



TUC

# Women and the Cuts

Toolkit



How to carry out a human rights and equality impact assessment of the spending cuts on women

Written by Mary-Ann Stephenson,  
Chair of Coventry Women's Voices



This is a toolkit for trade unions, voluntary organisations, community groups and others who want to assess the human rights and equality impact of the spending cuts on women in their communities. Although the toolkit focuses on women and the cuts, much of the information it contains can be used to look at the impact of the cuts on other groups.

Some of the issues covered in this toolkit have been devolved in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Much of this toolkit will nonetheless be useful to the TUC's sister organisations, the STUC, Wales TUC Cymru and ICTU.

TUC

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## Acknowledgement

This publication has been written by Mary-Ann Stephenson, Chair of Coventry Women's Voices, an independent body that brings together women's organisations, organisations working with and for women, and individual women themselves to make sure that their voices are heard in Coventry when policy is made. You can find out more at: <http://coventrywomensvoices.wordpress.com/>

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# Foreword

## The TUC and the cuts

**The TUC is the voice of Britain at work. We represent 55 affiliated unions with more than six million members. The TUC campaigns for a fair deal at work and for social justice at home and abroad. Fifty-one per cent of trade union members are women.**

The TUC campaigns on a wide range of issues affecting women at work, at home and in the wider community. Through its research and campaign work the TUC has played a key role in the campaigns to fight for equal pay, end violence against women and defend abortion rights.

The Women's Committee promotes the voice of women trade unionists throughout the work of the TUC and the wider labour movement. The Women's Committee has ensured a focus is maintained on the disproportionate impact on women of the government's programme of spending cuts and welfare reform.

The TUC has been at the forefront of the anti-cuts campaign and has consistently highlighted the unequal and unfair impact of the cuts on different communities. Through online activism, political lobbying, organising national campaign events, like the March for the Alternative and supporting local community campaigns, the TUC and affiliated unions have been leading the opposition to the government's spending cuts, changes to the benefits system and the outsourcing and privatisation of our public services.

The TUC has worked with the campaigning website False Economy to map cuts, gather information through crowd-sourcing and freedom of information requests and to mobilise for regional and national campaigns and events.

The trade union movement has been working closely with voluntary sector organisations and community organisers across the UK to fight local authority cuts and to defend jobs and services.

The TUC and affiliated trade unions have produced a wide range of campaign resources, from briefings to toolkits and posters on the gender impact of the cuts. Some of these resources are listed in this toolkit and many more can be found on individual trade union websites.

# Introduction

**The public spending cuts introduced by the coalition government are already hitting people and communities across the country with job losses, cuts to benefits and cuts to public services. The cuts are disproportionately hitting the poorest and most vulnerable members of society - children and young people, disabled people, pensioners and lone parents are being particularly badly affected.**

The TUC, along with groups like the Fawcett Society and the Women's Budget Group, have already highlighted the way in which the cuts will disproportionately affect women.<sup>1</sup>

- ⊙ Women are more likely to lose their jobs as the majority (65 per cent) of public sector workers are women.
- ⊙ Women will lose more in cuts to benefits. The Shadow Minister for Women, Yvette Cooper MP, has shown that of the £8bn net revenue to be raised by the financial year 2014–15, nearly £6bn will be from women, in contrast with just over £2bn from men.<sup>2</sup>
- ⊙ Women will be hardest hit by cuts to public services. The Women's Budget Group has shown that the groups that will suffer the greatest reduction in their standard of living due to cuts in public services are lone parents and single pensioners, the majority of whom are women.<sup>3</sup>
- ⊙ Women are the majority of those providing unpaid care<sup>4</sup> so are likely to be the ones picking up the pieces as social care services are cut.

These cuts are likely to have a major impact on gender equality and women's human rights. Research by the Centre for Human Rights in Practice at the University of Warwick and Coventry Women's Voices has concluded that we are in danger of seeing the slow progress toward equality over the last forty years unravel as women lose jobs, are pushed into poverty and can no longer access vital services.<sup>5</sup>

It is the combination of cuts that will be most damaging. Many women will not just be affected by one cut: they may lose their jobs, suffer a cut in benefits and see several different services that they rely on disappear at the same time. For some groups of women, particularly lone parents, pensioners, women victims and survivors of violence and abuse, many black and minority ethnic women, and poor women, this combination of cuts will be particularly devastating and may damage their human rights.

## Challenging the cuts

Women have been active in challenging the impact of the cuts on their families and communities through trade unions, voluntary organisations and faith and community groups.

This toolkit has been designed to help local groups campaigning against the cuts to carry out an equality and human rights impact assessment on the cuts on women in their area. (See below for more information about what this means.)

It is based on a report, *Unravelling Equality: a human rights and equality impact assessment of the public spending cuts on women in Coventry*, published in April 2011 by the Centre for Human Rights in Practice at the University of Warwick and Coventry Women's Voices (CWV). In particular, Section 5.4 on welfare reform has been reproduced almost entirely from the CWV version. Readers are welcome to copy sections from this toolkit, but please credit both this toolkit and the CWV version.

Other resources for challenging the cuts include:

UNISON has produced a comprehensive and very useful toolkit for challenging the cuts  
[www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/19873.pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/19873.pdf)

False Economy on how to challenge the cuts in court  
<http://falseeconomy.org.uk/blog/3-ways-to-challenge-the-cuts-in-court>

A guide to challenging cuts to services for disabled children  
[www.ncb.org.uk/edcm/Using\\_the\\_Law\\_to\\_Fight\\_Cuts.pdf](http://www.ncb.org.uk/edcm/Using_the_Law_to_Fight_Cuts.pdf)

There are many campaigns against specific cuts that provide ideas and information for local campaigns; see the relevant sections of this report for more information.

It is also important to respond to consultations that public bodies locally may be carrying out as part of their own equality impact assessments of spending decisions and other policies. For more information about how to do this see [www.tuc.org.uk/equality/tuc-20159-f0.cfm](http://www.tuc.org.uk/equality/tuc-20159-f0.cfm)

## The need for local information

Accurate information about the actual and likely impact of cuts locally is a vital part of these campaigns.

Although the decision to make public spending cuts has been made by the coalition government nationally, the implementation of many of the cuts (particularly cuts to jobs and public services) is happening locally. The amount paid from national to local government has been cut, while at the same time the "ring-fencing" of many budgets has been lifted. This means that councils are free to choose for themselves how to spend the money.

This has led to dramatic differences in the pattern of cuts in different parts of the country, with some services almost disappearing in some areas while continuing in others. Successful local campaigns need reliable information about what is happening (or likely to happen) locally. This toolkit is designed to help you find and use that information.

The evidence you find can be used in local campaigns in a number of ways including getting media coverage, providing evidence for impact on real people that goes beyond numbers and challenging poor-quality impact assessments.

Researching for a report that looks across a range of cuts can also help build links between people and campaigns from different parts of the community and help highlight how some people are likely to be hit by several cuts at once.



## Unravelling Equality: a case study of the Coventry impact assessment

*Unravelling Equality: a human rights and equality impact assessment of the spending cuts on women in Coventry* was published in April 2011.

Since its publication *Unravelling Equality* has had a huge impact. Coventry Women's Voices (CWV) members have used the findings of the report, and the media interest it generated, in order to lobby locally and nationally on behalf of themselves and the communities they serve. CWV has been asked for the first time to speak at meetings of all councillors, the Coventry Partnership and the Coventry Trades Council. Several CWV member organisations have used the evidence provided by the report to support applications for funding from public bodies and trust funders. These organisations have described the report as “invaluable”, “vital” and “a huge asset to us in our work”.

The report has generated much local and national media coverage.<sup>6</sup> Yvette Cooper MP referred to it in a debate in Parliament and the Coventry MP Geoffrey Robinson used the findings in a parliamentary debate he initiated on the spending cuts. A parliamentary seminar in partnership with the Fawcett Society presented the findings of the report to a packed audience of parliamentarians, academics and voluntary organisations. The meeting had standing room only and there was an extremely high level of interest from organisations wanting to carry out similar projects in other parts of the country.

For more information about the impact of the report see [www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/chrp/projectss/humanrightsimpactassessments/cwv/](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/chrp/projectss/humanrightsimpactassessments/cwv/)

# 1 How to use this toolkit

## Finding out more information

For each section we have included links to the websites of organisations that are campaigning or researching in this area. For voluntary organisations you will often find that the most detailed and up-to-date information can be found under "parliamentary briefings" or "policy responses".

## Using the subject sections

There are separate sections for each subject (employment, education, welfare reform and so on). For each subject we have given:

- ⊙ basic information about what cuts are happening nationally
- ⊙ a brief explanation of what this will mean for women and the human rights or equalities impact
- ⊙ sources of information so you can find out about the local impact.

You can combine this information in any way you want in your report. See *Writing the report* below for more information.

The toolkit covers:

- ⊙ employment
- ⊙ education and training
- ⊙ housing
- ⊙ welfare reform
- ⊙ health
- ⊙ social care
- ⊙ services for children and young people (and their families)
- ⊙ legal aid
- ⊙ transport
- ⊙ violence against women
- ⊙ women's voluntary organisations.

Note: some of the cuts outlined have already happened. Others are set out in legislation going through Parliament at the time of writing. Some are proposed in consultation documents and have not yet appeared in legislation. The government has made U-turns on some of its policies and may make further changes in the future. If you are in doubt about whether a policy is still current, check with the relevant government department.

## 2

# What is a human rights and equality impact assessment?

**A human rights and equality impact assessment (HREIA) is a way of making sure that the human rights and equality impacts of a policy are taken into account when that policy is developed, or for reviewing the impact of that policy.**

In the UK, equality impact assessments have generally been carried out by public bodies in order to meet their obligations under the Equality Act (and previously under race, sex and disability equality legislation).

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. It came into effect from 1 October 2010.

Under the Act, public bodies (such as councils, schools or primary care trusts) have to take account of the need to prevent discrimination, advance equality and promote good relations between groups in all that they do. This is called the Public Sector Equality Duty. It applies to age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation and replaces the former race, disability and gender equality duties that featured in previous discrimination legislation. The new duty took effect from 6 April 2011.

Specifically, the duty requires public bodies to have "due regard" to the need to:

- ⊙ eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ⊙ advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- ⊙ foster good relations between different groups.

For a full text of the Equality Act see [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/pdfs/ukpga\\_20100015\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/pdfs/ukpga_20100015_en.pdf)

This does not mean that public bodies have to treat everyone the same. Where different groups have different needs it may be lawful to provide different services (women-only domestic violence services, for example).

In order to fulfil the requirements of the duty and demonstrate that they have done so, most public bodies carry out equality impact assessments. Public bodies also have duties not to breach the Human Rights Act and some carry out combined HREIAs. For a full text of the Human Rights Act see [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents)

These assessments are often accused of being little more than tick-box exercises. Research by the Centre for Human Rights in Practice at the University of Warwick found that many impact assessments carried out by public bodies were poorly resourced, lacked analysis and seemed like a justification for a decision already taken.<sup>7</sup>

For more information about the public sector equality duty and what an equality impact assessment by a public body should contain, see the TUC's *Equality Duty Toolkit* available from TUC Publications on 020 7467 1294 and the Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance to public bodies on how to do equality impact assessments: [www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/PSD/equality\\_impact\\_assessment\\_guidance\\_quick-start\\_guide.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/PSD/equality_impact_assessment_guidance_quick-start_guide.pdf).

The TUC *Equality Duty Toolkit* also contains advice on how to ensure public bodies are fulfilling the requirement to have due regard to equality during a decision-making process and how to contribute to public bodies' own impact assessments.



In other parts of the world, HREIA are carried out not by public bodies making policy decisions but by civil society groups, trade unions and voluntary and campaigning organisations as a way of examining what impact a policy or policies may have and holding public bodies to account. This can be a powerful tool in providing evidence for the impact of policies, particularly the cumulative impact of policies of different public bodies, on some of the most vulnerable people.

This toolkit is designed to help trade unions and voluntary and community groups carry out their own HREIA of the impact of the spending cuts on women. For each section it sets out what cuts are taking place, what the likely impact of these cuts will be on women and how to find out what is happening locally.

The Scottish Human Rights Commission has produced a review of current practice in HREIA with a suggested methodology for carrying them out:

[www.scottishhumanrights.com/ourwork/publications/article/HRIAresearchreport](http://www.scottishhumanrights.com/ourwork/publications/article/HRIAresearchreport)

For more information about other ways of using the Equality Act and Human Rights Act see Section 4 of this toolkit.

## 3

# How to do a human rights and equality impact assessment

One of the strengths of the CWV report *Unravelling Equality* was that it showed how a whole series of different cuts could affect the same people and highlighted the devastating affect that this combination can have. However, you may decide that you cannot cover all the different cuts that are taking place (there are more cuts than we have had space to cover here). You may decide to focus on cuts in a few areas, or look at the impact of the cuts on particular groups locally (for example, older women, young women or lone parents).

## Forming a group and building alliances

Looking at the impact of all the different cuts that are going to affect people in your area can feel a bit overwhelming. Sharing the load with others can help make it more manageable. Forming a group or alliance made up of different people, unions and voluntary groups can also make sure you get several different perspectives on what the cuts might mean in practice.

Alliances that bring together trade unions, voluntary organisations and community groups can be particularly powerful. Unions will know about job cuts locally, and public sector union members will have first-hand knowledge of cuts to public services. They should also be involved in formal consultation processes about future cuts. Voluntary organisations are often in the front line of dealing with the impact of the cuts on different communities. Some will be delivering public services locally, others will be providing advice and support to affected groups and individuals. Faith groups may also be involved in providing support to vulnerable groups – for example, some churches are involved in supporting local food banks through the Trussell Trust: [www.trusselltrust.org](http://www.trusselltrust.org)

You can find national contact details of unions affiliated to the TUC at [www.tuc.org.uk/tuc/unions\\_main.cfm](http://www.tuc.org.uk/tuc/unions_main.cfm)

You may also find that your regional TUC is a good source of information about local cuts and existing anti-cuts campaigns. You can find your regional TUC office at [www.tuc.org.uk/tuc/regions\\_main.cfm](http://www.tuc.org.uk/tuc/regions_main.cfm)

You can get lists of local voluntary organisations from your local council for voluntary action and often from your local council. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations has a list of members at [www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/membership/meet-our-members](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/membership/meet-our-members)

The Women's Resource Centre has a list of women's organisations that are members at [www.wrc.org.uk/membership/members\\_listing/default.aspx](http://www.wrc.org.uk/membership/members_listing/default.aspx)

The F Word website has a list of local and national feminist organisations, blogs, networks and campaigns: [www.thefword.org.uk/resources/local\\_and\\_national\\_feminist\\_networks](http://www.thefword.org.uk/resources/local_and_national_feminist_networks)

UK Feminista also has a list of local feminist groups: <http://ukfeminista.org.uk/take-action/local-groups/>

You may also find it useful to make contact with academics and university departments locally. In Coventry the involvement of the Centre for Human Rights in Practice at the University of Warwick in the research into the impact of the cuts not only provided expertise but also gave the report a credibility it might not have had if it was just produced by local voluntary organisations. Departments that might be interested in this work would include law, politics, economics, sociology and women's/gender studies.

Once you have contacted the local groups who you think might be interested, call a meeting to explain the project and gain people's support (and commitment to do something). Not everyone will be able to be actively involved, but if they can help promote the project and support local consultation by forwarding information about what you are doing to their networks, that can be a real help.

### Consulting with groups and individuals

This toolkit provides much information about the cuts and their national impact, plus links to websites where you can research local data about the numbers of people likely to be affected by different changes. However, really to understand the impact of the cuts locally you will need to talk to the individuals and groups most likely to be affected.

Online surveys and questions circulated via email are easier to do than organising face to face meetings but may not generate a big response. For the Coventry report meetings were arranged with council staff, trade union officials, staff and volunteers from voluntary organisations and some members/service users of voluntary groups. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using the following questions:

- ⊙ Could you tell us about your organisation and the services it offers?
- ⊙ How are the spending cuts impacting/likely to impact on you and your services?
- ⊙ What will this mean for the women you are working with?
- ⊙ Do you think the impact of changes to your services will be different for particular groups (e.g., is there a particular gender impact, are there particular groups of women who will be particularly affected)?
- ⊙ Are you aware of the impact of other cuts on these groups (e.g., cuts in local or national services, welfare benefit or tax credit changes)?
- ⊙ Do you think there are groups that are particularly likely to be affected by the combination of different cuts?
- ⊙ We are keen to include anonymised case studies in our report: do you have any examples you can share with us or suggest people we should talk to?
- ⊙ Are there any other groups and organisations you recommend we talk to?
- ⊙ Are there any other points you would like to make?

These interviews were recorded and transcribed. Everyone was asked if they minded being quoted and their final quotes were checked with them before publication.

Groups you could consult would include:

- ⊙ older people's organisations
- ⊙ disabled people's organisations
- ⊙ carers' organisations
- ⊙ housing and homelessness groups
- ⊙ refugee groups
- ⊙ faith groups and inter-faith groups
- ⊙ Citizens Advice Bureaux
- ⊙ Law Centres
- ⊙ other advice and drop-in centres
- ⊙ public bodies including the council, Primary Care Trust, police, colleges of further education, universities
- ⊙ women's groups and networks including the Women's Institute, Townswomen's Guild, regional trade union women's committees
- ⊙ black and minority ethnic groups
- ⊙ women's refuges, rape crisis centres and other groups dealing with violence against women
- ⊙ children's centres
- ⊙ young people's organisations
- ⊙ student unions
- ⊙ LGBT groups
- ⊙ food banks
- ⊙ trade unions
- ⊙ drug and alcohol services
- ⊙ local councillors and staff at MPs' local offices (who will see the impact of the cuts in cases coming to their surgeries).

Some of these groups may be easier to contact than others. Remember, many voluntary organisations are very small and may have lost staff as a result of the cuts. They are more likely to respond if they feel that it will be worth their while, so explain how you will use what they tell you and what impact you hope to have. Some may be worried about the impact on their funding if they are outspoken, so you may have to make their comments anonymous. Many people are more likely to respond if they receive the request from someone they know and trust, so when deciding who should contact different people go through the list with your group to see who knows people at each organisation.

Very small community-based organisations may not have an office and may not be comfortable with email and the internet. You may have to telephone or write to these groups.

Staff at public bodies may be happy to cooperate, or they may be worried about negative publicity for their employer or the impact on their job. Again, an approach from someone they know may get a more positive response. It is worth trying to get support for the project at a senior level in each organisation. As well as contacting council staff, you can try to get local councillors on side for the project and ask for their help in setting up meetings. You can search for the name of your local councillor (as well as your MP and MEP) at: [www.writetothem.com/](http://www.writetothem.com/)

Some staff from public bodies may not respond to an initial request but will want to respond when sent a draft of your report. You may want to allow for this by making time to send the report out for comment and make amendments before you launch it.

## Finding out local information

For each section in this report we have included links to websites where you can search for local information about a specific issue (numbers of people claiming benefits, for example). This section outlines sources of information that may be useful for most or all of the sections in the report.

Local newspapers are often a useful source of information about a wide range of cuts locally including cuts to jobs and services. Search their website for articles. Local BBC sites can also be a useful source of information.

A Google search for "particular cut + name of your city" can throw up some useful information. You may have to try a number of different search terms to find what you want. For example, for information about housing and homelessness you might try "homelessness", "supporting people", "housing services" or the name of any local shelter or voluntary group working with the homeless to find what you want.

The False Economy website  
<http://falseeconomy.org.uk/> allows you to search for cuts by region or sector.

The Guardian Cuts Watch site  
[www.guardian.co.uk/society/series/cutswatch](http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/series/cutswatch) can be searched by postcode and contains a whole series of interactive maps that you can search for cuts to different sectors.

(These sites depend on reports from groups like yours so please pass on any information you find to them too.)

Your local council can provide information about the decisions it has made on different budgets. Some councils publish a wide range of data on their website in a clear, easy to search way. Others do not! Documents to search for include budget documents and reports, equality impact assessments of budget decisions and press releases. For each section, contact the relevant department and ask for the information you want. It helps to get the name of the person you want to speak to first. Although email is a quick and easy way of contacting people, you may need to telephone as well.

Some councils have a democratic services officer (or similar title) whose job it is to help you find out the information you want from the council. You may also find it useful to make contact with your local councillor and ask them for help in accessing the information you want.

Many local councils publish "facts about ..." reports or briefings which may contain information about homelessness, benefit claimants and so on. These can often be found by searching for "facts about place-name" in the search section of the council website.

A great deal of information about the cuts has come through freedom of information requests. The False Economy blog reported information about cuts to health service jobs that was based on freedom of information requests, for example. You can find out more about using the Freedom of Information Act here:  
[www.direct.gov.uk/en/governmentcitizensandrights/yourrightsandresponsibilities/dg\\_4003239](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/governmentcitizensandrights/yourrightsandresponsibilities/dg_4003239)

The Guardian has also produced a useful guide:  
<http://politics.guardian.co.uk/foi/guide/0,,1379201,00.html>

Local Citizens Advice Bureaux, Law Centres or other local advice services can often provide local case studies and examples. Advice workers may monitor the sorts of enquires they receive and can tell you if there is a changing pattern.

## Writing the report

Once you have gathered your information you need to start writing your report. You can present the information you gather in any way you chose. A simple structure would be to start with an introduction giving an overview of the findings, then go on to examine each type of cut in turn in a separate section. For each section you could cover:

- ⊙ **Overview** – a brief paragraph explaining what is happening and why it is an issue for women.
- ⊙ **What the changes are** – an explanation of the particular cut, with both national and local data. For example, in the employment chapter you might include the national data from this toolkit along with some information about local actual or predicted job losses.
- ⊙ **Who it will affect** – an explanation of the groups affected with local data where possible. For example, in the welfare reform chapter you might include information about the number of people claiming particular benefits locally. You might also include quotations from interviews with groups or individuals affected by the cut.
- ⊙ **Impact on particular groups** – highlighting if there are particular groups of women (e.g., black and minority ethnic women, disabled women, lone parents) who will be badly affected by a particular cut. Again, local case studies or quotations help bring the subject to life.
- ⊙ **The human rights and equalities issues** – you can use the information from this toolkit
- ⊙ **Monitoring/action required** – what should be done instead of making the cut and/or what action could be taken to reduce the impact of the cut. The trends that should be monitored.

Finally, write a conclusion which ties all the different cuts together and summarises what the impact is likely to be on women in your area.

As well as a full report, it is a good idea to produce a short summary (two to four pages) containing your key findings. Many people will not have time to read the full report, but they might read the summary. Journalists and local politicians, for example, are likely to prefer a summary to the full report. You can produce your key findings as a separate document and include them at the beginning of the full report.

Get someone who has not written the report to proof-read it for you and highlight any bits that do not make sense.

It may be worth sending a draft copy of your report to some of the people you interviewed for their comments. The situation may have changed since you interviewed them, or they may have new information to add. You may also find that public bodies who were not willing to be interviewed for the report have things to say once the report is written. It is important to give people a chance to correct inaccurate information.

As well as printed or photocopied versions of the report, it is a good idea to try to get the report available online. If you can, get your report posted on the website of one (or more) of your member organisations. If no one in your group has a website that can be easily updated, you could set up your own for the project. There are several sites where you can set up and maintain a free website (try [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)). These have pre-set templates that you can use and adapt. Several of the templates allow you to link to a Twitter feed so that your tweets will appear on the home page of your site.

*Unravelling Equality*, for example, is available on the Centre for Human Rights in Practice website here: [www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/chrp/projects/humanrightsimpactassessments/cwv/report/](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/chrp/projects/humanrightsimpactassessments/cwv/report/)

A summary of each section of the report with links to the full report is also available here:

<http://coventrywomensvoices.wordpress.com/unravelling-equality/>

Having the report available online means that people can get hold of it without having to contact you, and you having to send out copies. It also allows you and the members of your group to publicise the report on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter.

### Launching the report

Once the report is written, you will want to launch it. If you have the money to organise a launch event, this can be a useful opportunity to bring together everyone involved in the project, local public bodies and people likely to be affected with journalists and local politicians.

See if one of the members of your group can get you a room you can use for free. If you have university involvement in your project, they may be able to provide a free venue.

If there is someone you would particularly like to hear the findings of your report (for example, the leader of the council, your local MP), ask them to speak or chair the launch event. Local politicians are more likely to attend if they are on the platform! Remember that your MP will be in London during the week, so a Friday would be the best day for a launch if you want them to attend.

Make sure you have a summary of the report available at the meeting – not everyone will read the full report.

A morning event is often better for local media.

Do not have too many people on the platform; the report author, someone from a union and a local voluntary organisation are probably enough. If there are too many speakers, people switch off. Keep presentations short and allow plenty of time for questions and discussion.

Prepare yourself for any difficult questions.

If you cannot organise a launch event, you can have a 'paper launch' where you send the report out to the local media with a press release embargoed until (that is, not to be used before) a particular day. Local newspapers may be more interested if you can provide a good visual image to go with the launch. You could organise a vigil or rally, collect signatures for a petition that you hand in to the council hall or other public building.

### Getting media coverage for your report

Getting the media interested in your report is very important, whether newspapers, radio or even TV.

#### Finding out who to contact

Look in your local newspaper for the names of journalists who have written stories about the cuts or who write about local politics. You can often find journalists' email addresses on the local newspaper website, or ring the paper and ask. Listen to local radio to find the programmes that are most likely to cover your report and telephone to find the name and email of the producer.

TUC regional offices and many regional union offices have press officers and have already established good relationships with local media outlets. You may well be able to get help disseminating your press release and getting media interest by contacting your regional union office or the TUC.

#### Writing a press release

Journalists receive press releases all the time, so you want to make sure yours grabs their attention.

Keep your release short and snappy. You will not be able to cover all the findings of your report, so try to pick one main story and three or four key facts to support it.

Local journalists like local stories, so make sure you use the name of your area in the title of your press release.

Here is an example of a basic press release. You may want to focus on other issues. If you are organising a stunt (vigil, rally, march or something else to provide a visual image), then describe that in the first paragraph before going on to give information about the impact of the cuts.

## Media release

**Embargoed until 00.01 hrs. – date**

Embargoed means not to be used before. This allows you to send out a press release before the launch.

**For more information contact:** Give the name and telephone number of someone in your group who can deal with media enquiries. You should include a mobile or out-of-hours number as well as a daytime number.

### **New report shows spending cuts will hit women in your town harder than men**

This is the headline of your release

Cuts in public spending will hit women in your town harder than men and will increase inequality, according to a new report published today by *name of your organisation*.

The report *Report title here*, shows that cuts in *your town* are likely to hit women harder in a number of ways:

Women are losing more jobs. 65 per cent of public sector jobs are done by women *use a local figure if you have it here*. Jobs in your town are being lost in (*give examples here*).

Women are being hit harder by cuts to public services. *Give some examples here of services that have been cut*.

Women are being hit harder by cuts to benefits. For example, there are *give number here* headed by a lone parent in *your town*. 92 per cent of lone parents are women. Lone parents will be particularly hard-hit by many of the cuts and other changes that affect women including: cuts to childcare tax credit, cuts to housing benefit, closures to childcare services and a charge of up to £100 and 7–12 per cent of maintenance if they use the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission. These will reduce the disposable income of lone parents in *your town* and make it harder for them to find employment.

The report examines cuts to jobs, tax credits and benefits, funding for education, health and social care budgets, legal advice and women's voluntary organisations. It concludes that the spending cuts will increase inequality between women and men and may seriously damage the human rights of some women.

Report co-author *give name here* said:

"Many of these cuts will make life harder for women in your town. Taken together, the effect will be devastating, particularly on the most vulnerable. Women who need care will not get the care they need. Some women and their children (particularly lone parents) may be pushed into poverty. The shocking pay gap is likely to get worse. Women did not cause this situation, but we are paying the price." – *this is the quotation*. You might also want to include a quotation from a woman who has been directly affected about the impact the cuts are having on her.

### **Case studies**

If you can include case studies of individuals who have been directly affected by the cuts, particularly people who are happy to talk to journalists, then this will increase your chance of media coverage.

### **Notes to editors**

#### **About your organisation**

Say something here about the group that wrote the report.

**A full copy of the report is available at:** If you can put the report on a website, put the link here – it will save people having to contact you for a copy. If you can produce a 'key findings' document, put a link to that too.

The Women's Resource Centre has produced a guide to using the media for women's organisations. You can find it at:

[www.wrc.org.uk/resources/tools\\_to\\_engage\\_and\\_influence/using\\_the\\_media/social\\_media/default.aspx](http://www.wrc.org.uk/resources/tools_to_engage_and_influence/using_the_media/social_media/default.aspx)

### Using social media

Social media (like Facebook or Twitter) can be a good way to keep people informed about your project, promote the final report findings and get in touch with local journalists and politicians.

Many journalists use Twitter. Set up a Twitter account for your campaign ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)) and send messages to local journalists about your report. Journalists who use Twitter often follow local campaigners if you post things they think are interesting, so you can keep them in touch with the campaign.

You can set up a Facebook page for the project that will allow people to stay in touch with what you are doing and take part in online discussions about your findings.

There is a guide to using social media for Trade Unions here: <http://cyberunions.org/2010/05/26/trade-unions-web-2-0-and-social-media/>



# 4 Other ways of using the Equality Act and Human Rights Act

**The Human Rights Act and Equality Act can be powerful tools to challenge the decisions of public bodies. This toolkit does not provide detailed guides to using either Act but the resources below can help you find out more.**

## Using the Equality Act

A number of groups and individuals have taken cases under the Equality Act to challenge spending cuts. Birmingham City Council was recently found to have breached the Disability Discrimination Act because it failed to consult properly when it cut adult social care services. (See [www.thebirminghampress.com/2011/04/20/budget-ruling-birmingham-city-council-responds/](http://www.thebirminghampress.com/2011/04/20/budget-ruling-birmingham-city-council-responds/) for more information.) As a result of this and other cases, many public bodies are nervous about what might happen if they are taken to court for breaching the Equality Act.



## Recent cases taken under the Equality Act

Charities in Swindon won extensions to health and social care contracts after the local authority and NHS trust was threatened with legal action. Swindon Mind, Swindon Carers Centre and others took a judicial review against the council for failing to consult residents and organisations on changes to funding arrangements, and of failing to carry out assessments of the impacts of their proposals.

Swindon Borough Council and NHS Swindon agreed to put the funding changes on hold and extend funding arrangements until March 2012.

[www.thirdsector.co.uk/news/archive/1081019/Legal-threat-wins-extra-time-social-care-contracts-Swindon/?DCMP=ILC-SEARCH](http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/news/archive/1081019/Legal-threat-wins-extra-time-social-care-contracts-Swindon/?DCMP=ILC-SEARCH)

Lambeth Council backed down on plans to reduce the benefits of a Taxicard scheme which provides subsidised door-to-door transport for disabled people who have difficulty using public transport. The Council was threatened with a legal challenge under the Equality Act for failing to properly consult or carry out an equality impact assessment of the changes.<sup>8</sup>

London councils were found to have breached their equality duties under the Equality Act when they cut £10 million of funding from voluntary sector organisations. London councils were told to reverse their funding cuts and re-run the process in line with their equality duties.

Both cases on [www.pierceglynn.co.uk/news\\_1.htm](http://www.pierceglynn.co.uk/news_1.htm)

In addition to carrying out your own equality impact assessment, you and your group can feed into such assessments carried out by public bodies. For more information about how to do this see the TUC's *Equality Duty Toolkit*. This publication is available free of charge from TUC Publications on 020 7467 1294 or you can view it online at

[www.tuc.org.uk/equality/tuc-20159-f0.cfm](http://www.tuc.org.uk/equality/tuc-20159-f0.cfm)

For information about best practice for public bodies carrying out an equality impact assessment, see the Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance to public bodies on how to do these assessments:

[www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/PSD/equality\\_impact\\_assessment\\_guidance\\_quick\\_start\\_guide.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/PSD/equality_impact_assessment_guidance_quick_start_guide.pdf)

The Women's Resource Centre has produced briefings on the Equality Act that are available here:

[www.wrc.org.uk/resources/briefings\\_and\\_consultations/past\\_briefings\\_and\\_consultations/equalities/equality\\_act.aspx](http://www.wrc.org.uk/resources/briefings_and_consultations/past_briefings_and_consultations/equalities/equality_act.aspx)

The Equality and Diversity Forum have also produced a guide to using the Equality Act for voluntary and community groups: [www.edf.org.uk/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/EDF\\_Using-the-Equality-Act\\_.pdf](http://www.edf.org.uk/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/EDF_Using-the-Equality-Act_.pdf)

## Using the Human Rights Act

The British Institute of Human Rights has produced a guide for voluntary and community groups on using the Human Rights Act: [www.bihhr.org.uk/sites/default/files/human%20rights%20in%20your%20community\\_%20guide%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.bihhr.org.uk/sites/default/files/human%20rights%20in%20your%20community_%20guide%20FINAL.pdf)

They have also produced a series of guides to the Human Rights Act for different groups of people:

[www.bihhr.org.uk/resources/guides](http://www.bihhr.org.uk/resources/guides)

The Legal Action Group has published a toolkit for public sector bodies and staff on the Human Rights Act. Although it is aimed at public bodies, it provides a good explanation of the duties of public bodies under the Act that is also useful for voluntary groups, trade unions and other campaigners. A copy can be ordered here:

[www.lag.org.uk/Templates/System/Publications.asp?NodeID=89151&Mode=display](http://www.lag.org.uk/Templates/System/Publications.asp?NodeID=89151&Mode=display)

# 5 The issues



**This part of the toolkit contains separate sections for each subject (employment, education, welfare reform and so on). For each subject we have given:**

- ⊙ **basic information about what cuts are happening nationally**
- ⊙ **a brief explanation of what this will mean for women and the human rights or equalities impact**
- ⊙ **sources of information so you can find out about local impact**
- ⊙ **links to other information and campaigns.**

**You can combine this information in any way you want in your report. See “Writing the report” in Section 3 for a suggested format and more ideas about how to write a report.**

# 5.1 Employment

## Job cuts

As a result of budget cuts, public sector employers are cutting posts in order to keep within their tightened budgets. Between the start of 2010 and the first quarter of 2011, public sector employment fell by 143,000.<sup>9</sup>

- ⊙ 50,000 jobs in the NHS are likely to be cut.<sup>10</sup>
- ⊙ 34,000 jobs in the police, including 16,000 front-line staff are likely to be cut by 2014/15.<sup>11</sup>
- ⊙ 88,000 jobs in local government were lost in 2010.<sup>12</sup>
- ⊙ 12,000 jobs are at risk in primary schools, according to head teachers.<sup>13</sup>

These job cuts are leading to a rise in unemployment:

- ⊙ In the three months to June 2011, the total number of unemployed people increased by 38,000 to reach 2.49 million.
- ⊙ The number of people unemployed for up to six months increased by 66,000 over the quarter to reach 1.23 million.<sup>14</sup>

## Pay freezes

There is also a public sector pay freeze which means that public sector workers earning more than £21,000 will have their pay frozen for two years and public sector workers earning less than £21,000 will receive a flat £250 annual pay increase.

## Cuts to childcare

The childcare tax credit has been cut to cover 70 per cent of childcare costs rather than the 80 per cent previously covered.

There have been cuts to day nurseries and childcare offered through children's centres in many parts of the country.<sup>15</sup>

After-school and breakfast clubs have been hit by an increase in fees charged by schools and local authorities to use premises.<sup>16</sup>

More and more nurseries attached to workplaces are being forced to close. Often these nurseries are the only childcare available to people working shifts or unsociable hours, such as healthcare professionals and postal workers. UNISON, UCU and the NUS have a joint campaign called Save Our Nurseries, campaigning specifically against the closure of nurseries attached to further and higher education colleges.<sup>17</sup>

## Women's employment

Women will be hardest hit by public sector job cuts. Women do 65 per cent of public sector jobs and 40 per cent of women in paid work are in the public sector, compared to 11 per cent of men. A recent TUC report found the public sector has been responsible for the vast majority of net female jobs growth (84 per cent) over the past decade.<sup>18</sup>

The TUC has estimated that 325,000 of the 500,000 people who will lose their jobs as the result of public sector pay cuts will be women.<sup>19</sup>

In the three months to June 2011, 21,000 women lost their jobs compared to 18,000 men.<sup>20</sup>

Women's employment in the North-East, for example, has fallen by 5.09 per cent between December 2007 and April 2011.<sup>21</sup>

## Equal pay

The gender pay gap (the difference between the hourly pay of men and the hourly pay of women) is likely to increase as a result of pay freezes because more women work in the public sector so more women will be affected by the pay freeze. Job cuts in the public sector will also see fewer women employed in the relatively well paid public sector. The gender pay gap is twice as large in the private sector as it is in the public sector.

## Part-time workers

Women working part time in the public sector will be particularly badly hit by job losses as part-time jobs in the private sector tend to be less well paid. Average pay for part-time workers in the public sector is £9.34 an hour compared to £6.78 in the private sector. Women working part time in the public sector who lose their jobs may have to take a significant pay cut if they take a part-time job in the private sector.<sup>22</sup>

## Cuts to childcare

The cut in the level of childcare tax credit will increase the cost of childcare to working parents. Parents will also be hit by a reduction in the amount of childcare available as local authority nurseries close and after-school and breakfast clubs are hit by rising costs.

This will have a particular impact on lone parents who do not have another parent to share childcare. Ninety-two per cent of lone parents are women.<sup>23</sup>

Although childcare should be seen as an issue for all working parents, in practice women are more likely to be "second earners" in couples and the cost and availability of childcare has a much bigger impact on their ability to stay in work.<sup>24</sup>

Research by workingmums.co.uk website suggested that a quarter of women had left work because of the rising cost of childcare.<sup>25</sup>

Further changes to childcare under the tax system are to be proposed in the Welfare Reform Bill. Although there are various options under consideration, it is highly likely that the government will choose one of the following options:

- ⊙ keep the percentage of eligible costs at 70 per cent but reduce the upper limit to £125 and £210
- ⊙ return the percentage of eligible costs to 80 per cent but reduce the upper limit to £100 and £150.

Research by Gingerbread and the Resolution Foundation<sup>26</sup> has shown that the proposed changes to childcare under Universal Credit will make work unaffordable for many low-income women, particularly single mothers.

## Impact on particular groups of women

Nearly half of all black Caribbean women, and 37 per cent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, are employed in the public sector.<sup>27</sup> Research by the Fawcett Society has shown that black and minority ethnic (BME) women are also four times more likely than white women to be working in jobs for which they are overqualified and disproportionately represented in routine or semi-routine and insecure temporary jobs.<sup>28</sup> There is a risk that BME women will suffer disproportionately as a result of public sector job cuts.

Disabled women are already less likely to be in employment and suffer widespread discrimination in the jobs market.<sup>29</sup> With unemployment increasing, there is a danger that this problem will get worse.

## Human rights and equalities impact

Cuts in jobs and pay are likely to lower rates of employment for women and increase the pay gap. This will increase inequality between women and men.

The pay gap combined with caring responsibilities means that women are more likely to suffer poverty in old age because they are less able to save for their retirement.<sup>30</sup> Poverty has a potentially serious impact on women's human rights, including potentially on the right to life, right to health and right to food.<sup>31</sup>

## Finding out about local impact

See Section 3 "Finding out local information" for general advice on using local media, various websites listing cuts that you can search by issue and area, and finding out information from your local council and other public bodies. In addition, local union branches should be able to provide you with some data on actual and threatened job losses. Your regional TUC is a good place to start: [www.tuc.org.uk/the\\_tuc/index.cfm?mins=58&minors=2&majorsubjectID=19](http://www.tuc.org.uk/the_tuc/index.cfm?mins=58&minors=2&majorsubjectID=19)

Local unions may also help put you in touch with people who have lost their job, or whose job is at risk, to interview. These local examples and case studies will bring your report to life.

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) labour market statistics can be searched at: <http://nmweb.dur.ac.uk/reports/lmp/la/contents.aspx>

You can search for a range of data by local authority area including employment and unemployment, earnings, benefits, vacancies at the job centre and so on. Most of the data is broken down by gender. This is the easiest data set to use and search by area. It will provide you with information about numbers of men and women in employment, the pay gap, benefit claimants and so on.

If you click on "query data" for any of the data sets you can get more detailed breakdowns of the data.

The ONS also publishes more general neighbourhood statistics (including employment-related figures), searchable by local authority area at: [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/)



If you want more detailed (but less up to date) information about the different industries people work in across your local authority area, you can search for spreadsheets produced by the ONS here: [www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme\\_labour/bres/supp-text.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/bres/supp-text.pdf)

The most up to date national information about employment and unemployment rates can be found at: [www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=1944](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=1944)

Some of this data can be searched by region.

## 5.2 Education and training

The following cuts are happening:

### Schools

More than half of schools in England are facing cuts to their budgets.<sup>32</sup>

Sixty per cent of primary students and eighty-seven per cent of secondary students face a real-terms cut in funding.<sup>33</sup>

The Building Schools for the Future programme has been stopped.

### Further education and training

Ninety-six per cent of further education and sixth form colleges face a budget cut for 2011/12.<sup>34</sup>

Students aged 25 and older will have to pay half fees for a GCSE equivalent qualification and full fees for an A-level equivalent qualification.<sup>35</sup>

The government has changed its mind on rules that would have prevented colleges offering fully funded courses to people who were not on Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or disability benefits who were looking for work. Colleges now have "local discretion" to provide free courses to students on other benefits if the training would help them into work. However, there is no additional funding for these people and college leaders have warned that it will be difficult for colleges to provide courses to all of those who would benefit.<sup>36</sup>

### Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

EMA is aimed at helping young people from low-income families stay on in education by providing a payment of up to £30 a week to cover books, travel and so on. EMA is being replaced by a bursary scheme which colleges and schools will be able to distribute at their discretion. Funding is being cut from £560m to £180m.

### Care to Learn

Care to Learn provides non-means-tested support for childcare and travel costs for parents up to the age of 20 to help them continue in education and training and enter employment. The government is currently consulting on possible changes to Care to Learn including making it means-tested, reducing the amount paid toward childcare costs, making the scheme discretionary for colleges to administer or reducing the age at which it can be claimed to 18.

### English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL)

The government has made a U-turn on planned cuts to the funding of ESOL courses. These would have limited free places to people receiving JSA or Employment Support Allowance (ESA – Work Related Activity Group [WRAG]). Funding will now be available for those seeking work, including people on income-related benefits (such as income support) as well as JSA or ESA (WRAG). This change has been welcomed by further education colleges and campaigners to save ESOL but it has caused significant problems for colleges who had already told students that they would not be eligible for funding and had replaced ESOL courses with other courses.<sup>37</sup>

### Higher education

Funding for teaching in universities is being cut by up to 80 per cent. Funding for arts, humanities and social science subjects will be cut completely. To replace this, from 2012 universities will be able to charge tuition fees of up to £9,000, compared to the current maximum of £3,375.

The cuts are likely to affect the following:

### Schools

Cuts to education budgets have led to cuts in services in schools for children with special needs or mental health problems.<sup>38</sup>

These cuts have an impact on the women who are the mothers of these children, since mothers are more likely to be the primary carers and therefore be the parents responsible for trying to get additional help, taking children to appointments, appealing against decisions and so on. Women make 73 per cent of applications for legal aid in education-related cases.

### Further education

Women mature students are more likely to be affected by removing funding from GCSE equivalent or A-level equivalent courses. Women are 56 per cent of learners at GCSE equivalent level.<sup>39</sup>

Of the students on "inactive" benefits, ranging from income support to housing benefit, 75 per cent are female. In London, 67 per cent were also from ethnic minorities. Although the government has done a U-turn on its policy preventing colleges from providing free courses to these students, it has not provided any funding to support free courses.<sup>40</sup>

### Educational Maintenance Allowance

An assessment by the Department for Education in 2009 showed that:

- ⊙ EMA was particularly important in helping teenage mothers and young people with special needs stay in education.
- ⊙ EMA has a positive impact for BME girls and young women.<sup>41</sup>

### Care to Learn

A research report commissioned by the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) found that most young parents (usually young mothers) receiving Care to Learn would not have returned to learning without support for their childcare costs.<sup>42</sup>

### English for Speakers of Other Languages

The U-turn on ESOL funding will particularly benefit women since 74 per cent of the students who would not have been eligible for free ESOL places are women.<sup>43</sup>

However, the announcement of a U-turn was made in August, leaving colleges with very little time to organise courses or attract students. Many students had been told that they could not get funding and many colleges had cut the number of ESOL places available significantly.

## Higher education

Women will be disproportionately affected by the changes to higher education funding:

- ⊙ There are more women than men studying the courses that have lost their funding (arts, humanities and social sciences).<sup>44</sup> Courses that are more likely to be studied by men (science, technology, engineering and mathematics –STEM courses) have had their funding protected. In April 2011 the government significantly reduced funding to UKRC, the leading body in the UK offering advice and services to address the under-representation of women in science and technology.<sup>45</sup>
- ⊙ Women continue to earn less than men throughout their lives and female graduates earn less than male graduates. Three and a half years after graduating, 22 per cent of men earn more than £30,000 compared to only 12 per cent of women.<sup>46</sup> The London Economics Consultancy has estimated that 70–80 per cent of women students will not be able to pay off their student loans in the thirty years after they graduate.<sup>47</sup>
- ⊙ More than 40 per cent of female students are over 25 compared to 36.7 per cent of male students.<sup>48</sup> London Economics Consultancy research suggests that mature students may be more likely to be put off higher education by increased fees.<sup>49</sup>

Women with children are particularly likely to be affected. Sixty per cent of students with children have considered leaving their course as a result of difficulties to do with finances, childcare and inflexible course arrangements. Any further cuts to childcare funding, nursery provision, and support services at institutions, will lead to student parents leaving their courses as they struggle to cope.<sup>50</sup>

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds were much more likely than other students to be put off higher education by increased fees, according to polling by MORI.<sup>51</sup>

## Cuts to childcare

A number of nurseries at universities and further education colleges are threatened with closure. This will have a particular impact on women who study or work in further or higher education.<sup>52</sup>

### Goldsmiths/UCU/UNISON/ Goldsmiths Students' Union

Goldsmiths University announced that it was going to close its on-site nursery facility last year. The nursery has a good Ofsted score, unlike most other nurseries in the area. UCU, UNISON and Goldsmiths Students' Union joined forces to campaign against the closure. A turning point in negotiations with management came when they threatened to disrupt a student open day. It was finally agreed that Goldsmiths would close down its nursery at the end of August (2011) and it will reopen again in early September in the same building but it will be run by the Goldsmiths Students' Union. The campaign won NUS Campaign of the Year award. Campaign details here: [www.eastlondonlines.co.uk/2011/06/victory-for-goldsmiths-nursery-campaign/](http://www.eastlondonlines.co.uk/2011/06/victory-for-goldsmiths-nursery-campaign/)

## The human rights and equalities impact

The cuts to special needs support in school may have an impact on the right to education for children with special needs.

Many of the cuts to further and higher education will have a disproportionate impact on women. Taken together, they may prevent women, particularly BME women, those who have children, are from poorer backgrounds and/or are mature students gaining educational qualifications. These women may see their earning potential and job prospects reduced as a result.

## Finding out about local impact

See Section 3 "Finding out local information" for general advice on using local media, various websites listing cuts that you can search by issue and area, and finding out information from your local council and other public bodies. In addition, get in touch with local teaching unions and unions representing support staff:

Association of Teachers and Lecturers [www.atl.org.uk/](http://www.atl.org.uk/)

NASUWT [www.nasuwat.org.uk/index.htm](http://www.nasuwat.org.uk/index.htm)

NUT [www.teachers.org.uk/](http://www.teachers.org.uk/)

University and College Union [www.ucu.org.uk/](http://www.ucu.org.uk/)

GMB [www.gmb.org.uk](http://www.gmb.org.uk)

UNISON [www.unison.org.uk](http://www.unison.org.uk)

Unite [www.unite.org.uk](http://www.unite.org.uk)

Local data on educational attainment can be found at: [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/)

Search by local area and then look for the education and training data-sets.

Other education and training data, including numbers of students, class sizes and so on, broken down by local authority area can be found at:

[www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=7869](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=7869)

If you are interested in further education data, the main ONS education page is

[www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nscl.asp?ID=6085](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nscl.asp?ID=6085)

Local take up rates for EMA can be found at [www.ypla.gov.uk/publications/latest/Detail.htm?id=e49d44e6-6f6a-4a0d-a784-8b7270e93caf](http://www.ypla.gov.uk/publications/latest/Detail.htm?id=e49d44e6-6f6a-4a0d-a784-8b7270e93caf)

## Finding out more

The United for Education campaign brings together teaching unions and others with a concern about education cuts. See <http://unitedforeducation.org.uk/> for more information.

More information about the campaign to save education maintenance allowance is at:

<http://emacampaign.org.uk/>

Platform 51 represents disadvantaged young women and actively campaigns on educational and training issues such as EMA, apprenticeships and Care to Learn: [www.platform51.org.uk](http://www.platform51.org.uk)

A toolkit for campaigners to save nurseries at universities and further education colleges can be found at:

[www.nusconnect.org.uk/asset/news/6108/2009\\_nurseries\\_campaign\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/asset/news/6108/2009_nurseries_campaign_toolkit.pdf)

For more information about the campaign to fund ESOL go to <http://actionforesol.org/>

## 5.3 Housing

The following cuts are happening:

### Benefits

There have been significant cuts to Local Housing Allowance (LHA), with further cuts due later this year and in future years. In addition, the Supporting People budget, which provides funding for projects with homeless people (among others), has been cut and the ring-fencing of the budget has been lifted, leading some local authorities to make severe cuts in services for homeless people.

Furthermore, a cap of £500 will be placed on all benefits in 2013. This will mean that any given household will not be able to claim more than £500 per week in housing benefit, JSA, income support, child benefit and other benefits such as Carer's Allowance.

### Local Housing Allowance cuts

LHA is the name for housing benefit paid to people in private rented accommodation. It is means-tested and can be claimed by people in paid work as well as people who are unemployed, disabled, carers or retired.

- ⊙ LHA has been capped at £250 a week for a one-bedroom house/flat, £290 for two bedrooms, £340 for three bedrooms, up to an upper limit of £400 a week for a maximum of four bedrooms.
- ⊙ Non-dependent deductions will increase. This is the amount deducted from LHA because it is assumed that a non-dependent family member such as an adult son or daughter or an elderly relative is contributing to the rent.
- ⊙ From October 2011 LHA will only cover up to the bottom 30 per cent of rents rather than the median.
- ⊙ From January 2012 the age threshold for claiming the single-room rate will be raised to 35. Anyone younger than this with no dependants will only receive LHA for the cost of a room in a shared house (rather than a one-bedroom flat, for example).

- ⊙ From April 2013 LHA rates will be updated in line with the consumer prices index (CPI) rather than actual local rents.

### Cuts to Supporting People

Supporting People is paid from central government to local government to provide housing-related support to help vulnerable people to live as independently as possible in the community, in their own homes or in hostels, sheltered housing or other specialised supported housing. It funds services that help older people, disabled people, women and their children leaving violent relationships and homeless people.

Supporting People has been cut by 12 per cent over four years.

The ring-fencing on this funding has been lifted, which means that councils can decide what they want to spend the money on. Some councils have cut the support they provide to such projects by significantly more than 12 per cent. Nottingham City Council, for example, is planning cuts of 45 per cent to its supported housing services.

## Who are the cuts likely to affect?

Cuts to housing benefit will have a disproportionate impact on women. Single women make up 46 per cent of LHA claimants, compared to 30 per cent who are single men and 20 per cent who are couples.<sup>53</sup>

- ⊙ 47 per cent of those affected will have children, of which 32 per cent will be lone parents.<sup>54</sup>
- ⊙ 19 per cent will be disabled.<sup>55</sup>
- ⊙ 8 per cent will be pensioners.<sup>56</sup>
- ⊙ 13 per cent will be from BME groups who will also be disproportionately affected by the four-bedroom cap.<sup>57</sup>
- ⊙ People with non-dependants (like elderly relatives) living in the same households will also incur extra charges.<sup>58</sup>

The immediate impact of these changes will vary depending on the level of rents in different parts of the country. People in London and other cities with high levels of rent are likely to be particularly badly affected.

Impacts will include increased rent arrears, evictions and homelessness.

- ⊙ The number of couples with an income of less than £50 a week after rent has been paid will double. This is less than half the minimum income guaranteed by benefits such as JSA and ESA.<sup>59</sup>
- ⊙ Between 311,000 and 612,000 people will be left in "severe housing difficulty" (unable to re-negotiate their rent or make up the shortfall) by the LHA changes.<sup>60</sup>

In the longer term, the impacts are likely to be even more severe because of the change to uprating LHA rates in line with the CPI rather than actual rents. In the ten years to 2008, the CPI rose by 20 per cent. During the same time, actual rents increased by almost 70 per cent.<sup>61</sup> This will mean that the number of houses and flats that can be afforded by people claiming LHA is likely to be reduced quite substantially. The Chartered Institute of Housing has calculated that in some parts of the country it will only take a few years before the level of LHA is lower than the lowest rent available.<sup>62</sup>

Cuts to services funded by Supporting People will vary in different parts of the country. In some parts of the country there have been drastic cuts to supported housing, shelters and other support for homeless people. See <http://falseeconomy.org.uk/cuts/sectors/type/housing> for many of the cuts that have taken place. In some parts of the country there is already a shortage of accommodation for single homeless women. These cuts are likely to make this situation worse.

See Section 5.10 for more information about the impact of Supporting People cuts on women's refugees and other services for women leaving violent relationships.

## What are the human rights and equalities issues?

The changes to LHA will disproportionately impact on women, particularly lone parents, BME women and those with larger families.

Forced moves will have a disproportionate impact on women with children since they are usually the parent responsible for organising schooling and often rely heavily on informal networks of support to combine paid work with childcare. Moving to a new area may make it difficult to continue with paid work.

Under the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, everyone has the right to adequate housing.<sup>63</sup> Cuts to LHA are likely to increase homelessness<sup>64</sup> at the same time as support for homeless people is being cut.

Cuts to LHA will push many families into poverty as they struggle to make up the shortfall in rent. Women often act as the 'shock absorbers' of poverty, cutting back themselves in order to balance family budgets.<sup>65</sup> Poverty has a potentially serious impact on women's human rights, including potentially on the right to life, right to health and right to food.<sup>66</sup>

## Finding out about local impact

See Section 3 "Finding out local information" for general advice on using local media, various websites listing cuts that you can search by issue and area, and finding out information from your local council and other public bodies. In addition, your local council can provide information about the decisions it has made on Supporting People budgets. The council should also be able to provide you with information about LHA rates calculated on median rents and how much LHA will be once it is calculated based on the bottom 30 per cent of rents. This will allow you to calculate how much people are likely to lose.

ONS data on housing can be found at:

[www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/people-places/housing-and-households/housing-market/index.html](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/people-places/housing-and-households/housing-market/index.html)

For data on numbers of people claiming housing benefit in your area go to:

[www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/)

Put in the name of your area and click through to the next page where there is a list of topics. Housing benefit claimants can be found under "economic deprivation"; the figures are broken down by those in the private rented sector and those in social housing. The changes to LHA affect people in private rented accommodation.

To calculate how many women will be affected, take the total number of people in private rented accommodation and use the Department of Work and Pensions figures for the proportion who are likely to be single women (46 per cent), single men (30 per cent) and couples (20 per cent).

The national data-sets that can be broken down by area sometimes include a gender breakdown. They rarely include data on ethnicity. You may be able to find out this information from the local council.

The Department of Work and Pensions has produced a report with an assessment of the number of people in each local authority area who will lose out as a result of the LHA changes and how much they will lose. This is broken down by the number of rooms, so you can see, for example, how many people in your area living in a one-bedroom flat will lose money and how much they will lose. This assessment only includes the immediate changes to LHA and does not cover those who will lose out by changes to the way it is being uprated. For more information see:

[www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/impacts-of-hb-proposals.pdf](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/impacts-of-hb-proposals.pdf)

The Chartered Institute of Housing has produced a report on the numbers who will lose out in each local authority area too:

[www.cih.org/policy/Resp-SelectCommitteeBudget-Oct10.pdf](http://www.cih.org/policy/Resp-SelectCommitteeBudget-Oct10.pdf)

This report challenges the Department of Work and Pensions' conclusions on a number of areas. It also includes the impact of the change to the uprating of LHA in line with the CPI and calculates the number of years before LHA for different types of housing is lower than the lowest available rent in each area.

## 5.4 Welfare reform

The following cuts are happening:

### Pregnancy

- ⊙ The Health in Pregnancy grant, which was a payment of £190 paid to women in the 25th week of pregnancy and designed to support healthy eating, was abolished from January 2011.
- ⊙ The Sure Start maternity grant of £500, which was paid to low-income women from the 29th week of pregnancy, is now only payable to women pregnant with their first child.

### Child benefit

- ⊙ Child Benefit rates have been frozen for three years from April 2011 – amounting to a real-terms cut. In addition, families with a higher-rate tax payer will no longer be entitled to child benefit.

### Tax credits

There will be a series of changes to tax credits:

- ⊙ There will be above-inflation increases in the child element of Child Tax Credit in April 2011 and April 2012. This will mean an additional £180 in the 2011/12 financial year and £110 in the 2012/13 financial year.
- ⊙ The baby element of tax credits will be withdrawn.
- ⊙ Families earning more than £40,000 will start to lose tax credits.
- ⊙ The basic rate of tax credit and the rate for people working more than 30 hours a week will be frozen for three years.
- ⊙ The rate at which tax credits are withdrawn as income rises will increase from 39 per cent to 41 per cent.
- ⊙ A fall in income of up to £2500 will not lead to an increase in a tax credit award.
- ⊙ Families with children will have to work for at least 24

hours a week (instead of the current 16) and one of them must work at least 16 hours.

- ⊙ The childcare tax credit will be cut to cover only 70 rather than 80 per cent of childcare costs.

### Lone parents

There will be some changes particularly affecting lone parents:

- ⊙ From 2012 lone parents with children over five will be required to move from Income Support to JSA and therefore be actively seeking work.
- ⊙ The Child Support Agency is being replaced by the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission (CMEC). From 2012 lone parents who use the CMEC will be charged an application fee of up to £100 and between 7 per cent and 12 per cent of any maintenance paid.
- ⊙ From 2013 the government will introduce a cap on the total amount of benefit that working-age people can receive so that households on out-of-work benefits will no longer receive more in benefit than the average weekly wage earned by working families. This will apply to all working-age benefit claimants but, according to the Department of Work and Pensions, will particularly affect lone parents.<sup>67</sup>

### Disabled people and carers

- ⊙ Disabled people who have been claiming Incapacity Benefit (IB) will have to undergo an assessment to see if they are eligible for ESA which replaces IB.
- ⊙ People on ESA will be placed in two groups. Those whose disability is "severe" or who are terminally ill will be in the support group and will not be expected to work. Those who are judged to be less severe are placed in the "work related activity group" (WRAG) and are expected to take part in work focused activity.
- ⊙ There are two types of ESA – contributory (based on NI contributions) and income-related for those who have not made sufficient NI contributions.

- ⊙ Contributory ESA will only be paid to people in the WRAG for one year, after which it will be means tested. If they have savings, assets or a partner who works, then their benefits will stop.
- ⊙ Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is being changed to Personal Independence Payment (PIP). People currently receiving DLA will have to be re-assessed. At the same time the total budget for DLA/PIP is being cut by 20 per cent. Whereas the DLA has three rates of care component, PIP will have only two rates of the "daily living" component. The mobility component of PIP is being withdrawn from people living in residential care.

### Increase to the age of the state pension

- ⊙ State pension age for women was due to rise gradually from 60 to 65 by 2020.
- ⊙ The coalition government then announced in 2011 that it would rise more rapidly, reaching 65 by November 2018 and 66 by April 2020, bringing it in line with men. Under this proposal, by 2020 the state pension age would have been 66 for both women and men.
- ⊙ This was six years earlier than planned, which many campaigners, such as Age UK and trade unions, thought didn't leave those affected with enough time to plan for their financial futures.
- ⊙ Following campaigns by Age UK and many trade unions, the coalition government agreed to cap the extra time anyone will have to wait for their state pension to 18 months, thus delaying the second rise in the pension age for men and women from April to October 2020.<sup>68</sup>

### Conditionality and sanctions

- ⊙ Benefits such as JSA are already conditional on a claimant seeking work. People who a job centre believes are not actively seeking work can face sanctions including loss of benefits. Sanctions will become more severe with the introduction of the Universal Credit.

### Up-rating of benefits

- ⊙ Benefits and tax credits will be up-rated in line with the CPI rather than the Retail Price Index (RPI) or the Rossi Index (a variant on the RPI).

### Universal Credit

From 2013 the government is planning to replace all in- and out-of-work benefits with a Universal Credit:

- ⊙ This payment will replace non-contributory JSA, Working and Child Tax Credits, ESA, Housing Benefit, Income Support and Council Tax Benefit.
- ⊙ It will mean a single system of support for people moving in and out of work without needing to make separate claims.
- ⊙ It will be paid out as a single monthly payment and the government is proposing that for couples one person should claim the Universal Credit on behalf of the family.

The cuts are most likely to affect:

### Benefits to families

Freezing of Child Benefit, changes to tax credits and reduction or withdrawal of benefits for pregnant women will have a significant and disproportionate impact on women.

For some women, Child Benefit is the only income they have in their own right.<sup>69</sup> Cuts to this benefit will increase many women's dependence on their partners which will be particularly damaging for women in financially abusive relationships.

Although some of the poorest families will gain through the increase in Child Tax Credit and the increase in the personal tax allowance, a study by the National Family and Parenting Institute concluded that "these increases are, for many families, off-set by losses from other elements of the benefits and tax credit system".<sup>70</sup>

The National Family and Parenting Institute study highlights in particular:

- ⊙ A family with two children claiming the basic rate Working Tax Credit will lose £80.64 in 2011 rising to £210 by 2012/13.
- ⊙ If they work more than 30 hours a week their losses will be greater – £113.82 in 2011 rising to £297.42 in 2013.<sup>71</sup>

The cut to the childcare element of Working Tax Credit will hit parents in paid work. Although childcare should be seen as an issue for all working parents, in practice women are more likely to be second earners in couples and the cost and availability of childcare has a much bigger impact on their ability to stay in work.<sup>72</sup>

Research by workingmums.co.uk website suggested that a quarter of women had left work because of the rising cost of childcare.<sup>73</sup>

### Lone parents

Lone parents will be particularly badly affected by the cut in childcare tax credit since they have to meet childcare costs out of one income and do not have a partner to share childcare costs. The proposals for the work programme state that childcare costs will not be met, which will cause particular problems for lone parents.

They will also potentially be affected by changes to Income Support, the benefit cap and charges for use of the new child support scheme.

A Gingerbread and Resolution Foundation report found that many single mothers would not be able to afford to work under the new childcare tax credit proposals which are anticipated under Universal Credit.<sup>74</sup>

### Income Support to Job Seekers Allowance

From October 2011 lone parents with children aged five and over will be required to move from Income Support to JSA and therefore to seek work actively.

Lone parents face particular barriers to entering paid work including:

- ⊙ The cost of childcare has to be met from one salary, rather than two for couples.
- ⊙ It can be very hard to find childcare outside standard working hours (before 8am, after 6pm or weekends).

Although lone parents will not be obliged to take work that does not fit round their caring responsibilities, in practice organisations like Gingerbread have shown that, nationally, benefits advisors do not always show understanding of the particular situation that lone parents face, with some lone parents threatened with sanctions for refusing jobs that would be impossible to fit round their children's needs.<sup>75</sup>

## The benefit cap

The cap on total benefits that a family can receive will disproportionately affect women and affect lone parents worst of all. The Department of Work and Pensions' own Equality Impact Assessment of this policy states:

"We expect around 60 per cent of customers who are likely to have their benefit reduced by the cap to be single females but only around 3 per cent to be single men. Most of the single women affected are likely to be lone parents, this is because we expect the vast majority of households affected by this policy (around 90 per cent) to have children. Approximately 60 per cent of those who will be capped are single women. Single women form around 40 per cent of the overall benefit population."<sup>76</sup>

The Department argues that these impacts will be mitigated by policies to support lone parents into paid work. However, this will still leave women who are unable to find work, particularly work that fits round their childcare responsibilities, facing a significant drop in income.

## Charges for the use of the new child support scheme

Lone parents will also lose out from government proposals to charge for use of the new child support scheme, the CMEC, which will replace the Child Support Agency (CSA).

Once the new scheme is underway, all existing CSA users will have to choose whether to opt in to the new scheme – and pay the charges – or make their own arrangements.

For many lone parents on the lowest incomes, these charges may act as a barrier to accessing the CMEC. They and their children may be left with no support at all from the non-resident parent or, if they can negotiate some money, it may be far less than what they would be entitled to.<sup>77</sup>

## Disabled people

### Employment Support Allowance

Although the changes to disability benefits will not have a disproportionate impact on women as a group, we include them here because they may lead to a significant drop in income for some groups of women, particularly those who were receiving IB but are assessed as not being entitled to ESA. This may leave these women in poverty with implications for their human rights.

Since 2008 IB has been replaced by ESA for new claimants. From April 2011 people claiming IB are being moved onto ESA.

Many organisations of disabled people and disability rights organisations have raised serious concerns with the way people are assessed for ESA. A national survey by the Disability Benefits Consortium of disabled people found:

- ⊙ More than half of those respondents who had been for a medical assessment for ESA found it stressful and more than four in ten said it actually made their health condition or impairment worse because of the stress and anxiety caused.
- ⊙ More than half of those respondents who had received a decision on their application for ESA did not agree with the decision and, of these, half planned to appeal against it.<sup>78</sup>

A national report by Citizens Advice endorsed by 17 other organisations highlighted a number of specific problems with the assessments:

- ⊙ Seriously ill people who should be exempt from the assessment are forced to be assessed.
- ⊙ The assessment does not "take sufficient account of variable symptoms. There is little recognition of generalised pain and exhaustion, or the seriousness of an underlying condition. It takes no account of the context of the work environment, including a person's education, skills and circumstances or the discrimination they may face in looking for work".

- ⊙ The assessment is producing "inappropriate outcomes". "Citizens Advice and other organisations have been concerned for many years about the quality of medical assessments for benefits. We still hear repeated reports of rushed assessments, assumptions being made without explanation, inaccurate recording and poor recognition of mental health problems."<sup>79</sup>

In addition to the stress caused by the assessment for ESA, disabled women (and men) will also lose by the move to limit contributory ESA for people who are in the WRAG to one year. People with assets, savings or a working partner will no longer receive benefits. Among others this will hit disabled women, women who are carers and the partners of disabled people.<sup>80</sup>

## Disability Living Allowance

Although the changes to the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) will not disproportionately affect women, we include them here because of the serious impact they will have on the incomes of disabled women and women carers.

As DLA is replaced by PIP, disabled people will be affected by a cut in the total budget of 20 per cent. The government has said it wishes to focus support for those most in need. However, the Disability Alliance has pointed out that:

"A focus on those disabled people with the greatest need will exclude many disabled people who still face additional costs associated with their disability or condition. The people accessing the lowest rates of DLA are often unlikely to be able to access support elsewhere and cuts to these groups could lead to unsustainable pressure on social care or NHS budgets. In the context of council budget cuts and the NHS being under considerable pressure, people's needs could remain unmet elsewhere. This is especially relevant given the Government's announced changes to time-limiting contributory ESA and increasing sanctions and conditions on the disabled people who receive this out-of-work benefit."<sup>81</sup>

## Carers

A disproportionate number of carers are women.

Changes to DLA will affect carers as well as those receiving care. If someone currently receiving the middle or higher level rate of DLA is re-assessed onto the lower rate of PIP, or judged not to be eligible at all, then not only will they lose money but their carer will lose their Carers Allowance. Disabled people and carers are already at high risk of living in poverty. A further reduction in benefits could lead to severe hardship. A carer in this situation would have to move onto Universal Credit. It is not clear whether they would then be expected to look for work, even though they are still responsible for full-time care (see Universal Credit section below for issues relating to this).

## Pensions

Changes to the age of the state pension will bring about equality between women and men. However, as a result of the more rapid move towards equality than previously planned there is a group of women in their mid-50s will have a very short time to adapt to a change that will see them lose a significant amount of income.

Rash Bhabra, from pension experts Towers Watson, has argued that the women born around 1954 will be the biggest losers.

"A woman born on 5 April 1953 will still be able to claim her State Pension when she is just 62 years, 11 months and one day old. A woman born a year and a day later will have to wait until she is 66. The extra three years of income could be worth more than £15,000 just looking at the Basic State Pension and could be much higher for women with substantial entitlements to SERPS or the State Second Pension. It may have been fairer to start the changes earlier but implement them more gradually."<sup>82</sup>

Age UK has argued that:

"If given the green light these changes will deny millions of people the chance to plan properly for their retirement and will condemn the poorest to even more hardship." <sup>83</sup>

### Conditionality and sanctions

Citizens Advice nationally has raised concerns that sanctions are already being applied unfairly:

"Case evidence reported by bureaux to Citizens Advice highlights that many claimants are sanctioned apparently inappropriately; others, it is clear, do not know why they have been sanctioned, and get no explanation or warning in advance of the sanction being applied. Cases highlight the impact of sanctions on the most vulnerable claimants. They are often vulnerable clients with learning disabilities who have failed to understand what is required of them, or who haven't attended courses or applied for jobs because the options have been inappropriate to their disabilities or levels of literacy." <sup>84</sup>

There have been national newspaper reports that Department of Work and Pensions staff in some areas have been set targets to sanction people. <sup>85</sup> The government has admitted that some job centre managers "misunderstood" the sanctions system and had been setting targets. <sup>86</sup> The government claims that this has been stopped but the Guardian has reported claims by a number of Department staff that the policy is still continuing in their area and that as a result staff are deliberately targeting the most vulnerable people, including people with learning difficulties and poor English in order to find an excuse to apply a sanction. <sup>87</sup>

Women who have experienced domestic or sexual violence have reported being sanctioned when they were unable to attend appointments or interviews as a result of their trauma following attack. (See Section 5.10 for more information.)

Under Universal Credit, conditionality will extend to those in work. There will be an obligation for people in work to raise their income above a certain level – which will vary for different groups of people – and sanctions will be applied if they do not.

### Uprating of benefits

This will affect everybody receiving benefits and tax credits. Benefits, including tax credits, make up a greater percentage of women's total income than men's (18 per cent for women compared to 8 per cent for men). Nearly a third (30 per cent of women) but only 15 per cent of men rely on state support for at least 75 per cent of their income. <sup>88</sup>

The Institute of Fiscal Studies has estimated that the difference between the CPI and the RPI is likely to be close to 2 per cent each year. <sup>89</sup> This will mean that the incomes of people on benefits will decline relative to the general population over time. Since women are more likely to be affected, this will increase their poverty relative to men.

### Universal Credit

It is difficult to predict the impact that Universal Credit will have on women's incomes because not all elements of the way the credit will be calculated have been announced. <sup>90</sup> Some women may gain because they will be able to combine Universal Credit with "mini-jobs" of less than sixteen hours a week. However, others may lose depending on the way the credit is calculated. <sup>91</sup>

In addition, the Women's Budget Group has raised concerns about the potential impact on gender equality of the way in which the Universal Credit will be paid. <sup>92</sup> Their concerns include:

## Disincentives for second earners

Because of the way that Universal Credit will be withdrawn, second earners in couples (usually the woman) will be worse off under the Universal Credit. The effect of the credit may be to discourage women with working partners to return to paid work after the birth of a child. This will leave many women without an independent income and at risk of poverty if the couple separate.

## Payment to a single person within couples

The government is proposing that for couples one person should claim Universal Credit on behalf of the family. This may leave women without any independent income. There is strong evidence that money is not shared equally within households, and in some couples the person who earns money, or receives it in benefits, exercises greater (including total) control over how it is spent.<sup>93</sup>

## How often payment is made

Universal Credit will be paid as a single monthly payment. At the moment some benefits are paid fortnightly, while tax credits are paid monthly. The Women's Budget Group argues that this will cause problems with budgeting for some families. These will particularly impact on women because in low-income households it is usually the woman who is responsible for managing day to day spending and balancing the family budget. Women tend to be the 'shock absorbers' of poverty, going without in order to ensure other family members are fed and clothed.<sup>94</sup>

Universal Credit will have a more severe sanctions regime. Someone who does not take part in Mandatory Work Activity (MWA) can lose benefits for 13 weeks for a first "offence" and 26 weeks for a second.

## Impact of other changes

Women's incomes may also be affected by a number of other changes catalogued elsewhere in this report including:

- ⊙ Women are more likely to be affected by reductions in housing benefit (see Section 5.3).
- ⊙ Women needing legal advice or help (for example, to deal with unfairly applied sanctions or mistakes in benefit assessments) will be affected by the removal of legal aid for welfare benefit cases (see Section 5.8).
- ⊙ Women's chances of finding suitable employment may be reduced by the loss of a large number of public sector jobs (see section 5.1 for more details).

## What are the human rights and equality impacts?

The overall impact of these tax and benefit changes, particularly when combined with the changes to Housing Benefit, will hit women more than men. Calculations by the House of Commons Library have shown that the cost to women of all changes including Housing Benefit will be £5.76bn. The cost to men will be lower – £2.295bn.

Women are already poorer than men<sup>95</sup> and receive a higher proportion of their income from benefits,<sup>96</sup> so the effect of these changes will be to increase inequality between women and men's incomes.

For some women, the combined impact of changes to benefits and tax credits could lead to a significant loss of income, pushing those women into poverty. Lone parents, disabled women, carers and BME women are likely to be particularly badly hit.

Poverty has significant long-term impacts on people's overall health and well-being that also raises human rights issues:

- ⊙ Infant mortality is 35 per cent more common among those from manual backgrounds than those from non-manual backgrounds.<sup>97</sup>
- ⊙ Life expectancy is linked to poverty.
- ⊙ Poorer children on average experience poorer health during their childhoods and the effects of this last throughout their lives. Three-year-olds in households with incomes below about £10,000 are 2.5 times more likely to suffer chronic illness than children in households with incomes above £52,000.<sup>98</sup> Children growing up in poverty experience significant long-term impacts on their health, educational attainment, employment opportunities and life expectancy.<sup>99</sup>
- ⊙ The risk of mental illness for someone in the poorest fifth of the population is about twice the average.<sup>100</sup>

Therefore, if the combined impact of changes to benefits and tax credits leads to a significant loss of income, pushing women into poverty, this could impact on their right to health or even their right to life.<sup>101</sup>

### Finding out about local impact

See Section 3 "Finding out local information" for general advice on using local media, various websites listing cuts that you can search by issue and area, and finding out information from your local council and other public bodies. In addition, local statistics for numbers of people claiming various benefits can be found at: [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/)

Put in the name of your local authority then click through to the next page which gives sub-headings for a wide range of data-sets. Information about benefit claims can be found under "economic deprivation". You can search for numbers of people claiming Child Benefit, Housing Benefit, JSA, disability benefits, tax credits and so on. Several of these tables are further broken down so you can look up the number of lone parents receiving income support, for example. You can use this information to show how many people locally will be affected by different changes.

You can also find numbers of people of working age claiming various out-of-work benefits via the ONS labour market statistics pages:  
[www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/contents.aspx](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/contents.aspx)

These can be searched by local authority area to give local information on JSA and disability benefits. If you click on "query data set" at the top right-hand corner of each set of data, you can do further searches to find out, for example, the gender breakdown of people receiving incapacity benefit in your area.

The Department of Work and Pensions publish a wide range of data, some of it broken down to ward level on benefit claims and so on. The full list of data available can be viewed here:  
[http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=statistics\\_a\\_to\\_z#d](http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=statistics_a_to_z#d)

You can do searches for particular information (for example, number of people receiving carers allowance in a particular local authority area broken down by gender) using a tool here:  
<http://83.244.183.180/100pc/tabtool.html>

You can also do searches by parliamentary constituency rather than local authority area, which can be very useful if you are trying to get your MP interested in your report.

The information available via this search tool often seems to be more up to date than using other websites, but it can be a bit difficult to find until you are used to the tool.

There is a huge amount of data on poverty and social exclusion in the UK on the Poverty site:  
[www.poverty.org.uk/](http://www.poverty.org.uk/)

Some of this data can be searched by local authority area at: [www.poverty.org.uk/summary/maps.shtml](http://www.poverty.org.uk/summary/maps.shtml)

Other data on the site is broken down by region.

## More information

Welfare reform: Citizens Advice has published a large number of reports:

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/search.htm?pr=Corporate&query=welfare+reform&x=39&y=11](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/search.htm?pr=Corporate&query=welfare+reform&x=39&y=11)

For information about the impact of welfare reform on women see the Women's Budget Group:

[http://www.wbg.org.uk/RRB\\_Reports.htm](http://www.wbg.org.uk/RRB_Reports.htm)

For information about disability benefits see:

[www.disabilityalliance.org/about.htm](http://www.disabilityalliance.org/about.htm) and  
[www.disabilityalliance.org/dbc.htm](http://www.disabilityalliance.org/dbc.htm)

A group of anti-poverty, child rights, disability and other organisations have produced joint briefings on the impact of the welfare reform proposals:

[www.cpag.org.uk/cro/Briefings/CPAG\\_JointWRBriefing\\_0611.pdf](http://www.cpag.org.uk/cro/Briefings/CPAG_JointWRBriefing_0611.pdf)

Gingerbread is campaigning against charges for collecting child maintenance:

[www.gingerbread.org.uk/content.aspx?CategoryID=574](http://www.gingerbread.org.uk/content.aspx?CategoryID=574)

Citizens Advice is campaigning for a fair and just welfare system:

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/campaigns/current\\_campaigns/fairwelfare.htm](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/campaigns/current_campaigns/fairwelfare.htm)

The Hardest Hit Campaign organised jointly by the Disability Benefits Consortium (DBC) and the UK Disabled People's Council is campaigning against cuts to disability benefits:

<http://thehardesthit.wordpress.com/>

Age UK is campaigning on the increase in the state pension age for women:

[www.ageuk.org.uk/get-involved/campaign/state-pension-age-campaign/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/get-involved/campaign/state-pension-age-campaign/)



## 5.5 Health

The NHS in England has to make £15–20bn of savings by 2015.

Fifty thousand jobs are expected to be lost in the NHS.<sup>102</sup>

The cuts to jobs and local health services vary depending on where in the country you are. There have been cuts to speech therapy, mental health services, walk-in centres, elective surgery, maternity services, fertility treatment, dementia services, physiotherapy, drug addiction services and cosmetic surgery. Waiting times have increased in many parts of the country.

Recent cuts reported on the False Economy website include:

- ⊙ East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust has to make £30m of "efficiency savings" for 2011/12 and total savings of £100m over the next four years. Four 28-bed wards earmarked for closure (one already closed) at Conquest Hospital and Eastbourne District General Hospital.
- ⊙ Cuts to a range of services provided by Springwell mental health unit in Barnet.
- ⊙ Airedale hospital is due to close two further wards after closing a ward in March this year.
- ⊙ More than 700 hospital beds are set to be slashed across Birmingham and Solihull. The cuts are planned across major acute hospitals in the city including Queen Elizabeth, Heartlands, Good Hope, Solihull and City hospitals. It would mean that about 15 per cent of the 4,500 hospital beds could go.
- ⊙ Pay cuts or redundancy for nurses who care for premature or sick babies at Liverpool's neonatal unit.

For more information see:

<http://falseeconomy.org.uk/cuts/sectors/type/health>

### Maternity services

The innovative Enhanced Midwifery Service run by Liverpool Women's Hospital offers "vulnerable" mothers-to-be in deprived areas advice about health issues such as smoking and diet in pregnancy and breastfeeding. Yet its future is in doubt after Liverpool City Council said it would withdraw its 75 per cent funding for the scheme and three maternity support workers did not have their contracts renewed.

The postnatal counselling group in Islington, north London, for mothers with postnatal depression ended on 31 March when funding was withdrawn. Similarly, Andover birth centre in Hampshire is "temporarily suspended",<sup>103</sup> Eastbourne maternity ward is being threatened with closure and the maternity unit at the King George Hospital in Romford, Essex, is also under review.

More examples of cuts can be found here: [www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/apr/11/nhs-cuts-first-areas](http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/apr/11/nhs-cuts-first-areas)

### Who are the cuts likely to affect?

Both women and men need health services and use the NHS. Therefore, any cuts to services will affect both men and women. However, there are certain health issues which are more likely to affect women than men. For example, cuts in mental health services may particularly impact on women who are between one and a half and two times more likely than men to suffer from anxiety and depression.<sup>104</sup>

In addition, in many parts of the country primary care trusts (PCTs) fund organisations working on domestic and sexual violence. In some parts of the country this funding has been reduced and many local providers are concerned about the future once PCTs are removed.

Cuts to health care services to older people are likely to affect women disproportionately since women live longer than men. Care homes specialising in patients with dementia have been threatened with closure: this is likely to affect more women than men.



### Human rights and equality impact

Some cuts to healthcare services, for example cuts to dementia services, will disproportionately affect women.

If cuts to healthcare budgets mean that patients do not get the treatment that they require, this could impact on their right to life or right not to be subject to inhuman and degrading treatment.

### Finding out about local impact

See Section 3 "Finding out local information" for general advice on using local media, various websites listing cuts that you can search by issue and area, and finding out information from your local council and other public bodies. In addition, your local PCT should be able to provide you with information about cuts to its budget. Some PCTs may put information including briefings on budget cuts on their website, but others will not. You may have to telephone or write to the PCT.

Unions with members working in the NHS may be able to provide you with information about what is happening locally:

- ⦿ British Medical Association [www.bma.org.uk](http://www.bma.org.uk)
- ⦿ GMB [www.gmb.org.uk](http://www.gmb.org.uk)
- ⦿ Royal College of Midwives [www.rcm.org.uk](http://www.rcm.org.uk)
- ⦿ Royal College of Nursing [www.rcn.org.uk](http://www.rcn.org.uk)
- ⦿ Unite [www.unitetheunion.org.uk](http://www.unitetheunion.org.uk)
- ⦿ UNISON [www.unison.org.uk](http://www.unison.org.uk)

If you have an interest in a particular, specialist service, note that there are also several smaller, specialist unions working in the health service (e.g., the Society of Radiographers, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists, the Society of Chiropractors and Podiatrists) and you should consider contacting the relevant union or professional association. You can find details of many of the smaller health unions on the TUC website: [www.tuc.org.uk/tuc/unions\\_main.cfm](http://www.tuc.org.uk/tuc/unions_main.cfm)

Specialist patient groups and campaign groups such as Cancer Research UK, Mind and Scope may also be a good source of information.

## 5.6 Social care

Social care budgets for services to elderly people are due to be cut by an average of 8 per cent, according to research by Age UK.<sup>105</sup>

The *Financial Times* calculated that cuts of £1.4bn are being made to adult social care services across the UK.<sup>106</sup>

Councils have tightened eligibility criteria to receive social care. Birmingham City Council, for example, restricted social care to people whose needs were assessed to be "critical". This move was judged to be unlawful by the High Court because the council had failed to pay due regard to the impact on disabled people during the decision-making process, contravening the Disability Discrimination Act.

In other parts of the country, criteria have not formally changed but voluntary organisations report that informally it is harder to get an assessment of need.

Some councils have increased charges for adults receiving social care who have to pay for themselves.<sup>107</sup>

Councils have cut services including day centres and reduced the amount of time care-staff can spend with those needing care.<sup>108</sup>

### Who are the cuts likely to affect?

Cuts to adult social care can have a devastating impact on older people, disabled people and carers. Any reductions in care or support for carers will affect more women than men.

- ⊙ The majority of those needing social care services are women because there are many more older women than older men.<sup>109</sup>
- ⊙ The majority of those providing care (both paid and unpaid) are women. Sixty per cent of unpaid carers are women.<sup>110</sup>
- ⊙ Even before the budget reductions in April 2011 took place, a survey by more than 40 leading care charities, part of the Care and Support Alliance, found that nearly one in four (23 per cent) disabled and older people and their families had had their services cut.

- ⊙ Nearly half (43 per cent) could not afford essentials like food and heating, as a result of changes such as increased care charges.
- ⊙ More than half of respondents had seen their health suffer as a result of changes to services.
- ⊙ Fifty-two per cent were struggling to maintain their independence.
- ⊙ Forty-eight per cent of carers and disabled people were finding it harder to stay in employment.<sup>111</sup>
- ⊙ Research by Carers UK found that more than 80 per cent of carers are worried about cuts to services.<sup>112</sup>

### What are the human rights and equalities impact?

Women are the majority of those receiving care and the majority of those providing care to adults (both paid and unpaid). They will be disproportionately impacted by a range of different cuts including:

- ⊙ Reduction in funding for organisations supporting carers.
- ⊙ Cuts to welfare benefits that may affect those receiving care as well as those providing it.
- ⊙ Cuts to legal advice on welfare benefits that is heavily utilised by sick and disabled people.
- ⊙ Reduction in domestic violence support services which will disproportionately affect disabled women.

The cumulative impacts of all these changes may also lead to human rights issues for those receiving care. Human rights that could be engaged include the right to life, the right not to be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to liberty and security of person and the right to respect for private and family life.<sup>113</sup>



### Finding out about local impact

See Section 3 "Finding out local information" for general advice on using local media, various websites listing cuts that you can search by issue and area, and finding out information from your local council and other public bodies. In addition, you can find a range of local data at: [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/)

Once you have entered your local authority area and clicked through, look under "Health and Care" for datasets showing numbers of women and men who are carers in your area, numbers receiving DLA, numbers with limiting long-term illnesses and so on. This can provide useful information about the numbers of people who might be affected by changes to adult social care services.

Local disability organisations, older people's organisations and carers' organisations may be able to help with information about cuts to services locally.

Local Age UK information can be found here: [www.ageuk.org.uk/about-us/local-partners/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/about-us/local-partners/)

Local groups supporting carers can be found at: [www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/finding-help-where-you-live](http://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/finding-help-where-you-live)

An extensive list of disability organisations can be found here: [www.ableize.com/support-groups/](http://www.ableize.com/support-groups/)

Unions that may be able to provide local data include:

- ☉ GMB [www.gmb.org.uk](http://www.gmb.org.uk)
- ☉ Unite [www.unitetheunion.org.uk](http://www.unitetheunion.org.uk)
- ☉ UNISON [www.unison.org.uk](http://www.unison.org.uk)

UNISON has launched a campaign for better funding for adult home care services: [www.unison.org.uk/localgov/homecare.asp](http://www.unison.org.uk/localgov/homecare.asp)

## 5.7 Services for children and young people (and their families)

There has been a range of cuts to services for children and families. These include:

### Sure Start

The government has lifted the ring-fencing of funding to local authorities for Sure Start Children's Centres, meaning that local authorities can choose what to spend the money on. Sure Start funding is now part of a wider Early Intervention Grant. The government has argued that there is enough money for local authorities to continue to support Sure Start projects; however, faced with severe cuts, many local authorities have cut back on funding for children's centres.

A survey of children's centre managers carried out by the Daycare Trust and 4Children found that:

- ⊙ 250 (7 per cent) will close or are expected to close, affecting an estimated 60,000 families.
- ⊙ 2,000 (56 per cent) will provide a reduced service.
- ⊙ 3,100 (86 per cent) will have a decreased budget.
- ⊙ Staff at 1,000 centres (28 per cent) have been issued with "at risk of redundancy" notices.<sup>114</sup>

### Teenage parents

Supporting People is paid from central government to local government to provide housing-related support to help vulnerable people to live as independently as possible in the community, in their own homes or in hostels, sheltered housing or other specialised supported housing. Among those helped by supporting people are teenage parents (mainly mothers) in supported accommodation.

Supporting People has been cut by 12 per cent nationally and is no longer ring-fenced, which has resulted in significant cuts to services for teenage parents in some parts of the country.<sup>115</sup>

Furthermore, the Department for Education is consulting on ways to cut the cost of Care to Learn, a non-means-tested grant for teenage parents to pay for childcare in order to facilitate sixth form or further education studies.<sup>116</sup>

### Youth services

Services for young people are facing severe cuts.

A survey of council heads of youth services in January 2011 found that:

- ⊙ £100m will be cut from local authority youth service budgets in England by March 2012, leading to the loss of 3,000 full-time youth worker jobs.
- ⊙ Nearly all the 41 heads of youth services polled said that open-access youth clubs and centres will be hardest hit with such services being reduced or axed altogether.<sup>117</sup>

A survey by Unite and Young People Now showed that youth services in one in four council areas is being cut by between 21 and 30 per cent.<sup>118</sup>

### Cuts to special needs and mental health support

Mental health services for children and young people are being cut. More than half of PCTs and local councils surveyed for the charity Young Minds said they were reducing spending, in some cases by up to 25 per cent.

School nurses, drop-in and counselling services are all being cut.<sup>119</sup>

## Human rights and equalities impact

The cuts to services for young people are particularly severe. In addition to these cuts, young people are also affected by cuts to the EMA and increased tuition fees (see Section 5.2).

Unemployment among young people is far higher than among the rest of the population, with one in five 16 to 24 year olds out of work.<sup>120</sup>

Cuts to services to children affect not only the children themselves but also their families. Women are likely to be disproportionately affected by these cuts since women are the primary carers for children. Cuts to services in schools for children with special needs or mental health problems will have an impact on the women who are the mothers of these children, since mothers are more likely to be the primary carer and therefore be the parent responsible for trying to get additional help, taking children to appointments, appealing against decisions and so on. Women make 73 per cent of applications for legal aid in education-related cases.

Cuts to Sure Start children's centres have an impact on the parents who use the centres. A survey by Netmums showed that 68 per cent of parents with a child under one used a children's centre.<sup>121</sup> These centres provide advice and support for parents on a range of issues including breastfeeding, baby and childcare, speech and language therapy, child nutrition, counselling, debt advice and getting back to work.

Some children's centres also provide nursery care. As these centres close, parents, and mothers in particular, may find it impossible to continue working.

## Finding out about local impact

See Section 3 "Finding out local information" for general advice on using local media, various websites listing cuts that you can search by issue and area, and finding out information from your local council and other public bodies.

## Campaigns

Shout Out for Sure Start:

<http://shoutoutforasurestart.org.uk/about>

Netmums Sure Start campaign:

[www.netmums.com/campaigns/Fivepoint\\_Campaigner\\_s\\_Toolkit.5748/northderbyshire/](http://www.netmums.com/campaigns/Fivepoint_Campaigner_s_Toolkit.5748/northderbyshire/)

The Choose Youth Campaign campaigns on youth services: <http://chooseyouth.org/>

A guide to challenging cuts to services for disabled children can be found at:

[www.ncb.org.uk/edcm/Using\\_the\\_Law\\_to\\_Fight\\_Cuts.pdf](http://www.ncb.org.uk/edcm/Using_the_Law_to_Fight_Cuts.pdf)

UNISON represent many Sure Start workers:

[www.unison.org.uk](http://www.unison.org.uk)

Aspect represent many Early Years workers:

[www.aspect.org.uk](http://www.aspect.org.uk)

The Community and Youth Workers section of Unite

represent youth workers: [www.cywu.org.uk/](http://www.cywu.org.uk/)

## 5.8 Legal aid

Changes to civil legal aid will affect:

- ⊙ what can be covered by legal aid
- ⊙ who will be able to receive legal aid
- ⊙ how you get legal advice
- ⊙ how much legal advisors are paid for doing the work.

### What legal aid will cover

There will be significant changes in what legal aid will cover:

- ⊙ **Debt** – legal aid will not fund debt advice except where a person's home is at "immediate risk".
- ⊙ **Welfare benefits** – all legal aid will be cut. This will include issues like appealing against decisions to deny ESA or to reduce or suspend benefit payments or tax credits.
- ⊙ **Education** – all legal aid will be cut. This will cover issues like appeals against exclusions or admissions, bullying, special educational needs or disability discrimination.
- ⊙ **Employment** – all legal aid will be cut except for cases of discrimination.
- ⊙ **Family law** – all legal aid will be cut except in cases of domestic violence. Changes will cover issues such as divorce, child contact and/or maintenance.
- ⊙ **Housing** – legal aid will no longer cover issues such as protection against harassment by landlords. It will only fund advice on homelessness or serious disrepair threatening health, or for people facing eviction.
- ⊙ **Immigration** – legal aid will only cover cases where someone is detained or seeking asylum. It will no longer cover issues such as applying for citizenship or extending visas.
- ⊙ **Medical negligence** – legal aid will be cut.

### Who can claim legal aid?

People on benefits will no longer be automatically entitled to legal aid. Everyone will have savings and assets assessed.

- ⊙ People with a disposable income of more than £315 a month will be required to pay more towards legal costs.
- ⊙ People with assets over £300 will have to pay toward legal costs.

### How to get legal advice

- ⊙ People needing legal aid will have to call a telephone advice line for a referral rather than approach solicitors directly.

### Rates of pay

In addition, the proposals will reduce the amount paid to lawyers for giving advice by 10 per cent. Rates will then be frozen until 2015.

### Other cuts to funding which will impact legal advice services:

- ⊙ Reform of the EHRC will result in it losing its grants programmes which have provided funding for law centres, Citizens Advice offices and others to do discrimination advice and casework.
- ⊙ Plans to cut debt advice from Citizens Advice were averted by emergency 12-month funding. This will allow Citizens Advice to continue its debt advice service for another year, but there are currently no plans to fund the service thereafter.
- ⊙ The Home Office is cutting advice for newly arrived asylum seekers by more than 60 per cent from March 2011. This advice covers applying for asylum, support and housing. It also helps people suffering from harassment or domestic violence.
- ⊙ Local authorities are cutting the funding to legal and other advice services.

## Who are the cuts likely to affect?

Cuts to legal aid and other funding for legal advice are likely to have disproportionate effects on a range of vulnerable, poor and otherwise disadvantaged groups:

- ⊙ The vast majority of those who receive legal aid are the poorest and most disadvantaged.<sup>122</sup>
- ⊙ The cuts will disproportionately affect BME women and men. Of all civil legal aid clients, 64 per cent are white and 26 per cent are BME (the ethnicity of the rest was not known).<sup>123</sup> BME people make up 31 per cent of those receiving legal advice on education matters.
- ⊙ People suffering from illness or disability will be particularly badly hit by cuts to advice on debt or welfare. Sick or disabled people make up 30 per cent of debt advice clients and 63 per cent of people needing legal help with welfare benefit.<sup>124</sup>
- ⊙ Withdrawing legal aid from clinical negligence cases will disproportionately impact sick and disabled clients. People from this group bring 30 per cent per cent of these cases.<sup>125</sup>

Overall, women are more likely than men to be affected by the changes to civil legal aid: 62.2 per cent of applications for civil legal aid were made by women.<sup>126</sup> Women make up:

- ⊙ 65 per cent of those who will no longer receive legal aid for family law cases
- ⊙ 60 per cent of those in housing cases
- ⊙ 73 per cent of those in education cases (often bringing a case on behalf of a child).<sup>127</sup>

Voluntary organisations that do not provide legal advice themselves but refer on to specialist services will also be affected by these changes as they may find themselves with clients they are unable to help.

## Human rights and equalities impact

A disproportionate number of women will be affected by cuts to civil legal aid and other funding of legal services. These cuts will also have a particularly negative impact on some of the most vulnerable groups of women, as highlighted earlier. There are also many ways in which these changes could lead to negative human rights impacts. For instance:

- ⊙ Women in violent relationships will be particularly vulnerable to removal of legal aid. Legal aid will still be available in some family law cases where there is domestic violence but the definition remains narrow. Women leaving violent relationships may also need legal advice for help with debt, welfare and housing problems, which will no longer be covered by legal aid.
- ⊙ Liberty, the human rights organisation, has argued that "important human rights are at stake in many of the areas of law earmarked for removal from scope. In family and immigration matters, for example, the right to respect for family life is frequently at issue."<sup>128</sup>
- ⊙ Lack of legal advice could also amount to a violation of Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights (right to fair trial) where "such assistance proves indispensable ... by reason of the complexity of the procedure or of the case."<sup>129</sup>
- ⊙ Removal of advice on complex welfare benefits issues, housing issues and immigration issues which lead to homelessness and destitution may also amount to human rights violations under Article 3 of the Human Rights Act.<sup>130</sup>
- ⊙ It is also argued by Liberty that "the cuts are likely to significantly restrict the local availability of services effectively creating 'advice deserts'".<sup>131</sup> If this were to happen, then this would be in violation of Article 13 of the ECHR (effective remedy) and the human rights issues identified here would be greatly increased.

## Legal aid in cases of domestic violence

Legal aid will still be available in family law cases where there is domestic violence. Following lobbying, the government has broadened the definition of violence to include psychological abuse. However, the definition is still narrower than that used elsewhere by government: "Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality."<sup>132</sup> This broader definition is supported by international practice including general recommendation 19 of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and the UN General Assembly Declaration on Violence against Women.

In addition, women will have to provide evidence of domestic violence:

- ⊙ A non-molestation order, occupation order, forced marriage protection order or other protective injunction is either in place or has been made in the last 12 months.
- ⊙ There is a criminal conviction, or on-going criminal proceedings, for a domestic violence offence by the other party towards the applicant for funding (unless the conviction is spent).
- ⊙ The victim has been referred to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (as a high-risk victim of domestic violence) and a plan has been put in place to protect them from violence by the other party.
- ⊙ There has been a finding of fact in the family courts of domestic violence by the other party giving rise to the risk of harm to the victim.

These requirements will exclude those women who have not reported the violence that they have suffered. In addition, the government has specifically excluded non-molestation orders or occupation orders since they may be granted without the perpetrator admitting abuse. This will exclude large numbers of women who have a non-molestation order against their partner but have not taken further action.

## Finding out about local impact

See Section 3 "Finding out local information" for general advice on using local media, various websites listing cuts that you can search by issue and area, and finding out information from your local council and other public bodies. In addition, the Legal Action Group has produced a spreadsheet showing the impact of legal aid cuts by local authority area:

[www.lag.org.uk/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=88856](http://www.lag.org.uk/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=88856)

Local Citizens Advice bureaux, law centres or other local advice services can often provide local case studies and examples of people who are currently entitled to legal aid but will no longer receive it.

Other advice services that refer people to specialist legal advice where needed will see the impact of the legal aid cuts on their clients and may be able to provide case studies and examples.

## Campaigns

The Justice for All Campaign brings together a wide range of groups and individuals to campaign against cuts to legal aid: [www.justice-for-all.org.uk/](http://www.justice-for-all.org.uk/)

The Women's Institute is a member of the Justice for All campaign and WI members are campaigning against legal aid cuts:

[www.thewi.org.uk/standard.aspx?id=23519](http://www.thewi.org.uk/standard.aspx?id=23519)

## 5.9 Transport

Local bus services will be hit by the cuts in a number of ways:

- ⊙ Cuts to local authority funding means that many authorities are cutting funding for supported bus services (these are routes that are socially necessary but not commercially viable).
- ⊙ Fuel tax rebate for bus operators (Bus Service Operators Grant) will be cut by 20 per cent from 2012.
- ⊙ The way the free bus pass scheme is funded is changing, meaning that approximately £100m will be lost to the bus sector.<sup>133</sup>
- ⊙ As a result, more than 70 per cent of local authorities have decided to reduce funding for supported bus services. This is mainly affecting rural, evening and Sunday bus services.<sup>134</sup>
- ⊙ Some councils have withdrawn all subsidised bus services.<sup>135</sup>
- ⊙ A majority of councils are currently reviewing discretionary bus fares for young people, including terminating concessionary travel for post-16 students in full-time education and scaling back pre-16 school travel to statutory minimums which will potentially force thousands of schoolchildren and their parents into cars or on foot.

According to the House of Commons transport select committee, these changes have "created the greatest financial challenge for the English bus industry for a generation". They estimate that the cuts will cost the bus industry between £200 and £300 million per annum.<sup>136</sup>

A report by the Passengers Transport Executives in the six big cities outside London has forecast that one in five big city buses could be gone by 2014, while bus fares will rise by 24 per cent.<sup>137</sup>

### Train services

These may also be affected by proposals by Sir Roy McNulty as part of his review into value for money on UK railways. Included among these proposals are:

- ⊙ driver-only operations as the default position of all services on the network
- ⊙ closures and reductions to opening hours for more than half the ticket offices in the country, particularly smaller, rural stations
- ⊙ a priority review of all station staffing.

### Fares

The government has increased the cap on statutory ticket prices on UK railways, enabling train operating companies to increase fares at three per cent above the rate of inflation, leading to huge fare hikes for commuters and other rail travellers.

### In addition

The concession scheme which gave older and disabled people half-price travel on coaches will end in November 2011.

Councils across the country are cutting support to Dial-a-Ride and other voluntary services that provide transport for disabled and older people.

## Who are the cuts likely to affect?

- Two thirds of public transport journeys are made by bus.
- A quarter of UK households do not have a car, including 11 per cent in rural areas.<sup>138</sup>

Women are more likely to be reliant on public transport than men:

- 78 per cent of women live in a household with a car compared to 84 per cent of men.
- 63 per cent of women have a driving licence compared to 81 per cent of men.<sup>139</sup>

Older women are particularly likely to be reliant on public transport. Women over 70 made only a fifth of their trips as car drivers, while men over 70 made more than half their trips as car drivers.<sup>140</sup>

Cuts to bus services will particularly affect:

- young people who may be unable to get to work or college
- older people who will be cut off from social activities, health services and shops
- people on low incomes who are less likely to have a car
- job seekers who may be limited in the jobs they can take if transport is not available
- disabled people who use buses more than non-disabled people
- people in rural communities where bus services are already infrequent and expensive.

The proposed changes to rail staffing threaten a large-scale cutting back of staff on trains, stations and ticket halls, leaving vulnerable passengers isolated. This has particularly adverse impacts on access and safety for women, older people and the disabled.

An increase in rail fares will have a particular impact on low-income travellers. The UK's rail network is already the most expensive in Europe.

## Human rights and equalities impact

As a result of these changes, the House of Commons transport select committee collected evidence showing:

- people becoming more socially isolated, in some cases with no way of getting from their village to the nearest town
- elderly people with reduced access to hospitals, social activities and shops – those who could not drive or afford taxis were particularly badly affected
- people no longer able to visit sick or elderly relatives as frequently because there was no bus service and they could not afford taxis every day
- commuters finding it difficult to get home from work because the local bus service stopped in the evening
- some young people forced to change jobs, others no longer able to get to college, play sport or meet up with friends
- parents of young children finding it difficult to take their children to play group.<sup>141</sup>

Cuts to public transport can have an impact on:

- Women's health. Over a twelve-month period, 1.4 million people fail to attend, turn down or choose not to seek medical help because of transport problems. Women in rural areas and on low incomes have particular problems accessing ante-natal care, for example.<sup>142</sup>

The Department of Health's Women's Mental Health Strategy (2003) points to links between social isolation and mental health. Women are more vulnerable to social isolation because of higher levels of poverty, lone parenthood, lack of mobility (being unable to drive or to own a car), longer life expectancy and fear of going out alone.<sup>143</sup>

- Women's access to employment. Women are more likely to work part time. Cuts in public transport outside peak hours may be particularly difficult for women working shift patterns who may not be able to get to or from work.

- ⊙ Women's access to childcare. A fifth of parents surveyed in 2002 said that their choice of nursery was restricted by available transport.<sup>144</sup>
- ⊙ Young women's access to places of education and training. The Association of Colleges estimate that 72 per cent of young people use the bus to travel to school or college.

### Finding out about local impact

See Section 3 "Finding out local information" for general advice on using local media, various websites listing cuts that you can search by issue and area, and finding out information from your local council and other public bodies. In addition, the Campaign for Better Transport "Save our Buses" campaign website includes an interactive map showing some of the cuts to local bus services:

[www.bettertransport.org.uk/campaigns/save-our-buses/map](http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/campaigns/save-our-buses/map)

Following a successful legal challenge in Cambridgeshire, the Save our Buses campaign has also published guidance on the statutory obligations of local authorities, enabling campaigners to monitor their own local authority's compliance with minimum bus service requirements. This can be accessed at <http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/system/files/11.09.26.bus-cuts-legal-duties.pdf>

### Campaigns

The Campaign for Better Transport has information and advice for local campaigners:

[www.bettertransport.org.uk/campaigns/save-our-buses](http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/campaigns/save-our-buses)

Rail unions and passenger groups are launching a range of campaigns to challenge these proposals:

The TSSA has set up the Together for Transport campaign, providing information on events and campaigns across the UK:

[www.togetherfortransport.org.uk](http://www.togetherfortransport.org.uk)

Further information can be accessed at the websites of the RMT ([www.rmt.org.uk](http://www.rmt.org.uk)), ASLEF ([www.aslef.org.uk](http://www.aslef.org.uk)) and Unite ([www.unitetheunion.org.uk](http://www.unitetheunion.org.uk))

The Campaign for Better Transport's Fare Fairs Now initiative campaigns for fairer, cheaper and simpler ticketing on UK rail:

[www.bettertransport.org.uk/campaigns/fair-fares-now](http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/campaigns/fair-fares-now)

# 5.10 Violence against women

## Services for women experiencing violence are under threat

Some agencies have already lost significant funding. Others face an uncertain future.

One of the main sources of funding for women's refuge services has been the Supporting People programme, which is paid from central government via local authorities.

Supporting People has been cut by 11.5 per cent and is no longer ring-fenced. This has resulted in councils in some parts of the country making cuts of up to 50 per cent in their spending on Supporting People projects.<sup>145</sup>

Funding for rape crisis centres has been cut by councils in a number of parts of the country.

## The scale of the problem

- ⊙ 2.3 per cent of women in the UK experienced rape or sexual assault in the last year.<sup>146</sup>
- ⊙ 19.7 per cent of women have experienced rape or sexual abuse since the age of 16.<sup>147</sup>
- ⊙ Between 7.5 per cent and 10 per cent of women experienced domestic violence in the last year.<sup>148</sup>
- ⊙ One in four women will experience domestic violence in their lifetime.<sup>149</sup>
- ⊙ If sexual assault and stalking are included, then 45 per cent of the female population have experienced at least one incident of inter-personal abuse in their lifetimes.<sup>150</sup>
- ⊙ Repeat victimisation is common: 44 per cent of victims of domestic violence are involved in more than one incident. No other type of crime has a rate of repeat victimisation as high.<sup>151</sup>

## Police cuts

The police are facing a budget cut of 20 per cent by 2014/15. This may reduce the support available to victims and survivors of violence.

Research into the experience of the criminal justice system among women who have suffered domestic or sexual violence shows that large numbers of women already "felt disillusioned about the level of protection and response received from the police and felt they had unequal access to the criminal justice system."<sup>152</sup> Agencies dealing with violence against women are concerned that cuts in police resources will make the situation worse.

## The Crown Prosecution Service cuts

The Crown Prosecution Service is facing cuts of 25 per cent. The Director of Public Prosecutions Keir Starmer has said: "I'm determined that the budget cuts will not affect our service to victims of sexual offences and domestic abuse" and that violence against women is a priority for the Crown Prosecution Service.<sup>153</sup> However, agencies remain concerned that such substantial cuts may have an impact on the resources available to prosecute cases of violence against women.

## NHS cuts

PCTs, which currently fund work with victims and survivors of violence, are being abolished and it is not clear how far the new GP consortia will continue to fund this work.

Violence against women has long-term impacts on the physical and mental health of women. The impact of rape and sexual abuse includes anxiety and panic attacks, depression, substance misuse, eating disorders, self-harm and suicide.<sup>154</sup> Women who experience domestic violence require twice the level of general medical services and three to eight times the level of mental health services.<sup>155</sup> Half the women of Asian origin who have attempted suicide or self-harm are domestic violence survivors.<sup>156</sup>

Research by the Women's National Commission (WNC) for the Department of Health has highlighted how health services can fail to meet the needs of women who have experienced violence or abuse.<sup>157</sup> Cuts to NHS funding may reduce the ability of health services to meet these women's needs still further.

### Legal aid cuts

Cuts to legal aid will reduce the ability of women suffering violence to get the legal help and support they need. Legal aid will still be available in domestic violence cases for family law issues. However, the definition of violence used by the Ministry of Justice is limited. See Section 5.8 for more information.

Women who are in, or who have left, violent relationships may need legal advice for a number of other issues including debt, housing and welfare benefits. Cuts in legal aid will mean that many women who have experienced violence will not get the legal advice or support they need.

### Other cuts

Changes to welfare benefits also risk increasing women's financial dependency on men, making it harder for women to leave violent relationships.

The government is planning to replace out-of-work and in-work benefits with Universal Credit. In couples this will be paid as a single payment to one partner. The Women's Budget Group has expressed concern that this will increase women's financial dependency on their male partners.<sup>158</sup>

Disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic violence as non-disabled women.<sup>159</sup> Changes to benefits for disabled people may increase disabled women's financial dependence on their partner. This will increase these women's vulnerability to financial abuse and may make it harder for women to leave violent relationships.

Increased conditionality of benefits may impact women who are unable to seek work because of trauma or ongoing mental health problems as a result of their abuse.

In focus groups run by the (now defunct) Women's National Commission (WNC) for the Department of Health, some women complained that GPs who worked as medical examiners for Jobcentre Plus had no understanding of rape and sexual violence and how this might prevent women from working. Women reported having their benefits cut because Jobcentre Plus staff failed to recognise the ongoing problems they were suffering as a result of the violence they had experienced.<sup>160</sup>

In addition, cuts to housing benefit may make it harder for women to move out of an area to get away from their attacker.

### Human rights and equalities impact

Violence against women is linked to long-term mental illness and with physical and sexual health problems.<sup>161</sup> Specialist counselling services are vital in helping women deal with the long-term impact of violence.

Women who have experienced violence and/or abuse may have to deal with financial, legal, employment-related or housing problems. Without specialist advocacy services, women may find it impossible to get the advice, support and services they need.

The combined impact of all of these cuts includes:

- ⊙ reduction in investigations and prosecutions of offenders because of cuts in the budget of the police and CPS and cuts to services that support women through the prosecution process
- ⊙ increased mental, physical and sexual health problems for women because of cuts in NHS services and cuts to specialist counselling and support services that help women with the long-term impact of violence

- ⊙ more women trapped in violent relationships – without women's refuges or supported accommodation, women in violent relationships may have nowhere to go to be safe. In addition, welfare and housing benefit changes may leave women trapped with violent partners.

Violence against women is a human rights issue. Public authorities have obligations to tackle domestic, sexual and other forms of violence against women under Article 2 (the right to life), Article 3 (the prohibition of inhuman and degrading treatment) and Article 14 (the prohibition of discrimination) of the European Convention on Human Rights.<sup>162</sup>

### Finding out about local impact

See Section 3 "Finding out local information" for general advice on using local media, various websites listing cuts that you can search by issue and area, and finding out information from your local council and other public bodies. In addition, you can calculate what the rates of violence against women are in your area (assuming that they are in line with the national average) using the percentage rates for sexual and domestic violence given earlier.

The Home Office publish data on recorded crime by police authority area:

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/historical-crime-data/rec-crime-1990-2011](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/historical-crime-data/rec-crime-1990-2011)

(This covers reports to the police but most violence against women is not reported.)

Interactive maps of recorded crime data is available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110220105210/http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/soti.html>

Contact your local police authority to find out about cuts to local police budgets.

Contact local rape crisis and women's refuge services to find out about their funding situation.

Women's Aid publishes a list of domestic violence services you can search:

[www.womensaid.org.uk/landing\\_page.asp?section=000100010024](http://www.womensaid.org.uk/landing_page.asp?section=000100010024)

Remember, the telephone numbers given here will be for a help-line, rather than an office number. People staffing the help-line will want to prioritise women in need rather than more general enquiries, so use the name of the service to search for its website where you may be able to find another non-emergency number.

Rape Crisis has a list of local rape crisis centres and projects at: [www.rapecrisis.org.uk/centres.php](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk/centres.php) Again, the numbers given will generally be for a help-line rather than an office number.

The False Economy website carried out research into cuts to voluntary sector organisations in August 2011. The research was based on Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to 353 local authorities about cuts greater than five per cent. This information is disaggregated by sector and by region and includes 63 domestic violence and sexual abuse services. You can access this information and search by region or local authority at: <http://falseeconomy.org.uk/blog/exclusive-more-than-2000-charities-and-community-groups-face-cuts>

### Campaigns

End Violence Against Women (EVAW) is campaigning to end the postcode lottery in services for women experiencing violence:

[www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/pages/hr.html](http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/pages/hr.html)

Women's Aid has a campaign to Save Survivors Services: [www.womensaid.org.uk/page.asp?section=0001000100100017&sectionTitle=Saving+Survivors%27+Services+Campaign](http://www.womensaid.org.uk/page.asp?section=0001000100100017&sectionTitle=Saving+Survivors%27+Services+Campaign)

The Women's Resource Centre and Rape Crisis have been campaigning on the crisis in funding for rape crisis services:

[www.wrc.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/campaigns/the\\_crisis\\_in\\_rape\\_crisis/latest\\_news\\_on\\_the\\_rape\\_crisis\\_campaign.aspx](http://www.wrc.org.uk/what_we_do/campaigns/the_crisis_in_rape_crisis/latest_news_on_the_rape_crisis_campaign.aspx)

# 5.11 Women's voluntary organisations

## What cuts are happening?

Women's voluntary organisations are facing a series of cuts:

- ⊙ A number of funding streams from central government for voluntary organisations have ended or are due to end.
- ⊙ Local authorities are cutting funding to voluntary organisations as their budgets are cut.
- ⊙ There is a drop in charitable donations from individuals.
- ⊙ Many charitable and non-charitable trusts are receiving an increasing level of grant applications and a falling return on investments, meaning the success rate for applications is falling.
- ⊙ Many voluntary organisations are facing increased demand from the communities they serve as a result of the recession and the impact of other public spending cuts.

These cuts are part of a pattern experienced by voluntary organisations across the country. A survey of London voluntary organisations by London Voluntary Service Council showed that:

- ⊙ 81 per cent said the demand for their services had increased in 2010/11
- ⊙ 51 per cent have closed services in 2010/11
- ⊙ 54 per cent expect more services to close in 2011/12
- ⊙ 77 per cent expect public sector funding of their organisation to decrease in 2011/12
- ⊙ 77 per cent are not confident they will be able to meet increases in demand in 2011/12
- ⊙ 54 per cent have made staff redundancies.<sup>163</sup>

A survey of BME organisations by MiNet showed that:

- ⊙ Small BME organisations, or those which are less well established, have had to cease delivering services as they have not been able to absorb funding cuts of 25 per cent.

- ⊙ Requests for specific types of help such as legal representation, advisory services, counselling and advocacy have increased from 2009/10 to 2010/11, with organisations voicing fears that they might not be able to keep up with demand.
- ⊙ Newly arrived communities have an urgent need to access education and language services, opportunities for which are reducing because of withdrawal of funding from ESOL.<sup>164</sup>

## Who are the cuts likely to affect?

Women's voluntary organisations play a unique role in supporting and empowering women. Research by the Women's Resource Centre has shown that women's voluntary organisations provide a particular benefit to women through:

- ⊙ provision of women-only space
- ⊙ focus on empowerment and independence
- ⊙ service-user involvement and high level of peer support
- ⊙ integrated one-stop-shop service
- ⊙ a needs-based approach
- ⊙ reaching 'hard to reach' women.

## Human rights and equalities impact

Women's organisations provide a range of services that support women's equality and human rights including:

- ⊙ tackling social, health and economic inequalities through training, education, employment and healthcare projects
- ⊙ tackling domestic and sexual violence and its impact, which disproportionately affects women
- ⊙ working with some of the highly vulnerable, isolated and otherwise disadvantaged women in the community
- ⊙ breaking down barriers for women in the workplace.

## Finding out about local impact

See Section 3 "Finding out local information" for general advice on using local media, various websites listing cuts that you can search by issue and area, and finding out information from your local council and other public bodies. In addition, some councils for voluntary service have carried out surveys on the impact of the spending cuts on voluntary organisations. They may be able to provide you with information about women's voluntary organisations or, if they are planning a survey, may add a question for you.

The best way to find out about the impact of the cuts on women's voluntary organisations is to ask them. Your local volunteer bureau or council for voluntary service may be able to provide a list of voluntary organisations locally.

The False Economy website carried out research into cuts to voluntary sector organisations in August 2011. The research was based on Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to 353 Local Authorities about cuts (greater than five per cent) made to voluntary sector organisations. This information is disaggregated by sector and by region. While there is no specific category for women's organisations, you can search for the word "women" in the spreadsheet and you will find many women's centres and domestic and sexual abuse services aimed at women. You can access this information and search by region or local authority on the False Economy website  
<http://falseeconomy.org.uk/blog/exclusive-more-than-2000-charities-and-community-groups-face-cuts>



## More information

The Women's Resource Centre's "Why Women?" campaign is highlighting the importance of women's services and campaigning to ensure sustainable funding:  
[www.wrc.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/campaigns/why\\_women/default.aspx](http://www.wrc.org.uk/what_we_do/campaigns/why_women/default.aspx)

# Notes

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- <sup>9</sup> [www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/pse0611.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/pse0611.pdf)
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