PREM 19/3385

MT.

PART 2

CONFIDENTIAL FILING.

Women's National Commission and Policy towards Women.

HOME AFFAIRS

PT 1: May 1979

PT 2: February 1988

PREM 19/3385

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
~~22.2.88~~							
~~7.10.88~~							
~~8.11.88~~							
~~9.11.88~~							
~~6.12.88~~							
~~8.8.90~~							
~~13.8.90~~							
~~16.10.90~~							
~~4.1.91~~							
~~1.2.91~~							
~~8.2.91~~							
~~20/2/91~~							
~~27.3.91~~							
~~14.5.91~~							
~~30.5.91~~							
~~24.7.91~~							
~~12.9.91~~							
~~13.9.91~~							
~~4.10.91~~							
~~22.11.91~~							
27.11.91							
Parents							

PART 2 ends:-

OMCS to WEC 28 11 91

PART 3 begins:-

HMT to OMCS 4 12 91

010

APPOINTMENTS-IN-CONFIDENCE

CABINET OFFICE
OFFICE of the MINISTER for the CIVIL SERVICE

CF MTM 10/12 WEC 4/12

THE RT HON TIM RENTON MP
The Minister of State
Privy Council Office

Horse Guards Road
London SW1P 3AL
Telephone: 071-270 5929

C91/5197

William Chapman Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AA

28 November 1991

Dear William,

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Details of the number of public appointments held by women are included in the Cabinet Office's annual publication 'Public Bodies'. The 1991 edition is due out on 10 December.

We now have to hand details of the 1991 position which shows that the overall percentage for 1991 remains at 23.3%.

... I attach for your information a copy of the paper which the Public Appointments Unit (PAU) has circulated to the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues. The figures do of course reflect the position as it was in July (ie before the issue of the Prime Minister's minute).

The Annex to the PAU's paper is an update of Annex A to the Prime Minister's minute of 21 October.

Yours
Jayne

JAYNE COLQUHOUN
Assistant Private Secretary

APPOINTMENTS-IN-CONFIDENCE

MGWI 15/1/91

IN CONFIDENCE

MINISTERIAL GROUP ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

WOMEN & PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS
Note by the Public Appointments Unit

Details of the number of public appointments held by women are published each year in 'Public Bodies'. The 1992 edition will be published on 10 December but members of MGWI will wish to see an advance copy of the overall figures for each department.

2. A table in diagram form showing the total number of appointments as at 1 July 1991 and the percentage of these held by women is attached. The overall picture is disappointing in that it shows very little change from the 1991 position. This supports the decision taken earlier which resulted in the Prime Minister's minute to all Ministers instructing them to set objectives aimed at increasing the percentage.

3. Particular points to which we would draw attention are as follows:

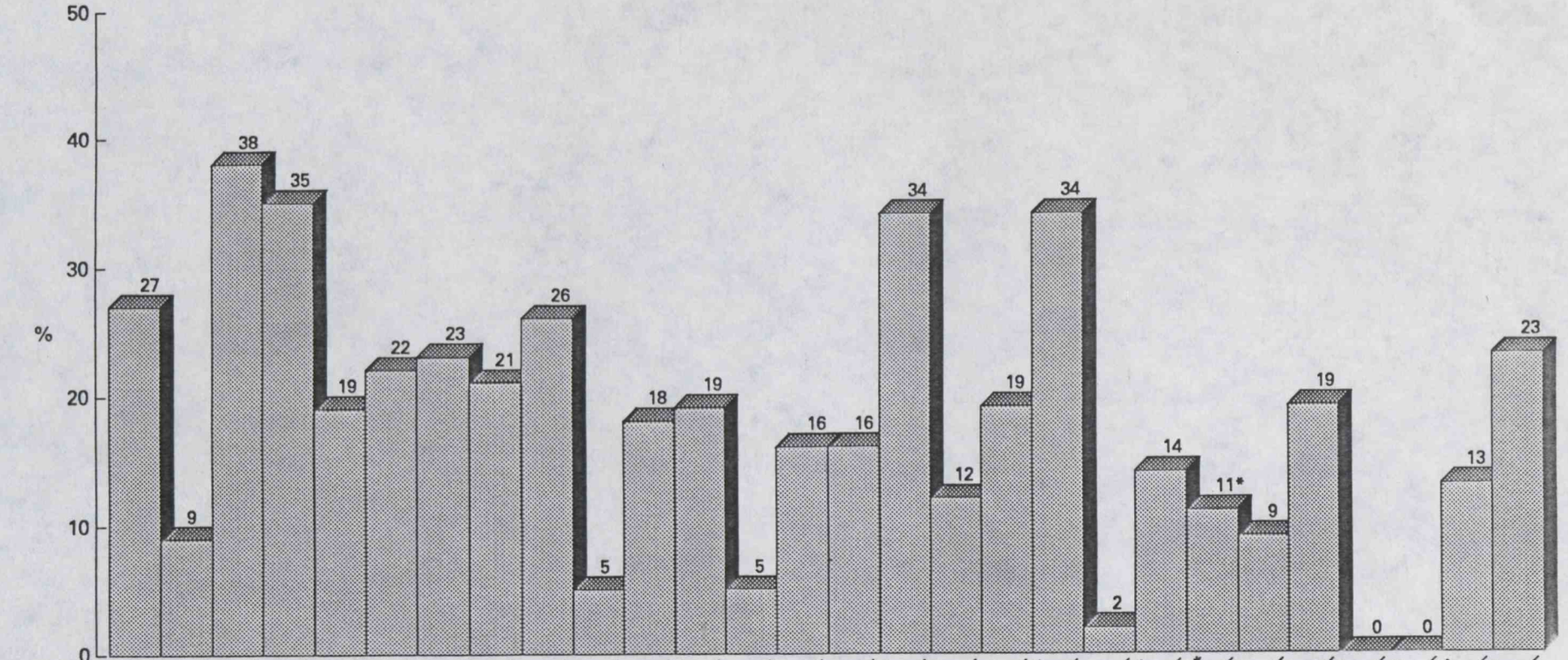
- the overall percentage remains at 23.3.%.
- the total number of public appointments has dropped by nearly 5,000 to 39,122.
- the percentage figure for the Department of Health has fallen by 5% to 26%. The number of health appointments has reduced due to changes in the health authorities. In addition the figures for 1991 do not include appointments made by Regional Health Authority Chairman since the department was unable to say how many of these appointments were held by women. (The figures have been included in previous years.)
- Other changes in individual departmental percentages are marginal; some show small increases whilst others have decreased by 1-2%.

4. The attached figures should be treated on an 'in confidence' basis until after 'Public Bodies' has been published.

Public Appointments Unit
27 November 1991

APPOINTMENTS IN CONFIDENCE

Percentage of Public Appointments Held By Women: 1991



DEPARTMENTS IN ORDER OF NUMBER OF APPOINTMENTS MADE	DSS	IR	HO	SO	DOE	DE	NIO	LCD	DH	MAFF	WO	DTI	MOD	DES	OAL	OFFER	DTP	FCO/ODA	OFWAT	DEn	HMT	Cab Off*	SCA	OFTEL	CSO	ECGD	COI	TOTAL
TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS	6405	4598	4374	4264	3371	3248	2508	2190	2104	1628	1261	716	517	416	412	212	201	170	122	101	95	72*	33	21	12	11	8	39122
TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS HELD BY WOMEN	1738	409	1661	1488	657	715	589	467	551	83	227	139	24	68	66	72	24	33	41	2	13	8*	3	4	0	0	1	9135

* Excludes Women's National Commission (52 members , all female)

APPOINTMENTS IN CONFIDENCE

Annex A

apl

MAFF

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HH

From the Minister

The Rt Hon Tim Renton MP
Minister of State
Privy Council Office
Office of the Minister for the Civil Service
Horse Guards Road
London
SW1P 3AL

27 November 1991

OPPORTUNITY 2000

In your letter of ~~22~~ October to Angela Rumbold, you invited departments to consider participating in their own right in Opportunity 2000. WILL REQUEST IF REQUIRED

The progress report on equal opportunities for women in the Civil Service which your department provided for the launch of Opportunity 2000 shows clearly the steps which my department has already taken in order to encourage greater opportunities for women, and we certainly subscribe to the underlying aims of the initiative. I am pleased to say, therefore, that we will be taking out individual membership.

I am copying this letter to those who received your letter of 22 October.

JOHN GUMMER

CCPD

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
2 MARSHAM STREET LONDON SW1P 3EB

My ref:

Your ref:

The Rt Hon Tim Renton MP
Minister of State
Privy Council Office
Horse Guards Road
LONDON
SW1P 3AL

26 NOV 1991

Dear Tim,

OPPORTUNITY 2000

You wrote to Angela Rumbold on 22 October inviting Ministers to consider participating in Opportunity 2000.

I very much welcome this initiative and am glad to say that the Department of Transport will be joining the campaign. The launch of Opportunity 2000 is timely: the Department has already achieved progress on a number of fronts including the introduction of career breaks, Keeping in Touch Schemes, and the promotion of alternative working patterns, particularly part-time working and job sharing. However these changes were essentially concerned with removing obstacles to equal treatment for women. More recently our focus has switched to a greater emphasis on measures to ensure that women staff are encouraged and enabled to achieve their full career potential. We had already begun to prepare an action plan for women and we will be glad to carry this forward in the context of Opportunity 2000.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, colleagues on the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues and to other Ministers in charge of Departments.

Yours ever,

MALCOLM RIFKIND

CAPU

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT

MSJ

PRIME MINISTER

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

file with OPEC

1. I refer to your minute of 21 October in which you asked Ministers to develop a strategy to bring about a real and lasting change to increase the proportion of women and members of the ethnic minorities holding public appointments. I agree that without a positive new strategy the pace of change will not be adequate and I have appointed Patrick McLoughlin to take on for my Department the responsibilities outlined in paragraph 5b and c of your minute.

2. As requested in your paragraph 5a, I have looked at my Department's record. At 12%, it is undeniably well below the average of 23% for all departments as shown in the chart at Annex A to your minute. There is obviously scope for considerable improvement here over the next 5 years but it would be unrealistic for me to think that by 1996 we could reach even the present level of departments at the top of the chart. For example, to achieve the Home Office figure of 37%, we would need to treble the number of female appointees over the next 5 years. With the best will in the world, I do not think it would be possible to reach that stage by 1996 because many posts do not come up for renewal for 5 years. I have to recognise that transport is still a male dominated industry, that where posts are advertised very few women respond (2 out of 67 in a recent case) and that there is little prospect in the foreseeable future of many full-time executive members being women.

3. Nevertheless, I am sure that it should be possible for us to increase the number of women in some areas. I intend to aim for a higher proportion of the non-executive members of the

nationalised industries to be women when suitable vacancies occur and I shall try to increase the number of women whenever possible on the advisory committees and other bodies. Even here though, the scope for progress by 1996 will be limited to some extent by the fact that nearly a quarter of the appointments included by the OMCS in the published chart for DTp are not appointments made by Ministers. We shall try to use powers of persuasion on the appointing bodies but I shall, of course, have no control over the outcome.

4. Against this background, and bearing in mind your view that appointments must continue to be made on the basis of aptitude and merit, I have concluded that an objective that would be both demanding but achievable would be the doubling of the percentage of appointments held by women over the next 5 years to bring the DTp total in the published chart to 24%.

5. You also suggested that there is scope for increasing the ethnic minority representation. I agree that the search for able candidates for appointment from the ethnic minorities must be rigorous. Although none of the DTp bodies or committees particularly impacts on ethnic minority communities, I intend that the Department's objective shall be the appointment of one member from the ethnic minorities to each body by 1996.

6. I am copying this to Angela Rumbold (Chairman of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues) and to Sir Robin Butler (Cabinet Office).

M R

MALCOLM RIFKIND

22 November 1991

Home Affairs: Women's
Nat[illegible]
Comm Pt 2

10 DOWNING STREET

William.

Your letter of 15.11 to OPAL asked for nominated ministers for Equal Opportunities in 3 Depts.

I've spoken to OPAL and they have confirmed:

DES Mr Eggar

FCO Mr Lennox-Boyd

DTP Mr McLaughlin.

A letter is on its way setting out all nominated Ministers.

Christopher

22/11

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

PRIME MINISTER

I refer to your personal minute (MS4/91) of 21 October about Public Appointments and Equal Opportunities and about your concern to increase the representation of women and ethnic minorities on public bodies, as well as enhance generally their respective contributions to public life.

My Ministerial colleagues and I had a very full discussion on this matter in September, and agreed to set targets (but not quotas) for female representation on all public bodies. These targets are 25% female representation on all public bodies by 31 March 1992; 30% by 31 March 1993, and 33% by 31 March 1994. To enable us to attain these targets, all Ministers and Departments have been issued with details of the 700 female names held by Central Appointments Unit (our equivalent of Public Appointments Unit) and my Ministerial colleagues and I will consider what further steps are required to achieve these goals.

While ethnic monitoring is not a contentious issue in Northern Ireland, nevertheless I think it is important to ensure that it does not become so. We shall therefore undertake ethnic monitoring of appointments in Northern Ireland.

Meanwhile I have asked Jeremy Hanley, our Departmental representative on MGWI, to spearhead this initiative within the Northern Ireland Office.

I am copying this minute to Sir Robin Butler.

P.B.

PB

22 November 1991

Minister of State

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

The Rt Hon Tim Renton MP
Minister of State
Privy Council Office
Horse Guards Road
LONDON SW1P 3AL

20 November 1991

Dear Tim,

OPPORTUNITY 2000

You wrote to Angela Rumbold and colleagues in other Departments on 22 October encouraging Departments to participate in the Opportunity 2000 initiative which was subsequently launched with the support of the Prime Minister.

As you know the Northern Ireland Civil Service, like the Home Civil Service, has a well developed equal opportunities policy supported by comprehensive monitoring arrangements, though in our case we monitor across the three dimensions of sex, religion and disability. In terms of the provision of flexible working arrangements of benefit to women (and men for that matter) the NICS is a broadly comparable position to the Home Civil Service. As in GB, however, women are still under-represented in the more senior levels in the Northern Ireland Civil Service and in various areas of work, notably in the professional and technical field, and further progress needs to be made.

Accordingly, we see merit in the NICS joining the Opportunity 2000 initiative, provided it is open to Northern Ireland employers, and we will be contacting Business In The Community to explore this possibility. I understand, also, that an equivalent initiative organised by Business In The Community in Northern Ireland is expected to be launched early next year and clearly the NICS, as a major employer with a good equal opportunities record, will wish to be associated with the Northern Ireland venture.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, to members of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues and Ministers in charge of Departments.

Warm regards.

Brian

BRIAN MAWHINNEY

27.11.
1131

cc PO

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

PRIME MINISTER

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

You minuted colleagues on 21 October about the need to increase the number of public appointments held by women and members of the ethnic minorities.

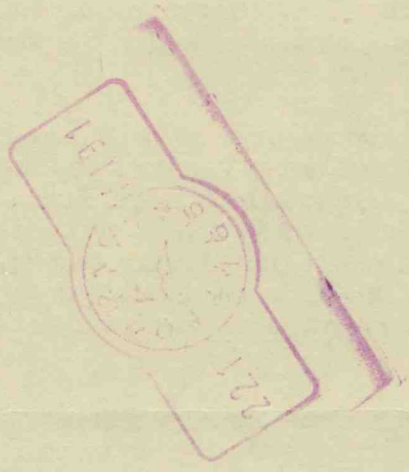
My Department's public bodies are mainly executive NDPBs, often with the number of board members limited by statute. My aim has been to keep boards to a manageable size for effective decision-making with board members who have private sector business experience to bring to bear on public sector management problems. Appointees to our major NDPBs, some with large expenditures, must have a record of achievement and the expertise and management skills for these tasks.

That said there is room to improve the network of who is available, particularly in the case of women and members of the ethnic minorities able to take on these tasks. My officials are looking urgently at ways to improve our performance.

I have asked Robert Key, my representative on the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues, to co-ordinate this, although all Ministers in the Department will need to be involved.

MH
19 November 1991

HOME AFFAIRS: WOMEN'S ISSUES Pt 2



CCPV

CABINET OFFICE
OFFICE of the MINISTER
for the CIVIL SERVICE

THE RT HON TIM RENTON MP
The Minister of State
Privy Council Office

Horse Guards Road
London SW1P 3AL
Telephone: 071-270 5929

file

C91/4997

The Rt Hon Tony Newton, MP
Secretary of State
Department of Social Security
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
LONDON SW1A 2NS

November 1991

M

with WEC?

OPPORTUNITY 2000

Thank you for your letter describing the good work your department is already doing with a view to achieving equality of opportunity for women, and indicating that you plan to join Opportunity 2000.

You say that a key element in achieving equality of opportunity is the provision of a suitable working environment. I am sure that this is right, and the existing Programme of Action for women of course includes a number of recommendations aimed at achieving this. I was pleased to see that your department has taken a range of initiatives in this area.

We shall, of course, be including similar recommendations in the new Programme for Action to be launched next spring. Meanwhile the sort of initiatives you are taking may, as you suggest, be helpful and appropriate targets for your department, and indeed others, to include when joining the Opportunity 2000 campaign.

Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, colleagues on the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues, Ministers in charge of departments and Sir Robin Butler.

TIM RENTON

c/home/colquhoun

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

15 November 1991

Thank you for your fax of 12 November reporting on the nomination of Ministers responsible for public appointments and equal opportunities. I should be grateful if you could chase up the Department of Education and Science, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department of Transport, if you have not already done so, and report back within the week on whether Ministers have now been nominated. If necessary, I could then send a "chasing" letter off from here.

WILLIAM CHAPMAN

Ms. Jayne Colquhoun,
Office of the Minister for the Arts

OLI

CC PM

The Rt. Hon. Peter Lilley
Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

→ CF

PA

The Rt Hon Tim Renton MP
Minister of State
Privy Council Office
Horse Guards Road
LONDON
SW1P 3AL

Department of Trade and Industry

Ashdown House
123 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6RB

Direct line
071-215 4440

DTI Enquiries
071-215 5000

13 November 1991

Dear Tim

OPPORTUNITY 2000

WITH WSC? I WILL REQUEST IF AGREED/GO

You wrote to Angela Rumbold on ~~22~~ October about this campaign and advising that the OMCS has taken out umbrella membership on behalf of the civil service. You invited Ministers to give consideration to their department joining in their own right. I am pleased to say that the Department of Trade and Industry has decided to do so.

We very much support the aims of Opportunity 2000. We believe we have to date achieved a great deal in the area of equal opportunities for women. Currently 7.5% of our employees work part-time, (overwhelmingly women and with a good spread through the grades), we have introduced a career break scheme and operate a holiday playscheme. We are also in the early stages of introducing homeworking and other employment flexibilities. We do not, however, wish to rest on our laurels and are aware that we must remain open to new ideas and initiatives. This is why we welcome the opportunity to add our name to the Opportunity 2000 campaign.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, colleagues on the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues and to other Ministers in charge of departments.

Yours ever

Peter

PE11213

Recycled Paper

URGENT cc Steve Byrd

MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

MINISTER FOR THE ARTS

Government Offices, Horse Guards Road, London SW1P 3AL

FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

Fax machine: 071-270 6026
Fax enquiries: 071-270 5918

Name of sender: JAYNE COLQUHOUN

Telephone number: 270 5929

Message: William, please see forlang meet. Those Depts left blank have promised to ring back with an answer, those "not yet appointed" I have urged to expedite!

To: WILLIAM CHAPMAN
NO 10.

Fax telephone number: 930 1419

NUMBER OF PAGES (excluding this sheet) 1

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT REQUIRED

NO ( ) YES (✓)

JUNIOR MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

MAFF	Baroness Trumpington
Ministry of Defence	Kenneth Carlisle
Department of Education and Science	
Department of Employment	Robert Jackson
Department of Energy	Colin Moynihan
Department of the Environment	Not yet appointed
Department of Health	Virginia Bottomley
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	
Home Office	Angela Rumbold
OMCS, OAL	Tim Renton
Northern Ireland Office	Peter Brooke
Scottish Office	Lord James Douglas-Hamilton
Department of Social Security	Michael Jack
Department of Trade and Industry	Not yet appointed
Department of Transport	
HM Treasury	Mrs Shephard
Welsh Office	Sir Wyn Roberts

TOTAL P.02

a PU

NBPM

ST 7/4

Prime Minister

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Thank you for your minute of 21 October 1991 about the need for the Departments to increase further the number of women and people from ethnic minorities holding public appointments.

As a direct employer of some 80,000 staff, my Department actively promotes equality of opportunities and implements the Civil Service Programmes for Action for Women and on Race. We carry this thinking forward to public appointments and the successful initiatives we have put in place mean that DSS already has more women holding public appointments than any other Department - some 27 per cent are held by women, although this is still well short of the 50 per cent in the population. Similarly our record of 2.8 per cent from ethnic minorities is progress, but short of the 4.1 per cent in the economically active population.

Nevertheless, we are committed to build upon our achievements and are determined to make additional advances in the position of women and ethnic minorities in this key area. I therefore welcome your approach and have asked Michael Jack, my representative on the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues, to take forward our strategy and provide the Department with a further impetus for progress.

TN

November 1991

TN

RA

H: Women

em.Renton

CC PO

Department of Employment
Caxton House, Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NF

Telephone 071-273 . . . 5803
Telex 915564 Fax 071-273 5821

Secretary of State

The Rt Hon Tim Renton MP
Minister of State
Cabinet Office
Office of the Minister for the Civil Service
Horse Guards Road
London
SW1P 3AL

30 October 1991

Dear Tim

OPPORTUNITY 2000

WILL REQUEST IF REQUIRED

Thank you for copying me your letter of 22 October to Angela Rumbold.

As you may now be aware, the Employment Department Group has joined the Opportunity 2000 campaign as an employer, and Sir Geoffrey Holland represented the Group at the launch. I ... attach a copy of the information about the Group which is being used in campaign publicity.

The aims of Opportunity 2000 are very much in accord with the emphasis of the Ten Point Plan for Equal Opportunities which I launched last March, and which encourages employers to develop their own action plans and to set challenging, ... achievable targets for progress. I am enclosing a Press Notice from that Launch for your information. I firmly believe that voluntary action by employers is the best and most appropriate way to move forward and I very much hope that the campaign will encourage other employers.

Officials here are liaising with OMCS and Business in the Community to consider whether the ED Group will be in the Civil Service umbrella organisation in the campaign.

100%
RECYCLED PAPER

Secretary of State
for Employment

A copy of this letter goes to the Prime Minister, to colleagues on the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues and to Ministers in charge of Departments.

Yours ever

Michael

MICHAEL HOWARD

EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT GROUP

The ED Group policy is to treat all job applicants and staff reasonably and fairly in respect of recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment and career progression. Equal opportunities is supported by top management and there is a dedicated equal opportunities section centrally, together with a network of Equal Opportunities Officers and Advisers throughout all sectors and regions. Equal Opportunities initiatives, some in place since 1984, include: part-time and other flexible working patterns; a career break scheme; childcare support and provision; a sexual harassment policy supported by a network of trained counsellors.

Each part of the ED Group has set the strategic framework to increase the representation of women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities at more senior grades by 1996.

Because of the nature of the ED Group centrally-set goals are not meaningful or practicable. All Equal Opportunity Programmes aim to increase the representation of women at key senior grades by 1996 and interim stages. Most include numerical goals.

Regional Directors will report on Equal Opportunity programmes to the Chief Executives of the ED Group sectors, who in turn report annually to the Permanent Secretary.

Extensive monitoring is carried out to check the level of representation of women at all grades quarterly and and annually in order to check progress on the various initiatives.

EMPLOYMENT
DEPARTMENT

Department of Employment
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London SW1H 9NF

Press Office (24 hrs) 071-273 6950
Public enquiries 071-273 6969
Exchange 071-273 3000

PRESS NOTICE

92/91

18 March 1991

TEN POINT PLAN FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ENDORSED BY EMPLOYMENT SECRETARY

Employment Secretary, Michael Howard today urged employers to adopt a ten-point plan to make equal opportunities a natural and integral part of management practice.

Speaking at the first national conference to be hosted jointly by the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality, Mr Howard said:

"An equal opportunities policy is not only good management. It also ensures business success through the effective use of our key resource - people.

"For any policy to be effective, there must be an action plan to put the policy into operation. There are ten steps to follow:

- develop an equal opportunities policy
- review your recruitment,selection and promotion procedures regularly
- draw up clear and justifiable job criteria
- set an action plan, including targets
- monitor progress in achieving your objectives
- train staff who recruit and select employees
- consider your organisation's image

- use flexible working including provision of special equipment and facilities for the disabled
- link up with local schools and community groups
- use pre-recruitment training to prepare potential applicants for selection tests and interviews.

Mr Howard also emphasised the need to create the right environment for the promotion of equal opportunities.

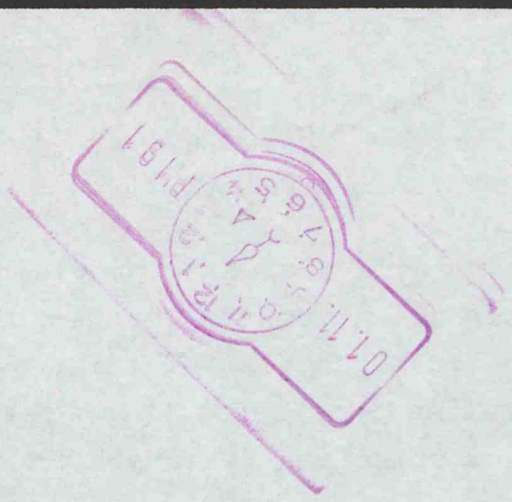
He said:

"Legislation cannot provide the whole answer in the promotion of equal opportunities. Employers must take the lead since they hold the keys to jobs and therefore to equal opportunities. Commitment from those who set policy and make decisions is the first step towards ensuring that all job applicants and existing employees are treated fairly on the strength of their abilities and that the best people get the jobs.

"For any commitment to be effective there must be a plan to put it into practice. The promotion of equal opportunities is like any other function - it needs firm and positive management if it is to be successful.

"Fair treatment between people regardless of sex, race, disability or age is fundamental to a healthy society. Discrimination is divisive and destabilising. It is wasteful of resources and bad for business.

"It is in the interests of employers as well as individuals to put equal opportunities where it belongs - at the top of the agenda."



SUBJECT MASTER

Filed on:

CONFIDENTIAL

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

25 October 1991

Dear Jay,

WOMEN'S ISSUES

The Prime Minister discussed women's issues with Mrs. Rumbold yesterday evening. Mrs. Sarah Hogg and Miss Carolyn Sinclair (No.10 Policy Unit), Mrs. Judith Chaplin (Prime Minister's Political Secretary) and Mr. Gus O'Donnell (Head of Information) were also present.

Mrs. Rumbold made a number of suggestions about the Prime Minister's draft speech for Opportunity 2000 (which have since been taken on board in an amended version). After discussion, the Prime Minister decided that he wanted the speech to make clear at the start that he was speaking as an Opportunity 2000 employer, and that it should include a brief list of the policy decisions taken under his Premiership and Chancellorship which have helped to benefit women. The speech should also emphasise four points in particular:

- Mrs. Rumbold's Network Initiative;
- his wish that Departments should sign up to Opportunity 2000;
- the new Public Appointments Initiative; and
- that Mrs. Rumbold would report direct to him on women's issues.

The Press should be briefed on the basis of this four-point initiative which would help to respond effectively to the expectations which had been generated about the speech.

The Prime Minister would of course wish to speak to the Home Secretary about Mrs. Rumbold's new reporting line (he will now do so on Sunday).

The Prime Minister asked Mrs. Rumbold for her view of the priority areas. Mrs. Rumbold said that the following were particularly important:

- a small amount of resources for child care would make a disproportionately large difference to many women's lives, especially in terms of providing more care after

school, and school holiday schemes. Employers should be encouraged to run these, using existing school buildings;

- part-time work was specially important to women. Employers should recognise this by allowing for more flexible working patterns;

- it was already clear from the Network Initiative that working conditions for part-time workers, and pensions, were of considerable concern to many women;

- "ordinary" women needed to be listened to more;

- the Government had already done much, and this needed to be publicised more effectively.

The Prime Minister commended Mrs. Rumbold on the Network Initiative. Mrs. Rumbold should take every opportunity to publicise this as well as the Government's other actions. The Network could be a valuable source of guidance for the Government on future policy direction. Mrs. Rumbold should ask Central Office to create opportunities for her to publicise the beneficial effects of Government policies for women.

The Prime Minister asked Mrs. Rumbold for a note on the Network and the concerns which it was revealing.

I am copying this letter to Paul Pugh (Home Office), Janette Sinclair (Department of Employment) and Vaughan Rees (Office of the Minister for the Civil Service).

Yours sincerely,

William

WILLIAM CHAPMAN

Ms. Joy Hutcheon,
Home Office.

PRIME MINISTER

MRS. RUMBOLD'S REPORTING LINE

You want to speak to the Home Secretary on Sunday evening about your proposed announcement, in the Opportunity 2000 speech, that Mrs. Rumbold will report direct to you.

You may want to put this in the following context:

- the concerns which Mrs. Rumbold's Network Initiative is already throwing up are bringing home even more forcefully than before how diverse those concerns are, and how they permeate every aspect of Government policy; this reinforces the case for the broadest possible overview of women's issues;

- the new reporting line will help the Government to highlight the way in which women's issues affect the whole of Government, and cannot be ghettoised. It will help you contrast the Government's sensible approach even more convincingly with the Labour Party's policy for a Ministry for Women;

- it will help to meet expectations about your speech, generated by the overwritten accounts of your interview with the Today newspaper;

- you will want Mrs. Rumbold to report to Kenneth Baker too, and you will continue to value his advice on these matters just as before.

(Incidentally, although the first Network meeting will not take place until 5 November, the process of setting the Network up has already prompted about 500 letters from women to Mrs. Rumbold.)

WER

WILLIAM CHAPMAN

25 October 1991

jd c:\wpdocs\home\rumbold

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

cc Carolyn Sinclair

WOMEN'S ISSUES

You are seeing Angela Rumbold tomorrow evening to discuss women's issues. I believe strongly that we should not hype up "women" as a great electoral issue. There are two reasons for that: the first is that it would not please our supporters, male or female, and would prevent us from having a distinctive stance from the Labour Party; and the second is that we could not deliver.

This does not mean that there are not many things that we can do and for which we should get publicity. For example, we have not got enough publicity for the things we have already done such as independent taxation and the abolition of CRT. The Civil Service itself is an excellent employer and already women are coming through the system whose combination of career and family life are models of their kind. This is not only at the high flyer level, but also at more junior levels.

Huge steps have been made in women's education and training and many private sector companies are now looking at their working patterns to fit in with women's working lives. This can be shown by the difference which women of my age faced 25 years ago compared with the choice and attitudes facing a 25 year old woman today.

There are additional things that can be done in this limited way, such as your initative on public appointments and the work of Opportunity 2000, work with the CBI to encourage employers to think of these issues and, after the election, beefing up the Ministerial Group's efforts to remove barriers to women's work by giving it more seniority and moving it to the Department of Employment. But basically, greater equality for women is a function of time.

There is only one way in which women's circumstances could be changed fundamentally fast, and that is by a massive increase in child care. This is of course the easy way in which other parties can gain votes, because they do not have to consider the cost. "Affordable childcare for all who wish it" is an easy slogan. Those women who want it are pleased and those women who choose to stay at home when their children are young are pleased because they feel they have a choice and do not think that the money has had to come from somewhere.

I do think that we have a mess on tax relief on childcare. As you remember, I was always in favour of increasing Child Benefit, which gives help to all families, rather than trying to buy the women's vote by giving tax relief on childcare. The changes in Child Benefit in this year's Budget were excellent, and again we should try to get more publicity for them. However, by giving tax relief on workplace nurseries, we now have the anomaly that if you lug your child to work with you, or if your employer goes to the effort of arranging childcare provision, you get tax relief, but your employer cannot buy care for you in other nurseries without it being a benefit in kind. I know that the Treasury frightened you off extending it by dire threats of huge costs, but if that had come about we would have achieved the objective of a large increase in childcare provision.

I do not actually think the wider tax relief would have increased employer provision sustantially very fast.

As always, the Treasury was probably more worried that loopholes would be opened up which would benefit some people rather than looking at the likely consequence and whether the objective would be achieved. I know they would have argued that women would have got their employers to pay the children's grannies who were looking after the children anyway. But then the granny would have had to declare the income, so it is swings and roundabouts.

I wish we had never gone down this route, but having got this far I think we should now give tax relief on all employer provided childcare so that when an employer provides childcare there is no cost to the employee. The justification would be the need to increase the supply, which is important for all women. However, that is a side track, as it is obviously not something to be discussed at the present time.

What is needed at the present time is a clear statement of what the Government's position is and publicity for that position. It is for the Government to take a neutral attitude to whether or not women work, to remove barriers which prevent them from working when they choose to do so, to encourage employers to make their return and their employment easier, and in its own role as employer to do so. You need all your Ministers saying this and advertising what has already taken place, not just the female Ministers.

And to cheer you up, although we have lost our lead over Labour (1987) with women voters, our share hasn't changed substantially (see attached table).

JUDITH CHAPLIN
23 October 1991

Voting Intention

	All Women		Women 18-34	
	1987 General Election* %	August 1991* %	1987 General Election* %	August 1991** %
Conservative	43.0	42.0	34.5	35.5
Labour	32.0	39.0	37.0	42.0
Liberal Democrats	23.0	15.0	26.0	13.0
Others	2.0	4.0	2.5	9.5
Conservative Lead:	+11	+3	-2.5	-6.5

* MORI figures ** Gallup figures

(i) Since the 1987 General Election our lead among women (based on polling evidence) has fallen from 11% at the General Election to 3% in August 1991.

The level of our support has remained almost unchanged - 43% at the 1987 General Election and 42% in August 1991. Labour support has increased largely at the expense of the Liberal Democrats.

(ii) Among women in the 18-34 age group Labour, on the basis of polling evidence, had a small (2.5%) lead at the 1987 General Election - by August 1991 they had increased this lead to 6.5%. As with women as a group, our support remained largely unchanged (34.5% at the General Election - 35.5% in August 1991) but Labour support increased again largely at the expense of the Liberal Democrats.

(iii) There has been a significant increase in support for the Green Party among women in the 18-35 age group.

PRIME MINISTER

MEETING WITH ANGELA RUMBOLD: 24 OCTOBER

You are meeting Mrs. Rumbold tomorrow, briefly, to discuss at her request:

- Women's issues;

- Asians in the Party.

From your point of view, the main purpose of the meeting should be, as Carolyn Sinclair has suggested, to decide how to put flesh on what you said in your "Today" interview.

I attach the following papers:

- a note from Carolyn Sinclair suggesting a number of points for you to put to Mrs. Rumbold;

- a note from Judith Chaplin on the need to get greater publicity for what the govenrment has already done to benefit women. This includes the need for all Ministers, including your male colleagues, to give greater priority to this in their speeches (should Mrs. Rumbold send a note round urging this, including an endorsement from yourself);

- your recent minute to Ministers in charge of departments initiating new steps to get more women (and more members of the ethnic minorities) off the great and good list into actual appointments, should you wish to refer to it;

- a revised draft of your speech to Opportunity 2000 which I have sent across to Mrs. Rumbold and on which you may wish to get her reactions. The speech is not yet completely finalised. Comments are still coming in from Departments, It probably needs shortening. I will put a further version into your box tomorrow night which can take account of your

discussion with Mrs. Rumbold if necessary. You will then be able to see a final version over the weekend

Gus has also suggested that the Secretary of State for Employment should see whether TECS can actually seek out mothers to let them know of the available opportunities to return to work. You may wish to float this with Mrs. Rumbold.

Women's Hour would like to do a short interview with you on Monday before your speech which will be broadcast that morning. Press Office are keen for you to do this. It would be a good opportunity to set the speech in context and reach a wide audience.

As to Asians, no-one knows quite what Mrs. Rumbold wants to raise. But it will probably be sufficient to listen and say you will consider any points she makes. You are of course attending a dinner for Conservative Asians on 28 November (and also unveiling the Nehru statue later this year).

Content to give a short interview to Women's Hour on Monday 28 October?

WEC

WILLIAM E. CHAPMAN

23 October 1991

c:\home\rumbold (kk)

MR CHAPMAN

23 October 1991

cc Mrs Chaplin

WOMEN'S ISSUES: MEETING WITH ANGELA RUMBOLD 24 OCTOBER

I think we need to use this meeting to decide how we put flesh on what the Prime Minister said in Harare. The press reports (attached) were highly coloured.

- We have the Prime Minister's speech to Opportunity 2000 on Monday. This will formally announce the public appointments initiative.

- We have Mrs Rumbold's advisory network of meetings with women across the country. The Prime Minister's speech gives this initiative a puff. But I am not clear that it is off the ground yet. We need to press Angela Rumbold to get on and organise good publicity for this exercise.

- We seem to be launching a new programme of action on women in the Civil Service, but I am not clear what it amounts to. Not, I suspect, targets for the number of women in top jobs (which is the impression given in the press reports). The Civil Service tend to be rather low key and defensive - quite unnecessarily, because they are a good employer of women. Angela Rumbold should be asked to liaise rapidly with Tim Renton on presenting what the Civil Service is doing effectively - including trumpeting the fact that Civil Service Departments are signing up to Opportunity 2000.

- Angela Rumbold should be asked if there are any specific initiatives, arising from the work of her group, which could be highlighted in the coming months. Small changes

to rules and regulations making them more helpful to women would show sensitivity, and with luck could be costless.

- A rather delicate point: Angela Rumbold really must adopt a higher profile on women's issues, particular now. She has appeared less effective than Virginia Bottomley on women in the NHS (see attached press release).

CAROLYN SINCLAIR

527.CS

D
Pl. copy all be attached to Wilkin
C

BUSINESS in the COMMUNITY

Ms Carolyn Sinclair
Policy Unit
10 Downing Street
London SW1

23 October 1991

Dear Carolyn,

OPPORTUNITY 2000

I enlcose further information for the launch of Opportunity 2000 on 28 October:

- draft to date of Lady Howe's speech and of the material provided to Peter Davis for his presentation

- latest draft guest list

- guest programme

- Q & A briefing on Opportunity 2000

I spoke to your secretary this afternoon and I hope you will agree with us that it would be more sensible to get the Prime Minister's personal programme to you after the walk-through of the event with Lady Howe and Peter Davis this evening. I will send it round tomorrow morning - I hope at no inconvenience to you or any of your team.

I hope this is helpful and that you will let me know if you would like us to provide any further details.

Yours sincerely,

Jane

Jane Kershaw
Programme Director

President: HRH The Prince of Wales
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Chief Executive: Stephen O'Brien · Registered Charity No: 297716
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OPPORTUNITY 2000
TOWARDS A BALANCED WORKFORCE

LAUNCH OF OPPORTUNITY 2000

28 October 1991

In the presence of the Rt Hon John Major MP

at

[Venue to be advised]

OUTLINE PROGRAMME

10.30	Reception	
11.00	Keynote presentations	
	Lady Howe	*Chairman of Business in the Community's Women's Economic Development Target Team*
	Peter Davis	*Chairman, Reed International* *Deputy Chairman, Business in the Community*
	The Rt Hon John Major MP	
11.30	Reception - to be joined by the Prime Minister	
12.15	Reception ends	

The Launch of Opportunity 2000 has been made possible by the practical help and financial contributions of all companies and organisations which have committed to the Campaign. Particular thanks for today's event to Barclays Bank, the BBC, BT, Inland Revenue, Kingfisher and Reed International.

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY

LAUNCH OF OPPORTUNITY 2000

<u>Suggested basis for presentation by Peter Davis</u> (8 minutes)

NB FINAL SPEECH POINTS TO BE PREPARED BY REED INTERNATIONAL

Summary of Key points:

- business arguments
- what the Opportunity 2000 approach entails
- some key messages from Mission Statement
- the power of just the first step - getting the information
- calling on other chairmen and chief executives to join Opportunity 2000

Elaboration of key points

One of the greatest challenges facing business today is to attract and retain good staff.

All of us on the Target Team have become involved in this initiative for stong business reasons - not for philanthropic or idealistic notions of equality. Everyone who joined at the beginning has stayed involved. They have made time for the many meetings (more than Lady Howe first asked us to commit to) despite difficult trading conditions for many of us.

We believe in Opportunity 2000 and its rationale:

- there's an increasing need for and availability of women's skills

- we must not ignore the potential women have to offer nor throw away the investment we have made in their development

What is the Opportunity 2000 approach?

a) it's an active ongoing programme of measurable improvement in each participating organisation phased over several years - changing culture takes time but can be measured, like most other things.

b) it's the development of challenging but achievable goals, starting from where we are in our own organisation and assessing our future needs.

c) it's a public statement of commitment to our organisation's specific Opportunity 2000 goals and publication of our companies' progress.

The Target Team believes the combination of these key elements will have the effect of a well-known lager - enabling equal opportunities for women to reach parts of organisations that good practice to date has not yet touched.

- Key messages from Mission statement

From the breakfast meetings, the Target Team developed several credos as a basis for Opportunity 2000 - these are key themes in the Mission Statement: we believe that

- firstly, every company joining this initiative starts from a different place. Some have a large proportion of women in their employ; other with very few. We cannot set arbitrary standards for all companies to aspire to. Each organisation must judge its goals for itself, depending on its own business.

- secondly, we must find a way through which is very practical, vey reasonable, very sensible - free of buzz words and crusading jargon.

- we must have a single focus - women at work, women in management. We must encourage businesses to focus on this issue very single-mindedly.

We are under no illusion about the size of the task - tackling issues to do with the roles of women and men ivolves dealing with a fundamental psychology that is deep-rooted in both organisations and individuals. Employers cannot simply sign up to this initiative unless they mean to follow through their commitment very substantially.

Half of this battle is to get people to sign up to Opportunity 2000. The brave step is to put it on their agenda and treat it as a very important crucial item which is an integral part of future business success. Once you've lit the fuse, the momentum of the movement will carry the company forward.

Most companies have told us that their first requisite is to gather information on the profile and extent of women already employed. The impact of this alone should not be underestimated as it is both a challenge and a catalyst for many organisations. Information and the awarenss it brings in itself develops a momentum - certainly, we have found at Reed that, as a highly devolved, extensive operation, while we knew how many women we employed, it took us 6 months to find out how many women are in management positions. Knowing that women make up 60% of our workforce and 37% of our management has already started a chain reaction.

It's not just the process of drawing up goals but of making them stick at the middle management and strategic business unit level. As John Birt at the BBC relates, the very process of setting goals, of whatever type, also adds its own momentum - for some organisations, the detail of what they have set themselves may not be as important as the very fact of having goals and agreeing to publish them.

The research done for us by Ashridge showed that the management of corporate change is most effective when the leaders of companies adopt a position on the proposed change and carry it through with conviction. This is why our objective is to reach chairpeople and chief executives, encourage them to join this initiative and follow it through.

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY

LAUNCH OF OPPORTUNITY 2000

INITIAL REMARKS BY LADY HOWE

I'M DELIGHTED TO WELCOME YOU ALL TODAY TO THE LAUNCH OF OPPORTUNITY 2000. THERE ARE OVER 200 MAJOR COMPANIES AND ORGANISATIONS HERE, REPRESENTED AT THE MOST SENIOR LEVEL. THIS IN ITSELF REFLECTS THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR INTIATIVE TO THE HEALTH OF OUR RAPIDLY CHANGING SOCIETY.

THE AIM OF OPPORTUNITY 2000 IS TO INCREASE THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE WORKFORCE - AT ALL LEVELS.

THE CASE WE'RE MAKING IS STRICTLY A BUSINESS ONE, AIMED UNSENTIMENTALLY AT EMPLOYERS. COMPETITION FROM EUROPE, CHANGING EMPLOYMENT TRENDS, SKILLS SHORTAGES - WOMEN ARE PART OF THE SOLUTION. (DID YOU KNOW THAT THIS YEAR FOR THE FIRST TIME THERE ARE LIKELY TO BE MORE WOMEN UNDERGRADUATES THAN MEN?)

I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU A LITTLE ABOUT THE BACKGROUND TO OPPORTUNITY 2000.

THE CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN DEVELOPED BY BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY'S WOMEN'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TARGET TEAM, WHICH I'M PROUD TO CHAIR. THIS IS A POWERFUL GROUP OF BUSINESS LEADERS - DELIBERATELY INVOLVING TOP MEN AS WELL AS SENIOR WOMEN WITH

EXPERIENCE IN BOTH BUSINESS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ISSUES.

OUR FIRST MEETING TOOK PLACE LAST YEAR OVER BREAKFAST IN THE KINGFISHER BOARDROOM. IT WAS CLEAR FROM THE START THAT WE NEEDED TO TAKE PRACTICAL STEPS ON TRAINING, FAMILY CARE AND ENTERPRISE AND FOR THESE, THREE FOCUS GROUPS WERE SET UP, CHAIRED RESPECTIVELY BY SIR BRYAN NICHOLSON, TERRY THOMAS AND JOE PALMER.

HOWEVER, THE ISSUE TO WHICH THE ENTIRE TEAM GAVE GREATEST EMPHASIS, WAS HOW YOU BRING ABOUT THE CHANGES IN ATTITUDES AND WORKING PRACTICES THAT ARE THE VITAL NEXT STEP IN PUTTING WOMEN INTO THE MAINSTREAM.

THE TEAM COMMISIONED ASHRIDGE MANAGEMENT RESEARCH, LED BY VAL HAMMOND, TO LOOK AT HOW PROFITABLE COMPANIES WERE ACHIEVING CULTURAL CHANGE AND WHAT MIGHT BE LEARNT FROM THEM IN BRINGING ABOUT EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN.

THAT RESEARCH, TOGETHER WITH INPUT FROM THE TARGET TEAM, IS THE BASIS FOR THIS CAMPAIGN. WE OWE A SPECIAL DEBT TO THE STRATEGY GROUP OF PETER DAVIS, COLIN MARSHALL AND JOHN BIRT, WHO HAVE LED THE TEAM IN SUBJECTING ALL OUR IDEAS TO HARD-HEADED BUSINESS SCRUTINY.

THE ESSENCE OF THE CAMPAIGN IS ENCAPSULATED IN THE MISSION STATEMENT WHICH YOU'LL FIND IN YOUR PACKS: BROADLY, OPPORTUNITY 2000 INVITES EMPLOYERS, IN THE LIGHT OF THEIR BUSINESS NEEDS TO SET THEMSELVES GOALS TO INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN ACCORDING TO THEIR ABILITIES BY THE YEAR 2000. THE ADDED AND

VITAL CHALLENGE IS TO PUBLISH THOSE GOALS AND REPORT REGULARLY ON PROGRESS.

FOR EACH ORGANISATION INVOLVED, THE THREE ABSOLUTELY VITAL POINTS FOR SUCCESS ARE

1. THAT THERE IS COMMITMENT FROM THE TOP - ie CHARIMAN/CHIEF EXECUTIVE LEVEL
2. THAT THERE IS OWNERSHIP BY ALL INVOLVED (GETTING LINE MANAGER ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IS ONE OF LORD ALEXANDER'S FAVOURITE THEMES)
3. THAT WOMEN AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD BE SEEN AS A MAINSTREAM BUSINESS ISSUE - NOTHING LESS THAN PERMEATION INTO THE VERY VEINS OF ORGANISATIONS IS WHAT IS REQUIRED.

WE ARE CLEARLY JUST AT THE VERY BEGINNING. ON THE BASIS OF OUR SMALL CAMPAIGN OFFICE AT BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY, WE FELT WE COULD HANDLE ONLY A LIMITED NUMBER OF CAMPAIGN MEMBERS AT THIS EARLY STAGE. WE'RE DELIGHTED THAT WE CAN ANNOUNCE TODAY THAT OVER 60 TOP COMPANIES AND ORGANISATIONS HAVE ALREADY COMMITTED TO OPPORTUNITY 2000. THEY INCLUDE MAJOR COMPANIES, SOME SMALLER BUSINESSES, CIVIL SERVICE DEPARTMENTS, THE NHS AND THE METROPOLITAN POLICE.

THEY ALL ENDORSE OUR OPPORTUNITY 2000 MISSION STATEMENT AND ARE PUBLISHING TODAY THEIR GOALS AND ACTION PLANS AS AN EXPRESSION OF THEIR SUPPORT. (THOSE THAT ARE NOT QUITE READY FOR THIS WILL DO SO SHORTLY.)

YOU'LL SEE THAT THERE IS A RICH DIVERSITY IN THE APPROACHES THAT COMPANIES ARE TAKING, RANGING FROM BOARD-LEVEL AWARENESS PROGRAMMES ON ISSUES OF WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT TO EXTENDING SUPPORT FOR CARERS AND BUILDING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES INTO STANDARD PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS. SOME ARE LOOKING AT NUMERICAL TARGETS. THE KEY IS THAT ALL GOALS ARE MEASRUREABLE.

MANY IN THE CAMPAIGN ARE SETTING UP INTERNAL PROJECT TEAMS, ACCOUNTABLE TO THEIR BOARD, WITH AN INTENTION TO WRITE UP THEIR PROGRESS IN THEIR ANNUAL REPORT.

THE ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN OPPORTUNITY 2000 SO FAR ARE PURELY THE FIRST TRANCHE. WE HOPE THEY WILL HELP US TO DEVELOP THE CAMPAIGN BY ENCOURAGING AND MENTORING OTHER COMPANIES OF ALL SHAPES AND SIZES AROUND THE COUNTRY.

I'M DELIGHTED THAT WE HAVE HAD SUCH WARM SUPPORT FROM KEY PARTNER ORGANISATIONS, PARTICULARLY FROM JOHN BANHAM AT THE CBI AND JOANNA FOSTER AT THE EOC, WHO HAS BEEN A GREAT STRENGTH ON THE TEAM. THE VARIOUS PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS HAVE ALSO BEEN VERY SUPPORTIVE.

THE TARGET TEAM WILL CONTINUE, WITH SOME NEW ADDITIONS TO STEER THE INITIATIVE FORWARD THROUGH 1992 AND BEYOND.

I'D LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SAY HOW EXTREMELY STIMULATING AND ABOVE ALL ENJOYABLE IT HAS BEEN FOR ME TO CHAIR THE TARGET TEAM. I'D LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE ON THE TEAM, AND INDEED THEIR COMPANIES, FOR THEIR INPUT AND GENEROSITY. THE

DEVELOPMENT OF OPPORTUNITY 2000 HAS BEEN ENTIRELY PRIVATE SECTOR FUNDED. I'D ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE STAFF UNIT AT BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY UNDER JANE KERSHAW AS PROGRAMME DIRECTOR. SHE HAS BEEN LEADING THE DEVELOPMENT OF OPPORTUNITY 2000 AND WILL NOW BE HANDING OVER THE RUNNING OF THE INITIATIVE TO OUR NEW CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR, LIZ BARGH.

SOMEONE VERY INSTRUMENTAL IN MAKING OPPORTUNITY 2000 HAPPEN IS PETER DAVIS. I'D LIKE TO ASK HIM, ON BEHALF OF THE TEAM, TO GIVE US THE BUSINESS VIEW OF OPPORTUNITY 2000 AND ITS IMPORTANCE.

PETER DAVIS

guest list

21 October 1991 at 2:13 p.m.

NAME	POSITION	COMPANY
r John Adshead	Group Director, Personnel	J Sainsbury
inda Agran	Head of Production	Paravision (UK) Ltd
Barry Aiken	Director of Personnel	Johnson Wax Ltd
r Peter Allen	Deputy Chairman	Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte
Dick Andrews	Group Personnel Director	Dixons
r L Atkinson	General Manager, Manufacturing & Supply	BP Oil International Ltd
s Mary Baker	President	Women in Management
s Ann Baldwin	Executive Partner	Grant Thornton
r M Bamforth	Manager of Human Resources	Esso Petroleum Company Ltd
John Banham	Director General	CBI
Caroline Banszky	Director	N M Rothschild & Sons Ltd
s Jane Barker	Chief Financial Officer	International Stock Exchange
s Mair Barnes	Managing Director	Woolworths
aroness Denton of Wakefield	Deputy Chairman	Black Country Development Corp
aroness Seear	Deputy Leader	Liberal Democrats
r D Barron	Group Personnel Director	United Newspapers plc
Ian Barr	Director of Human Resources	NFC plc
r Alan Bartlett	Executive Director	Assoc. of British Chambers of Commerce
Dennis Battle	Director of Personnel	HM Customs and Excise
r Rodney Bickerstaffe	General Secretary	NUPE
r Haydn Biddle	Managing Director	Newcastle Breweries Ltd
r John Birt	Deputy Director General	BBC
Ms Moira Black	Partner	Price Waterhouse
Mr David Blake	Group Head of Corporate Affairs	Woolwich Building Society
Mr M Boase	Chairman	BMP DDB Needham
Ms Virginia Bottomley JP MP	Minister for Health	Department of Health
Mr Martin Brooks	Managing Director	Extel Financial Limited
Mr Jim Butler CBE	Chairman	KMPG Peat Marwick McLintock
Mr Peter Cabrelli	Director of Human Resources	Pearson
Sir Michael Caine	Chairman	Booker plc
Ms Alison Canning	Managing Director	Cohn & Wolfe
s Sue Cantor	Head of Human Resources	Ernst & Young
Mary Lou Carrington	Director of Business Development	LIFFE
Ms Rhiannon Chapman	Director	Industrial Society
Mr J Neil Clarke	Chairman	British Coal Corporation
Mr P N Clark	UK Personnel Manager	ICI
s Sheila Clark	Managing Director	Packaging Innovation Ltd
Mr Tim Clement-Jones	Company Secretary	Kingfisher plc
s Janet Cohen	Director	Charterhouse Bank Ltd
r Jerry Cope	Personnel Director	Royal Mail
r Eric Dancer	Chairman	Devon & Cornwall TEC/Dartington Crystal
Ms Lucy Daniels	Co-Ordinator	Working Mothers Association
Mr John Davies	Deputy Director of Personnel	Barclays Bank
Ms Rosemary Day	Executive Director	Allied Dunbar Assurances plc
Ms Brenda Dean	Deputy General Secretary	GPMU
Mr David Dickinson	Chairman	London East TEC
r Richard Dunn	Chief Executive	Thames Television
Greg Dyke	Managing Director	London Weekend Television Limited
r John Egan	Chief Executive	BAA
Tim Evans	Chairman	Thames Valley Enterprise
Mr David Falcon	Director General	RIPA
Richard Fenhalls	Chairman & Chief Executive	Henry Ansbacher
Richard Field	Chairman	Sheffield TEC

NAME	POSITION	COMPANY
Elizabeth Filkin	Assistant Chief Executive	London Docklands Develop. Corp
Martin Findlay	Executive Director	Whitbread plc
Viki Ford	Manager, Personnel Programmes	Rank Xerox (UK) Ltd
Joanna Foster	Chair	Equal Opportunities Commission
J Fox	Personnel Director	Asda Group plc
Tom Frost	Chief Executive	National Westminster Bank plc
John Fry	Group Services Director	Abbey National plc
R Gavron	Chairman	St Ives
Anthony Gill	Chairman & Chief Executive	Lucas Industries
R Goodall	Group Personnel Director	Inchcape plc
Jane Grant	Director	Nat. Alliance of Women's Organisations
Malcolm Greenslade	Group Employment Policy Director	Grand Metropolitan
M Green	Chairman & Chief Executive	Carlton Communications
Roger Gregory	The Dep. Receiver of the Met. Police	Metropolitan Police
Jan Hall	Chairman & Chief Executive	Coley Porter Bell
Brendan Hamilton	Head of Personnel	Nationwide Anglia Building Society
Valerie J Hammond	Director	Ashridge Management College
Christine Hancock	General Secretary	Royal College of Nursing
Venetia Harper	Personnel Director	Compass Services (UK) Ltd
C R Haskins	Chairman	Northern Foods
I Hay-Davison	Chairman	Storehouse
Patricia Hewitt	Deputy Director	Institute for Public Policy Research
P T G Hobbs	Personnel Director	The Wellcome Foundation Ltd
Mr Paul Hodgkinson	Chairman	Simons Group
Sir Geoffrey Holland KCB	Permanent Secretary	Department of Employment
Mr J Holloran	Chief Executive	BPCC
Sir Simon Hornby	Chairman	W H Smith Group
Dr D J H Huber	Director of Personnel	Safeway plc
Ms Janet Hull	Head of Account Management	Young & Rubicam Ltd
Sir Peter Imbert QPM	Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis	Metropolitan Police
Mr Laurence Jackson	Personnel Director	Manchester Airport plc
Ms Catherine James	Strategy and Planning Director	Grand Metropolitan Estate
P Jansen	Chief Executive	MB-Caradon plc
Alex Jarratt	Chairman	Smiths Industries
Mr E Paul Jones	Director - Human Resources	Hawker Siddeley Management Ltd
Mr David King	Chair of Consumer Brands UK	SmithKline Beecham
Ms Edna Kissmann	Joint Managing Director	Burson-Marsteller
Miss Amanda Knight	Regional Director of Executive Education	London Business School
Mr Crawford Laughlan	Group Personnel & Services Director	Halifax Building Society
A Lawson	Chair	The Fawcett Society
Ms Alicja Lesniak	Group Finance Director	J Walter Thompson Company Ltd
Ms Gill Lewis	Director of Human Resources	Courtaulds
Professor Andrew Likierman	President	CIMA
Mr John Lineker	Chairman	Norfolk and Waveney TEC
Ms Frances Line	Controller	BBC Radio Two
Lord Sainsbury of Preston	Chairman	J Sainsbury
Ms Linda Loy	Equal Opportunities	The Littlewoods Organisation
Iain Mac Intyre	Assistant General Manager	Bank of Scotland
Dorothy MacKenzie	Managing Director	Dragon International
Lochy Maclean	Personnel Director	United Biscuits (Holdings) plc
I Jacqueline Malton	Detective Chief Inspector	Metropolitan Police
Dr Anna Mann	Managing Director	Whitehead Mann Group plc
M J Marshall	Chairman	Marshall of Cambridge (Holdings)
Clive Mather	Personnel Director	Shell UK Ltd

NAME	POSITION	COMPANY
John McFarlane	Country Corporate Officer	Citibank NA
Diane McGarry	Director of Operations	Rank Xerox (UK) Ltd
Frank McGettigan	Director and General Manager	Channel Four Television
Julie Mellor	Equal Opportunities	TSB Group plc
Ted Merrette	Managing Director	AB Electronic Products Group plc
Maureen Miffling	Managing Director	Manpower plc
Barbara Mills QC	Director	Serious Fraud Office
Fran Minogue	Managing Director	Neutrogena (UK) Ltd
Victoria Mitchell	Executive Director	Savills plc
John Moores	Director	The Littlewoods Organisation
Jan Morgan	Chairman	Grosvenor International Estate Agents
Hon Mrs Sara Morrison	Director	GEC plc
W Morris	General Secretary Elect	TGWU
Alastair Morton	Chief Executive	Eurotunnel
Geoff Mulcahy	Chairman	Kingfisher plc
Elizabeth Nelson	Chairman	Taylor Nelson Group Ltd
Paul Newman	Director of Personnel Policy	British Telecom
M Newmarch	Chief Executive	Prudential Corporation plc
Bryan Nicholson	Chairman	Post Office
Gillian Nott	Manager Opportunity Assessment	BP Ventures, BP International Ltd
M Osbaldeston	Chief Executive	Ashridge Management College
Lorraine Paddison	Equal Opportunities Vice-President (IPM)	TMS Management Consultants
Joe Palmer	Chief Executive	Legal & General
Mr Roger Pauli	Chief Executive	Stuart and Sons Ltd
Dr Robin Paul	Deputy Chairman	Albright & Wilson Ltd
Ms Lyndy Payne	Chairman	Advertising Agency Register
Sir Leonard Peach	Director of Personnel & Corp Affairs	IBM
Mr Brian Pearse	Group Chief Executive	Midland Bank plc
Ms Judy Piatkus	Director	Piatkus Books
Mr P S Preston	President & Chief Executive	McDonald's Restaurants
Mr David Prosser	Group Chief Executive	Legal & General
Ms Margaret Prosser	National Secretary for the Women's Group	TGWU
M T Rainey	Chief Executive	Chiat/Day
Alexis Redmond	Managing Director	Mersey TV Company Ltd
Mr Alec Reed	Chairman	Reed Personnel Services
Ms Jane Reed	Director of Corporate Relations	News International plc
The Rt Hon Tim Renton MP	Minister for the Arts	Office of Arts and Libraries
Miss B Rider	Director of Human Resources	BET
Mr D Robertson	Partner	Turner Kenneth Brown
Edward Roberts	Chairman	Central England TEC
Anne Roberts	Director	National Trust (Enterprises) The
Ann Robinson	Head of Personnel Policy Unit	IOD
Mr David Robinson	Director of External Affairs	Royal Bank of Scotland
Mr P Roche	Director of Personnel	Boots The Chemist
Ms Bridget Rosewell	Joint Managing Director	Business Strategies (London) Ltd
The Rt Hon Angela Rumbold MP	Minister of State	Home Office
Mr M Saatchi	Chairman	Saatchi & Saatchi Company
Mrs Gillian Shephard MP	Minister of State to the Treasury	The Treasury
Jill Sherratt	Director of Public Relations	Charter Consolidated
Steve Shirley	Chairman	FI Group plc
Hon David Sieff	Director	Marks and Spencer
Ms Sue Slipman	Director	National Council for One Parent Families
Andrew Smith	Group Secretary	Tarmac plc
Paul Southworth	President	Avon Cosmetics limited

NAME	POSITION	COMPANY
rs Carol-Ann Spencer	Manager of Human Resources	Sony (UK) Ltd
r Derek Stevens	Chief Financial Officer	British Airways plc
r John Stevens	Head of Manpower	NEDO
r I E F Stewart	Company Secretary	Ciba-Geigy plc
s Sue Stoessl	Chair	Catalyst (Women and Training)
he Rt Hon Lord Swaythling	Executive Chairman	Rothmans International plc
r A J Tennant	Chairman	Guinness plc
r Terry Thomas	Managing Director	The Co-operative Bank plc
s Pat Thomas	Partner	S J Berwin & Co
s Sue Topham	Manager, People Development Programmes	Unipart Group of Companies Limited
r Bruce Warman	Director of Personnel	Vauxhall Motors Ltd
s Anne Watts	Equal Opportunities Director	Midland Bank plc
Ms Janet Weitz	Chairman	FDS Market Research Group Limited
s Judy Weleminsky	Director	NCVO
r M Wemms	Personnel and Training Director	Tesco Stores
r H A Whittall	Chairman	BSG International
r P D Wickens	Personnel Director	Nissan Motor Manufacturing UK
r Ken Windsor	Group Personnel Manager	The Peninsular & Oriental
s Frances Wood	Director, Compensation and Planning	Sedgwick Group plc
r Alastair Wright	Director of Human Resources	Digital Equipment Co Limited

TOTALS:

Printed 181 of the 504 records.

PRIMARY SORT FIELD: NAME

SELECTION CRITERIA:
(invite="y"&response3="coming")

OPPORTUNITY 2000

SPOKESPERSON - INTERVIEW BRIEF

KEY MESSAGES

WHAT IS OPPORTUNITY 2000:

- Opportunity 2000 is a Business in the Community initiative to increase the quality and quantity of women's participation in the workforce
- Aimed specifically at business
- non-politically aligned initiative

WHY IS OPPORTUNITY 2000 DIFFERENT:

- is forward looking and is the first time that a group of key organisations have publicly committed themselves to attaining specific goals which are in some way measurable (not necessarily in numbers)
- companies have taken a critical look at their internal operations and established a realistic, tailored, and practical Action Plan - addressing how organisations can enable women to make their full contribution
- signifies a real and long term commitment by companies, goals announced will encompass a broad range of initiatives and are not purely about numbers
- Chief Executive led
- through peer pressure Opportunity 2000 will influence other companies to develop their own equal opportunity programmes

BUSINESS CASE: - Women are a wasted resource in terms of investment in training and development and the resulting lost potential

- getting the best skills for the job

COMPANIES INVOLVED: - Until 28 October, only Target Team member companies will be released, other organisations to be realeased at the launch

LAUNCH DATE: - 28 October 1991

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY: BITC is the leading authority on corporate community involvement. It is an association of major UK businesses and works with its members to develop practical ways in which business can play a creative role in economic revitalisation and enterprise.

Tracey English, BITC Press Office: 22 October 1991

OPPORTUNITY 2000
TOWARDS A BALANCED WORKFORCE

BUSINESS in the COMMUNITY

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What is OPPORTUNITY 2000?

   OPPORTUNITY 2000 is a Business in the Community initiative. It is a long-term, business-led campaign to increase opportunities for women and to improve the balance of women and men in the workforce.

2. Why is OPPORTUNITY 2000 necessary?

   Campaign members believe that in the long term their companies - and Britain as a whole - will be best served by a balance of women and men in the workforce, in all areas and at all levels, especially in management, to reflect the abilities of the labour force as a whole. Britain simply cannot afford to continue to waste the ability and potential of half the workforce.

   Despite 15 years progress since the Sex Discrimination Act, women still account for only 25% management and 2% senior directors in business. Women are still employed in traditional roles, often in jobs way below their qualifications and experience level, or in insecure part-time work with very little access to training.

President: HRH The Prince of Wales
227A City Road · London · EC1V 1LX · Telephone: 071-253 3716 · Facsimile: 071-253 2309
Chief Executive: Stephen O'Brien · Registered Charity No: 297716
Registered office as above · A limited company No: 1619253
Printed on re-cycled paper

3. What are the origins of OPPORTUNITY 2000?

OPPORTUNITY 2000 has come about as the result of work by the BITC's Women's Economic Development Target Team, a group of senior business leaders, chaired by Lady Howe and set up by Business in the Community. The Team feels that British business is not taking full advantage of the economic potential of women in the workforce. There is a pressing business need to maximise women's skills and avoid wasting ability and Opportunity 2000 addresses this need.

4. What distinguishes OPPORTUNITY 2000 from other initiatives in this area?

OPPORTUNITY 2000:

- is forward looking and is the first time that key organisations have courageously committed themselves to attaining specific goals.
- involves companies in taking a critical look at their internal operations and establishing a realistic, tailored and practical Action Plan.
- signifies a real and long term commitment by companies; goals announced will encompass a broad range of initiatives and are not purely about numbers.
- is Chief Executive led.

5. How does it work?

As a first step, campaign companies will voluntarily set and publicly announce goals for increasing opportunities for women in the workforce by the year 2000. This will pave the way for other UK companies to follow suit.

6. What is the business case for OPPORTUNITY 2000?

Women are an under-used resource in terms of investment in training and development, and the resulting lost potential.

7. Why does OPPORTUNITY 2000 place so much importance on cultural change?

If real change is to be made in industry, employers need to look not only at the provision of enabling facilities such as flexible working, childcare provision and training, but they also need to address the more fundamental issue of the culture of their organisation. This is the subtle mix of attitudes, custom and practice, expectations and values that fashion how an organisation actually functions.

Good practice to date has improved opportunities for women but there are still attitudinal or organisational barriers to overcome. Women are still not represented in all areas at all levels.

8. How many companies are involved in OPPORTUNITY 2000?

OPPORTUNITY 2000 launches with almost 60 organisations throughout the UK, ranging from household-name companies to smaller employers. A full list of campaign companies is attached.

9. Is OPPORTUNITY 2000 restricted to the private sector?

OPPORTUNITY 2000 originated in the private sector but now encompasses public sector employers including the National Health Service and the Employment Department Group.

10. What financial contribution do campaign companies have to make to OPPORTUNITY 2000?

OPPORTUNITY 2000 must be self-financing, so each campaign company is asked to contribute up to £1,000, depending on the size of the organisation, to cover the costs of the action pack and the running of the campaign office. Some organisations have offered to contribute more than this.

11. What are the criteria for selection?

First and foremost campaign members must be actively and publicly committed and demonstrate that commitment at top level. Also they must be prepared to carry through what they say they will do.

12. How did the first group of organisations get involved?
Because of limited resources, BITC initially approached a small group of campaign companies, selected from a broad cross-section of BITC member companies and associates. Others directly approached BITC seeking involvement.

13. How many women will OPPORTUNITY 2000 directly affect?
With almost 60 major organisations involved, OPPORTUNITY 2000 stands to affect the employment prospects of well over a million women immediately. It has the potential to affect the whole of the female - and therefore male - working population.

14. Why has OPPORTUNITY 2000 focused only on women rather than minority groups?
The founding members of the campaign felt that, while working within the broad context of equal opportunities, they would be more effective by focusing on one key group. Campaign companies can of course choose to extend the OPPORTUNITY 2000 approach to other equal opportunities work.

The issues affecting women - eg. wasting resources, childcare - are issues which affect everyone and can therefore benefit everyone.

15. How do you define 'goals'?

A goal is the intention to achieve an identified object, qualitative or quantitative, or both. The key factor is that it is measurable.

Each company's objectives will be based on its own particular starting point and its specific business circumstances, needs and culture. OPPORTUNITY 2000 will encompass a broad range of objectives, from purely numerical targets to training, educational, attitudinal, cultural and beyond. The main point about the goals is that they are a public commitment by campaign companies to ensure that, in all areas and at all levels, women have the opportunity to make progress according to their abilities.

16. Is there a balance between large and small companies within OPPORTUNITY 2000? And regionally?

A number of small blue-chip companies - eg. Channel 4, Henry Ansbacher - are already involved. As the campaign develops, so will the representation of small - medium sized and regionally-based organisations.

17. How will progress be monitored?

It is obviously important that each of the organisations involved in the campaign measures their progress against the goals they have set themselves. They have agreed to do this at appropriate intervals as part of their commitment to the campaign. Campaign companies will be encouraged to publish their progress, both individually, for example in their annual reports, and collectively, through the OPPORTUNITY 2000 campaign.

18. What is the time-scale of OPPORTUNITY 2000?

OPPORTUNITY 2000 is a long-term initiative, planned to run until the end of the decade and beyond. There are almost 60 campaign companies currently involved and BITC anticipates an increase to at least 100 within six months.

19. Does OPPORTUNITY 2000 favour positive action?

Yes. In that campaign companies will commit to specific goals to increase the quality and quantity of women's participation in the workforce by the end of the decade, OPPORTUNITY 2000 is favouring positive action. OPPORTUNITY 2000 emphasises the need to appoint the best person for the job based on ability. The campaign does not advocate positive discrimination, which is illegal.

20. Does OPPORTUNITY 2000 have the support of the government?

OPPORTUNITY 2000 is an independent campaign which has been initiated by Business in the Community. It does, however, have government support. The main political parties are aware of the campaign and senior representatives will be at the launch.

21. What is Business in the Community?

Business in the Community (BITC) is the leading authority on corporate community involvement. It is an association of major UK businesses committed to working in partnership with each other, with local and central government, voluntary organisations and employee organisations to promote corporate/social responsibility and revitalise economic life in local communities. It is a national non-profit-making organisation with a comprehensive regional network.

22. Explain the role of Ashridge in OPPORTUNITY 2000.

The Ashridge Management Research Group (AMRG), under the directorship of Val Hammond, was commissioned by the Target Team to carry out extensive research into equal opportunities and the management of change.

An action pack containing support materials for the Chief Executive, the Human Resource Managers and the Line Managers has

been developed from this research to give practical guidance to all participating companies.

AMRG is also a campaign member of OPPORTUNITY 2000.

23. Does OPPORTUNITY 2000 have the support of the Equal Opportunities Commission?

Yes. The EOC is totally behind OPPORTUNITY 2000: EOC Chair, Joanna Foster, is a member of the Target Team.

24. What support does Opportunity 2000 offer campaign companies?

All campaign companies will receive an action pack, developed from the Ashridge research, to give them practical guidance on setting goals and programmes of action. They will also benefit from being a part of a growing network of organisations able to share both good practice and what is less successful. They will have access to leading-edge research and case study material through the campaign.

The campaign office will respond to the needs of campaign organisations as appropriate - eg. by providing access to consultants or by organising workshops as requested.

25. When and where is OPPORTUNITY 2000 to be launched?

OPPORTUNITY 2000 will be launched by BITC on Monday 28 October at a Central London venue. The Prime Minister is to attend as well as over 200 business leaders and opinion formers.

26. Does OPPORTUNITY 2000 have the support of the major business organisations?

Yes. The CBI, IoD, IPM, ABCC, amongst others, have all pledged support.

27. Does OPPORTUNITY 2000 have the support of women's organisations within the UK?

Yes. Representatives from all the major women's networks are supporting the campaign and have formed an advisory panel.

28. Is OPPORTUNITY 2000 supported by the Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs)?

A number of TECs have already expressed interest in supporting the campaign, notably Tyneside TEC and Northamptonshire TEC.

29. Is BITC a member of OPPORTUNITY 2000?

BITC is itself developing goals and action plans in accordance with the aims and objectives of Opportunity 2000.

30. Do women really want this kind of approach?

Opportunity 2000 seeks to support women in the fulfilment of their aspirations and to increase their opportunity to make choices.

31. Why launch Opportunity 2000 in the middle of a recession?

Potential campaign companies were specifically asked earlier this year to give their views on the appropriateness of launching Opportunity 2000 in the current economic climate. Their response was that we should go ahead.

Recession intensifies an organisation's focus on change and human resource issues, highlighting the importance of the contribution of a highly skilled, motivated and productive workforce. It also highlights the cost of waste.

Department of Health

PRESS RELEASE

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H91/495

22 October 1991

TEN ACTION POINTS DEMONSTRATE COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN THE NHS SAYS VIRGINIA BOTTOMLEY

Proof of the Government's commitment to improving the contribution of women in the NHS was highlighted today by Virginia Bottomley, Minister for Health.

Speaking at the London regional conference on "Women in the NHS - Opportunities for Action" Mrs Bottomley launched the new good practice handbook "Women in the NHS". She outlined 10 action points which demonstrate the growing opportunities for NHS women staff.

She told the conference: "Equal opportunities is not just about social justice - important though that is. As every good employer knows, equal opportunities has a more practical dimension. It is about securing the right number of qualified staff to meet future needs. It is about making the best possible use of our most valuable resource - our workforce."

The 10 action points are:

* Publication of "Women in the NHS: a Good Practice Guide";

* The Year of Action for women which began in June with the "Opening Minds Opening Doors" conference;

* The series of three regional conferences on "Opportunities for Action";

* Pump priming a series of pilot projects;

* A national competition to identify good practice within the NHS;

* Opportunity 2000 - a scheme designed by Business in the Community to improve the contribution of women to the workforce by the turn of the century;

* Regional nominees on health authorities who agree to take responsibility for progressing the Women in the NHS initiative in their region;

[MORE]

* A series of General Whitley Council agreements to help staff in combining their work and domestic commitments by career breaks, child care vouchers and maternity leave. An agreement on sexual harassment is currently in preparation;

* Action to increase numbers of female non-executive authority and Trust members; and

* A data collection and goal setting review being undertaken by the Office of Public Management.

Mrs Bottomley told the conference: "We are making good progress but we still have more to do before we can claim that the NHS is in the vanguard of employment practices for women. We are the largest single employer of women in Europe with over three quarters of a million of female staff.

"We aim to lead the field in promoting good employment practices for women. I am most encouraged by the energy and enthusiasm for our initiative within the service."

NOTE TO EDITORS

A copy of the full text of Mrs Bottomley's speech is available from the Press Office. Telephone 071 210 5229.

[ENDS]

DAILY EXPRESS - 21.10.91

Major unveils charter to put women at top

JOHN MAJOR is to launch an urgent drive to capture the women's vote by promising them more jobs at the top of government, business and public services.

He has pledged to deliver a five-year charter aimed at breaking the cosy men's club atmosphere in many public organisations.

The Premier is expected to produce a blueprint before the end of the year — and has already asked Whitehall departments to set the pace by appointing more women to the most senior positions.

Mr Major wants to build on his opinion poll popularity among women to help win next year's General Election. In

From **CHRIS BUCKLAND**
at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

speech after speech he has already made it clear he supports women's aspirations and declared they should be given more opportunities to reach the top.

In an interview at the Commonwealth Summit in Harare he again stressed that he wanted to get many more women into politics — and indicated they would figure strongly in his new Cabinet after an election victory. Among those on the second rung likely to be promoted are Treasury Minister Gillian Sheppard, Foreign Office Minister Lynda Chalker and Health Minister Virginia Bottomley.

Mr Major said: "I am not satisfied with the number of women at the top either in politics, industry, business, or the universities.

"We are looking at what we can do to bring about quite substantial and lasting change now." He explained he was starting in his own back yard: "I am asking every department in Whitehall what they can do to improve their record and what changes can they make over a five-year period."

In a clear attempt to upstage Labour on women's issues, he added: "This will form the basis of the Women's Charter which is meant to produce real results within five years."

It would mean more women on executive bodies and official committees of inquiry as well as more women executive directors on the boards of industry.

He hoped local Tory parties would choose more women candidates so that there would be a bigger pool to produce female ministers.

EXCLUSIVE: Prime Minister gives his vision of the future to PAUL WILENIUS

SKY'S THE LIMIT FOR WOMEN

by JOHN MAJOR

PREMIER John Major is drawing up a revolutionary plan to give women massive new opportunities in business, government and politics.

His radical Women's Charter was unveiled in an exclusive hour-long interview with TODAY in Harare.

Mr Major says his five-year plan will be the biggest ever shake-up to smash the "cosy man's world" of big business and give women more chances for the top jobs. He has vowed to order Government departments and public organisations to urgently increase the number of women they employ.

And he is determined to appoint more high-flying women to executive posts in bodies such as British Rail.

In some cases, he wants the public sector to triple the key positions on offer to women.

His controversial plan amounts to positive discrimination in favour of one sex. But Mr Major, feeling the pressure of being seven points behind Labour in the latest opinion poll, is determined to press on. "I am not satisfied at the moment with the number of women at the top either in politics, industry, business, universities or elsewhere," he said.

"We are actually looking at what we can do to bring about quite substantial and lasting change now.

"I am asking every department in Whitehall how their record compares with other departments – and with outside.

"I want to know immediately what can they do to improve their record in their departments and beyond it, what changes can they make over a five-year

Turn to Page 2

Double shock over tax cuts

PREMIER John Major virtually ruled out "buying votes" with tax cuts in the Spring Budget yesterday.

He branded a pre-election spending spree as "fools' gold" which might bring short-term political gain but would only hurt innocent people later.

Mr Major said: "Some people say, 'Why don't you act more rapidly on interest rates.

EXCLUSIVE

stimulate the economy in one form or another?'

"But this would mean pumping an extra £10 billion into the autumn public spending round.

"It would also mean tax cuts in the March Budget, just before the election. It is possible to do that but it is unwise," he added.

Shadow Chancellor John Smith pledged that if the Tories did make any cuts, a Labour government would immediately reverse them.

"It's a farce putting a tax cut in a Budget knowing that there's an election," he said.

Full stories: Page 2

MAJOR'S PLEDGE FOR A NEW DEAL IN INDUSTRY, CIVIL SERVICE

5-year plan to put women

From Page 1

period." He added: "This will form the basis of the Women's Charter which is meant to produce real results within five years."

Mr Major, giving his first full interview since calling off a November election, promised his official announcement on the charter was not far away.

"The proposal is smack in the middle of my desk at the moment," he said.

"It means there will also be more women exective directors of boards, executive bodies and committees of inquiry.

"This would be vital to smash the cosy male club atmosphere in many public organisations in terms of the opportunities for women and the proportion of women and holding appointments."

'There will be substantial and lasting change'

Mr Major plans to lead the way by encouraging more women MPs and bringing a string of talented women into his new Cabinet if he wins the next election.

He is irritated that he has not a single woman there so far and Treasury Minister Gillian Shephard and Health Minister Virginia Bottomley are already guaranteed a place.

He said: "I have got a lot of extremely able women who are Ministers of State.

"I think you would have to go back quite a long time in British political history to find so many just outside the Cabinet who are women."

He complained: "The basic problem with women in Parliament is that too few get elected."

Local Tory parties had a poor record on picking [illegible]n candidates, he said.

"It is the selection committees, we cannot control them, they make their own selections."

But clearly hoping grass-root Tories would take heed, he said: "I would like more women in Parliament. I would like a bigger pool of women from whom to produce ministers.

"It is rather like a pyramid – the more people you have got in Parliament, the more women you are going to get right to the top."

Through his Women's Charter the Prime Ministers aims to change the future for all women.

"I think it is about changing social attitudes," he said.

The final final package of measures is expected to be ready before Christmas – time is one thing Mr Major does not have on his hands.

The Prime Minister is aware that the women's vote will be vital if he is to get back into Downing Street next year. He is also aiming to woo first-time voters by declaring he personally checks all his policies to ensure they will help both them and the voters of the future.

If young people back the Tories he plans to offer them the freedom to control their own money – and inherit much more from their parents.

Mr Major said that all his policies were aimed at giving independence and opportunity to younger people.

"The policies we are fashioning now are not policies for next year," he said.

"The acid test we have for every one that comes forward is what that policy is going to look like in the late 1990s and is it going to be relevant to the year 2000."

Mr Major said: "Unless we use the best brains, the best talents and bring on our young people as much as we possibly can, we are just going to fall behind in a competitive world. There is no choice about it." Looking at the future for young people in Britain he said: "The prospects of owning a home are better than they have ever been.

"The prospects of a wide range of alternative jobs are better than they have ever been.

"Their prospects of training and retraining thrghout their career are better than they have ever been.

"The prospects for their actual quality of life are better than they have ever been."

He said the chances for anyone under 20 were far brighter than for those now 40 or over when they were young.

Mr Major pulled off a stunning diplomatic coup last night when he forced the Commonwealth to accept his "Ten Commandments" to root out bad government.

The Victoria Falls Declaration includes his plan to link aid to a commitment to more democracy and better policies on human rights.

'Change is vital to smash the cosy male clubs'

The aim is to produce "just and honest governments" by threatening to axe aid without significant improvements in democracy and human rights.

Despite widespread opposition from some less humane governments, which had threatened to veto the declaration, it was sealed at the Commonwealth summit after a two-day retreat at the Elephant Hills Hotel within sight of the spectacular Victoria Falls.

The key principle in the 10-point declaration is that the Commonwealth should "extend the benefits of development within a framework of respect for human rights".

Put bluntly, that means countries with poor human rights records will not get "money for nothing".

The declaration came after weeks of intensive effort to lobby support among the 50-strong Commonwealth governments. Mr Major said that the declaration was "a very important document".

He added: "Perhaps it is the most important document the Commonwealth has produced for 20 years or more.

"It will be perfectly clear on the issues of good government and clearly involve a vast range of matters connected with human rights."

The Ten Commandments state:

- The protection of democracy, the freedom of the courts and the rule of law and fundamental human rights.
- Equality for women – so they can exercise their full and equal rights.
- Provision to help control population growth of all nations.
- Continuing action to end apartheid in South Africa and produce a non-racial and prosperous state.
- The promotion of sustainable growth and a reduction of poverty through sound economic programmes.
- The extending of the benefits of development within a framework of respect for human rights.
- The protection of the environment and the setting up of a report into pollution in Third World countries.
- Action to combat drug abuse and the spread of diseases such as Aids.
- Increasing help for small Commonwealth countries trying to improve their economic performance.
- Support for the United Nations and other international institutions.

Mr Major is confident the 10-point plan will encourage the move towards accountable government as the Commwealth goes into the 1990s.

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

Personal Minute

No. M54/91

MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF DEPARTMENTS

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

1. The Ministerial Group on Women's Issues (MGWI) has recently reported to me their concern about the slowing down of the progress in the appointment of more women to public appointments. Last year, the percentage of women rose from 23% to 23.3%. The picture within individual Departments of public appointments held by women ranges from under 5% to well over 30% as shown on the attached chart at Annex A.

2. I share MGWI's concern and agree with the Ministerial Group that we cannot simply let matters drift on the basis of further exhortation to do better. Appointments must continue to be made on the basis of aptitude and merit, but I do not believe that the current pattern of appointments properly reflects the contribution that women could and should be making to public life. I now want to see this pattern changing. At the same time, I believe that there is scope to increase the representation of people from ethnic minority backgrounds. Members of Britain's different ethnic minority communities already make a very valuable contribution to the life of this country. I want to see their participation in public affairs extended by an increase in the number holding public appointments. Such data as we have now suggests that a very small proportion of public appointments is held by people from the ethnic minorities.

3. Many able women, with relevant qualifications and experience, are now putting themselves forward. The register maintained by the Public Appointments Unit (PAU) in the Cabinet Office now has women nominees as more than 30 per cent of the people on its books with a very much higher proportion in the under-50s or 40s. But the Public Appointments Unit is currently involved with only a few hundred appointments; many of the thousands of appointments and reappointments made each year are made by individual Departments.

4. We do not at present have similar data for appointments and nominations of people from ethnic minorities. But this information will be available from 1992. I am sure that Departments are already committed to ethnic monitoring of public appointments and appreciate the value to be gained from more detailed figures than we have now.

5. While I hope that the PAU's resources can be used more systematically by Departments, I believe that the pace of change will not be sufficient without some further Ministerial involvement. I therefore ask all Ministers in charge of Departments to develop a strategy to bring about a real and lasting change. In particular, I ask Ministers:

a. to take a close look at the record of their Department and question the explanations for the proportion of women and members of ethnic minorities holding appointments. How does your record compare with the best? What can be done to improve your record? What changes can you achieve over, say, a five-year period?

b. to appoint a Junior Minister (the Ministerial member of MGWI may be the appropriate nominee) to set appropriate, but testing, objectives and ensure that they are met. The Minister should be asked to prepare a report to be submitted to me in a year's time outlining your objectives, your achievements in increasing representation in key areas, and the changes which you have made to appointment procedures to keep up the momentum;

c. to ask the responsible Junior Minister to examine whether there is a case for the appointment of more non-executive or consumer representatives to boards, executive bodies and committees of inquiry. This could make an important contribution to our ideas for developing Citizens' Charters: non-specialists, some of whom might be women, will in many cases be well placed to make a valuable contribution to making boards and committees more aware of consumer or customer views or the views of special interest groups in appropriate cases; similarly, members of the ethnic minority communities can, and do, have an important input to such bodies;

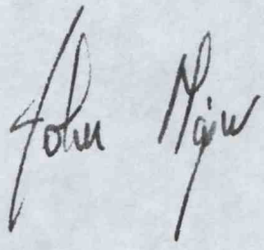
d. to insist that when considering appointments or reappointments to public bodies, shortlists of proposed candidates are submitted, and that, if no women candidates are proposed, an explanation for this is given. In some cases, where the work of a body or committee will particularly impact on ethnic minority communities, the same procedure may be appropriate for ethnic minority representation.

6. Annex B includes a number of steps which may be helpful to you. They have been suggested by a group of senior women civil servants and the Women's National Commission, to assist in the identification of qualified candidates from groups not adequately represented at present. While the initiative has come from MGWI in terms of the position of women on public bodies, I hope I have also made it clear that many ethnic groups are also under-represented. The search for able candidates for appointment from the ethnic minorities should be no less rigorous.

7. I am under no illusion that progress here will be easy. I well know that those making appointments are often balancing a whole range of requirements and desirable objectives. But I am convinced that we are dealing with an area where we must do better, and be seen to be doing better, in the interests of a cohesive society and a responsive and informed Government. I

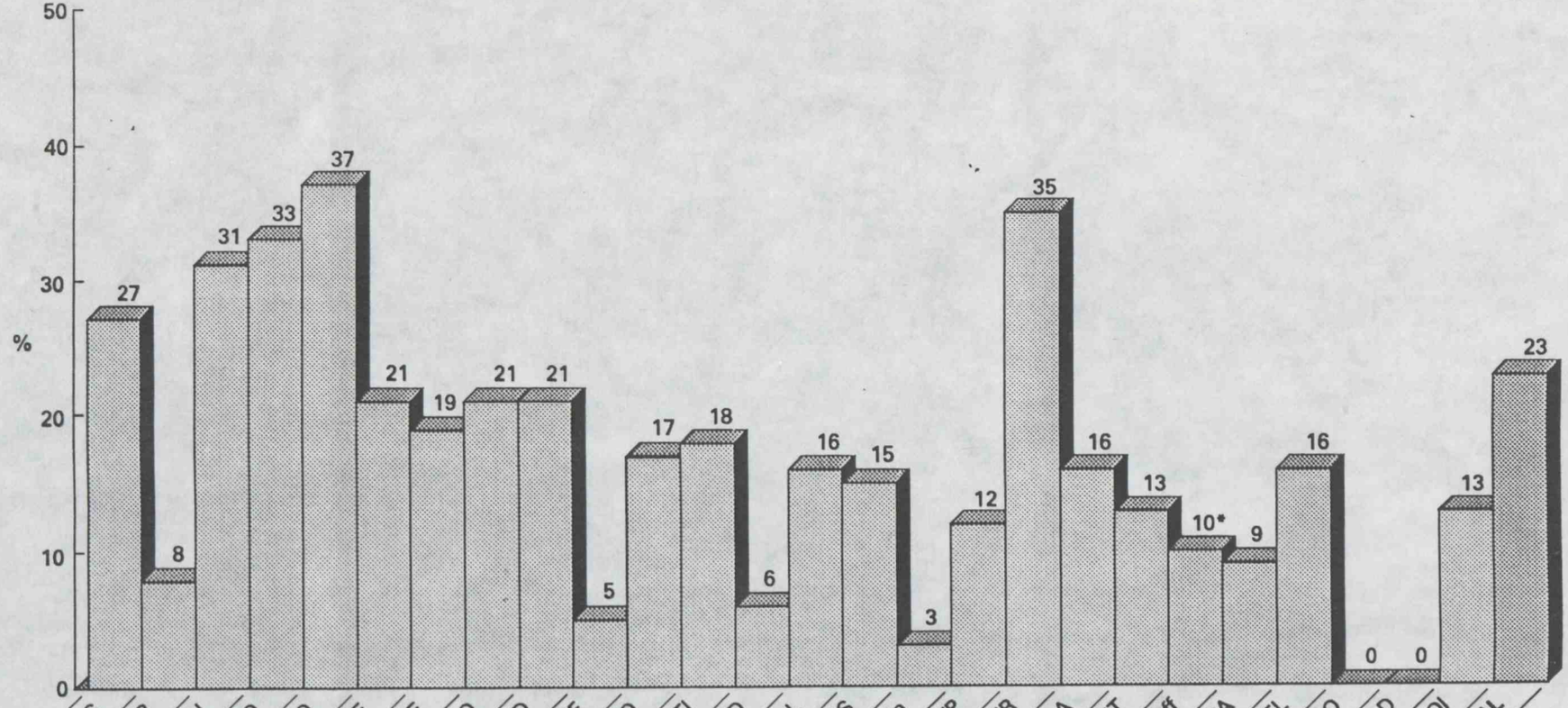
am asking the Chairman of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues to arrange for a summary of your Departmental objectives to be assembled in six to eight weeks' time, and will then look to next September's reports to reflect the progress achieved over the coming twelve months.

8. I am copying this minute to Sir Robin Butler (Cabinet Office).



21 October 1991

Percentage of Public Appointments Held By Women : 1990



DEPARTMENTS IN ORDER OF NUMBER OF APPOINTMENTS MADE	DSS	IR	DH	SO	HO	DE	DOE	NIO	LCD	MAFF	WO	DTI	MOD	OAL	DES	DEn	DTP	OFFER	FCO/ODA	HMT	Cab Off	SCA	OFTEL	CSO	ECGD	COI	TOTAL
TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS	7479	4615	4548	4386	4334	3816	3529	2686	2106	1684	1679	733	509	416	370	235	223	216	188	93	73*	32	25	12	10	8	44057
TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS HELD BY WOMEN	2052	392	1413	1452	1619	783	675	564	437	82	282	135	29	67	55	8	26	75	31	12	7*	3	4	0	0	1	10256

* Excludes Women's National Commission (52 members, all female)

Annex A

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES: STEPS TO IMPROVE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AND ETHNIC MINORITIES

GET THE RIGHT SPECIFICATION

* Look at the whole task of the committee or body concerned:

  - establish the different contributions required from its members/the team;
  - do not write the specification too narrowly, and distinguish between what is essential and what is desirable;
  - consider whether specific provision might be made for more non-executive or consumer representatives;
  - consider whether the interests of ethnic minority communities are likely to be affected.

* Seek to eliminate constraints, for example

  - consider offering payment and not just expenses;
  - make clear what expenses are available, for child care for example;
  - examine the qualifications required and eliminate any which are, on reflection, unnecessary;
  - re-examine application procedures and forms to avoid any inadvertent discriminatory references or omissions (for example to give women who have had a career break the opportunity to set out fully what alternative experience they have and cover all relevant experience, not simply paid employment);

WIDEN THE FIELD OF CHOICE

* Plan appointments and reappointments well in advance so there is time to spread the net wide.

* Use as much openness as possible about the process. Consider advertising for candidates in appropriate cases.

* Make better use of existing pools of talent, for example by arranging for feedback to be given on performance of those on existing central or regional public bodies. Encourage the feeding in of names of new contacts.

* Consider interviewing potential candidates by Ministers, local or central officials or headhunters.

* Target employers to identify suitable women and people from ethnic minorities in their organisations and sell the idea that service in public appointments can have a long term benefit to companies.

* Target people on career breaks, including where appropriate civil servants.

* Target people in the voluntary sector through the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Women's National Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

* Widen the number of nominating bodies and ensure that they are aware of equal opportunities requirements.

* Insist on shortlists rather than single candidates from organisations who may have a right to be consulted and insist that women and, if appropriate, ethnic minority candidates are represented on the shortlist or an explanation is given for their absence.

* Use the Public Appointments Unit as an additional resource.

TEST ASSUMPTIONS

* Wherever possible involve women and, where appropriate, people from an ethnic minority background in the selection process.

* Query whether plausible explanations for the lack of women or ethnic minority candidates really stand up, especially given the pools of qualified women and ethnic minority candidates available and the balance of skills and experience already represented on the board or committee concerned.

* Check that CVs are used sensibly, recognising the different career patterns and opportunities for development likely for women and people with an ethnic minority background.

* Ensure proper value is place on unconventional experience.

* Beware of 'tokenism'. Select on merit and do not rest on your laurels if a few additional appointments are made. You may be missing out on talent you need.

PUBLICISE ACHIEVEMENTS

* Ensure the role models of successful women and ethnic minority candidates are widely publicised in appropriate media.

MRS CHAPLIN
MISS SINCLAIR

WOMEN'S ISSUES

As you are aware, a short meeting has now been arranged between the Prime Minister and Mrs Rumbold on 24 October.

Mrs Rumbold wishes to discuss women's issues and the role of Asians (in the latter case, I think, primarily in the Party).

I should be grateful if Mrs Chaplin would set out her ideas on how we target more effectively women who are not high-flyers.

In addition, we need to address one outstanding item from Mrs Rumbold's two latest letters to the Prime Minister. This is the need to encourage more male ministers to speak on women's issues. I think the best way of handling this would be for Mrs Rumbold to write to colleagues. Her minute could include a specific endorsement by the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister could also usefully ask Mrs Rumbold about the progress of her meetings with groups of women around the country. I imagine you would like to see the notes of these.

Another item could be when the proposed change in departmental responsibility for these issues should be announced, as Miss Sinclair identified in her note of 2 October, subject to Mr ~~Harold's~~ Harold's views in due course.

I should be grateful for any other items which you think the Prime Minister should raise and for any steer you wish to give the Prime Minister.

WEC

(WILLIAM E. CHAPMAN)
16 October 1991 c:\home\women (ecl)

Mark Lorch

PRIME MINISTER

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

You have already agreed to write to all colleagues, launching an initiative to get more appointments of women (and blacks and Asians) from the great and the good list.

I understand that you did not have time to discuss the publicity arrangements with Gus, as you had hoped, before you left for the Party Conference. I now attach the papers and Gus will speak to you about them over the weekend.

You indicated earlier that you were content to sign the minute to colleagues, setting in hand the initiative. Would you please sign the minute which is at A.

(WILLIAM E. CHAPMAN)

11 October 1991

c:\home\public (ecl)

Prime Minister.
The attached minute has been signed but not despatched pending settlement of presentation. One possibility was quiet letter to Opportunity 2000 conference on October 28th. Given the trailer which is likely to appear in Mondays Today I would sent out asap so that depts understand what you have in mind
(Content)
AT 17/10

Yes.

Cons/ Pl. agree

PRIME MINISTER (1)

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

You have already endorsed in principle a proposal from the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues (MGWI), put to you by Tim Renton, for improving the numbers of appointments of women (and members of ethnic minorities) from the great and the good list. This involves Ministers setting specific objectives.

You agreed to send a personal minute to colleagues.

Since you last saw the draft, Mr. Renton's office have suggested an amendment (to paragraph 7) which would involve asking the Chairman of MGWI to arrange for a summary of Departmental objectives later this year and then to examine progress reports in a year's time. Mrs. Rumbold is happy with this.

Before writing out, you asked for advice on how we should publicise this initiative. Press Office, and Mr. Renton's office, advise that this would best be done by a reference in your speech to Opportunity 2000 on 28 October. You will recall that this is an organisation set up to improve companies' employment policies for women. The speech will be sent to the national media. Women's magazines, and papers for the minority communities, could also be targeted with news of the initiative. Press Office advise against any further special publicity efforts, devoted to the initiative alone. These might rouse expectations which may not be entirely fulfilled. If, after the first annual progress report, the results look good, we can seek more publicity then.

Content with the publicity arrangements proposed? ✓

Content to sign the attached minute? Yes.

WEC

(WILLIAM E. CHAPMAN)

2 October 1991

c:\home\public (ecl)

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

Personal Minute

No.

MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF DEPARTMENTS

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

1. The Ministerial Group on Women's Issues (MGWI) has recently reported to me their concern about the slowing down of the progress in the appointment of more women to public appointments. Last year, the percentage of women rose from 23% to 23.3%. The picture within individual Departments of public appointments held by women ranges from under 5% to well over 30% as shown on the attached chart at Annex A.

2. I share MGWI's concern and agree with the Ministerial Group that we cannot simply let matters drift on the basis of further exhortation to do better. Appointments must continue to be made on the basis of aptitude and merit, but I do not believe that the current pattern of appointments properly reflects the contribution that women could and should be making to public life. I now want to see this pattern changing. At the same time, I believe that there is scope to increase the representation of people from ethnic minority backgrounds. Members of Britain's different ethnic minority communities already make a very valuable contribution to the life of this country. I want to see their participation in public affairs extended by an increase in the number holding public appointments. Such data as we have now suggests that a very small proportion of public appointments is held by people from the ethnic minorities.

3. Many able women, with relevant qualifications and experience, are now putting themselves forward. The register maintained by the Public Appointments Unit (PAU) in the Cabinet Office now has women nominees as more than 30 per cent of the people on its books with a very much higher proportion in the under-50s or 40s. But the Public Appointments Unit is currently involved with only a few hundred appointments; many of the thousands of appointments and reappointments made each year are made by individual Departments.

4. We do not at present have similar data for appointments and nominations of people from ethnic minorities. But this information will be available from 1992. I am sure that Departments are already committed to ethnic monitoring of public appointments and appreciate the value to be gained from more detailed figures than we have now.

5. While I hope that the PAU's resources can be used more systematically by Departments, I believe that the pace of change will not be sufficient without some further Ministerial involvement. I therefore ask all Ministers in charge of Departments to develop a strategy to bring about a real and lasting change. In particular, I ask Ministers:

a. to take a close look at the record of their Department and question the explanations for the proportion of women and members of ethnic minorities holding appointments. How does your record compare with the best? What can be done to improve your record? What changes can you achieve over, say, a five-year period?

b. to appoint a Junior Minister (the Ministerial member of MGWI may be the appropriate nominee) to set appropriate, but testing, objectives and ensure that they are met. The Minister should be asked to prepare a report to be submitted to me in a year's time outlining your objectives, your achievements in increasing representation in key areas, and the changes which you have made to appointment procedures to keep up the momentum;

c. to ask the responsible Junior Minister to examine whether there is a case for the appointment of more non-executive or consumer representatives to boards, executive bodies and committees of inquiry. This could make an important contribution to our ideas for developing Citizens' Charters: non-specialists, some of whom might be women, will in many cases be well placed to make a valuable contribution to making boards and committees more aware of consumer or customer views or the views of special interest groups in appropriate cases; similarly, members of the ethnic minority communities can, and do, have an important input to such bodies;

d. to insist that when considering appointments or reappointments to public bodies, shortlists of proposed candidates are submitted, and that, if no women candidates are proposed, an explanation for this is given. In some cases, where the work of a body or committee will particularly impact on ethnic minority communities, the same procedure may be appropriate for ethnic minority representation.

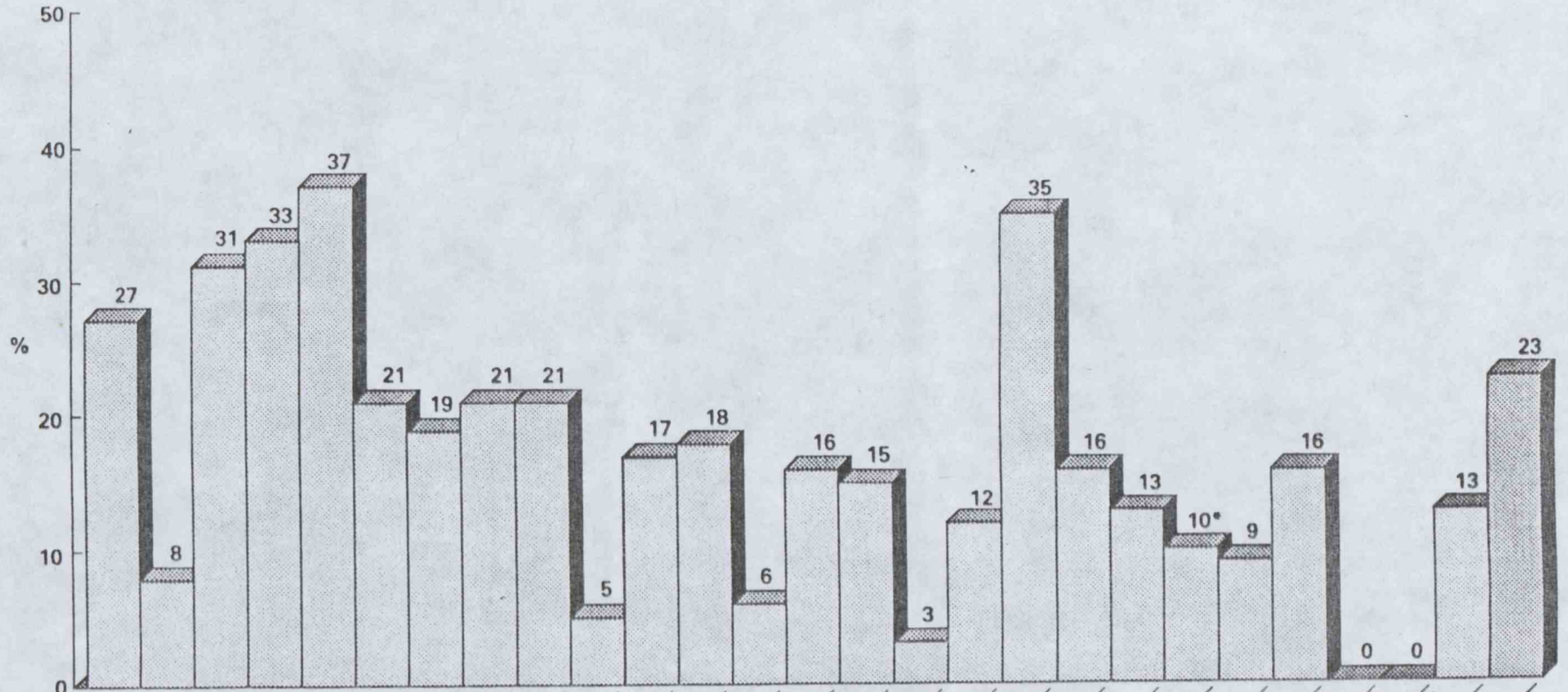
6. Annex B includes a number of steps which may be helpful to you. They have been suggested by a group of senior women civil servants and the Women's National Commission, to assist in the identification of qualified candidates from groups not adequately represented at present. While the initiative has come from MGWI in terms of the position of women on public bodies, I hope I have also made it clear that many ethnic groups are also under-represented. The search for able candidates for appointment from the ethnic minorities should be no less rigorous.

7. I am under no illusion that progress here will be easy. I well know that those making appointments are often balancing a whole range of requirements and desirable objectives. But I am convinced that we are dealing with an area where we must do better, and be seen to be doing better, in the interests of a cohesive society and a responsive and informed Government. I

am asking the Chairman of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues to arrange for a summary of your Departmental objectives to be assembled in six to eight weeks' time, and will then look to next September's reports to reflect the progress achieved over the coming twelve months.

8. I am copying this minute to Sir Robin Butler (Cabinet Office).

Percentage of Public Appointments Held By Women : 1990



DEPARTMENTS IN ORDER OF NUMBER OF APPOINTMENTS MADE	DSS	IR	DH	SO	HO	DE	DOE	NIO	LCD	MAFF	WO	DTI	MOD	OAL	DES	DEn	DTP	OFFER	FCO/ODA	HMT	Cab Off	SCA	OFTEL	CSO	ECGD	COI	TOTAL
TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS	7479	4615	4548	4386	4334	3816	3529	2686	2106	1684	1679	733	509	416	370	235	223	216	188	93	73*	32	25	12	10	8	44057
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  - consider offering payment and not just expenses;

  - make clear what expenses are available, for child care for example;

  - examine the qualifications required and eliminate any which are, on reflection, unnecessary;

  - re-examine application procedures and forms to avoid any inadvertent discriminatory references or omissions (for example to give women who have had a career break the opportunity to set out fully what alternative experience they have and cover all relevant experience, not simply paid employment);

WIDEN THE FIELD OF CHOICE

* Plan appointments and reappointments well in advance so there is time to spread the net wide.

* Use as much openness as possible about the process. Consider advertising for candidates in appropriate cases.

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PUBLICISE ACHIEVEMENTS

* Ensure the role models of successful women and ethnic minority candidates are widely publicised in appropriate media.

SIC

SUBJECT
CC MASTER

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

4 October 1991

Dear Joy,

This is to confirm what I told you over the 'phone this morning about the telephone call between the Prime Minister and Mrs. Rumbold last night.

The Prime Minister agreed to participate in a photo call with women Ministers during the Party Conference, to be followed by a press release to be put out by Mrs. Rumbold.

The Prime Minister also agreed to see Mrs. Rumbold after his return from CHOGM to discuss women's issues and ethnic minorities. Mrs. Rumbold said she would only need 15 or 20 minutes. I have asked Sandra Phillips here to be in touch with you to arrange a suitable time.

Yours sincerely,

William Chapman

WILLIAM E CHAPMAN

Mrs. Joy Hutcheon,
Home Office.

① ~~William~~
Fixed for
Thursday 24
October at 1830-1850
S 8/10

② p/w papers.
S 10/10

cc

JUDITH CHAPLIN

cc: Carolyn Sinclair

Mrs. Rumbold, as you know, had asked to speak to the Prime Minister about, as we thought, the handling of womens issues in the run-up to the general election. The phone call took place yesterday evening. In the event, Mrs. Rumbold asked whether the Prime Minister would be willing to have a photo call with women Ministers, as foreshadowed in your minute of 1 October, to be followed up by a press release. The Prime Minister aired his doubts about this but eventually agreed that it should be done. May I ask you to liaise with Mrs. Rumbold's office or take whatever other steps necessary to set this up?

Mrs. Rumbold then said that she would like to come and see the Prime Minister after the conference to talk about womens issues and ethnic minorities (this combined with several not so oblique references to the obstacles she encountered in trying to see the Prime Minister). The Prime Minister agreed to see her after his return from CHOGM. We will liaise with her office for a suitable date.

WILLIAM E CHAPMAN
4 October 1991
c:\wpdocs\home\chaplin (sr)

PRIME MINISTER (1)

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Since submitting Carolyn Sinclair's note to you last night about your telephone call with Mrs. Rumbold, one further thought has occurred to me which you could mention to her.

You and she agreed that more male Ministers should be encouraged to make speeches on womens issues. This has not yet happened (although you will be making such a speech to Opportunity 2000 later this month). Ministers could be prompted either by a minute from Mrs. Rumbold including a reference to your strong support; or by a round robin minute from yourself.

You have, however, recently sent a personal minute to Mrs. Rumbold: and you have agreed to minute all colleagues on getting more women from the great and the good list into public appointments. You do not want to undervalue the currency of personal Prime Ministerial minutes; I doubt if one is warranted on this occasion. You may therefore prefer Mrs. Rumbold to write. We can provide a suitably warm sentence supporting her initiative to meet groups of women around the country to hear their concerns.

WEC

W.E. CHAPMAN
3 OCTOBER 1991

C:\WPDOCS\HOME\WOMEN (MRM)

Prime Minister ©

Mrs Rumbold will be telephoning tomorrow evening to talk about the political handling of women's issues pre-Election. A note from Carolyn is below; I've also discussed with Judith.

You may well want to say to Mrs R. that you will listen and will then want to discuss with Sarah, Carolyn, Judith before responding fully to her. Meanwhile, you could urge her to get maximum publicity for the initiative at (X).

MR CHAPMAN

cc Mrs Hogg
Mrs Chaplin

2 October 1991

WOMEN'S ISSUES

You asked for my views on how women's issues should be handled in the run up to the Election. Mrs Rumbold wants to talk to the Prime Minister about this tomorrow evening.

What is currently happening

(X) Mrs Rumbold's meetings around the country with groups of women have not yet got off the ground. She is hoping to hold the first meeting this month, probably somewhere in the north of England. Thereafter she hopes to have such meetings around the country roughly at monthly intervals.

Mrs Rumbold's private secretary thinks that she will want to ask the Prime Minister whether he wants a high profile campaign on women's issues. She is likely to say that she hasn't got the resources to be very pro-active. We have heard all this before. It is hard to know how to help Mrs Rumbold because she seems to shy away from the suggestion that the Prime Minister should press the Home Secretary to ensure that adequate resources are available to implement a high profile policy on women. (In practical terms it would now be quite difficult to beef up that part of the Home Office for what may only be a matter of months, particularly since the long term aim after an Election is to transfer the main responsibility for women's issues to the Department of Employment).

The proposed change in departmental responsibility has not been announced. Any announcement would have to come from the Prime Minister. He will want to consider:

- whether to trail it in a speech or

- to save it for the Manifesto.

It is a change which is likely to be welcomed by most of the women's groups. (You may want to have a word with Michael Howard on the timing of this too WEC)

Next steps

The main step this Government has taken to help women is the increase in child benefit. There are no other big steps to be taken. Government encouragement in a number of areas - such as promoting the use of school premises after hours - could produce worthwhile small changes. Mrs Rumbold's ministerial group is pursuing issues like this.

More generally, I think two things are well worth bearing in mind in appealing to the female vote:

- a recent poll public opinion survey suggested that attitudes towards working mothers had shifted markedly over the past decade. A majority now think it quite right for mothers to go out to work;

- it is important not to sound exclusively concerned with the careers of highflyers. Many women, like men, will be lowflyers. The Government should make it clear that it is just as concerned with the problems of an ordinary mother who combines this important function with a fairly low-level job as it is with ensuring that more women seize the commanding heights in industry and professions. (Judith very strongly agrees with this. She'd like the chance to put a paper to you on this especially, plus other women's issues). WEC

CAROLYN SINCLAIR

471.CS

Prime Minister ①

In [redacted]'s absence (ill) today, I spoke to Mrs. Rumbold's P.S. who spoke to Mrs Rumbold. She is concerned that if there is not a photocall, there will be very little on 'women' at the Conference.

WEL
3/10

PRIME MINISTER

PARTY CONFERENCE AND WOMEN

Angela Rumbold had hoped to have an opportuntity to speak at the Party Conference at a fringe meeting to try to get a helpful message across about our policies on women's issues. Unfortunately, nothing had been arranged at an earlier stage and if an unadvertised meeting was set up outside the secure area, she would be lucky to get an audience of any size at all.

Lady Seccombe has therefore suggested that there could be a photo opportunity of you with your women Ministers and Angela could then hitch a press release on to that event.

Would you be prepared to do this if we can fix it up - it would probably be early evening on Wednesday?

You will be pleased to know that a number of women PPCs are proposing motions at the Conference:
Elizabeth Gibson (Employment and Training)
Annabel Goldie (Economy & Taxation)
Jacqui Foster (Defence)
Brenda Binge (Trade & Industry).

JC

JUDITH CHAPLIN
1st October, 1991

OK - but not keen. It's a good idea. V. grateful + Agree. Finally a post conference speech is better + could get more coverage.

I'll discuss with Angela. f.

FILE

MRS. CHAPLIN

MISS SINCLAIR

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Mrs. Rumbold has asked to speak to the Prime Minister briefly over the telephone on the handling of Women's Issues in the run-up to the General Election. We have provisionally fixed a time at 8.00 p.m. on Thursday evening.

I should be grateful if you would provide a short note or notes for the Prime Minister for his box tomorrow night with your views on the matter.

WILLIAM CHAPMAN

1 October 1991
a:\women.vlb

Judith

Rib

Please see the Mrs. Lincoln note on the flagged document about a Party Conf.

When I spoke to Mrs. Rumsfeld earlier this month she had hoped to speak at a fringe meeting. However, I now hear she has not managed to find a slot and is feeling sore about it. Can you help?

Mrs. Rumsfeld wants to speak over the telephone to Mr Rifkind (on women's issues)

(were sat 10 mins - on Tuesday)

will would be helpful if this could be sorted before then?

Lesley

27/5

Miss Sinclair (cc)

Following a request I made to HMT ages ago, I've attached minutes of Mrs. Shepherd's first meeting with businesswomen I have invited desperately late. I've ~~sent~~ told Mrs Rumbold's office to cc (although I had asked HMT to send her cc. automatically too). You may wish to see it.

There's anything you want to
draw to the attention of the
PM or to follow up in any
other way.

WKR

10/9.

HOME OFFICE
Queen Anne's Gate London SW1H 9AT

Direct line 071-273 4640
Switchboard 071-273 3000

Please reply to The Under Secretary of State
Your reference

Our reference

Date 12 September 91

Sarah Charman
Press Office
Prime Minister's Office

Dear Sarah.

WOMEN'S ADVISORY NETWORK

I hope you will find the attached information of some use should you need to answer questions on the Advisory Network.

Officials here are in the process of organising the first three meetings. They are to have the first meeting in London in October in October and another two by the end of the year. It is important to make it clear that meetings are to be held around the country not just in the capital. The rational behind this is:-

- to canvass the widest and most representative sweep of opinions possible
- because we recognise the problems there can be travelling
- so that Ministers hear first hand from people - may indeed even be able to see local projects - rather than having to rely on office-bound reports

You might consider contacting Val Elliott at the Sunday Telegraph if Mr Major is ken to take this any further forward. The Daily Telegraph (Alan Osborn of their political staff) also wrote quite a good piece at the time the idea was first mooted.

If you need any more information you know where I am.

Lesley McLeod
12 September 1991

Encs. 1. Briefing Note
2. Selection of Press Cuts.
3 PN.

Home Office

NEWS RELEASE

50 Queen Anne's Gate London SW1H 9AT
(Night line 071-273 4595)
Contact Number:

NOT FOR PUBLICATION, BROADCAST OR USE ON CLUB TAPES BEFORE 17.30 HRS 12 SEPTEMBER 1991.

12 September 1991 071 273 4640

NETWORK FOR WOMEN GETS MINISTERIAL GO AHEAD

The new informal women's advisory network, which has the personal backing of the Prime Minister, will meet for the first time in London this October, with two more meetings before the end of the year, Home Office Minister Angela Rumbold announced.

In a message of support for Mrs Rumbold's initiative the Prime Minister the Rt Hon John Major MP said:

"I believe that the initiative will make a valuable contribution to our aim in the Citizen's Charter to give more influence and choice to people.

"We should all be made aware of the ways in which women's responsibilities and concerns differ from men's and be prepared to review policies to ensure that they take these differences fully into account. The new informal network of women will complement the existing channels of the Women's National Commission and women's organisations generally, to inform the development of policy and public services."

The Prime Minister asked to be kept informed of progress with the initiative.

The meetings, Mrs Rumbold told colleagues today at the autumn meeting of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues, gave her the chance to hear first hand from women of all walks of life.

Each meeting will be based on a common theme and will be held at different venues around the country. Women, invited from a cross-section of the local community, will be able to meet Ministers from various Government Departments to discuss the issues which matter most to them.

Mrs Rumbold reported to colleagues that since announcing her plans to set up the network in her speech to the Soroptomist's conference at the end of July the response had been tremendous.

"I have received hundreds of letters from women keen to participate and share their experiences," she said.

"I am delighted that this important new initiative has received the blessing of the Prime Minister and of colleagues from other Departments. Their enthusiastic support will contribute to the success of the network and I am pleased that they intend to come to as many of the meetings as possible.

"Many of the letters I have received have been deeply moving. The issues which women talk about in their letters cover every aspect of everyday life.

"Their letters reflect the particular needs of working mothers and of those living on fixed incomes. They highlight the need to give full value to the skills and experience which many women gain at home bringing up children or caring for relatives," continued Mrs Rumbold.

"I hope that their concerns will point up ways in which Government policy can be made more responsive to the needs and aspirations of all women in society. We want to ensure that as many women as possible are able to contribute to the decisions which affect their daily lives."

Members of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues also agreed the domestic publication of the second UK Report on the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (C.E.D.A.W)..

The report demonstrates the progress that has been made across the board on a range of issues affecting women such as health, employment, education and childcare. It also looks at areas where changes in the law will combat discrimination and promote equal opportunities.

Other topics discussed were domestic violence, student grants, self-employment for women and the Citizen's Cahrter.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The members of the group are:

Rt Hon Angela Rumbold CBE MP	Home Office (Chairman)
Virginia Bottomley MP	Department of Health and Women's National Commission (Vice-Chairman)
Robert Jackson MP	Department of Employment
Sir Wyn Roberts MP	Welsh Office
Jeremy Hanley MP	Northern Ireland Office

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton MP	Scottish Office
Rt Hon Tim Renton MP	Privy Council Office
Gillian Shephard MP	Treasury
Hon Mark Lennox-Boyd MP	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Edward Leigh MP	Department of Trade and Industry
Michael Jack MP	Department of Social Security
Robert Key MP	Department of the Environment
Tim Eggar	Department of Education and Science

2. The UK ratified the C.E.D.A.W. Convention in 1986 and submitted its initial report in 1987. The report was examined last year by the CEDAW Committee which congratulated the UK on its excellent report and record. A limited number of copies of the second report is available from the Home Office.

HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT
16 AUG 1991

Prime Minister

MINISTERIAL GROUP ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

I reported to you on 24 July on the progress the Group was making and the work it might undertake. I referred to the plans I had for a speech to the Soroptomists' International Convention, in which I would take the status of women as my theme and announce the setting up of a new informal network of women.

2. I am writing to let you know about the steps I have taken since then. I hope that you will be prepared to give it your personal support. It would be particularly helpful if you could send me a message which I could read to Ministers at the next meeting of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues on 12 September.

Background

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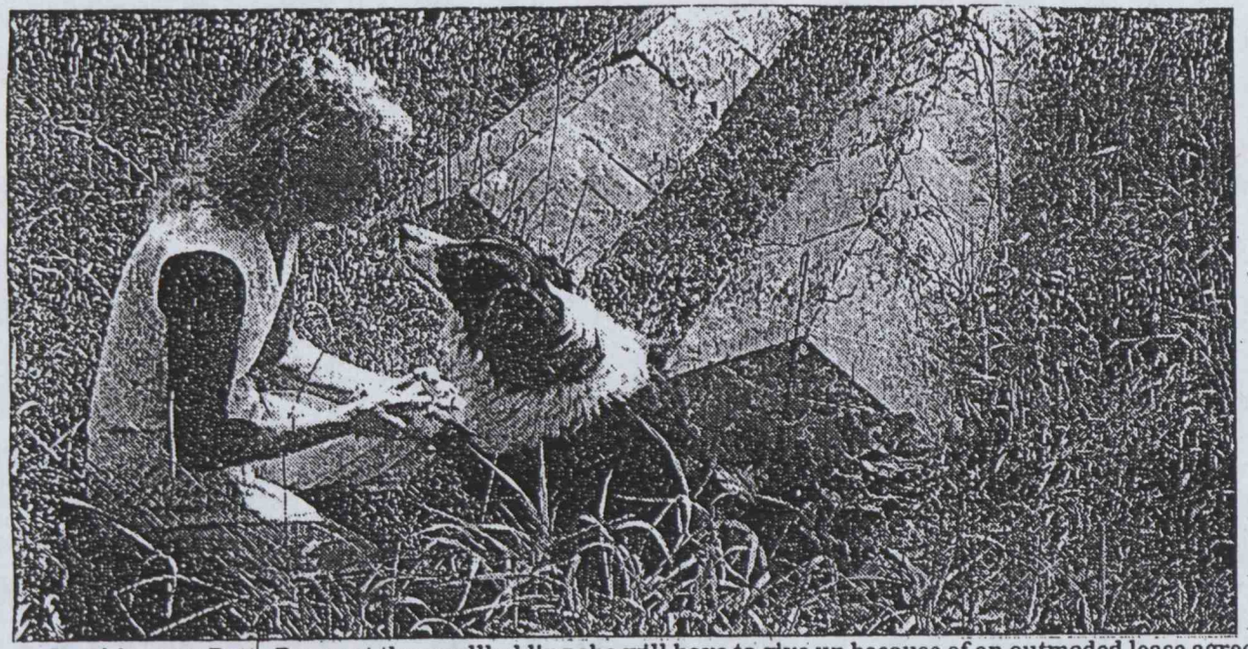
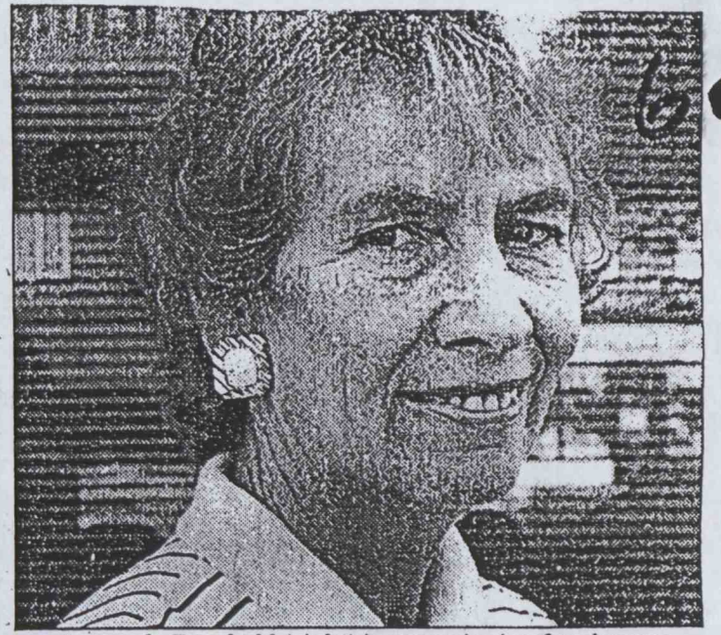
ANGELA RUMBOLD

Home Office
August 1991





Speaking out: Betty Pavey at the smallholding she will have to give up because of an outmoded lease agreement. Angela Rumbold (right) is campaigning for changes

Worried women write their wrongs

HOUSEWIVES will help to shape John Major's Britain after a successful campaign to persuade ministers to incorporate more ideas from women voters into Tory policy.

Women have taken up the Government's challenge to write about their fears, hopes and needs. Home Office ministers are now identifying the main areas for action.

The initiative follows a complaint last month by Mrs Angela Rumbold, chairman of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues, that she was fed up with being lobbied by professional, successful and wealthy women who had already made their mark in their careers or in public life. She wanted to know what ordinary women wanted from the Government to improve their lives.

She will report to colleagues next month and suggest a series of informal meetings with women. Their ideas are expected to help formulate Government policy, particulary on child-care, and may lead to more help for stay-at-home mothers. Budget measures will be put to the Treasury.

Their letters have shown that women are mainly concerned about pensions, child-care, career opportunities and the continuing need to break down prejudice.

Mrs Marion Grayson, 46, a mother

by Valerie Elliott
Home Affairs Correspondent

of three from Grimsby, believes the Government must do more to help the single-income family. She says ministers should recognise the worth of a mother who stays at home with her children and who participates in voluntary and charity work.

"The Conservatives say they are the party of the family but they don't understand what that means. You can't manage on one income these days if it is under £200 a week."

Her husband, Trevor, is an office manager and they have struggled for years to bring up their children. "You can see how we've managed by just looking at our house. We don't have a modern kitchen. We don't have holidays. But we've got three marvellous children of whom we're very proud and we've had no trouble. I truly believe it's because I was always there."

Mrs Betty Pavey, 62, from West Chiltington, Sussex, has run a five-acre smallholding for 30 years growing strawberries and raspberries. But last year her husband, Frederick, died and she has now been told the lease cannot be given to her.

She believes the equality laws have to be improved and that it is unfair she is going to be denied her livelihood. The local council has offered her the opportunity to purchase the smallholding for £135,000 but she cannot afford it.

"It's my life and my health is good, so I want to plod along. The thought of going off to live in a pensioner's flat terrifies me. Councils should get agreements brought up to date."

Mrs Irene Martin, 52, from Blackfield, Hampshire, insists that the Government must do more to help women with child-care in the early years. She believes women suffer by taking years away from work to bring up their children.

22

The Times

5 AUG 1991

Women's voices, loud and clear

From Ms Margaret Prosser

Sir, So Angela Rumbold, in an effort to convince women from all walks of life that the government is aware of their problems, is prepared to offer herself as an agony aunt ("Ministers expect child-care help for working mothers", report, July 30).

Of course the government is aware. Mrs Rumbold only has to look at the issues raised by women through the TUC women's conference, the National Conference of Labour Women or, indeed, the women's election agenda conference held by the UK Federation of Business and Professional Women, at which she herself was a speaker in January.

Women such as those she has said she wishes to hear from — nurses, teachers, shop assistants and those involved in setting up small businesses — were all in attendance at this year's conferences and spoke of their needs. They called for more and better affordable child-care and better vocational training opportunities and services for carers generally. Future governments were urged to take note of the particular needs of women from ethnic minorities and the needs of the ever-increasing numbers of part-time women workers.

Representations have been made to the government by, among others, the Maternity Alliance on EC directives which affect the health and safety of pregnant women at work as well as their entitlements to leave and the right to return to work. The Equal Opportunities Commission has made proposals on improvements to the sex discrimination and the equal pay acts and on a more coherent government approach to child-care.

There has indeed been a 60 per cent increase in the number of registered day nurseries, but this is from an extremely low base and is exceeded by the 81 per cent increase in the number of day nurseries which are exempt from registration.

Given the continuous stream of information to the government, why does Angela Rumbold feel the need to speak with women individually? Does she feel that the collective voices of women, speaking through representative organisations, are distorted or less accurate? If so, why does the government listen to the collective voices of the CBI or the Institute of Directors?

Yours faithfully,
MARGARET PROSSER
(National Women's Secretary),
Transport and General Workers' Union,
Transport House,
Smith Square, SW1.
August 1.

Daily Telegraph

Tuesday July 30 1991

What do housewives and working women really think?

Silent female majority urged to speak up

4

By Alan Osborn, Political Staff

THE AMBITIOUS task of finding out what British women think about their lives, but which they are unable or unwilling to express in public, was announced yesterday by Mrs Angela Rumbold, Home Office Minister.

She said an informal advisory group would be seeking "the views of those women who had never previously thought of sharing their experiences".

The initiative is seen as part of a drive to increase the Government's standing with women voters, which could eventually include moves on the tax front to help working mothers. Mr Major, as Chancellor, granted tax relief on workplace nurseries last year and calls have been growing to extend this to nurseries outside offices and factories.

However, Mrs Rumbold made no mention of this yesterday and officials said suggestions that such a move would be included in the Conservative manifesto were "pure speculation".

Although Home Office officials were diffident about using the term "ordinary women" in respect of the new advisory group, the initiative is designed to bypass the usual spokesmen and women for female causes.

Mrs Rumbold told an international Soroptimists convention in Nottingham that it was not certain that successful career women, or those who had the time, money and inclination to serve on committees or stand for election, were able to speak for women in general.

Most women were used to getting on with things without making a fuss, she said.

Mrs Rumbold, who chairs the Government's ministerial working group on women, is anxious for "first-hand knowledge of what directly needs to be done".

She added: "I want to hear for myself about the problems of living in the cities and in the country, the worries of the young mother and the pensioner, the challenges for the playgroup leader and the school teacher, the daily tribulations of the nurse and the shop assistant, the ups and downs of getting started in business."

The signs are that this will be done, initially, through churches, voluntary groups, small business organisations, playgroups and similar bodies that have little tradition of speaking out on social issues.

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The Times

Tuesday July 30 1991

Tories woo women in the run-up to election

By Robin Oakley, political editor

THERE is a growing expectation among ministers that the Conservative election manifesto will contain a pledge to give working mothers help with the cost of child care – whether or not their employers provide nurseries.

The government has been at pains to demonstrate its concern for women since the furore when John Major named his first cabinet without a woman.

Angela Rumbold, the minister of state at the Home Office, yesterday offered herself as a national agony aunt in

Rumbold: agony aunt for British women

a new effort to reach the woman in the street and to convince women that the government is aware of their problems and listening to what they have to say.

Mrs Rumbold, who heads the ministerial group on women's issues, said she wanted to reach out and talk to women outside the networks which already had the ear of the government. She told a meeting of the Soroptimist International in Nottingham: "I am going to hold a series of informal meetings with women from all parts of the country: women whose lives reflect the lives of the majority of women."

Mrs Rumbold issued an invitation which could see her office deluged with problem-page correspondence, saying: "I want to hear for myself about the problems of living in the cities and in the country: the worries of the young mother and the pensioner, the challenges of the playgroup leader and the schoolteacher, the daily tribulations of the nurse and the shop assistant, the ups and downs of getting started in business."

Mrs Rumbold said that the number of registered child minders in workplaces had increased 25 per cent over the past two years, while the number of places in nurseries had increased 60 per cent, following the boost from tax concessions.

Mr Major, as Chancellor, removed the tax which women earning more than £8,500 a year had to pay on the provision of workplace nurseries, and there was a flurry of expectation before this year's budget that there would be a tax concession on childcare costs for women whose firms did not provide workplace nurseries. That did not happen, but speculation has increased in ministerial circles that something will be offered, either in a pre-election budget next spring or as a pledge in the Conservative manifesto.

In a recent speech to the Conservative women's conference Mr Major said he wanted an "opportunity society for women as well as men". He said that more women wanted what men took for granted – "career, marriage and family" – and it was the role of government to set a framework which enabled women to make their own choices. The government had increased the value of child benefit and safeguarded it for the future because "it does not discriminate between those who go out to work and those who do not", he said.

File

DSG

cc: HO

10 DOWNING STREET (original faxed to M/State's Office)

THE PRIME MINISTER

SUBJECT MASTER OPS FILED ON:

Personal Minute
No. M/51

MINISTER OF STATE, HOME OFFICE

MINISTERIAL GROUP ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

I am delighted to hear of your initiative in setting up an informal network of women to bring their personal experience of the problems faced by women of all kinds to the attention of Government. I believe it will make a valuable contribution to our aim in the Citizen's Charter to give more influence and choice to people.

I hope that Departmental Ministers will give you every assistance in making this initiative successful. We should all be made aware of the ways in which women's responsibilities and concerns differ from men's and be prepared to review policies to ensure that they take these differences fully into account. Your new informal network of women will complement the existing channels of the Women's National Commission and women's organisations generally, to inform the development of public policy and public services.

I should like to be kept informed of your progress with this initiative.

John Major

11 September 1991

DSG

CAROLYN SINCLAIR

cc Judith Chaplin
Sarah Charman

MINISTERIAL GROUP ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

You will wish to see the Prime Minister's comments on your minute of 22 August. The minute to Mrs Rumbold has now gone and our Press Office and the Home Office will be seeking to publicise it.

The Prime Minister would like to have a word about this with Judith involved (you will see that he thinks this may be worth a fringe meeting at the Conference). I will ask Sandra to try to find a 10 minute slot in the diary which we can manage next week.

WILLIAM E CHAPMAN
11 September 1991
c\home\women (kw)

Carolyn or Jonathan? Pl. refer with Judith C. 7/25.8.

Yes - and Angela should publicise this in a big way (after Lord Ullswater dies down).

PRIME MINISTER 22 August 1991

* Also worth a briefing meeting @ Conference? ?

MINISTERIAL GROUP ON WOMENS ISSUES

There is a significant piece of politics — she must be given support. *

Angela Rumbold has sent you two letters on what she is doing about women. The first is a rather bland account of the work going on in the Ministerial Group which she chairs. This is all perfectly sensible. But her second letter is altogether more interesting. She has already announced that she intends to have a number of meetings with women throughout the country to hear their problems at first hand. Particular meetings will be targeted to particular groups.

Angela Rumbold would like the support of her colleagues on the Ministerial Group for this exercise. It is no good her sitting listening to a list of complaints from women which mainly concern a Department other than the Home Office. She needs to have immediate advice available, either from a ministerial colleague or at least from officials in the relevant department. She would like you to minute her on the lines of the attached draft to ensure that she gets this co-operation.

Comment

A series of meetings on the line Angela Rumbold proposes sounds very sensible. It is, as she says, in line with the Citizen's Charter. It will provide a fresh source of women's views over and above those filtered through the existing pressure groups.

Of course there are risks. But I think these could be reduced if the key departments could be involved. It will do them no harm to expose them directly to women's grievances. And if they have a good explanation for their policy, they may be able to defuse some of these grievances.

Recommendation

I recommend that you endorse Angela Rumbold's initiative and minute to her on the lines of the attached draft.

CAROLYN SINCLAIR

340.CS

FILE KK

MISS SINCLAIR

WOMEN'S ISSUES

You should have been copied Angela Rumbold's latest letter of 16 August on this subject. You mentioned to me that you were preparing a note on her earlier letter: you may now wish to adapt this to take account of the latest one.

WILLIAM E. CHAPMAN
16 August 1991
c:\home\cs (kk)

cc PS

MINISTER OF STATE

HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT
16 AUG 1991

Prime Minister

MINISTERIAL GROUP ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

Plan.

I reported to you on 24 July on the progress the Group was making and the work it might undertake. I referred to the plans I had for a speech to the Soroptomists' International Convention, in which I would take the status of women as my theme and announce the setting up of a new informal network of women.

2. I am writing to let you know about the steps I have taken since then. I hope that you will be prepared to give it your personal support. It would be particularly helpful if you could send me a message which I could read to Ministers at the next meeting of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues on 12 September.

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Angela Rumbold

ANGELA RUMBOLD

Home Office
August 1991

DRAFT MINUTE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO MRS RUMBOLD

MINISTERIAL GROUP ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

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A Britain Without Barriers

THE CONSERVATIVE RECORD FOR WOMEN

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Published by the Conservative Research Department
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The Rt Hon. Angela Rumbold, CBE, MP
Minister of State, Home Office.
Chairman of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues.

INTRODUCTION

by

Angela Rumbold

A concept close to the hearts of the British is the concept of "fairness". We want to know that our society is fair – that the opportunities available are freely available; that all can participate. Hence: "A Britain without Barriers". A Conservative theme, and a deeply British theme. We want opportunity for all, and we are out to get it.

Look, then, at what women have already achieved these last 12 years! Our position is in some respects almost unrecognisable. Not that individual women have necessarily changed their lifestyle. The point is that they are now far more able to *choose* their role, and to take it up because it expresses their personal convictions, wishes, ambitions and vocation.

Not least, women are far more able to combine the tasks and responsibilities of raising a family – of nurturing the citizens of tomorrow – with participation in opportunities outside the home. For example, it is not now the choice between full time work, or no work at all. Any combination of part-time work, flexitime, career breaks, job-sharing or what-have-you is now widely available. Many women need to contribute to the family's earnings and contribute to the

improving lifestyle so many famililes have enjoyed over the last decade. Many want outside involvement and stimulus. Many want to devote themselves to looking after their children and running the home – not least those with young children. The point is that all these circumstances can now much more easily be accommodated and in many cases combined. Choice, opportunity and freedom – as realities, not as concepts – are gaining ground, fast.

With these sorts of advances being made – and this publication details a wide range of advances in health, childcare, taxation, safety and other important areas besides – it is madness to put the clock back and try and treat women as if they were an oppressed minority or second-rate citizens. We don't want a "Ministry for Women", like the Labour Party plan. We are not a "minority", and don't want to be treated as one! We don't want to be labelled and patronised; and we don't want women's growing contribution to be relegated to a political ghetto fit only for discussion of "women".

Women have made too much progress, and, frankly, are too strong in their position in British society, to be hived off from the mainstream. We want the *practical,* step by step progress of the last 12 years to be continued into the future, so that "A Britain without Barriers" is simply a description, not a goal.

Enormous progress has been made, and will continue to be made. As Chairman of The Ministerial Group on Women's issues, my group has highlighted many areas for improvement during the next few years, such as employment and education trends. This will continue the pattern of advance so successfully pursued over the past few years.

The key point is that advance should continue to be pragmatic and practical, rather than "ideological". We want neither tokenism, nor the kind of favouritism that turns our concept of fairness on its head. Women, I believe, want real opportunity; they want to be able to "make it" on the basis of merit; they want freedom to make their own decisions; they want to take advantage of a current of events which is flowing in their favour.

This Conservative Government takes pride in what we have achieved since 1979. It is right that we look forward with confidence.

A BRITAIN WITHOUT BARRIERS

The Conservative Government has a fine record on realising opportunities for women. The fruit of our work is that women are much better placed to make their own choices about the way they run their lives.

Opportunities have been created, and have been seized. For example, the number of women self-employed has *more than doubled* since 1979. Next to Denmark, Britain now has the highest proportion of women working in the European Community. The position of women in our society has been transformed.

There is more yet to be done. We must continue to develop real choices for women. There are many resources of talent and initiative as yet untapped. Many women want to invest their energies and abilities in the work of bringing up children. Many women want to progress in the workplace. Many want to combine both roles. Our object is to break down the barriers – to provide real freedom so that women are able to contribute to the full, and to benefit to the full, whatever their vocation.

While recognising that "A Britain without Barriers" is a long-term task, not an accomplished fact, it is important to be aware of just how far we have come in little over a decade.

- Independent taxation for women.
- 50% more nursery places since 1988.
- Extended cervical cancer screening.
- Family credit.
- Fathers' responsibilities enforced.
- More science for girls at school.
- 20% more women in employment.
- 100,000 more women in higher education.
- Better help for family carers.

– and more.

In so many areas, things have improved greatly for women. And they are continuing to improve. This publication is our chance to demonstrate just how much has been achieved by women these last 12 years. There is a story to tell, and we are glad to tell it.
We want, for example, to point to changes such as the growth in part time employment, which greatly helps

women to combine family responsibilities with opportunities in work. New training opportunities, job-sharing, flexi-time and other opportunities have all opened out fields of choice previously unknown. And it is vital to create a true awareness of how much of this flexibility and opportunity could be lost under Labour's plans for a "Minimum wage" and under the Social Charter, both of which would make employers much less keen to take on, or keep, women employees.

Flexibility is a key factor that the labour market has to offer women – and many women have to offer to the labour market. That flexibility, with its advantages to all sides, should not be threatened.

Perhaps the most important mark of Conservative success in opening the way is that women – and "women's issues" – are less often being pigeon-holed. It is becoming more normal to be aware that "women's isues" emcompass everything, in politics as elsewhere. Whether it be foreign affairs or economic policy, defence or the environment, women want and expect to be considered in terms no different from anyone else. Equally, no-one is interested in pursueing specific women's interests in a way which ends up making women side-lined on everything else. Of course there *are* issues of particular relevance to women. Screening for breast cancer and cervical cancer is an obvious example. That is why there will always remain a special agenda relating to women's needs, just as there will remain particular forms of insight that women can bring. But it would be a cruel irony if a policy towards increasing the participation of women in society ended up, by its approach, restricting their influence and sphere of opportunity. That is not the Conservative way.

In the following pages, we look at specific areas of policy where the Government has worked to create opportunities for women. As you will see, much has been achieved and there is more in the pipe-line.

But reading these pages it is important to bear in mind that the concerns and interests of women are as wide as politics itself. Here we look only at that small segment of the concerns of all citizens that relate to women in a particular way. The true role of women in our society could never be segmented in anything so narrow as "women's policy".

WOMEN AND TAXATION

Tax is one of the most important factors in our standard of living. A substantial proportion of all of our earnings goes in taxation, but the *rate* of income tax has been cut by a quarter for basic rate payers over the last 12 years. As a result, every taxpayer takes home far more of their earnings.

But the Conservative Government has not just been interested in reducing how much you pay – benefiting men and women alike. It has also made big changes in how and when tax is paid, changes which have brought particularly important benefits to women.

To begin with, independent taxation for married women has been introduced. For the first time, women with an income of their own can now deal directly and independently on tax matters, and with complete privacy. This reform has been widely welcomed.

Independent taxation has brought more to women than privacy. In its first year of operation, one and a half million women saw their tax bills fall as a result.

Also, married men and women, single men and single women are all entitled to the same tax allowance. The married man's allowance has been replaced by a new married couple's allowance, which can be attached to the husband's or wife's income, according to circumstances. Married couples now have two separate capital gains tax allowances.

This is a great improvement all round – particularly for women. Women have also benefited from major changes in the way savings are taxed. It used to be that, through the Composite Rate Tax, all savers had to pay tax on their savings, even though they may not have been earners or had enough income for them normally to be eligible for tax. This particularly affected married women, many of whom are below the tax threshold.

Now, since April 1991, 5 million married women no longer need to pay any tax on their bank or building society savings income. 4 million pensioners have also benefited from this – well over half of them being women.

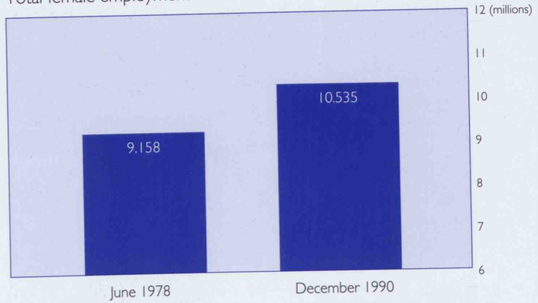
WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT

Britain now has a higher proportion of women in employment than any other European Community country except Denmark. And we are the only EC country where the *un*employment rate is lower for women than for men.

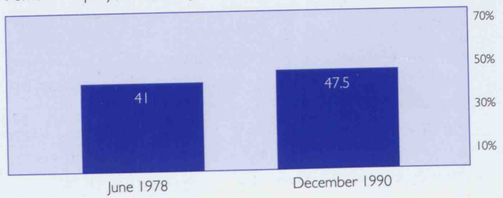
We believe that it is up to individual women to make the key choices – for example between going out to work and working at home. But aiming for "A Britain without Barriers" means removing obstacles that would make either choice difficult. Here we concentrate on opening the way in employment.

Great progress has been made since 1979. The number of women in employment has increased by nearly 20%. The charts show the degree of progress over 12 years.

Total female employment

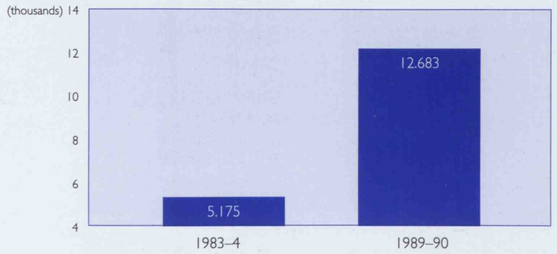


Female employment as a percentage of all employment



The increase in women's participation has been particularly marked in a number of key professions. Solicitors are a good example here.

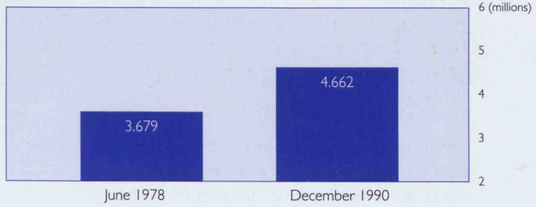
Number of practicing women solicitors – actual figures



Industry and commerce are also attracting far more women. According to a survey on recruitment patterns, conducted by Blue Arrow Personnel Services and Ashridge Management Research Group, nearly half of all companies are now offering more flexible working conditions or better deals to attract and retain female staff. They recognise that women provide a large and often under-utilised pool of talent.

Many women are particularly attracted to part-time work as it allows them to combine work with family responsibilities. There has been huge growth during the 1980s in the availability of part-time work. The Labour Force Survey of 1988 showed that 8 out of every 10 women working part-time specifically wanted a part-time, rather than a full-time, job.

Part-time female employment



Enabling more women who wish to work to do so is clearly important economically. The pattern of birth rates in the UK during the 1970s means that far fewer young people will be joining the workforce during the next few years. That means that companies will need to look elsewhere for their recruits. Women, including women

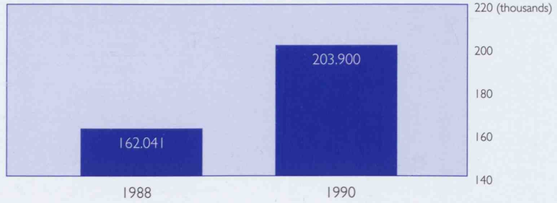
"returners" who had worked before having children, will increasingly be in demand. A recent survey by Price Waterhouse and Cranfield found that firms in Britain offer better training opportunities for women returners than other European countries. Over 200,000 women return to work every year.

Childcare

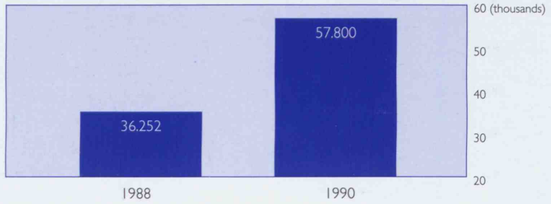
The Government has worked to support schemes that encourage returners. Thus, childcare facilities are being provided to enable women to take advantage of training and educational opportunities. For example, since April 1991, Training and Enterprise Councils have been required to provide help with child care where necessary to all trainees who are included in the Employment Training (ET) and Youth Training (YT) guarantee groups.

Since the 1990 Budget, there are also tax incentives for those who use workplace nurseries. Increasing the supply of good quality nursery care in this way helps employers to meet the expected changes in workforce patterns over the 1990s. Such incentives will give added momentum to an already rapid increase in private and voluntary provision, which has seen a marked advance even in the last two years.

Childminders – number of places

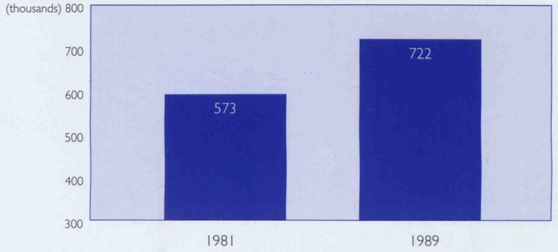


Private and voluntary day nurseries – increase in number of places

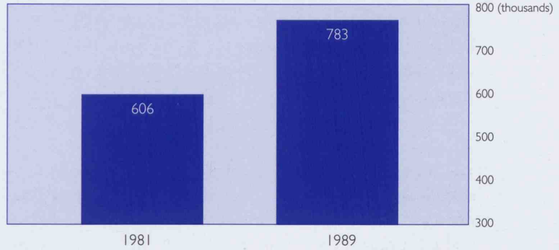


Mothers who want to work are helped by the increasing provision for under-fives. The Government has designated the training of teachers for the under-fives a National Priority Area. Now 86% of all 3 and 4 year olds are in education or some form of organised day care. Spending on the under-fives by local authorities has increased by 45%, over and above inflation, since 1979. Britain now spends a larger proportion of its national income on our under-fives than in 1979. This has brought clear results, as the chart shows.

Number of children under the age of five in education at school



Number of children under the age of five in day care



We are, additionally, almost alone in providing free education for all children aged 5 and over. In most other countries education begins at 6 or 7.

Given the vitality of the private and voluntary sector in childcare provision, a massive development of publicly-funded and managed childcare would be counter-productive, serving to supplant the innovative and market-led role that is being successfully played by *non* governmental bodies. The private sector is far more able

to respond to the developing choices and standards that women demand for their children.

Local authorities do have important functions concerned with childcare, including the duty to regulate and oversee these services. But they should be enablers and facilitators, rather than direct providers. Decisions about the type and amount of childcare should be made by *parents,* in the light of their own circumstances. Public sector provision should be concentrated on children most in need – for example, children at risk.

The Government can have an important role in encouraging the right kind of provision. The Ministerial Group on Women's Issues wanted to see more use of school premises for childcare schemes. Accordingly, the Department of Education and Science wrote in 1989 to the Chairman of Governors of all maintained schools encouraging them to make maximum use of their premises for children during out of school hours – to be paid for by parents who wished to make use of it. Just one year on, a survey showed that, during the year, the number of such schemes had doubled.

Education

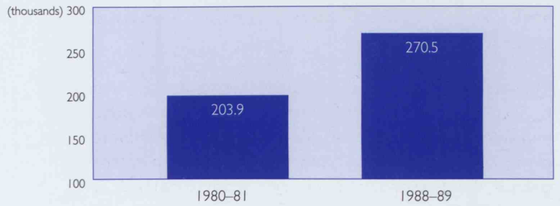
Opportunities in employment often follow from opportunities in education. Much work has been done, for example through the new national curriculum, to ensure that, in an increasingly technological society, girls will have as much opportunity as boys to study science from an early age. The Technical and Vocational Education Initiative has worked to encourage girls to embark on scientific careers. Youth Training also helps in this direction.

Changes to the decision-making powers of further and higher education institutions maintained by local authorities will allow providers to tailor courses more particularly to the needs of women – for instance, part-time courses, the development of distance learning material, or varying course starting times.

The Department of Education is encouraging greater access to learning courses for adults who lack the traditional qualifications for entry into higher education, some of which are targeted specifically at women. Providers of adult education are becoming increasingly interested in developing courses offering adults a "second chance".

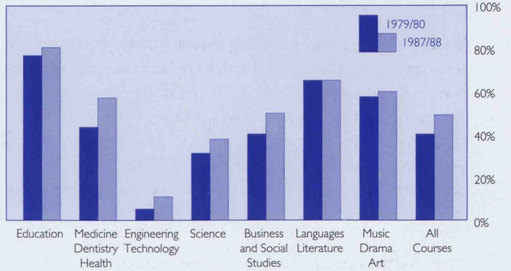
Perhaps most important of all, there are now very many more women in higher education than in 1979. And they make up a higher *proportion* of all those attending universities or polytechnics than previously – 46% today compared with 42 % in 1979.

Women in Higher Education –full-time students



Also of importance are the subjects for degree courses where women have disproportionately increased their participation in engineering, science, business studies and medicine.

Female students as a percentage of all students: by selected full-time first degree courses, 1979/80 and 1987/88



Government Employment

The Government, as a major employer, also recognises the part it can play in extending workplace opportunities for women. This is particularly true within the National Health Service, Britain's – indeed, Europe's – largest employer. Three-quarters of its one million staff are women.

- Health authorities have increased their provision of work-place nurseries.

- NHS staff can now take "special" leave to take care of a sick child, or to look after their child because the child-carer is ill.
- More part-time medical training posts have been set up to encourage women doctors into surgical specialities.
- Dentists now have access to two schemes to help those seeking a career break to keep in touch with professional developments and to retrain prior to returning to work.
- GPs now find it easier to employ temporary staff to cover for a colleague's maternity leave. The new GP contract also recognises explicitly that women GPs often want to combine a career in general practice with bringing up a family. Thus, it has introduced new opportunities to work part-time and to "job-share". In Scotland, the number of women GPs has risen from 693 to 847 in just four years.

As Virginia Bottomley said recently, we are moving away from the Florence Nightingale image.

> "Her commitment would probably not have combined domestic responsibilities and part-time work, flexi-hours and career breaks".

Conservatives recognise the key importance of family life. The family must hold a central place in the life of our society. It also holds a central place – sometimes *the* central place – in the lives of women. Government policy in this area covers a wide range of family needs and concerns – from various measures of income support, to measures that enhance parental responsibility, and assistance with the caring role of many families.

Direct financial help to all families with children comes through Child Benefit. Introduced by a Conservative Government, Child Benefit is rising to £9.25 per week for the first child and £7.50 for subsequent children. Its real value will be protected from inflation. This is a highly significant benefit for families because it is universal and it is payable to the responsible parent (usually the mother).

Maternity payments have increased by more than 11%, over and above inflation, under this Conservative Government. Maternity Allowance has increased to £40.60, and low income families can claim a £100 lump sum as well.

The Government has been particularly concerned to provide special help for families on low incomes. Family Credit – a system for providing extra income for families with low wage-earners – now goes to 325,000 families. This is nearly half as many again as formerly received Family Income Supplement, which it replaced in 1988. In 98% of cases, this money is paid to the mother. Now families can qualify if they work more than 16 hours – a recent reduction from 24 hours – to include more families. The average award is over £30 per week – almost three times the level of support available in 1979, even after allowing for inflation.

The British income related benefit system is among the most generous in the world.

Financial support is important. All told, spending on the key family benefits – at £10 billion a year – is 29% higher in real terms than it was in 1979. But measures of a different kind to strengthen parental responsibility are also vital to the Conservative approach.

Parental responsibility is being strengthened in a number of ways. For example parents are gaining a much more influential role in education, through open enrolment and school governorships.

The Maintenance Enforcement Bill will ensure that absent fathers pay their fair share of the costs of bringing up their children.

A Child Support Agency will help trace absent parents, emphasising our conviction that the responsibilities of parenthood are for life.

The new Criminal Justice Bill also puts emphasis on parental responsibility for the actions of their children.

Finally, *the Children Act,* the most important reform of Child Law this century, has replaced the 28 day safety order (where children thought to be at risk could be "removed" from their parents) with an 8 day Emergency Protection Order which parents can challenge after 72 hours. Children can now only be placed in care if there is real evidence of harm.

The Government has also sought to assist families in their

role in caring for the elderly, the mentally ill and the disabled. These caring roles, which are frequently fulfilled by women, are of immense value, not only to the individuals cared for, but also to society as a whole. In recognition of this, Government spending on Community Care has risen very substantially since 1979 – by 68%, after allowing for inflation. Examples of the kind of areas of improvement include:

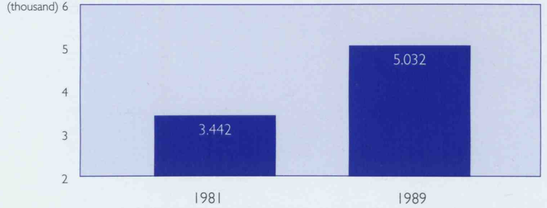
- 20% more home helps
- 30% more day centre places for the elderly
- 33% more day centre and day hospital places for the mentally ill
- A *three-fold* increase in the number of community psychiatric nurses

Three new grants have been introduced, along with new complaints procedures and local authority inspection units. Helping carers will remain a priority, and the improvements and achievements of recent years are part of continuing progress on the issue.

While health is of importance to all people – and all will benefit from Conservative reforms which give more opportunity for GPs to help their patients – there are health issues which are of particular importance to women. On these, we have a record of achievement that has been widely acknowledged. A good example is screening for breast and cervical cancer:

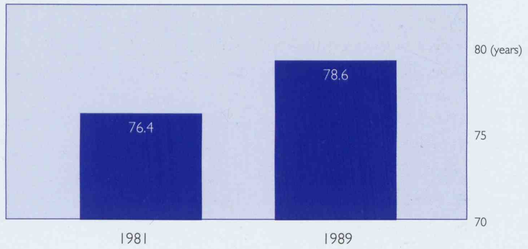
- We are the first country in the European Community to launch nationwide screening programmes for breast and cervical cancer. These are based on a computerised call and recall system.
- More women are being screened for cervical cancer: the majority of GPs receive the higher target payments that have been made available to encourage greater activity on this issue.
- Specialised breast screening centres have been set up over most of the country and all eligible women – aged between 50 and 64 – should have been invited for screening by 1993.
- The report of the Advisory Committee on Breast Cancer Screening concluded that the screening programme could reduce mortality in the eligible age group by around a quarter by the year 2000.

Cervical Cancer – number of smears taken



Other medical advances in areas of concern to women include a decrease, over the last 12 years, in deaths of women in childbirth and perinatal and infant mortality, while life expectancy for women has increased from 76.4 years in 1979 to 78.6 years today.

Increase in life expectancy for women



More of our children are now being protected against diphtheria, tetanus, polio and whooping cough: four out of five GPs have attained their immunisation and vaccination targets.

Safety is also an issue that is frequently of special concern to women. For example, violence against women demands special skills from the police force. Hence the specific training for police officers to deal with domestic violence is recognised as a great advance.

The Government is committed to a strong police force. Funding has increased by nearly 70%, after inflation, since 1979. The number of police officers has increased by over 15,500 since 1979.

More particularly, the UK has played a leading role in identifying the problem of violence against women and we have taken positive action to reduce it. Practical advice to women on how to protect themselves was included in the Home Office Handbook, `Practical Ways to Crack Crime'. Many of the Safer Cities projects sponsored by the Home Office focused on the safety of women, setting up safe transport systems and encouraging lessons in self-defence.

The first Conference of European Ministers on Physical and Sexual Violence Against Women was held in March 1991. Britain was among 16 European countries which signed the Declaration arising from the Conference, covering necessary legislation, police and judicial aspects, assistance and relief, prevention and research. But we have already been working on these issues for years. For example:

- The first Domestic Violence Unit was set up by the London police force in 1984. There are now well over 40 such units in London alone and many other police forces have taken similar action.
- As early as 1983, Home Office guidelines recommended that police officers investigating rape should be specially trained, and the victims should be examined, if possible, away from police stations and by women doctors. Special rape examination suites have been set up in a number of forces.
- The Criminal Justice Bill ensures that those offenders who show themselves to be a persistent danger to women will receive tougher custodial sentences.
- Between 1984 and 1989 the average sentence lengths for crimes against women almost doubled.
- Over 350 local Victim Support Schemes are now in operation. Government funding for the schemes amounted to £4.5 million in 1990-91.

- The number of women in the police force has increased by over a half since 1979.

Whilst concentrating on the need to protect women from crime, the particular needs of women in prison have also not been forgotten. A unique scheme at Holloway – Britain's largest women's prison – gives mothers the opportunity to spend a full day with their children on two Sundays a month. These visits are open to all sentenced women at Holloway, as well as those on remand for more than three months.

Angela Rumbold, the prisons minister, said that the scheme appeared to be a great success. "I think that it restores the women's confidence and enhances their sense of responsibility". (7th April 1991). A similar scheme is being considered for Styal Women's prison in Cheshire, and will be developed in prisons around the country for men as well as women.

The Labour Party in their document *"A new Ministry for Women"* (March 1991) state that: "setting up a new Ministry for Women will be a priority for the next Labour Government.

The key problem in Labour's approach is that it is essentially restrictive towards women – relegating all "women's issues" to a specific "Ministry for Women".

Many who support such a proposal misunderstand its likely effect. This would be for the interests of women in policy issues to be sidelined more than ever. It would take us in the opposite direction from our goal of "A Britain without Barriers". There are, as we see it, three main reasons why such a Ministry would be harmful.

First, it would inevitably narrow the focus of women's contribution to those areas that are of *specific* or *exclusive* interest to women. This, we believe, is to underestimate both women's range of contribution and women's range of interest. There should be full integration into every aspect of politics, not an artificial segmentation of the role of women.

Second, such a "Ministry" centres on names and formalities – the idea of having a special Minister for Women. There is a real risk that, when something is set up, called by a fancy name, one imagines the job is done. This is "tokenism". Like having a token woman on a TV panel, one has a token "Ministry". End of story.

Third, the "Ministry" is bound, according to Labour's plans, to be incredibly bureaucratic in approach, and lacking in effectiveness. It would establish not only its national machinery, but also an array of regional offices, which in turn would monitor local councils, each of which would have to draw up an annual "women's action plan"; there would be a Parliamentary Select Committee on women; women's regional advisory commissions; an extension to the work of the Equal Opportunities Commission; a review of the role of the Women's National Commission; a Scottish Minister for Women; plus no end of annual reports, consultations, `gender balance' regulations, and so on.

This is choosing the shadow instead of the substance; restrictiveness instead of opportunity; tokenism instead of real achievement; bureaucracy instead of choice.

Women want the substance of freedom, not the shadow. That is why we have been working, over the last 12 years, to bring the real, practical changes that will be of real, practical help.

WOMEN AND THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

The Conservative Party needs no lessons on the contribution, importance or role of women. The Conservative Women's Organisation, with more than half a million members, is the largest women's political organisation in the world. The first woman MP to take up a seat in the House of Commons was Conservative. The first UK woman Prime Minister was Conservative. Throughout the voluntary side of the Party, women have held the highest offices including the chairmanship of the senior body – the National Union; and also the Chairmanship of provincial Area Committees; the Conservative Trade Unionists; the Conservative Political Centre and other key bodies. Half of those employed by the Party are women. And John Major has appointed a woman to head his Policy Unit at Number 10 and another woman to be his Political Adviser.

The Conservative Government has made sure that it is at the forefront of moves to strengthen the role of women and to safeguard their interests. Thus:

- The Ministerial Group on Women's Issues was set up by the Home Secretary in May 1986 to provide a co-ordinated examination of policy issues of special concern to women. Angela Rumbold, CBE MP, chairs the group and Ministers from 12 other Departments are represented on it.

- The Ministerial Group oversaw the preparation of the report to the UN on the "UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women". In January 1990 the UK was congratulated by the United Nations for being at the forefront of countries dealing with the issues raised by the UN convention.

The Conservative Party is a body which is not only committed to helping women – but also a Party which benefits enormously from the contribution of women and from the resources that its woman members provide. Ours is a truly open Party. And we mean "open". There is no demand for "quotas", for "statutory women"; and we will not support the restrictiveness of token "Ministries" either. Our confidence in the vital contribution of women is strong enough for us not to feel the need for bureaucratic tinkering. It is the substance, not the shadow, that we pursue.

We are proud of our record in providing women with the help, support and encouragement they need. "A Britain without Barriers" is an objective which sums up many areas of Conservative policy – none more so than with regard to women. It is our conviction that under a Conservative Government, "A Britain without Barriers" will become a vision that is increasingly fulfilled. Fulfillment for women is a crucial part of that goal.

"I look to the 1990s under a Conservative Government, for greater opportunities for women in the home, workplace and in the political life of this country. Women are increasingly judged by their talent, ability and enthusiasm. This decade will see great numbers of women achieving their ambitions, making us truly a Britain without Barriers".

Hazel Byford (National Chairman, Conservative Women's Committee).

"The 1990s will be an exciting decade for women. We need many more women in Parliament, not to balance the numbers but for our skills, experience and ability. I am confident we will achieve our goal".

Baroness Seccombe (Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Party).

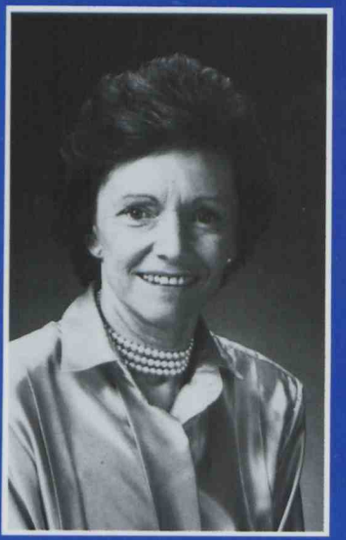
"I worked for 15 years in engineering and four years as a City Councillor. I know women can do it if they just come forward. More women in Parliament will give a real impetus to using the knowledge, experience and abilities in all areas of our national life".

Angela Knight (Conservative Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Erewash).

"I am a successful, self-employed Consultant Specialist Nurse, "Breast Care", serving the NHS and Private Sectors. I believe in the emphasis of Conservatism on achievement by self determination for all, regardless of race, gender, colour or creed. This policy has been of particular inspiration to me as a woman who happens to be black".

Lurline Champagnie (Conservative Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Islington North).

Hazel Byford



Baroness Seccombe

Angela Knight

Lurline Champagnie

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HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

24 JUL 1991

Dear Prime Minister

I have seen Mr Chapman's letter of 30 May to my Private Secretary and am grateful for your response to my letter and paper of 19 April on women's issues.

I was delighted to learn that you were in agreement with the proposals set out in that paper, and am very much in accord with your slight variant to those proposals, as set out in Annex A of Mr Chapman's letter. I was also most grateful for the words of support you offered to the press in connection with my speech to the Highflyers' Conference in May.

Mr Chapman enquired about future speeches and the possibility of a publication outlining the Government's action on women's issues. I enclose a copy of the speech I gave last month to the Conservative Women's Conference, plus a copy of A Britain Without Barriers, which was launched at the conference, and which constitutes a useful and concise summary of our achievements in this area. I am sure you will also be aware of the quite excellent document, The Best of Both Worlds, launched last week by Michael Howard. A number of the themes contained in it go to the heart of much of the work we are doing on the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues.

I am not sure that there is scope for a further publication at this stage, though I would be happy to explore the possibilities more fully if you felt that this would be of value. I am, however, very much in favour of you devoting the whole or substantial part of a speech during the summer or autumn to matters of specific concern to women, and will of course be happy to provide whatever assistance I can. You might also like

/to note that

The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street

to note that I will be taking the status of women as my theme in a speech at the end of this month to the Soroptomists' International Convention in Nottingham, where I plan to announce the setting up of a group of women outside government in the professions, business and voluntary sector to advise me. I will of course ensure that a copy is sent over to you.

Turning now to the more substantive points raised in Mr Chapman's ... letter. I am attaching a short paper prepared by the Secretariat to the Ministerial Group, which outlines the progress made over recent years in specific areas and identifies those areas of current - and possible future - concern to the Group.

In general terms I see little reason for - or the desirability of - any further legislative measures. With the exception of some pump-priming in certain areas, there is a limit to what can be achieved through a top-down approach. The process is largely an educative one, educating women about the opportunities that already exist, and educating employers and financiers about the folly - for them and for the economy - of failing to take women seriously as an essential resource. What is important is that across government we are sending the same message regularly. In that context, I would certainly agree that more male Ministers should be encouraged to make speeches about these issues.

There are three areas which are particularly important, and to my mind in need of attention.

Training I am not convinced that the training available to women, particularly those women wanting to return to work, is - qualitatively or quantitatively - what it might be. In particular, we have to ensure that the Training and Enterprise Councils take sufficient and due account of women's potential and the special problems that confront them, and at all stages of their careers.

Self-employment/business start-ups I am equally convinced that women who wish to set-up in business on their own are not getting a fair crack of the whip. Many of those women with highly successful businesses of their own, who we are always keen to refer to, have risen to their positions despite, not because of, the support and advice that is currently available. Gillian Shephard is currently engaged in a series of breakfast meetings with leading businesswomen to discuss this very problem. My own new advisory group will also keep to view other problems and point to simple solutions.

Childcare Problems with childcare and the responsibilities of carers generally are closely linked with women's choices for employment. We have made considerable advances here, particularly in the provision of care for the under 5s, but I think that the main impetus now is needed is out-of-school and holiday care for school age children. We should be looking into the provision of pump-priming funding to get things moving more quickly. This has been done very successfully by the Department

/of Health for

of Health for schemes such as those run by the Kids Club Network, and we should take steps to adopt this approach more widely.

At a more general level, I am becoming concerned that the arguments about women's issues are becoming polarised. The choice is often wrongly assumed to be between going out to work or staying at home to look after children. In practice, this need not be the case: flexible working and job-sharing, for example, enable women to combine both roles. More significantly, and less understood, opportunities exist for women who wish to spend the bulk of the early years of their child's life at home, to prepare through imaginative educational and training opportunities for their eventual return to work.

To encourage this development would be highly desirable and would work to the advantage of all concerned: to the child, who gets most of his or her mother's attention during the early and important formative stages; to the mother, who gets to spend time with her child, but is not left feeling that she is treading water in career terms; and to employers, who get a better qualified and more motivated returner. Education and training packages targeted at women who wish to stay at home during the early years of their child's life are still in their infancy. I am convinced that we need to do more to encourage them and to persuade women of their merits.

Yours ever

Angela

ANGELA RUMBOLD

MINISTERIAL GROUP ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

Progress Report - July 1991

1. This paper sets out the purpose and role of the Group, its achievements to date and its current work, and suggests some directions in which it might develop.

2. The Group is chaired by Angela Rumbold, Minister of State at the Home Office, and its membership comprises Ministers with policy responsibility for issues of special concern to women. This includes the three territorial Departments and nine other Departments.

3. The Group was established in May, 1986, with David Waddington in the chair, and was chaired by John Patten from October, 1987, until July, 1990. Hitherto, it has met around three times a year.

Purpose and Role of the Group

4. The Group was established to provide a co-ordinated examination of policy issues of special concern to women, following the adoption of the Forward Looking Strategies (FLS) for the Advancement of Women adopted by consensus at the World Conference in Nairobi in 1985, which concluded the United Nations Decade for Women.

5. The Group's first task was to review Government policy in those areas covered by the FLS and to produce a report to the United Nations on progress under the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This first report was published in May, 1987. A second report was produced in May, 1991.

Work of the Group

6. The remainder of this paper deals with the progress made by the Group on a range of major topics. In addition, the Group ensures that Ministers are informed and consulted on other relevant issues which do not require such detailed consideration.

Equal Opportunity Proofing

7. In October, 1988, the Group adopted model instructions, which formed the basis for guidance which has since been issued by all Departments, to ensure that the impact on women of policy proposals is understood and taken into account as they are developed. Training of senior managers at the Civil Service College and in Departments has taken place to equip them to implement the guidance effectively.

8. The Group is currently reviewing the effectiveness of this initiative and considering whether further steps should be taken.

Public Appointments

9. The Group has taken initiatives to improve the proportion of appointment held by women and keeps developments under review. In 1986, when figures were first collected, 19.1% of public appointments were held by women. In 1988, guidelines on the appointment of women were issued to Departments. The Public Appointments Unit has worked with the Women's National Commission, the Equal Opportunities Commission and others to encourage more women to come forward. Over 30% of the names on PAU's list are women. Departments have introduced methods akin to good recruitment practice, such as reviewing requirements, widening searches, shortlisting and interviewing. However, in 1990, the proportion of appointments held by women had increased to only 23.3% and many Departments' appointments remain below 10%. The Group is, therefore, considering further initiatives.

Employment

10. The Group has recently undertaken to examine the barriers to women's employment. It is clear that women have made major strides in recent years, in reaching the top in a wider range of professions and occupations, and in entering key high-status areas such as law and medicine in equal numbers with men. Women are now nearly half the workforce and are returning to work after maternity leave in larger numbers and more quickly. Women are the overwhelming majority of part-time workers, which usually means lower pay, less training, fewer prospects for promotion, although there are also some promising initiatives (mainly in the public sector) to extend part-time, job-sharing and other flexible working practices to posts with more senior and managerial responsibilities. Very considerable job segregation remains, with those jobs more frequently done by women generally having poorer pay and prospects.

11. The Group has begun to look at training, paying particular attention to where women's needs may be special and where access may be problematic. Thus, it has been looking at provision for women returning to work after a career break, not only to update skills but also to acquire new skills and access to new employment opportunities, including self-employment. It has also been exploring the availability of part-time higher education and management training. The Training and Enterprise Councils should be playing a key role in facilitating appropriate training for women returners. On the basis of information received by the Group so far, it is not yet possible to identify clearly what barriers there are and what initiatives could most appropriately be taken to deal with them.

12. At future meetings, it is intended that the Group should look closely at particular sectors for evidence of good practice which could be developed further and of other problems which need to be tackled. These include:-

* The National Health Service

As a very large employer, particularly of women, the NHS has the opportunity and responsibility to make a major impact. There is growing evidence, both of a strong lead from the top and of greater flexibility and imagination at regional, district and unit levels and within and between the various health occupations, that problems are being tackled, both to provide women with more opportunities and to ensure that the NHS does not suffer from failing to utilise their talents and experience.

* Teaching

Women are also a substantial proportion of the teaching profession and the Group intends to examine how their careers progress and what provision is made to retain women in teaching and to encourage returners.

* Women in Rural Areas

The Group intends to look at the additional barriers to women's employment in rural areas and how they can be tackled.

* Self-Employment

The Group intends to examine the advice and support available to women wishing to set up in business on their own account. Although there has been a marked increase in self-employment among women in recent years, they are still a far smaller proportion of self-employed people than of employed people. The experience women have in running a home and looking after a family and their frequent desire for flexible arrangements to combine work with family responsibilities suggest that self-employment may often be an appropriate option, but one which needs the right circumstances - training, finance, back-up, etc., - to succeed.

* Family Businesses

The Group intends to examine the role of women within family businesses, how far they have legal rights and financial rewards proportionate to their contribution, how they fare in the event of family or business breakdown and whether any action needs to be taken to improve their position.

13. The work of the Group in relation to employment takes into account the European dimension, the requirements to comply with EC Directives and the wish to demonstrate and build on the very considerable UK achievements. The work of the Group in connection with childcare and carers (detailed below) is also closely related, in part, to examining barriers to employment.

Childcare

14. The Group has regularly considered childcare questions; it aims to take an overview of policy and consolidate the work being done in different Departments. Working mothers regularly identify childcare as the single most important issue for them and their opportunities at work.

15. In April, 1989, the Group adopted a "five point plan" for childcare:-

* Amendments to the Children Bill to improve the registration and enforcement arrangements for day nurseries, childminders and play-groups.

* Encouragement to employers and childcare providers to consider the need for a voluntary accreditation scheme which would both provide information about the availability of childcare facilities and give a guarantee of the quality of the services provided.

* Guidance to local authorities and school governors to encourage the use of school premises for after school and holiday schemes.

* Further support for the voluntary sector through pump-priming of projects and encouragement of partnerships of employers and the voluntary sector.

* Encouragement to employers to make greater use of the tax reliefs available to them to provide childcare facilities.

16. Having implemented this plan, the Group approved a follow-up programme of measures to encourage a range of high quality childcare options:-

* New guidelines and regulations under the Children Act 1989 for local authorities to implement their responsibilities for daycare services for children under 8 years old.

* Work to be undertaken by the Department of Health to help local authorities improve their practice in the registration of day-care services.

* Encouragement for the development of childcare information services for parents and employers.

* Continued encouragement for employers to help their staff with childcare provision.

* Continued development of a range of flexible working patterns and childcare facilities for civil servants, both to assist them to combine work and family responsibilities and to provide models of good practice for employers generally.

17. Progress in childcare provision has been impressive. Between 1988 and 1990, the number of places in registered day nurseries increased by 60% and the number of registered child minders increased by 25%. 86% of children aged three and four are involved in part-time out-of-home care, play or education. With nearly half of mothers with children under five going out to work either part-time or full-time, the demand for good quality, reliable and accessible childcare services is high and growing.

18. The Group intends to monitor progress and to consider whether further action is required.

Carers

19. In 1990, the Group looked into the problems faced by those caring for dependants. Some of the problems were found to be similar to, but more intractable than, childcare problems; caring for elderly, sick or disabled dependants could be more demanding and less rewarding than caring for fit and healthy chidlren and had no built-in time limit as they grew older.

20. The programme of action agreed by the Group involved:-

* Special attention to carers' needs in the guidance to be issued to local authorities and health authorities on implementing the National Health Service and Community Care Act.

* Encouragement to employers to recognise the benefits that could accrue to them from helping their staff combine work and caring for dependants and to make use of the tax reliefs available for this purpose.

* Consideration of the best ways of providing a greater range and variety of respite care facilities and ensuring that information about them reached carers.

* Publicity for the new grants available under the Local Government and Housing Act for disabled people to have adaptations made to their homes.

21. The Group will wish to review the effectiveness of this programme of action in due course and to consider what further initiatives may be appropriate.

Pensions

22. The Group is intending to give attention to certain aspects of pension entitlements. At present, women generally have lower entitlements for contributory pensions in their own right because of their lower pay and promotion prospects and their greater use of career breaks and part-time work. With the rise in divorce, they

are also less likely to benefit from the pension entitlements of their husbands.

23. The Group may also wish to consider the options and implications of equalising the age of entitlement to state pensions.

Older Women

24. Consideration is being given to whether the Group might examine the position of older women. Issues of some concern include:-

* Opportunities for employment, public service and voluntary work. As younger women increasingly take advantage of the new opportunities opening up and the removal of barriers, are older women sharing in the benefits or are they being relied on too much to fulfil the unpaid caring roles?

* Health. How are the initiatives on women's health services being taken up by and helping older women?

Safety and Security

25. The Group has paid considerable attention to domestic violence. In July, 1989, it reviewed the position and set in hand a programme of action involving:-

* The use of the criminal and civil law, including the response of the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and the courts.

* An examination of the policies and practices of Social Services Departments and health services and whether they could give more help to the victims of domestic violence and their families.

* Consideration of the contribution of education to the prevention of domestic violence, including an examination of the materials and guidance available to schools.

26. The Group continues to keep progress on domestic violence under review.

27. Consideration is being given to whether the group should also look into other aspects of safety and security which are of particular concern to women, such as:-

* Safety at work. There is concern over the extent of sexual harassment and the effectiveness of measures available to deal with it. This is one of the issues being taken up under the EC Third Action Programme and a Code of Practice is in preparation in the Department of Employment. More generally, there is concern over the vulnerability of women to violence in the course of their work. Occupations such as nursing and social work bring many women into contact with people in circumstances where there is a risk of violence. Incidents may have profound effects, directly and indirectly, on counter clerks in banks, building societies and social security offices, among whom women are probably in the majority.

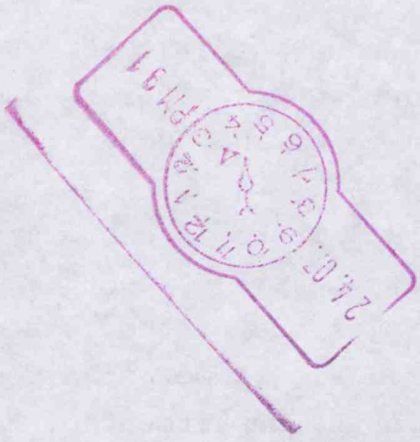
* Safety in public places. There is evidence that women are more afraid than men of attack, particularly in towns and after dark, and that they restrict their lives as a result. As more flexible hours and patterns of work develop, women are increasingly exposed to circumstances that they fear and concerned about the availability and safety of transport.

Development of the Group

28. This progress report has identified a large number of major topics on which the Group has been working, is working and is considering working. No doubt, others will also be raised in future. Progress itself gives rise to identifying issues for attention.

MGWI Secretariat
Home Office

HOME AFFAIRS: HOWER Pt 2



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NOTE OF A MEETING HELD IN HM TREASURY ON 4 JULY

Present: Minister of State

Mary Grassick, Chairman Grassick's Garage
Fran Minogue, Managing Director Neutrogena (UK) Ltd
Elsie Orme, Director, George Jowitt & Son Ltd
Janet Weitz, Chairman, FDS Market Research Group Ltd
Jennifer Page, Chief Executive, English Heritage
Zena Moran, Unimetal Group of Companies
Ann Vinton, Reject Shop
Lady Denton

WOMEN IN BUSINESS: WORKING BREAKFAST

1. The Minister explained that the meeting was one of a series to hear the views of women in business on the current economic climate and how their businesses were affected. She was also interested to hear their opinions on Europe.

EFFECTS OF THE ECONOMY ON BUSINESS

2. In turn, each of those present gave a brief presentation of the recent performance of their company. Mary Grassick said that her family owned a retail Rolls Royce dealership with about 40 employees and annual turnover of about £8 million. The company was finding life very difficult at present: the recession was affecting the motor industry particularly hard and the Budget had contained a number of measures which made things worse. Elsie Orme said that her small engineering company (85 staff) was heavily involved in supplying the motor industry and was similarly affected. For the first time this year the performance of the parent company and its subsidiaries in the US and the Netherlands had all declined. In the UK, output was 25% below target. She believed that the recent further increases in taxation of company cars would do serious harm to the UK industry, driving more private buyers to choose imported models. Japanese manufacturers

established in the UK often operated a policy of using single source suppliers. Small companies, such as hers, could not offer a sufficiently wide product range to satisfy these producers and were therefore excluded from this growing sector. She wondered whether Government action to safeguard the interests of companies in this position might be possible. The Minister replied that the Government was aware of the difficulties facing the motor industry: she had seen representatives of car retailers and the Chancellor had met manufacturers. Lady Denton added that the motor industry had benefited from recent relaxation in Government intervention. It would not be helpful in the long term to introduce protectionist measures to help the domestic market since car manufacturers needed increasingly to operate on an international basis.

3. Janet Weitz had started her own market research business 19 years ago; now it had about 30 employees. Building on experience gained during previous recessions, the company had responded quickly to the first signs of economic downturn and was now not performing badly against its tightly drawn plans. Long standing relationships with clients and business in other parts of Europe were helping to cushion the impact of the recession.

4. Neutrogena (UK) Ltd, the health and skin-care products company managed by Fran Minogue, was doing very well - turnover had increased 28% over the last year and this rate of growth was expected to continue. She explained that the company had been founded in Belgium in the late 1970s and was now managed from the US. The UK subsidiary was part of a network of operations spread across Europe. The recent success could be attributed to the extension of distribution to new outlets, new products and wider advertising. She commented that wholesale chemists had recently cut stock levels which had led to some cash flow difficulties for suppliers, particularly among larger companies.

5. Lady Denton said that her involvement with the Black Country Development Corporation revealed a mixed picture. While some companies were experiencing difficulties, others were very well prepared for the economic conditions and jobs were being created

both in services and manufacturing. BNFL, of which she was a director, was now a well run company with a future strategy which was well suited to present market conditions. She was also involved in Triplex Lloyd (glass manufacturer), which was examining opportunities abroad, in particular in Czechoslovakia.

6. Zena Moran's business had two main strands: recycled metal products which also involved trading on the London Metal Exchange; and purchasing and resale of derelict land. During a recession she was able to focus on making acquisitions at low prices. Her strategy was to buy into companies and monitor their performance rather than becoming closely involved with management.

7. Jennifer Page explained that English Heritage had previously been run as a part of the Department of the Environment and was still largely financed by Government funding supplemented by income from admission charges. Unlike other parts of the tourism industry, English Heritage had done reasonably well in 1990-91 (receipts up 6%), but this year had seen severely reduced numbers of visitors particularly at major sights. This loss of revenue meant that less money was available for grants to help maintain historic buildings at a time when demand was high on account of the decline in agricultural rents, the traditional source of funds for repairs of stately homes, and the depressed state of the construction industry which made repairs more affordable. Inflexible control of public funding added to the difficulties. The Minister agreed that excessive rigidity in Government spending could cause difficulties for bodies in this type of situation. However she hoped that as Next Steps Agencies were developed, more flexible systems would be introduced.

8. Ann Vinton said that business was very tough for both the Reject Shop and Cadbury Schwepps - the two companies she was involved in. The Reject Shop's sales had not increased over the last two years but fixed costs had risen considerably, particularly the Uniform Business Rate (UBR) and the prices of utilities. On the latter, she felt the public perception of the

Government's privatisation record had been severely damaged by the huge profits made by the utilities, which were essential monopoly suppliers, at a time when other sectors were facing serious difficulties.

9. Continuing, Ann Vinton believed that the impact of the UBR on retailers had been particularly severe and quoted the example of one outlet on which the Local Authority assessment was based on a value of £350,000 whereas the market value was only £150,000. While the company had lodged an appeal, this would take some time to be heard.

10. In response, the Minister said that she understood public concern over the profits of the utilities, and recent criticism of the levels of directors' salaries. She explained that the UBR had been introduced to remove the injustice of Local Authorities imposing high business rates to pay for excessive public services for the electorate. But she was aware of the difficulties faced by businesses in some areas and some sectors: she acknowledged that retailers were probably worst hit with the smallest facing particular problems. Janet Weitz added that, depending on the location of companies, there had been gainers too - she had done well being in Islington.

INVESTMENT

11. Zena Moran considered the quality of the output of UK industry to be significantly below that of our major competitors. She attributed this to a lack of investment and argued that the Government should grant tax allowances for capital expenditure comparable to those available in the US. Mary Grassick agreed. Unless people could feel that their work was profitable, they would lack motivation. Janet Weitz added that it was not only investment in technology which was important. Training was also crucial. She believed that during the 1980s, the Government and the press had perhaps created a business culture which valued short term profit too highly at the expense of longer term strength. The Minister replied that the recent history of the

Government's economic policy was well known. Loose monetary conditions in the mid 1980s had led to excessive demand in the economy which was now being brought under control by the Government's tight anti-inflationary strategy.

12. Continuing, The Minister said that she believed that there were already signs of the Government's initiative on training bringing long term benefits. Zena Moran believed that training was very important and considered exchange programmes with companies in other European countries to be of particular value. Janet Weitz said that her company had achieved success with informal exchanges of graduate staff with companies elsewhere in Europe. She saw similar initiatives by individual employers as the best way forward. Lady Denton added that an EC exchange scheme already existed for university students, but that the UK often was unable to fill its quota of participants. The Minister commented that it was paradoxical that students from the Grandes Ecoles in the French system often followed joint courses UK polytechnic students but that the public esteem of the two sets of establishments was very different in the two countries.

13. Fran Minogue said that apprenticeships were very important and she wondered whether the DTI could do more to promote them. Mary Grassick replied that many small employers were keen to train their staff more but often did not feel sufficiently secure to dedicate the necessary time and resources.

EUROPE

14. Introducing the discussion on Europe, The Minister suggested that many of the internal problems at present facing the Conservative Party, and to an extent also the Opposition, stemmed from a generation gap in the perception of European issues. Fran Minogue and Janet Weitz believed that many sectors of industry already considered Europe as a single market. In many areas, the domestic market was now too small to make economic sense taken in isolation. Elsie Orme and Janet Page both had experience of exporting to Europe, but had experienced difficulties breaking into the German market. Ann Vinton said national preferences were

stronger in retailing than in some other sectors which made expanding abroad more difficult. However the Reject Shop did have cautious plans to enter the French market. Cadbury Schwepps had traditionally focused on exporting to Commonwealth countries but was now seeking to strengthen its presence throughout Europe.

15. Mary Grassick believed that people were concerned about losing a sense of national identity and individuality. The Minister agreed. European integration had logical sense for business, but would be very slow to erode regional differences.

16. Janet Weitz said that she was involved in a pan-European working group which was devising quality standards for market research. In this area the UK was leading the way in Europe. It was important for people to recognise similar areas and capitalise on them but also to acknowledge areas of relative weakness. Lady Denton added that the UK was expected shortly to become a net exporter of video recorders.

17. Jennifer Page said that her present dealings with European issues were hampered by a short-sighted attitude towards Europe held by the Department of the Environment. The Department appeared to hold the view that conservation work was not at present covered by EC competence and that, as a result, European thinking on these issues were not relevant. However there were a number of areas where EC policies had significant implications for conservation where UK interests were not being adequately represented. The Minister commented that her experience of Customs and Excise had shown them to be participating very constructively in European negotiations on frontier controls and related issues.

18. Zena Moran said that she was concerned about the danger of the US overtaking London as the major centre in the international metals market. More widely she believed that there was tension between the UK's historical ties with the US and emerging pressure for greater European integration which she feared might lead to loss of UK influence in both spheres.

FOLLOW UP

19. The Minister said that she had been very encouraged by the success of the two breakfast meetings she had held and that she hoped to build on the progress made. She was considering a further round of meetings, perhaps on a regional basis, and invited those present to write to her after the meeting with any ideas they had on how best this might be taken forward. Lady Denton suggested that they might also cover the areas they saw as priorities for Government action.

20. Participants said that they had welcomed the opportunity to discuss these issues. There was divided opinion on whether the future meetings should be for businesswomen only - some felt that an all woman forum had been particularly constructive, others that mixed gatherings could be helpful too. The Treasury often gave the impression of being very far removed from the situation affecting businesses at the sharp end of Government policy. The Minister replied that while there were advantages in the Treasury fulfilling a central role at one stage removed, she had been very interested to hear the views of the meeting so directly.

PATRICK CHILD
Private Secretary

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NOTE OF A MEETING HELD IN HM TREASURY ON 2 JULY 1991

Present: Minister of State
Elizabeth Aves, Managing Director, Avenue Communications
Maureen Chalker, Managing Director, Haverhill Generators Ltd
Pat Marsh, Director, Ace Coin Equipment Ltd
Sally O'Sullivan, Editor, Good Housekeeping
Dr Anna Mann, Managing Director, Whitehead Mann
Dounne Moore, Gramma's Ltd
Lyndy Payne, Managing Director, Advertising Agency Register
Yve Newbold, Company Secretary, Hanson Plc
Peggy Czyzak Dannenbaum, Managing Director, La Fornaia Ltd
Lady Denton

WOMEN IN BUSINESS: WORKING BREAKFAST

1. The Minister explained that this was the first in a series of working breakfasts which she was holding to hear the views of women in business on the present economic climate and the particular factors affecting them. She was also interested to hear their views on Europe.

THE ECONOMY

2. Maureen Chalker said that her company had not been greatly affected by the earlier part of the economic downturn, but that since the beginning of the year the effects of the recession were being sharply felt. Both she and Pat Marsh believed that it was important to promote exports while domestic demand was weak. Pat Marsh's company had been developing markets throughout Europe. The company had needed to face some difficult decisions recently, but during the past three months there had been a surge in new orders. Yve Newbold said that many companies were facing difficulties as their traditional UK suppliers were going out of business, and they were needing to seek alternatives abroad.

3. In response to a question on interest rates, the Minister replied that the Chancellor had always made it clear that his policy was to reduce interest rates when it was safe to do so. She drew attention to the recent reductions in interest rates and explained that the increments had been kept necessarily small to maintain the stability of the pound within the European Exchange Rate Mechanism. She believed that the Government was right to maintain a firm anti-inflationary policy.

4. Yve Newbold invited the Minister's reaction to the results of a recent survey showing record numbers of company failures. Many companies had been encouraged by high levels of business confidence in the 1980s were now suffering major disappointment. The Minister said that these figures had to be seen against the background of the large numbers of new companies which had started up during the later part of the 1980s.

5. Dr Mann's was a small business in absolute terms (employing about 60 people), but was a market leader with an international reputation in its field (recruitment consultancy). She saw the level of activity in her area of work as a leading indicator which responded about six months in advance of the rest of the economy. It was encouraging therefore, that after a relatively difficult period last year, activity had picked up this year. The company had not become heavily involved in the financial services sector, where recruitment was most difficult at present, but had concentrated more on senior management in large industrial groups of companies. Maureen Chalker stressed the importance to the economy of maintaining a solid base of manufacturing industry, and expressed the fear that the base was reducing.

BANKS

6. The Minister asked how far participants agreed with recent suggestions in the press that the high street banks were treating small businesses unfairly. Dounne Moore said that she had found it difficult to secure the necessary finance to expand her business as she would have wished. Elizabeth Aves agreed. Often

bank managers, particularly at the local level, were unsympathetic to the needs of small businesses and adopted a patronising attitude when dealing with them. Sally O'Sullivan said that the recent sharp reduction in the availability of credit had caused difficulties for many small businesses. The most successful small companies were often those which had found capital from sources other than the banks. She offered to provide further details of companies in this position which had recently been highlighted by her magazine.

7. The Minister said that, as with public services, banks needed to recognise the importance of respect for their customers. Pat Marsh and Maureen Chalker said that they had no difficulties with their bankers. It was important to recognise that services provided by banks were based on mutual agreement as with other transactions between companies. However it was acknowledged that large manufacturing companies with security to offer often could secure more favourable treatment than a fledgeling services business.

WOMEN AT WORK

8. Sally O'Sullivan said that the readership of Good Housekeeping (circulation 2 million) was largely composed of active educated women who often wanted to combine a career with raising a family. In her experience, a loss of confidence among women taking a career break was more of a barrier for those considering returning to work than a need for new skills or training. Good Housekeeping were active in helping women overcome these difficulties and were keen to raise awareness of this problem among employers and with Government. Lyndy Payne believed that lack of confidence also prevented many women from breaking out of areas of specialist expertise into general management. The Minister agreed but felt this was a problem which particularly affected people over 30.

9. Lady Denton commented that, paradoxically, sabbatical leave was often viewed more favourably by employers than maternity leave. Peggy Czyzak Dannenbaum added that, contrary to the view

held by most male managers, there was evidence that men changed jobs more frequently than women

10. A number of participants stressed the importance of child care to working women. Although perhaps temporarily halted by the recession, the demographic pressure for more women to return to work could be expected to intensify. Pat Marsh suggested that all expenditure on domestic help should be tax deductible particularly given that, in her view, child minding services were, to a large extent, already operated in the Black Economy. Sally O'Sullivan said that she believed the only effective way of dealing with the problem was to pay women more - this was the approach adopted for the predominantly female staff of Good Housekeeping. Lady Denton added that wider use of flexible and part-time working patterns also had a role to play. The Minister replied that the Government's aim was to level out the tax base and reduce the overall burden of taxation. Following the limited measure to encourage employers to establish child care facilities for their staff in the 1990 Finance Bill, there had been pressure to introduce a wider system of child care vouchers. However the Government continued to believe that new tax allowances should be avoided where possible and that fiscal inducements should not be used to dictate people's choices.

TRAINING

11. Lady Denton commented that small companies often faced difficulties finding resources to provide for training of their staff. There was perhaps scope for large companies to make existing training facilities available to smaller companies at times when they would otherwise not be used (eg evenings and weekends). Sally O'Sullivan added that the recent thrust of Government policy had been to give employers increased responsibility for training. The Minister was pleased to note that this policy was getting results, and that employers were continuing to invest in training in the present economic climate.

12. Turning to the Training Enterprise Councils, Pat Marsh said that she believed this was an extremely valuable initiative which

had prompted a surge in training activity led by employers. She did not think that the unfavourable comparisons which were sometimes made between training in the UK and Germany or Japan were always justified.

DEREGULATION

13. The Minister invited views on the Government's efforts on deregulation. Yve Newbold commented that the Government sometimes appeared to give a higher priority to this issue than was perhaps justified. However, there was a general perception that the country's infrastructure was being allowed to run down, and she urged the Government to address the needs of business in this area, in particular by adopting a co-ordinated transport policy. Peggy Czyzak Dannenbaum agreed. Her business (a bakery) often experienced distribution difficulties arising from traffic congestion.

EUROPE

14. The Minister asked whether participants shared her view that public attitudes towards Europe varied by age, with older people being more resistant to further integration. Yve Newbold agreed that there was a generation gap in attitudes. She wondered whether young people would become more alive to the potential conflict between UK sovereignty and wider European issues as they became more involved in European decision making. Elizabeth Aves believed that there was a strong case for closer economic cooperation between EC Member States. Many large companies already treated Europe as a single market. However, Community action in other fields was unacceptable and could result in fundamental changes to the present structure of UK Government. Peggy Czyzak Dannenbaum believed that there was already evidence that greater feelings of regional identity were emerging to counterbalance increased economic integration at the European level.

15. Continuing, Peggy Czyzak Dannenbaum suggested that the crucial factor in the development of the federal Government in the

US had been the existence of a common language. The Minister and Pat Marsh believed that language skills were becoming increasingly important, particularly when companies were trying to sell goods in overseas markets. Lady Denton felt that, arguably, too much weight was given to the importance of language training given that English was now emerging as an international language.

16. Dounne Moore drew attention to the particular circumstances facing her, with a West Indian background, in extending her business outside the specialist ethnic market in the UK. She believed that her products (spicy pepper sauce) had a better chance of being accepted by a large number of consumers in the US than in Europe. Her present focus was therefore on expanding exports to the American market.

FOLLOW UP

17. These present said that this had been a valuable exercise, that it would be helpful to organise more such meetings in London and in the regions and not necessarily for business women only.

18. The Minister said that this was the first in a series of similar meetings. She invited those present to send her a list of about four ideas on the best way to take the initiative forward.

PATRICK CHILD
Private Secretary

Note:

I spoke to Mrs Rumbold.

She undertook to write to the PM outlining the progress that had been made since April.

She would like one other person (in addition to me and the Lord), to ~~[illegible]~~ maintain contact with women's organisations and voluntary bodies.

I then spoke to Carolyn Sinclair,

I would like up the question of staff with KB or the Pers Sec (Mrs R had said she'd welcome that).

I spoke to Jay Hutchen finally, and asked her to try to ensure we had a letter from Mrs R in time for the PM to respond before the Recess.

LR 27/6

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

11 June 1991

The Prime Minister was grateful to Mrs Shephard for her recent letter about the working breakfasts for business women.

The Prime Minister would be most interested to see the notes of the meetings. He assumes that Mrs Shephard will be copying them to Mrs Rumbold, as chair of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues.

WILLIAM E CHAPMAN

Neville Trout Esq
HM Treasury

mst.sb/GShephard/038

cc PM

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MINISTER OF STATE TREASURY

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

Prime Minister ①

Would you like to see the notes of the meetings? And you may want to ensure Mrs Rumbold sees them too. Content for me to reply accordingly? LEL. 16/6.

Yes

Yes

Rt Hon John Major MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
Whitehall
LONDON

June 1991

Dear Prime Minister,

Further to our conversation, these are the arrangements for my working breakfasts for business women.

The two arranged so far will be on 2 and 4 July, here in my room at the Treasury, from 8.15am to 9.15am. I attach a copy of the invitation letter, from which you will see that the intention is to talk about commercial and business matters, (not child care).

The people invited for each of the days are as follows:

2 July

Elizabeth Aves, Managing Director of Communications Company, London.

Audrey Baxter, Commercial Director, Baxter Speyside, Scotland.

Maureen Chalker, Managing Director of Haverhill Generators Ltd, Kettering.

Peggy Czyzak-Dannenbaum, Managing Director of a Bakery, London.

Pat Marsh, Managing Director of Ace Coin Equipment Ltd, Telford.

Katherine Hamnett, Chairman of fashion design company, London.

Noelle Walsh, Editor, Good Housekeeping, London.

Dr Anna Mann, Managing Director of Recruitment Consultancy London.

Yve Newbold, Company Secretary, Hanson plc, London.

Dounne Moore, Proprietor of West Indian Food Producing Company, Essex.

4 July

Zena Moran, Chairman and Managing Director, Unimetal Group of Companies, London.

Janet Weitz, Chairman of Market Research Group, London.

Jennifer Page, Chief Executive of English Heritage, London.

Elsie Orme, Director, George Jowitt & Sons Ltd, Sheffield.

Fran Minogue, Managing Director of Cosmetics Company, London.

Doreen Lofthouse, Managing Director of lozenge manufacturing company, Lancashire.

Ruth Henderson, Managing Director, Alexon Brands, Milton Keynes.

Mary Grassick, Chairman of car dealership, Perthshire.

Colette Burke, Managing Director, Schweppes Great Britain, Watford, Herts.

Vivien Duffield, Deputy Chairman, Royal Opera House, London.

Sue Rorstad, Managing Director, Franchise business, Darlington, County Durham.

As I mentioned, Jean Denton will be with me, and I have kept Central Office informed.

I hope it will prove a useful initiative on which we can build.

Yours ever,
Gillian.

GILLIAN SHEPHARD

mst.sb/GShephard/021

Copy of mistaken letter

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

Lady Denton
83 St George's Road
LONDON
SE1 6ER

June 1991

I am writing to invite you to a working breakfast at the Treasury, on 4 July, at 8.15am. The breakfast will last for about one hour.

This is one of a number of events at which I am hoping to hear from business women about the economic and financial issues currently of concern to them. I am inviting guests, in small groups, from all over Britain, and from a wide range of enterprises, including manufacturing, retailing, media, advertising and the arts.

I do hope you will be able to come. I would greatly value your views on financial and commercial matters of interest to you.

If you are able to accept this invitation, I will send further information about security arrangements for getting into the Treasury.

I look forward to hearing from you.

GILLIAN SHEPHARD

CONFIDENTIAL

DAS

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

30 May 1991

Dear Ms Hutcheon

WOMEN'S ISSUES

The Prime Minister was very grateful for Mrs. Rumbold's letter of 19 April and for her paper.

The Prime Minister agrees that new arrangements within government, building on the work being done by the current Ministerial Group, would be desirable. He has considered your Minister's proposals carefully and has suggested the slight variant on them as set out in Annex A to this letter. He agrees with Mrs. Rumbold that the arrangements should be considered as a package for a Manifesto commitment and has suggested that he might trail them in a speech this summer or autumn, which could also refer to and publicise the work which the Ministerial Group under Mrs. Rumbold's chairmanship has been and is doing. The Prime Minister would be interested in Mrs Rumbold's views.

The Prime Minister was pleased to see your Minister's speech to the High Flyers Conference and to be able to offer some words of support for the press. As you will recall, the possibility was raised at the meeting with colleagues on Maundy Thursday of two major speeches on the philosophy of removing obstacles for women and the Prime Minister would be grateful to know whether Mrs. Rumbold has another speech in mind in the foreseeable future. There was also a possibility of her speeches being published as a pamphlet, along with a more comprehensive publication on the government's actions on women's issues.

At that meeting, it was also agreed that Mrs. Rumbold would develop her ideas on the Ministerial Group's remit including the following specific items: the encouragement of private sector child care, the improvement of flexible employment practices in the private sector (drawing on the best Civil Service practices), greater publicity for the Government's record on women's health, better practical measures to help working women (for example, keeping schools open after hours) and more sensitive presentation of government policies which particularly affect women. In addition, it was agreed that male Ministers and Members of Parliament should be encouraged to speak on matters concerning women.

CONFIDENTIAL

KW

The Prime Minister would, of course, be happy to consider the possibility of another discussion of women's issues in due course but he thinks that the need for this can be better assessed when he has received the further details of how Mrs. Rumbold proposes to take forward the specific matters referred to in the paragraph above and discussed at the meeting on 28 March.

I am copying this letter to Colin Walters (Home Office).

Yours sincerely

pp WILLIAM E CHAPMAN

Ms Joy Hutcheon
Home Office

ANNEX A

STRUCTURE FOR HANDLING WOMEN'S ISSUES

Cabinet Committee Chaired by Prime Minister

Cabinet Committee Chaired by Secretary of State for Employment

Core team of officials in Employment co-ordinating and chasing progress

Named officials in each major Department with specific responsibility for ensuring that the impact of policies on women is considered as part of policy making.

It would be the responsibility of these officials in each Department to liaise with the relevant voluntary groups.

067.CS

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER (1) 16 May 1991

WOMEN'S ISSUES

I have discussed Angela Rumbold's proposals with her. The following is what she has in mind (not identical to what she says in her paper, but she stressed that she was quite open minded on organisational points of detail);

- transfer of responsibility for women's issues from the Home Office to Employment (or whatever Department deals with employment matters);

- the establishment of a Cabinet Committee, to ensure that policy-makers systematically take into account the effect of their policies on women;

- the necessary back-up structure in Whitehall.

Arrangements for dealing with the environment are a good model. Angela Rumbold agrees. On this basis you might chair a senior Committee of Cabinet colleagues around once a year to review progress on women's issues, while the Secretary of State for Employment would chair more frequent meetings to push work forward in Departments. Annex A explains how this might work. Kenneth Baker has no objection to the proposed transfer of responsibility away from the Home Office.

Under the scenario in Annex A the existing Ministerial group (composed of junior ministers and officials) would disappear. Despite what is said in her paper, Angela Rumbold sees no problem

with this. (The paper gives the impression that there are outside bodies on the Group, but this is not the case). Ministerial groups serviced by Departments have in practice proved less effective than Cabinet Committees - the Ministerial groups on drugs and alcohol abuse were recently replaced by Cabinet Committees for this reason. The secrecy surrounding meetings of Cabinet Committees need not be a problem provided the Government publishes regular reports on what it is doing to advance the cause of women (again, cf the environment). This seems a good idea anyway.

Timing

Neither the transfer of responsibility nor the other organisational changes in Whitehall could be achieved overnight. They would be for the Manifesto (though change could be got underway sooner than that). There is no reason why you should not trail the proposals in a speech fairly soon (the Women's Conference is an obvious opportunity, or a special Centre for Policy Studies' lecture on women). Angela Rumbold favours this rather than your chairing a meeting of the rather ineffective Ministerial group. She thinks this could look gimmicky, and so do I.

Conclusion

Changes of the kind outlined above would ensure that much more weight was given to women's issues in Whitehall. They would go down well with the pressure groups. If they worked effectively, it might be possible in due course to dispense with the National Commission for Women - an umbrella body of women's organisations which is something of a pain.

CONFIDENTIAL

You might like to reply:

- thanking Angela Rumbold for her ideas;

- enclosing Annex A and asking if she is happy with this slight variant on them;

- suggesting that you trail the proposed new arrangements in a speech this summer/autumn (combined with recognition of the good work she has been doing within an unsatisfactory framework);

- asking her how her own speech programme is coming along, and whether No 10 can help (this bit of the remit from your 28 March meeting seems rather to have lapsed).

CAROLYN SINCLAIR

066.CS

PRIME MINISTER

p/. process as Carolyn recommends + ask about X + X below. 9/17.5

WOMEN'S ISSUES

You asked the Policy Unit for advice on Mrs Rumbold's paper (at A), sent to you following your meeting with her on Maundy Thursday. Carolyn Sinclair has discussed Mrs. Rumbold's proposals with her and I attach Carolyn's advice at B. This has been agreed with Mrs. Rumbold, and proposes a new Cabinet Committee structure for handling women's issues, and the transfer of Home Office responsibility to Employment.

At your meeting, you gave Mrs. Rumbold a remit which went somewhat wider than how to strengthen the Ministerial group. Carolyn has pointed out that you asked her to work up a couple of speeches emphasising the philosophy of removing obstacles for women (one to be made in June or July). This is not covered in Mrs. Rumbold's paper. Carolyn suggests you return to her on this point.

Yes X

In addition, however, you also asked Mrs. Rumbold to develop her ideas on the Ministerial group's remit, including proposals to encourage private sector child care, the improvement of flexible employment practices in the private sector (drawing on good Civil Service practices), greater publicity for the Government's record on women's health, better practical measures to help working women (for example, keeping schools open after hours), and more sensitive presentation of Government policies which affect women. You may wish to remind Mrs Rumbold to come back to you on these too. (There is no over-whelming reason why they should wait until a new committee structure is established, especially as the latter may not happen until after the next election.) The note of the meeting, with relevant sections highlighted, is at 'C', should you wish to glance at it.

Yes X

Content to write as Carolyn has suggested at the end of her note, plus a reminder as in the last paragraph above? If so I will draft accordingly.

WEC

WILLIAM E CHAPMAN

17 May 1991

c:\wpdocs\home\womens (srw)

FILE

MISS SINCLAIR

WOMEN - OPPORTUNITY 2000

As I mentioned on the telephone, the Prime Minister has agreed to attend the launch of Opportunity 2000. Sandra Phillips here is liaising with Lady Howe on suitable dates. We had hoped that a slot in early October would have been convenient to Opportunity 2000, but I gather Lady Howe would prefer late October or early November and we are exploring a date around then with her.

I propose to commission a speaking note from Angela Rumbold's office but would welcome any ideas you have on points the Prime Minister should make.

WILLIAM CHAPMAN

14 May 1991

a:\2000.vlb

MISS SINCLAIR

The Prime Minister has asked for advice on Mrs Rumbold's paper before we arrange a meeting with her, or alternatively suggests he might chair the Ministerial Group one time.

I attach the paper which Angela sent me.

JUDITH CHAPLIN
8 May 1991

Policy Unit advice further. Great.

PRIME MINISTER

Surely simpler for me to Chair Northern Group

Would you like me to arrange a meeting with Angela Rumbold? (write Angela as alternate!)

But advise please

JUDITH CHAPLIN

3 May 1991

PRIME MINISTER

WOMEN'S ISSUES

You asked me to find out where Angela Rumbold had got on the question of what obstacles women face at home and at work. I attach a letter she has now written to you, and she has asked if she could see you this week as she will be out of the country from 27th April until 7th May.

Do you wish to see her as urgently as this or would you rather the Policy Unit consider her note and you see her when she returns?

PP JUDITH CHAPLIN
22 April 1991

HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SWIH 9AT

19 APR 1991

Dear Prime Minister

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Since our meeting on Maunday Thursday, I have been giving considerable thought to how we might take forward some of the important issues we touched upon during that meeting.

I have long been convinced, and my recent spell at the Home Office has served to reinforce this view, that if we are ever to tackle effectively the sort of issues we identified at our meeting as being of most concern to women in this country, then we must first reform the way in which we address those issues within Government. Naturally, I am not advocating the creation of a Ministry for Women - a bureaucratic diversion which would only serve to marginalise women's issues by absolving other government departments of responsibility. Nevertheless, I do believe that fundamental changes are essential.

To that end, I have drafted a short paper outlining a number of proposals for your consideration. I would welcome an early opportunity to talk to you about these.

As you will see, one of my key recommendations is that the principal responsibility for co-ordinating women's issues within Government should be transferred from the Home Office to the Department of Employment, and elevated from Minister of State to Secretary of State level. Women's issues span many (nearly all in fact) government departments; a significant proportion, however, and certainly those of greatest electoral significance, fall more naturally within the domain of the Department of Employment. Transferring responsibility and investing it in the hands of a Cabinet Minister would send out the right signals by ensuring that women's issues were addressed more seriously within Whitehall.

/I am not proposing

The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street

I am not proposing that we disband the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues. I believe that it has an important role to play, though in order to make it more effective, we must improve upon the resources we provide to run it. The current provisions are woefully inadequate.

But no matter how effective the Ministerial Group becomes, it will never be the right forum for giving sufficient impetus within Government to women's issues. Despite my best efforts, and those of John Patten before me, we have not been able to ensure that it is taken sufficiently seriously by ministers and officials in other departments.

I strongly believe that the proposals I have outlined would provide the most effective basis on which to meet our long term objective of eradicating obstacles that stand in the way of women. In the short term, I also believe that as a package of proposals, they constitute an attractive manifesto commitment. Indeed, my paper has been drawn up very much with the election in mind.

I am copying this note to the Home Secretary.

Yours ever

Angela

ANGELA RUMBOLD

E.R.

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Part of the problem at present is that the very term 'Women's Issues' is itself broad and static: it conveys no sense of direction. What is needed is a clear goal and a coherent strategy for achieving that goal.

Goal

Women must be free to decide for themselves how to run their own lives. The Government's goal should be to remove those obstacles that currently hinder the exercise of free choice. Government alone cannot 'solve' all the problems that confront women. It can, however, help to create a 'level playing field', free of impediments to women.

For government to adopt as its goal a level playing field, in which women can compete on an equal basis with men, conveys:

(a) that Government is providing an essential framework in which women can realise their own ambitions and goals; and

(b) that it is up to women themselves to make the most of the opportunities afforded by that level surface.

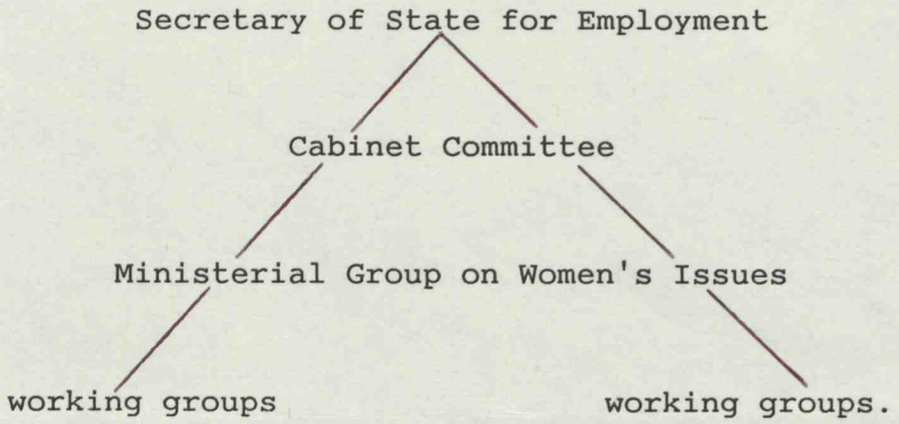
E.R.

Strategy

In order to achieve that goal, a range of policies will be necessary. The first question to address, however, is what is the best structure to adopt within Government in order to identify and formulate that policy? This will be vital not only to the successful outcome of policy initiatives, but also to the effective public presentation of them.

Various options merit consideration: for example, giving responsibility for women's issues to a Cabinet Committee instead of the Ministerial Group, and giving a Cabinet Minister designated responsibility for women's issues. The options are not mutually exclusive. Dispensing with the services of the Ministerial Group, however, may send out the wrong signals (a Cabinet Committee alone being seen as too narrow, secretive and minister-oriented) and lose the advantages that a diverse body of interests can offer. Rather, it can usefully be supplemented, not superseded, by the other proposals made, producing an integrated - and eventually pyramidal - structure:

E.R



THE SECRETARY OF STATE: the Secretary of State for Employment would have Ministerial responsibility for the subject as part of his portfolio. This would thus ensure Cabinet-level responsibility for the subject, while avoiding the potential for marginalising it through the creation of a 'Minister for Women'. Given the goals outlined above, the Employment Secretary would be the most appropriate Minister.

CABINET COMMITTEE: a Cabinet Committee would raise the status of the subject and provide for the necessary input from those with Ministries with cognate responsibility. The importance attached to the subject by the Government could be demonstrated by the Prime Minister designating himself as Chairman of the Committee, with the Chair being taken in his absence by a female Minister of State.

E.R.

Why shd I not chair that occasionally instead?

MINISTERIAL GROUP: retaining the Ministerial Group not only avoids the potential of a bad press, but also retains the benefits that accrue from a ministerial group: a broad range of inputs, including from non-departmental bodies. (It is the non-departmental bodies that would likely be most aggrieved by the demise of the Group.) Indeed, there is a case for extending the scope for this non-Departmental input, possibly through working groups.

WORKING GROUPS: the idea here is that within each Department a small working group is established to identify measures that could be taken to create an even playing field. Each group inviting an input from relevant groups operating within the Department's sector of responsibility. Each group would then feed its proposals into the ministerial group for broader-based evaluation and integration, before transmission to the Cabinet Committee.

In this process, the emphasis would be a two-way one. The Cabinet, through the Cabinet Sub-Committee, would set the goal and be responsible for the measures to be placed before Parliament (the 'top down' element). And the working groups and ministerial group would be responsible for generating proposals to realise that goal (the 'bottom up' element).

E.R.

HOW TO PROCEED? If such a structure is agreed, it should be announced as an integrated structure (in other words, it should not be done on an incremental basis, the vesting of responsibility in the Employment Secretary announced one week, and the creation of working groups announced the next), and should be accompanied by a Government publication detailing what the Government has already done in this sector. In short, one should be in a position to announce:

(a) This is our goal (a level playing field);

(b) This is what we have done already to help realise that goal;

(c) Here is what we plan to do to ensure its final realisation.

All this to be accompanied by a reasonably specific time frame: in other words that the level playing field be achieved within x number of years.

Atkins 273 3205.

Involvement of NGOs. – official who is sec. of Women's Commission

CONFIDENTIAL

meeting Record
Subject
& Masts.

Cate MJ

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

9 April 1991

Dear Colin,

WOMEN'S ISSUES

The Prime Minister chaired a meeting on 28 March to discuss women's issues. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Home Secretary, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Secretary of State for Health, the Secretary of State for Employment, Mrs. Angela Rumbold and Mrs. Virginia Bottomley were present. The meeting had before it papers by the Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for Health and the Secretary of State for Employment.

The Prime Minister opened the discussion by saying that he wanted to focus on credible, practicable issues which would address the genuine problems some women faced.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- Government action should be directed to "removing the obstacles for women", and should be publicised as such;

- it should be emphasised that removing obstacles was a matter of good resource management;

- the benefits of the child benefit measures in the Budget needed to be emphasised at every opportunity;

- it would be wrong to create a Ministry for Women or to pursue an approach which ghettoised women in any way;

- a key area was enabling mothers to return to work if they wished to. This meant looking at child care provision; education for under fives; training; and employment practice;

It was also noted that:

- child vouchers for the under fives would enable parents to buy care or nursery education for their children, before

full-time school; the cost, however, would be high;

- there would be advantage in enabling small employers to buy in child care facilities;

It was generally agreed:

- while the Children's Act was generally an excellent piece of legislation, it gave some local authorities the excuse to impose restrictive conditions on child care facilities. This often prevented, for example, mothers setting up their own local groups. If deregulation of child care facilities were taken too far, however, there could be unfortunate results. Local authorities should be encouraged to see their role as one of partnership, enabling the private sector in childcare to flourish;

- the Civil Service was a flexible employer of women; and the Government should encourage the improvement of private sector practices, drawing on the Civil Service's good record as necessary;

- the Government had an excellent story to tell in respect of women's health;

- the NHS was the biggest employer of women in the country and changes in management practices meant that its career prospects for women had improved constantly over the last decade;

- often measures needed better organisation or co-ordination - for example keeping schools open after hours;

- the presentation of issues which particularly affected women needed special care.

In summing up, the Prime Minister indicated that there were two areas - nursery education and child care tax allowances and vouchers - which had significant expenditure and tax implications. They should be addressed separately. Beyond that, however, removing obstacles should be the prime aim of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues and should be woven into the Government's economic and social policies.

The Group needed a higher profile. It should consider how to take forward the issues (other than the two mentioned above), identify further initiatives, and begin to bring them forward for decision. Colleagues should be encouraged to put initiatives to the Group.

Greater publicity should be given to the Government's proposals so far and to its future proposals. In particular, at a suitable point, Mrs. Rumbold should make a couple of major speeches on the philosophy of removing obstacles for women, to which the Prime Minister would give his strong public backing. These should be published, as should a more comprehensive pamphlet setting out Government action on women's issues. Male Ministers and MPs should be encouraged to speak on matters

concerning women: they should not be seen as the preserve of women MPs.

The Prime Minister asked Mrs. Rumbold to write, setting out her ideas on how to develop the Group's remit, especially on the matters outlined in the fifth paragraph above. She should also consider whether the Group had the right reporting line and the right personnel. It might be necessary for the Committee to report direct to the Prime Minister, given the number of Departments involved.

I am copying this to the Private Secretaries of all those who attended the meeting and to Stephen Crowne (Department of Education and Science).

Yours sincerely,

William Chapman.

William E. Chapman

Colin Walters Esq
Home Office

Carolyn/.

What about a mega-speech by Angela on 'Removing Obstacles' that No. 10. would really push.

Then publish it as a pamphlet?

Good idea.

28/3.

PRIME MINISTER

WOMEN

You are to chair a meeting tomorrow with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Home Secretary, Party Chairman, Secretary of State for Employment, Secretary of State for Health, Angela Rumbold and Virginia Bottomley. The Secretary of State for Education was invited but will not be coming.

The meeting arises from a paper (at B) by the Home Secretary. A discussion on it was postponed from February until after the Budget, as two of the main issues which Kenneth Baker raised were child benefit and child tax allowances. Michael Howard and William Waldegrave have now submitted supplementary papers, at C and D respectively. Carolyn Sinclair has provided a helpful briefing note, at A.

The three Ministers make various points. You will wish to draw out those issues which you wish to make a priority and Carolyn's briefing note suggests the following agenda:

- handling of women's issues in the run-up to an election, including the manifesto;

- identifying a shortlist of the most promising proposals;

- future Whitehall arrangements for women's issues.

On the first item, Carolyn's note indicates the main issues you will wish to raise. The choices seem clear, so you may want to keep discussion on this item brief, while reaffirming the decision not to have a separate manifesto section on women.

On promising proposals, Carolyn suggests three. The underlying aim of them all is to enable women with families to have a real choice on whether to return to work, and to ensure that such a choice is not effectively restricted to well-off families or those without children. The three proposals are:

- greater use of school buildings after hours;

- more flexible career opportunities;

- easing the rules covering small childminding operations.

If there is time, you might then very briefly run through other possible new initiatives in Kenneth Baker's note - in his paragraphs 2a, b, c and d. None looks very promising because of expense, but Michael Howard thinks there may be scope to extend the tax relief covering employers' childcare facilities (2b).

On future arrangements, Carolyn points to the difficulties of discussing these fully with Mrs. Rumbold present. In addition, last time you saw Mr. Baker's paper you commented that to give women's issues too high a profile at the moment would look

gimmicky and therefore you did not want a change of department or a male chairman for the time being. Having heard the meeting's views, it may be better to take forward the organisational issues later with Kenneth Baker alone. You may also want to float whether the Equal Opportunities Commission should be transferred from the Home Office remit to the Department of Employment, with which both Mr. Baker and Mr. Howard would be content.

WEC

WILLIAM CHAPMAN 27 MARCH 1991

jd a:womena4

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

26 March 1991

MEETING ON WOMEN'S ISSUES : 28 MARCH

You are meeting colleagues to discuss the handling of women's issues in the light of the Budget announcement on uprating Child Benefit. Kenneth Baker, Michael Howard and William Waldegrave have written detailed letters setting out a range of proposals designed to help women.

You might like to focus on:

(a) the handling of women's issues in the run up to an Election, what is said in the Manifesto etc;

(b) identifying a short list of the most promising proposals;

(c) future arrangements within Whitehall for giving women's issues a higher profile (if that is what is wanted).

(a) Handling women's issues in the run up to an Election

It was agreed that the Manifesto should not contain a separate section on women. Instead policies designed to help women should be woven into the relevant sections on health, social security benefits etc.

This seems sensible. Many women do not want to be treated as some disadvantaged group who must be given special treatment. Practical measures designed to help women combine their own

development with family responsibilities is a clear and attractive alternative to the Labour party policy of treating women as a minority.

It follows that "women" should not be an issue as such in the run up to an Election. But you can point:

- to the pledge to uprate child benefit, the single most popular way of helping mothers;

- to the NHS' present and planned measures to improve women's health (nationwide programmes of cancer screening, special efforts to reach ethnic minority women).

(b) Shortlist of most promising proposals

A number of the proposals put forward by colleagues overlap. Most involve organisation and effort rather than large amounts of money. Because of the need to galvanise a number of players- schools, the NHS, businesses - to achieve change, you might want to select 2 or 3 promising areas for a real push. These could be reflected in the relevant bits of the Manifesto.

Three promising areas are:

- Schemes to use school buildings after hours and in school holidays. Schools could charge a rent, employers could contribute to the cost and supervision could be provided at low cost by parents or voluntary workers. Such schemes exist, but have been slow to get off the ground. Schools and LEAs need a push on this.

- Example setting by public services. Women employees with children need flexibility - career breaks, job splitting,

flexi-time etc. The Civil Service has a better record than some other public services. More could be done to improve flexibility for returning nurses and teachers. (Virginia Bottomley has been putting a lot of effort recently into making the NHS a better employer of women.)

- Easing the rules applying to small child-minding operations. It is important to prevent abuse, but the balance is in danger of tipping too far the other way, with zealous local authorities demanding additional loos (for 6 children?) etc.

You could invite colleagues to agree to concentrate efforts in these areas.

DES and local authorities will need to be brought in to make real progress.

(c) Future arrangements in Whitehall

There are two issues here:

- which Department should take the lead on women in Whitehall;

- how to beef up the influence within Whitehall of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues (MGWI) currently chaired by Angela Rumbold.

Kenneth Baker has told me that he would like the Home office to get out of lead responsibility for women. He thinks it belongs more naturally in the Department of Employment, where he suggests putting responsibility for the Equal Opportunities Commission. Michael Howard seems happy to take the EOC on.

CONFIDENTIAL

It will be hard not to deal with these issues at your meeting. But it will be equally hard to discuss them frankly in front of Angela Rumbold, who chairs MGWI. It is not her fault that MGWI has relatively little influence: it needs to be chaired by a Cabinet Minister who gives it priority.

The best course would be to listen to what your colleagues say on this. We can then follow up in the light of your conclusions.

CAROLYN SINCLAIR

(153)

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL - POLITICAL CIRCULATION ONLY

Department of Employment
Caxton House, Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NF

Telephone 01-273 . . . . . .
Telex 915564 Fax 01-273 5821

Secretary of State

Rt Hon John Major MP
10 Downing St
Whitehall
LONDON SW1

26 March 1991

Dear Prime Minister

MEETING ON WOMEN'S ISSUES - 28 MARCH

We are to meet with Kenneth Baker, Norman Lamont, Chris Patten, and Angela Rumbold on 28 March to discuss women's issues in a Manifesto context.

Kenneth circulated a paper for this meeting on 13 February.

I agree with the general approach of that paper, but I would make the following specific comments.

Target Groups

From an employment perspective, women returners to the labour market are a broader category than mothers with young children. My Department's "Back to the Future" initiative last year, for example, also helped and advised women who had not sought a job until their children left home, who had left work to marry but had remained childless, and who were returning to work because of a change in family circumstances such as a divorce.

Childcare

Kenneth Baker's paper sets out six options for expanding childcare provision.

(a) I agree that extension of tax relief to cover all childcare costs would be too expensive.

(b) The tax relief granted in the 1990 Budget already covers all childcare facilities actually provided by an employer, whether at or outside the workplace, but as I set out in my Budget submission to Norman Lamont I do believe there is a strong case to go further. There is a case for looking at action again in a future year.

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Secretary of State
for Employment

(c) There would be very considerable practical difficulties in the provision of a childcare voucher by the Government.

(d) It would be difficult to make childcare vouchers provided by employers a non-taxable benefit without subsidising parents to use babysitters in the evenings so that they could go out more often than otherwise.

(e) I am very supportive of the idea of extending the hours of the primary schools.

(f) I am also keen to encourage new providers of childcare. A desirable model would be one where four mothers living near to each other agreed that three would go out to work, and pay for the fourth to stay home and look after all their children. Unfortunately, the new Children's Act says that anyone who provides childcare for payment must register with their local authority. This obviously provides a deterrent to those who might otherwise provide childcare.

Employment Issues

Kenneth Baker's paper mentions, in general terms, the difficulties posed by the Pregnant Women's Directive. Our opponents will attempt to use our opposition to this directive to discredit any other measures we take to assist women, so it is important that we continue to stress that our attitude to this directive is shaped by our commitment to the creation and preservation of jobs for women. We should also recognise that in the longer term the Community dimension to these issues is likely to remain unhelpful.

Self-employment amongst women has doubled since 1979, a much faster rise than amongst men. We should not miss any opportunity to stress the importance of this development and our commitment to see it continue.

Rising levels of unemployment may make the provision of additional incentives for women to return to work both cheaper (because of reduced deadweight and low take-up), and possibly less attractive politically (because of the displacement of unemployed people who would otherwise get jobs, thus raising the count at a time when we may be anxious to bring forward the point at which it levels off). We shall need to consider these issues carefully.

Colleagues should also be aware that the reductions in the funding available to Employment Training in the next financial year will oblige many Training and Enterprise Councils to concentrate almost exclusively on the Aim and Guarantee Groups of the long term unemployed. As a result, a number of programmes to assist women returners are likely to be closed down over the next few months.

Secretary of State
for Employment

Equal Opportunities Commission

Kenneth Baker's paper suggests that the Equal Opportunities Commission might be moved "within the orbit of" my Department.

I would be happy for this idea to be given further consideration.

Further Suggestions

I would make two further suggestions. First, I am currently working to establish national training awards for individual achievement. It would be possible to identify the training achievements of individual women as a separate category for these awards.

Secondly, Training and Enterprise Councils could play the key role in encouraging and coordinating employer contributions to, and collaborative organisation of, childcare facilities.

I am copying this letter to Kenneth Baker, Norman Lamont, Chris Patten and Angela Rumbold.

Yours ever

Michael

MICHAEL HOWARD

JP2633P+

cc Carolyn Harlow

D

Prime Minister

WOMEN'S ISSUES

1. Having read Kenneth Baker's useful survey of the field, I thought it would help our discussion next Thursday if I briefly summarised my Department's plans for the future. I enclose a note. I hope this will enable colleagues to focus on what we have in hand, see if we are missing any major areas of concern and give a view on the priorities we have identified.

2. The note covers a range of issues. But three initiatives stand out:

a. our programme of action on child care. As we all recognise, this is an area of concern and controversy which we need to tackle. These proposals make a positive contribution;

b. a leaflet on women's health and related social care issues to be published towards the end of April or early May. The aim is to draw attention to the present range of services which are available for women and to show what progress has been made over the past decade; and

c. our "women in the NHS" initiative.

3. These are the three areas where Virginia and I aim to concentrate our efforts. Virginia already has regular meetings with a range of major women's organisations and uses these to promote our policies in this area.

4. I am copying this to the others attending next Thursday's meeting.

WW

March 1991

Department of Health

KK/3363p+

WOMEN'S ISSUES

I. HEALTH ISSUES

New Leaflet on Women's Health

We have commissioned a leaflet for publication in April/May, setting out the services available through the NHS and other community and voluntary services for women. The leaflet will be widely available and will explain how the services have developed and can be used to best effect. It will be on the lines of the central insert we produced for the household leaflet "The NHS and You".

Maternity Services

A comprehensive range of services is available through the NHS, which recognises increasingly the need to respond to women's preferences. A number of publications are produced by the Health Education Authority (part of the NHS) including a "Pregnancy Book" which is free to all first time expectant mothers.

We established a Maternity Services Advisory committee in 1981 which advised over three years on all aspects of maternity and neonatal care. It produced three reports on good practice, which have been widely distributed to health authorities.

We have asked health authorities to review maternity and neonatal services as a priority for 1991/92 and to set specific targets for improvement.

There has been a significant improvement in mortality rates over the last 10 years.

Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening

Breast cancer kills more UK women than in any other country. The UK was among the first countries in the world to introduce screening services nationwide. They are based on computerised call and recall and were made possible by injection of Government funding. Specialised breast cancer screening centres are now operating over most of the country - the remainder will come on stream by the end of 1991. The GP's new contract is designed to encourage uptake of cervical cancer screening.

Promoting Good Health	The main Government agency for the promotion of health education in England is the Health Education Authority. It pays particular regard to special needs of women within its main educational programmes and its workplace initiative.
Older Women	The Government is encouraging research and other activity, including voluntary sector initiatives (with Government funding), towards health and welfare provision and promotion for older women and formation of women's self-help groups.
Minority Ethnic Women	We are committed to improving access to health services for ethnic minority women. To improve the uptake of antenatal services, the Department of Health has appointed link workers as part of the Asian Mother and Baby Campaign to overcome language and cultural barriers. Currently, it is investigating ways of improving the uptake of breast and cervical screening programmes to ethnic minority women.
Domestic Violence	The Department of Health helps to fund the main body providing advice for women experiencing domestic violence, the Women's Aid Federation - England.
Family Planning	Family planning services are available nationally, free of charge. Voluntary agencies with Government grant aid complement the NHS.
Abortion	The NHS provides for termination of pregnancy. The availability of safe, legal abortion has contributed to the general health and well being of many women and their families. We are very conscious that we have to tread a fine line between publicising the services available and being accused by the anti-abortion lobby of promoting them.
Invitro-fertilisation	The Government has established a Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority to and licence centres providing treatment involving IVF, AID, egg and embryo donation. The Authority will come into being on 1 April 1991.

II. "WOMEN IN THE NHS" INITIATIVE

Aim of Initiative

The NHS is one of Europe's major employers - and three quarters are women. It must therefore compete effectively for new staff; retain existing staff; attract back former staff; and ensure they are promoted, on merit. This is both good management practice and enlightened self interest.

Focus for action

Each Regional Health Authority is being asked to nominate a non executive member to take special responsibility for women's issues.

More women are to be recruited for health authorities.

June Conference

There will be a Conference in June on women in the NHS, with particular emphasis on recruitment and retention policies.

Other central initiatives

Doctors

- changes to Family Doctor contracts so that women GPs can combine a career in general practice with bringing up a family;

- publication of a report (Women Doctors and their Careers) proposing practical measures which can be taken to overcome obstacles to equality of the medical profession;

Dentists

- the introduction of new KEEPING IN TOUCH and GETTING BACK TO PRACTICE schemes for general dental practitioners;

- a maternity payments scheme for general dental practitioners;

Nursing/Health Visiting/Midwifery Staff

- funding of projects aimed at encouraging the return of nursing, health visiting and midwifery staff;

General Whitley Council agreements on:

- retainer scheme - a national framework agreement allowing staff to interrupt their employment for up to 5 years for domestic or other reasons;

- special leave for domestic, personal and family reasons;

Childcare

- establishment of workplace nurseries by increasing numbers of health authorities, including in collaboration with Midland Bank and other employers in the private sector. About half of all health authorities are thought to have some facilities

Social Services

Programme of Action - publication of guidance on better use of women's skills in social service departments

Child Care Policy Document

III. CHILD CARE AND CARERS

Our aim is to promote partnership with the full involvement of employers, the private sector, voluntary organisations and parents. We have a committee bringing these interests together and are also working with Business in the Community. The policy document is designed to set out our aims. Colleagues will of course be involved in its preparation.

Older Children

Our programme of action on childcare is directed at:

local authorities - to make the registration scheme for which they are responsible efficient but sympathetic to independent providers;

employers - including ourselves with our responsibilities for the caring professions with their high proportion of women;

the voluntary sector - who can help to promote good standards and innovative practice.

Carers

The childcare field falls into two parts: covering preschool age children and older children respectively. Kenneth Baker's proposal to keep schools open for longer hours each day and in the holidays applies to the second group. We have not found it easy to get this off the ground. DES have, we believe, only had a minimal response from schools. And voluntary out of school schemes which we have been promoting for some time still do not make much impression. If we are to make progress we may need to think about a larger initiative.

We provide substantial funds to a range of voluntary organisations to carry forward childcare initiatives.

We made clear in the White Paper "Caring for People", which sets out our proposals for community care, that we fully accepted the importance of supporting informal carers - family members and friends who enable the frail, elderly and handicapped to live as independent lives as possible in the community.

Informal carers are predominantly, but by no means exclusively, women. We need to be careful therefore not to label this "woman only" issue. It is, however, of particular importance to women.

We must also be careful not to offer immediate improvements. Our community care proposals are being phased in between now and April 1993. Meantime, we cannot point to any other significant change which will help carers. Moreover, where resources are limited, help inevitably tends to go to those struggling on their own without any support from carers.

PRIME MINISTER

WOMEN'S ISSUES

During our recent discussion you asked me to consider what we could say in the Manifesto which would appeal to women voters. I am sure you are right to want these issues addressed. In drawing up suggestions for the Manifesto, the Home Affairs Policy Group will not deal with women's issues as a separate matter. I thought, therefore, that you might care to consider the ideas I have put forward in this paper.

1. Targeting Specific Groups

If we are looking to improve our electoral standing with women then we need to identify which particular groups would feel better disposed towards us if they saw manifesto pledges in particular areas. Three specific interest groups which we could concentrate on are;

(i) The mother returning to work shortly after having a child.

(ii) The working mother of young school age children.

(iii) The mother of young children at home.

The Party is confused and schizophrenic about the role of the mother. Should she stay at home in the early years or not? The choice should clearly be hers, that is our Party policy. However, our economy in the 1990s will need more economically active women and the trend for women to return to work is very marked and will grow. If our policy is to allow women to choose, then we must ensure that there is a level playing field and that it is not just the well off family that can find suitable childcare. This means a positive policy to stimulate childcare provision.

2. Childcare

The Labour Party is looking to the universal provision of nursery education as its panacea. But free nursery education for all is a very expensive option. At the 1987 election we costed this Labour pledge at around £1.5 billion. We have taken the position that there should be diversity in the choice of childcare for under 5 year olds. At the moment about half of 3 and 4 year olds attend nursery schools including private nursery schools. About the same number of this age group benefit from some form of pre-school provision. That is to say, play groups, day care, and registered child minders.

As Chancellor of the Exchequer, you announced a measure giving an incentive to workplace nurseries. Working mothers were allowed to use this service without having to pay tax on it as a perk. This measure was welcomed as a step forward in giving help to working mothers.

Possible new initiatives:

a) Extending tax relief to the cost of childcare. This would be very expensive, untargetted and not help the non-working mother. I attach a leader from the Daily Telegraph this week opposing such a scheme.

b) Extending tax relief to cover employers buying in places for the children of their employees in other suitable nurseries. The Conservative Women's National Committee is pressing for this. This is an extension of your scheme to cover non workplace nurseries. It could be very costly.

c) The provision of a voucher which would give mothers an entitlement to the basic cost of their choice of childcare provision. This could be topped up voluntarily by the individual. We did some work on this at the DES and we had in mind an ambitious scheme which rolled up all the existing pre-school expenditure and distributed it by way of a voucher. We were trying to devise something similar to our post sixteen training voucher, but it is expensive and there was a large dead weight cost.

d) A variation of this would be a voucher provided by the employer at his cost, similar to the luncheon voucher, which could be for childcare. This voucher could be used by the employee to pay for approved nurseries, registered child minders or even for qualified care at home. It should be treated as a non taxable benefit. It would be less expensive than making childcare costs tax deductible. Moreover, the level of the voucher and the cost of it could be controlled. It would undoubtedly stimulate the provision of private nursery and private day care.

e) Mothers would be considerably helped if one of the local primary schools which provided nursery education or even education post 5, stayed open after other schools closed at 3.30pm in order to provide a protective environment for some children. Mothers who left children at such a school would be able to do more than part-time work.

A scheme could be developed under which the extra hours could be funded by employers, and the staff of this extended school day need not necessarily be teachers or LEA employees. This is a good use of the existing assets of the state school. The designated school could also be made available in holiday and half-terms.

f) Encouraging new providers of childcare services. It is currently an awful hassle to set-up small nursery care operations say, of a single proprietor, maximum 12 children. It involves DES, DH, and local authorities. What is needed is a simple planning and inspection package which would free keen and capable women from struggling with the regulatory bureaucracy. Many LEAs do not seem to be very interested in cutting through the red tape for such small operations.

3. Child Benefit

Many colleagues are in no doubt that the issue of child benefit crucially affects the attitude to our Party of mothers with young children. We can approach the issue in a number of ways.

(i) Abolish child benefit.

(ii) Freeze child benefit and ultimately allow its value to become eroded over time.

(iii) Means test child benefit so that the bulk of it goes to those in the lower income groups. If we remove universal entitlement to child benefit in this way then it should be tapered off rather than ceasing at an absolute cut off point.

(iv) Vary the rate of child benefit to favour children below a certain age.

(v) Increase child benefit in line with inflation.

All of these options are very high profile politics. I imagine that the Treasury and the Department of Social Security have already done work to cost the implications of these ideas. I think we will probably have to opt for (v).

4. I have concentrated in this paper on the two areas of childcare and child benefit. Several other Departments have specific responsibilities of interest to women and I now list some of these areas;

Employment - The effects of the current European Directives, and in particular the proposed Social Charter. Employers will not welcome proposals to increase both maternity leave with pay together with the obligation to keep open work for employees who have left to have children.

Employment continued - Continue exploring schemes for job-sharing, working from home, and extended part-time work.

Treasury - We should align taxation and benefits so that we avoid the situation where women find they are penalised for going back to work and experience a drop in net income compared with the amount they were receiving in benefits.

- The idea of reintroducing the Child Tax Allowance is coming back on the agenda. One trade off could be the abolition of the married couples allowance. The allowance would only go to married couples with children. This would have the twin objective of recognising the financial burden of child raising, and providing a financial boost to the institutions of marriage and the family.

- A number of women have lost out by not keeping up their pension payments during the time they took off for childcare. We should be considering ways to encourage women to maintain pension contributions during this period.

Health - We should be stressing our good record on preventative health measures for women, and consider what further we could do in this area. There are several health issues which affect women only - more should be made of these.

Education - This paper has already recognised the importance of nursery education, albeit as one form of childcare. Early years education is recognised as especially valuable, and many women will see nursery education provision as a touchstone of the Government's good faith. However, this doesn't have to be provided just by the State.

Education continued	-	We have a very good record on increasing the proportion of places women now occupy in higher education and certain professions.
Environment	-	Housing is an important touchstone of the Government's concern for women/families. We need ideas on renting, low cost housing, sheltered housing.
	-	The Community Charge adversely affects the non working married woman where a separate charge is sent to her but is payable by her husband. This appears to contradict the reform which gave husband and wife separate tax assessments. This grievance is echoed by women pensioners who are married to pensioners.
Home Office	-	Considerable publicity is given to the plight of women's vulnerability with regard to criminal assault both outside the home and when out at night. We need to reassure women about our concern as evidenced by street lighting programmes and safer public transport provision.
	-	Ethnic minority women need to be convinced (as do ethnic minority men) that ours is an equal opportunity society and that we firmly stand against racial discrimination in the allocation of public services and employment.
Institutions Catering for Women's Interests	-	We have a strong tradition of voluntary sector activity on behalf of women - Women's Institutes, The National Council for Women, the National Alliance of Women's Organisations and the WVS.

Institutions Continued

The most high profile body is the Equal Opportunities Commission, which is sometimes controversial but would be more trouble to abolish than keep in being. One suggestion might be to move the EOC within the orbit of the Department of Employment so that the EOC could refocus on its main task which is in the field of employment.

MGWI is the current official Government focus for dealing with women's issues but, as I have set out earlier, has only a limited effect. It could be given a higher profile which runs the risk of it being seen as our equivalent of Labour's Ministry for Women.

It could develop along lines rather akin to the responsibility for Green issues allocated to a particular Minister in each Department. A strengthened MGWI could also conduct an audit of individual Department's work specifically to ensure that proposals coming forward did not conflict with the objective of helping women. A women's audit group for each Department.

5. How this could be handled in the Manifesto

The Labour Party has made great play of its commitment to women through its Women's Spokesperson, and its plan for a Ministry for Women.

The Labour Manifesto will include a Women's section, and their Press Conference programme will probably include a Women's Issues day. I believe we should avoid aping this approach.

Each section of our Manifesto should, where appropriate, include references to how women are being helped by our proposals. The whole picture should be drawn together in briefing form as a speaking note, and a letter for candidates to send out in response to enquiries. In this way we are able to match the Labour Party, but without resorting to the 'ghetto approach' to this issue for which we have repeatedly criticised Labour.

6. The Next Steps

One of the problems in pulling together women's issues is that they straddle several Government Departments. The Ministerial Group on Women's Issues (MGWI) was established to develop a co-ordinated response. But, as Angela Rumbold noted to my predecessor, it has so far had only limited effect due to problems of Departmental representation and limited resourcing.

What is now needed is a clear signal by you that the Prime Minister attaches a high priority to resolving the criticism that different Departments sometimes seem to have conflicting aims.

It is also very likely that any Manifesto Policy initiatives we suggest will have cost implications. Therefore, before embarking upon a major exercise to develop initiatives which appeal to women, we need to decide how much money can be made available. Ultimately, it is this cash amount which will determine what initiatives we can undertake. We then have to decide how to target effectively initiatives so they have a positive electoral impact.

The issue turns essentially on childcare and child benefit.

7. This is a preliminary paper highlighting the main women's issues as I see them. If we are to take this further however, then the three issues we need to resolve are;

(i) The appropriate Group and personnel to develop women's issues policies.

(ii) The status of this Group vis a vis its inter-Departmental remit.

(iii) The financial resources available to enable both the Group to perform its task and to fund whatever policy initiatives emerge.

Perhaps we could meet to discuss this.

February 1991

Extract from
The Daily Telegraph
Tuesday February 5th 1991

Unnecessary incentive

THE GOVERNMENT wants to encourage women to participate more actively in society. It seems to feel that women's family responsibilities present a common barrier to such fulfilment. Labour has made much of the running in generating proposals to overcome that barrier, by promising greater help for working mothers through plans for better childcare. Now, there are signs that the Government is preparing to follow that lead.

The main incentive to encourage mothers back to work would be financial. Use of workplace nurseries is already subject to special tax treatment. However, the Chancellor, Mr Lamont, is reported to be considering implementing in the Budget direct tax relief for mothers who use childminders or nurseries outside the workplace. The principle of fiscal neutrality, to which many Conservative thinkers are wedded, is already breached by mortgage interest tax relief; so there would be no great ideological departure in extending relief to employers of childminders.

None the less, such a concession would be wrong and unnecessary. The principal objection is that it would unduly help those who need it least — middle-class women with full-time, highly paid jobs so well rewarded that they need no further incentive to take them up. Nor is there any consistency in the Government's policy, since it is also said to be considering limiting mortgage tax relief to the basic rate, at the same time as it is contemplating this new tax break. Moreover, with unemployment rising, the economic need to encourage women back to work becomes less pressing. Such a concession might also cause the Government to sidestep the far more important, and expensive, issue of providing nursery education. The Government should not seek to affect by fiscal intervention a woman's decision whether or not to work. That should be based on the conscience and aspirations of individual women, not by causing other taxpayers to subscribe to make working motherhood more economically rewarding.

Sandra
R. deal
BHP 26/2

Prime Minister
Content for one or both Health
Ministers to be invited to the
Ministerial meeting on women?
BHP 25/2

(2)

MR POTTER

cc Mrs Hogg

25 February 1991

MEETING ON WOMEN'S ISSUES - 28 MARCH

at 11.30 (or after Cabinet)

I have only just become aware that the Department of Health see themselves as having a major interest in child care issues because of their responsibility for children. In addition to this, Mrs Bottomley has been pursuing something of a personal campaign to improve the position of working women. The key point here is that the NHS is the largest employer of women in Europe.

It occurs to me that you might want to invite Mr Waldegrave, and possibly also Mrs Bottomley, to the proposed meeting after the Budget on women's issues.

both will attend. S 7/3

CAROLYN SINCLAIR

211.cs

Fixed

10 DOWNING STREET

Sandra.

We need a meeting on Cyprus (See Home Secretary's note of February). The following should be invited:

28/3 at 1200.

Home Sec.
— Chandler
Chairman
* SIS Grp.
Angela Rumbold (Min of State H.O.)
Carolyn Sinclair
Tony Kerpel (Home Sec Special adviser)

PTO

and Sarah Nagg.

This is probably
Barry's meeting.
It should be after
the Budget
Hts

1872

S15/2

2. CAS

PRIME MINISTER

WOMEN

Caroline Slocock put in a note last night about arrangements for a meeting with the Home Secretary, Chancellor and others on women's issues. Who? Sp.

Caroline kindly noted my concern that this discussion ought to take place after, rather than before the Budget. The two main issues - child care tax allowances and child benefit - are as you know, both Budget candidates.

Quite independently, John Gieve telephoned to give the same message i.e. that the Chancellor would very much appreciate it if this discussion could be delayed until after the Budget.

Content for the meeting to be set for after 19 March?

JCBox

P.P. Barry Potter
14 February 1991

c: Women (MJ)

(have put pp to William for info)

PSG also ✗

Copy to CF pl. note

1. Tony Kerpal
   Special Advisor to Home Sec
2. Carolyn Sinclair
3. Sarah Hogg.

Sgd/-

CONFIDENTIAL

FILE

bc Tony Kerpel, Special Adviser to Home Sec
Carolyn Sinclair
Sarah Hogg.

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

20 February 1991

Dear Helen,

Following our telephone conversation this morning, I confirm that the Prime Minister will chair a 1 hour meeting on Women's Issues at 10 Downing Street after Cabinet (i.e. approximately 1200 noon) on Thursday 28 March. The Home Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State for Employment and the Party Chairman are invited to attend, together with the Minister of State in the Home Office, Mrs. Angela Rumbold.

I am copying this letter to the offices of all participants.

Yours sincerely,

Sandra

MISS SANDRA PHILLIPS

Miss Helen Murray,
Diary Secretary,
Home Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

HK

CONFIDENTIAL

William/Barry
To note
time of
meeting
S 21/2

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

20 February 1991

Barry
As not all the issues are economic, I should like to attend this as well as you. Would that be OK?
William.
22/2.

Yes, of course.
B.
22/2

Dear Helen,

Following our telephone conversation this morning, I confirm that the Prime Minister will chair a 1 hour meeting on Women's Issues at 10 Downing Street after Cabinet (i.e. approximately 1200 noon) on Thursday 28 March. The Home Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State for Employment and the Party Chairman are invited to attend, together with the Minister of State in the Home Office, Mrs. Angela Rumbold.

I am copying this letter to the offices of all participants.

Yours sincerely,

Sandra

MISS SANDRA PHILLIPS

Miss Helen Murray,
Diary Secretary,
Home Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

Yes. Post Budget

F.H.2

10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

Mr Baker is happy to send his note to the Chancellor, the Chairman and - he suggests - the Secretary of State for Employment. He is happy to hold a wider meeting with them and Mrs Rumbold (who has since asked to see you for 10 minutes to discuss departmental responsibilities for women). He would like his special adviser to be present and is happy for the Policy Unit to be there.

Content for me to set up this meeting?

Barry wonders whether it should be after the Budget.

AS 13/2

With the Compliments
of the Special Adviser

Caroline Slocock -

For information.

Would it be possible for me to attend the Women Issues meeting as I drew up the Home Secs paper and will be asked to maintain an interest in this area.

Tony Nagel.
12/2

"CONFIDENTIAL - POLITICAL CIRCULATION"

HOME SECRETARY

QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

13 February 1991

The Prime Minister has asked me to circulate the attached paper on Women's Issues for a meeting to be arranged by No 10.

It is being copied to Norman Lamont, Chris Patten, Michael Howard, and Angela Rumbold.

Approved by the Secretary of State
and signed in his absence

"CONFIDENTIAL - POLITICAL CIRCULATION"

B

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

8 February 1991

WOMEN

Kenneth Baker has minuted to you on women's issues. His minute covers

(a) the big and small policy steps which the Government could take, including tax and benefits;

(b) the approach to these issues in the Manifesto;

(c) the handling of these issues in Whitehall.

(a) Policy Steps

Kenneth Baker flags up the key issues viz increased child benefit and tax relief for childcare. He seems to favour the former and to have some reservations about the latter unless it focuses on employers and encourages them to provide vouchers which can be used to pay for different kinds of childcare.

My note of last week made virtually the same points (copy attached for ease of reference). But Kenneth Baker goes on to express some support for the re-introduction of Child Tax Allowances as well, financed by phasing out the Married Couple's Allowance.

Arguments against this:

- Child Tax Allowances give most benefit to those who pay most tax. They do nothing for non-taxpayers.

- You probably need the money from phasing out MCAs to pay for increased Child Benefit.

If you increase Child Benefit, you need do nothing on tax beyond phasing out the MCA. But if you wanted to, you could extend employee tax relief on employer provided child care.

(b) Women and the Manifesto

Kenneth Baker reviews the policies affecting women which are handled by different departments. He goes on to propose that the Manifesto should look at how women are being helped in various areas under the appropriate headings eg employment, health etc.

This would contrast with the Labour Party's Manifesto which will include a Women's section and trail the idea of a Ministry for Women.

Plenty of women will not like the Labour Party approach, and there are good arguments for differentiating the Conservative Party Manifesto in the way Kenneth Baker suggests. Some of the individual ideas - encouraging state schools to keep their premises open after school hours, against payment by employers- are attractive.

(c) Women and Whitehall

There are two issues here:

- which Department should take the lead on women in Whitehall;

- how to beef up the influence within Whitehall of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues (MGWI) currently chaired by Angela Rumbold.

Kenneth Baker has told me that he would like the Home Office to get out of lead responsibility for women. He thinks it belongs more naturally in the Department of Employment, where he suggests putting responsibility for the Equal Opportunities Commission.

There is a lot to be said for such a move:

- women's concerns increasingly focus on employment, not civil rights;

- the Home Office has a million worries and women do not rank highly when prisoners are on the roof or immigrants at the door;

- the Home Office are not seen as movers or shakers within Whitehall. The Department of Employment is looking for more to do.

Switching responsibility away from the Home Office could make it easier for the Secretary of State to take a personal interest. He/she could chair MGWI, and this could help to give the Group more clout, especially if you were known to take a personal interest in its work. But you might not want to make this change until after an election.

Conclusion

Kenneth Baker's suggestions are broadly sensible. He concludes that three issues need to be resolved:

(i) The appropriate Group and personnel to develop women's issues policies

(ii) The status of the Group vis a vis its inter-Departmental remit

These issues hang together. Transfer of lead responsibility/chairmanship of the Group to the Secretary of State for Employment looks sensible in the longer term. Meanwhile Kenneth Baker could chair the Group to demonstrate the importance you attach to these matters (this was done for a while on drugs).

More senior representation and sustained pushing with your known backing would result in Departments giving more weight to the impact of their policies on women.

(iii) The financial resources available to enable both the Group to perform its task and to fund whatever policy initiatives emerge

You will want to avoid Kenneth Baker's idea of a total pot of cash for initiatives which will appeal to women. Child benefit/tax changes are matters for you to settle with Norman Lamont. They are not for the Group.

Other initiatives will need to be accommodated by Departments in the usual way (as was done for initiatives in the Environment White Paper).

CAROLYN SINCLAIR

(077)

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

WOMEN

I am attaching at Flag A a note from the Home Secretary about women and at Flag B some advice from Carolyn Sinclair which also refers back to her earlier note on this subject.

The Home Secretary raises three issues which he says need to be resolved and in a manuscript addition asks for a meeting to discuss them. Although you have a bilateral with the Home Secretary on 18 February, I have had a word with Andrew who thinks it would be better to discuss these questions in a separate meeting. The bilateral will cover security issues which you will want to discuss privately and it already has a pretty full agenda. You may want Angela Rumbold, Sarah Hogg and Carolyn Sinclair to come to any meeting with the Home Secretary on women's issues.

You will see that Carolyn gives a very helpful steer at the end of her minute on how you should respond on the three points which the Home Secretary says need to be resolved. But you may prefer not to express a view until you have had an opportunity to discuss these points with the Home Secretary. Looking at Carolyn's note it seems likely that Mr Baker is being rather guarded about what is really in his mind on the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues and the location of overall responsibilities for women's issues in Government. Although his note is far from clear, it seems likely that he thinks that the chair of the Ministerial Group needs upgrading; and that the Department of Employment should take over responsibilities for women's issues. The last idea seems to me to be a particularly good one, since today's "women's issues" are largely ones of employment, childcare and maternity rights rather

4/10-2

than Home Office issues such as civil rights, women's organisations and adoption. But if you moved responsibilities to DE you would increase the momentum for change.

The Home Secretary's diffidence may have something to do with Angela Rumbold's position and it might be as well to check with him before inviting her. That said, it would be very odd to discuss these questions without her being present.

✓ Content to agree to a meeting?

✓ Agree that these issues should be dealt with separately, not in the next bilateral?

✓ Agree to suggest to the Home Secretary that Angela Rumbold should be invited?

✓ Would you like Sarah Hogg and Carolyn Sinclair to be present?

CAS

Caroline Slocock
8 February 1991

CCPM — B

Prime Minister
You need to take a view on the right package (if any) for women in this year's Budget.
I suggest it is raised in next week's bilateral with the Chancellor.
BHP 1/2

(2)

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

1 February 1991

Yes.

M. A/d for that meeting. F. 2.2

WOMEN

Time is ticking on for measures in the tax/benefit field. This note sets out some options with timings.

Policy aim

Is it to find

- policies which will be popular with women;
- policies which will advance the position of women;
- or both?

Popular policies

These need not be directed specifically at women. A general commitment to help those who need an extra helping hand should be attractive to women. Many are in that category themselves, or tend to know a lot about those who are.

If you want to focus more narrowly, the women who should be helped are mothers. Here it is clear that by far the most popular policy would be:

- an increase in Child Benefit coupled with a commitment to indexation (an extra £1 on Child Benefit would cost around £470m).

X

This would be much more attractive than any tinkering with the structure of Child Benefit. Changing structures involves losers.

It may be necessary if there is simply not enough money for an across the board increase. But you should be chary of ingenious arguments that it would be better to slice Child Benefit this way or that. These arguments never cut much ice outside Whitehall.

If you wanted to be even more generous you could ease the rules for those receiving Family Credit or Income Support, so that they could receive Child Benefit on top of these other payments. Cost about £160m.

Increasing benefits in this way would be presented as measures to help children - who stand to gain most from the Opportunity Society. We should not pretend that benefit levels are related to the cost of childcare which is necessary if mothers wish to realise their potential through working.

Policies to advance women

The key thing here is help with childcare costs.

Direct help would be very expensive if it took the form of all-day kindergartens paid for by the taxpayer. The best course would be to encourage employers of women to help with childcare. It is they who stand to benefit by keeping the staff whom they have trained.

Given the deep-rooted attachment of UK employers to perks, this points to giving employees tax relief on all forms of employer provided help (eg childcare vouchers). Employers already benefit from not paying NICs on such payments. But if the employee pays less tax, the money given by the employer goes further. So tax relief for employees should encourage employer paid childcare.

The benefit in kind threshold (£8,500) would be no problem. If

you exempt a benefit from tax, the exemption applies whatever the mother earns. (The £8,500 threshold is only relevant to benefits which are taxed.)

The attractions of this form of tax relief for childcare costs are:

- encouragement to employers to provide help with childcare. All their employees would benefit from this whether they paid tax or not (NB 40 per cent of working mothers are non taxpayers);

- it avoids giving tax relief (at higher rate) for ladies in Belgravia who do not work but have nannies.

The cost of such a relief is likely to be small in the short term, though it would build up as employer behaviour changes.

Conclusions

You could go for popular policies without advancing women. But it would be mistake to go for advancing only. Too many non-working mothers would feel that they were getting nothing. This points to a benefit and tax relief package.

A possible scenario is:

- Tax relief for employer provided childcare in this year's Budget.

- A significant increase in taxation of company cars - inevitable sooner or later - to balance childcare perks and help offset cost. No need to act in this year's Budget if political considerations point otherwise -

cost of childcare relief will take some time to build up.

- An increase in Child Benefit plus indexation. There is a five to six month lead time for implementation. This could go in the Manifesto.

- If you decided to change the rules on Family Credit and Income Support, this could go in the Manifesto as well.

- The obvious offset to the cost of increasing benefits is to freeze and phase out the Married Couple's Allowance. Back of envelope calculations suggest that savings from MCA might not be far short of worthwhile Child Benefit increase in full year (though not if you add it to Family Credit and Income Support as well). Cost considerations point to freezing the MCA in this year's Budget to allow the savings to build up. But political considerations point to linking it to a Child Benefit increase in the Manifesto.

Do you want to ask Norman Lamont to consider a package on these lines, advising you precisely on cost and timing?

CAROLYN SINCLAIR

171.CS

Prime Minister
This is relevant to Carolyn Sinclair's exercise minute about tax and other measures for women. You are discussing the tax measures with the Chancellor at next week's Cabinet. ④

PRIME MINISTER

10 January 1990

PM. B/L for Ch. X Bilateral 13/1.

WOMEN - RUMBOLD GROUP PROPOSALS

The Ministerial Group chaired by Angela Rumbold draws together the initiatives being taken by a number of Departments to help women. Attached is a sample list of current initiatives. These either involve minimal cost, or are already being funded by Departments.

An initiative which could have significant impact over time is **equal opportunity proofing** of policy proposals within government. The aim of equal opportunity proofing is to ensure that the impact on women of all proposals is fully understood. An example of what happens without effective arrangements for this are the recent changes in ET rules. The changes, which aim to give TECs more freedom of manoeuvre, are unhelpful to women with children who want training. This aspect was simply not considered when the rules were changed - the Rumbold Group only discovered what had happened after the event.

The Rumbold Group have produced guidance to Departments on how equal opportunity proofing should be carried out. The problem is that there is no real political steam behind the exercise. This means that the Home Office have an uphill task in getting other Departments to carry out the proofing properly.

CAROLYN SINCLAIR

CHILDCARE

1. **Department of Education** have provided a small amount of money to encourage a voluntary body to find out how far LEAs are willing to make school premises available for out of hours childcare schemes. The initiative for this often comes from parents, who are beginning to look for private sponsorship. Potentially very important.

2. Private providers of nursery schools, and consultants who advise employers on childcare provision, have wanted a trade association and some generally recognised standards which would improve their credibility. **Department of Health** have helped with both of these. The Childcare Association was launched last month. Proposals for a voluntary system of accreditation go out to consultation next month. These are concerned with the commercial viability of private providers. Standards of childcare will be tightened under the Children's Act.

3. Following passage of the Children's Act **Department of Health** are helping to train local authorities to press for good practice in childcare.

4. **Department of the Environment** have amended planning controls to make it easier for employers to provide childcare facilities on site.

RETRAINING

5. **Department of Education** are providing £12 million over two years to help LEAs to support and encourage returning teachers. Support includes creche and childcare facilities, part-time working and jobshare schemes, plus skills updating and confidence building courses.

6. **Department of Employment** are to publish a booklet to help employers to recruit women returning to the labour market.

7. Unemployed women have been a target group for the Department of Education's REPLAN scheme (funded until 1991). REPLAN aims to create better educational opportunities for unemployed adults.

8. Department of Education are encouraging providers of adult education to develop courses offering adults a "second chance".

CARERS

9. Department of Social Security are improving the presentation of rules governing benefits available to carers.

10. Department of Health will ensure that organisations representing carers' interests are consulted by local authorities drawing up plans for community care.

11. Department of Health are considering how to provide better information to carers about available services.

12. Department of Employment are encouraging employers to develop "family friendly" policies, including drawing their attention to (existing) tax reliefs available to them.

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

13. The Cabinet Office is co-ordinating efforts to find more suitable female candidates for public appointments.

BENEFITS

14. Department of Social Security have recently amended rules on arrears of widows' pensions, Housing Benefit for lone parents and Maternity Allowance in ways which are helpful to women.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

15. In June 1990 Home Office issued new guidelines to the police emphasizing the need to protect victims of domestic violence, and to provide a quick and effective response. (136.CS)

VIRGINIA BOTTOMLEY, J.P., M.P.

① cc Miss Phippard
Cab Off.

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

4th January 1991

② Ltr AT 10/1.

Rt Hon John Major MP
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Dear Prime Minister,

I am grateful to you for your letter inviting me to become one of the Co-Chairman of the Women's National Commission. Many colleagues whom I greatly admire have undertaken this role over the years and I am happy to accept. I met the Secretary of the Commission, Moira Jones, just before Christmas when I went over to see the offices.

Since in the Health Service we employ more women than any other organisation in this country or, indeed, in Western Europe, and, as we probably appoint more women to public bodies than any other department in Government (as well as having policy responsibility for children and carers), there seem to be few topics where I shall not need to delicately distinguish between my Ministerial and WNC roles! January 10th suits me fine.

With kind regards

Yours ever

Virginia

HOME AFFAIRS : Women's National
Comm Ptz

STRICTLY PERSONAL

ECL

SUBJECT
CC MASTER
OPS

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

Personal Minute
No. M1/91

CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER

Over the last few weeks, I have been giving some thought to our policies towards women generally.

I am convinced that we need to take action. We cannot go in for reverse discrimination: that would be unattractive, indeed fatal. But ensuring that women have the chance to maximise their potential is absolutely consistent with our wider aims. Moreover, it is politically worthwhile and socially attractive.

Accordingly I asked the Policy Unit to consider some possible ways forward. Their principal conclusion is that financial help with child care costs would do more to open up opportunities for women than any other move. Moreover such measures might be combined:

(i) with an initiative designed to make equal opportunities considerations rank with, say, environmental considerations in policy-making;

(ii) with a number of small and largely costless measures which could make life easier for women, especially women who want to work (the Rumbold Group can provide a list);

(iii) and with some extra money for carers.

STRICTLY PERSONAL

My own view is that, over time, some action, particularly to provide more help with child care, is inevitable. But, for the present, it would not be possible to finance the whole package envisaged by Policy Unit. (Indeed, I am not sure of the priority for carers with the ICA at its present level.)

I would be most grateful if you could give some thought to this subject. We can then speak and decide how best to lead or dampen expectations as appropriate.

I do appreciate that some of this infringes certain financial orthodoxies. But I firmly believe some action is necessary both on merits and on grounds of wider political attraction.

John M.

2 January 1991

Barry //.

We cannot go in for reverse discrimination – that would be unattractive – and fatal.

But ensuring women have the chance to maximise potential is absolutely consistent with our aims + (politically) is worthwhile and socially attractive.

Carolyn's conclusions are well-worth further examination (by Judith too, please).

But, how to proceed?

1. ? discuss politics with Mr. Patten. (? Mr. Mac Gregor).
2. ? " manoeuvre with Mr. Lamont
3. I would like to see the 'Rumbold list' that Carolyn mentions in her conclusions. (Could Carolyn get it: I don't want it known I'm asking for it!).

P-T-O

4. Please Private Ch. X. as follows: -

"I have been giving some thought to our policies on Women's issues generally. STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

We cannot ..... — and fatal (as ever).

But certainly .... attractive (" ").

Policy that suggests that "at our Conclusions."

Over time, I some of this is inevitable, I think — all of it impossible financially. (I'm not sure of priority for Cancer for example, with ICR @ its present level).

But can you give this some thought so that we can speak + then lead/dampen expectations as appropriate. I know some of this is foreign ordinary but I do believe something is necessary — on merits and on grounds of political attraction.

Prime Minister ②
You might raise this at a bilateral with the Chancellor. Alternatively, you could instigate a wider Ministerial discussion.
BHP 21/12

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PRIME MINISTER

20 December 1990

WOMEN

You asked for some ideas for helping women.

There are basically two types of action:

How does this work?

(a) Action within Government to ensure that all policy makers consider how their policies affect women. There are well established precedents for this eg. deregulation, the environment. Such action goes down well with the pressure groups.

(b) Specific measures to help women eg. with the cost of childcare.

You could combine (a) and (b). You could beef them up into a Green Paper, White Paper, or passage for the Manifesto.

(a) ACTION WITHIN GOVERNMENT

There is already a framework for this. Angela Rumbold in the Home Office chairs an interdepartmental group of Ministers on women's issues. This was set up in 1986, and fulfils a UN undertaking (we have to report periodically to the UN on what we are doing for the advancement of women).

The group is not really taken seriously in Whitehall. The Home Office find it difficult to get other Departments to do more than churn out bland papers defending the status quo on childcare, training etc. There is little real interest in the impact of policies on women.

You could change this by:

- asking Kenneth Baker to make it a priority within the Home Office;

- asking other Cabinet colleagues to take the exercise seriously.

The necessary infrastructure at official level would be set up if you made it clear that you regarded this as priority issue. "Equal opportunity" proofing would cost little, and in the longer run could achieve quite a lot.

(b) **SPECIFIC MEASURES**

Childcare

The key issue here is help with the cost of childcare, to enable women to get back into the labour market. This would be good for the supply side. It would also be good for women, offering them opportunity for independence and fulfilment outside as well as inside the home. It fits well with your ideas for a classless society offering opportunity for all.

Help can be given in various ways - through tax relief, the benefit system, wider provision of state nursery schools etc. (In practice the last is probably ruled out at the moment given uncertainty over the future funding of education.)

Options

Tax Reliefs

- The Treasury could quickly produce a range of options for tax reliefs for childcare. Providing relief is

limited to mothers with children under five, and is capped, we are talking of measures costing less than £500m.

- Tax relief by definition only helps those who pay tax. About 40% of working mothers do not pay tax. (50% in the case of working mothers of children under five, two-thirds of whom work part-time.)

Benefits

- You could increase Child Benefit across the board on a one off basis; or go further and commit yourself to indexing. This would be expensive - around £470m for each additional £1.

- An increase in the payment for the first child only would be cheaper - around £250m for each additional £1.

- Help could be concentrated on those receiving Family Credit. We could increase the present disregard of £15 per week. An extra £5 disregard might cost around £90m.

- A cheaper variant would be to increase the disregard only for lone parents. This halves the cost to roughly £45m for every extra £5 of disregard.

Increasing Child Benefit helps all mothers, whether working or not, and would be popular. But indexing would involve a substantial future commitment. It is not certain that the political return would be worth the price. Many people think that indexing is the minimum needed to help those looking after children.

Offsetting savings

Quite a lot of money for either tax relief or benefits could be found by freezing and phasing out the Married Couple's Allowance (MCA). This allowance (which goes to husbands) sits oddly with the concept of independent taxation.

- If the MCA were frozen for all couples next year, it would save £500m.

- If it were frozen for all couples without dependent children, it would save £250m.

Provided the money saved was clearly recycled into helping mothers and children in other ways such a move would be hard to criticise.

Another option would be to withdraw Child Benefit from families with joint income over £25,000 per annum. This could save up to £850m, but there would be administrative costs, and quite a lot of people would face high marginal rates.

Comment

The fundamental dilemma is whether to give help via the tax or benefit route.

The tax route allows help roughly equal to childcare costs - £50 per week on average. But tax relief would only help a proportion of working mothers. It does not sit easily with a relatively simple tax system with few reliefs, and fuels pressure for more reliefs for this and that desirable activity. The argument, advanced by the TSB and others, that employers generally will not pay for childcare unless there is a specific tax relief, is over-stated. Employers already have an incentive to pay direct for

childcare costs: it is cheaper than extra pay because it does not incur NICs. Arguably, demographic pressures over the next few years will make employers provide more help with childcare anyway, whether or not tax relief is given to working mothers. The real argument for tax relief is political - there is a lot of steam behind it.

Help via the benefit system bears little relation to childcare costs if it is given via Child Benefit. Help only gets near the average childcare cost of £50 a week if it is restricted to recipients of Family Credit. This, of course, greatly limits coverage.

Politically there are downsides to acting solely on tax or benefits. You probably need to do both. A possible package would be:

(a) tax relief on childcare (with limits);

(b) increase in Child Benefit, possibly limited to the first child payment;

(c) means-testing for Child Benefit (to balance the benefit of (a) to the higher paid who would also benefit from (b)).

Carers

Carers are another group, predominantly women, who save the state a good deal of money. Some recognition of the importance of their role would go down well.

Invalid Care Allowance (ICA)

- This is currently £26.25 a week paid to those looking

after recipients of Attendance Allowance. ICA is means tested and is paid only to people of working age. It could be increased relatively cheaply - the total cost is currently just over £200m per annum.

CONCLUSION

How much? Cost?

Financial help with childcare costs would do more to open up opportunities for women than anything else. It could be combined:

(i) with an initiative designed to make "equal opportunities" considerations rank with, say, environmental considerations in policy making;

(ii) with a number of small and largely costless measures which could make life easier for women, especially women who want to work. The Rumbold Group could provide a list immediately;

How? Can we have please?

(iii) with some extra money for carers.

Very difficult @ present, though worthy.

The timescale for the measures discussed above varies. Something could be put together for 1991-92, but more substantial changes probably take us into Manifesto territory.

CAROLYN SINCLAIR

131.CS

CONFIDENTIAL

file DCA

bc FCO

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Principal Private Secretary

16 October 1990

Dear Clair,

WOMEN'S NATIONAL COMMISSION

The Prime Minister met Mrs. Shephard today to welcome her as the new Chairman of the Women's National Commission and to thank her for taking on a difficult assignment.

I would be grateful if this record could be treated as for Mrs. Shephard's own use and not circulated outside the Private Office.

The Prime Minister was worried that the WNC spent too much of its time lobbying for measures which generated public spending. Mrs. Shephard commented that the WNC was having difficulty in getting people to attend its conferences. She would be encouraging it to look at tax reform and at maintenance, both issues where the Government had a good story to tell.

The subsequent discussion touched on three issues. First, the Prime Minister was concerned about the way in which the tax/benefit system recognised family responsibilities. She felt it was wrong in principle that two families with identical incomes but where one had several children should pay exactly the same tax. Mrs. Shephard commented that while child tax allowances dealt with this problem they had their disadvantages. Child benefit was administratively simpler, politically more popular and channelled money through mothers and hence more directly to children. Where a family broke up the father would, for a time, still be able to claim the benefit of child tax allowances. The mother at home with children would eventually be able to secure the benefit of this through a Court Order but this channel was slow and uncertain. The Prime Minister noted that it would be possible to have a mixed scheme, with child tax allowances on top of child benefits.

Secondly, the Prime Minister was concerned about the long term consequences of the growth of single parent families. There was little point in seeking to apportion blame for the origins of such families; more important was to ensure that the children of such families could be brought up in a way which gave them a

CONFIDENTIAL

chance of being good parents themselves. If such families lived together the children would not have the model of ordinary family life to which to aspire.

Mrs. Shephard agreed and noted that part of the problem lay with the policies of housing authorities who tended to herd such families together in particular estates. Like the Prime Minister, she was impressed with the work of Homestart. Much of their effectiveness stemmed from their being volunteers rather than professional social workers. Mrs. Shephard said there was a difficult balance to be struck between schemes which helped single mothers to break out of their predicament while not creating false incentives. She quoted the difficulties that had arisen with the Department of Employment's training scheme which paid a child care allowance to single mothers which was not available to married mothers. Although there were good policy reasons for this it had created antagonism.

Finally, the Prime Minister and Mrs. Shephard expressed concern about the number of women being appointed to public bodies. Mrs. Shephard undertook to get the WNC to make a greater effort to identify suitable candidates.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Turnbull

ANDREW TURNBULL

Ms. Clair Edwards,
Department of Social Security.

back up

PRIME MINISTER

MEETING WITH MRS. SHEPHARD

The main purpose of the meeting is for you to welcome her as the new Chairman of the Women's National Commission. The meeting will provide an opportunity to exchange views on the direction the WNC should be taking. Mrs. Shephard would like to talk about family policy. You could ask her to keep a close eye on the European dimension, to make sure that the various initiatives coming from Brussels under the guise of helping women, do in fact do so.

The WNC are coming to Downing Street for tea on Wednesday 24 October. Earlier that day there is a lunch to celebrate their 21st anniversary but you are unable to attend as you are having lunch with President Cossiga.

ANDREW TURNBULL
15 October 1990
c:\pps\shephard (kk)

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

28 September 1989

Dear Helen,

WOMEN'S NATIONAL COMMISSION: CONSULTATION

It has come to the Prime Minister's attention that, in a recent consultation exercise regarding the review of a form about exemption from NHS charges, the Women's National Commission was excluded from the list of groups invited to give their views. This was particularly unfortunate in the light of the Commission's long-standing interest in improving this particular form and the assurances given to the Government Co-Chairman, Mrs Rumbold, and to officials that the Commission would be consulted.

The Prime Minister wishes Departments to be reminded that the Women's National Commission is officially recognised as a channel for women's views to be conveyed to Government, and hopes that Departments will ensure that they are consulted on topics of potential interest to women.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to other members of the Cabinet, and I should be grateful if you and copy addressees could ensure that your Departments are reminded about this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Slocock

CAROLINE SLOCOCK

Mrs Helen Shirley-Quirk
Department of Health

Ref. A089/2446

MS SLOCOCK

Women's National Commission

Mrs Rumbold, the Co-Chairman of the Women's National Commission, raised with me recently the continuing difficulty of getting Departments to remember to consult the Women's National Commission about policy changes in which women have a specific interest.

2. As it happens, a particularly glaring example has just occurred in which the Department of Health were undertaking a consultation exercise regarding the review of a form about exemption from NHS charges ~~for elderly women~~ in which the WNC had had a long standing interest, and the Department of Health allowed one of their Ministers inadvertently to delete the Women's National Commission from the bodies to be consulted.

3. It would undoubtedly help to ensure that the Women's National Commission are properly consulted if Departments feel that the Prime Minister is keeping an eye on this, and this little cause celebre offers an opportunity to bring this matter to the attention of Ministers in charge of Departments. This could be done if you were to write to the Secretary of State for Health, with copies to the offices of other members of the Cabinet, in the attached terms. Mrs Rumbold is speaking to the office of the Minister concerned in the Department of Health to ensure that they understand the reasons for exploiting their peccadillo in this way.

R.E.R.B.

ROBIN BUTLER

26 September 1989

SAM. WNC

(T)

DRAFT LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HEALTH FROM NO.10

Women's National Commission : Consultation

It has come to the Prime Minister's attention that, in a recent consultation exercise regarding the review of a form about exemption from NHS charges ~~for elderly women~~, the Women's National Commission was excluded from the list of groups invited to give their views. This was particularly unfortunate in the light of the Commission's long standing interest in improving this particular form and the assurances given to the Government Co-Chairman, Mrs Rumbold, and to officials that the Commission would be consulted.

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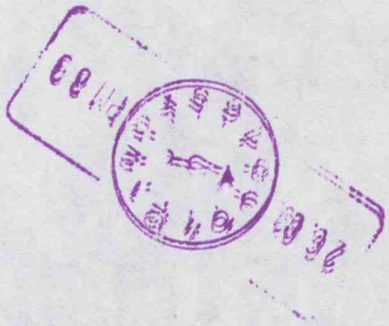

SUBJECT
cc MASTER

CONFIDENTIAL

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

MR WOOLLEY
CABINET OFFICE

We spoke.

I attach a copy of a note of this morning's meeting with Mrs Rumbold. In view of the sensitive references to personalities, I should be grateful if you would ensure that the note is not seen outside your office.

pp DOMINIC MORRIS
5 December 1988

CONFIDENTIAL

NOTE FOR FILE

The Prime Minister saw Mrs Rumbold this morning at the latter's request to discuss the future of the Women's National Commission in the light of the Hammond Report.

The Prime Minister agreed that it would not be right at this stage to abolish the Commission. She had doubts however about the Hammond Report. It could be a blueprint for the larger, more bureaucratic organisation which she feared. It was necessary to keep the WNC small and tightly focused.
Mrs Rumbold said that she saw some use for the Commission as a channel for women's views to Government, but acknowledged that these were seldom startlingly original. She wanted the composition of the Commission to be made more representative, to focus on very specific issues and to feed its views into John Patten's Ministerial Group on Women's Issues.

The Prime Minister said there was always a danger that such groups would simply become a channel for lobbying the Government for public funds. She noted that there was already pressure on the Ministerial Group along these lines to provide more public funds for creches. It was important that the Ministerial Group should not allow itself to be drawn down that road. The Government's role was to step in only where the family as a unit had broken down. The role of the mother in family life remained the primary one.

The discussion turned briefly to the question of unmarried mothers and council housing.

Mrs Rumbold felt that the Commission was now on the straight and narrow. There had been a awkward period earlier, partly because she had found it very difficult to get on with the Secretariat. A new Secretary to the Commissioner had been appointed and Mrs Rumbold felt things would now work out much better. She noted that the previous Secretary had now re-appeared as Government adviser on women's issues in the

Home Office. It would be important to ensure that the Women's Group on Ministerial Issues discounted any unnecessary advice coming from that quarter.

Mrs Rumbold felt that on provision for women in work the UK had a good story to tell. There were assertions that Sweden and Italy were more generous in nursery education provision. She noted, however, that the Swedes were reigning back on this because of the public expenditure implications and that the Italian figures were highly suspect. The Prime Minister suggested that Mrs Rumbold might check these out with the Embassy in Rome. It was also important for the Government not to be drawn into explicit support for nursery education: it was very expensive and tended to be State provided, whereas playgroups involved parents closely with children's education and sustained the voluntary ethos.

The meeting concluded with the Prime Minister reiterating to Mrs Rumbold the need to avoid the Ministerial Group being drawn into Government support for more creche activity.

DOMINIC MORRIS
5 December 1988

EAMAIR

PRIME MINISTER

Angela Rumbold is coming to see you for half an hour on Monday morning about her minute (Flag A) on the future of the Women's National Commission in the light of the review report (Flag B) which you saw earlier (and with which you were not much impressed).

Mrs. Rumbold wants your endorsement that the Commission should continue for the time being, but along the leaner and sharper direction she wants to take it. You will want to be sure that Mrs. Rumbold is satisfied it will move in this direction, since she can only give a limited amount of her time to the Commission's activities; and to discuss with her Robin Butler's suggestion (Flag C) that the Commission be given a definite period - say two years - to prove its worth.

DM

DOMINIC MORRIS
2 December 1988

SLH/44

Ref. A088/3498

MR WICKS

Women's National Commission: Prime Minister's Meeting with Mrs Rumbold: Monday 5 December

I understand that the Prime Minister is seeing Mrs Rumbold on Monday about the latter's minute on the future of the Women's National Commission.

2. Mrs Rumbold discussed this matter with me, and the Cabinet Office have assisted in finding a new Secretary for the Commission.

3. The Commission has not been very effective. Its membership has not changed since it was first set up and plenary meetings, which comprise representatives of some 50 organisations, are unwieldy. It has not been particularly businesslike in its methods, and although some of its working groups have done good work, the targets at which it has aimed have been too diverse.

4. Mrs Rumbold has decided - I think rightly - that abolishing the Commission would attract criticism and that it would be better to bring its membership up to date and make its activities more efficient and more limited. The report by Mrs Valerie Hammond of Ashridge College of Management is sensible and a new Secretary has been appointed with whom Mrs Rumbold is content. The Commission will focus on a narrower range of subjects and the aim is to ensure that advice is offered within a defined timescale.

FRBAOS

5. I recommend the Prime Minister to endorse the direction in which Mrs Rumbold is taking the Commission and agree that there should be a further review of the Commission's work in two years or so: if that shows that the Commission is continuing to be ineffective, consideration should be given to its disbandment.

F.E.R.B.

ROBIN BUTLER

1 December 1988

FRBAOS

SP8-12

A

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

WOMEN'S NATIONAL COMMISSION

At flag

You may recall that a year ago we discussed the work of the Women's National Commission and its effectiveness within Government.

It was agreed that there should be an independent review of the Commission which would examine the functions, membership and funding of the Commission with a view to clarifying the value of its work and the need for it to continue.

Mrs Valerie Hammond from Ashridge College of Management was commissioned to undertake this study and I attach her report. John Patten and I have both studied the report which does not contain reference to the possibility of disbanding the Commission. Although it would have been helpful to have looked more thoroughly at this option, on balance I believe that a public investigation of the possibility of closing down the Commission would have had undesirable political repercussions.

Instead, as co-Chairman, I have taken the responsibility for insisting that the Commission must continue to work within its cash limited budget and to proceed to find suitable savings to ensure that running costs are kept to a minimum. Apart from this constraint I have thought, and gained consent from the Executive, to work towards the achievement of the targets set out in the report namely to:-

1. Focus more clearly and objectively on the remit to provide Government with clear advice on matters that are referred for consideration.

2. To heighten the reputation and coherence of the

organisation for public presentation purposes which I believe will have an additional beneficial "spin-off" for Government.

3. To revise the membership and operative rules of the organisation to reflect the modern world of women in work and voluntary organisations.

4. To manage the office more effectively.

This Report has been considered only by the Executive and will of course have to be considered by the Plenary also.

I intend to limit the time for delivery of the recommendations to a two year period after which I would hope to have your agreement to review the work and place WNC within Government. If there is no noticeable improvement in its work and output I believe there may well be a case for discontinuance to be seriously considered.

I would be grateful if I could come and discuss this with you.

AR.

ANGELA RUMBOLD

B

REPORT OF THE REVIEW OF

THE WOMEN'S NATIONAL COMMISSION

Carried out by
Valerie Hammond

Ashridge Management College, Berkhamsted, Herts, HP4 1NS

31 May 1988

REVIEW OF THE WOMEN'S NATIONAL COMMISSION

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Appendix 1 Example of WNC Budget over 3 years
Appendix 2 The Secretary's Post

1 SUMMARY

1.1 This review notes the history of the Women's National Commission and reports on its current position as an advisory body to the government.

1.2 It recommends that the WNC should be retained but that its focus should be sharpened and that clear objectives should be set, allowing the development of measurable progress against plans. The report directs attention to the need for adjustments to be made to the criteria for selection of organisations and for the nomination of members. The need for high level professional staff who can help maximise the effectiveness of the WNC is emphasised and recommendations are made to help staff achieve this goal.

Note: The figures in brackets at the end of each recommendation refer to the detailed recommendation in the report.

Specific recommendations are as follows:

Purpose and Standing of Women's National Commission

1.3 Tighten remit to focus on the task and point towards stated objectives but retain scope for a variety of actions for their achievement. (6.4)

1.4 Identify and develop roles that WNC is uniquely able to provide. Delegate the rest. (6.11)

1.5 Make reputation a key target for improvement. Develop coherent message about WNC, its membership and its work to gain commitment. (6.17)

Effectiveness of the Organisation Structure

1.6 Retain Cabinet Office location. (7.6)

1.7 Clarify members' expectations of the role of the Government Co-Chairman and determine specific responsibilities of the two chairmen. (7.14)

1.8 Monitor duties of Elected Co-Chairman to build accurate picture of the time and cost demands. Draw up position and person specifications as guidelines for elections. Review potential for part-funding this position. (7.17)

1.9 Strengthen role of Executive Committee as Executive arm of WNC. Increase elected Executive to 10-12 members. Increase meetings to 7-8 per annum. Members to shadow major government departments. Create position description for Executive stating responsibility and time commitment (minimum 10 days per annum). (7.26 - 7.28)

Membership

1.10 Retain ceiling of 50 organisations in membership but amend composition to include those with younger, working members and to give representation to all UK countries. Revise membership profile and selection criteria. Review possibilities of a new category for associate or communicating organisations. Schedule complete organisation membership review at 5 yearly intervals. (7.42 - 7.49)

1.11 Specify term of office for individual member - 2 years minimum, 5 years maximum - with extension available for co-chairman. Guidelines suggested for situation where member organisations disband or merge or where individuals do not attend WNC meetings. (7.53 - 7.54)

1.12 Develop guidelines to help organisations select their representatives. Use a template to ensure WNC membership is more representative of women as a whole. Prospective new members to be encouraged to attend meetings with outgoing members as means of introduction. (7.60)

1.13 Define role of individual members and give information on expectations re time commitment and support available from WNC, indicating expectations with regard to consultation in the member organisation. (7.63)

1.14 Prepare information packs for new members and offer short training and information session on civil service procedures and processes. (7.65)

1.15 Encourage members to see a wider role through involvement in and beyond WNC formal meetings. (9.28)

Mechanisms to Achieve WNC Objectives

1.16 Hold two plenary meetings per year, one to agree and set objectives and the other to review progress and plan forward, both normally with workshop. Specify roles and responsibilities of these meetings and circulate guidelines. (8.10)

1.17 Have two/three working parties, tightly managed with detailed work plans, in operation at any one time. Review dissemination policy with aim to make well-presented reports widely available. (8.19)

1.18 Ensure major projects are clearly linked to WNC objectives, and subject to tight management, clear targets and appropriate publicity. (8.24)

1.19 Offer a conference every third year. Seek conference partners. Open conferences to wider participation. Aim for cost to be recovered. Include publication in objectives requirement for tangible outcomes. (8.28)

1.20 Determine priorities in building relationships with selected government departments, identifying those whose decisions set the climate for others. Keep all members in touch with progress. Keep under review scope for using technology to speed consultation process with members. (8.35)

1.21 Define task and output requirements for International Committee. Review scope for re-orientation of focus towards EEC and Europe. (8.37)

1.22 Guide members and staff on ways to ensure WNC makes effective use of opportunities arising out of the formation of Ministerial Group on Women's Issues. (8.41)

1.23 Develop links with appropriate external organisations to include expert representation and to enhance WNC's information network. (8.45)

1.24 Prepare short annual report on WNC for wide circulation as means of raising awareness and disseminating information. (8.48)

Financial Management

1.25 Request Financial Division to review the Commission's management accounting arrangements at an early date with a view to integrating the planning of the Commission's work programme, and its subsequent monitoring, with the Cabinet Office financial system in a more structured way. (9.4)

Staff and Resources

1.26 Appoint full-time civil servant to post of WNC Secretary. Balance the weight of the Secretariat resource in favour of senior staff. (7.75)

1.27 Consider regrading the Secretary's post and re-allocating responsibilities within Secretariat to allow development of all staff. (9.16 - 9.17)

1.28 Train staff to use keyboard technology to considerably speed drafting. (9.18)

1.29 Keep under review the typing/wordprocessing resource with a view to increasing the staff to include a personal secretary/public relations person in the future. (9.19)

1.30 Organise WNC offices to provide for more effective space utilisation and improved work conditions. Investigate possibility of 2 additional computer terminals. (9.24)

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Women's National Commission has been in operation for nearly 20 years having been set up by the then Prime Minister in 1969 as an advisory committee to government. Apart from a short break in 1970 after the change in government, it has continued without interruption. During this period the Commission has been subject to the usual internal reviews as is appropriate to all public bodies. However, there have been many changes during the life of the Commission, in terms of both the situation and expectation of women, and particularly with regard to legislation and the role women play in the economy. The introduction of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues is an example of an increased awareness of the need for decision-makers to take account of the informed opinions of women.

2.2 It was decided that members of WNC should be invited to review their operation and that at the same time a wide ranging independent review should be made. This report is the result of that independent review.

3 REVIEW OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 The review was carried out under the following terms of reference:

In the light of (a) relevant social, economic, statutory and other changes since the Commission was set up in 1969 and (b) the government's policy to keep spending of non-departmental public bodies under tight control and regular scrutiny.

- To examine the Women's National Commission's role, constitution and membership; its structures and procedures to provide advice to government; and its manangement of resources and activities through the Secretariat.

- To report within 3 months to the Co-chairmen and make recommendations including those to secure better value for money and more accountable management.

3.2 The review looked at the history and background of the WNC and at the current and forecast situation for women. The remit was examined in terms of its usefulness in giving a sense of direction in stimulating practical work to meet the government's current and future need for the informed opinion of women. The work therefore involved studying documentation, reviewing procedures with officers and collecting data through nearly 60 interviews.

3.3 The interview sample was drawn to collect opinion from a broad range of people with knowledge of the Commission. In summary, the interview sample was as follows:

Representatives from		
. government departments		13
. external organisations		15
. members - longer service	18	
- less than 1 year	5	23
. past/present secretariat		7
Total		57

3.4 Representatives from government departments, who might be termed the clients for WNC opinion, included Ministers and officials who have current communication with WNC as well as those who do not. Several interviewees are also involved with the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues. Representatives from external organisations included the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission of the European Communities as well as women's organisations. People with knowledge of women's organisations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were included. The members' sample included women from voluntary organisations, trade unions, professional associations, religious bodies and political parties. All members of the present Secretariat and representatives from past staff were also interviewed, as well as senior members of Cabinet Office staff. Plenary and Executive Meetings were observed and a number of visits made to the Secretariat as a means of building a general picture about the work of the Commission.

4 THE CHANGING SCENARIO

4.1 When the Women's National Commission was established in 1969 it was at the request of the Women's Consultative Council following the United Nations initiative requesting member states to consider setting up National Commissions on the Status of Women. It reflected international recognition that women formed approximately half the population but were locked into what had become known as traditional roles for women: they were under-represented at the higher levels of decision-making, few professions were open to women, most of those at work had jobs rather than careers and the majority gave up work on marriage or the birth of the first child. Indeed, up until 1960 some major companies required women on marriage to change their status to that of temporary employees.

4.2 Since then there have been many changes. Some have been enabling in nature, e.g. legislation dealing with equal pay, sex discrimination, work of equal value. Others have been changes through the rising tide of awareness, e.g. the influence of the United States of America where equal rights legislation has a longer history, and Europe where the EEC has sustained and legislated for a commitment to equality based on the original statement in the Treaty of Rome that women should receive equal pay for equal work. More recent international initiatives such as the UN Decade of Women and Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women by the year 2000 continue to exert influence.

4.3 A visible expression of change in the UK is the reality of a woman as Head of the Government. In 1969, this would have been unthinkable. Now a woman prime minister has been in office for nearly 10 years.

4.4 However, perhaps the greatest impetus to change has been an economic one. Women need to work to contribute to the family purse. The decline of manufacturing industry and the growth of the service sector favours women. Often during the recession they were the only family members who could find work. Possibly the single greatest difference between women in 1969 and those today is the contribution that they make to the work force. In 1969 women formed 37.4% of all employees whilst today women constitute 45% of employees in employment. The percentages tend to mask the fact that the civilian workforce has increased by nearly 2 million people over this period and that this is entirely because of the number of women in the workforce. This single fact defines a different set of roles, different priorities, different needs. It is also a powerful demonstration of the economic power of women as a group to participate both in the creation of wealth and in the spending of it. It is no accident that 53% of women today have their own bank account and 43% have a joint account (Mintel 1988).

4.5 At the end of the 1980s, the typical woman is probably better educated; nearly twice as many women continue to further education now than did at the end of the 1960s. In terms of work she may be a young professional making her way in a non-traditional career but, almost certainly, not earning as much as a man doing comparable work. Alternatively, she may be in a traditional women's job working full or part-time and, if the latter, probably not accruing pension rights. She may live alone; nearly a quarter of all households are one-person households. She may be elderly; nearly 12% of the population are women aged over 60 years. She may be a single parent; 90% of these families are headed by a woman. The rate of births to single mothers has increased by 250% since the early 1960s and now accounts for nearly 20% of births. She may marry the father later - the age at first marriage is now 28 years, 20 years ago it was 24.7 years.

4.6 When looking forward through the 1990s to the year 2000 other changes, just as dramatic, are forecast. The proportion of elderly people in the total population will increase. The number aged 75+ is projected to increase by nearly 1 million by 2001. At the same time the proportion of young people aged 15-29 will decrease by 2.7 million: or by around 5.4%. Both factors will place pressures on women. There will be a much greater need for carers for the elderly. There will be too few young people entering the labour market to meet the nation's requirements. In both cases, these mature women are likely to be regarded as the solution.

4.7 Employers in industries already facing labour shortages are working hard to encourage young women to enter non-traditional careers in their organisations. Some are introducing career break and/or child care schemes and one can anticipate that as competition and demand increase during the 1990s such schemes will become more commonplace.

4.8 This does not, however, indicate that women's lives will become any easier. It is forecast that by the end of the 1990s, 33% of jobs will be part-time and that 85% of these will be held by women (The Institute of Employment Research, Warwick). Even among the professional and skilled workers the trend will mean that women have to be confident risk-takers to succeed at work.

4.9 The effects of socio-economic development have been accompanied by the way women choose to participate in society. The 1970s and 1980s have been characterised by a decline in membership of the long-established, traditional women's voluntary organisations. Membership has declined by 30-40% in some cases since 1971, although the numbers are still huge, often involving thousands of women. At the same time there has been a surge in the creation of new organisations. Often these are tightly focussed, appealing to a limited group or to those who coalesce around a particular mission, need or interest. The new groups tend to be fluid and to operate in a highly flexible way, both internally and in the way they link with others. Frequently, the groups are little known outside their own membership. This makes them difficult to consult or even to list. Now, however, there are signs of another change. Umbrella organisations are emerging to whom both the long-established and new groups are affiliating, giving, perhaps for the first time, the possibility of consulting the myriad organisations that women choose to join today.

5 FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The detailed findings of the review are reported under the following major headings:

- Purpose and standing of the Women's National Commission
- Effectiveness of organisation structure
- Mechanisms to achieve Women's National Commission's objectives
- Effective use of resources

For clarity, detailed recommendations follow immediately after the discussion in each sub-section.

6 PURPOSE AND STANDING OF THE WOMEN'S NATIONAL COMMISSION

6.1 In this section the WNC is examined in terms of how it defines its overall purpose and how this influences its choice of roles and activities and, subsequently, its reputation. It is argued that a sharper definition of purpose, allowing the development of objectives and a strategy to achieve these will lead to improvements in results and reputation.

Remit

6.2 The remit is broad, all-embracing and lacks definition. Interviewees frequently described it as vague. It is open to different interpretations. The positive aspect of this is that is has allowed the Women's National Commission to adjust the emphasis and direction of its work to meet the interests and priorities of the current staff and membership. The negative aspect is that it does not focus action towards a specific end. There is no key objective against which progress can be measured and therefore activities are not selected in any strategic way which would carry forward the Women's National Commission as an influential body.

6.3 Planning and action should be geared to a situation where the Women's National Commission is rendered redundant because women's opinions become part of the on-going decision-making process. It is hard to see how the present remit will achieve this. Cynically, one could argue that acceptance of a long term role for the Women's National Commission supports the view that women will continue to play a subsidiary role in the affairs of society and of the nation.

6.4 **Recommendations:** The remit should be tightened to focus on the task and point towards stated objectives but it should retain scope for a variety of actions for their achievement.

Roles

6.5 The Women's National Commission is an advisory body to government in general rather than to one particular department. This is one of its distinctive attributes, a potential strength but also a weakness in that there is no natural focus for communication.

6.6 The Women's National Commission performs a variety of roles:

- brings issues of concern to women to attention of the government
- gives advice/opinion on proposed legislation
- collects opinion from representative women's organisations in the community
- informs such organisations about government legislation
- performs a representational role for government particularly with regard to overseas delegations on women's affairs
- provides a forum where representatives of women's organisations can exchange views and information
- provides an information service to government departments, the press, women's organisations, and women generally.

6.7 These roles might be summarised as having the objective of raising the status of women in the eyes of the government of the day and in society more generally. It would be helpful if such a role were to be spelt out more clearly.

6.8 These roles demonstrate a need for two-way communication; government need women's input about issues and concerns, women need to know more about government plans and policies in order to make an effective contribution. There is also a need for a forum, a meeting ground for women's organisations and an information service for women and organisations more generally. However, these roles could be separated with some advantage especially with the emergence of new umbrella organisations.

6.9 The WNC should remain the formal channel for advice to government and should develop this role working both with and across departments to raise awareness of women's concerns and particularly to alert government to the implications for women of proposed legislation, in time for constructive representations to be made.

6.10 Other roles, particularly providing a forum for information exchange between the women's organisations and general information to women at large, could with advantage be delegated to the umbrella organisations. There would, however, need to be strong links between these organisations and the Women's National Commission. One possibility is that the Commission might have an additional role in being a required authority in the decision to give grant aid to such organisations.

6.11 **Recommendations:** Identify the roles that the Women's National Commission is uniquely able to provide. Develop these and delegate the rest.

Reputation of the Women's National Commission

6.12 There is a very wide range of opinion about the reputation and standing of the WNC. This range is found among members of WNC as well as among those outside. Briefly, members' views reflect the level of sophistication of their own organisation. Large voluntary organisations used to dealing with government, or organisations with a work or political orientation tend to be more critical of the WNC and the way it performs its work than others.

6.13 From those outside, women's organisations who are seeking membership tend, predictably, to rate WNC highly. Others tend to be dismissive, saying that it is unrepresentative of women today, does not work in a woman-friendly way, is bureaucratic and ineffective.

6.14 A similar range of opinions is found among the people with whom the WNC must work: the officials in government departments and in other public bodies. Here the reputation depends largely on the success WNC has enjoyed in building a fruitful relationship. Therefore, some departments describe WNC as helpful, professional, informative. Others describe the Commission as a "lobby from within", lacking in understanding about the machinery of government.

6.15 The WNC's reputation and standing will only be enhanced by demonstrating achievement against stated objectives. It must clarify the relationships that are necessary for success and work at improving these in appropriate ways. This will be difficult. The WNC must straddle the boundary between women's organisations with their fluid, flexible structures, and government with its procedural orientation.

6.16 It is also clear that there are potentially confusing messages in the way WNC presents itself to the wider community. It emphasises its independence but also its close links with government. It accurately states that individual members are nominated by their organisations but sometimes describes them as Commissioners, implying an individual appointment (they are included in the Cabinet Office list of public appointments). WNC claims status as an advisory body rather than a women's organisation and yets lists itself in its own directory under "Women's Organisations". Whilst these apparent conflicts can be easily explained, it would be more helpful if WNC were to develop a more coherent way of presenting itself.

6.17 **Recommendations:** Include reputation as a key target for improvement. Educate members to raise understanding and self-esteem. Encourage commitment from a wider group both within government and outside by publicising targets and achievements. Develop a coherent message about the WNC, its membership and its work. Use members and staff to show the appropriate 'face' of WNC to those outside.

7 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

7.1 In this section the structure of WNC is reviewed, its position within the Cabinet Office and how it is organised. It is argued that the structure is basically a sound one but that the criteria for selecting member organisations and their individual nominees needs to be redrawn to reflect current and future needs. Detailed operational changes are proposed.

Location Within The Cabinet Office

7.2 The Secretariat of WNC is currently located within The Cabinet Office. The staff are included in the manpower plan of The Cabinet Office and the Commission enjoys the use of common services. The WNC is not, however, part of The Cabinet Office. There is no line responsibility to officials in the Cabinet Office. WNC therefore enjoys the advantages of a high degree of autonomy as befits an advisory body, but it suffers some disadvantages in that although it reports to a Minister it is not linked to a specific department. It has, instead, to work with all departments.

7.3 The staff report some advantages in being within The Cabinet Office in terms of perceived status. The choice of being able to announce oneself as being from The Cabinet Office, The Commission, or The Women's National Commission is clearly helpful in establishing a basis for communication. However, an anticipated spin-off, that WNC would be "known" within government has not occurred. Few officials, even those based in The Cabinet Office, know of its existence.

7.4 New members are sometimes intimidated by the address. Women's organisations who are not members tend to see it as epitomising their perception of the establishment: as rigid, bureaucratic, over-resourced, slow-paced. They question the value of this image when the reality for many of the women's organisations, particularly the newer ones, is very different.

7.5 The main advantages therefore seem to be the physical closeness to government and the implied assocations this allows together with the not inconsiderable benefits of shared resources.

7.6 **Recommendation:** The WNC should remain located within The Cabinet Office since this serves the unique aspect of the role, being half-in and half-out of government. However, WNC must recognise the inhibiting aspects of the location when working with women's organisations. This could be overcome by education/information.

Organisation Structure

7.7 The organisation structure is currently as shown in Figure 1. The proposed changes are incorporated in Figure 2.

Co-Chairmen

7.8 The WNC has two co-chairmen; one, a Minister, appointed by the Prime Minister and the other elected from among the body of Members.

7.9 This dual leadership role is an example of the unique nature of the WNC and of its status of being half-in and half-out of government. The anticipated benefits are that the government co-chairman will bring the knowledge of

Figure 1 - Current Organisation Structure

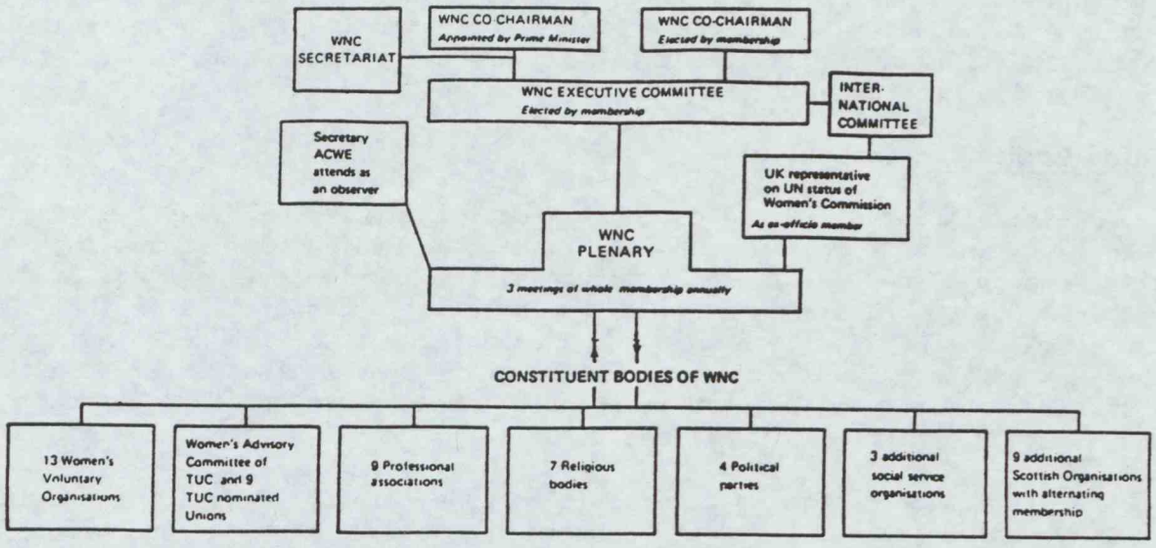
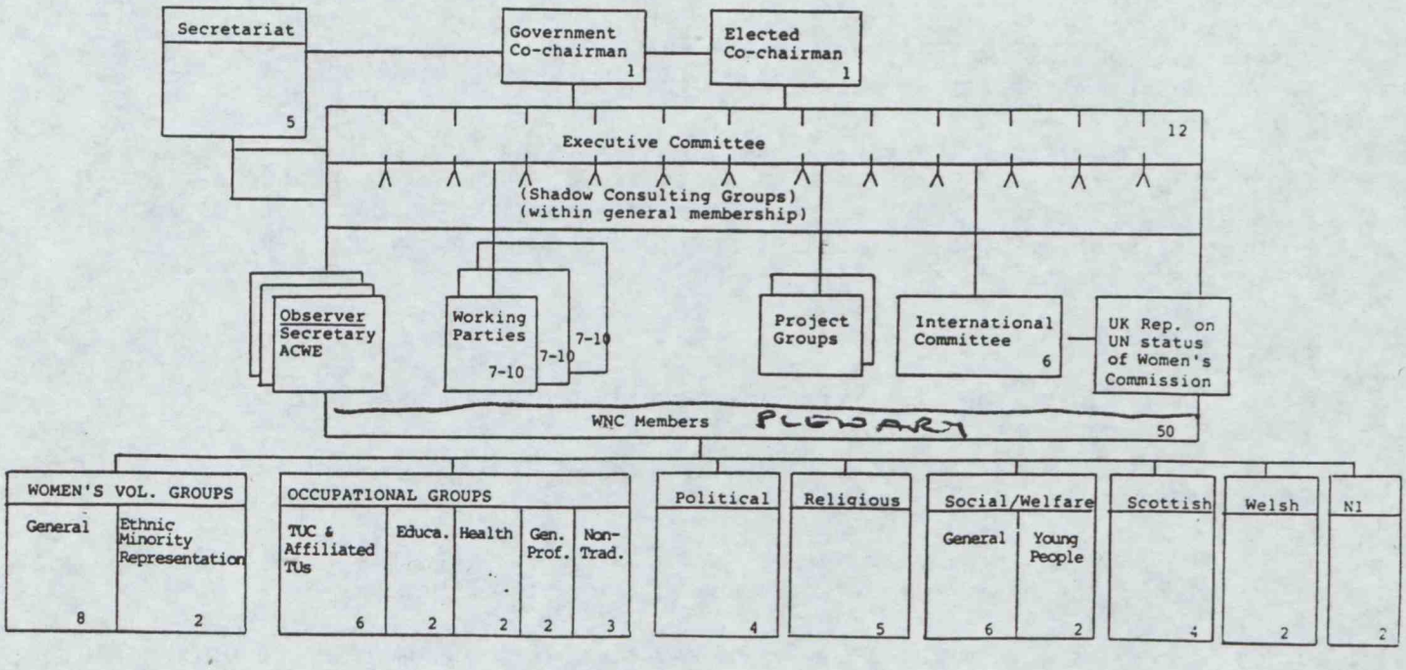


Figure 2 - Proposed WNC Organisation Structure



government practices and the thinking of the government of the day. The elected co-chairman will bring the experience and understanding of women's organisations, and out of the close working of the two will come the means of transmitting women's opinions to government. In practice this is extremely difficult.

Government Co-Chairman

7.10 The government co-chairman has always had other ministerial responsibilities and therefore limited time for WNC activities. At the same time the wide-ranging nature of issues on which WNC comments means that the government co-chairman is asked to urge colleagues to reconsider some of their policies in order to reflect the concerns of women. Where there is an apparent conflict between government policy and the perceived needs of women it is essential that the government co-chairman is provided with full information in support of the case. This is made more difficult because the WNC Secretariat is small and not overly equipped to provide detailed Ministerial briefings on a wide range of topics.

7.11 Some members have commented that they find the presence of a Minister inhibiting when they want to discuss issues which are known to be contrary to the policy of the government of the day. On the other hand, members appreciate the value of having a high level link into government thinking and see that this role is further enhanced by the information of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues (MGWI), especially since the government co-chairman is deputy chairman of this Group.

7.12 On balance, the appointment of a government co-chairman appears to work to the advantage of the WNC, giving status and access and reflecting the role of the Commission as an Advisory Body. However, it is a role that has to be handled with sensitivity to the charge that the Commission is not independent. It is perhaps the most positive indicator of the difference between the Commission and a pressure group.

7.13 In the longer term, the government and the Commission may wish to consider whether the work of the Commission would not be better served by appointing as government co-chairman a distinguished member of the House of Commons or House or Lords who has more time to devote to the work of the Commission. It would be important to ensure that this did not diminish the status of the Commission implicit in having a ministerial co-chairman. In any case, to be fully effective it would be essential that such an appointee should have access to Ministers and to the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues.

7.14 **Recommendation:** Clarification of the objectives of the WNC will also clarify members' expectations of the role of the government co-chairman. It will also be helpful to determine the specific responsibilities of the two chairmen.

Elected Co-Chairman

7.15 The second co-chairman is elected by members from among those who have served on the Executive. The term of office is for 2 years and is unpaid apart from reimbursement of expenses and subsistence whilst on WNC business. She may not be elected to serve a second consecutive term.

7.16 The elected co-chairman is, in effect, the working chairman since other pressures on the government chairman can mean that she is not always available for meetings and functions. It is therefore clear that the members need to exercise particular care in the choice of the elected co-chairman. She must be respected within the Commission and in the wider community of women's

organisations, be a competent chairman and leader, as well as exhibiting the skills and presence of an accomplished public speaker and diplomat since she will be required to be the public face of the Commission. It is to the Commission's credit that over the years it has been successful in attracting and electing accomplished women to take this role. However, as the Commission becomes more involved with a wider range of government departments, as must happen if the Commission is to be more effective, the demands on the co-chairman are likely to increase. As an indication, the current elected co-chairman is recorded as having attended at least 26 meetings or functions for WNC in 1987/88, the majority involving a full day away from home-base. It may be necessary to broaden the search for the co-chairman and/or to consider paying an honorarium to allow the candidature of people who would not otherwise be able to honour the time commitment.

7.17 **Recommendation:** Monitor the duties of the present elected co-chairman to build an accurate picture of the time and cost demands. Draw up position and person specifications to use as guidelines for the next elections. Review potential for part-funding this position.

Executive

7.18 The Executive Committee comprises the co-chairmen and 8 members who are elected from among the members of the Commission. Elections are held annually and members are expected to serve for two consecutive terms. A further two consecutive terms are possible after a one year break. It is understood that the previous elected co-chairman is invited to attend Executive Meetings for one year following expiry of office.

7.19 The role of the Executive is not defined other than to advise the government co-chairman on "all questions of membership of the Commission". In practice it is the policy working group of the Commission. It is responsible for agreeing plans, reviewing progress, receiving information from the Secretariat and offering advice on matters which arise between plenaries.

7.20 In the last year the Executive met 5 times with an average attendance of 5 members (excluding the Chairmen), the minimum number for a quorum. Meetings take place in London and usually last 2.5 hours, plus lunch.

7.21 Whilst the frequency and duration of meetings may be sufficient when the work of the Executive is principally a monitoring role, increased requests for advice and opinion from government departments mean that the Commission must have a standing group who are available for urgent consultation and who can respond promptly. This is an area where the members of the Executive who, by definition are judged to be both experienced and informed, can play an important role. There would therefore be advantage in bringing the Executive together more frequently, say 7-8 times per year. This would allow the necessary build up of knowledge and information and ensure that there is sufficient time to cover necessary business.

7.22 A suggestion with support from a number of members is that the Executive should be expanded slightly and that members should be nominated to "shadow" major government departments. This it is believed will allow the development of some "expert intelligence" that could alert the Commission to potential areas of concern and monitor progress. It would also, in the forum of the Executive, allow a focus on the implications for women of government proposals which have a 'knock-on effect' across departments.

7.23 This is an attractive suggestion but not necessarily easy to implement. It implies a willingness on the part of Executive Members to devote time to learn substantially more about the work of particular departments and to

identify and work with experts in the field who can enlarge the Commission's understanding and knowledge. If the members were to do this successfully, then the Executive Committee would be well placed to develop and work to a strategic plan, taking account of the policies and plans of the various government departments.

7.24 If the shadowing idea were to be implemented and extended into the Membership as a whole, it could give a focus to the need to better understand the practice of government. It would also have the added benefit of giving the Commission a development route for Members. There would always be new people building up specialist government knowledge on top of their own expertise. This could be taken into account as part of the election process although it would also have to be accepted that one did not always shadow the same department.

7.25 In the meantime, the Secretariat would have a small cohort of people (Executive shadow, Member shadows plus experts identified by the group) to consult with as issues arise. These would of course need to be presented to the Executive Committee and Membership as a whole for comment and approval.

7.26 **Recommendation:** Strengthen the role of the Executive Committee as the Executive arm of WNC, delegating to it responsibility for carrying out policy and managing the affairs of the Commission.

7.27 Increase the size of the Executive Committee to say 10-12 members plus chairmen to allow members to shadow major government departments and increase the number of meetings from 5 per annum to 7-8. NB. In costing these proposals, the larger number has been taken in each case.

7.28 Create a position description for members of the Executive. This should state clearly the responsibility and likely time commitment recognising that this is a minimum of 10 days for Executive and Plenary meetings. Nomination forms should be designed to show not only what skills and attributes the nominees bring from their area of expertise, but also what range of government departments they are particularly interested in shadowing.

Members

7.29 The reputation and standing of the WNC and its ability to secure action depends almost entirely on the quality and perceived representativeness of its membership. This is a matter of concern to existing members as well as to people outside the WNC, in potential client groups and other organisations.

7.30 The size of the membership was set at 50 when the WNC was set up and organisations identified as being able to voice women's opinions were invited to nominate representatives. These organisations were mainly but not exclusively women's organisations. The organisations were mainly but, again, not exclusively what are commonly called voluntary bodies. The selected organisations were long-established and national and could be said to meet the criteria of having consultation processes with their members.

7.31 The aim therefore was to build up a balanced body of women who could reasonably be said to represent women in general and who had, in addition, the means of gathering the opinions of women for transmission to government.

7.32 There are a number of aspects of membership that need attention if the WNC is to be representative of women now and in the future. These concern the selection of organisations and the group profile of the individual representatives.

Organisations in Membership

7.33 The list of participating organisations is still broadly the same as set up nearly 20 years ago, despite the fact that there has been a dramatic increase in women's consciousness, resulting in changes in their participation in economic, social and political activity. Membership of some of the most respected major organisations for women has declined substantially over the last 20 years, whilst many new, smaller organisations have emerged. The long established organisations still have an important part to play but account must also be taken of groups who are perceived to emerge as a result of current issues and priorities.

7.34 A more fundamental inhibition is the criterion dealing with "national membership". This indicates little understanding of the reality of women's organisations. Women's need for involvement in the organisations to which they give energy means that they are more likely to join local groups which may or may not be linked to a large national grouping. Also the level of women's consciousness differs across the nation. There are, for example, many more possibilities for joining women's organisations in London and in the south east than in other parts of the country.

7.35 For some categories of women where the total population is small, although it remains desirable to look for national representation, it may not be reasonable or feasible to do so. For example, over half the ethnic minority population lives in the south east and works in Greater London. One is therefore likely to find a larger number of established groups among ethnic women in London than in other parts of the country. This does not mean that other major cities do not have ethnic women's groups. It means that the political awareness of these groups, and of women's groups in general, is not yet at a level where there can be a national structure. Indeed, since these groups are often strongly involved in self-help and support, and always short of funds, it is doubtful if they would, without help, form national groupings.

7.36 The need for national representation also presents problems with regard to ensuring adequate perceived representation from the countries comprising the United Kingdom. At present there is separate representation for Scotland comprising 4 permanent organisation members and 2 members from a group of 6 organisations who participate in rotation. In additional there are on occasion members representing UK organisations who themselves are Scottish. This results in a higher rate of representation for Scotland when compared both with the population and with representation of other countries within the United Kingdom. In fact no other country has particular representation. All members are drawn from UK-wide organisations. This means that there is no way of ensuring the participation of an Irish or Welsh voice, thereby detracting from the perceived representative nature of the Commission.

7.37 The Scottish organisations are therefore the only ones to have experienced national membership and also the only ones to have experienced rotating membership which could be a way of involving a larger number of organisations in the Commission. However, members and non-members express dissatisfaction with how this works in practice. Little attempt appears to have been made to keep rotating members in touch with the work of the Commission during their "out of membership" periods. (As a result of this finding, the Secretariat has already taken action to improve this situation.) There was also little evidence of Scottish members perceiving themselves as a group which could work together outside the London meetings.

7.38 The Scottish experience suggests that country groups should either be abolished or managed more positively. On balance, the need for a representative local voice suggests that the concept should be extended to cover Wales, Northern Ireland as well as Scotland, maybe even dividing England into major regions. The members of these groupings should be required to work together on issues where a local perspective is appropriate.

7.39 A final point concerning organisations in membership relates to "umbrella" organisations. There appears to be a widespread distrust of these organisations with regard to membership. In the first place umbrella groups by definition are open to a broad band of membership. The fear here appears to be that they include radical and pressure groups and that the views of the umbrella may be overly coloured by these groups. The second fear is that the membership of umbrellas includes the long-established, national organisations who are themselves members of WNC in their own right, and therefore some groups of women may have duplicate representation.

7.40 It is evident that one cannot logically sustain these two objections at the same time. The major organisations will always exercise some restraining influence on the radical tendencies in umbrellas. It would be valuable to include the umbrellas for the very reason that they are in touch with the more radical view.

7.41 Duplicated representation is also a red herring since research shows that women can be broadly divided into "joiners" and "non-joiners". Some women will inevitably be represented and consulted many times over through their religous, social, political and work affiliations. The real concern should be how to access the views of the non-joiners. Again the umbrellas are likely to offer the best chance of direct representation since even non-joiners are likely to find themselves part of small, local groups who might be encouraged to affiliate to an umbrella. It will, of course, remain important that the interests of these groups are also looked after by secondary representation, through the carers and welfare oriented groups.

7.42 **Recommendations:** The numbers of organisations at any one time being in full membership of WNC should remain at 50 since this number can meet the dual need for broad representation and for effective working relationships between individual representatives. However, organisational membership should be amended to reflect the current reality of women's organisations. In comparison with 1969, membership should include more organisations concerning work, reflecting the broader range of jobs undertaken by women today. This will involve overhauling the proportion and choice of occupationally based groups including the trade unions and the professions.

7.43 Umbrella organisations should be admitted, one each for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

7.44 A possible profile for organisational membership of WNC reflecting the needs of today is as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

PROPOSED ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERSHIP PROFILE FOR WOMEN'S NATIONAL COMMISSION

	Number of Organisations		
	Sub-Group	Group Total	Running Total
Women's national voluntary organisations,			
- general, open to all, no entry barriers	5		5
- with a bias towards younger members	2	8	7
- an umbrella organisation for England (or UK)	1		8
Voluntary organisations for women of ethnic origins (these should have a substantial membership in terms of the ethnic population but may not be nationwide)	2	2	10
Occupationally-based groups, Trade Unions and professions			
- TUC Women's Committee (as umbrella for 3.5m working women)	1		11
- TUC affiliated unions selected on basis of spread of women's occupations and numbers of women	5	15	16
- Education	2		18
- Health/Medicine	2		20
- General professional groups - open to range of members	2		22
- Women's non-traditional occupational groups	3		29
National political organisations, selected on basis of size of women's membership	4	4	29
Religious groups to include C/E, RC, Free Churches, Jewish Women + one other (non-trinitarian or muslim)	5	5	34
Social, carers and welfare organisations	6		40
- Dealing specifically with young women	2	8	42
Scottish membership, selected on basis of not represented elsewhere			
- Umbrella	1		43
- Others, two to be in rotation	3	4	46
Welsh membership, selected on basis of not represented elsewhere			
- Umbrella	1		47
- Other - to rotate	1	2	48
Northern Ireland membership, selected on basis of not represented elsewhere			
- Umbrella	1		49
- Other - to rotate	1	2	50
TOTALS	50	50	50

7.45 **Recommendations:** The organisation profile suggests categories for membership and some criteria to guide selection are indicated. It is expected that if this is a useful framework, the Commission will wish to develop it further. The guiding principle should be to include organisations that represent **different** groups of women rather than those that share a similar membership. It should be made clear that priority will be given to women's organisations or organisations where there is a substantial membership of women who can be and are consulted.

7.46 With regard to current criteria for membership, it is recommended that WNC retain the requirement for organisations to have been in existence for 5 years. Organisations will normally have existed for this period, in some form, before they have sufficient standing to be eligible for WNC.

7.47 It is recommended that the requirement for national membership should be amended to "national membership and/or substantial membership of the eligible population" for the organisation. This would permit the inclusion of significant regional or occupational groups where the national distribution is small. Organisations who are not accepted could be encouraged to seek representation through their appropriate umbrella.

7.48 The Commission should give consideration to a new category of communicating, or associate members, who would receive limited information from the WNC, who would be invited to conferences and seminars and who would be willing to be consulted should the need arise.

7.49 Organisational membership should be reviewed positively. The questionnaire for the directory of women's organisations could be adapted to serve this additional purpose. This could be tackled in 1989 when the 1990 directory is due to be prepared. Thereafter a major review should be scheduled every 5 years.

Individual Membership - Representatives of the Organisations

7.50 There are a number of problems and anomalies around the role of the individual members of the Commission. In a very real sense these members are the face of the Commission. As a group they need to be demonstrably representative of women in the United Kingdom and to be equipped to fulfil this role.

7.51 Individual members are currently nominated by their organisation but little guidance is given on what is expected in terms of period of office, responsibilities, communications with the organisations. Recommendations about individual members can therefore be grouped around term of office, selection, induction and training, role and performance and internal communications.

Term of Office

7.52 The fact that no guidance is given with regard to term of office is contrary to government guidelines which state that "appointments should normally be made for a limited and specific period, not exceeding 5 years" (Non-Departmental Public Bodies, A Guide to Departments, HMSO 1985). The Guide also makes it clear that appointments are made by the Minister. The Commission's position is that the members are representatives of their organisations which are themselves appointed. However, the fact that the individuals are included as public appointments means that, in effect, the appointments are approved by the Govornment co-chairman.

7.53 **Recommendations:** It is recommended that the Commission adhere to the government guideline. To ensure continuity individual members should be expected to serve for a minimum of 2 years. Whilst in order to ensure a supply of talent appropriate to the needs of the moment, individual membership should be restricted to 5 years. This could be extended, exceptionally, if a member is elected to become co-chairman at the beginning or end of her fifth year.

7.54 It is further recommended that if an organisation is not represented at 2 consecutive plenaries by the designated member or a substitute, then the organisational and individual membership should be deemed to have lapsed and the place offered to another organisation. Similarly, if an organisation is disbanded or merges with another, then membership should lapse. In the case of a merger with an organisation not currently a member of WNC, the new organisation should be considered sympathetically provided it meets the selection criteria.

Selection

7.55 At present the perceived status and information needs of Commission work appear to lead organisations to nominate individuals on the basis of their position in the organisation rather than for specific skills they might bring to the Commission. Typically they are the President of the organisation, or persons of experience and standing, usually of mature age and carrying substantial responsibility and work load in their organisation and perhaps in their work or community as well.

7.56 Whilst such people have been extremely valuable to the Commission and have made significant contributions to WNC work, there is a problem where all or a large majority of members are perceived as similar. This is particularly important with regard to age. Recent research (Mintel 1988) shows that age is the single most discriminating factor in determining women's opinions. It is essential that a body like WNC includes younger people both to give an added dimension to thought but also to ensure the future for women and their organisations, if not for the WNC itself. Women are making progress to the more senior ranks at work, in social and welfare organisations, in political arenas and they are doing so at a younger age. Organisations should be encouraged to nominate up and coming people.

7.57 Government statistical data shows that if the individual members of the Commission are to be representative of the female population aged over 20 years then for the 50 members of the Commission one would expect the following:

Figure 4: Representative Profile

Age	**Status**
20 - aged under 40 years 30 - aged 40+	30 - married 20 - single, widowed, divorced
Employment	**Ethnic Origin**
25 - in employment (15 full-time, 10 part-time) 25 - not currently employed	2-3 - of ethnic minority origin (2 Asian, 1 Afro-Carribean) 46-7 - white

7.58 One person may combine several of these attributes and it is not suggested that these be used as rigorous selection criteria. However, they do offer a useful template against which to measure the overall composition of WNC members. Using such a template approach might alert WNC to unbalanced representation in time to make some adjustments.

7.59 Several members stated that it would have been helpful if they had known more about WNC before they took up office and that they expected an interview. To cater for this need but to avoid a heavy administrative burden, it is recommended that prospective new members should be encouraged to attend a plenary meeting with their outgoing representative and that the Secretariat should continue and extend the new members' introductory sessions.

7.60 **Recommendations:** Guidelines should be developed to encourage organisations to sometimes nominate up and coming people instead of only those in the most senior positions who may already have many responsibilities. The Commission should maintain a watching brief on membership, perhaps using the template, to achieve an effective representation overall.

Role, Performance and Communications

7.61 The WNC should provide more guidance to the represented organisations on the role of the designated member, the time commitment and support that is available in terms of travel and subsistence expenses. To attract the nomination of younger women it may be necessary to offer child care allowances. The role description should include obligatory attendance at plenary meetings but should also indicate other participation in the form of working parties, committee work, representing WNC locally as well as within their own organisation. The time commitment is likely to be a minimum of 10 days annually. For some it will be significantly more than this.

7.62 Organisations will need to support their nominee in their representational role by ensuring they have mechanisms to consult the membership. The means of doing this will obviously differ among organisations but each must ensure there is a way which the representative is accountable for actions.

7.63 **Recommendations:** Guidelines should be developed on the role of individual members emphasising the time commitment required of WNC members. The possibility of offering an allowance for childcare as part of WNC travel and subsistence should be investigated.

Induction and Training

7.64 As mentioned previously, there is a need to ensure all new members are brought up to speed quickly. A number of actions would help:

a) preparation of a WNC information pack for new members, on the work of the Commission, a brief history, a guide to members and officers, details of the current work plan and targets, diary dates for up to a year ahead, procedural guidelines for meetings.

b) inclusion activities, e.g. on-going members should be given the task of welcoming and introducing new members, new members should be urged to attend a formal induction session

c) training and information sessions on civil service procedures and parliamentary processes would help members to be more effective as members of an advisory body. These should be offered to all members perhaps as a series of short workshop options attached to plenary meetings.

7.65 **Recommendations:** Information packs and training sessions should be introduced to help new members understand WNC and its work processes.

Secretariat

7.66 The Secretariat is responsible for managing the affairs of the Commission on a day-to-day basis and, with the guidance of the Secretary, for ensuring that the WNC proceeds in a way that results in feasible recommendations for government ministers. This is a challenging role calling for intellectual and diplomatic skills of a high order.

7.67 The Secretariat establishment is for 5 civil servants in full-time equivalent posts: the Secretary, an HEO, EO, AO and AA. Most recently the role of the Secretary has been a shared job. There is virtually unanimous agreement that this has not been effective. Dissatisfactions refer to two aspects of the job share:

1) the job-share involved a civil servant and a lay person, a previous member of the Commission, with the work divided on policy and project lines. Members felt that their prime need was for the advice and knowledge of the civil servant and therefore directed enquiries to her. This obviously meant that the necessary advice was available for only half the time, leading to Members expressing feelings of frustration. This aspect could have been overcome by either appointing 2 civil servants or by giving more training and guidance to the lay person;

2) the job-share was arranged to allow the sharers to work together for one day each week. This offered undoubted benefits but also meant that for another day each week no senior person was in the office. Again this could have been tackled by adjusting the work patterns or, more particularly, by delegating responsibility during the whole of the week so that members gained confidence in other staff.

7.68 Whilst this would suggest that the job-share itself may not have been at fault, it is not recommended that the Commission fills the senior role in this way in the future. Rather it is suggested that the level and skills of the Secretary should be increased to handle the complex and heavy workload.

7.69 The main responsibility for the effectiveness of the Commission falls on the shoulders of the Secretary. This person has responsibility for ensuring the best use is made of resources, that the members' energies and skills are guided into projects that are achievable and timely, making the best use of windows of opportunity, being mindful of the objectives and targets of the Commission, helping members to develop a strategy and showing commitment to it, being the focal point for enquiries from government departments, being the expert on governmental systems and processes, ensuring documents are prepared for ministers and departments in ways that are practicable, preparing thorough briefs for the co-chairmen, particularly for the government co-chairman for use at MGWI meetings, and performing a representation role when necessary.

7.70 One of the key roles is to manage the interface between the members who vary in their knowledge and experience of government processes and the professional civil servants in other departments. This has to be managed with great sensitivity to promote respect for the work of the Commission as an advisory body and to clearly differentiate it from the work of lobbies from outside government. The work and standing of the Secretary can help substantially in this respect.

7.71 The Secretary also has responsibility for planning work objectives and for managing the financial and other resources.

7.72 The day to day work of the Secretariat consists of organising, preparing papers for, and running WNC meetings, servicing working parties and WNC project work, dealing with requests for advice/information from government departments and other bodies, responding to enquiries from other organisations, the media, the public, and essential maintenance work including record-keeping and filing.

7.73 The work is subject to peaks, especially around the time of Commission meetings. It is also sometimes difficult to respond quickly to requests from government departments for detailed advice. This has as much to do with difficulties in consulting members as in having time to prepare a well-reasoned response. The need is for highly professional people who can provide an effective 'translation' service between lay people and civil servants, who can produce succinct and accurate summaries of proposals from the departments to allow prompt response from the members, and who can then convey to the departments the WNC opinions supported by evidence in a way that is recognised as legitimate by civil servants.

7.74 The balance of staff in the Secretariat should be weighted towards senior people, with high level skills in interpretation, drafting and diplomacy. Most people are more satisfied and effective at work when they feel they are making an effective contribution and are continuing to develop themselves. WNC Secretariat staff are no exception, attention to their development and training will contribute to the overall effectiveness of WNC.

7.75 **Recommendations:** In view of the complexities of the role, the Secretary of WNC should be a full-time civil servant. The balance in the Secretariat should be weighted in favour of senior staff. See also: Optimising the Staff Resource (9.5 - 9.19).

8 MECHANISMS TO ACHIEVE WNC OBJECTIVES

8.1 The Commission has a number of different ways to achieve its objectives: Plenary Meetings, Working Parties, Projects, Conferences, Consultation, International Committee, Interfaces with MGWI and external organisations, and provision of information more generally.

8.2 These should be planned in such a way as to enable the Commission to pursue its strategy and meet objectives. Underlying the detail in the sections which follow is the assumption that the Commission should move to a 3 year planning cycle. In this period it would programme 6 plenaries, up to 9 working parties, 3 projects including a conference, develop its international committee, as well as consulting with government departments, preparing material for MGWI and handling sundry enquiries.

Plenaries

8.3 Currently WNC members meet as a full plenary 3 times each year. These might be described as the business meetings of the Commission, the main purpose being to update members on the progress of various projects, working parties, and to take members opinions on current issues. Members assemble over coffee but there is little attempt to integrate new members, some of whom find the process rather daunting. The day-long meetings, which may include an external speaker or workshop, are characterised by a high degree of formality. Members sit on numbered seats and tend to use surnames. Whilst there are good reasons for this (helping the Chairmen and Secretariat to identify speakers) it tends to promote an atmosphere for set position speeches rather than discussion. This may account for why some members find the plenaries rather less valuable than the working parties where there is more open discussion and debate.

8.4 Some Executive Committee members describe the plenaries as merely a re-run of the Executive Meeting. Whilst there will inevitably be some overlap, this suggests that the roles of the two types of meeting are not sufficiently clearly defined. It is suggested that it should be the role and responsibility of the membership to agree objectives, set priorities, make an input on strategy and to receive reports on progress. The plenary is the appropriate forum for this work, which should be characterised by lively debate. The Executive and Secretariat may wish to review the format for plenaries to ensure that there is the opportunity for that freedom of expression that is often associated with informality, whilst still achieving the consensus that tends to follow formality. The meetings should perhaps be linked with a workshop, speaker or debate on a specific issue.

8.5 At present some organisations and departments are permitted to send observers to plenary meetings. The observer role is always an uncomfortable one, especially if as in the case of WNC, some observers believe they are not allowed to speak. This puts the observer into a critical mindset, not necessarily the most helpful if one wants to build relationships. It is suggested that the WNC should decide either to exclude observers from the business parts of plenaries but still invite them to workshops, or allow them to attend the whole meeting and to speak, clearly identifying themselves. They would not, of course, be eligible to vote on any issues put to the membership.

8.6 The plenaries are valued as an opportunity for members from different women's organisations to meet and exchange news. This is a valuable by-product but needs to be seen as such rather than being given as a rationale for holding plenaries. There are other ways of meeting this need, through the umbrella organisations, for example.

8.7 Meeting dates for plenaries are agreed for the year ahead and members should be required to attend or to arrange for a substitute. The planning schedule for such meetings should also be published so that members know the dates by which they should submit any items they wish to raise. They should also know when they can expect meeting documentation so that they can make adequate preparations for the meeting.

8.8 Members comment on the piecemeal documentation for plenaries and this is clearly an area that needs attention by the Secretariat. Again it would be helpful if documentation could be succinct and where this is not possible, it should be annotated in such a way as to help Members identify key points.

8.9 It would be helpful if members could be asked to identify at the outset of the meeting any other business they wish to raise. This would allow any essential re-shaping of the agenda to incorporate any late but genuinely urgent items and allow members to deal with other AOB informally, say over lunch. This would go some way to relieving the frustration some members feel when they are invited to raise their issues when several members have already left.

8.10 **Recommendations:** Specify the role and responsibilities of the plenary meetings to organisations and individual members. Include procedural guidelines in the Members' Information Pack. It is recommended that there should be 2 plenaries each year, one to agree and set objectives and the other to review progress and plan forward. A decision should be tabled as to whether there is any information suitable for a press release. Minutes should continue to be circulated to members and they should be held responsible for disseminating relevant information within their own organisation.

Working Parties

8.11 Working parties allow the possibility of innovative ground-breaking work in the Commission. Over the years they have become WNC's main method of raising awareness in government and elsewhere of issues of concern to women. In some instances, the work has been significant in securing change, e.g. the Violence Report has contributed to changes in practices in police forces with regard to the treatment of rape victims. The immediate products of this type of work - the reports - offer a way of bringing important issues into the public arena.

8.12 Working parties therefore offer a way of harnessing the expertise of the members and of focussing government and public attention on issues of concern in a highly practical way.

8.13 WNC should be encouraged to develop its use of working parties for this type of work. There are however, substantial differences in the performance of working parties and it would be helpful to develop guidelines or examples of good practice to maintain a high standard.

8.14 There is usually an optimum size for a working group - below 6 may not be a large enough resource in terms of range of experience and time commitment. Above 10-12 there will be problems in keeping the group together. Probably 7-10 is a good size, meeting 6-8 times in a year.

8.15 Each working party should have a clearly expressed objective expressed in terms of tangible output (this might be a report), a budget, a time and resource plan including use of staff from the Secretariat. Target audience/s should be identified at the outset as should the dissemination policy. Where

the work is likely to be lengthy, it should be divided into stages with clear outputs at each stage. This would help to keep tasks in the realm of the achievable and maintain a high level of motivation. It also offers the opportunity of influencing opinion in the process and of incorporating new information without losing direction.

8.16 A good principle is to: tell people what you are going to do, tell them that you are doing it, keep them updated as you proceed and, finally, tell them what the results are.

8.17 Insufficient attention is given to presentation of working party results, causing them to be under-rated. Often excellent work is buried in poorly-produced, amateur looking, dull reports. The wide-spread use of new technology means that there is an expectation of quality in terms of presentation as well as content. The Commission cannot afford to overlook this aspect of its work as a means of raising awareness, and should ensure that documents are designed to make maximum impact.

8.18 Better presented reports should be made available to a wider audience, perhaps through HMSO or directly through WNC. This could offer a means of generating income to cover production costs.

8.19 Recommendations: The Commission should aim to have 2/3 working parties in operation at any one time but these should be tightly managed to adhere to work plans. The dissemination policy should be reviewed and greater emphasis be given to producing well-presented reports. Whenever possible, these should be made available to the general public, either by HMSO, or through the WNC directly.

Projects

8.20 From time to time WNC has initiated or has been involved with major projects. Examples include the Roadshows, and the Women into Public Appointments publications. These offer the opportunity for good publicity and involvement of members at grass roots level. However, major projects are costly in terms of time and finance. Care must be taken to ensure that they are targeted towards the objectives of the Commission. Both projects mentioned above are aimed at women in general, although the Public Appointments work needs the co-operation of government departments. The Roadshows in particular, whilst being a worth-while venture in themselves, to date appear to have had only limited effect. They appear to have been an aberration, only raising awareness of WNC among those immediately involved rather than in the community at large. Members enjoyed the involvement but it was a costly way to build a sense of belonging. A tighter focus on the purpose of the Commission, development of objectives and strategy would have highlighted the need to stop the roadshow concept or, at least to find ways of exploiting publicity so tying it more closely to the role of the Commission.

8.21 Smaller projects include the publication every 2 years of the directory of women's organisations. This is a useful way of building on the WNC's own need to keep in touch with women's organisations. This publication could be handled through a commercial publishing house although the source data would still need to be collected and updated. This would need to be handled by WNC perhaps in conjunction with the Women and Training Group who also keep similar lists. There is a great need to map out the ground and ensure that work is not duplicated.

8.22 An example of a potential new area for project work would be to build on the work of government department shadows and to monitor department progress on policies such as equality proofing.

8.23 Another activity which could best be regarded as a project is the organisation of occasional conferences, see below.

8.24 **Recommendations:** Projects should only be entered into when they are clearly linked to the objectives of the WNC. It is anticipated that major projects will always be the subject of separate budget applications. As with working parties, they should be subject to tight management, clear targets and appropriate publicity.

Conferences

8.25 WNC organises conferences for its members and for other invited participants. They offer the opportunity for members to work together over an extended period, usually 2 days, and are a useful means of generating information and collecting opinions. They also offer a means of communicating with government more directly since the conferences are sometimes addressed by Ministers and/or officials. Again there is a good opportunity for dissemination in terms of invitations to the press to attend and in terms of a conference publication which could be made available for sale.

8.26 The conference format has potential for development by inviting representatives from a wider range of women's groups, ideally all those who have elected to be communicating organisations (see 7.50) and/or those listed in the WNC directory. To be effective, the conference objectives must be clearly defined, e.g. to give information and gather opinion on a specific topic.

8.27 To encourage wide participation, attendance should be subsidised initially. The object should be to move to full cost recovery as the conference becomes recognised as an important forum. It may be possible to hold joint conferences on suitable topics with organisations such as the Equal Opportunities Commission, or Women and Training Group and thereby sharing the cost. Alternatively, a WNC member organisation may be prepared to be the working partner. In either case, it would be desirable to rotate the location of the conference so that it is not always in or near London.

8.28 **Recommendations:** Retain conference as a project to be offered every third year and to be the responsibility of a working party. Seek conference partners and open the conferences to wider participation. Aim for cost to be recovered. Include among conference objectives the requirement for tangible outcomes, including conference publication.

Consultation

8.29 The Secretariat currently receives requests for advice and information from several government departments. These are departments with whom a relationship has been built over the years. In addition, the WNC initiates meetings with departments where it wants to raise the awareness of Ministers and officials about the implications for women in current government proposals.

8.30 If it is to be effective in this work, WNC must display high levels of competence and professionalism. It must also have the ability to respond and act quickly especially with regard to imminent legislation.

8.31 In order to raise awareness of implications for women at any early stage, ideally before green or white papers are produced, WNC should aim to both deepen and extend its relationships with government departments. This will happen to some extent as the level of awareness of WNC is raised through involvement with the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues. However, time and resource constraints will also demand that WNC sets priorities and puts substantial efforts into building relationships with key departments, particularly those which it has been decided to shadow (see 7.22 - 7.25). In selecting these departments, WNC should consider those especially who have a superordinate role where change would set the climate for other departments. It will also need to look at the existing mechanisms used by the department for the collection of women's opinion. Where, for example, the department already had its own women's advisory body, the Commission may decide either to work closely with that body or to accord that department a lower priority on their agenda, having delegated, as it were, the responsibility to the department's own advisory body.

8.32 To meet these needs WNC must ensure that its Secretariat and Members are informed about the issues and about government processes, and that mechanisms are developed to allow quick responses on urgent issues. This is an obvious area where technology could assist, e.g. telephone conferencing where a discussion involving several people is essential, use of facsimile where complex documents need to be considered. (Facsimile costs have reduced substantially in recent years and it would be worth checking whether members have access to a machine. This should be kept under review as fax becomes even more widespread.) It would also be worth checking whether members have access to network communications, e.g. Telecom Gold or telex. And of course, the use of the ordinary telephone should not be overlooked.

8.33 These mechanisms will allow consultation with many or all members of the Commission. However, if the concept of department shadows is followed there will be designated groups of members to consult on specific matters. This will speed the process considerably.

8.34 Whether all are involved or only a designated group, it will be important for the Commission as a whole to be kept in touch. This could be handled easily through the mechanism of Executive Meeting minutes which are circulated to all members.

8.35 **Recommendations:** The Commission should build deeper relationships with selected government departments, perhaps giving priority to those whose decisions set the climate for others. All members should be kept in touch with progress. The scope for using technology (telephone conferencing, fax, networks) to speed the consultation process with members should be explored and kept under review.

International Committee

8.36 The International Committee of WNC meets infrequently and is held in low regard by most members, even those who have been members of the Committee for some time. The reason for this is that the Committee appears mainly to be a recipient for information, to have an orientation towards United Nations affairs, and to be a focus for visiting delegations. The Committee, through its Civil Service member, is also responsible for advising the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on grant applications under the Helsinki Fund. Whilst these duties are all valuable in themselves, Members do not see them as central to WNC. The Commission might wish to consider whether a more useful primary

focus for its International Committee should be on Europe and the EEC. This would bring relevant information directly to the Members enabling them immediately to be aware of issues being raised in the Community to which the government will have to respond in due course. A focus on Europe would therefore be more directly relevant to the work of the Commission and will be even more imperative in view of the closer links in 1990s, e.g. "one market" plans for 1992, channel tunnel 1993. These will inevitably influence the UK situation.

8.37 **Recommendations:** Membership arrangements for the International Committee should remain as now but the Committee should be set a task in the same way as any working party. Equally, they should be aware of the need for output, these could be information papers. Their job should be to ensure the Commission is aware of external influences affecting the situation for women. In particular the Committee should be encouraged to develop a greater knowledge and understanding of the role of the European Commission with regard to women. Initially the Committee should meet 3 times annually as already scheduled but this may need to be increased in line with activity.

Interface with the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues

8.38 The creation of MGWI is an important development, providing as it does, the opportunity for Ministers from different departments to take a joint perspective on issues of concern to women. The effect could be far-reaching in that the involvement of Ministers means that their officials have also to be aware, and thus there could be a general raising of awareness. It is also relevant that the WNC government co-chairman has a pivotal role since she is also deputy chairman of MGWI.

8.39 The presentation of issues to MGWI therefore offers an outstanding opportunity for the Commission to fulfil its remit. It also represents a challenge to the existence of WNC as an institution. The opportunity will be maximised if the Commission selects, with great care, only subjects which genuinely require an input from several or all departments. These should be presented in a practicable way, with full supporting material. It may not be necessary to prove the case, but it will be necessary to prove why a case should be investigated.

8.40 The challenge would become a threat to WNC's existence if as an advisory body it were not perceived as relevant, credible and professional.

8.41 **Recommendations:** The WNC Secretariat must give clear guidance to Members on the criteria for preparing successfully for Ministerial meetings, ensure that the government co-chairman has a full briefing with supporting data, and build firm working relationships with other Officials supporting Ministers at MGWI meetings.

Interface with Other Organisations

8.42 WNC has an effective working relationship with the Equal Opportunities Commission which could be further developed where there are interests in common. There could be advantages in developing or improving links with other organisations such as the Training Commission/Women and Training group, and the Commission of the European Communities' London Office. These organisations need to be aware of WNC activities and priorities.

8.43 Among umbrella organisations not currently represented in WNC membership, there is both a desire for membership and, in some cases, a strongly held view that WNC is not representative. Whatever decision is finally reached about the selection of members, WNC should take care to build workable relationships with these groups who could form part of WNC's information network.

8.44 These organisations need to be kept aware of WNC priorities, activities and achievements.

8.45 **Recommendations:** Representatives from external organisations should be invited to participate in WNC activities where appropriate, including expert representation at working parties. These groups should be kept informed of WNC publications.

General Information Service

8.46 The Secretariat receives and deals with enquiries both generally and with regard to WNC publications and activities. Although enquiries increase when WNC is mentioned in the press, the volume can usually be handled by junior staff. A higher public profile would undoubtedly further increase the number of enquiries. These will need to be monitored carefully and effective use made of information sheets and personalised, standard replies where possible.

8.47 It would be useful to prepare a short annual report on WNC activities and achievements. This would be beneficial for information dissemination and publicity purposes. It would also be good practice to publically acknowledge the work of Members.

8.48 **Recommendations:** Introduce a short annual report for wide circulation. Develop time-effective methods of handling enquiries and monitor results.

EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES

Financial Management

9.1 It is understood from the Cabinet Office Finance Division that "the WNC is funded from the Cabinet Office vote and, as such is included fully in the Office's vote accounting system. The Secretariat is consulted formally about its resource needs during the annual Public Expenditure Survey (covering the next 3 financial years) and during the annual Estimates exercise (covering in more detail the financial year immediately ahead)". In practice, the plan prepared by the Secretariat deals with the current year in broad terms. It is used to prepare work plans for individual staff against which to assess performance but not as a measure of financial control for projects.

9.2 The WNC maintains its own financial records on computer and on file. The budget is a simple one with few headings and information can be traced easily. The WNC receives monthly expenditure statements and these are used as records to ensure the budget heads are not exceeded. This is one important aspect of financial data but the WNC would benefit from using detailed monthly reports as part of a more rigorous project control system. This would inject a degree of sophistication which, if approached in the right way, would be motivational to staff, stimulate the members to be more disciplined about meeting targets and add to the sense of achievement in the Commission as a whole.

9.3 The WNC annual budget is, by Civil Service standards, a modest one of £100,000. Nearly two-thirds of this budget is allocated to staff costs and training, a quarter to member costs and the balance to administration. It is not suggested that this budget should be cut but rather than planning and tighter controls should be used to ensure greater productivity. Specifically there should be more activities and each project or working party should be allocated a financial resource and an appropriate individual - staff or the chairman of the working party - should have responsibility under the Secretary for managing the resource against the plan. An outline plan over 3 years using 1987 figures is included as Appendix 1 as an example which takes account of all recommendations made in this review.

9.4 **Recommendations:** The Financial Division should be asked to review the Commission's management accounting arrangements at an early date with a view to integrating the planning of the Commission's work programme, and its subsequent monitoring, with the financial system in a more structure way. In any event, the Commission should be strongly encouraged to set measurable targets for itself. A more disciplined approach to financial planning and expenditure would help in this respect.

Optimising the Staff Resource

9.5 As noted above (9.3), the major financial resource of the WNC is committed to the cost of staff to service the Commission. It is therefore essential that this resource is used to optimal effect.

9.6 As also noted previously, the Secretary, as the senior permanent representative of the WNC, has a demanding role, taking responsibility for the operation of the Commission under the Government co-chairman, and in line with the status of Secretary of an Advisory Body to government has considerable autonomy. The ability to guide the members into producing recommendations and reports in a way that ensures government attention can directly affect the standing of the Commission. This means paying a high regard to the standards expected for work presented to Ministers across government as a whole rather

than to one department only. It means building relationships with senior officials in the various departments to create more open channels for two-way communication on issues of concern to women. It means working with officials to create a change of climate where WNC is viewed as a resource rather than as a nuisance as is now sometimes the case.

9.7 The development of MGWI means an increase in work at this level.

9.8 The Secretary needs to command the respect of members and to help them understand the process of government. The diversity of experience among members means that for some this will be a development experience; the skill to handle this should not be under-estimated. The Secretary needs to help members to formulate objectives and the strategies to achieve them. The strategy might need to be sustained over several years, beyond the service of an individual Member. Indeed the changing membership of the Commission makes education a constant and demanding facet of the work. At the same time, the Members must have absolute confidence that the Secretary, and indeed, the Secretariat as a whole, reflects their views accurately especially when dealing with urgent enquiries from government departments and from the wider community, particularly the media.

9.9 The Secretary needs to be able to deal equitably with people of standing in the wider community, the Chair of the EOC, trade union leaders, and visiting delegations from abroad. Whilst others will be involved in meetings with these people, it is the Secretary who has responsibility for establishing good on-going working relations.

9.10 Within the Secretariat the Secretary needs to be seen as a leader of a team of professionals who are well-trained and motivated. The whole team needs to be highly regarded both within the Civil Service and by those outside with whom they come into contact.

9.11 The exisiting staff are enthusiastic about the work of the Commission and would, it is felt, respond well to a challenge. The more senior would welcome the opportunity for more demanding work and greater scope for personal development. This could be achieved by careful delegation, appropriate training, personal counselling, and by building their status and role with members. In particular, they should be encouraged to develop their skills of intepretation and drafting to take more of a share in this type of work.

9.12 The more junior members of the team are undergoing training and would respond well to clear messages as to standards. The Secretariat is fortunate in having as its most junior member, a young woman of initiative who has been able to use the computer to develop a database as well as for accounting and simple word processing functions. The Commission could usefully develop and build on this talent.

9.13 The Secretariat uses central resources for services such as typing, wordprocessing, reprographics and messages, library and information. Some problems are experienced in achieving the required turnround for typewritten work and it was noted that the central unit is unable to assist with special requirements such as updating the Women into Public Life Appointments Directory. However, enquiries indicate it would not be cost effective for the Commission to have its own resource at this time either by means of a dedicated member of the typing pool or by employing a personal secretary within the

Secretariat. Both would attract increased costs and the latter would require additional accommodation. Instead it is suggested that all staff should be able to use the computer terminal and that the junior staff should be trained and required to use it for short, urgent letters. At the same time, short, standard letters or cards should be used to reduce the volume of typing.

9.14 The situation with regard to the typing resource will need to be kept under review as, if the level of activity with the Commission increases as is proposed and if this is accompanied by a higher public profile, then the volume of original work and enquiries will increase. At this stage it will be worth developing a role for a personal secretary who can also handle the public relations aspects of WNC's work. The large volume wordprocessing would still, of course, be handled by the typing pool.

9.15 It is understood that the WNC already has requested an additional part-time staff resource which could perhaps be called to meet this need at the appropriate time.

9.16 Recommendations: Consideration should be given to upgrading the position of the Secretary (records show that in the past this post has been held by senior Civil Servants and a former diplomat, which reflects the level of skill and standing that is required). A document to support this recommendation is attached as Appendix 2.

9.17 Work should be re-allocated among all members of the Secretariat to allow for their personal development and involvement in a wide range of aspects of the Commission.

9.18 All staff should be trained and able to use keyboard technology which could considerably speed drafting. As an alternative they should be trained to use dictating equipment effectively.

9.19 The typing/wordprocessing resource should be kept under review with the possibility of increasing the strength to include a personal secretary/public relations role in the future.

Accommodation and Resources

9.20 Accommodation is within two offices of the Cabinet Office where the Secretariat enjoy the benefit of common services, telephone, heat, light, power. One room is used as the Secretary's Office/Meeting Room and the other as a general office. Communication between the two is via the external corridor rather than by a connecting door. It is understood that the building construction precludes any structural alteration but if it becomes possible to relocate the WNC, a suite rather than separate offices would be desirable as this would be more conducive to good communication and effective working relationships.

9.21 In the meantime, better use should be made of available space. Both rooms are overfull of furniture and, in addition, the Secretary's office is used to store boxes of WNC publications. Ideally, these should be stored elsewhere. If this is not possible, then the furniture should be arranged to provide a tidy and discrete storage area. It is also suggested that some of the meeting room furniture should be removed from the Secretary's office to create more space. This would allow the room to be arranged attractively whilst providing sufficient space for the HEO to share this room with a separate working area.

9.22 The resulting space in the general office would allow that room to be re-arranged giving each member of staff a separate working area. At present three of the desks are pushed together which makes it hard for anyone to operate a "clear desk" policy. These changes might appear cosmetic but the increased professional air should help to signal increased pace and vibrancy. Good working conditions are not sufficient in themselves but they help to create the climate for excellent work.

9.23 It would increase efficiency if the computer system were more fully developed as an information base and communications system. One printer is sufficient for current needs but two additional terminals, one in each room, would encourage staff to move away from handwritten drafts to quickly produced, finely-honed documents. Terminals could be rented on a similar basis to the existing equipment and funded in the current year from the existing budget. This should be considered as a means of stimulating staff to make the most effective use of new technology as they will need to do if they are to keep pace with the anticipated increase in activity.

9.24 **Recommendations:** Reorganise the WNC offices to provide for more effective space utilisation and improved work conditions. Investigate the possibility of renting two more computer terminals, one for each room, and, ideally, to use these as a communications link between the two offices as well as with the main computer.

Maximising Membership Resources

9.25 The individual members of the Commission constitute an important additional resource, not only to participate in working parties and meetings, but also to represent the WNC. It would be helpful if members could be encouraged to accept invitations to speak and in other ways to help the Commission disseminate information about its work and collect opinion. It is only in this way that the Commission will have a realistic chance of a presence in all parts of the country. A higher profile can be initiated from London but can only be carried out effectively at the local level.

9.26 Some members already take on these roles, some others are only awaiting permission, but still more may need encouragement and support, for example, by the appropriate use of the Information Packs mentioned earlier.

9.27 Some organisations represented within the Commission have significant experience and resources to mount programmes, seminars and conferences and the Commission may find it useful to explore the possibility of joint activity with these organisations and, indeed, with non-member organisations who have interests in common.

9.28 **Recommendations:** Members should be encouraged to see a wider role through involvement in and beyond WNC formal meetings; in particular they should be encouraged to develop a promotional role.

10 CONCLUSION

10.1 The WNC has been in existence for nearly 20 years. During that time there have been significant changes in the experience and more particularly the expectations of women. These changes have not, however, been matched by an apparent greater awareness of the views and opinions of women by decision-makers. There remains a need to provide a channel for advice to government on the informed views of women. The WNC has the basic framework and structure to meet this need but should be updated in line with the recommendations contained in this review in order to perform this role effectively in the future.

10.2 It is to be hoped that the WNC will recognise and exploit its own unique strengths and use these in determining priorities, perhaps supporting others to do work that is believes necessary but is beyond its own resources.

APPENDIX 1

EXAMPLE OF WNC BUDGET OVER 3 YEARS USING 1987/88 FIGURES

Plenaries, 6 at £1500 each 3 meetings per year, 50 members To cover members' t/s, coffee, lunch	£9000
Executive Meetings, 23 at £400 each 8 meetings per year, 12 members at each To cover members' t/s, coffee, lunch	£9600
Working Party Meetings, 72 at £400 each 3 working parties in each of 3 years each meeting 8 times, 10 members in each To cover members' t/s, coffee, lunch	£28800
Allowance of £2000 for each working party for report/consultancy	£6000
International Committee Meetings, 9 at £400 each 3 meetings annually, 11 members at each To cover members' t/s, coffee, lunch	£3600
Conference 1 at £4000 1 within 3 year period, 50 members free, non-members at cost, or cost plus (Budget 1987 £4000, cost 1987 £2700)	£4000
Cost here based on 1987 budget Allowance towards conference report	£1000
Mini-Projects, 2 at £3000 each (includes allowance of £1000 towards report in each case)	£6000
Co-Chairmen expenses, at £1500 pa for 3 years (in 1987 £1200)	£4500
Staff costs, in 1987 £63000, for 3 years	£189000
Staff training, in 1987 £2500, for 3 years	£7500
Computing, 3 terminals at £750 rental each for 3 years	£6750
Books/printing, 1987 £2000, for 3 years	£6000
Local purchases, 1987 £2000, for 3 years	£6000
Admin, not allocated elsewhere, £2000 for 3 years	£6000
	£293750
Contingency, £2083 in each of 3 years	£6250
TOTAL	£300000

APPENDIX 2

THE SECRETARY, WOMEN'S NATIONAL COMMISSION

Outline Proposal to Regrade Post

The Women's National Commission is an advisory body to government set up to ensure by all possible means that the informed opinion of women is given its due weight in the deliberations of government. It operates as a small separate secretariat out of The Cabinet Office. The government co-chairman of WNC is a Minister appointed by the Prime Minister.

The Secretariat has a staff of five and works primarily through the members of the Commission, 50 representatives of national organisations with a large and active membership of women. These members are nominated by the organisations.

The Secretary is the senior permanent executive member and has considerable autonomy in managing the affairs of the Commission. The structure of WNC includes an elected co-chairman in addition to the government co-chairman, an Executive Committee elected by members and various committees and working groups.

The Secretary's key roles include:

- managing the financial, staff and other resources
- preparing briefs for co-chairmen, particularly detailed briefs for the Government Co-chairman of the Commission for meetings with the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues
- helping WNC develop a strategy to meet its objectives
- ensuring the skills and energies of members are guided into projects that are achievable and timely, that the results are presented in a way that ensures serious consideration by government
- being expert on government systems and processes
- being a focal point for enquiries from government departments
- building links with key officials in Government Departments to facilitate the work of WNC
- performing a representative role
- planning work objectives, monitoring performance

Relationships

The Secretary has to work effectively with:

WNC Co-chairmen - Government and Elected Co-chairmen

The Secretary must build good working relationships with both chairmen, recognising the particular complexities of the joint role. In both cases the relationships must be managed at a distance which demands good communication disciplines. In particular, the Secretary will need to develop a working relationship with the Minister's own office even though they are not involved in WNC work.

Members of WNC - Women of Standing in Organisations and in the Wider Community

The Secretary must command the respect of members, experts in their own field, and help them to understand the processes of government. The diversity of experience among members means that for some this will be a development experience; the skill to handle this should not be underestimated.

Ministers and Government Departments

The Secretary must create the possibility for open channels of communication between the WNC and government departments on issues of concern to women. It means working closely with officials in a sensitive way and to build a positive view of the Commission as a valuable contributor of informed opinion.

Staff

The Secretary must be a leader of a team of professionals who can respond quickly and sensitively to requests for opinion on a wide range of topics. The scope of WNC work means that there is a constant challenge in terms of knowledge needed.

External Organisations

The Secretary must be able to develop good working relationships with people of standing in the wider community, the Chair of the Equal Opportunity Commission, trade union leaders, visiting delegations from abroad.

The development of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues has the effect of increasing the demands made on the Secretary. It will also increase the work load per se, both in terms of developing the opportunities for working with departments which arise out of the meetings as well as preparing for the meetings themselves. The possibility for WNC to use with advantage the opportunities arising out of MGWI will depend substantially on the skillful work of the Secretary.

The Commission is entering a period where there is a need for rigorous development in order to increase effectiveness. This will not be achieved without difficulty. High levels of skills and diplomacy as well as intellect and knowledge will be required.

In these circumstances it is recommended that consideration be given to re-grading the post of Secretary from Grade 7 to Grade 6.

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

9 November 1988

**WOMEN'S NATIONAL COMMISSION:
FUTURE EFFECTIVENESS**

The Prime Minister has seen Mrs. Rumbold's minute of 7 November and agrees with her recommendation that she accept the suggestions of the Commission's Plenary following Valerie Hammond's review of the Commission.

I am copying this letter to S.J. Rimmer (John Patten's office, Home Office) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

(DOMINIC MORRIS)

Ms. S.A. Scott,
Mrs. Rumbold's Office,
Department of Education and Science.

PRIME MINISTER

Mrs. Rumbold seeks your endorsement to the main principles of the Review of the Women's National Commission which have been agreed by the Plenary. You are due to see Mrs. Rumbold in a couple of weeks' time to talk over the longer term future of the Women's National Commission and how the recommendations in the Review might be implemented.

The points agreed by the Plenary are bland and innocuous; the key is in the implementation, but content to accept the Plenary's suggestions as Mrs. Rumbold proposes?

Dominic Morris

8 November 1988

DG2DAP

SP4-42

PRIME MINISTER

WOMEN'S NATIONAL COMMISSION: FUTURE EFFECTIVENESS

1. Following Valerie Hammond's review of the Commission, the Plenary has agreed the following:

(i) The remit of the Commission should change from "reflecting the opinion" to "reflecting the opinions" of the membership. At the same time the Plenary agreed that consensus was a more powerful persuader to Government and would aim to gain this position in the majority of views put to Government.

(ii) It should reorder its membership to reflect modern Women's Organisations and should limit length of service to encourage "new blood" to the Plenary and Executive and thereby be more representative of the changing views of women.

(iii) It should adopt more efficient programmes of work to enable it to give clear, up-to-date opinions to Government.

(iv) It should also adopt a higher profile in liaison with both Government and its member organisations to encourage greater participation.

(v) Within its existing budget it should manage its funds, meetings and office more efficiently.

2. I recommend that we accept the suggestions. I should be grateful to know if I have your agreement.

3. I am sending a copy of this minute to John Patten and Sir Robin Butler.

AR.

ANGELA RUMBOLD
~~7~~ November 1988

07. XI. PM18

PRIME MINISTER

You agreed earlier this year that there should be an Independent Review of the Women's National Commission. Mrs. Rumbold's minute to you attaches the finished report. I do not think you need to read it in full at this stage but you might like to glance at the summary of recommendations on pages 1 - 3.

Mrs. Rumbold asked to see you to discuss the report. This is not pressing, but content to see her for half an hour at a suitable time in the next month?

DM

DOMINIC MORRIS
7 October 1988

Yes - I would not

It is not a very impressive report. We didn't need a consultant for this

file DTS

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

22 February 1988

The Prime Minister has seen your letter of 17 February about the proposed Review of the Women's National Commission. Mrs Thatcher has confirmed that she is content with the revised terms of reference and that you may now therefore proceed with the appointment of an outside consultant.

P A BEARPARK

Mrs. Angela Rumbold, C.B.E., M.P.
Cabinet Office

Women's National Commission
An Advisory Committee to Her Majesty's Government
Cabinet Office
Government Offices, Great George Street, London SW1P 3AQ
Telephone 01 233 4208 270 5903

Co-Chairmen:
Mrs. Angela Rumbold, CBE. M.P.
Mrs. Janet Jones, JP
Secretary:
Susan Scales

Prime Minister!

Mrs Rumbold is still keen to have an independent review of the WNC. Content with her revised terms of reference?

R 19/2

PS 19/2

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
Whitehall
London SW1

Yes

17 February 1988

Dear Prime Minister

REVIEW OF THE WOMEN'S NATIONAL COMMISSION

1. I recognise fully your ~~concern~~ flap. lest an independent review should propose a very much larger organisation. Mrs Jones and I should like to meet this concern with 3 points:-

a) tightened terms of reference are offered as attached. These clearly state government policy on non-departmental public bodies.

b) personal briefing and oversight of the independent consultant would be provided by myself and Mrs Jones. Each of the candidates whom we have submitted for your approval has relevant and realistic understanding of the financial and political constraints.

c) a general desire exists among Commission members not to increase the overall size of the organisation, but to revise the membership to reflect society today more accurately. This has emerged from the soundings and more formal consultations which we have taken on the Commission's effectiveness over the past year.

2. A report on the Commission is now due under the Cabinet Office programme of regular review of non-departmental public bodies. Besides internal discussions, we have extended the consultation to invite members of the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues to suggest improvements from their perspective as recipients of the Commission's advice..

3. The report can be prepared by the Co-Chairman and the Secretariat as in previous years, or with the help of a review by an outside consultant, as we have discussed. Either method could produce more radical recommendations on efficiency than Commission members may do through their current self-examination. In my opinion, the use of an outside consultant is preferable as this could reduce accusations of bias, bring in a fresh, professional expertise, and retain flexibility for the government when taking final decisions.

4. I should be glad to know whether, after consideration of these points, you are content now that we proceed with the appointment of an outside consultant.

Yours ever

Angela

ANGELA RUMBOLD

Revised Proposed Terms of Reference

In the light of a) relevant social, economic, statutory and other changes since the Commission was set up in 1969 and b) the government's policy to keep spending of non-departmental public bodies under tight control and regular scrutiny,

To examine the Women's National Commission's role, constitution and membership; its structures and procedures to provide advice to government; and its management of resources and activities through the Secretariat.

To report within 3 months to the Co-chairmen and make recommendations including those to secure better value for money and more accountable management.

HOME AFFAIRS Women's Nat. Commission
May 79.

PART ONE ends:-

PAB TO MRS A RUMBOLD 21.1.88

PART TWO begins:-

MRS A. RUMBOLD TO PM. 17.2.88

Grey Scale #13
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