

Women's National Commission

women's voices to government



ANNUAL REPORT 2006 - 2007

This report covers the period from 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007

About the Women's National Commission

The Women's National Commission (WNC) is the UK umbrella body that represents the views of several million women and women's organisations by providing a voice for women and bringing issues of concern to the attention of the Government and into public debate.

Established in 1969, the WNC is the only women's organisation in the UK that is fully funded by Government, but is independent in its views — it is an advisory Non-Departmental Public Body.

A publicly appointed Chair and Board of Commissioners provide the strategic direction and steer for the Commission. A small team of civil servants (the Directorate) manages the day-to-day work. The WNC relocated this year from the Department of Trade and Industry to the Department for Communities and Local Government. In both offices, the WNC was situated alongside the Women and Equality Unit (established in 1997), which supports the Ministers for Women.

Membership

Our partner organisations are central to the WNC. They number around 500, covering a diverse range of women's activities and interests across the UK. All independent women's organisations are eligible to join us as partners. In addition, there are around 90 women who are individual WNC Partners.

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Message from WNC Chair Baroness Margaret Prosser



Dear Friends,

It has been a year of great change for the Women's National Commission. I am stepping down as Chair as I have taken up post as Deputy Chair at the Commission for Equality and Human Rights. Janet Veitch has retired as Director and Susan Green has stepped in as Acting Director until a replacement is appointed. We also said goodbye to Kristi Gooden, Tahnee Wright, Trisha Greenhalgh and Andy Smith.

It has also been a very busy year, with our bi-annual All Partners' Conference and the publication of several reports, all of which have been a challenge in their different ways. *'Making the Grade'*, the annual independent analysis of Government initiatives on violence against women, saw a big improvement in the Government's response to this issue since the last report in 2005; *'She Who Disputes'*, a report on five consultations around the country with 200 Muslim women, many of whom had not spoken out before, was revelatory and sensitive; the IWIP report *'A Journey of Discovery'* was a groundbreaking piece of work, much applauded by Ministers, which capacity-built Iraqi women to engage with democratic Government processes and agendas; the All Partners Conference, generously sponsored by Barclays Wealth, allowed 120 delegates to come together to discuss new and existing agendas for women and give their views directly to Meg Munn, Deputy Minister for Women and Peter Housden, Permanent Secretary at Department for Communities and Local Government. I am delighted to say that the delegate feedback was hugely positive and it was a most productive and enlightening day. In her speech, Meg Munn announced a light touch review of the Women's National Commission, led by Rita Donaghy. A big thank you to those who have given evidence to the review. We look forward to a very positive outcome.

Of course, the lifeblood of the WNC is our partners and we increased the numbers last year to a record high of nearly 500 partners. We saw a welcome increase in the number of traditionally excluded groups and now are proud to count amongst our partners a greater number of minority ethnic and Muslim women's organisations.

I would like to thank our Commissioners for all their hard work. Carrie Pemberton, Farkhanda Chaudry, Ann Hope, Mandana Hendessi, and Barbara Erwin will be retiring from their positions as WNC Commissioners. Also stepping down from her post will be Angharad Law, who joined the Women's National Commission Board in a developmental capacity to advise on media issues. These women have each contributed considerably to the work of the Women's National Commission and will be missed. I would also like to welcome our new Commissioners: Bronagh Hinds, Sabin Malik and Baroness Joyce

Gould. We look forward to working with you alongside the existing Commissioners: Professor Liz Kelly, Brenda King, Ranjana Bell and Baroness Anita Gale.

I have greatly enjoyed my time at the Women's National Commission. I have met some truly inspiring women and worked with a very dedicated and passionate team. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your hard work, commitment, and support. I have been immensely proud to Chair the Women's National Commission for the past four years and I know it will continue to secure praise for its work and go from strength to strength following the review.

I want to thank you all for your energy and input – you make WNC what it is. I hope you enjoy reading about our work.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Prosser". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Baroness Prosser of Battersea

How the WNC Works

In order to fulfil our task of providing a voice for women to Government, the work of the WNC involves undertaking consultations with partners on Government proposals, organising information seminars and conferences, producing reports and policy papers, advising Government Ministers and the Women and Equality Unit, meeting visiting delegations, speaking at various assignments around the UK, and providing representation at international events. The Board of Commissioners set the strategic direction for this work, which is carried out with the assistance of our working groups that are crucial to taking forward the work of the WNC.

Chair and Board of Commissioners

The publicly appointed Board of Commissioners comprises women who represent different geographical areas and sections of the women's lobby across the UK. Specialist knowledge is provided by some of the appointees on Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, for whom seats on the Board are reserved. The role of the Commissioners involves providing the strategic direction, offering advice on areas of expertise, acting as WNC representatives in various forums, chairing or participating in working groups, and attending regular meetings of the Board.

As a result of the ongoing review, there are currently several seats for Commissioners left open, including the seat of the Commissioner for Scotland.

The current WNC Commissioners are Baroness Joyce Gould, Ranjana Bell, Baroness Anita Gale, Professor Liz Kelly CBE, Brenda King MBE, Sabin Malik and Bronagh Hinds.

The Directorate

A small team of civil servants, makes up the Directorate, and carries out the day-to-day work of the WNC. This year, Janet Veitch retired from her position as Director, and Susan Green has taken the position of Acting Director until the end of the light touch review. The Director's role is to manage the WNC as an independent non-departmental public body and deliver advice to Government which reflects the view of women in line with the strategic steer from the WNC's Chair and Board of Commissioners. This year, the priorities were to deliver advice on Violence Against Women, Migration and Asylum, and the views of Muslim women, as well as undertake strategic outreach and consult women on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), as well as the Commission on the Status of Women and to take an active part in the Equality agenda, particularly the Gender Equality Duty.

The team is often assisted by unpaid interns from the UK and overseas. In addition, people sometimes join the Directorate on a short-term basis to work on specific projects.

The WNC Review

In view of the appointment of the WNC's Chair as the new Deputy Chair of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights and the departure of several WNC

Commissioners, Ministers called for a period of reflection, including a light touch review of the Women's National Commission.

In late 2006, the Minister for Women, Ruth Kelly, who is responsible for tackling gender inequality, and responsible for the sponsorship of the WNC, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR), decided that a review of the WNC was timely. Following advice and discussions with officials it was agreed that a light touch review should commence in March 2007, in particular to review the effectiveness and efficiency of the WNC and to consider how best it can operate in the new equality environment when the CEHR is up and running. The review is ongoing and is being chaired by Rita Donaghy (chair of ACAS) and supported by Women and Equality Unit officials.

Work of the WNC in 2006-07

The WNC had a busy year hosting and attending many events, participating in consultations, meeting with national and international delegations, taking part in local, national and international meetings and conferences, and producing reports on priority areas of work. We operated in partnership with both our partner organisations and individuals, partners in non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as well as Government Ministers and Departments to ensure useful information exchange between the women's NGO sector and Government.

WNC Outreach Work

The WNC's outreach work includes working to increase our partners in under-represented areas. There are over 450 individual partners and partner organisations from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. One of the ways we keep in touch with our partners is by distributing an electronic newsletter. This provides a link to each other's work as well as a means to quickly and efficiently circulate relevant and comprehensive information. We also provide the WNC website as an information point, and a source of relevant documents and publications.

This year, the WNC held its bi-annual All-Partners Conference on 14 December 2006. The conference was attended by nearly 120 partners and was held at Barclays Bank Head Office in Canary Wharf. It featured a keynote speech by Meg Munn MP, Parliamentary under Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Women and Equalities, and Peter Housden, Permanent Secretary at Communities and Local Government. We asked WNC partners to vote on priority areas beforehand for discussion at the Conference. These were; Violence Against Women, Engaging with the CEHR, Preparing for CEDAW and CSW, Women in Public Life, Gender Equality Duty. The All Partners Conference Report 2006 which discusses each area in detail can be found on our website.

Much of the Outreach work this year has been carried out as part of the Muslim Women's Network consultations and has been led by Anber Raz.

Working Groups

The working groups continue to focus on priority areas of work as identified by our partners. Over the past year our main working groups have been the Violence Against Women (VAW) Working Group, the Women's Human Rights E-network, the Asylum and Migration Working Group and the Muslim Women's Network.

Violence Against Women Working Group

WNC Commissioner, Professor Liz Kelly, who is also the Director of London Metropolitan University's Child and Women Abuse Studies Unit, chairs the Violence Against Women (VAW) Working Group. The Directorate work for this group has been led by Kristi Gooden and Erin Richardson. This year, members of the VAW Group met with Trevor Phillips, CEHR Chair-in-waiting, to discuss the importance of VAW in the new Commission's priorities, met with a representative of the Office of the Third Sector, engaged with the Mayor of London on how violence against women can be addressed during the 2012 Olympics, and with the Home Office (who lead the Domestic Violence Virtual Unit (DVVU)). The Group meets quarterly and has two sub-groups: the Sexual Violence Policy Monitoring Sub-group and the Domestic Violence (DV) Policy Monitoring Sub-group. All of the violence groups have had a significant input into the Equalities consultation documents, for example the *Equalities Review Interim Report*, the *Gender Equality Duty: Draft Code of Practice Consultation* and a response to *Tackling Human Trafficking – Consultation on Proposals for a UK Action Plan*.

The Sexual Violence Policy Monitoring Sub-group has engaged with a number of consultations this year, for example, *Convicting Rapists and Protecting Victims - Justice for Victims of Rape*, the revised *Guidance for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships* on tackling sexual violence and providing advice on the Home Office's *Sexual Violence and Abuse Action Plan*. The Sub-group maintains effective links with Government officials from a number of departments and statutory bodies, such as the Home Office, Department of Health and the Crown Prosecution Service. A WNC official attends the DVVU, the interdepartmental group of officials that leads Government's DV work.

The Domestic Violence Policy Monitoring Sub-group is tasked with monitoring, through engagement with relevant officials, all current Government policy around domestic violence (DV), including the *DV Action Plan* and forced marriage policy, and inputting into the CEDAW consultation and CSW this year.

The WNC works as a member of the End Violence Against Women Campaign (EVAW), an independent organisation and supported by Amnesty UK. WNC facilitated *Making the Grade* for 2006 but Amnesty UK fund a campaign manager (from September 2006) and all EVAW activities, including its annual audit of Government's strategic work on VAW, '*Making the Grade*' now fall to the EVAW campaign. This annual examination of Government departments' performance in tackling VAW, highlighted the lack of coordination between departments and that many do not fully understand the relevance of VAW to their work. WNC's role was to support and facilitate Government responses to the audit process by working with departments to advise them on their responses. The WNC also worked with EVAW, whose experts score the Government responses, to moderate the scoring. '*Making the Grade*' represents the informed opinion of women in the independent VAW sector.

Migration and Asylum Working Group

Women that are forced to flee their country of origin often do so for reasons that differ from male refugees. Women are often victims of sexual violence and often flee from oppression and persecution from society rather than the state. Often the state is unable or unwilling to protect these women. About 50 per cent of women claiming asylum in the UK have been raped and many are traumatised due to their experiences. Because women's experiences differ from that of men, they need different treatment and often there is a lack of awareness about this from officials.

The Migration and Asylum Sub Group was set up to take forward specific concerns in the field of migration and asylum. Members are drawn from a wide background and the group is currently taking forward its work programme, prioritising Citizenship & Integration, Immigration, the Asylum and Nationality Act, the points based system for managed migration, trafficking and the issue of no recourse to public funds for asylum-seeking women. The Group meets quarterly and since its inception have undertaken the following activities:

- Input into the WNC's response to Department for International Development (DfID's) consultation on *Eliminating World Poverty*
- Letter to Tony McNulty MP about the points-based system
- Input into the Home Office Consultation on *Tackling Human Trafficking*
- Met Lin Homer (Chief Executive of the Borders and Immigration Agency) in December 2006 to discuss trafficking, the Home Office Gender Guidance and no recourse to public funds for asylum seeking women, they sent a follow up letter to her in March
- Fed into the WNC's UK CEDAW Shadow Report
- Input into the Equalities and Discrimination Law Reviews
- Input in the *UK Action Plan on Trafficking*
- Responded to the Discrimination Law Review Green Paper: *A Framework for Fairness: Proposals for a Single Equality Bill for Great Britain.*

This work has been led by Tahnee Wright, Andy Smith and Shelly Dowrich.

Muslim Women's Network

The Muslim Women's Network (MWN) began life as a small group meeting from time to time with the then Minister for Women, Patricia Hewitt, to act as an unofficial sounding board for a particularly excluded group. In 2005, the WNC secured Home Office funding for a consultation with Muslim Women. The objective was to reach the most excluded women and to bring their authentic voice and opinions to Government, and very importantly, to let them set their own agenda.

Throughout 2006, MWN used their contacts to help WNC reach 200 women from five cities across England. We had hoped the consultations would reach into the devolved nations but the Home Office was unable to fund this. Five, one-day events were held at which women spoke freely about the barriers they face as Muslim women. In addition, small focus group discussions were held for lesbian and transsexual Muslims, and for those suffering from domestic violence and other forms of violence, to enable women who were unable to raise these issues in open forum, to speak.

The report from this consultation, '*She Who Disputes*', was published in December 2006. The Report found that this group had a huge amount in common with other women – for example, they came across the same issues surrounding sexism, although other forms of discrimination added to their experiences.

In February 2007, the WNC Chair and Professor Haleh Afshar, Chair of the MWN, as well as MWN members, met Patricia Hewitt to discuss how to take the health issues identified in the report forward. WNC and Health officials are now discussing undertaking consultations to look at how Muslim Women's particular difficulties can be addressed.

The WNC is planning to support the Network's move to independence by securing external funding over the next year. The MWN is keen to continue to offer the voice of Muslim women to government. Since the MWN conducted its road show, some regional MWNs have been spawned and it is hoped this will begin to build a greater capacity for this excluded group to engage with government. DH has offered to fund some of this work. Throughout this year, the work has been led by Anber Raz, Shelly Dowrich and Mutanser Ashraf.

Women's Human Rights E-Network (WHRE)

The WHRE was established to bring together the views of women from around the UK on international issues, to lobby government on key topics, and to contribute to government policy. This work has been led by Tahnee Wright and Shelly Dowrich.

The WNC has responsibility for two ongoing work areas: producing a Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) shadow report, and preparing for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) annually. Following a restructure in the WNC, this work functions primarily as an e-network with members meeting only on an ad-hoc project basis.

The e-network is open to WNC partners, and organisations and individuals interested in learning more about women's human rights and gender equality from an international perspective. In a regular email circulation, e-network members receive up-to-date information on gender issues in the international arena, invitations to events and seminars, information on current government and NGO initiatives, and have opportunities to contribute to consultation exercises. Listed below are some of the activities the WHRE has been involved in.

- Letter to Kim Howells MP about UK nomination to the Human Rights Council
- Letter to Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs about new UN Human Rights Council
- Letter to Department for International Development (DfID's) consultation on *Eliminating World Poverty*
- Response to the *Tackling Human Trafficking – Consultation on Proposals for a UK Action Plan*
- Letter to Secretary of State to support suitably qualified women candidates and support the election of a women to the post of UN Secretary General.

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is held annually at the United Nations headquarters in New York in late February – early March. The object of the Commission is to promote implementation of the principle that men and women shall have equal rights.

CSW was established as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council of the UN, known as ECOSOC, in 1946. The purpose of CSW is to prepare recommendations and reports to ECOSOC on promoting women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields. CSW also makes recommendations to ECOSOC on urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women's rights. The WNC holds consultative status with the ECOSOC, which means that we are able to attend UN Commissions such as CSW.

CSW was the preparatory body for the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing — the outcome of which was the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PfA). The UN General Assembly mandated the Commission to play a central role in monitoring implementation of the PfA and from 1996 the main focus of work for the CSW has been this. Generally, two issues have been selected each year for the Commission to concentrate on.

Over recent years, WNC attendance at CSW has become a regular responsibility and we play an important role in providing a link between the UK Government delegation and UK NGOs. In doing this, WNC undertook a number of activities to support both parties in preparing for and participating in CSW, including:

- Ensuring NGOs are kept up to date with CSW activities by sending regular email updates
- Establishing a list of UK NGO representatives going to New York to ensure that NGOs are kept in the loop about CSW activities and so that the Government delegation and the UK Mission know which NGOs will be in New York
- Facilitating at least two meetings prior to CSW 1) for those who are attending for the first time to give them general background information on CSW and 2) a meeting between the Government delegation and NGOs to discuss UK priorities for CSW
- Sending representatives to attend CSW 51 to act as the liaison between the UK Government delegation and NGOs whilst in New York
- Facilitating NGO briefings each morning and meetings between the Government delegation and NGOs each evening
- Supporting and promoting side events being held during CSW by UK NGOs

At the 51st session of CSW (2007), the two themes examined were:

- (i) The Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child;*
- (ii) Review of the agreed conclusions on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality*

On 1 March 2007, the WNC, supported by National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO), facilitated a side event entitled: *Developing International Indicators on VAW*. The UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women (VAW) Yakin Ertuk, Unifem

statistics specialist, Hanny Cueva Beteta, and internationally renowned VAW specialist, Professor and WNC Commissioner, Liz Kelly discussed the commitment to the transnational indicators at the UN and the initial proposals developed by Liz Kelly.

This was extremely well attended with standing room only. A lively debate followed and women from all over the world discussed the specific proposals and the vital need for agreed indicators. The report on which the side event was based, will be submitted by Yakin Ertuk to the Human Rights Committee at the end of 2007.

Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

WNC is responsible for the production of the UK Shadow Report on the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women which is submitted to the UN in parallel with the UK State Report, every four years. The shadow report is produced by WNC in consultation with partner organisations and more widely. The UN CEDAW Committee relies on shadow reports to inform its examination of the UK government's progress in implementing its obligations under CEDAW. The WNC continues to discharge its duties on CEDAW by undertaking its own consultation with women's groups on an ad hoc basis in advance of each CEDAW examination. We started the 2008 CEDAW process in September 2006 and held a consultation event at the All Partners' Conference in December. Drafts of the Report are regularly circulated to Partners and will be signed off by Commissioners in the final stages.

Taken from the UN Womenwatch Website: *The Convention defines discrimination against women as "...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."*

By accepting the Convention, States commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms, including:

- *to incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women;*
- *to establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination; and*
- *to ensure elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises.*

The Convention provides the basis for realizing equality between women and men through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life -- including the right to vote and to stand for election -- as well as education, health and employment. States parties agree to take all appropriate measures, including legislation and temporary special measures, so that women can enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Convention is the only human rights treaty which affirms the reproductive rights of women and targets culture and tradition as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations. It affirms women's rights to acquire, change or retain their nationality

and the nationality of their children. States parties also agree to take appropriate measures against all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of women.

Countries that have ratified or acceded to the Convention are legally bound to put its provisions into practice. They are also committed to submit national reports, at least every four years, on measures they have taken to comply with their treaty obligations.

Iraqi Women's Internship Programme

The Iraqi Women's Internship Programme, a pioneering model of international capacity-building, began in December 2004 and ended in September 2006. Funded by a grant from the Department for International Development's Civil Society Fund (CSF) via the British Council, it aimed to build the capacity of Iraqi women's civil society organisations (CSOs) to engage more effectively with national decision-making. This work has been led by Trisha Greenhalgh and Karin Snabb.

The programme ran twice during this period each round comprised two phases. In Phase One, a selected group of Iraqi women underwent a comprehensive programme of capacity-building in the UK (and Canada in 2005 only). In the UK they visited Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

In Phase Two, the Iraqi women each planned to cascade train a minimum of 25 women from their networks in Iraq. The direct cascade training beneficiaries amounted to 628 people. A monitoring meeting was held at the end of the programme in Jordan, to enable both groups of participants to discuss with the programme co-ordinator their progress and learning.

The programme report, *A Journey of Discovery*, is due to be launched on 6 June 2007, at the Mother's Union, London. The report will detail the planning, delivery and evaluation of the programme. The report will be sent to all organisations and individuals who participated in the programme and can be found on the WNC website.

We would like to thank the members of the Iraqi Women's Internship Programme Advisory Board for their help and support towards a successful programme. Whilst there are currently no plans to run the internship programme in Iraq again, the WNC hopes that a similar project may set up in other areas of the world.

Advisory Board Members

Baroness Margaret Prosser (Chair)
Baroness Pola Uddin
Dame Audrey Glover
Dr Nada Hakki
Farkhanda Chaudhry

Gregge Madan
Joan Ruddock MP
Lady Anne Greenstock
Mandana Hendessi
Thana Saleh

WNC and Diversity

The Gender Equality Duty (GED) comes into force in April 2007. The GED requires all public authorities in England, Wales and Scotland to demonstrate that they are promoting equality for women and men and how they are eliminating sexual discrimination and harassment. The WNC has been working with a number of Government Departments in developing their Gender Equality Schemes. WNC sat on

both the CPS and DCA reference groups. The Director also sat on the Gender Equality Advisory Group, chaired by the EOC, which helped to develop the Code of Practice. All WNC Working Groups have engaged with the Equalities Agenda and made contributions to the consultations, examining in detail their specific areas of work in relation to the Equalities proposals.

The WNC has been invited to join the Equality and Diversity Forum, the NGO umbrella group for equality organisations across all six equality strands. Its main function is to bring the equality sector together to engage collectively with the new CEHR. The WNC plays an active role, feeding in the results of a number of consultations it has undertaken with women's organisations. Chief among these have been: two open meetings with WNC partners to consult them on the Government's proposals to establish the CEHR, coupled with a written consultation exercise, and leading to two reports to government; three formal responses to the *Interim Report of the Equalities Review* (one submitting evidence, one general, and one produced by the WNC VAW Working Group) leading to a meeting with the Chair-Designate of the CEHR and an informal commitment to incorporate VAW as a focus for the CEHR's developing work programme. All these consultation reports have been formally submitted to Government.

The Olympics

WNC held a consultation meeting in 2006 to consider the Olympic Diversity Plan (DCMS/DCLG lead) in relation to women. The Director sat on the inter-departmental Olympics Diversity Reference Group, advising on the gender perspective. This work will grow in importance and volume as the Olympics grows nearer, and involves significant issues for women, including employment and training; increased representation in sectors like construction; gender sensitive access; participation in the Games; the increased VAW/sex sector activity associated with international sporting events; benefiting from the legacy of the Games. The WNC Sexual Violence Working Group will also be taking forward work on women's safety at the Olympics.

Women's Budget Group

The WNC Director is on the Management Board for the Women's Budget Group (WBG) and acts as liaison with Treasury to bring a gender perspective to fiscal policy. This work includes arranging regular meetings between Ministers, officials and WBG members, as well as seminars for officials. The latest of these on the Gender Pay Gap, was held in January 2007, and was commissioned by the Paymaster General. Professors Damian Grimshaw, Susan Himmelweit, and Hilary Land made up the external panel.

The WBG undertakes other work, such as the *Voices of Experience* Project to build the capacity of women living in poverty to engage with Government and influence policy on women and poverty.

WNC meetings

All Partners' Conference

The Women's National Commission's (WNC) All Partners' Conference was held at Barclays Bank Head Office in Canary Wharf, London on 14 December 2006. This event was planned and managed by Trisha Greenhalgh and Karin Snabb. It was one of a series of open meetings with WNC's partners, normally held every two years. These meetings inform the setting of WNC's own work programme, and give Government information about the views of women and their key priorities. The last open meeting was held in December 2004.

The day began with an opening speech by WNC Chair, Baroness Prosser. A series of workshops were then held. The workshops were split into the following topics: Violence Against Women; Engaging with the CEHR; Preparing for CEDAW and CSW; Women in Public Life; and Gender Equality Duty. These were followed by a plenary, keynote speech and a Q&A session. The keynote address was made by Meg Munn MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for DCLG and responsible for Women and Equalities, standing in for Ruth Kelly. The Q&A panel was chaired by Baroness Prosser. Panellists included: Meg Munn MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for DCLG and responsible for Women and Equalities; Peter Housden, Permanent Secretary, DCLG; Vivienne Hayes, Director of Women's Resource Centre; and Sue Tibballs, Chief Executive, the Women's Sports Foundation.

The conference was chaired by Baroness Prosser, Chair of WNC, and the feedback from the workshops was facilitated by Liz Chennells, previously a Director of the Women and Equality Unit. The conference was attended by nearly 120 people, who represented a diverse range of women's organisations from all over the UK.

The conference was an open meeting for our Partners with the aim of providing an opportunity for them to share ideas and discuss issues and priorities for women. The conference looked at some of the big issues women in the UK are facing today, including Violence Against Women, Engaging with the CEHR, Preparing for CEDAW and CSW, Women in Public Life, and Gender Equality Duty. In her keynote address, Meg Munn announced plans for a light touch review of the Women's National Commission.

A full report of the Conference can be found on the WNC Website.

Northern Ireland

In 2006, WNC Chair, Baroness Prosser, and WNC Commissioner Barbara Erwin, along with representatives of Northern Ireland Partners, met with Peter Hain, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The meeting was arranged to discuss a number of issues of concern to women in Northern Ireland: the Comprehensive Spending Review; funding of the women's voluntary and community sector; the Review of Public Administration; under-representation of women in public life and UNSR1325; resourcing the Gender Equality Strategy; and violence against women.

There were some positive outcomes resulting from the meeting. For example, the NI departments were instructed by the Secretary of State (SoS), Peter Hain to participate

in *Making the Grade* and the Department for Finance and Personnel held specific events for the women's sector on the Comprehensive Spending Review. The SoS also organised a conference on women's participation in public life attended by women politicians and women's sector representatives, though little subsequent progress has been made on this issue and there has been no move by the NI Assembly to address UNSR1325 in the context of Northern Ireland. While the Gender Equality Strategy was launched by Peter Hain in December 2006, there has been no progress to date on resources or action plans to accompany the Strategy. However, the Gender Advisory Panel has recently been re-convened (with Bronagh Hinds being invited on to it as a WNC representative) and a new appointment has been made at DP level in the Gender Unit to work on the development of departmental action plans. Civil servants have remarked that the lobbying by the women's sector has been useful as it has led to an additional new member of staff. But there has been little progress on a number of the other issues raised with the SoS at the time. In part, this is due to the ending of Direct Rule and the re-establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly. For example, the Review of Public Administration (RPA) has been delayed, though the issues regarding women and the RPA still need to be addressed and despite some advances, funding of the women's sector is still a live issue. WNC Partners, along with the broader women's sector, continue to raise these issues with MLAs and the relevant departments.

Wales Event

In November 2006, our Commissioner, Baroness Anita Gale of Blaenrhondda held a seminar in Cardiff titled "*How will the Commission for Equality and Human Rights impact on Wales?*"

Attendees heard speeches by Jane Hutt AM Minister for Equalities; Julie Morgan MP Cardiff North; Jenny Randerson AM Cardiff Central; Kate Bennett, EOC Director ; WNC Chair, Baroness Margaret Prosser spoke about the work of the WNC. Shaheen Munsif, Education and Raising Awareness Coordinator for BAWSO (Black Association of Women Step Out), spoke about its work in Wales. This generated an interesting discussion on violence against women, and how BAWSO is engaging with black women in the community. Many issues relevant to the equalities agenda in Wales were also discussed in detail.

Conclusion

Although funding constraints limited the number of initiatives we were able to undertake this year, the WNC was able to deliver on some key priorities. The increase in partners, especially from BME organisations, was a step in the right direction. We maintained close and effective working relations with key groups such as the EDF (the only umbrella group working across all equalities issues) and EAW (the largest coalition of VAW groups). Through our working groups, we facilitated sustained dialogue between women's organisations and Government officials and Ministers.

At the end of January 2007, WNC moved from the Department for Trade and Industry to the Department for Communities and Local Government, following an earlier reshuffle of Ministerial responsibilities. This move required careful planning before, during, and after the physical move and absorbed a lot of the Directorate's resources.

The internal review by Ministers took up much of our time in the last quarter of the year and we were delighted that many of our partners and other stakeholders contributed their views, confirming the continuing importance of the WNC, especially as, with the demise of the EOC, it will be the only independent Government body with a gender remit.

Finally, a big thank you to Janet Veitch, Kristi Gooden, Tahnee Wright, Andy Smith and Trisha Greenhalgh for their hard work over many years. They each made a significant contribution to the work of the Women's National Commission on their areas of expertise. Janet in particular, has led the Directorate for over eight years and through periods of enormous change, so particular thanks go to her. The Directorate would also like to thank Margaret Prosser for her excellent leadership, her unstinting support and good humour in steering the Commission over her years as Chair. We could not have achieved what we have without her.

Financial Report

WNC Budget for FY2006/07

Baseline funding	£330,000
Transfer from FY2005/06 ⁽¹⁾	£31,130
Received during year ⁽²⁾	£13,330
<u>Total</u>	<u>£374,460</u>

Expenditure during FY2006/07

Salaries ⁽³⁾	£324,320
Travel and Subsistence	£29,746
Policy Meetings	£4,290
IT & Stationery ⁽⁴⁾	£6,938
Training	£3,060
Policy Development	£13,324
<u>Total⁽⁵⁾</u>	<u>£381,690</u>

Notes

1. Balance of additional funding received during FY2005/06 for work carried out across both years.
2. In year funding increase for work related to CSW and to underwrite WNC outreach activities. Also includes £3,830 editorial fee from Amnesty International for *Making the Grade*.
3. Includes costs for temporary and agency staff alongside permanent staff.
4. Calculated figure, precise figures are no longer available due to the change in departments during year. Total has been derived from the known overall spend within DTI and the known additional funding increase given to WNC which was set against this budget area.
5. Due to the transfer of WNC from DTI to CLG in January 2007 and a consequent delay in outstanding invoices being settled, several large items of expenditure were not processed in time to be set against this year's budget. These amount to approximately £10,000 and will be set against the budget for FY2007/08.

Due to the change of Departments during the financial year, it hasn't been possible to use the same definitions for expenditure throughout. The following table shows the categories of expenditure under each area.

	Definitions used within CLG	Definitions used within DTI
Salary Costs	Includes both Agency and Permanent staff costs. Includes all Travel and Subsistence payments made to both types of staff.	Permanent & Seconded staff costs and Agency Costs.
Travel and Subsistence	'Travel & Subsistence' paid to non-staff attendees of events and working groups.	Air Fares, Car Hire, Hotel costs, Mileage payments, Rail Fares, Taxi fares and all Travel and Subsistence costs for both staff and attendees of events.
Policy Meetings	Catering, Conferences, Consulting, Government Procurement Card expenditure and Hospitality.	Hospitality, Catering, Entertaining, Gifts and Conference Hire.
IT and Stationery	Stationery	Computer Consumables, 'IT Maintenance' and Stationery
Training	Training	'External Training', 'Internal Training' and 'Other Training'
Policy Development	Non-Staff Fees and Publications	Media & Design Services, Mobile Call Charges, Project Management Costs, PR, PR & Marketing and Publications

WNC Partners (as of March 2007)

1990 Trust (was SIA)
4Children
A Brave New World Ltd
AAINA Asian Women's Group
Abbe Hayward
Abortion Rights
Active Learning Centre
Adept Community Development Agency
African and Caribbean Women's Association (ACWA)
African Women's Council - African Families Foundation
African Women's Welfare Association
Afsana Dad
Age Concern England
Age Concern Scotland
Alison Jeffries
Al-Nisa Association NI
Amanda Ariss
Amina the Muslim Women's Resource Centre
Amnesty International UK
Angel International GB
Angela Clayton
Anita Gale
Ann Ramsden
Ann Swain
Ann Todd
Anna Reading
Anne Jackson
Anne Weyman
Arab International Women's Forum
Ardmonagh Family and Community Group
Ardoyne Women's Forum
Army Families Federation
Asian Women of Achievement Awards and Women of the Future
Asian Womens Network
Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW)
Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services (AIMS)
Association of Bahai Women UK
Association of Jewish Women's Organisations in the UK
Association of Radical Midwives
Association of Teachers and Lecturers
Association of Teachers' Widows
Association of Women Barristers
Association of Women Solicitors
Asylum Aid
Balliol Women's Society
Ballybeen Women's Centre
Barbara Light
Barbara Rogers
Batool Al-Toma
BAWSO ltd
Bedford Centre for the History of Women
Belfast Rape Crisis Centre
Berenice De Lord
BETI (Birmingham Empowerment Training Initiative)
Bev Wildeboer
Birmingham Women's Advice and Information Centre
Black Women and Europe Network
Black Women's Health and Family Support
Black Women's Mental Health Project
BME Women's Forum
Breast Cancer Care
Brinder Seni
British Association for Women in Policing
British Association of Early Childhood Education
British Association of Women Entrepreneurs
British Computer Society
British Federation of Women Graduates
British Housewives' League
British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS)
British Women Pilots' Association
Bronagh Lawson
Brook
Bryson Charitable Group
BTCV
Business and Professional Women UK Ltd
Business and Professional Women UK Ltd NI Division
Business Ethics Ltd
Cambridge Association for Women in Science and Engineering AWAISE
Campaign to End Rape and Truth About Rape
Cardiff Women's Safety Unit
Carers UK
Carola Addington
Cassandra Balchin
Catherine Tuitt
Catholic Women's League
Celia Capstick
CHASTE UK
Children in Scotland

Christine Traynor
Church Army Women's Day Centre
Church of Scotland Guild
Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
Churches Together in England - Women's Coordinating Group
CIS'ters (Childhood Incest Survivors)
City Women's Network
Comfort Momoh
Commonwealth Countries' League
Communication Workers Union Women's Advisory Committee
Community of Women and Men in the United Reformed Church
Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Association section of Amicus
Community Transport Association Ltd
CONNECT
Conservative Women's Organisation
Co-operative Women's Guild
Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse
Corona Worldwide
Cruse Bereavement Care
Cullyhanna Women's Group
Cunliffe Centre
Daphne MacNab
Daycare Trust
Department for Transport
Derby Women's Centre
Derry Well Woman
Doris Henderson
Eaves Housing
Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)
Eileen Fairhurst
ELBWO Centre
Elizabeth Harrison
Elizabeth Rex
Elizabeth Sidney OBE
Elizabeth Sperling
Endometriosis UK
ENGENDER
Equal Opportunities Commission
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
EQUINOXCARE
Erika Kirchner
European and International Unit
European Federation of Black Women Business Owners
European Union Of Women - British Section
European Women's Lobby
Every Woman Ltd
Fair Play Partnership
Family Education Trust (Family and Youth Concern)
Family Mediation Scotland
Family Planning Association
Family Planning Association (N Ireland)
Farm Women's Club - Farmers Weekly (FWC)
FATIMA Women's Network
Fawcett Society
Federation of Women's Institutes of NI
Feminist Library and Information Centre
Footprints (UK)
Footprints Women's Centre
FORWARD
Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths
Foundation for Women's Art
Frances Alexander
Full Time Mothers
Fundango (UK) Ltd
Gender & Justice Policy Network
Gender in Education
Gender Statistics Users Group
Genuine Empowerment of Mothers in Society
GFS Platform for Young Women
Gilda Wells
Girlguiding UK
Girl's Brigade England and Wales, The
Global Consultant on Public Health, FGM and Surgical reversals (GCPH)
GMB Britains General Union
GMB Scotland Regional Rights Committee
Greater London Authority
Greenwich Chief Executives Social Inclusion and Justice Division
Griselda Kenyon
HALT(Help, Advice & Law Team)
Haven Paddington
Haven Whitechapel
Helen Lindars
Hilda Stearn
Hillcroft College
Hindu Women's Network
Hope Medical and Educational Aid
House of Lords
Housing For Women
Hull Women's Centre
I Village UK
Infertility Network UK
Institute of Chartered Accountants for England and Wales - Narrowing the Gap
Institute of Our Lady of Mercy
International Alliance of Women

International Council of Jewish Women	Menopausal Research and Information Service
International Federation for Home Economics (UK Section)	Merched y Wawr
International Federation of University Women	Methodist Women in Ireland
Irish Congress of Trade Unions - Women's Committee	Middlesex University
Jackie Draper	Milton Keynes Women & Work Group
Jalna Hanmer	Minerva - The Independent West Midlands Women's Alliance
Janet Harris	Moira Fanell
Janet Veitch	Mothers' Union
Jayam Dalal	Moyra Young
Jeanne Gregory	Multi Cultural Resource Centre
Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants	Muslim Voice UK
Josephine Butler Society	Nancy Catchpole
Joyce Scroxtton CBE	Naomi Salmon
Judy Searle	Naseem Malik
June Ayling	National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO)
June Douglas	National Assembly of Women
Junior League of London	National Association of Diocesan Advisors in Women's Ministry (NADAWM)
Jyotsna Ghosh	National Association of Head Teachers
Jyotsna Thanki	National Association of Ladies' Circles (GB+1)
Kate Fussell	National Association of Widows
Kath Davies	National Association of Women Pharmacists
Katy Cigno	National Association of Women's Clubs
Kurdish Women's Rights Watch Ltd	National Board of Catholic Women of England and Wales
Labour Party	National Childbirth Trust
Lambeth Young Women's Project	National Childminding Association
Lara Griffith	National Consumer Council
League of Jewish Women	National Council of Women of Great Britain
Libby Horsfall	National Federation of Women's Institutes
Lilith Project, Eaves Housing for Women	National Federation of Women's Institutes Wales
Liz Bavidge	National Women's Register (NWR)
Lois Hainsworth	NETWORK
London Borough of Islington Women's Equality Unit	Newham Asian Women's Project
Lorna Campbell	Nexus Institute
Lorraine Radford	Nexus Institute
Low Pay Commission (previously Low Pay Unit)	Nicola Foster
Madeline Williams	Noreen Howard
Margaret Backhouse	North East Asian Women's Network
Margaret Mary Stokes	North East Ecumenical Women's Group
Margherita Rendel	North London Cooperative Party Council
Marianne Hester	Northern Ireland Childminding Association
Marion Scott	Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation (NIWAF)
Married Women's Association	Northern Ireland Women's European Platform
Marsha Scott	Object
Mary Seacole Memorial Association	One Parent Families
Mary Thompson	One Parent Families Scotland
Medical Women's Federation	Opportunity Now
Men, Women and God	Overseas Women's Club
Merlynne Francigue	Oxfam

Parentline Plus	Single Parent Action Network
Pat Zadora	Sizanani Africa
Pauline Ann Jones	Social Inclusion Unit (Women's Opportunities Unit)
Pavati Raghuram	Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland
Peterborough Women's Centre	South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre
Pink Parents	South Wales Police
Pinky Lilani	South Wales Police - Minority Support
Pre-School Learning Alliance	Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future
Probus Women's Housing Society Ltd	Standing conference of Womens Organisations
Professional Coaching and Development Consultancy	Standing Together Against Domestic Violence
Prowess	Stonewall
Public and Commercial Services Union	Stonewall London
Purna Sen	Stonewall Scotland
Queen's University Students' Union (QUBSU)	Stonewallcymru
Rainbo	STUC Womens Committee
RASASC (Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre)	Susan Gibney
Refuge	Suzy Lamplugh Trust
Refugee Action	Swansea Chinese Community Co-op
Refugee Council	Sylvia Walby
Relate	TABBDA Women's Group
Relatives and Residents Association	Takura Spiwe
Rights of Women	The Amar International Charitable Foundation
Rosemary Ballaster	The London Centre for Personal Safety
Rosy Ammin-Mannion	The Miscarriage Association
Royal College of Midwives	The National Group on Homeworking
Royal College of Nursing	The Princes Trust
Royal College of Surgeons of England	The Roselle Antoine Foundation
Royal Society of Chemistry - Women Members Network	The Royal British Legion Women's Section
Ruth Jones	Threshold Women and Mental Health Initiative
Safra Project	Toc H
Sahara Communities Abroad (SACOMA)	Townswomen's Guilds
Salma Hassam	Trades Union Congress
Salma Yasmeen	Training for Women Network
Salvation Army	Training Opportunities
Sanchia Smithson	TULIP GROUP
Sarah Richards	UK Asian Women's Conference
Savana	UK Resource Centre for Women in Science Engineering Technology
Scottish Baptist Women's Fellowship	UK Sport
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)	UNIFEM UK
Scottish National Party - Women's Forum	Union Of Catholic Mothers, The
Scottish Women's Aid	UNISON
Scottish Women's Convention	UNISON (Wales)
Scottish Women's Rural Institutes	UNITE - AMICUS SECTION
SERTUC Women's Rights Committee	Unite the Union - Amicus Section Welsh Office
Sheffield Women's Forum	Unite the Union T and G section (previously Transport and General Workers' Union)
Shirin Rai	Unite the Union T and G section Welsh Officer
Padma Bhatt	United Nations Association (UK)
Society of Women Writers and Journalists	University of Bristol

University Women's Club
 Valerie Noble
 vis-à-vis Research Consultancy Ltd.
 Vivienne Rubinstein
 WAITS (Women Acting in Today's Society)
 Wales Assembly of Women
 Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline
 Wales Women's European Network
 WAND (Women's Association for African Networking and Development)
 Warwick Anti-Sexism Society (WASS)
 WATCH (What About the Children)
 WATCH (Women and the Church)
 Welsh Labour Women's Committee
 Welsh Women's Aid
 Wendy Hogg
 West Rhyl Young People's Project
 Widows for Peace Through Democracy
 Windsor Women's Centre
 WiTEC UK - European Association for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology
 WIZO.UK
 WOMANKIND Worldwide
 Women and Health
 Women and Manual Trades
 Women for Women International UK
 Women in Architecture
 Women in Banking and Finance
 Women in Film and Television
 Women in Journalism
 Women in Management Network (WIM)
 Women in Music
 Women in Physics Group
 Women Into Business
 Women into Politics
 Women Into Work- Building Futures
 Women Liberal Democrats (WLD)
 Women Living Under Muslim Laws
 Women of Africa
 Women Welcome Women World Wide
 Women's Sports Foundation (WSF)
 Women's Aid Federation England
 Women's Art Association
 Women's Business Network (North West)
 Women's Coalition for Palestine
 Women's Co-ordinating Group for Churches Together in England
 Women's Design Service
 Women's Employment Enterprise and Training Unit
 Women's Engineering Society (WES)
 Women's Environmental Network (WEN)
 Women's Farm and Garden Association
 Women's Food Farming Union
 Women's Forum Northern Ireland
 Women's Health Concern Ltd (WHC)
 Women's Health Network
 Women's International League of Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
 Women's Network for Peace and Freedom
 Women's Network of the Methodist Church
 Women's Pioneer Housing Limited
 Women's Resource and Development Agency
 Women's Resource Centre (WRC)
 Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS)
 Women's Support Network
 Women's Technology and Education Centre (Blackburn House)
 Women's Voice
 Workers' Educational Association
 Working Families
 World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
 World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women
 Yvon Appleby
 YWCA England & Wales
 Zainab Al-Maajoun
 Zarina Ahmed
 Zonta International London II

