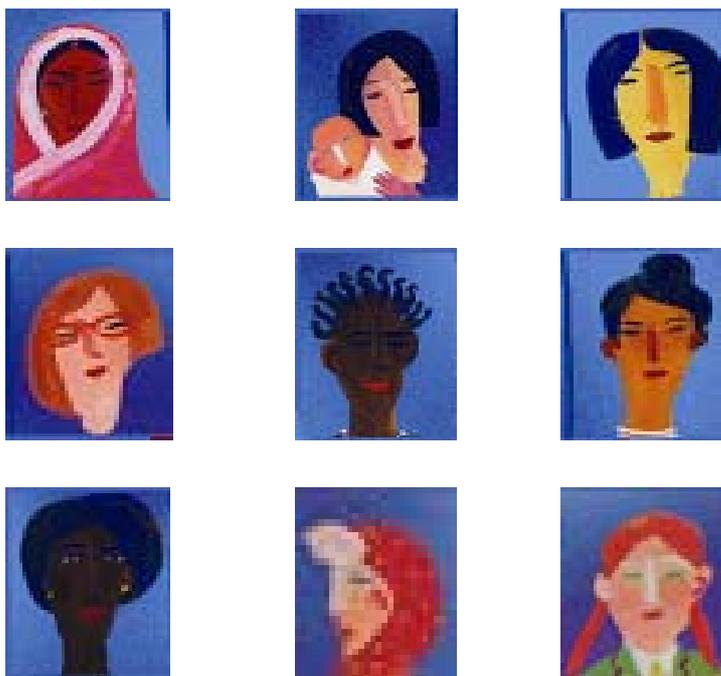


Women's National Commission

women's voices to government



ANNUAL REPORT 2009 - 2010

This report covers the period from
1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010

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 is sponsored by the Government Equalities Office (formerly the Women and Equality Unit) which became a department in its own right in October 2007.

Partnership

Our Partners are central to the WNC and now number over 600, covering a diverse range of women's activities and interests across the UK. Any organisation that represents women is eligible to join us as Partners and we also have many individual Partners who are academics and experts in their particular field.

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→ Our year at a glance

Some of our achievements over the last 12 months....

Spring 2009

- WNC held the final 16 of 24 focus groups across England to inform the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) cross Government consultation 'Together We Can End Violence Against Women and Girls'.
Outcome: Interim report written on the findings for the Home Office on the consultation.
- WNC Gender Equality Duty toolkit released on website.
Outcome: Partners are better able to engage with the gender equality duty.
- WNC Equality Bill Commissioner sub group meets to discuss proposals in the Equality Bill and draw up a plan of action to enable effective engagement with Partners.
Outcome: Equality Bill Roundtable held with Solicitor General, Vera Baird, Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), Government Equality Office (GEO) Officials and WNC Partners to give views to Government on the Equality Bill.
- WNC launches a comprehensive consultation with Partners on the proposals outlined in the Equality Bill.
- Women in Public Life Guide launched giving practical advice and case studies for women to help them enter public life.
- WNC attends the Czech Republic EU Presidency meeting in Prague.
Outcome: WNC gains a good overview of the current European level discussions around gender equality and was able to share this with partners.
- WNC consultation launched on attitudes and experiences of widows in the UK.
- WNC gives evidence sessions for the EHRC enquiry into gender pay in the Financial Services sector.
- WNC Chair sits on the EHRC Gender Pay Transparency High Level Stake Holder Group to advise on implementing the pay elements in the Equality Bill.

Summer 2009

- WNC Chair, Baroness Gould gives evidence to the House of Commons Public Bill Committee on the Equality Bill.
- As part of the WNC consultation on the proposals in the Bill, WNC Commissioners discuss the concerns of Partners with Government Equality Office officials.
Outcome: WNC publishes its Position Paper on the Equality Bill proposals.
- WNC Commissioners chair several events around the four nations with Equalities Minister, Michael Foster MP to talk to women about proposals in the Bill.
- WNC celebrates 40 years of WNC and holds a reception at the House of Lords.
Outcome: WNC publishes '40 Years of the Women's National Commission', its 40th birthday legacy document outlining WNC achievements since its inception.
- WNC officials provide intensive support and advice to the Home Office to inform the analysis of 10,000 responses received to the cross VAWG Strategy consultation.
- **Outcome:** Report produced of key themes and specific recommendations for all government departments
- Baroness Gould secures Olympics Minister, Tessa Jowell as champion on issues of women's safety and the 2012 Olympic games.
- **Outcome:** Tessa Jowell agrees to profile trafficking and visit Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

- **Outcome:** WNC meets London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) to discuss their involvement and ways of working.
- First meeting of Women's Safety and the Olympics Group, chaired by Prof Liz Kelly.
Outcome: Workplan drawn up and activated.
- Beijing+15 Platform for Action consultation launched to gather views of Partners on the twelve critical areas.
- WNC Annual report 2008-09 published.
- Cabinet Office recognises WNC contribution to successfully and consistently securing honours for women.

Autumn 2009

- WNC commissioned by Home Office to run focus groups with survivors of rape re 'Rape: The Victims Experience Review' by then Victims' Champion, Sara Payne. Three focus groups held with 36 women.
- **Outcome:** Report published and available on WNC and Home Office website.
- WNC report, '*Still We Rise*' published documenting WNC focus groups and women's experiences of violence which informs the VAWG Strategy in England.
- The Home Office receives a national diversity award for WNC work on the focus groups.
- WNC present and answer questions to Ministers on the findings of the VAW Focus Groups to help Ministers devise an effective strategy on VAWG.
- Women in public life programme is launched giving practical tools and guidance to encourage women to take part in public life.
- **Outcome:** 17 events begin around England.
- WNC holds its bi-annual All Partners' Conference to discuss its priorities for the next two years. Minister, Vera Baird and Shami Chakrabarti from Liberty speak.
- **Outcome:** 134 WNC Partners attended from across the four nations and agreed future priorities for WNC.
- CEDAW/CSW programme launches to look at international mechanisms for women's engagement including CEDAW and CSW as well as informing Partners of key EU Presidency issues.
- **Outcome:** five events held across four nations with over 200 women.
- WNC Advisory Forum newly established and met for the first time. The existing Migration and Asylum Group moves to this format.
Outcome: facilitated an exchange of information between women and Government on International issues.
- Four Commissioners appointed, or reappointed, to the WNC Board.
- WNC consults Partners on a number of consultations on the Bill: Age consultation, the Specific Duties, the Multiple Discrimination, the inclusion of religion and belief in the Bill.
Outcome: comprehensive responses submitted to Government and EHRC.

Winter 2009/2010

- Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) commissions WNC to contribute to its internal CPS Victim's Views Assessment with women who have experienced VAW. WNC holds further focus groups to inform findings with 34 women.
Outcome: WNC produces report to inform the CPS "Criminal Justice System Victims' Views Assessment".
- Roundtable held at the US Embassy with a number of WNC VAW Partners and US officials to discuss best practice in VAW service provision.
Outcome: Participants' interviews were promoted in a short film on YouTube.
- 14 WNC focus groups held around England to inform the Department of Health (DH) taskforce on the health aspects of Violence against women and girls.
- **Outcome:** WNC report, '*A Bitter Pill to Swallow*' published documenting women survivor's experience of health services from DH Focus Groups.

- WNC Commissioner, Professor Liz Kelly joins Ministerial and Delivery Board to represent the VAW sector and advises Ministers on VAWG strategy.
- Pre-CSW meeting held with Partners.
Outcome: Partners fully prepared for their effective engagement at the 54th CSW session.
- Women in public life events finalised around the country.
Outcome: 17 events in nine English regions were run with around 212 women attending.
- Light touch consultation launched on the WNC website to gather evidence on WNC Partners' experience of women-only services.
Outcome: 81% of partners reported that the WNC response was 'Good' or 'Excellent' when contacting the WNC needing information or expressing views.
Outcome: 297 women responded and final report prepared.
- WNC Chair meets the Canadian Minister for Culture, Communications and Women at the House of Lords to discuss women's participation in the British labour market and the Equality Bill.
- WNC's Single Equality Scheme (SES) consultation launched asking all stakeholders to ensure we have an inclusive and effective scheme.
Outcome: SES scheme finalised and action plan produced.
- WNC Director and Chair attend CSW 54 in New York to help facilitate successful NGO engagement with the process.
- WNC meet President Obama's Council on Women and Girls at the White House to exchange information.
- Baroness Gould speaks at a 40th birthday anniversary reception hosted by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland, Anne McKechnie MP for partners in Edinburgh.
- All Partners' Survey consultation launched inviting all Partners to give their views on WNC to enable better delivery on WNC's remit.
- **Outcome:** Survey fed into 2010-11 workplan and communications strategy and published on WNC website.
- "*What's Beijing Got To Do With Me?*" published, giving Partners' views on the twelve critical areas in the Beijing Platform for Action to inform CSW 54.
- WNC consults Partners on non statutory guidance for the single equality duty.
- **Outcome:** WNC submits a comprehensive response to the EHRC consultation.
- Baroness Gould speaks in the debate on the Equality Bill. The Bill receives Royal Assent on 8 April.
- The third meeting of the Olympics and Women's Safety Group is held.
- **Outcome:** WNC write 46 letters to Olympic Boroughs requesting an outline of their plans to deal with women's safety during the Olympics: and carried out a risk assessment of likely capacity of service provision.
- WNC Chair meets the Canadian Minister for Culture, Communications and Women at the House of Lords to discuss women's participation in the British labour market and the Equality Bill.
- WNC Chair meets with a delegation of four Armenian women MPs to share good practice on engaging women in Politics.
- WNC Chair meets with the UN Deputy Secretary at CSW 54 to discuss the proposed UN Gender Entity and outline the UK's vision for the Gender Entity.
- GEO to brief WNC Chair and Director on the UN Gender Reform in order to mobilise support from partners.
- WNC invited by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to join international symposium in Thailand and take independent expert advisory role in developing new UN supplementary rules on women in prison and women on community sentences.
Outcome: First ever gender-specific rules to protect women in the justice system scheduled to be ratified by UN in New York 2010.

“Just to update you quickly on our progress, CRASAC have gone from no strategic influence locally at all before the VAW reports, to using them at every meeting we go to and as a direct result being invited to sit on two strategic boards at LSP level and invited to present at two others. We have also been invited to contribute to the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis for Coventry and are part of the review of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

These are giant steps forward for us, none of which would have been possible without the strategies that you were all so instrumental in delivering.

I’m not sure what will happen over the coming months but you gave us the ability to fight our corner. The Local Authority can of course cut our funding, but this time it will be in the knowledge that they know the extent of the problem and are taking a deliberate decision not to fund us. It also means, once raised, that when they get more money, we’ll be on their agenda.

I’m a Capacity Builder for four other Rape Crisis Centres and I encourage them to do exactly as we have done, I will also be using the reports in the launch to the entire Rape Crisis Network of research into how women’s organizations can raise the issue of VAW strategically at a local level.

I hope you are all very proud of what you’ve achieved; it has had a huge impact and made a difference where it counts, with victims.”

**Sarah Learmonth, Coventry Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (CRASAC)
on the difference the violence against women focus group reports have
made to them**

→ Message from WNC Chair

Dear Friends,

It has been yet another extraordinary year for WNC. We celebrated our 40th birthday and looked back over those forty years in our legacy booklet which sets out our long journey and showcases the inspiring women from political and national life over the years who have shaped our organisation.



We also held our All Partners' Conference in November and I was delighted to meet so many of you and to get the opportunity to discuss and establish WNC priorities over the coming years. The report of the conference is available on our website and our thanks go to all the speakers and panel members and to you for giving so much to it. We have increased our partner size to over 600 individual women and organisations - an increase of nearly 50% on last year's increase - so we speak with confidence that the priorities you told us you want: Ending Violence Against Women; Women in the Economy; Equalities; and Women in Public Life are the right ones.

We have also taken the opportunity to get out to meet you about the issues that matter to you: indeed, we have met over a thousand women from diverse backgrounds during the last 12 months at over a hundred different events. This has ranged from a programme of ground-breaking focus groups to inform the cross-government England Strategy on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy and a series of breakfast sessions across the English regions to support action to increase the numbers of women entering into public life, together with events across the four nations to raise awareness of the United Nations Beijing Platform for Action as it reached its milestone of 15 years.

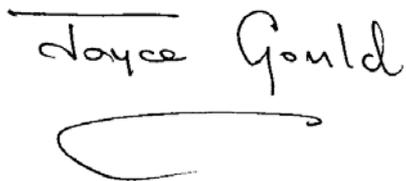
Many of the women we work with are often hard to hear because of the multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage they have experienced; including disabled women and women from Black, Asian, minority ethnic and refugee communities. I am delighted that we have been able to bring those unique voices and stories to Government to inform public policy to make it the best it can be. As a result, we have published eight informative reports in the last year and have been delighted that this work has met with such a positive response from the women who took part. They have seen their voices and views acknowledged publicly by Ministers and that WNC brings the many different lived experiences of women to the Government table. For instance, we were delighted to work so closely with the Home Office, the Department of Health and CPS on the VAWG Strategy, not just running the 48 focus groups as part of their consultations, but providing primary evidence through comprehensive reports and also advising Ministers on issues right across Whitehall on VAWG. We have even worked with the American Embassy in London – to share best practice on tackling VAWG.

As a result of this joint working with the American Embassy, I was invited to the White House to meet with President Obama's Council on Women and Girls in February, to discuss the WNC's unique independent role to government and the women's sector and our notable achievements. I was very proud to talk about the WNC model for engagement which I know is replicated in other countries.

We also ran topical consultations on the Beijing Platform for Action in its landmark 15th year; we asked you about women-only services and in particular, we put together your views on the Equality Bill in the WNC Position Paper so it informed discussions around the Bill. We also held a roundtable for key stakeholders with Ministers on the Bill and I gave evidence to the Public Bill Committee about the importance of women in the legislation. We know that women make up the majority in most equality grounds and that this sometimes gets lost, so we submitted a consultation response from Partners on the provisions on multiple discrimination in the Bill. This was one of several consultation responses we gave to Government that helped to inform the development of the Bill. We have also drawn up our own WNC Single Equality Scheme which you have helped us with and we are implementing that now. Importantly, we also asked you how WNC could improve so have also consulted you on our Partner Survey and we will be looking at that in detail over the coming year.

We have also increased our international activity and in particular, the way the four nations engage with the CEDAW and CSW process. To raise awareness and get your feedback, we held five events over the nations in the Autumn. We are keen to build capacity for our Partners to engage with all the international mechanisms available to women.

This has been an amazing year for WNC activity and I remain privileged to have been Chair of the WNC through all this important activity. We are looking forward to the challenges ahead and we will be working to build on this unprecedented consultation with Partners and women more generally, to engage them with the issues of the day and how they affect them to help forge a fairer society.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joyce Gould". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the first name and a large, sweeping flourish below it.

Baroness Joyce Gould of Potternewton
WNC Chair

→How the WNC Works

In order to fulfil our remit of providing a voice for women to Government, the work of the WNC involves undertaking consultations with Partners on Government proposals, running working groups, organising information seminars and conferences, producing reports, advising Government Ministers and the Government Equalities Office (GEO), meeting visiting delegations, speaking at various events around the UK and providing representation at international events.

→Chair and Board of Commissioners

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

During the summer of 2009, five of our Commissioners reached the end of their appointment terms: Baroness Anita Gale, Ranjana Bell, Liz Kelly and Bronagh Hinds all remained with WNC until July, although Sabin Malik resigned from the Board in May when she accepted a position with the Home Office. The recruitment process for new Commissioners was handled by the Appointments Commission throughout the summer and autumn period and in excess of 140 applications were received for the five vacant positions. WNC was delighted to be able to announce the appointment of four Commissioners at the All Partners' Conference in November, with the fifth position still to be filled during the 2010-2011 financial year. Liz Kelly and Bronagh Hinds both sought reappointment and were welcomed back onto the Board at the December board meeting, alongside our two new Commissioners, Olivia Bailey and Jan Floyd-Douglass.

Sincere thanks to Baroness Anita Gale, Ranjana Bell and Sabin Malik for all their work and support for WNC over the many years they were associated with the Commission.

The current board, led by WNC Chair Baroness Joyce Gould, now comprises: Adele Baumgardt (Wales); Ann Henderson (Scotland); Baroness Haleh Afshar; Beatrix Campbell; Brita Fernandez Schmidt; Bronagh Hinds (Northern Ireland); Helen Jackson; Jan Floyd-Douglass; Juliet Lyon; Liz Kelly; Mary-Ann Stephenson; Olivia Bailey; Sarah Veale; and Vivienne Hayes. A full list of Commissioners that have served the WNC over this past year can be found at the end of this report. All Commissioners can be contacted at wnc@communities.qsi.gov.uk.

"Your value lies in your access to government and your independence from it"

WNC Partners, from WNC Partner Survey 2010

Commissioners' Reports on their WNC Activity

Brita Fernandez Schmidt: Special interest area: International Affairs

As Commissioner for International Affairs, I have chaired the UN Advisory Group and ensured that members' views on international issues, including Beijing +15, 1325 and CEDAW are communicated effectively to government and the GEO. I have represented the WNC at various meetings on international issues, including the EU presidency meeting in Prague, reporting back to WNC.

Juliet Lyon: Special interest area: Criminal Justice, Migration and Asylum

I have taken a lead for the WNC on diverting vulnerable women from the justice system and progressing the Corston agenda cross-party. This included meetings for discussion with Ministers and shadow Ministers for Women and for justice and work, on a special edition of 'The Magistrate', the Magistrates' Association journal with a circulation of 27,000. In November, supported by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Penal Reform International and WNC, I contributed to the development in Thailand of new draft UN supplementary rules on women in custody and on community sentences. These first gender-specific rules, requiring women in the justice system to be treated with respect in safe conditions, have subsequently been approved at the Crime Congress in Brazil and await final ratification at the UN in New York.

I also chaired the January Women in Public Life event in Cambridge, chairing the meeting in February on women's safety at the 2012 Olympics with Tessa Jowell and women's project directors and agreed to take on the chair of the WNC sub-group on women seeking asylum in the UK.

Helen Jackson: Special interest area: Equality legislation, Women in the Economy

I represented WNC at the GEO Senior Stakeholder Group to monitor the preparation, progress through Parliament and implementation plans of the Equality legislation. The Group has become a useful sounding board for government on European directives as well as significant research projects eg the National Equality Panel report. Together with fellow Commissioner Haleh Afshar, I put together a consultation event at Sheffield Hallam University for 60 women from a variety of public and third sector bodies in October 2009 on the potential impact of the Bill. Further, I supported IDeA in their training programme on the procurement aspects of the Bill for representatives of local government and health authorities.

We met with the Business and Skills Department to raise concerns about part time work and the flexibility needed to match the paid work of a job and the unpaid care within a family. This would ensure that women's skills are not lost to employers and that their caring responsibilities do not incur financial penalties. This will be progressed through the Women and Economy sub group.

In addition, I represented WNC in the evidence sessions for the EHRC enquiry into gender pay in the Financial Services sector. I also provided gender advice at a meeting at the Runnymede Trust to inform the report on equalities for the Council of Europe and helped to draft the WNC's response to the Equality Bill consultation on age.

Sarah Veale: Special interest area: Equalities, Women in the Economy

The introduction of the Equality Bill into Parliament was of huge importance to the WNC. It included some important commitments on gender pay transparency and a new generic public sector equality duty; I represented the TUC on the Senior Stakeholder Group to advise the Government on the Equality Bill alongside other NGOs, trade unions and

employers' organisations and in this role was able to work with Helen Jackson, who represented the WNC. I also participated in the WNC Roundtable Meeting on the Bill with key stakeholders, GEO and Ministers.

I helped construct the WNC position paper on the Bill in consultation with all partners enabling the WNC Chair to make interventions in the Lords, in particular on gender pay auditing and the Gender Equality Duty. The Bill was enacted in April; the WNC will continue to work with Government to ensure that the Regulation and Codes reflect the concerns of women.

At their meeting in February, the Commission agreed to set up a Working Group to look at Women in the Economy and I am delighted to have been asked to Chair. We will be looking at a number of issues including women and the informal economy, women in formal paid work and the impact of the Government's proposed austerity measures on women, in particular the cuts in spending on public services, which will affect women employees and women who rely on public services.

Mary-Ann Stephenson: Special interest area: Women in Public Life

I facilitated workshops on women in public life in Oxford, Birmingham, Coventry, Nottingham and Leicester for WNC. These were part of a series of workshops held across the country, which were aimed at women who were interested in finding out more about public appointments. I have set up a working group on women in public life with other WNC Commissioners who ran workshops to learn from their success in developing our plans for next year. In Coventry, women identified the lack of a network for women's organisations so working with these women and others, we have set up 'Coventry Women's Voices'. This forum brings together women's organisations and individuals to ensure women's voices are heard when policy is made locally.

I have represented the WNC as a speaker for example at a fringe meeting at Conservative Party Conference, and the launch of a report by the Coalition on Men and Boys. I also promote WNC's goals locally with several women's organisations locally and encourage them to become Partners.

Olivia Bailey: Special interest area: Young women, Communications

I co-wrote a communications strategy for the WNC with fellow Commissioner, Jan Floyd-Douglass which plans to build awareness and further develop effective communications with Partners, as well as reaching out to a wider audience. I have also chaired two of the women and public life forums, which were a great opportunity to meet a diverse range of inspirational women. I have also highlighted the rights of young women in Commission meetings - and have already been successful in a greater focus on objectification and on the rights of student parents.

Jan Floyd-Douglass: Special interest area: Women on Boards, Women in Public Life, WNC Awareness, International

I have: met with 20 female head hunters and recruiters of senior leaders and directors and agreed how they might support the goals of the WNC: met and interviewed various CEOs and directors who work in role model corporates or organisations aiming to be so including Coutts, Barclays, CEVA, EFG. I have also met with various influential professional female networks such as Everywoman, The Glasshammer, Downing St Project, WIBF and NextWomen and identified ways to promote the WNC to their membership. I have also met with senior officials in the Appointments Commission, GEO, etc re Women on Boards activity and agreed my participation in them.

I attended the 2010 CSW conference in New York as part of the WNC delegation, and gave a presentation on Women in the Media. I have also met with over 50 senior and/or influential female leaders and advocates in business and public life and delivered a Women in Public Life workshop. I drove and co-drafted the WNC Awareness Campaign programme, and was appointed a Mentor on the Public Mentoring Programme as well as attending many public events as a Commissioner.

Vivienne Hayes: Special interest area: Women's Voluntary and Community Sector

We have raised Partners' concerns with the Ministers for Women and their officials highlighting the importance of women-only services and specifically for women's specialist services for BME communities.

I have represented WNC at various events including a CEDAW event in Newcastle and a British Council event for women from Arab nations. Discussion and debate with a diversity of women is a pleasure and an honour and is pivotal to ensuring WNC is able to achieve its mission of "women's voices to government".

I look forward to continuing the conversations and assisting the government in understanding the needs and aspirations of women in our society.

Liz Kelly: Special interest area: Violence Against Women

I chaired the WNC's UK VAW Working Group meetings which meet quarterly. External speakers at these groups included representatives from the UK Borders Agency, the Home Office, the Department of Health, the Government Equalities Office and the Scottish Government.

I chaired the joint sub-groups meetings which brought together the domestic and sexual violence sectors to co-ordinate ways of addressing sustainable funding for the VAW sector. I also chaired three meetings of a new, time-limited sub group – the Women's Safety and the 2012 Olympics Sub-Group – which was established to discuss measures to prevent VAW and address women's safety concerns associated with the 2012 Games.

In March 2010, I was invited by the Labour government to join the VAWG Strategy (England) Ministerial and Delivery Board meetings and attended meetings at which I represented VAW stakeholder views to inform the delivery of the VAWG Strategy for England.

Beatrix Campbell: Special interest area: Equalities, EU and Commonwealth

I developed the WNC position on the new equalities legislation, focussing primarily on the equality duties. I also consulted with external stakeholder organisations, the four nations who had strong experience of working on and implementing the equality duties and also with the EHRC to explore a way of transcending the limits on duties in relation to caring responsibilities. I also chaired the Women in Public life event in Norwich, and became the Chair of the EU and Commonwealth Advisory Group of the WNC.

Haleh Afshar: Special interest area: BME Women, Women in the Economy

I have worked actively as a liaison between the Muslim Women's network UK (MWNUK) and the WNC; I spoke in Parliament highlighting some of the concerns of the WNC and MWNUK. I also spoke at a meeting with Muslim women in Sheffield on the Equality Bill and attended the WNC conference. I also helped co-facilitate a workshop on Women in Public Life with Mary-Ann Stephenson. With fellow Commissioner, Helen Jackson, I put together a consultation event at Sheffield Hallam University in October for 60 women

from public and third sector bodies about the impact of the Bill. I also spoke at various other meetings on behalf of WNC.

Adele Baumgardt: Special interest area: Commissioner for Wales, Equalities, Gender Equality Duty

I took over the role of Wales Commissioner in December 2009. In this new role for the Commission, I set myself four priorities in the first instance: first, raising the profile of the WNC in Wales and making the case to women in Wales of what the WNC offers them: increase the number of Welsh partners: raise the profile of international conventions, CSW and CEDAW in Wales and engage the women in Wales on the international agenda: and liaise with women in Wales to establish their priorities and agenda and manage a work programme to meet their needs better.

To achieve these goals, I have set up and attended a number of key meetings with stakeholders, women and women's groups across Wales. These have included the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG); Welsh local Government Association, Centre for Equality and Human Rights NHS Wales, Welsh council for voluntary action and the EHRC. These organisations are now actively promoting the WNC to their members.

I have worked with the WAG across a range of issues including the Equality Bill in Wales in particular the Public Sector Equality Duty. I have also joined the steering group for Welsh Assembly Government single Equality Scheme. I have worked closely with women making a difference and the Public Appointments Unit in Wales on women into public life and decision making. I am actively working with the Wales VAW working group and with the Wales Gender Budget Group.

In January 2010, we ran a Wales event on CEDAW and CSW. Delegates were able to feed in the Welsh women's perspective to the WNC central work on these issues. In March 2010, I contacted all Welsh WNC partners and encouraged them to respond to our Partner Survey and our response was excellent and our Wales partnership base is slowly increasing.

We are all actively planning ways to better consult the women in Wales on their priorities and this will include making sure these issues are fully reflected in the WNC Women and the Economy work. All this work comes together to strengthen the voice of Welsh women and ensure their voices and views are heard better by both WAG and Westminster. In the meantime, the Commission has been actively working to better reflect the four Nations in all its work.

So centrally I, continued key and critical work on the Equality Bill, attending the high level stakeholder group and worked to ensure gender and sex equality issues continue to be considered in every aspect of the legislative work. I have worked with the EHRC on guidance as well as helped to draft WNC responses on the Equality Bill consultations e.g. the multiple discrimination consultation, the non statutory guidance on the single equality duty, the WNC partner consultation and the WNC position paper on the Bill.

Ann Henderson: Special interest area: Commissioner for Scotland.

I have met with a number of organizations to discuss WNC's work and to learn more about their priorities and concerns. This has included discussions with the Equality Network, Engender, Scottish Women's Convention, UNIFEM, Soroptomists, STUC Women's Committee, Glasgow City Council's campaign 'End Prostitution Now', the Gude Cause commemorating the campaign for women's suffrage and the Scottish Federation of University Women Graduates. I was delighted that the WNC was represented at the STUC Women's Conference in November 2009 in Dundee.

I met with Ann McKechin MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland on several occasions and chaired a GEO consultation stakeholders' event in Edinburgh on the Equality Bill, at which the Minister for Equalities, Michael Foster MP spoke, along with representatives from the EHRC and from the Scottish Government. There have also been specific consultations running in Scotland on the devolved obligations under the new legislation.

The 40th anniversary celebrations for the WNC allowed recognition of the role that Scottish women have played in championing women's rights and representation, as former MP Maria Fyfe and other women from Scotland attended the event at the House of Lords. Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland Ann McKechin MP hosted a very enjoyable 40th anniversary evening reception at the Scotland Office in Edinburgh which was addressed by the Chair. This brought together women from different organizations, including the Soroptimists, Engender, WILPF and the Scottish African Caribbean Women's Association.

In February 2010, the WNC made a submission to the Scottish Parliament's consideration of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill, with reference to prostitution and criminalizing demand. We have been able to follow more of these opportunities on policy discussions, as our Scottish partners become more involved in the WNC.

I chaired the WNC International Event on the UN agenda in Glasgow attracting a wide range of representation from women's groups and organizations. I also chaired a 'Women into Public Life' event in Liverpool which informed work being done in Scotland, particularly through the STUC Women's Committee.

Bronagh Hinds: Special interest area: Northern Ireland Commissioner

I represented the WNC on the Gender Advisory Panel of the Office of the First and deputy First Minister (OFMdFM) which considered departmental gender action plans and the report on the Gender Equality Strategy. Junior Minister, Robert Newton attended the September meeting of the panel and I represented the Panel in giving evidence to the Assembly's OFMdFM Committee. I worked with officials to develop a series of questions on public attitudes to women for a major survey. A review of women's sector funding and a reference group was established and I input preliminary work to the group which included a set of principles for its operation.

I attend meetings Women's Ad-hoc Policy Group to discuss the key policy issues facing the sector on behalf of WNC. The agenda is wide-ranging, considering, for example, the sector's view on the Gender Equality Strategy, the women's funding review, equality impact assessment issues, public appointments, the Northern Ireland Bill of Rights, European issues, international matters such as CSW, CEDAW and UNSCR 1325, elections and reports from the Violence Against Women group, rural women and others. I also represent the WNC on the End Violence Against Women coalition.

I prepared a submission on behalf of the WNC and three WNC Partners on the *Proposed Arrangements for the Establishment of Transition Committees in Statutes* as part of the local government reform agenda. The principal concern of the WNC and Partners was to establish proper representation of women on the statutory transition committees responsible for developing new council arrangements. The concrete proposals in the submissions by the women's sector were not taken on board by the Minister.

There were two meetings for WNC Partners in Northern Ireland during the year. In September, I engaged Partners in preparing the Northern Ireland input into the WNC's

Beijing + 15 document for CSW in 2010. In Partnership with the Northern Ireland Women's European Platform extensive work was undertaken with Partners to put together a comprehensive document that was reproduced by the WNC along with the main publication. Around 50 Partners registered to attend the meeting in January 2010 on the United Nations Women's Agenda that was addressed by officials from the Government Equalities Office and the Office of the First and deputy First Minister and a number of WNC Partners. The following month I attended the GEO Roundtable on the new gender architecture in Admiralty House.

I addressed both subgroups of the WNC International Advisory Forum in February 2010 – the UN Subgroup and the European and Commonwealth Subgroup on UNSCR 1325 and the Northern Ireland experience. I subsequently developed a paper on the subject and worked with the WNC staff team in finalising recommendations that could be taken up within the UK.

In addition to attending WNC meetings, I took an active part in a number of pieces of the WNC's work; for example, engaging in teleconferences on women and public life and on the Equality Bill.

→ General WNC Activity

Board Meetings

2 and 3 June 2009 – Baroness Anita Gale chaired the Learning Exchange, as Baroness Gould was giving evidence to the Parliamentary Committee examining the Equality Bill. Janice Shersby (Director, GEO) gave a presentation on the Minister for Women's Priorities, concentrating on Priority 1 – Supporting Families. Morag Alexander, EHRC Commissioner for Scotland and Bob Collins, Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland both attended the main board meeting (unfortunately, Dr Neil Wooding, EHRC Commissioner for Wales had to withdraw at the last moment) to discuss how the equalities agenda works through devolved administrations.

17 July 2009 – An additional board meeting was scheduled to discuss the Equality Bill in detail, in order to develop the WNC Position Paper which informed Ministers and Government of WNC Partners' thinking on specific aspects of the Bill.

13 and 14 October 2009 – This meeting was held almost 40 years to the day of the first WNC meeting in October 1969, when the Lord Chancellor (then Lord Gardiner) attended. The current Lord Chancellor, Rt Hon Jack Straw MP, was unable to attend to mark the occasion, but it was particularly appropriate that he asked Maria Eagle MP to be his representative as she was also Minister of State for the Government Equalities Office, WNC's sponsor body. This was a valuable opportunity for the Board to hear what progress is being made with women in prison and the criminal justice system.

15 and 16 December 2009 – Many of the Board members took the opportunity to hear the debates on the Equality Bill in the House of Lords, which received its first reading on 15 December and at which both Baroness Gould and Baroness Afshar were speaking, so no Learning Exchange was held. The Board meeting itself afforded Commissioners a preliminary opportunity to review the 2010-11 Business Plan and to hear about the extensive progress made in VAWG Strategy through the series of focus groups.

9 and 10 February 2010 – WNC Commissioners used the Learning Exchange as an opportunity for a wide-ranging discussion on the strategic future of the Commission; how the Board and Commissioners operate and are supported by the Directorate; and how new work activities are developed and progressed. Two external speakers were welcomed to the main board meeting to present the findings of their recently-released reports: Baroness Margaret Prosser, Deputy Chair of the EHRC reviewed the recommendations of the Women and Work Commission, three years on, having chaired the reconvened panel which produced the original WWC report: and Professor John Hills reported on the results of the National Equality Panel. Both presentations promoted some usefully discussion and consideration of further WNC involvement in particular work areas.

“At the meeting in February, we agreed to set up a Group around Women in the Economy. I am delighted to have been asked to Chair the Group. We will be looking at a number of issues including women and the informal economy, women in formal paid work and the impact of the Government's proposed austerity measures on women, in particular the cuts in spending on public services, which will affect women employees and women who rely on public services.”

WNC Commissioner, Sarah Veale.

Commissioners' Strategic Planning Day

The new Board of Commissioners' Strategic Planning Day was held on 18 March 2010. Following the February Board Meeting, the focus of the day was key policy areas including plans arising from the 2010-2011 budget, women in the economy, women-only services and strategic direction.

→ The WNC Directorate

The Directorate is made up of a small team of civil servants, which carries out the day-to-day work of the WNC. Its role is to: act as the central point for the WNC Partners; organise dialogue with women and consultation meetings around the country on key issues; liaise between Government departments and women's groups on issues concerning women; manage the work programme of the WNC and the budget; co-ordinate and disseminate information; manage working groups; produce position papers on policy issues and liaise with GEO in its work supporting the Ministers for Women and Equality. The team is often assisted in its work by interns from the UK and overseas. In addition, people sometimes join the Directorate on a short-term basis to work on specific projects.

The Director's role is to manage the WNC as an independent, non-departmental public body and deliver advice to Government which reflects the views of women and the sector, in line with the strategic steer from the WNC's Chair and Board of Commissioners. Barbara Collins has continued to lead and guide the Directorate through a demanding twelve months, assisted by Susan Green, Deputy Director – Policy and Daniel Barrow, Deputy Director - Corporate. WNC was sorry to lose Daniel in March 2010 when his secondment from DCFS came to a close and he returned to his 'home' department.

Over the course of 2009-10, we also said farewell to Erin Brooks and Katherine McIntosh, and welcomed Shelly Dowrich back from maternity leave who works on international and migration and asylum issues. A full list of past and current staff is at the end of this report. A big thank you to all the staff that have worked in WNC over this year.

In comparison to many previous years, the Directorate staffing has remained relatively stable over the past year. Jo Stradling and Anna Clark both joined we were fortunate to secure the services of two volunteers in November for six month internships: Colleen Main and Fabienne Jung both proved invaluable in supporting the Outreach programme, in particular the Women in Public Life events being held around the country.

"An important, articulate, committed and experienced organisation – very necessary."

WNC Partners, from WNC Partner Survey 2010

→ Work of the WNC in 2009-2010

WNC Outreach Work

To celebrate our 40th anniversary year we have been travelling enthusiastically around the country running events including: 17 events in the regions to encourage more women into public life, six events in all four nations on International policy, our All Partners' Conference as well as 40th celebration events in London and Edinburgh. This is in addition to the 40 focus groups held by the Violence against Women team. More details on all of these events can be found under the relevant policy areas.

Along with the events we have continued our Partnership work; recruiting and maintaining relationships as well as producing our quarterly newsletters and updating our website continuously.

What is your overall image of the WNC?

- *"A very professional body which promotes and cares for the voices of women."*
- *"A very useful network: meeting at Partners' events is invaluable. A good source of information on women's issues and Government."*

WNC Partners, from WNC Partner Survey 2010

All Partners' Conference

The WNC held its All Partner's Conference on Thursday 19 November. The conference, chaired by Baroness Joyce Gould, was an opportunity to bring together all our Partners to discuss their views on the topics that were of most concern to them and steer our work programme.

The Conference was particularly an important event as 2009 marked 40 years of the WNC and holding the conference during our 40th year gave us the opportunity to celebrate with our Partners. Bringing our Partners together in this way helps to ensure we remain aware of our Partners' views and concerns, which helps inform future WNC activity.



Delegates at the All Partners Conference, November 2009

The Conference proved to be a fantastic success due to the magnificent support and response of our Partners, who came from Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, as well as all parts of England and represented a wide and diverse set of interests.

“Until I attended the WNC Conference I had not realised the extensive representation of all women from different sectors, religions, ages etc. that WNC represents. It was truly an eye opener - keep up the good work!

“I think this is a valuable way to make Partners feel connected with the WNC. There is a useful two-way flow of information.”

WNC Partner feedback

Our guest speaker, the Director of Liberty, Shami Chakrabarti gave a fascinating speech which touched on various subjects from human rights to the injustices faced by women in the criminal justice system. The morning session also included discussion workshops previously identified as priority areas by WNC Partners: Women in the Economy; Violence Against Women: the Equality Bill; Women in Power and Decision Making; and the Gender Duty. Each of these workshops were facilitated by WNC Commissioners and experts in the relevant subject area. Our specific thanks go to Anjum Mouj of IMKAAN, Narmada Thiranagama from the TUC, Gay Moon from the Equality & Diversity Forum and Hilary McCollum from the EHRC for co-facilitating these workshops.

The afternoon session saw the Solicitor General, Vera Baird QC MP give the keynote address to the conference. The Solicitor General highlighted some very important topics such as women in the recession and the importance of tackling violence against women. Following her speech, the Solicitor General joined the panel for a question and answer session, which also included the Director General of the Government Equalities Office, Jonathan Rees, the Director of Fawcett, Ceri Goddard and Marai Larasi, the Director of IMKAAN. Many of the questions taken had been submitted by WNC Partners in writing in advance and produced some interesting points in the responses from the panel.

The top five priorities for the future identified by Partners are:

- Violence against Women
- Ways to make Equality Happen (national and international mechanisms)
- Human Rights
- Women in the Economy
- Women in Decision Making

We would like to thank all our Partners who attended the conference from far and wide across the four nations. A full report on the Conference is now available on our website.

40th Anniversary

The WNC celebrated its 40th Anniversary at the House of Lords on Thursday, 16 July with an event intended to bring together past WNC Chairs, Commissioners and Steering Group Members and former Ministers for Women to reflect on WNC’s contributions to the changing debate and to consider what progress has been made on women’s equality. In particular, it was an opportunity for those who have run, organised and managed WNC over the years to share their experiences with current staff and Commissioners.

The event was hosted by current WNC Chair, Baroness Joyce Gould, who was honoured to be able to read out a message from HM The Queen, conveying Her Majesty’s best wishes. This mirrored the message Her Majesty sent when the WNC was first established 40 years ago.

Following a speech by the Minister for Women, the Rt. Hon Harriet Harman QC MP, where she spoke on recent changes that have taken place in the UK for women, Baroness Gould invited the Minister to cut the WNC birthday cake. To conclude, comedian Jo Brand spoke about her own funny experiences over the years. Our thanks to both of them for speaking and for their kind words of support.

The event was also used to launch a new WNC document, which presents a chronological summary of changes on gender equality in the UK since the 1960s, as well as being a legacy document, marking the first 40 years of WNC's existence.

"(WNC) performs a necessary task. Its independence is highly valued and is an asset to the women's sector".

WNC Partner from WNC Partner Survey 2010

WNC 40th Birthday celebration with Partners in Edinburgh

In November, a reception was hosted by the Rt Hon Ann McKechin Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland on behalf of the WNC at the Scotland Office to celebrate WNC's 40th birthday. We were grateful to Ann McKechin and Ann Henderson, WNC Commissioner (Scotland), for arranging such an enjoyable event. It was fascinating to meet more of our Scottish Partners and contacts.



From left to right: Baroness Joyce Gould, Chair Women's National Commission, Harriette Campbell, African and Caribbean Women's Association Ann McKechin MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland Victoria Campbell, African and Caribbean Women's Association Meg de Amasi, African and Caribbean Women's Association

Meetings

We have held meetings with groups who work with under-represented women to ensure their voices reach government. Groups have been as diverse as BCSWomen (British Computer Society) and the Al-Isharah Deaf Foundation.

At the WNC outreach event in Taunton in 2008, concern was expressed about public transport provision in the South West. As a largely rural area, the South West relies heavily on public transport. We therefore facilitated a meeting between Equality South West and the then Parliamentary under Secretary of State for Transport, Paul Clark MP in May 2009. The meeting was very productive and an ongoing dialogue between the Department for Transport and Equality South West on access to transport for women in the area is now in place.

We have also had stalls at a number of events to promote the WNC and raise our profile. This has included events in October 2009 at the University of Sheffield and the Soroptomists International Conference in Cardiff, the Scottish Trades Union Congress Women's Conference in Dundee in November 2009 and at the NUS Women's Conference in March 2010.

Partnership

In the year up to 31 March 2010, we have recruited 39 organisations and 30 individual Partners to join the WNC, a total of 69 new Partners. We are delighted that so many regional and diverse groups have become WNC Partners. We now have 606 Partners - an increase of 17%. We hope to increase numbers further this year and will again aim to increase participation from under-represented and hard to hear groups. We continue to maintain contact with many of the Groups we have worked with over the years including the Muslim Women's Network which we set up a few years ago and then supported to independence.

"I have worked actively as a liaison between the Muslim Women's network UK (MWNUK) and the WNC; I spoke in Parliament highlighting some of the concerns of the WNC and MWNUK. I also spoke at a meeting with Muslim women in Sheffield on the Equality Bill. "

WNC Commissioner, Baroness Haleh Afshar.

WNC Partner Survey

For the first time, WNC ran an online survey to evaluate Partners' experiences of WNC and how WNC delivers on its commitments and achieves its goals. The questionnaire, conducted through SurveyMonkey, was emailed out to all WNC Partners in February 2010 and was completed by 101 individuals or organisations (17% of our Partner base) across all UK regions. The survey included a range of topics (Communications, Engagement and Marketing, Activities and Consultations, WNC Single Equality Scheme, Newsletter and Website and Future Improvements) and styles to gather both quantitative and qualitative responses.

Overall, the WNC fared very well in how it communicated its events and activities, useful information, developments and announcements and in how it involved, listened to and considered the views of its Partners. Those respondents who have contacted the WNC generally had a very positive experience. Respondents noted that the WNC plays a vital role in representing women's voices to government.

Respondents noted that the WNC has a large remit and has achieved a great deal with few resources, thanking and congratulating the WNC for their hard work in a complex and challenging position. Most Partners joined the WNC either through the recommendation of a current Partner or after a positive experience of the WNC at an event. The WNC was described as 'professional,' 'approachable,' 'knowledgeable,' 'proactive,' 'inclusive' and 'experienced' and two-thirds of respondents confirmed they would liaise with government through the WNC on gender matters. A number of Partners used the evaluation as an opportunity to thank and congratulate the WNC for their hard work in a complex and challenging position.

The WNC rated better than other comparable organisations at involving stakeholders in their objectives and in its communication when compared to other government bodies. Two thirds of respondents confirmed they would liaise with government through the WNC on gender matters. Overall, the WNC rated better than other non-departmental bodies, advisory bodies, government bodies and umbrella organisations with a large membership at involving stakeholders in their objectives.

Partners recommended a number of areas in which the WNC could improve which we will be looking at in detail. These included clarity over what it meant to be a Partner, opportunities for Partners to engage and providing clear, accessible and innovative avenues for this engagement. Partners asked for communications tailored more towards their requirements and for WNC to prioritise listening to its Partners rather than delivering news on government policy and the need for WNC to develop a media presence and raise its profile by actively attending and holding relevant UK women's events. Partners valued the WNC and want to utilise further their skills, knowledge and networks and facilitate networking and information sharing. This survey has fed into the work WNC is planning and into all its business and communication strategies as well as being shared with WNC's sponsor body, GEO and all stakeholders through its website.

Would we be your partner of choice in liaising with government on gender matters? If so why? If not – why and who would be?

- *"I think the WNC represent everything women stand for."*
- *"Yes as WNC is uniquely placed within government but retains independence."*
- *"Yes. Well established and respected."*
- *"Yes because of good communication skills and willingness to pursue issues."*

WNC Partners, from WNC Partner Survey 2010

Communications

It has been a focus for the WNC this year to engage in profile-raising and develop a clearer online presence, through the use of new and social media. The creation of a Facebook account has meant we have been able to target non-Partners and engage with them, actively promoting our Women in Public Life events and inviting them along to participate. Members can join the group independently or through an invitation by another member. Similarly, through setting up a Twitter account, we are able to follow other members of the site, keeping up to date with their news and connecting with them via the site. Again, members can follow the WNC and it is a great way to publicise our events

and the work we are doing. In particular, this has been an effective way of engaging younger women who otherwise may not take part in WNC discussions. Partners have also used this as a useful forum for discussion.

The WNC blog is another recent communications innovation and enabled our Director Barbara Collins to add updates during CSW54 and on her visit to the White House with WNC Chair, Baroness Joyce Gould. The updates were extremely well received and added a valuable dimension to the way we report back to Partners, who were able to see exactly what was involved for the WNC in such an important international role. Additionally, the use of Survey Monkey, an online survey facility, has been a great success and enabled us to canvass the opinions of our Partners on different projects and monitor our success in different areas. We have received a very high response rate from surveys conducted in this way. Further areas of work have been identified through a focused Communications Away Day with a media specialist which proved a particularly valuable exercise.

"I co-wrote a communications strategy for the WNC with fellow Commissioner, Jan Floyd-Douglass which plans to build awareness and further develop effective communications with Partners, as well as reaching out to a wider audience."

WNC Commissioner, Olivia Bailey

WNC Website

We continue to monitor and update the WNC website regularly. Work on improving the appearance of the website continues with feedback from our Partners and continual evaluation as well, of course, through the Partners' survey.

WNC Newsletter

We have continued to keep our readers up-to-date with the work of the WNC and its Partners through our quarterly newsletter, which receives positive feedback. We are very grateful to all those Partners that have contributed to the content of the newsletter and always welcome new contributions. All our newsletters are available on the WNC website and hard copies are available to Partners that request them.

What is your overall image of the WNC?

- *"An important, articulate, committed and experienced organisation - very necessary"*
- *"In recent years I think the public image of the WNC has improved greatly, they are much more visible in the women's sector and play a clear role"*
- *"Good, and trying hard to represent a very diverse range of women's interests."*

WNC Partners, from WNC Partner Survey 2010

Violence against Women

“The success of the WNC’s work on violence against women in 2009/10 has resulted in the VAW Working Group now being considered the sector stakeholder for government, and we are able to regularly consult on policy and other developments across government departments and provide expert advice and feedback from group members.”

WNC Commissioner. Prof Liz Kelly.

UK Violence against Women Working Group

The WNC UK Violence Against Women (VAW) Working Group and its sub groups - the Sexual Violence (SV) Sub Group and Domestic Violence (DV) Sub Group - met four times between April 2009 and March 2010. WNC aims to be responsive and flexible and as a result of concerns from the VAW sector about funding and sustainability, both sub groups meet together at each meeting to discuss common funding concerns and have advised GEO about ways of addressing sustainable funding for the VAW sector. This then informed the subsequent consultation on a Strategic Action Plan for the VAWG Third Sector.

April 2009

The VAW Working Group heard from the UK Borders Agency on progress on the UK Trafficking Action Plan. The DV Sub Group and heard from Friends, Families and Travellers about their work to raise awareness of the needs of Gypsies and Travellers experiencing DV. The VAW Group also discussed key issues in response to the English cross-government consultation *Together We Can End Violence Against Women and Girls*. Group members provided informed and detailed responses to the consultation in June 2009, which fed in directly to the resulting cross government strategy for England.

September 2009

The Department of Health attended to discuss its Taskforce on the Health Aspects of VAWG and group members advised on the priorities that the NHS need to address to provide a successful response to VAWG. In particular, that many women from BAMER communities, including asylum seekers and women without English as a first language, had unequal access to healthcare and made recommendations for how the NHS could be more accessible and responsive to all women experiencing violence. Group members also worked on DH Taskforce subgroups to provide detailed input into the evidence reports that informed the final recommendations from the Taskforce. The Group also heard from the Home Office about the proposed Vetting and Barring Scheme and advised on the likely adverse impact on women. Scottish Government representatives updated the group on their framework for tackling VAW (*‘Safer Lives: Changed Lives: A Shared Approach to Tackling Violence Against Women in Scotland’*); the GEO talked about their work on VAW and women offenders; and the Home Office updated the group on their work on DV and SV. The Home Office attended the DV Sub Group to discuss progress on implementing the national DV Delivery Plan and the Scottish Government spoke about co-ordinated initiatives to support children living with DV in Scotland.

December 2009

Baroness Vivienne Stern attended the meeting to discuss her Review of how public authorities respond to rape and group members provided expert views on how public authorities should improve responses to rape and sexual violence. The Group gave feedback to GEO on their VAW Communications Toolkit. The DV Sub-Group discussed the need for sexual violence in a domestic context to be addressed in the Stern Review and also had an update on the issue of 'no recourse to public funds' work and government proposals. The SV Sub-Group welcomed a new member to the group, Carlene Firmin, Senior Policy Officer at Race On The Agenda (ROTA), who updated the group on their work and the research project, *Female Voice in Violence*, which assesses the impact of serious gang violence on women and girls.

March 2010

The DV Sub Group discussed progress of the 'no recourse to public funds' pilot and how women from BAMER communities were still being denied access to safety and protection if they were excluded from the pilot, Group members provide regular advice to government on the measures needed to enable women from BAMER communities who have insecure immigration status to access safety and support. The SV Sub Group welcomed two new members: Katharine Moseley, manager of the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre North Wales and Sandy Brindley, national co-ordinator for Rape Crisis Scotland. Westminster Government officials from various departments attended the March VAW Working Group to discuss the delivery and implementation of the cross-departmental VAWG Strategy for England. It was agreed that officials from the VAWG Strategy Delivery Team will continue engagement with the Group as a consultation mechanism as the Strategy is developed and implemented. We were sorry that VAW leads from the Welsh Assembly Government were unavailable to update the group on the development of a VAW Strategy for Wales.

The WNC is currently reviewing the membership to the VAW Working Group, to ensure that the group is representative across the equality strands and that there is expertise across all forms of violence against women, which is also representative of issues across the four nations. This review is being undertaken in adherence to the WNC Single Equality Scheme commitment.

A regular VAW E-News has been circulated to VAW Working Group and E-List members throughout the year, based on information sent to the WNC for distribution to the sector.

Women's Safety and the 2012 Olympics Sub-Group

The Sexual Violence Sub-Group first raised concerns about the risk of increased levels of VAW in relation to the London Olympics 2012 in December 2008. WNC Chair, Baroness Joyce Gould, wrote to the Chair of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG), Lord Coe of Ranmore, to raise these concerns. Minister for the Olympics, Rt Hon Tessa Jowell MP was keen to champion this for women and met with Baroness Gould to discuss Partners' evidence on the issues. Baroness Gould also met with LOCOG to discuss measures to prevent VAW and address women's safety concerns associated with the 2012 Games.

In response to concerns raised by the VAW Working Group, the WNC has set up a time-limited working group to bring together key representatives from the women's sector, to discuss how to address these issues. The first meeting of this Group took place on the 18 September 2009, where members agreed their terms of reference and work plan. The Sub-Group met again on the 12 November. Tessa Jowell came to the 24 February meeting to discuss her findings from a recent trip to the 2010 Winter Olympics in

Vancouver and ways to address women's safety at the 2012 Games. The group is currently exploring the best way of gathering further evidence on the impact of the Olympics and large sporting events on women's safety. The Group has also sent written 46 letters to Olympic boroughs, requesting an outline of their plans to deal with women's safety and have carried out a risk assessment of capacity for service provision.

WNC Focus Groups

Home Office: In 2009/10, to inform the English cross-government consultation on how to end violence against women and girls,¹ the Home Office commissioned the WNC to run a series of focus groups to speak directly to women and girls who had experienced different forms of violence, including specific groups with survivors of domestic violence, rape and sexual violence, forced marriage and of female genital mutilation (FGM). We particularly wanted to hear women's and girls' experiences of using services, of what would help increase their safety and of how they felt violence against women and girls could be prevented. The WNC organised and facilitated 24 focus groups with 300 women and girls who identified as Black, Asian, minority ethnic and refugee (BAMER) women including Travellers, women asylum seekers and refugee women; disabled women; older women; girls and young women; transgender women; lesbians; bisexual women; women trafficked into the UK; women offenders including women in prison; women in the sex industry and in prostitution; homeless women; women with mental health problems; women with problematic substance use; women from rural areas; and women night-shift and retail workers. The findings and recommendations made by these women and girls (set out in the WNC report '[Still We Rise](#)', 2009, available at www.thewnc.org.uk) directly informed the England cross government violence against women and girls strategy, and the detailed recommendations set out in the report will be reviewed annually to provide a benchmark against which future government progress on ending violence against women can be measured. The Home Office received a national diversity award for this work.

Additionally, in September 2009, Sara Payne (Victims' Champion) and the Home Office carried out a Victims' Experience review of how to improve the criminal justice system response to rape victims, as part of the development of the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. In doing so, the Home Office commissioned the WNC to develop and organise three further women's discussion groups in England, targeting women who have been raped and who are in receipt of support from sexual violence services and who either have not reported to the justice system; reported but had their case discontinued; or reported and had their case progressed through the court system. The Home Office report, [Rape: The Victim Experience Review](#), was published on 25 November 2009, accompanied by an independent WNC Report ([WNC Report from Women's Discussion Groups, September – October 2009](#), WNC, 2009) that provides a summary of the issues raised and recommendations made by the 36 women who attended the groups.²

Department of Health: In September 2009 the Department of Health also commissioned the WNC to run 14 focus groups with women who had experienced violence to find out what they thought of health service responses and how they could be improved. Health services included primary care services (GPs, health visitors, practice nurses, dentists, sexual health clinics, maternity services); hospital-based services (including A&E, hospital and ambulance services); Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) where they exist; and psychiatric, mental health and counselling services. The WNC worked in Partnership with Imkaan to co-facilitate these groups, and at the request of the DH particularly targeted women who have experienced domestic violence and forced marriage; women who have experienced rape, sexual abuse and incest; women who

¹ Home Office (2009) "[Together We Can End Violence Against Women and Girls: A Consultation Paper](#)", Home Office: London.

² These publications are available at www.thewnc.org.uk

have used statutory mental health services; women from BAMER communities; women asylum seekers; older women and disabled women. In order to ensure groups were accessible to women from BAMER communities and to women without English as a first language, thanks to our Partnership with Imkaan, several groups were run in women's first language to enable their full participation in the group discussions. WNC also worked as a member of the DH Taskforce on the Health Aspects of Violence Against Women and Girls and the report from the focus groups ('A Bitter Pill To Swallow', WNC 2010, available at www.thewnc.org.uk) informed the DH Taskforce final report and recommendations for the NHS, which was published in February 2010.

Crown Prosecution Service: In January 2010, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) commissioned the WNC to contribute to its internal CPS Victims' Views Assessment, which focuses on victims who have experienced violence against women (VAW). We were asked to assess women's views on support, safety and satisfaction in relation to the criminal justice system (CJS). Building on the findings from previous focus groups, the WNC worked with the Greater London Domestic Violence Project (now AVA – Against Violence and Abuse) to organise and facilitate additional focus groups with women who had experienced domestic and sexual violence and whose cases had gone to court. Five focus groups were held with 34 women, who identified as sex workers; women who had experienced FGM; women subjected to so-called 'honour'-based violence and forced marriage; and women who had experienced domestic violence. A final report was submitted to the CPS in March 2010.

"(WNC is) looking out for the welfare and equality of women no matter what background they come from"

WNC Partner from WNC Partner Survey 2010

A special report of results from the Focus Groups can be found at Annex A

WNC VAW Partners meeting with US Embassy officials

Following the success of the focus groups, WNC was approached by US Embassy officials to meet with VAW Partners to explore the state's response to VAW nationally and locally and any specific issues for VAW services. Our thanks to Solace Women's Aid, Coventry Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre, the African Well Women's Service in Waltham Forest, Rise (Refuge, Information, Support and Education) in Brighton & Hove and West Sussex, Apna Haq in Rotherham, Women Asylum Seekers Together in Manchester, the Poppy Project and Women Acting in Today's Society in Birmingham, who met with officials from the US Embassy along with a number of WNC staff on 8 December 2009. The issues raised at the meeting were promoted by the Embassy through a short film of interviews with participants on YouTube.

The Westminster Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy Ministerial and Delivery Board Meetings

WNC Commissioner and VAW Working Group Chair, Professor Liz Kelly, was invited to join the VAWG Strategy (England) Ministerial and Delivery Board meetings to represent VAW stakeholder views. Officials from the VAWG Strategy Delivery Team will also have regular communication with the WNC VAW Group.

Correspondence and other work on VAW

Throughout 2009/10 the WNC has retained an observer status on the End Violence Against Women (EVAW) Coalition Steering Group. The WNC also participated in various consultations: the Greater London Authority VAW Strategy; Home Office VAW Stakeholder Meetings; the GEO advisory group for the development of the online VAW Communications Toolkit; Home Office DV and SV Stakeholders Meetings; Forced Marriage Unit stakeholder consultation meetings and the cross-government FGM Advisory Group. WNC attended a number of meetings including the IDeA National Conference on Equalities and VAW; the Broken Rainbow launch of the young people's survey into LGBT violence and abuse and accompanying resources; Amnesty Refugee Testimony Project, the Metropolitan Police and also met with visiting representatives from Albanian NGOs working on gender issues, to discuss the role of the WNC, and share information about issues for local services and national systems for promoting women's equality and preventing violence against women.

Throughout August 2009, the WNC provided intensive support and advice to the Home Office to inform their analysis of the thousands of responses received by the cross-government consultation in England on ending violence against women and girls. This work included writing a report of key themes and specific recommendations for all government departments and for specific government departments, to make the strategy as inclusive and responsive as possible.

WNC wrote to Justice Minister, Jack Straw, to express Partners' concern about an amendment to the Coroner's and Justice Bill about the clause ensuring that infidelity alone cannot provide a defence to murder. Baroness Gould also wrote a submission to the Scottish Parliament Justice Committee in support of proposed legislative amendments that challenge demand for prostitution. We also wrote to Trevor Phillips, Chair of the EHRC, about the lack of funding for women's organisations and how this relates to the Gender Equality Duty. In February 2010, the WNC wrote to Minister for Women and Equalities, Harriet Harman, about the provision of women's self defence programmes. The WNC also submitted both WNC VAW focus group reports; *Still We Rise*, and *A Bitter Pill to Swallow* to the EHRC Triennial Review as primary evidence of women's inequality across the majority of equality strands.

"In recent years I think the public image of the WNC has improved greatly, they are much more viable in the women's sector and play a clear role in taking information from the women in the UK to government, as the WNC's membership increases it's authority increases."

WNC Partner, from WNC Partner Survey 2010

Equalities Work

"I continued key and critical work on the Equality Bill, attending the high level stakeholder group and worked to ensure gender and sex equality issues continue to be considered in every aspect of the legislative work. I have worked with the EHRC on guidance as well as helped to draft WNC responses on the Equality Bill consultations and the WNC partner consultation and the WNC position paper on the Bill."

WNC Commissioner, Adele Baumgardt

The Equality Bill was published in April 2009; and the Bill received Royal Assent and formally became the Equality Act 2010, on 8 April 2010. During this time the WNC has been following the progression of the Bill closely. WNC Commissioners held a number of extra-ordinary meetings on the Equality Bill, including hosting a roundtable in May with the Solicitor General Vera Baird, the EHRC, GEO officials working on the Bill and a number of WNC Partners. The Public Bill Committee passed the Bill on 7 July, after considering 67 written submissions of evidence and four oral sessions of evidence. The Women's National Commission gave evidence on 2 June.

"It provides a good forum for advising Government on issues relevant to women. The meeting organisation on the Equality Bill last year was one of the best meetings on the Bill that I have ever attended."

Attendee at Equality Bill Roundtable Partner stakeholder survey

WNC Commissioners chaired several events around the four nations with Equalities Minister, Michael Foster MP to talk to women about proposals in the Bill and what it would mean for them.

Following an extensive consultation with Partners and discussions with GEO officials where Commissioners set out Partners' concerns about proposals in the Equality Bill, the WNC prepared a briefing and position paper on available on the WNC website. Following further engagement with Partners, WNC responded to a number of consultations on the Bill: on Age, the Specific Duties, Multiple Discrimination, the inclusion of religion and belief in the Bill and a comprehensive response to the extensive EHRC consultation on non-statutory guidance on the Equality Bill.

"Through the consultation periods on the Equality Bill, I met with Ann McKechin MP, Under Secretary of State for Scotland on several occasions. In September 2009, I chaired a GEO consultation stakeholders' event in Edinburgh on the Equality Bill, at which the Minister for Equalities Michael Foster MP spoke, along with representatives from the EHRC and from the Scottish Government."

WNC Commissioner, Ann Henderson

The Bill passed through the House of Commons successfully and entered the House of Lords on 3 December. The Bill was scrutinised by the House of Lords, and completed its third reading on the 23 March, with a number of amendments:

- adding a power to prohibit caste discrimination as part of race discrimination.
- making explicit that reasonable adjustments for disabled people include reasonable steps to provide information in accessible formats, when the way information is provided would otherwise put disabled people at a substantial disadvantage.
- ensuring that all people who conduct religious marriages can continue to opt out if they reasonably believe a marriage involves someone who has changed gender.
- extending protection against discrimination because of pregnancy and maternity to pupils in schools.
- adding provisions that can be used to require political parties to publish anonymised information on the diversity of their candidate selections, as a means of increasing transparency on the involvement of all groups in the political process.
- removing the prohibition on civil Partnerships taking place in religious premises.
- clarifying that 'substantial' (which is used in relation to the disability provisions in the Bill) means something which is not minor or trivial.

The Bill returned to the House of Commons on 7 April, where all Lords' amendments were accepted without vote and so the Bill completed its parliamentary stages and received Royal Assent on 8 April, formally becoming the Equality Act 2010. The WNC followed the progression of the Bill closely, attending meetings with our equalities stakeholders and regularly updating our Partners on the amendments made to the Bill.

"I consulted outside organisations, stakeholders, the four nations who have strong experience of working on and implementing the equality duties, and also the EHRC to explore a way of transcending the limits on duties in relation to caring responsibilities."

WNC Commissioner, Beatrix Campbell

"The organisation has expert knowledge on the wider gender equality agenda and is strategically positioned between women's organisations and the government."

WNC Partner, from WNC Partner Survey 2010

Single Sex Services

Following concerns expressed by Partners that women-only services are under threat and that the gender equality duty was being misinterpreted by funders, the WNC ran a light touch online survey asking women about their experience of women-only services, whether they would choose a women-only service in certain circumstances and whether they valued having the option to go to a women-only service. We received 297 responses to this survey which is an unprecedented response to a WNC survey. We are looking in detail at the responses and will be reporting on this soon.

"We have been able to raise issues with Ministers for Women and their officials in relation to the sector; highlighting the importance of women only services and within that women's specialist services for BME communities."

WNC Commissioner, Vivienne Hayes.

International Work

International events

The WNC was funded by GEO to hold five International events to follow up on the 2008/2009 programme of raising awareness of the UN Women's Agenda. These events were held in Newcastle, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Belfast and London, with guest speakers from across the Four Nations. The events were all chaired by WNC Commissioners and the GEO gave presentations and fielded questions and feedback at all five events. All the events were well-attended and generated lively debate.

The programme covered the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 53rd Session which took place in March this year and preparations for the 54th session in 2010 and a session on the Beijing Platform for Action which entered its 15th year in 2010. The day also examined the CEDAW process and the Government's *One Year On* report to the CEDAW committee as a follow-up to their report in 2008. WNC fed the views of attendees into the UK delegation to inform CSW54 in March and also to the European Women's Forum: Beijing +15 in Cadiz on 4 and 5 February to inform Partners of key Presidency issues.

"I found this event very informative as I did not know that there was this women's group was involved with other like minded women's groups internationally."

Attendee at Glasgow event

Czech Republic EU Presidency Conference May 2009

The WNC was successful in obtaining one of the UK places at the Czech Presidency (Informal) Gender Equality Ministerial Conference. The opportunity for interaction for civil society is very narrow so this is a significant opportunity to share developments in thinking in Europe with WNC partners.

The main aim of this gender conference was an exchange of experience and good practice, and to set the direction for the forward course of the EU Roadmap on Gender Equality (2006-2010), which can be accessed through the WNC website. Attendees attended from across EU member states and European institutions. The conference was comprised of a number of expert panels, including 'Tools and methods for overcoming gender stereotypes and bias' in childhood; in the media; and in decision-making. The UK Gender Equality Duty was highlighted as an example of good practice in relation to projects to combat hate crime against transgendered individuals.

Advisory Forum

As part of our activity to increase engagement with our Partners, WNC has established a series of light-touch Advisory Groups on priority areas, in order to improve communications and stakeholder management. The aim is to gather Partners' views and use the information to influence critical areas of government thinking and policy development at key periods in the annual timetable.

Two Advisory Groups have been established, first to focus on UN issues and second the European Union, Council of Europe and the Commonwealth. They sit alongside the existing Migration and Asylum Working Group. To date, two meetings have been held under this new arrangement. The second meeting took place on 12 February, with the afternoon session used as a pre-CSW preparatory meeting to enable Partners to engage

effectively at CSW, some of whom attended for the first time. It also enabled Partners to prepare for the event to maximize their participation.

These Advisory Groups will meet twice yearly, but there are opportunities for members to respond to initiatives during intervening periods of the year through an E-network as specified by the Chair.

Europe and Commonwealth Group: WNC Commissioner, Beatrix Campbell was appointed Chair of this Group at the beginning of 2010 and chaired the second meeting on 12 February. WNC Director Barbara Collins acted as temporary Chair for the 6 October meeting.

On 6 October, Group members confirmed their Terms of Reference and discussed the EU Presidency priorities and developments on the European Roadmap for Gender Equality with a representative from the Government Equalities Office. Group member, Liz Law gave a presentation in her capacity as Treasurer to the European Women's Lobby (EWL) on the EWL's priorities. There were also presentations on the UK Joint Committee on Women and on the Council of Europe Convention on Domestic Violence. Finally, Mamusa Siyuni from the Gender Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat joined the Group to share information about the Secretariat's work on gender equality and how Partners can engage with those processes. This included information about the forthcoming Ninth Women's Affairs Ministers' Meeting in June and WNC outlined how Partners could feed into that meeting via the NGO Partners' Forum beforehand.

WNC Commissioner, Bronagh Hinds also gave a presentation on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. As a result of concerns expressed, Baroness Gould then wrote to FCO Minister, Henry Bellingham about the omission of Northern Ireland from the UK National Action Plan on 1325.

"A very relevant body in today's society that could do more if given some powers and funding by the UK Government to further women's issues such as educating the public on the relevance and use of 'CEDAW.'"

WNC Partner, from WNC Partner Survey 2010

UN Group: The UN advisory group was also held on 6 October 2009 and 12 February 2010, with Commissioner, Brita Fernandez Schmidt chairing the meeting.

During the first meeting the Terms of Reference were agreed by the group. This was followed by an update on CEDAW by the Government Equality Office (GEO), followed by a discussion on the implementation of the CEDAW Committee recommendations. The GEO talked about the government's preparation for Beijing +15. The group also discussed the benefits of the new UN Gender Entity.

At the meeting on 12 February, Celia Reed from the Government Equalities Office gave a detailed update of work on CEDAW and CSW, followed by a second presentation by Commissioner, Bronagh Hinds discussing the UNSCR 1325.

"I have chaired the UN Advisory Group and ensured that members' views on international issues, including Beijing +15, 1325 and CEDAW are communicated effectively to government and the GEO. I have represented the WNC at a number of meetings on international issues, including the EU presidency meeting in Prague and reported back to WNC members, to ensure they are kept up to date."

WNC Commissioner, Brita Fernandez Schmidt

The Migration and Asylum Working Group

The Migration and Asylum Working Group re-convened on 12 February under the auspices of the newly-formed WNC Advisory Forum. The meeting was chaired by WNC Chair Baroness Gould in place of WNC Commissioner Juliet Lyons, the newly appointed Chair of the Migration and Asylum Working Group. Sophie Howes from the WNC's VAWG Team gave a comprehensive overview of the findings on women asylum seekers from the WNC's recent VAW focus groups. There was also an overview of the work of the Department of Health's Asylum Seeker Co-ordination Team. In addition, the Group were given an insight into the health issues of women asylum seekers (including pregnant women and those living with HIV/AIDS) and healthcare provision. The Group's future priorities were agreed provisionally: monitoring the Government's implementation of the CEDAW Committee's recommendations, scrutinising Public Sector use of the Gender Equality Duty, looking at the provisions in the draft immigration Bill and priorities of the new Minister for Women and Equalities. A draft action plan for implementation of these priorities has been drawn up. WNC also facilitated research by Asylum Aid on a comparison of standards for women asylum seekers in immigration detention with standards for women in prison to advise Ministers on these issues. WNC submitted these to Minister for Women, Harriet Harman along with specific findings about asylum-seeking women from the WNC VAW focus groups.

"The organisation has expert knowledge on the wider gender equality agenda and is strategically positioned between women's organisations and the government."

WNC Partner, from WNC Partner Survey 2010

WNC White House Visit

It was with great pleasure that the WNC accepted an invitation from the White House for a meeting with the Director of the Office of Public Engagement to discuss the work being undertaken in the USA on women and children and its overlap with work here in the UK as well as talk about the WNC model for engagement with women. Baroness Gould and Barbara Collins also visited two women's organisations based in Washington; the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (<http://www.rainn.org/>) focusing on sexual and domestic violence and The Women's Collective



WNC Director and Chair at the White House

(<http://www.womenscollective.org/>) dealing with women with HIV and AIDS. One organisation had a national profile while the other operated at local level. Both RAINN and TWC were extremely keen to share ideas and updates on the work of the UK women's sector, providing enlightening information about their work locally and nationally and we very much hope to work with them and share information in the future. We have disseminated this information widely to Partners and other interested organisations.

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) – CSW 54

This year marked the 54th session for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), held at the UN Headquarters in New York. The Session took place from Monday 1 March to Friday 12 March 2010.

CSW is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the advancement of women. It is the principal, global, policy-making body. Every year, representatives of Member States gather at United Nations' Headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and the advancement of women worldwide.

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 the implementation of the PFA and this has been the main focus of work for CSW since 1996. Generally, a priority theme is selected each year for the Commission to focus on and the agreed conclusions developed from the priority theme of the preceding year's CSW are also reviewed.

To mark its 15th anniversary, a review of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action (BPfA) was the focus of the Session. To mark this important anniversary, the WNC conducted a light-touch consultation exercise with Partners which culminated in the publication: *"What's Beijing Got to Do With Me?"*. This provided a snapshot of views from across the four Nations and pinpointed both Government activity to date and the most pressing issues for women across the UK, 15 years on. These views also helped inform the WNC's Written Statement which was submitted in advance of the Session and clearly set out WNC Partners' position on all 12 critical areas of BfPA. It also highlighted achievements across all four nations and made robust recommendations for real change.

WNC Chair, Baroness Gould, Director, Barbara Collins and Deputy Director, Daniel Barrow represented the WNC as part of the official UK Government delegation at CSW 54. WNC Commissioner, Jan Floyd-Douglass gave a presentation as part of a side event on the depiction of Women in the Media. The WNC's side event, chaired by Baroness Gould, was entitled: ***'The 4 Nations: What's Beijing go to do with us?'*** with representatives from each of the devolved nations giving a comprehensive review of one of the critical areas from a national perspective: Carlene Firmin from ROTA talked about her groundbreaking work on women and girls involved in serious youth violence; Paula Manley talked about women in decision-making in Wales; Marsha Scott and Isabelle Lannon spoke about poverty in Scotland; and Kate McCulloch spoke about women and conflict in Northern Ireland. The event was a great success and demonstrated the diverse nature of issues in the four nations. There were also successful side events hosted by a number of WNC partner organisations, including; Widows for Peace through Democracy and Baha'i International Community to name a few.

"In September 2009, I engaged Partners in preparing the Northern Ireland input into the WNC's Beijing + 15 document for CSW in 2010. In Partnership with the Northern Ireland Women's European Platform an extensive piece of work was undertaken with Partners putting together a comprehensive document that was reproduced by the WNC along with the main publication."

WNC Commissioner, Bronagh Hinds

"In January 2010, we ran a Wales event on CEDAW and CSW. Delegates were able to feed in the Welsh women's perspective to the WNC central work on these issues."

WNC Commissioner, Adele Baumgardt

The newly-appointed UK Ambassador to the UN, His Excellency Sir Mark Lyall Grant, hosted a reception to provide an opportunity for the UK Government delegation and UK NGOs to meet and discuss areas of critical concern to UK women. The Reception was held on 1 March at the UK's UN Mission. There was also a drinks reception hosted by Minister for Women, Harriet Harman for UK NGOs at CSW on 28 February to hear their views on the proposed UN Gender Entity. This was a unique opportunity for Ministers to hear first hand from UK NGOs on this area and discuss any areas of concern.

This year's session resulted in no Agreed Conclusions which unfortunately meant Partners were unable to contribute to any developing Outcome Document in the normal way. Instead, the UN issued a Political Declaration, reaffirming commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action. The UK Mission and the UK Delegation retained a positive relationship throughout the session and demonstrated their dedication and commitment. The promotion of the proposed Gender Entity is a real and lasting outcome of this year's CSW and something we shall be following closely in future programmes. WNC continues to be seen as an exemplary mechanism for engagement with NGOs at CSW and we are delighted to get consistently positive feedback on our model at successive CSW sessions.

"I attended the 2010 UN CEDAW conference in New York as part of the WNC delegation, and gave a presentation on Women in the Media to conference."

WNC Commissioner, Jan Floyd-Douglass

Women in Public Life

The WNC completed their Women in Public Life events programme during this year. The events aimed to encourage women to enter into public life. The WNC, funded by GEO, held 18 regional events between October 2009 and March 2010 in Greenwich, Central London, Oxford, Newcastle, Cambridge, Norwich, Birmingham, Coventry, York, Leeds, Sheffield, Plymouth, Bristol, Nottingham, Leicester, Manchester and Liverpool. Over 200 women attended. This is the first of its kind for WNC and from feedback received has proven to be a very positive initiative for both the GEO and WNC. Through these events, we hope to increase the number of women in the public appointments pipeline, to increase the number of successful applications and help meet government's targets for women's civic participation.

Invitations went to all Partners and the events were aimed at women whether they had held a public appointment previously or were just starting out. The events were tailored to raise the awareness of the impact women can make in public life, providing advice and practical tools to counter some of the obstacles women face in getting through the application process. The events were led by a WNC Commissioner and featured an inspirational guest speaker who held, or holds, a public appointment and also a GEO Ambassador who spoke about their experiences. The guest speakers used the opportunity to share their journeys and experiences of public life, how they overcame the barriers that many women face and also offered useful and insightful advice to participants.

Each event followed the same format and consisted of three interactive exercises based on where women generally face particular obstacles. The first exercise encouraged participants to identify the challenges for women entering public life and identify solutions. As an aid, the participants were provided with two documents explaining the qualities needed for public life and the challenges for women entering public life. The second exercise effectively provided advice and handy tips on how to complete an application form and given a practical toolkit to help the process. The toolkit included application form examples, a good practice guide and a top tips guide on application forms. The third exercise was a mock board meeting, aimed at building women's confidence for participation in meetings. Each participant had an optional role to play, an agenda and took away materials to help them take the first steps into public life.

From the feedback we received, 83% of the participants felt that the events were good or very good. As a result, one participant has been successfully appointed to a public body and there are many encouraging signs that more will follow.

"We discussed the barriers women might face, came up with strategies to overcome them, looked at specific issues around application forms and taking part in board meetings and heard from women who already had a public appointment. I have helped set up a working group on women in public life with other WNC commissioners and we have been working together with staff to learn from the success of these workshops in developing our plans for next year. "

WNC Commissioner, Mary-Ann Stephenson

Other Activity

Widowhood

Following discussion between Baroness Gould and Margaret Owen from Widows for Peace and Democracy, WNC agreed to run a simple online consultation with Partners on the attitudes towards and experiences of widows in the UK. This project was supported by WNC Commissioner Helen Jackson, Margaret Owen, Lady Fiona Hodgson and Daniel Barrow and Anna Clark from the Directorate. The resulting report of the responses will be published soon and disseminated to all relevant government departments.

WNC Single Equality Scheme

Currently, all public bodies are required to comply with the disability, gender and race equality duties. WNC were keen to take this further into a Single Equality Scheme and extend it to cover all equality strands: age, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender identity and socio-economic status, as well as other communities of disadvantage such as migrants, travellers and caregivers. This scheme contains actions in all of these areas and is designed to be consistent with our mission to promote equality for women through dialogue and demonstrate our commitment to mainstreaming equality into everything we do.

The draft scheme was developed through discussions with staff and Commissioners, following published guidance and with regard to the schemes of EHRC and GEO. Following agreement of the draft Scheme by Commissioners in the summer of 2009, WNC staff undertook a pilot exercise applying the Scheme to all our programmes of work during September-December 2009. We reviewed progress in January 2010 and have used those findings to strengthen and improve elements of the Scheme.

From February to March 2010, for the first time, the WNC conducted an informal public consultation with its Partners and the wider public to gather their views on the revised Scheme. We particularly invited the involvement of disadvantaged groups whose concerns this scheme is designed to address. The final scheme includes an Action Plan and Delivery Document which will inform implementation of the scheme. WNC Deputy Director Susan Green and WNC Commissioner Adele Baumgardt have been appointed to lead on the delivery of the scheme and take forward the action plan.

→ Conclusion

This has been another year of high activity for WNC. With a new Board of Commissioners in place, WNC have been able to initiate and consolidate work areas that have engaged an unprecedented and diverse range of Partners and other stakeholders. Highlights have been the work and consultations on the Equality Bill, the All Partners' Conference to ascertain the Partners' priorities over the next two years, the 17 Women in Public Life and five International events which gave practical advice to women, WNC's 40th birthday and in particular, the focus groups that highlighted the need of more marginalized, particularly BME women. We were delighted that so many other Governments have sought the WNC's expertise and that we have been able to deliver a unique product to them. We look forward to bringing our unique abilities to Government Departments in the future.

The focus groups in particular have enabled WNC to really drill down into the individual experiences of women who are traditionally hard to reach and hard to hear, using our expertise and credibility with the sector and the willingness of Government to include those voices in the way it forms policy. In particular, we have been able to use the primary evidence of the focus groups to directly inform the provision of services around VAW and the NHS to make them more responsive and take into account the needs of women. We have framed these firmly within the provisions and contexts of the Gender Equality Duty and the international instruments as well as using the evidence more broadly to demonstrate clearly the state of women's inequality in the EHRC's Triennial Review, specifically highlighting the experiences of Gypsies and Travellers, disabled women and asylum-seekers who often have little realization of their human rights. We have mainstreamed many of these issues into our everyday work and used them as a basis for our work plan for the coming year. This has also enabled us to diversify further the WNC Partnership base, particularly with BMER organizations and with other non-mainstream organisations such as the IT industry resulting in an overall increase of 17% in WNC Partnership over the year.

This year, more than any other, we have gathered and given women's views to Government through publishing eight reports, including "*What's Beijing Got To Do With Me?*" giving Partners' views on the twelve critical areas in the Beijing Platform for Action to inform CSW 54. Uniquely, we were also able to share developments and information on equality legislation, the Gender Equality Duty and all the international instruments with our Partners through the 100 events this year and through our working groups enabling women to use the equality mechanisms as fully as possible. This also allows us to pass on case studies and experiences to policy makers and Government. We have done this over a broad range of legislation, consultations, international events and statements including ad hoc calls from Government for information or views. We look forward to expanding on this 'capacity building' particularly in the international arena next year.

The Equality Bill allowed us to demonstrate our strengths and reach both in Partner consultation and to engage effectively and constructively with officials working on legislation through a time-limited Commissioner sub group and a roundtable with Ministers. Through useful discussions, Commissioners were able to lay out concerns raised by Partners to Government but also hear directly from officials why proposals had been formed in a particular way. The WNC Position Paper, based on the consultation responses from Partners, kept pace with the Bill, shadowing its developments. We were able to be responsive with the Position Paper making it current and accessible. We regularly updated Partners on the Bill and through them, WNC was able to give to Government and Parliamentarians a clear view on what women wanted to see in the Equality Bill. Partners' issues were raised in debates and captured in Hansard. Work on the Equality Bill has crystallized for us how nearly all aspects of inequality affect women

and how women feature heavily in nearly all the protected, equality grounds.

Our strength comes from our Partners, their expertise and the speed with which they can respond is often breathtaking. In the Coroner's and Justice Bill, Partners had concerns about the clause ensuring that infidelity alone cannot provide a defence to murder, and Baroness Gould also wrote a submission to the Scottish Parliament Justice Committee in support of proposed legislative amendments that challenge demand for prostitution. Both of these submissions were turned round within a day and received positive feedback. We have also been able to respond quickly and proactively to Partners' concerns by setting up time-limited working groups like the VAW funding group and the Women's Safety and the Olympics Group to assess the impact of certain issues and engage the sector as effectively as possible with Government and other stakeholders.

We have also worked hard to improve the internal mechanisms and communications. Both the stakeholder survey and the single equality scheme have enabled us to look closely at how we do business and why. We are taking both of these forward to inform the work we do in the next year and we will be addressing gaps in representation. The list at the end of this report gives an indication of the breadth of WNC Partners' interests and we are proud that we have such a rich and diverse Partnership which enables us to represent - and put Government in touch with - such a wide variety of views.

A partner and Commissioner priority for 2009-2010 has been the consolidation of the WNC's unique four nations status. The appointment of Commissioners in 2008, including a Welsh Commissioner during 2009, has strengthened links with women's grassroots organisations and umbrella bodies and institutions representing women's interests in Scotland, Wales and in Northern Ireland.

Input into a wide range of national mechanisms to influence strategic decision-making which have been underpinned by a series of events across the four nations, has increased both visibility and representation and enabled women's voices to feed into national and international debate. The WNC intends to build on these important links during 2010-2011 with an invigorated outreach programme and increased consultation to add to the diversity of national Partners and to work towards our clear mandate from Partners at our Conference: Violence against Women, Ways to make Equality Happen (national and international mechanisms), Human Rights, Women in the Economy and Women in Decision Making.

We continue to talk to women across the world about the WNC model of working and this year as well as presenting to visiting delegations, we have been to the White House and taken Partners to the American Embassy to share good practice. We know we have several replicas globally and more on the way.

It has been an unprecedented year for meeting stakeholders and gathering in Partners' thoughts and concerns through the All Partners' Conference, online consultations and coupled with a steep increase in Partnership, particularly amongst under-represented groups and the four nations, we can be more confident than ever that we are in touch with the views of Partners. We will work to improve this representation across the UK and to be as responsive to Partners and to Government as possible as we all work towards a better and more equal society.

Results of the VAW Focus Group consultations

The aim of these extensive consultation exercises throughout 2009/10 was to enable women and girls who might not otherwise engage in consultation processes have their voices heard by government in the development of national policy and strategy to end violence against women and girls. Throughout these focus groups, we found that almost all women we spoke to had little trust or confidence in statutory services; they said consistently they felt excluded, isolated and rejected from services and recounted numerous examples of being told their experiences didn't 'count', that they weren't believed and being made to feel that they didn't matter.

In contrast, women spoke about the crucial role specialist, independent VAW women's organisations played in their recovery from the abuse and in preventing further violence from occurring. We found that where there is good practice in responding to violence against women, women and girls felt valued confident and safe, felt that their human rights were being realised and that they were able to participate more safely and effectively in their community.

The findings and recommendations from these focus groups will continue to be publicised widely and dissemination has included, for example, presentations and reports to various government departments and Ministerial meetings, local multi-agency Partnerships and fora and at national conferences. We know that local VAW services and Partnerships have also used the evidence from these reports to successfully inform service and strategy development and review on a local level, within Local Strategic Partnerships and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

WNC is committed to reviewing progress regularly on state action to address violence against women and girls across the UK against the recommendations made by women and girls with whom we consulted. Our particular thanks go to the women and girls who gave up their time to take part in the focus groups, who spoke so honestly about what were often difficult and very personal experiences and who shared with us their thoughts and feelings about how services could be so much better in responding to women's needs. Their strength and perception was inspiring and we feel privileged to have been part of this consultation on how to improve responses to end violence against women and girls.

Current WNC Commissioners

Baroness Joyce Gould of Potternewton Chair

Adele Baumgardt
Ann Henderson
Bronagh Hinds

Commissioner for Wales Equalities, GED
Commissioner for Scotland
Commissioner for Northern Ireland

Baroness Haleh Afshar OBE
Beatrix Campbell OBE
Olivia Bailey appointed Nov 09
Jan Floyd-Douglass appointed Nov 09

BME Women, Women in the Economy
Equalities, EU and Commonwealth
Young women, Communications
Women on Boards and Public Life, WNC
Awareness

Brita Fernandez Schmidt
Helen Jackson CBE
Vivienne Hayes
Juliet Lyon CBE
Professor Liz Kelly CBE
Mary-Ann Stephenson
Sarah Veale CBE

Commissioner for international affairs
Equality Legislation, Women in the Economy
Women's Voluntary and Community Sector
Women in the CJS, Migration and Asylum
Violence Against Women
Women in Public Life
Equalities, Women in the Economy

Past Commissioners

Sabin Malik
Baroness Anita Gale of Blaenrhondda
Ranjana Bell

WNC Directorate staff 2009-10

WNC Staff

Barbara Ann Collins	Director
Susan Green P/T	Deputy Director, Policy
Mutanser Ashraf	Outreach and Partnership Manager
Eleri Butler VAW	Policy Manager
Anna Clark	Communications and Policy Adviser
Jennifer Cole	Policy Adviser: Women in Public Life
Shelly Dowrich	Policy Manager: International, Migration and Asylum, Honours
Sophie Howes	Policy Adviser: VAW, Equalities Bill, GED
Fiona Lamming	Commissioner Relationship, Finance and Office manager
Sylvia Namata P/T	Communications Adviser
Jo Stradling	VAW Focus Groups: Single Equality Scheme, Partners' Survey
Sarah Priest P/T	Policy Adviser: International, Migration and Asylum, Honours

Interns 09-10

Fabienne Jung
Colleen Main

Staff who left 09-10

Daniel Barrow Deputy Director, Corporate
Erin Brooks
Katharine McIntosh

→ Financial Report

WNC Budget for FY2009/2010

VAW Working Group	£4,740
Women's Advisory Working Groups	£4,740
UN and Europe	£15,600
Outreach/40th anniversary	£43,350
Equalities	£1,000
Public Life - <i>developed and funded by GEO</i>	£18,000
Commissioners & Board	£112,595
Staff/WNC Administration	£20,300
Rent and IT provision Eland House	£74,000
Salary Costs	£460,352
Total	£754,677

Draft Expenditure during FY2009/2010

VAW Working Group	£4,382.23
Women's Advisory Working Groups	£3,634.55
UN and Europe	£15,814.20
Outreach/40th	£50,835.69
Equalities	£1,023.73
Public Life	£16,217.60
Commissioners & Board	£ 85,962.03
Staff/WNC Administration	£14,208.97
Rent and IT provision Eland House	£74,000.00
Salary Costs	£454,377.07
Total	£720,456.07

Additional income from external projects

Home Office	£34,738
DoH	£70,068
Rape Review	£9,000
CPS Project	£9,790
Total	£123,596

→ WNC Partners (at March 2010)

1990 Trust
 4Children
 A Brave New World Ltd
 AAINA Asian Women's Group
 Abortion Rights
 ActionAid UK
 Active Learning Centre
 Adele Baumgardt Consulting
 Adept Community Development Agency
 African and Caribbean Women's Association (ACWA)
 African Community Centre Wales
 African Women's Council/African Families Foundation
 African Women's Welfare Association
 Age Concern England
 Age Concern Scotland
 Agency for Culture and Change Management
 Alabare Christian Care centres
 Al-Isharah Deaf Foundation
 Alliance for Choice
 Al-Nisa Association NI
 AMICUS Wales
 Amina the Muslim Women's Resource Centre
 Amnesty International UK - London
 Amnesty International UK - Northern Ireland
 Angel International GB
 APNA HAQ
 Arab International Women's Forum
 Ardmonagh Family and Community Group
 Ardoyne Women's Forum
 Army Families Federation
 Asian Women's Network
 AskPyramid
 Associated Country Women of the World
 Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services (AIMS)
 Association of Bah'i Women
 Association of Jewish Women's Organisations in the UK
 Association of Radical Midwives
 Association of Scottish Business Women
 Association of Teachers and Lecturers
 Association of Teachers and Lecturers Northern Ireland Branch
 Association of Teachers' Widows
 Association of Women Barristers
 Association of Women Solicitors
 Asylum Aid
 ATL (Yorkshire) Ltd
 Balliol Women's Society
 Ballybeen Women's Centre
 BAWSO Cardiff
 BCSWomen
 Bedford Centre for the History of Women
 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 Womens Aspirations Network
 BME Women's Forum
 Breast Cancer Care
 Brighton Women's Centre
 Bristol Fawcett
 Bristol Girl Geek Dinners
 Bristol Women's Forum
 British Association for Women in Policing
 British Association of Early Childhood Education
 British Association of Women Entrepreneurs
 British Federation of Women Graduates
 British Housewives' League
 British Muslims for Secular Democracy (BMSD)
 British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS)
 British Women Pilots' Association
 Brook
 Bryson Charitable Group
 BTCV
 Business and Professional Women Northern Ireland
 Business and Professional Women UK
 Business Ethics Ltd
 Cambridge Association for Women in Science and Engineering
 Cambridge Women's Resources Centre
 Campaign to End Rape and Truth About Rape
 Cardiff Council Women's Network Group
 Cardiff Women's Safety Unit
 Carers UK
 Catholic Women's League
 Central America Women's Rights (CAWN)
 Centre for Action on Rape & Abuse (CARA)
 Centre for Women & Democracy
 Chaste UK
 Children in Scotland
 Church Army Women's Day Centre
 Church of Scotland Guild
 Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
 Churches Together in England - Women's Coordinating Group

Chwarae Teg
 CIS'ters (Childhood Incest Survivors)
 City Women's Network
 Clarifi Consulting Ltd
 Colwyn Girl Guiding
 Combating Obesity Ltd
 Commonwealth Countries' League
 Communication Workers Union Women's
 Advisory Committee
 Community Development Foundation -
 European and International Unit
 Community Practitioners' and Health
 Visitors' Association
 Community Transport Association Ltd
 CONNECT
 Conservative Women's Organisation
 Co-operative Women's Guild
 Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic
 Abuse
 Cornwall Council
 Cruse Bereavement Care
 Cullyhanna Women's Group
 Cumbria Women First
 Cunliffe Centre
 Darfur Training Committee
 Daycare Trust
 Department for Transport
 Derby Women's Centre
 Derry Well Woman
 Early Education
 Eaves Housing
 Eaves Housing - Lilith and POPPY
 Research and Development
 EB Women
 Education For Choice
 Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)
 ELBWO Centre
 End Violence Against Women Coalition
 Endometriosis UK
 ENGENDER
 English Regions Equality & Human Rights
 Network
 Equality & Diversity Forum
 Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
 Equality Network
 Equality Now
 Equality South West
 EQUINOXCARE
 Ethnic Deaf
 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
 Foleshill Women's Training
 Footprints (UK)
 Footprints Women's Centre
 FORWARD (Foundation for Women's
 Health Research and Development)
 Forward Ladies
 Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths
 Foundation for Women's Art
 Friends Families and Travellers
 Full Time Mothers
 Fundango (UK) Ltd
 Funny Women Ltd
 Gender & Justice Policy Network
 Gender and Development Network UK
 Gender in Education
 Gender Statistics Users Group
 Genuine Empowerment of Mothers in
 Society
 GFS Platform for Young Women
 Gingerbread NI
 Girlguiding UK
 Girl's Brigade England and Wales, The
 Global Consultant on Public Health, FGM
 and Surgical reversals (GCPH)
 GMB Britain's General Union
 GMB Scotland Regional Rights Committee
 Grandparents Plus
 Greater London Authority
 Greenwich Chief Executives Social
 Inclusion and Justice Division
 Griot Institute
 HALT(Help, Advice & Law Team)
 Havant Women's Aid
 Haven Paddington
 Haven Whitechapel
 Hillcroft College
 Hindu Women's Network
 Home-Start Conwy
 Hope Medical and Educational Aid
 Hope Medical and Educational Aid
 Housing For Women
 Hull Women's Centre
 IMECE Turkish Speaking Women's Group
 IMKAAN
 Infertility Network UK
 Institute of Chartered Accountants for
 England and Wales - Narrowing the Gap
 Institute of our Lady of Mercy
 Intellect's Women in IT Forum
 Interimwomen Network
 International Alliance of Women
 International Council of Jewish Women

International Federation for Home Economics (UK Section)
 International Federation of University Women
 Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation
 Iranian Welfare Association
 Irish Congress of Trade Unions
 Islamic Foundation
 iVillage UK
 Jazz Heritage Wales
 Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
 Josephine Butler Society
 Junior League of London
 Just Media
 Justice for Women
 Justice for Women Leeds
 Kalayaan
 Kurdish Women's Rights Watch
 Labour Party
 Lambeth Young Women's Project
 Law Centres Federation/Lynn Evans
 League of Jewish Women
 LeicestHERDay Trust
 LGB Forum Cymru/Stonewall
 Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland
 London Borough of Islington Women's Equality Unit
 London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC)
 Low Pay Commission
 Making Tracks
 Mansfield and Ashfield Domestic Violence Forum
 Mansfield District Council
 Married Women's Association
 Mary Seacole Memorial Association
 Me, Actually
 Medical Women's Federation
 Men, Women and God
 Menopausal Research and Information Service
 Merched Y Wawr
 Methodist Women in Ireland
 Middlesex University
 Milton Keynes Women & Work Group
 Minerva - The Independent West Midlands Women's Alliance
 Mo Poole Ltd
 Mothers' Union
 Multi Cultural Resource Centre
 Mums in Science
 Muslim Voice UK
 Muslim Women's Network UK
 National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO)
 National Assembly of Women
 National Association of Diocesan Advisors in Women's Ministry
 National Association of Head Teachers
 National Association of Ladies' Circles (GB+1)
 National Association of Widows
 National Association of Women Pharmacists
 National Association of Women's Clubs
 National Black Women's Network
 National Board of Catholic Women of England and Wales
 National Childbirth Trust
 National Childminding Association
 National Consumer Council
 National Council of Women of Great Britain
 National Federation of Women's Institutes
 National Federation of Women's Institutes Wales
 National Women's Register (NWR) NETWORK
 Newham Asian Women's Project
 Nexus Institute
 North East Asian Women's Network
 North East Ecumenical Women's Group
 North London Cooperative Party Council
 Northern Ireland Childminding Association
 Northern Ireland Women's European Platform
 Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
 Object
 One Parent Families
 One Voice
 One World Action
 Operation Black Vote
 Opportunity Now
 Overseas Nurses Network
 Overseas Women's Club
 Oxfam GB
 Parentline Plus
 Peterborough Women's Centre
 Plymouth City Council
 Pre-School Learning Alliance
 Probus Women's Housing Society Ltd
 Professional Coaching and Development Consultancy
 Prowess
 Public and Commercial Services Union
 QED Management Systems
 Queen's University Student's Union
 Race on the Agenda (ROTA)
 RADAR
 Rainbo
 Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre (NI)
 Rape Crisis Federation of Wales and England
 RASASC (Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre)
 rba Equality & Diversity Limited
 Refuge
 Refugee Action
 Refugee Voice Wales

Relate
 Relatives and Residents Association
 RESPECT
 Rights of Women
 Rosa UK
 Royal College of Midwives
 Royal College of Nursing
 Royal College of Nursing Northern Ireland
 Royal College of Surgeons of England
 Royal Society of Chemistry - Women
 Members Network
 Safra Project
 Sahara Communities Abroad (SACOMA)
 Salford Women's Aid
 Salvation Army
 Savana
 School of Lifelong Learning
 Scientific Educational Federation in the
 State National Assembly (SEFIYA)
 Scottish Baptist Women's Fellowship
 Scottish Council for Voluntary
 Organisations (SCVO)
 Scottish Federation of University Women
 Scottish National Party - Women's Forum
 Scottish Pensioners Forum
 Scottish Women's Aid
 Scottish Women's Convention
 Scottish Women's Rural Institutes
 Shakti Women's Aid
 Sheffield Women's Forum
 Silent Impact
 Single Parent Action Network
 Sizanani Africa
 Smart Opportunities for Women
 Social Inclusion Unit (Women's
 Opportunities Unit)
 Social Vision
 Society of Women Writers and Journalists
 Solace Women's Aid
 Somaliland Women and Children Group
 Soroptimist International of Great Britain
 and Ireland
 South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis
 Centre
 South Wales Police
 South Wales Police Minority Support
 South Yorkshire Women's Development
 Trust
 Southall Black Sisters
 Southern & Eastern Region TUC Women's
 Rights Committee
 Sparkhill Asian Women's Association
 Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable
 Future
 Standing Conference of Women's
 Organisations
 Standing Together Against Domestic
 Violence
 Stonewall
 Stonewall Cymru
 Stonewall Scotland
 STUC Womens Committee
 Suffolk West Federation of Women's
 Institute
 Suzy Lamplugh Trust
 Swansea Chinese Community Co-op
 Swansea Women Asylum Seekers
 Support Group
 Tees Valley Women's Centre
 The Amar International Charitable
 Foundation
 The Galbraith Muir Consultancy Limited
 The Haven Wolverhampton
 The Judith Trust
 The King Edward VI School Morpeth
 The London Centre for Personal Safety
 The Miscarriage Association
 The National Group on Homeworking
 The NIA Project
 The Princes Trust
 The Royal British Legion Women's Section
 The Union of Catholic Mothers
 The Womens Group
 Tina Fahm Training Limited
 Toc H
 Townswomen's Guild - Northern Ireland
 Townswomen's Guilds
 Toynbee Hall
 Traad & Ballyronan Women's Group
 Trades Union Congress
 Training for Women Network
 Training Opportunities
 TULIP GROUP
 UK Asian Women's Conference
 UK Resource Centre for Women in
 Science Engineering Technology
 UK Sport
 UKJCW
 UNIFEM
 UNIFEM UK
 UNISON
 UNISON Wales
 Unite the Union
 Unite the Union T and G Section
 Unite the Union T and G Section Welsh
 Officer
 United Kingdom National Committee of
 UNIFEM Northern Ireland Branch
 United Nations Association UK
 United Reformed Church
 University of Bristol
 University Women's Club
 Violence Against Women Research Group
 vis-à-vis Research Consultancy Ltd.
 Voice UK
 WAITS (Women Acting in Today's
 Society)
 Wales Assembly of Women
 Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline
 Wales TUC Women's Committee

Wales Women's National Coalition
 (Women's Voice)
 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
 West Rhyl Young People's Project
 Westminster Women's Forum
 Widows for Peace Through Democracy
 Williams Arthur + Associates Limited
 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 - Institute of
 Physics
 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 Action Network Dorset
 Women's Advisory Council of United
 Nations Association UK
 Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland
 Women's Aid Federation Of England
 Women's Art Association
 Women's Budget Group
 Women's Business Centre
 Women's Business Development Agency
 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 (WEETU)
 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 interfaith Network (WIN)
 Women's International League for Peace
 and Freedom
 Women's Leadership Network, FE
 Women's Network for Peace and Freedom
 Women's Network of the Methodist
 Church
 Women's Networking Hub
 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
 Women's Views on News
 Workers' Educational Association
 Working Families
 World Association of Girl Guides and Girl
 Scouts
 World Federation of Methodist and Uniting
 Church Women
 YWCA England & Wales
 Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust
 Zonta International London II