family friendly strategy within the NHS;
- contributed to publicity and substance in relation to a new nurse recruitment scheme;
- established partnerships with six retail companies;
- had a successful project launch and associated publicity at an NHS Human Resources conference, leading to partnerships with over 40 local NHS Trusts;

#### *Teenage Girls*

- established the importance of a balanced approach towards teenagers across Government and the need for 'joined up links especially with the Home Office, Social Exclusion Unit and the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE);
- brokered a new commitment to work on gender stereotyping within the DfEE;

- influenced drafts of the *Our Healthier Nation* White Paper, *Smoking Kills* White Paper, work in the Social Exclusion Unit on young people and teenage pregnancy and the Home Office on teenage boys.

#### *Violence against women*

- jointly funded research with Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) and the Department of Social Security (DSS) on provision of services;
- agreed with Home Office to transfer project after publication of report;
- collated good practice examples from around the country;
- negotiated a set of practical measures; and
- will publish a document this summer.

The **mainstreaming approach** is already beginning to have an impact with a number of Government initiatives now reflecting more clearly women's needs. Successes so far include the incorporation of the women's perspective into: the *Modernising Government* White Paper, the 'Beacon' Council scheme, new guidance for Regional Development Agencies, new Planning Policy Guidance especially for regional planning, guidance on the preparation of local authority development plans, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, Department of Environment Transport and the Regions' Rural England consultation paper, the Department for Culture, Media and Sports' tourism strategy, the National Carers Strategy and The Giving Age. The Women's Unit has also had detailed input to the Department for Education and Employment family friendly employment promotional work, detailed involvement in drafting parental leave regulations and dialogue on the implementation of the Employment Relations Bill.

In addition to changes in the most recent Budget, details of which are given in the answer to question 2, highlights of the Government's policies as they impact on women are:

- a commitment to promote family-friendly initiatives, including through the Employment Relations Bill, the Fairness at Work White Paper, and to implement the Working Time, Part-time Work and Parental Leave Directives;
- the New Deal for Lone Parents to help lone parents move from welfare to work;
- Child Benefit and income-related benefits increased to help families with children;
- the introduction of a National Minimum Wage from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1999;
- the first ever National Childcare Strategy;

- the **Working Families Tax Credit**, including the new **Childcare Tax Credit**, to be introduced from **October 1999** to help **low income families** meet the costs of **childcare**;
- the development of a package of measures to address violence against women;
- improved protection of vulnerable witnesses in court proceedings in the **Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Bill** currently before Parliament;
- draft legislation published to allow pensions to be shared on divorce, in the **Bill** currently before Parliament;
- help for the poorest pensioners (most of whom are women) guaranteeing them a minimum income;
- a review of the pension system to help women provide for their retirement;
- cash to improve cervical screening and breast cancer treatment;
- mixed sex hospital wards being phased out;
- setting up the **Social Exclusion Unit** to tackle all forms of social exclusion;
- a new initiative to put the women's perspective into policy-making;
- a commitment to the principle of 50% of public appointments being filled by women;
- broadening and strengthening links with women across the country so that policies reflect their real concerns;
- *Listening to women* campaign, including through organised conferences with Ministers and through a postcard campaign, so that future policies reflect women's real concerns;
- a **Cabinet Sub-Committee** on women, drawing together Ministers from across all major Government departments to put the women's agenda at the centre of Government;
- a new 10p tax rate halving the tax liability of 1.1 million women;
- **Employment Relations Bill** to increase maternity leave and provide for three months parental leave and time off for domestic emergencies;
- £140m for carers to take a break under the **National Carers Strategy**;

- **new guidance to all government departments to ensure that the women's perspective is an integral part of policy making and commitment in Modernising Government White Paper to meet the needs of women;**
- **£540m allocated to children in most vulnerable areas under Sure Start to give families and children the best start in life.**

## **Part Two**

### **Financial and institutional measures**

#### **The National Budget**

The budget is the UK's key financial mechanism. The 1999 budget contained many significant measures to promote women's interests. In summary these are:

- a reduction in National Insurance contributions for 8 million women and over ½ million women taken out of contributions completely;
- a new lower 10p band of Income Tax to help 1.1 million low paid women;
- an extension of maternity pay to low paid women in part time work - around 14,000 women are likely to benefit each year;
- self-employed women to get the full rate of maternity allowance (7% of women are self employed):
- a new £200 Sure Start Maternity Grant, doubling the existing Maternity Grant, benefiting 200,000 families;
- a new Children's Tax Credit, to be introduced from April 2001 worth up to £8 per family per week, to replace the married couple's allowance;
- the long term goal is an integrated child credit: to bring together the different strands of our income-related support for children to create an integrated and seamless system of financial support to children, to be paid to the main carer - that is, usually, the mother
- real terms increase in Child Benefit - from April 2000 it will be worth £15 for the first child and £10 for subsequent children;
- low-income families will also gain, through further increases in the under 11 rates in Income Support and the Working Families Tax Credit;
- extending the New Deal for women, to ensure continued Income Support payments for two weeks to help lone parents as they make the transition from welfare to work;
- extra help for the poorest pensioners will be of disproportionate help to women, who make up over two-thirds of pensioners on Income Support;

- from April 1999, there will be a minimum income guarantee - to be uprated by earnings in April 2000 - for pensioners aged 60 and over of £75 per week (with higher rates for older pensioners);
- the minimum tax guarantee will ensure that pensioners 65 and over with income below £110 per week pay no tax (£115 for those 75 and over);
- a fivefold increase in the winter allowance from £20 to £100 will help every pensioner household.

### **Gender appraisal in financial policy**

As part of the UK Government's wider commitment to improve gender appraisal of policy, it seeks to ensure that gender issues are integrated into macro-economic policy making, for example by consideration of the gender impact of potential budget measures at an early stage and regular assessment of the national budgetary process. The strategy is currently under review as this is a relatively new and dynamic area of policy appraisal, and Government is keen to build up expertise and 'tool kit'.

There is undoubtedly room for improvement. For example, the process is restricted by the absence or limited availability of gender disaggregated information. Improving the availability of this information is a high priority. Measuring unpaid work in the economy is an area for future work, and was the subject of an annex in the 1998 Pre-Budget Report.

In the spirit of progress, the Government consults regularly with outside groups. These include the Women's Budget Group, an independent think tank, on the relationship between women, men and economics. The Women's Budget Group is made up of individual women economists and social policy experts from academic institutions and NGOs, as well as independent researchers. The Group meets officials in the run-up to and aftermath of the Budget.

Distributional analysis is an important tool, and provides a useful statistical underpinning to the gender impact assessment. Detailed assessment is made of Budget measures both collectively and individually on women of a variety of ages and incomes. Information published on Budget Day sets out the impact of measures which affect women and men differently. Disaggregating and presenting the impact on women effectively is a key mechanism for securing the maximum amount of useful feedback, and also demonstrating the Government's commitment to women.

## Institutional Measures to follow up and implement the Platform for Action

Following the general election of May 1997, the Prime Minister appointed the first ever Minister for Women in the Cabinet. The Minister for Women is supported by the Public Health Minister based in the Department of Health.

The Cabinet Sub-Committee on Women's Issues, drawing together Ministers from across all major Government departments, whose remit is to review and develop the Government's policy and strategy on issues of special concern to women and to oversee its implementation. Members act as focal points for women's concerns in their departments.

The Ministers for Women are supported by a Women's Unit already described in the answer to question 1. There is also an inter-departmental group of senior officials with responsibility for women's issues to support the Cabinet Sub-Committee, share information and facilitate better communication.

## Arrangements to co-ordinate follow-up to global conferences

The Women's Unit has lead responsibility for ensuring compliance with the UK's international obligations on women's rights and co-ordinates all action on follow up to Beijing. Following Beijing, the UK Government gave a commitment to publish an annual progress report, and to hold an annual meeting of NGOs to discuss progress on implementing the Platform for Action. The latest progress report *Delivering for Women: progress so far* was published in November 1998, while in January 1999 the Women's National Commission (see below) arranged, on behalf of the Women's Unit, a consultative meeting with NGOs on that report and to take a forward look to identify what still needs to be done in the UK to improve women's lives.

## Role of NGOs

The Women's National Commission is the Government's official advisory body for women and its remit is to ensure that the informed opinion of women is provided to Government. Together with the WNC, many government departments, including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development, make efforts to involve some of the women's NGOs directly in their work.

The Women's National Commission stimulates debate among women's non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in order to increase their influence on public policy and to ensure that the views of women are brought before the Government. In co-operation with both the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and the EOC for Northern Ireland, the WNC produced a National Agenda for Action based on the Beijing Global Platform for Action in 1997. In June 1997 the WNC published 'Growing up female in the UK' inspired by the Global Platform's 'Girl Child'. Post Beijing, the WNC obtained Consultative

Status with ECOSOC at the UN and as a result brings UN materials to women and to women's organisations of the UK, and organises responses from them. Individual NGOs also attend the annual Commission on the Status of Women meeting.

## PART 3

Critical Areas of Concern in the Platform for Action	Successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action	Obstacles encountered	Commitment to further action / new initiatives
<p><b>Women and Poverty</b></p>	<p><b>1999 Budget</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reduction in National Insurance Contributions for 6 million women and 740,000 taken out of contributions completely (when implemented in 2001/02).</li> <li>• A new lower 10p band of Income Tax will help 1.1 million low paid women.</li> </ul> <p><b>National Minimum Wage</b></p> <p>Starting in April 1999, the National Minimum Wage marks an important step towards greater decency and fairness in the workplace. Of the 2 million who will be helped by it, 1.3 million will be women.</p> <p><b>Child Benefit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From April 1999, the rate for the eldest child will be increased by an extra £2.60 a week, with corresponding increases in the Family Premium in the income-related benefits to ensure the poorest families will benefit from this increase.</li> <li>• Family Premium being an additional amount of benefit paid to families in receipt of Income Support, including lone parents.</li> <li>• As a result and following the general uprating this will increase the amount paid for the first child by £2.85, from £11.45 a week to £14.40 from April 1999. This is the largest increase ever.</li> <li>• The rate for subsequent children will increase from £8.30 to £9.60 a week.</li> </ul> <p><b>Family Credit</b></p> <p>A weekly amount payable to working parents with</p>	<p>In the UK, women tend to work more part-time and in more low status occupation than men.</p> <p><b>Lone Parents</b></p> <p>Latest available figures show that almost 1.8 million children in families on Income Support or Family Credit were living with financial support from only one parent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 80% of lone parents are women.</li> <li>• Only 44% of lone mothers work, compared with 68% of mothers in couples.</li> </ul> <p><b>Partners of the Unemployed</b></p> <p>The New Deal for Partners of the Unemployed is designed to help them find work. Partners of unemployed people, 90% of whom are women, are currently treated as dependants of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimants and receive no active help or support to find work. This New Deal is focused on their needs as jobseekers.</p> <p><b>Pension Sharing on Divorce</b></p> <p>In most cases, the current provisions do not allow for a clean break. They also can also leave the person receiving the payment at risk of losing the intended retirement income if their ex-spouse dies. A Bill introducing new rights for pension sharing on divorce is going through Parliament.</p>	<p>Recent changes announced in the March '99 Budget include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A real terms increase in Child Benefit from April 2000, will bring the rate to £15 for the first child and £10 for other children.</li> <li>• A new Children's Tax Credit from April 2001, worth up to £8 per week.</li> </ul> <p><b>Women's Income over a Lifetime</b></p> <p>The Women's Unit has set up a project analysing the incomes of women over the whole of their life.</p> <p><b>National Minimum Wage</b></p> <p>The Low Pay Commission will evaluate the impact of the National Minimum Wage on competitiveness, small firms, pay differentials and particular groups of workers such as women.</p> <p><b>Unpaid work - Time Use Survey</b></p> <p>In May 1996, a Time Use Survey collected information on how individuals spent their time over a 24 hour period. It found the amount of time spent by people in unpaid production was about 1½ times that spent in paid employment. Whilst men undertook more 1½ times more unpaid work than men. Plans are currently underway to carry out a large scale time use survey - the field work should start by end 1999. This survey will provide far more detailed information on how the UK population spend their time including the amount of unpaid and paid work carried out by both women and children over 10 years.</p>

<p>low earnings, and is paid to the mother in two parent families. Around 385,000 female lone parents are currently benefiting from Family Credit.</p> <p><b>New Deal for Lone Parents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operational objectives are to help and encourage lone parents on Income Support to improve their prospects and living standards by taking up paid work, and to improve their job readiness to increase their employment opportunities.</li> <li>A personal adviser service will be offered to the lone parent to provide comprehensive practical support and guidance on jobsearch, training and childcare opportunities in the local area.</li> <li>The vast majority of lone parents who have attended an initial interview with an NDLA adviser have agreed to participate in the programme.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Family Friendly Employment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>63% of part-time workers are women.</li> <li>67% of women with dependent children are in paid work.</li> <li>Around 800,000 workless households are headed by a lone parent. If these are to enter employment, family friendly policies are essential.</li> </ul> <p>A programme of activity around family friendly employment is under way.</p>	<p><b>Working Families Tax Credit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will replace Family Credit in October 1999 and will cover up to 70% of eligible costs of approved childcare.</li> <li>Will help 400,000 more families.</li> <li>Allows either member of a couple who qualify for the payment to claim the WFTC.</li> <li>Given that nearly 50% of recipients will be lone parents (the majority of whom are women), it will mean that in-work incomes for many women will be higher whilst receiving the WFTC than they would be receiving Family Credit.</li> </ul> <p><b>Maternity Rights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maternity Leave to be increased from 14 weeks to 18 weeks.</li> <li>The qualifying period for Maternity leave will be reduced to one year rather than the current two years.</li> <li>The Government is looking at ways to extend and simplify maternity arrangements and other family-friendly initiatives.</li> </ul> <p><b>Family Friendly Employment Initiatives</b></p> <p>The Government will run a campaign to promote good practice in family friendly employment working closely with employers and other organisations. The aim is to encourage employers to go beyond the statutory minimum and to recognise the potential business benefits of policies which enable their employees to reconcile better the demands of work and home.</p> <p><b>Pension Sharing on Divorce</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislation to introduce pension sharing has been included in the Welfare Reform and Pension Bill currently before Parliament.</li> <li>Although pension sharing will apply equally to both men and women, the current distribution of pension rights means that the main beneficiaries will be women.</li> <li>Pension sharing will allow a divorcing wife to</li> </ul>
<p><b>New Deal for Partners</b></p> <p>Set up to assist the partners of registered unemployed people. It will offer over 200,000 partners, over 80% of whom are women, the option to receive help and guidance from a specialist Employment Service personal adviser and access to employment programmes to help them find work. Partners aged 19-24 will have access to the New Deal for Young People.</p> <p><b>Maternity Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A doubling of the existing Maternity Grant re-filled Sure Start maternity grant from £100 to £200.</li> <li>An extension of Maternity Pay to low paid women who do not pay National Insurance Contributions. They will be entitled to receive 90% of their earnings for up to 18 weeks.</li> </ul> <p><b>Family Friendly Employment Initiatives</b></p> <p>The Government is putting in place a basic fair framework of family friendly employment rights, covering: working hours, flexible working, parental</p>		

	<p>leave, and time off to deal with family crises.</p> <p><b>Childcare</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The establishment of the first national Childcare strategy has created provision for up to 1 million children.</li> <li>• Childcare places are varied and include out of school clubs, before and after school and during the holidays.</li> <li>• Early education places for all four year olds have been established.</li> </ul> <p><b>Child Support Agency</b></p> <p>Established to ensure both partners, following divorce or separation, pay contributions towards the cost of bringing up a child. Extra funds during 1998/99 and 1999/2000 have been allocated for improvements to the system, aimed at simplifying the process for making and appealing decisions.</p>	<p><b>Income Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-thirds of pensioners in the bottom fifth of the income distribution scale, are women.</li> </ul>	<p>obtain a fair, secure share of the value of the pension rights that have accrued in her husband's name.</p> <p><b>Income Support</b></p> <p>From April 1999, a minimum income guarantee was introduced for all pensioners.</p> <p><b>The Child Support System</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Government wants to reform the current child support system. Following consultation, plans for the new system will be announced in 1999, to take effect in 2001 at the earliest.</li> <li>• The modern service will be simple, transparent and straightforward. The aim is to get more non-resident parents paying maintenance.</li> <li>• The new system will benefit parents with care, mainly women, by getting child maintenance paid more quickly. The children of all parents with care on Income Support will gain as they will be allowed to keep up to £10 a week of the maintenance paid for their children.</li> <li>• The new system should encourage more women to co-operate with the child support scheme. At present 70% of parents with care claiming Income Support try to avoid co-operating with the CSA.</li> <li>• The receipt of regular maintenance can act as a vital bridge between benefit and work. A more effective system should help those women who want to return to work.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Education and Training of Women</b></p>	<p><b>Education Action Zones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational Action Zones have been established across the UK and encourage a number of schools to work in partnership with local and national organisations and other statutory agencies, with the aim of driving up standards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tukey and School Exclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first report from the Social Exclusion Unit looked at truancy and school exclusions, and was aimed at producing policies to tackle the problems of those who are excluded from mainstream society.</li> </ul> <p><b>Class Sizes</b></p> <p>Legislation has been passed to limit the size of infant classes to 30. Government has made available a total of £520M to reduce class sizes for 5, 6 and 7 year olds to 30 or below by September 2001 at the latest. This has been allocated to Local Education Authorities on the basis of their plans to achieve the class limit in their area.</p> <p><b>Funding</b></p> <p>£19bn extra has been committed to education over the years 1998-2002.</p> <p><b>Science, Engineering &amp; Technology (SET)</b></p> <p>A special unit has been established in the Department of Trade and Industry. Among its activities it promotes careers for women at all levels in Higher Education. The Unit also encourages, supports and co-ordinates the activities of various bodies concerned with the interests of women in the SET Higher Education environment.</p> <p><b>Modern Apprenticeships</b></p> <p>Increased the numbers of women starting on Modern Apprenticeships from one in eight to about half of all starts.</p>	<p><b>Literacy and Numeracy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 29% of adults have real difficulty with everyday literacy and numeracy tasks.</li> </ul> <p><b>Modern Apprenticeships</b></p> <p>More than 30% of those starting a Modern Apprenticeship in childcare, hairdressing and floristry in 1997/98 were women and 2% or less of those starting in electrical engineering, construction and plumbing, were women.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influenced by parents and teachers perpetuate views about appropriate jobs for women and men.</li> <li>• Employer views and preferences for certain gender in particular occupations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Lifelong Learning</b></p> <p>In engineering, there are six times as many men as women graduates; in maths and computing almost three times as many and in physical sciences almost twice as many.</p>	<p><b>Stereotyping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In England and Wales, career stereotyping is being addressed in schools under changes to the National Curriculum and through careers advice given to children.</li> <li>• The Women's Unit is also working on a teenage girls project which will address this issue.</li> </ul> <p><b>Literacy/Numeracy</b></p> <p>The Government supports a Family Literacy programme to assist children and their parents with learning literacy skills together. The National Year of Reading, begun in September 1998, encourages parents and children to read more.</p> <p><b>Modern Apprenticeships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A gender performance indicator for Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) is due to be piloted in 1999.</li> <li>• An equal opportunities action plan is being developed.</li> <li>• A study on Modern Apprenticeships and gender stereotyping is about to be finalised and recommendations for TECs, Career Services, training providers and employers will be disseminated.</li> </ul> <p><b>National Learning Targets</b></p> <p>New National Learning Targets, announced in November 1998, include 50% of adults with a 'level 3' qualification by 2002; and the number of 'non-learners' to be reduced by 7% by 2002</p> <p><b>Further &amp; Higher Education</b></p> <p>£90,000 extra places by 2002 - many of which will be taken up by part-time and mature students.</p>
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	<p><b>Lifelong Learning</b> 55% of students in Further Education are women.</p> <p><b>Adult &amp; Community Learning Fund</b> Some 180 local projects set up via the Adult &amp; Community Learning Fund, including e.g. (i) developing a pool of "community mothers" to mentor parents wanting to develop skills and support their children's learning; and (ii) assertiveness and communication training for abused women and women with mental or physical illness.</p>		<p><b>University for Industry</b> Will bring learning into the home and community through the use of IT and a nationwide network of learning centres. To be launched in 2000.</p> <p><b>Individual Learning Accounts</b> A UK-wide system from April 2000 with one million accounts by 2002. Target groups include labour market returners.</p>
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<p><b>Women and Health</b></p> <p>The Government has announced plans to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create a modern, dependable NHS;</li> <li>• give more power to community-based doctors and nurses;</li> <li>• replace competition between healthcare providers with a collaborative approach and integrated care;</li> <li>• improve quality year on year;</li> <li>• ensure treatment for all based on individual need; and</li> <li>• £23bn extra invested over 3 years.</li> </ul> <p>Additional resources of at least 5.45% cash increase to all health authorities for 1999/2000 will help health authorities, in partnership with NHS trusts, primary care groups, local authorities and local stakeholders to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health and modernising services.</p> <p>The first Minister for Public Health has been appointed.</p> <p>A 24 hour telephone helpline NHS Direct has been piloted, aimed at providing the public with immediate advice on health problems.</p> <p>In February 1998 Green Paper, Our Healthier Nation, the Government announced the twin aims of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the health of the population as a whole by increasing the length of people's lives and the number of years people spend free from illness; and</li> <li>• improving the health of the worst off in society and to narrow the health gap.</li> </ul> <p>A White Paper will be published in Summer 1999.</p> <p><b>Health Targets</b> The Government has announced a 10 year</p>	<p><b>Breast Cancer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is the single most common cancer in women in the UK, and kills 14,000 women each year.</li> <li>• The World Health Organisation (WHO) suggests that the UK has highest death rate from breast cancer among EU countries.</li> <li>• For women under 65 the UK has the fourth highest rate.</li> </ul> <p><b>Childhood</b> Disadvantage in early childhood can lead to serious problems in later life - some children fall behind before they reach school and never catch up.</p>	<p><b>Smoking Kills</b> The Government produced the White Paper Smoking Kills in 1998. It aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce numbers of people who smoke;</li> <li>• protect the health of both smokers and non-smokers;</li> <li>• reduce health inequalities;</li> <li>• and</li> <li>• target teenage girls and pregnant women of the measures to be set out in the White Paper.</li> </ul> <p><b>Sure Start</b> 21 programmes have been announced. 250 in total to be established by 2002.</p> <p><b>Wired for Schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With all schools and colleges being linked electronically on the Internet through the National Grid for Learning, every young person in the country will have access to the information they need to make responsible decisions about their health.</li> <li>• DfEE and DH are working together to ensure that young people and their teachers are able to access relevant and appropriate health information on a new website <i>Wired for Health</i>, which will link to accurate, clear and credible websites on a variety of health issues.</li> </ul>
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	<p>programme of modernisation for the National Health Service.</p> <p>Four national targets were announced to reduce deaths by 2010 from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• heart disease and stroke, by a third;</li> <li>• cancer deaths by a fifth;</li> <li>• accidents by a fifth; and</li> <li>• suicide by a sixth.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cancer Screening</b>  From April 1999, everyone with suspected breast cancer will be able to see a specialist within two weeks of their doctor requesting an urgent appointment.</p> <p><b>Breast Cancer</b>  Since 1989, rates of Breast Cancer in the UK have been falling at a faster rate than the EU average.</p> <p><b>Sure Start</b>  To improve physical, intellectual, social and emotional development of young children and support families in deprived areas. The strategy provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advice and support for parents;</li> <li>• early learning and play facilities;</li> <li>• access to primary health care;</li> <li>• outreach services and home visiting.</li> </ul> <p>£540m has been allocated to the programme.</p> <p><b>Teenage Parenthood</b>  The Social Exclusion Unit has published a strategy, following on from the work of the Department of Health, to address the high numbers of teenage pregnancies.</p> <p><b>Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The healthy school initiative was jointly launched by Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and the Department of</li> </ul>		
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	<p>Health (DH) in May 1996;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A National Healthy Schools Scheme is being piloted in 3 "health education partnerships", one in each regional health authority;</li><li>• DfEE and DH are jointly funding the partnership projects which will develop models which can be used for national development.</li></ul>		
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<p><b>Violence against women</b></p>	<p><b>Domestic Violence</b> The Government has launched in England and Wales a new domestic violence publicity awareness campaign entitled <i>Break the Chain</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The first element is a leaflet giving advice to domestic violence survivors and those such as friends, neighbours and relations who may be able to help them.</li> <li>It will be followed by new guidance to the agencies dealing with domestic violence.</li> <li>Further possible components of the campaign are under consideration.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Violence against Women</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>23% of women say that they have been assaulted by a current or former partner at some point in their lives.</li> <li>Domestic violence is the largest single type of violence against women and accounts for 25% of all violent crime.</li> <li>In 1997 there were 224 female victims of homicide. 47% of those (two a week) were killed by a present or former partner.</li> </ul> <p><b>Safety on Transport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Despite the low level of recorded crime, the fear of crime has a very real impact on many people's lives. This fear of crime contributes to people being deterred from using public transport, particularly at night.</li> <li>Of the white population, 16% of men and 38% of women said that they use public transport but have some fears. The figures in the black and ethnic minority communities were 28% and 45% respectively.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Government Initiative on Violence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Government will publish a paper in June 1999, entitled <i>Living without Fear - an integrated approach to violence against women</i>.</li> <li>The document will highlight practical examples of how violence against women is successfully being tackled by organisations and agencies in England and Wales.</li> <li>These good practice models will be supported by practical measures which are being developed across Government.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Crime Reduction Programme</b> As part of the Government's major Crime Reduction Programme, there will be an initiative to reduce domestic violence nationally. Projects will be funded from early 2000 to pilot domestic violence nationally. As preparation for this and to help in the selection of projects, leading academics are being invited to tender to bid to conduct surveys of what is currently known about effective interventions.</p>	<p><b>Sex Offenders Act 1997: Part I</b> Implemented in September 1997, obliges offenders who have been convicted of sex offences against children and other serious sex offences to notify the police of any changes of name, and address if they are living there for 14 days or more. Failure to notify the police is a criminal offence. Offenders who have been sentenced to 30 months or more imprisonment for a specified offence will have to register for life.</p>	<p><b>Scotland</b> The responses to the action plan <i>Preventing Violence Against Women</i> will be developed and refined, taking into account comments to it.</p> <p>The Scottish Partnership on Domestic Violence is expected to recommend minimum levels of service for women experiencing domestic violence in order to encourage consistent service delivery throughout Scotland.</p>	<p><b>Northern Ireland</b> The <i>Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998</i>, which came into force on 29 March 1998, replaced the existing legislation with a single code which both improves and extends the protection available to victims of domestic violence. It goes further than the equivalent English legislation in the protection it offers.</p>
<p><b>Sex Offenders Act 1997: Part II</b> Provides courts in the United Kingdom with the jurisdiction to deal with British citizens who commit sex offences against children abroad. However, the jurisdiction of the courts will only be extended extra territorially where the conduct concerned would be a criminal offence both in the UK jurisdiction and in the</p>	<p>A support package aimed at secondary schools will be published during 1998.</p> <p><b>Crime Audits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under the new Crime and Disorder Act, local crime audits will be expected to identify the prevalence and nature of domestic violence</li> </ul>	<p><b>Crime Audits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under the new Crime and Disorder Act, local crime audits will be expected to identify the prevalence and nature of domestic violence</li> </ul>	<p><b>Crime Audits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under the new Crime and Disorder Act, local crime audits will be expected to identify the prevalence and nature of domestic violence</li> </ul>

	<p>territory of the state where it was committed.</p> <p><b>The Criminal Justice (Terrorism and Conspiracy) Act 1998</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes it an offence for a person to conspire to commit an offence outside the UK, provided the substantive offence constitutes an offence both under the law in the UK and under the law in the country in which the act is to be committed.</li> <li>• This enables courts in the UK to deal with conspiracies in this country to commit, for example, sexual offences against children abroad. Tour operators who knowingly organise travel abroad for paedophiles for the purpose of engaging in sexual acts against children, or groups of individuals who might organise a trip for this purpose can therefore be prosecuted for such activities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Protection from Harassment Act '97</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides two criminal offences - causing another harassment and causing another fear they will be the victim of violence.</li> <li>• The courts can also impose an injunction on anyone convicted of either of these offences to prevent further occurrences of the offending behaviour. A civil injunction is also available through the courts. Breach of either injunction is a criminal offence.</li> <li>• The offences in this Act provide a general protection against behaviour which causes harassment, alarm and distress, or fear of violence, and can be used by women who are victims of stalking.</li> </ul> <p><b>Crime &amp; Disorder Act 1998</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Places a responsibility on local authorities and police to form crime and disorder partnerships with other local agencies.</li> <li>• These partnerships are required to conduct an audit of local crime and disorder problems and then devise a strategy for dealing with them.</li> </ul>	<p>locally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The crime reduction partnerships set up under the Act will then be required to devise a strategy for addressing the issue as part of their overall crime reduction strategy for the area.</li> <li>• There are already over 200 local domestic violence inter-agency groups in the UK, made up of many agencies working together, helping survivors of domestic violence in many different ways.</li> </ul> <p><b>Vulnerable Witnesses (England and Wales) Speaking Up for Justice</b>, the report of the Inter-departmental Working Group on Vulnerable or Intimidated Witnesses contained 78 recommendations which aim to improve the way in which such witnesses are treated by improving their access to justice, covering the investigation stage, through to the trial and beyond. Those recommendations requiring legislation are included in Part II of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Bill, currently before Parliament. Its measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• screens round the witness box, so that the witness cannot see the accused;</li> <li>• giving evidence from outside the courtroom via a live television link. There is a proviso that if a direction is made to clear the public gallery, at least one member of the media will be allowed to remain;</li> <li>• clearing the public gallery so that evidence can be given in private;</li> <li>• a presumption that complainants in cases of rape or other sexual offences will be eligible for special measures.</li> </ul> <p>The Bill creates a mandatory ban on defendants personally cross-examining the alleged victim of a sexual offence, and extends the existing ban on defendants cross-examining children, to include offences of kidnapping, false imprisonment or abduction in addition to the existing ban in</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Government stressed in the guidance to the Act that it expected partnerships to identify the level of domestic violence in their area and include measures to tackle it as part of their crime reduction strategy.</li> <li>• The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced Sex Offender Orders which provide a new means to control potentially dangerous sex offenders in the community. The provisions came into force on 1 December 1998. Sex offender orders are to be used where a sex offender gives the police cause for concern that the public are at risk of serious harm from him.</li> </ul>	<p>offences of violence, cruelty, neglect and sexual offences.</p> <p>The Bill further restricts the use of a complainant's previous sexual behaviour as evidence, it sets out a clear framework governing the limited circumstances in which such evidence may be admitted.</p> <p>An interdepartmental Steering Group is developing plans to implement all the recommendations in <i>Speaking Up For Justice</i>, both legislative and non-legislative.</p>	
<p><b>Safety on Transport</b></p> <p>Initiatives to increase women's safety on transport are included in the Government's White paper on the Future of Transport. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing a secure pedestrian environment;</li> <li>• progression of the Secure Stations Scheme;</li> <li>• improvements and standardising good security practices at all overground and underground stations;</li> <li>• development of gender audit checklist for transport operators and planners.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Transport Passengers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A programme of measures to improve personal security across the whole journey and to provide social inclusion, including publication of good practice guidance on improving personal security in pedestrian journeys.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Female Genital Mutilation</b></p> <p>The Government provides funds to FORWARD - the Foundation for Women's Health Development - which works to educate the relevant communities and professionals concerned.</p> <p>Northern Ireland A Consultation Paper on Tackling Violence against Women has been produced for Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Scotland The Scottish Office issued a consultation document <i>Preventing Violence Against Women: A Scottish Office Action Plan</i> in November 1998</p> <p>The Scottish Office has established a Scottish</p>		

	<p>Partnership on Domestic Violence in recognition of the need to take a multi-agency approach to domestic violence.</p> <p>The Scottish Office has launched a 3 year domestic violence awareness campaign using advertisements on television and radio and other media.</p>		
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<p><b>Women and Armed Conflict</b></p>	<p><b>Northern Ireland</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first female Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is playing a major part in conflict resolution in Northern Ireland.</li> <li>• During discussions for the Northern Ireland Assembly, women's groups played a major role in the peace process.</li> <li>• Two elected members of the Assembly are from the Women's Coalition, an all-female political party. A total of 14 women (15%) have been elected to the Assembly.</li> </ul> <p><b>International</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The female Secretary of State of the Department For International Development is responsible for a number of programmes aimed at conflict prevention in developing countries.</li> <li>• The Under Secretary of State in the Foreign &amp; Commonwealth Office (FCO), plays an active role in UK mediation in conflict in the geographical areas under her responsibility.</li> <li>• Women officials also head the FCO United Nations Department and the Peacekeeping and Conflict Prevention Section.</li> </ul>		
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<p><b>Women and the Economy</b></p>	<p><b>Women in the labour market</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women now make up 63% of the workforce in Great Britain.</li> <li>• 40% of women of working age have dependent children.</li> <li>• The unemployment rate for ethnic minority women is 18%, compared with 8% for white women.</li> </ul> <p><b>Code of Practice on Equal Pay</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Equal Opportunities Commission's Code of Practice on Equal Pay came into force from March 1997.</li> <li>• It provides employers and employees with a step-by-step guide on how to detect and remedy pay discrepancies between the sexes.</li> <li>• Although the Code is not legally binding, it can be used in evidence if a case is taken to a Tribunal.</li> </ul> <p><b>Women in Business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Small Firms Loan Guarantee Scheme assists viable businesses that lack security obtain debt finance.</li> <li>• In Scotland, a range of initiatives have been launched aiming at encouraging more women to set up in business.</li> </ul> <p><b>Science, Engineering &amp; Technology</b></p> <p>More women are being encouraged to work in traditional male industries such as science, engineering and new technologies through the work of the specialist unit in the Department of Trade &amp; Industry.</p>	<p><b>Women in Business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only 7% of women who work are self employed.</li> <li>• Women face added problems such as affordable childcare, access to finance and being treated seriously by potential customers and clients.</li> </ul> <p><b>Pay Gap</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The average hourly earnings rate for women was around 80% of men's at £8.22 per hour; the gross weekly rate was 72% of men's, standing at £308.60.</li> </ul> <p><b>Women in employment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women represent 32% of managers and administrators and only 35% of health professionals.</li> <li>• Men represent 91% of judges</li> </ul>	<p><b>Family Friendly Employment</b></p> <p>The Government has published its Employment Relations Bill, which is currently before Parliament. The Bill contains a number of areas that will benefit women in work, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measures to implement the EU Parental Leave Directive, which will provide mothers and fathers, including adoptive parent, to 3 months parental leave and reasonable time off for emergencies for all employees, by December 1998;</li> <li>• Simplified and extended maternity rights;</li> <li>• measures to implement the EU Part-Time Work Directive.</li> </ul> <p>Additional work will include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contributions towards the Consultation Paper, 'Supporting Families', which underlines the commitment to strengthen family life, including family friendly employment rights.</li> </ul> <p>The Women's Unit are working on a project involving large retail companies and the National Health Service. The objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to identify the business case for family friendly practices in these areas;</li> <li>• to develop ways of sharing experience/best practice throughout the NHS and Retail Industry;</li> <li>• to develop the sharing of ideas and practices between the two fields;</li> <li>• to facilitate joint working on ways to increase the availability of such policies by extending family friendly practices e.g. to Small/Medium Sized employers</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Women in power and decision-making</b></p>	<p><b>Political Representation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of women Members of Parliament now stands at 121 of a total of 659 i.e. 18%.</li> <li>There are 5 women members of the Cabinet out of a total of 22.</li> <li>There are 22 women members of the Government, out of a total of 93.</li> </ul> <p>Following recent elections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14 out of 108 members (13%) of the Northern Ireland Assembly are women;</li> <li>48 women out of the 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament (37%) are women while 3 out of 41 Cabinet Ministers are women (27%); and</li> <li>24 out of 60 members of the Welsh Assembly (40%) are women and 4 of the 8 Cabinet Ministers (50%) are women.</li> </ul> <p>Following elections on 10 June 1999</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21 out of the 97 UK Members of the European Parliament are women (21%);</li> </ul>	<p><b>50:50 Commitment</b></p> <p>The Government is committed to the principle of 50:50 representation of women in public appointments.</p> <p><b>What the Civil Service is Doing</b></p> <p>The Civil Service aims to value the differences between individual members of staff bring to the Service. Targets have been set for the representation of women in the Senior Civil Service. By the year 2004/5, 35% of the Senior Civil Service (most senior 3,000 Civil Servants) will be women and 25% of the top 600 posts will be filled with women. The Service will work closely with employers and other organisations on an awareness and promotional campaign on family-friendly employment practices.</p>
	<p><b>Public Appointments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There have been a number of initiatives to get increased representation of women on public bodies.</li> <li>There has been an increase from 26% to 32% between 1992 and 1997.</li> <li>The Government is committed to the principle of achieving 50:50 representation in Public Appointments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Civil Service</b></p> <p>Between 1994 and 1997, there have been increases in the number of women in all grades above the lower administrative grades. In 1998 17.8% of the Senior Civil Service were women.</p>	

<p><b>Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women</b></p>	<p><b>Minister for Women</b> A Minister for Women was appointed at Cabinet level for the first time in 1997. There is also a Minister for Women in the House of Commons as a spokesperson for women's issues.</p> <p><b>The Women's Unit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Women's Unit was established in May 1997 and is based in the Cabinet Office.</li> <li>The Unit acts as a taskforce within government, raising short and longer term projects, for example Teenage girls, and supports all other departments on issues of gender.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cabinet Sub-Committee on Women's Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Cabinet Committee consists of ministers from all the main departments, and they act as focal points in their home departments.</li> <li>Members review and develop policies of special concern to women.</li> </ul> <p><b>Equal Opportunities Commission</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The EOC was established under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975.</li> <li>The EOC has a statutory duty to eliminate sex and marriage discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.</li> </ul> <p><b>Women's National Commission</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The WNC is an advisory public body representing 8 million women.</li> <li>Its remit is to ensure by all possible means that the informed opinion of women is given its due weight in the deliberations of government.</li> </ul> <p><b>Policy Appraisal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidance on policy appraisal for equal treatment has been available to all government departments since 1982. New guidelines were issued jointly by the Women's Unit, the Department for Education and Employment and the Home Office, in November 1988.</li> <li>These new guidelines include race and disability mainstreaming, as well as gender.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Review of Sex Discrimination Legislation</b> The Government is considering the Equal Opportunity Commission's recently published proposals for changes in the sex discrimination legislation.</p>
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<p><b>Human Rights of Women</b></p>	<p>The Government has made great efforts to ensure that all citizens feel a part of society and everyone has equal rights.</p> <p><b>European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 1998, Parliament passed the Human Rights Act.</li> <li>The Act incorporated the European Convention on Human Rights into English law, thereby allowing UK citizens, who believe their rights under the European Convention on Human Rights have been infringed, to argue their case before a UK court.</li> </ul> <p><b>CEDAW: 4<sup>th</sup> UK Report</b></p> <p>The Government published its fourth national report on the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women in January 1992. The report covers all 16 Articles of the Convention and addresses all areas of women's lives in the UK over the last four years.</p> <p><b>Northern Ireland</b></p> <p>A new Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission has been established under the terms of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.</p> <p><b>Devolution</b></p> <p><b>Northern Ireland</b></p> <p>In Northern Ireland, following elections on 25 June 1998, a shadow Assembly was established to prepare for the transfer of powers in 1999. The Northern Ireland Agreement envisages that the Assembly will take full executive and legislative responsibility for all matters currently dealt with by the Northern Ireland Departments which are currently responsible to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland; and that it could, in future, take over responsibility for other matters currently dealt with by the Northern Ireland Office.</p> <p>All the responsibilities of the 6 existing NI Departments become transferred matters on devolution, that is the NI Assembly will be able to legislate freely about them.</p>	<p><b>Amsterdam Treaty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The UK is a signatory to the Amsterdam Treaty which enables the European Commission to bring forward proposals to combat discrimination in a number of areas, including gender.</li> <li>The Treaty provisions lie well with the UK Government's commitment to fight unfair discrimination and to promote equal opportunity.</li> <li>It puts equal opportunities at the heart of European policy, by declaring that the Community will aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equal opportunity, between men and women.</li> </ul> <p><b>Family Law</b></p> <p>In March 1999 the Scottish Office issued a consultation document <i>Improving Scottish Family Law</i>. It seeks views on such issues as Divorce Law Reform, matrimonial Property and Parental Responsibilities and Rights.</p>
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subject to a number of legal constraints, including observance of Community and ECHR obligations. Among those transferred matters will be the anti-discrimination codes including those on sex discrimination. Transferred matters also include most other social and economic issues, to a rather greater degree than in Scotland, along with the civil law.

In addition the office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister will include an Equality Unit which will take on the executive powers of the existing department in respect of discrimination including sex discrimination.

The Assembly is intended to reflect and embody a new determination among the people of Northern Ireland to work together to deal with the business of government in a way which commands cross community support with local decisions, taken by local people, being more likely to take full account of all concerns.

#### Scottish Parliament

A Scottish Parliament will be established on 1 July 1999. It will not be able to amend UK equal opportunities legislation but it will be able to legislate to require any office holder or public authority with devolved or mixed functions to make arrangements so as to ensure that their functions are carried out with regard to the equal opportunities requirements which are in force. The Parliament will be able to encourage equal opportunities, in particular the observance of equal opportunity requirements. It will have the power to legislate in devolved areas. Many such as health, education, social work and criminal and civil law, have particular implications for women.

#### National Assembly for Wales

The National Assembly for Wales was established on 7 May 1999 and will assume the functions of the Secretary of State for Wales on 1 July 1999. It will not have primary legislative powers although it will be consulted on the legislative programme. It will have powers to make subordinate legislation within the functions transferred to it by the Transfer of Functions Order. These functions do not include the applications of equal

	<p>opportunities legislation, so equal opportunities legislation is, effectively reserved to the UK Government. However the Assembly does have specific duties. The Government of Wales Act places a responsibility on the National Assembly to have due regard to the promotion of equal opportunities in the way in which it exercises its functions and to produce a report every year to outline how it has promoted this principle. The Act also requires it to have regard to the principle of equality of opportunity for all people in the conduct of its business.</p>		
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<p><b>Women and the Media</b></p>	<p>The way that the media deals with women's concerns, events involving women and stories about individual women, can influence wider public attitudes towards women. There is concern over the way women are sometimes portrayed in the media. In the long term, a significant increase in the numbers of women in positions of authority in the media should help address this problem.</p> <p>The role and influence of the media in the portrayal of women is widely recognised by Government, broadcasting regulators and broadcasters. However, it is a widely accepted principle that the Government does not intervene directly in programme matters either in arrangements for scheduling or in content. Neither does the Government intervene in the recruitment and promotion policies of media companies and in this respect the media are treated like other employers.</p>	<p>The Women's Unit has a proactive communications strategy to promote policies and initiatives which effect women's lives. It targets national broadcasters and tabloid newspapers, television, radio, regional/local media and specialist press including women's magazines - using press notices, briefings, interviews with Ministers, articles, speeches, features, visits and photo-opportunities to convey messages. Efforts are also being made to ensure the language and style used for conveying messages are designed to reach women.</p> <p>The Government Information Service, with its representatives throughout Government, also recognises the importance of women as a target audience for information about government policies and initiatives. Departmental media strategies should, as a matter of course, consider how the media can best be used to convey messages to women. This is reinforced by the Downing Street Strategic Communications Unit who are looking at the broader range of media outlets for conveying messages.</p>
	<p><b>BBC commitment to equal opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By the end of 1997/98, women in management at the BBC had increased from 19% in 1995, to 29% for senior executives; from 25% to 33% for senior managers; and from 32% to 36% for middle management and senior professionals.</li> <li>• The BBC aims to have 30% of senior executives and 40% of senior and middle management posts held by women, by 2000.</li> <li>• New guidelines issued by the BBC to its producers in 1996 contain specific advice on the portrayal of women and the use of non-sexist language in programmes.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Media Guidelines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new Broadcasting Council issued a new code of practice for broadcasters on fairness and privacy. These guidelines include sections on stereotyping and sexual humour and innuendo.</li> <li>• All independent television companies in the UK have policy statements on equal opportunities.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Press Complaints Commission's Code of Practice for print media contains the requirement that the press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to a person's sex, race, colour, religion, sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability.</li></ul>		
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<p><b>Women and the Environment</b></p>	<p><b>Regenerating local communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The £3 billion New Deal for Regeneration is designed to tackle the problems of the most deprived areas.</li> <li>The New Deal for Communities will offer intensive help to the most deprived areas, focusing on enhancing economic and employment opportunities, improving quality of life and offering better management.</li> <li>Over 50 major new projects will be launched under The Single Regeneration Budget within the next few years.</li> </ul> <p><b>Local Agenda 21</b></p> <p>Women's interests specifically represented on the UK Local Agenda 21 Steering Group by the National Federation of Women's Institutes and Women's Environmental Network</p> <p>1998 Survey of Local Agenda 21 activity showed that 30% of LA21 Forums had specific representations from women's groups.</p>	<p>No mechanisms or funding for monitoring women's involvement at local level.</p>	<p><b>Environmental Action Funding</b></p> <p>supports projects aimed at increasing the local involvement of women in environmental issues.</p> <p>Women's Environment Network project <i>Taste a Better Future</i> will be initiating and researching food growing collectives. The project will focus on ethnic minorities and young people as well as women.</p> <p>National Federation of Women's Institutes will be co-ordinating existing and proposed LA21 initiatives by WI groups through a project officer, training events, dissemination of information and promotion of best practice.</p> <p>Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone is one of four broad interrelated objectives of sustainable development to be set out in the Government's new sustainable development strategy, to be published shortly.</p>
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<p><b>Girls</b></p>	<p><b>Teenage Girls</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Women's Unit has taken on the role of examining the problems of teenage girls.</li> <li>The project is developing measures to help teenage girls be aware of, have access to and take advantage of the widest range of opportunities and choices open to them to achieve their full potential in life.</li> <li>The work will form two main strands; looking at choices girls make in education and careers; and examining at-risk behaviour and the pressure and influences that might lead to it.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teenage Parenthood</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>England has the highest rates of teenage conceptions in the developed world.</li> <li>The rates for pregnancy among the under 16s has risen for 12 out of the last 16 years for which figures are available (1990-1996).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Smoking Kills White Paper</b></p> <p>As part of the recent government publication Smoking Kills, action targeted at young people figures highly. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>legislation in 1998/99 parliament to end tobacco advertising on billboards;</li> <li>minimal tobacco advertising to be allowed in shops;</li> <li>under-age sales clampdown;</li> <li>proposals for a proof of age card for young smokers; and</li> <li>cigarette machines sited so as not to attract children.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Teenage Parenthood</b></p> <p>The Social Exclusion Unit published a report on Teenage Pregnancy. The work brings together a number of key agencies to co-ordinate their approaches to reduce the number of conceptions to under 16s by 2010. The report also puts forward a series of recommendations that will combat the risk of social exclusion for vulnerable teenagers and their children.</p>	<p><b>Science, Engineering &amp; Technology (SET)</b></p> <p>The Promoting SET for Women Unit in the Dept of Trade &amp; Industry has recently focused on promoting SET as a rewarding and exciting career for young girls. The aim is to redress the gender imbalance in areas traditionally dominated by men.</p>	<p><b>Teenage Girls</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Women's Unit is studying the many hurdles faced by girls in society and the gender-specific needs of girls in all aspects of their lives.</li> </ul>	<p><b>National Curriculum</b></p> <p>A new National Curriculum will be introduced in 2000 in England and Wales which will be more flexible allowing schools to focus more on teaching English and Mathematics.</p>
<p><b>National Curriculum</b></p> <p>The National Curriculum is taught to pupils throughout all state schools in England and Wales. It ensures that boys and girls study the full range of subjects and have a broad base on which to make career-related choices.</p>	<p><b>Female Genital Mutilation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Female genital mutilation (FGM) is illegal in the UK but so far there have been no prosecutions and only one doctor has been struck off the</li> </ul>		

	<p>Medical Register for gross misconduct relating to FGM practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Department of Health is working with the main organisations aiming to eradicate this practice.</li><li>• The UK Government's policy is to try to persuade countries where FGM is carried out to take steps that will lead to a reduction and eventual elimination of the practice.</li></ul>		
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