

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF GREAT BRITAIN

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Annual Conference 2011 - Resolutions

Integration of Child Benefit into a Universal Welfare Benefit.

*The National Council of Women, concerned about the proposed introduction of a universal benefit to be paid to the main wage-earner, so that the child benefit will no longer be paid to the mother, **urges** Her Majesty's Government to give consideration to how this situation can be avoided.*

Proposer: Margaret Field, Chairman, NCW Southern Region
Seconder: Margaret Greenwell, Individual Members Regional Branch South
Submitted by: NCW Southern Region

The continuing Importance of Libraries

The National Council of Women, aware that libraries:

- are needed by the community
- are used by all ages from pre-school children to the elderly
- are a resource for deep learning and the provision of information
- in the majority of cases provide computers which help people, especially children who do not have this resource at home, to access the Internet
- frequently provide free computer sessions to help people learn how send email, access the internet etc.
- offer the opportunity for pre-school children to become accustomed to handling books – especially important for those whose mothers do not, or cannot, read
- provide publicity for authors who would be badly affected by their closure

urges Her Majesty's Government to consider carefully the effects of the cuts being made to the funding of Library Services throughout the country.

Proposer: Sheila Chapman, Chairman, NCW Arts Committee
Seconder: Elsie Leadley, Vice President, NCW
Submitted by: NCW Arts Committee

Feeding Current and Future Generations Safely

The National Council of Women, in Conference assembled, aware of the need to safeguard future generations round the world, and the consequent obligation to ensure the protection of the entire food chain and the water, air and soil fundamental to this,

urges Her Majesty's Government

1. to make every effort to raise awareness among farmers, food producers, supermarkets and other commercial interests, scientists, and all those engaged in these areas of the long-term impact of new technologies such as genetic modification of foods and the use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers;
2. to act now to reduce waste throughout the food chain, from production and specification through to better waste management and consumer education about the issues.

Proposer: Erica Bargman, International Vice Chairman of the EUW Food, Agriculture & Consumers Commission
Seconder: Liz Morrison, Chair of the British Section of the EUW Food, Agriculture & Consumers' Commission
Submitted by: The European Union of Women (British Section)

Sexual Stereotyping in Education

The National Council of Women, in Conference assembled, notes the government's intention to introduce Technical Schools offering education in Engineering and Technical skills for 14-year olds who do not wish to pursue an academic career.

*NCW **urges** Her Majesty's Government to treat girls and boys equally in these new Technical Schools, ensuring open access to education in the fields of Science, Engineering, Technology and Mathematics, and encouraging the consideration of non-gender-specific career possibilities in SETM for both girls and boys.*

Proposer: Monica Tolman, Immediate Past President, NCW
Seconder: Heather Bell, Secretary, SW Midlands Region, NCW
Submitted by: Cheltenham Branch, NCW

Dangers of Mass Medication in Food and Water

*The National Council of Women in Conference assembled, aware of the current widespread custom of adding chemicals to food and drink, sometimes claiming health advantages for sections of the public, **urges** HMG to prohibit the addition of a chemical to:-*

- 1. The Water Supply – for mass medication purposes,*
or
- 2. Food or Drink – if there is any evidence from scientific research results, or reports from doctors or members of the public, of serious adverse reactions.*

Proposer: Patience Purdy, Honorary Vice President, Chairman, Tyne Coast Branch
Seconder: Gillian Poole, Vice President, NCW
Submitted by: Science and Technology Committee, NCW

Transport Problems

The National Council of Women, concerned that:

- rural bus services may no longer be subsidised and therefore will be reduced, or removed altogether*
- the considerable increase in rail fares discourages people from travelling by train*
- passengers on busy rail services are regularly unable to find a seat*
- we need to encourage more efficient use of public transport*

***urges** Her Majesty's government*

- not to reduce its subsidy to the railways, but to check that it is being used efficiently to improve the services*
- to maintain public services and reasonable fares so that: young people can access education, the workforce can travel to and from work, everyone, including the elderly and the vulnerable, can use public transport to enable them to enjoy an acceptable quality of life*
- to make further progress in improving access by public transport to connecting services, and include adequate parking, for people in rural communities*
- to take steps to maximise the use of public (road and rail) transport services at an affordable price.*

Proposer: Maureen Clifforth, Co-chairman, Hereford Branch, NCW
Seconder: Jenny Spivey, Darlington and District Branch, NCW
Submitted by: Darlington and District Branch, NCW

Reform of Women's Justice

The National Council of Women

noting with concern the excessive numbers of women in prison in the UK

- 1. aware that many women in prison have mental health problems and/or drug and alcohol addictions, have spent time in care, and/or have experienced domestic violence, including sexual abuse*
- 2. aware too that most women in prison serve short sentences for non-violent offences*
- 3. noting that sending women to prison is often unnecessary and ineffective in reducing reoffending, and carries a huge cost to women, children and wider society*
- 4. conscious of the broad consensus that community solutions, tailored to women's needs, are generally more effective than prison in reducing women's offending and minimising the cost to society*
- 5. aware that there is currently no clear government strategy or sustainable funding to support the widespread availability of such community solutions and the reduction in numbers of women being sent to prison*

Calls upon Her Majesty's Government to ensure:

- 1. that a rigorous, cross-Departmental strategy is developed and implemented with urgency to divert women from crime, reduce the women's prison population, and reduce offending and reoffending by women*
- 2. that this strategy acts on the findings of recent major reviews and research into women's justice such as the Wedderburn and Corston Reviews and specifically the consensus that community solutions work better than prison*
- 3. that, through this strategy, community services that have been shown to be effective in preventing and reducing crime by women, including women's centres, are made available throughout the country to women and families who are in need*
- 4. that, through this strategy, a wide range of effective alternatives to custody for women are made available to courts consistently across the country*
- 5. that these measures are undertaken at national and local level through co-operation between government departments and local services - justice, health and housing amongst others, and that they are driven forward by strong leadership at the highest level, and by structures for delivery that ensure transparency and accountability.*

Proposer: Juliet Lyon, Director (Prison Reform Trust)

Secunder: Wendy, Recruitment Manager, former prisoner

Submitted by: The Prison Reform Trust

Forced Marriages

"The National Council of Women

Concerned by reports of forced marriages and aware of the report on Forced Marriage by the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (Home Affairs Committee – Eighth Report on Forced marriage - Published May 17th 2011);

Aware, too, that the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 does not make forced marriage a criminal offence, and that evidence provided to the Home Affairs Committee indicates that this is a growing and serious problem;

urges her Majesty's Government

(i) to initiate legislation to make forced marriage a criminal offence, as recommended in the Home Affairs Committee report (May 2011);

and

(ii) to give support to organisations which work to assist victims of forced marriage.

Proposer: Lois Hainsworth MBE, Honorary Vice-President, NCW

Secunder: Rita Wheeler, Vice-President, NCW

Submitted by: Management Committee, NCW

Reaffirmations

2007 The Rise in Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's)

Submitted by: The Health Committee and Affiliate National Association for Nurses in Contraception and Sexual Health

The National Council of Women, aware that Great Britain has the highest rate of underage pregnancy in Europe, that STIs are on the increase and that sub-fertility may result from these, **urges** HMG to take the necessary steps to promote the sexual health of our population.

The Effect of the Global Economic Crisis on Women

Submitted by: Management Committee

The National Council of Women, aware of the adverse impact of the global economic crisis on women's employment, affecting rights to maternity leave, part-time work, family-friendly policies and flexible working hours,

aware, too, of the widening pay differentials between women and men,

calls upon Her Majesty's Government to safeguard the hard-won rights of women to equal treatment in all aspects of employment, and the legal provisions recognising employment rights related to pregnancy and child-care.

Note: All the above resolutions and reaffirmations were passed by delegates at Conference and confirmed by Council at the AGM which followed. The exception was the Resolution on the Dangers of Mass Medication in Food and Water, which was not passed.