

ENGENDER welcomes both the work of the Christie Commission and this opportunity to submit evidence.

Engender is a feminist organisation working to make Scotland a fairer, safer place where women can flourish and contribute to both the social and market economies with dignity, freedom and justice. We seek to increase women's power and influence; make visible the impact of sexism on women and on Scotland's social, economic and political development; and support people, organisations and our government to make equality a reality. Currently, our work is focused on women's participation and representation in public life, women's poverty, and violence against women.

We will comment in more detail on individual questions but first we wish to emphasise the following points:

- **Scotland's public sector is an intrinsically gendered space.** Somewhere between 65 and 70 percent of its employees are female, and women and their children use a disproportionate share of its services. The recession is disproportionately affecting women, particularly those living with multiple discrimination and exclusion. Women bear the brunt of public sector job and service cuts and increased poverty for them and their children, increased caring responsibilities with decreased resources, disproportionate job losses, and increased vulnerability to gender-based violence.

Any restructuring that fails to incorporate gender is doomed to re-create a system that is inefficient and ineffective at designing and delivering appropriate services to the right people at the right time. Women are disadvantaged by policies that fail to recognise and reflect that women's and men's realities and experiences differ. **Unequal pay, unpaid labour, occupational segregation, and domestic and sexual violence are just some of the cornerstones of women's differential experience.**

1. In 1995, the United Nations estimated that the global value of women's unpaid and uncounted labour as \$11 trillion per year.
 2. For developed countries, unpaid work produces the equivalent output to at least half of gross domestic product (GDP)
 3. Benefits typically make up one fifth of women's income as opposed to one tenth of men's.
 4. Housing Benefit as just one example – a million more women claim this than men, and many of these will be lone mothers facing poverty.
- **We should avoid always seeing public services in a deficit model - a last-gasp, minimalist, plug-the-hole approach.** Rather, public services are a significant part of our shared common goods which reflect our values as a community and support social solidarity and well-being. The latter makes it all the more important that public services are responsive/sensitive to and created from a shared understanding of need—and that understanding must be gendered.

Questions for the submission of evidence

- **How best can our public services achieve positive outcomes for and with the people of Scotland?**

Public services in Scotland need to work proactively with individuals, communities and organisations to tackle the unfairness and discrimination that impacts on people's lives. They need to pay particular attention to the structural inequalities that Scottish people experience according to their gender (and other social divisions such as ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and disability) which have a long-lasting negative effect on themselves, their families and their communities. These inequalities also have a deleterious effect on economic growth, prosperity and wellbeing, and public services need to acknowledge that and tackle the inequalities in order to secure a prosperous future for all Scotland's citizens.

- **How best can wider organisational arrangements (including functions, structures and processes) support and enable the delivery of effective services?**

Public services in Scotland need to be model the best practice in tackling discrimination, inequality and segregation, and to hold themselves and others to account in improving the life chances and outcomes of everyone in Scotland, regardless of gender. Services need to recognise, and tackle, the causes of poverty, inequality and discrimination and the cross-cutting impact of violence and occupational segregation. Public services need to be joined-up and responsive to the needs of men and women, and to recognise and support the many paid and unpaid contributions to society that citizens make. Public services need to work co-operatively and in partnership with the voluntary sector, the private sector, communities, families and individuals to deliver high quality, responsive services that

support people's aspirations and empower them to work and care for themselves, their families and their communities.

- **What shared values and ethos should underpin Scotland public services, and how best can they be embedded in the delivery of public services in the future?**

As stated above, we should avoid always seeing public services in a deficit model - a last gasp, minimalist, plug the hole approach. Rather, public services are a significant part of our shared common goods which reflect our values as a community and support social solidarity and well-being. The latter makes it all the more important that public services are responsive/sensitive to and created from a shared understanding of need and that understanding is gendered.

The Commission invites respondents to consider these questions, and to tell them about:

- **their experiences of the operation of public services**
- **the extent to which services are effective in supporting the most vulnerable**

Gender Equality in Scotland

Devolution has presented Scotland with a unique set of opportunities and challenges. Whilst devolved and federal regimes are often seen as maintaining inequalities and allowing the development of differential outcomes, they also have the opportunity to set their own objectives and to engage in policy experimentation and learning. The Scottish Government's overarching objective is to create "a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth" (Scottish Government, 2009, pg 3). There is increasing recognition that inequality between men and women in Scotland is both widespread, pervasive, and a major impediment towards achieving sustainable economic growth. In particular, there is evidence that occupational segregation is a chief factor in gendered inequalities with regards to access to income and economic and social participation, and that failure to tackle violence against women has a significant impact on the life chances and economic exclusion of both men and women (Strategic Group on Women, 2003).

In an interesting contrast to the Westminster government (Annesley, Gains and Rummery, 2007), the Scottish Government has developed a shared outcome based approach to the planning and delivery of public services in Scotland, expressed in Single Outcome Agreements, that has highlighted full regard to equality as a key element of the process. The United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has proved to be a useful international bill of rights for women, and the Scottish Government is responsible for contributing to the UK's response to the United Nations. This has provided a policy framework for developing specific objectives with regards to tackling gender inequality in Scotland, which echoes an earlier strategic commitment to making "sure that that equality issues are considered in the formulation, design and delivery of policy/legislation/services" (Scottish Executive, 2000, p17). Whilst research has

concluded that the Westminster government has failed to engage comprehensively in effectively mainstreaming gender policy (Rummery et al, 2007), research also indicates that the Scottish Government has made some progress towards a gender settlement (McKay and Gillespie, 2005). Scottish Ministers decided in June 2009 that tackling violence against women and occupational segregation are key priorities.

Government at all levels is bound by the Equality Act 2010 to assess impact on women and men of all policy, function and budgets. Unfortunately, systematic implementation has failed at both national and local levels. As evidenced in recent UN reviews (see 2009 UN CEDAW Concluding Observations for the UK Government), the UK Government, through poor performance and failure to implement proper impact assessment, has not delivered the expected progress and has obscured the opportunity these mechanisms offer to women to lever change.

Violence Against Women

Violence against women is a cause and consequence of women's inequality and drives a significant portion of demand for public services in local authorities, in health boards, in police forces. **The Scottish Government estimates that the cost of domestic abuse to the public purse is £2.3 billion and the cost of violence against women is estimated to be £4 billion 'Safer Lives: Changed Lives A Shared Approach to Tackling Violence Against Women in Scotland', Scottish Government (2009).**

In order to support the most vulnerable people, public services need to recognise and tackle the structural causes of that vulnerability. For example, it is necessary to protect women from violence at home and in public, and to provide the victims of domestic abuse with shelter and safety for themselves and their families. It is necessary to provide low-paid working women with protection from exploitation and abuse in the workplace. It is necessary to tackle occupational segregation, lack of opportunities for education and training, and lack of high quality childcare provision which prevents many women from accessing work, or traps them into low-paid jobs. It is necessary to recognise and support the invaluable role that many women play as unpaid carers of children and vulnerable adults. It is necessary to tackle the pay gap, particularly for part-time workers, which leads many women to be at a high risk of poverty. It is necessary to address the structural barriers that many women face in participating in public life (particularly in political and civil representation) that lead to women's voices, concerns and experiences being under-represented in political and civil life. It is necessary to tackle inequality and discrimination, and to improve access to education, training, work and childcare, and to recognise and value unpaid care, so that all Scotland's citizens can contribute fully to the success of themselves, their families, and their communities.

- **the extent to which services support and empower individuals**

Services can, and do, support men and women in Scotland in many ways. They can model best practice as employers; they can help to tackle the structural causes of poverty and inequality; they can remove the barriers to joined-up working; they can

highlight positive changes; they can demonstrate the need to take violence against women, women's poverty and women's low level of participation in public life; they can listen to, and empower, individual women and women's groups to enable them to care for, work for, and protect their families and communities. They can only do this if they work in partnership with women and women's organisations to tackle poverty, violence, and the reduced life chances that many women in Scotland face.

- **the nature and value of a 'public service ethos'**

Put simply, the public service ethos in Scotland needs to develop to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. It is necessary to measure success in ways which go beyond simply economic growth and recognise the full range of activities that men and women undertake to support themselves, their families and their communities. It needs to acknowledge and tackle discrimination and the structural barriers to gender equality and equity in the public and private spheres, and it needs to work in partnership with individuals and communities to enable all sections of the community to realise their potential and contribute to Scotland's success.