

WELFARE REFORM COMMITTEE

WOMEN AND WELFARE INQUIRY

ANONYMOUS WRITTEN SUBMISSION

I've just come across Women and Welfare and just wish to respond to the five questions on bullet point as I feel like it is a GLOBAL WAR AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN AND FAMILIES that include MEN!

I have been on benefits now nearly eight years and was forced onto them as I couldn't find paid work after my husband of twenty eight years committed adultery and left me sitting alone as my two sons had grown up and left home.

My first experience of going into the Job Centre was humiliating signing for JSA. Then all sorts of life events started to unravel and my whole life collapsed forcing me to claim ESA as I have DISCOID / SYSTEMIC LUPUS.

I had been trying for paid work but the reality is you need to bring in at least £1000 a month to clear rent, council tax and all food bills. You need this or a house needs this whether on benefits or working!

I receive £365.00 a month in Housing Benefit (£4380 per year) for rent and £247.40 a fortnight in other benefits (£5432.40 per year) so I live on £9812.40 per year with rent paid.

I was in the fortunate position to have some money behind me but since have sold all furniture and moved six times in eight years as I could not stay in the family home! If it hadn't been for my savings I'd have SUNK a long time ago.

I've been subjected to ATOS three times and was left sanctioned for two months whilst waiting appeal. Again I used my wits and overdraft.

In the eight years and six moves, I've been conned, robbed, in a serious car crash, divorced and I have been under stress as my youngest son was unwell. These situations mean nothing to the Job Centre but luckily due to my attitude and illness I'm still safe for now and on ESA support.

It's scary as I've nothing left to fall back on as I used it all up trying to find myself again! The biggest challenge to me would be if they decided to hound me again and put me on JSA as its just stressful and harassing folk. I hear and see it every day and see the suffering and stress the present government is playing with everybody and its driving folk MAD with worry.

If welfare was devolved to Scotland I'd like to see women protected – women of all ages especially with children and ones who care for others. To prioritise roofs being kept over people's heads and adequate funds for basic needs. Also a simple system

and a fair one for all, easy to access and deliver. No unfair taxes as folk on less than £12,000 a year should be council tax free.

All the present systems are too complicated for the ordinary working classes as they are designed that way. Also less harassment on folk who owe money, Sherriff letters etc.

I don't know what the answer is to it all but women do come out worse as they are left with all the work and worry.

When I was a working mother - you are at it from dawn to dusk. I see women cope day in day out with work and responsibilities of the home and also voluntary over and above the normal.

We are literally left holding the BABY or BABIES. It really is a man's world! Women across the globe are all in the same position. God bless those in war zones etc. The ones who are sexually assaulted, raped and trafficked. The exploitation is at epidemic levels, violence, abuse etc. This situation just can't go on and our men in Westminster should be ashamed of themselves as they are not men but monsters.

When will we all wake up?

The Earth's crust in ratio to size is equivalent to the skin of a soap bubble!

The Earth is fragile and women are too!

SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION

I already sent in a kind of personal response to Women and the effect of welfare but didn't touch on how I really feel as it's on-going and has been through most of my life since my teenage years and I am 57 years old on my next birthday.

I believe women are the key to change and education for both young men and women to address gender inequality. I took some notes this morning off the top of my head so will write them down below as this massive inequality must end and come into some sort of balance if we as a nation are to triumph over adversity. I've also enclosed a few bits that I had lying around amongst lots of notes and folders.

- Bring in women of all ages from deprived areas and the peripherals and give safe spaces across Scotland where they can explore ideas, relax, make new social contacts and women's health education, sex health, body image etc.
- Train teams of women to train and open free family friendly affordable childcare (utilising empty buildings that are lying empty all over the country). Café, crèche and women's space.

- Care / repair services as so many women living alone and bringing up children. Training programmes (DWP Job Centre for unemployed) and Skill Build (changing plugs, bulbs, hanging curtains and minor repairs). Community programmes for socially isolated needing assistance to remain in own homes. Also incorporate cleaning, decorating, laundry etc. to assist others who are stuck in a rut. Women helping women. No age limit. Young to old.
- Personal safety programme. Self-defence and home security.
- Utilise all colleges and ask them to encourage women to come forward to hair, beauty and fashion departments as models. As colleges always short of them (use everybody and build self-confidence, self-esteem).
- Play Scotland
- Pop up shops in empty shop premises promoting community activities as a lot of folk don't get to hear or know what's going on and there's plenty free activities and other things. HUBS.
- Mentoring and befriending (promote as it works)
- Food banks, clothes banks and furniture – recycle swapshops etc.

There's tons of stuff we could target and promote and get folk moving, inspired and active.

Women on welfare.

Especially with children.

Need Inspiration.

Help up not handouts.

Town, city and countryside for people.