



Parliamentary Report : February 2024

1 Report Highlights

In the News

- Victims of vaginal mesh and valproate deserve urgent compensation – [Report](#) by the Patients' Safety Commissioner
- [Women's health priorities for 2024](#) – Government announcement
- Menopause in the workplace – EHRC [guidance for employers](#)
- [First conviction](#) for FGM being carried out abroad
- [Harsher sentences](#) for 'rough sex killers'
- Council [cuts to violence against women services](#)
- Labour's pledges [equal pay rights for ethnic minorities](#)

New and closed consultations

- **Disability Action Plan 2023-2024.** Government has [published its Action Plan 2023-2024](#) based on the [responses](#) to its consultation. Campaigners say the Action Plan lacks ambition and is wholly inadequate.
- **Creating a smoke free generation and tackling youth vaping.** The Government has announced [a ban on disposable vapes](#) and powers to restrict flavours and introduce plain packaging as part of its plan to tackle youth vaping. The announcement came ahead of the publication of the [response to its public consultation](#). A large majority of respondents supported the government's proposal to create a smokefree generation.

- **Folic acid.** Following the publication of [responses](#) to its consultation, the Government has decided to proceed with the mandatory addition of 250 µg of folic acid per 100g to non-whole wheat flour. NCWGB wrote to Ministers pressing them to increase the amount and add it to all flours and rice in line with scientific and medical research but the Government has stuck to its original proposal.

Select Committees. New enquiries and reports (See section 4 for details)

- **Home Affairs Committee** – *Non-contact sexual offences* [new inquiry](#) to explore the escalation of non-contact sexual offences such as voyeurism and indecent exposure to more serious sexual offences such as rape and sexual assault and whether enough is being done to prevent the escalation;
- **International Development Select Committee** [report](#) on the devastating impact of UK aid cuts on women's health globally.

All of the above are highlighted in red in the full report below.

2 Public Consultations (new information in red)

All consultations can be found by clicking on this [link](#).

Open Consultations	Description	How to respond	Closing Date
None			

3 Closed Consultations: Government Response Published (click link for report)

None

4 Closed Consultations: Awaiting Government Response (click link for summary of initial consultation)

[Toilet provision in public buildings other than dwellings](#)

[Exchange of sexual relations for accommodation \('sex for rent'\)](#)

[Protecting Hedgerows in England](#)

Nature recovery green paper

Consultation on local connection requirements for social housing for victims of domestic abuse

Banning conversion therapy

4 Select Committees with open enquiries of potential interest to NCW (new information in red)

Details of Select Committees can be found by [clicking here](#)

Women and Equalities Committee [click here](#)

Inquiries	Description	Status
<u>Impact of the rising cost of living on women</u>	The inquiry will consider how are rising food, energy, housing, and other costs affecting women compared to men and whether it could exacerbate existing inequalities and what steps the Government and other stakeholders could take in response.	Most recent evidence session 31 January 2024. Link to evidence.
Women's reproductive health	A short inquiry looking at the challenges that women face when they are being diagnosed and treated for reproductive health, gynaecological and urogynaecological conditions which include heavy menstrual bleeding, premenstrual syndrome (PMS), premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD), endometriosis, adenomyosis, fibroids, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), urinary incontinence and vaginal prolapse.	Most recent evidence session 29 November 2023. Link to evidence.
The escalation of violence against women and girls	To understand whether men who commit certain types of crime and non-criminal offences have a higher potential to commit serious acts of violence against women. The inquiry will also examine the availability and effectiveness of services and interventions to tackle such behaviours.	Most recent evidence session 21 February 2024. Link to evidence.

National Disability Strategy	<p>Scrutinising the implementation and further development of the Government's July 2021 National Disability Strategy covering disabled people and those with learning disabilities and autism. The Committee will investigate the extent to which stakeholder contributions informed the strategy; how well it will help disabled people to enjoy equal living standards and life opportunities to those without disabilities; progress on the strategy so far; how effectively the Government is involving disabled people in the strategy's implementation and further development; how well the strategy is being funded and measured for success; how compatible it is with the UK's treaty obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; what more could the Government do to mitigate the effects of future crises on people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Report published on 6 December 2023. Click here for summary.</p> <p>Awaiting Government response.</p>
Preventing violence against women and girls	<p>Following its April evidence session, Changing cultures underpinning male violence against women, the Committee has launched the next stage of its work on Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls. The Committee's work will begin with a literature review of existing evidence submitted as part of the Government's consultation for its July 2021 Tackling violence against women and girls strategy, as well as written and oral evidence gathered by the Home Affairs Select Committee as part of its inquiry Violence against women and girls. Click here for full details of how the Committee will conduct its inquiry.</p> <p>Click here for an excellent summary of the topic, including what VAWG is, why it happens, how it can be prevented, international and domestic obligations to prevent it, Government action and the Committee's work to date.</p>	<p>Most recent evidence session 9 March 2022. Link to evidence.</p> <p>Specialist advisers appointed. Click for their details</p>

<u>Pornography and its impact on violence to women and girls</u>	As part of its wider work on preventing Violence Against Women and Girls, the Women and Equalities Committee is to hold the first of two evidence sessions exploring the impact of pornography on attitudes towards women and girls. It will consider whether the Online Safety Bill offers an opportunity for the Government to better regulate pornographic content in order to reduce harm. It will also look at how the porn industry is currently regulated and the potential impact of rapidly developing technologies.	Most recent evidence session 22 June 2022. Link to evidence.
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Health and Social Care Committee [click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
Assisted Dying and Assisted Suicide	Seeking views on assisted dying and suicide	Most recent evidence session 4 July 2023. Link to evidence.

Education Committee [click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
No current inquiries of relevance to NCW		

Home Affairs [click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
Non-contact sexual offences	To explore the escalation of non-contact sexual offences such as voyeurism and indecent exposure to more serious sexual	Most recent evidence session 21 February 2024.

	offences such as rape and sexual assault. It will examine whether enough is being done to prevent the escalation.	
Human trafficking	The Committee will assess the scale of human trafficking, the forms it takes and whether Government policy, legislation and the criminal justice system can be improved.	Report published on 8 December 2023. Click here for report. Awaiting Government response.

Justice

[click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
No current inquiries relevant to NCW		

Work and Pensions [click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
No current inquiries relevant to NCW.		

International Development Committee [click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
FCDO and disability inclusive development	To consider the adequacy and effectiveness of the FCDO's disability and inclusion rights strategy, launched in February 2022, including the consequences for disability-inclusive	Most recent evidence session 23 January 2024. Link to evidence.

	programmes of the decision to cut aid spending from 0.7% to 0.5% of GNI.	
<u>The FCDO's approach to sexual and reproductive health</u>	To assess whether UK aid spent by the FCDO on sexual and reproductive health in lower- income countries could be better targeted. Evidence suggests that the cut in UK aid has had an immediate and significant impact on this area of work despite the Government's commitment to drive progress and fight FGM. It will range across support and delivery of family planning education, contraceptive supplies and healthcare services, to maternity services and support for new-born babies, including preventable deaths.	Report published on 25 January 2024. Click here for report. Awaiting Government response.
<u>The future of UK aid</u>	Scrutiny of the cut in spending Overseas Development Aid from 0.7% to 0.5% of UK Gross National Income, the merger of the FCO and Department of International Development and the conclusions of the integrated review	Most recent evidence session 20 June 2023. Link to evidence.

Science, Innovation and Technology Committee [click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
<u>The antimicrobial potential of bacteriophages</u>	Seeking views on the restrictions on the clinical use of bacteriophages, an alternative antimicrobial to be used instead or conjunction with antibiotics. They can kill bacteria but aren't harmful to humans. The WHO has warned that resistance to antibiotics is one of the greatest threats to human health	Report published on 3 January 2024. Click here for summary. Awaiting Government response.
Insect decline and food security	To understand the role of insects in the UK's food system; the economic impact and risk to the food system of their decline;	Most recent evidence session 29 November 2023. Link to evidence.

	the current drivers of the decline and the Government's intervention's to reverse or halt the decline.	
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Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee

[click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
No current inquiries relevant to NCW.		

Culture, Media and Sport Committee [click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
<u>Gambling regulation</u>	To investigate the Government's approach to regulation following warnings that more needs to be done to protect people, including children from gambling related harm, and the issues raised by Parliament such as keeping up with online innovations and the links between gambling and broadcasting and sport.	Report published on 21 December 2023. Click here for summary. Awaiting Government response.

Transport Committee [click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
No current inquiries relevant to NCW.		

Details of Select Committees

Membership and contact details of Select Committees can be found by [clicking here](#) or the Committee Office, House of Commons, Palace of Westminster, SW1A 0AA

Women and Equalities Committee: Chaired by Rt Hon Caroline Noakes MP (Con)

Email: womegcom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 5113

Culture, Media and Sport: Chaired by Julian Knight MP (Con)

Email: cmscom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 6188

Education Committee: Chaired by Robin Walker MP (Con)

Email: educom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 2370

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Chaired by Sir Robert Goodwill MP (Con)

Email: efracom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 111

Health and Social Care Committee: Chaired by Steve Brine MP (Con)

Email: hsccom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 6182

Home Affairs Committee: Chaired by Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson MP (Lab)

Email: homeaffcom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 6856/3282

International Development Committee: Chaired by Sarah Champion MP (Lab)

Email: indcom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 1223/1226

Justice: Chaired by Sir Robert Neill MP (Con)

Email: justicecom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 8196/1280

Science, Innovation and Technology Committee: Chaired by Rt Hon Greg Clark MP (Con)

Email: scitechcom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 2793

Transport: Chaired by Iain Stewart MP (Con)

Email: transcom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 6094

Work and Pensions: Chaired by Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP (Con)

Email: workpen@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 8976

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