



Women's Regional
Consortium

WRC Launch REPORT

Index

Introduction	3
Agenda	4
Prompts	5 – 8
Policy and Socio-economic Context	9 – 12
Welfare Reform Issues Raised	13
Welfare Reform Suggestions for Actions	14
Health & Social Care Issues Raised	15
Health & Social Care Suggestions for Action	16
Childcare Issues Raised	17
Childcare Suggestions for Actions	18 – 19
Education & Training Issues Raised	20
Education & Training Suggested for Actions	21 – 22
Other Issues Raised	23
Engagement & Training Questionnaire	24
Engagement & Training Questionnaire Results	25
Engagement & Training Questionnaire Report	26
Women’s Regional Consortium Launch Action Plan	27 – 32
Bibliography	33

INTRODUCTION

Report on Launch of Women's Regional Consortium

The Women's Regional Consortium was launched officially on February 13th, 2014 in the Wellington Park Hotel, Belfast.

The Consortium is made up of seven organisations:

- Foyle Women's Information Network
- Women's Resource and Development Agency
- Training for Women Network
- Women's Support Network
- NI Rural Women's Network
- **WOMEN'S TEC**
- Women's Centre Derry

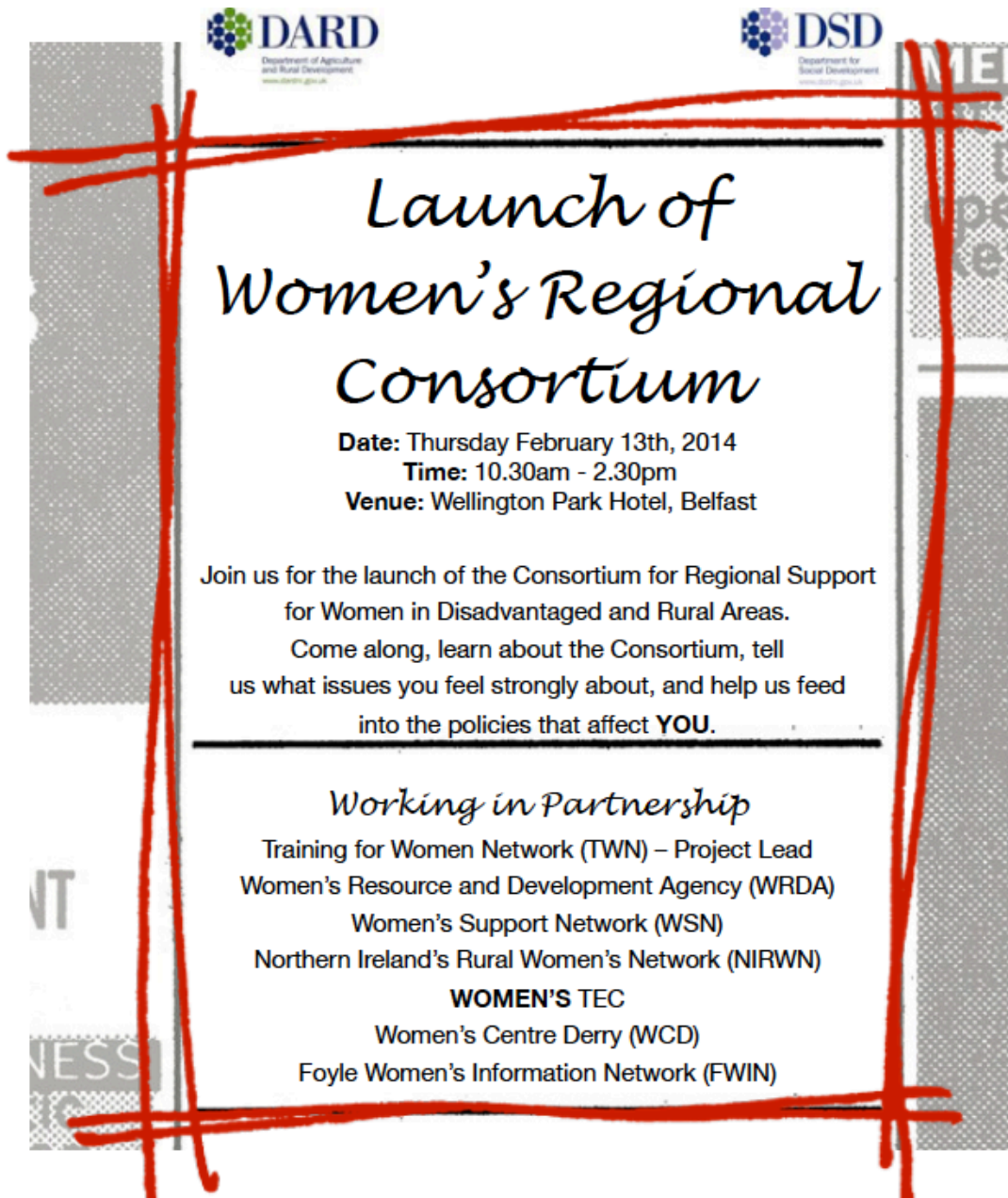
The consortium will be the established link between government and statutory agencies and women in disadvantaged and rural areas. It will also ensure a continuous flow of information between government and the sector.



Part of the launch included round table discussions to identify the issues which are most affecting women in disadvantaged and rural areas. Facilitators at each table were given prompts to encourage discussion among groups (prompts are included in this document). This is a report based on the information collated at this event.

The report deals with four main issues

- Welfare Reform
- Health & Social Care
- Childcare
- Education & Training

Agenda from Launch of Women's Regional Consortium



Launch of Women's Regional Consortium

Date: Thursday February 13th, 2014
Time: 10.30am - 2.30pm
Venue: Wellington Park Hotel, Belfast

Join us for the launch of the Consortium for Regional Support for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas. Come along, learn about the Consortium, tell us what issues you feel strongly about, and help us feed into the policies that affect **YOU**.

Working in Partnership

Training for Women Network (TWN) – Project Lead
Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA)
Women's Support Network (WSN)
Northern Ireland's Rural Women's Network (NIRWN)
WOMEN'S TEC
Women's Centre Derry (WCD)
Foyle Women's Information Network (FWIN)



**Welfare Reform and the implications for women and families
living in disadvantaged and rural areas
Roundtable discussion prompts for facilitators**

Issue	Prompts/information
<p>Universal Credit</p>	<p>The early roll out of Universal Credit began in Great Britain on 29 April 2013. It is expected to be introduced to NI in Summer 2014. The benefits that will be replaced are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the means tested part of Jobseeker’s Allowance • the means tested part of Employment & Support Allowance • Income Support • Child Tax Credits • Working Tax Credits • Housing Benefit -Rent element only <p>The following benefits will NOT be replaced by Universal Credit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the part Jobseeker’s Allowance that is made up from the contributions you have paid • Child Benefit • Pension Credit • Carers’ Allowance • Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit <p>Single payment to one person in the household: First it is proposed that Universal Credit will be paid as a single payment to a nominated person in the household. A concern is that this payment will invariably go to the wallet of the ‘male head of household’, thus taking money (previously tax credits) from the purse. For many women this will result in the total removal of direct access to financial resources.</p> <p>Universal Credit to be paid monthly: It is proposed that Universal Credit be paid monthly based on the idea that monthly payments are like “paid wages”. This proposal raises a huge amount of anxiety amongst women and families who are living on low and very low incomes who fear budgeting difficulties and increased levels of debt.</p>
<p>Bedroom Tax</p>	<p>The new system would allow one bedroom for each person or couple living as part of the household, with the following exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child under the age of 16 would be expected to share with one other child of the same gender; • A child under 10 years would be expected to share with one other child under 10, regardless of gender; • A bedroom for a non-resident carer will be allowed in the calculation of necessary bedrooms where that carer provides necessary overnight care for the claimant or their partner. <p>Tenants would see their Housing Benefit payment reduced by 14% of their rent for under-occupation by one bedroom and by 25% for under-occupation by two or more bedrooms. Based on the current average rent of £58.76, a tenant who receives full housing benefit but who is under-occupying by one bedroom would see their Housing Benefit reduced by about £8.25 a week. If your Housing Benefit is cut you will have to pay your landlord the difference between your Housing Benefit and your rent.</p>
<p>Threats to Benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability benefits will now be called PIP – (Personal Independence Payment). If you are called for an assessment and you are deemed fit for work – the benefit stops – should you appeal, you will not receive any benefit until the issue is resolved. This will force people to accept other benefits even if they are entitled to the disability payments. • There are so many changes to the benefit system – child benefit is means tested • Winter fuel allowance is means tested - currently the benefits that elderly people are entitled to and are not claimed is approximately 60 million a year! • Women are affected more by these reforms as 20% of women’s incomes are made up of social security benefits/tax credits compared with 10% of men’s incomes. • Welfare Reform is to modernize the system to save money. Why do this to the most vulnerable those most dependent on the state are to be punished!

Women's Regional Consortium

Health and Social Care for women living in disadvantaged and rural areas Roundtable discussion prompts for facilitators

Issue	Prompts/ information
<p>Transforming Your Care</p>	<p>For more information click on to the transforming your care website: http://www.transformingyourcare.hscni.net/</p> <p>Transforming Your Care describes how and where you will receive health and social care services. It includes details on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering services at home and in the community • Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs) is one of the key new proposals. Integrated Care Partnerships will include GPs, nurses, social workers, community pharmacists and other health care professionals, as well as representatives from voluntary and community organisations. ICPs will enable all those involved in providing care to work more closely together on a collaborative basis to improve efficient and effective service delivery and deliver better outcomes for patients. • Older People. Care closer to home, closure of Statutory Residential Homes. • Maternity and child health care- 'normalisation of birth', to reduce the length of time mothers stay in hospital and to increase the number of women having their ante-natal care in the community instead of attending hospital • Acute health care (with the introduction of Integrated Care Partnerships, together with other initiatives to reduce emergency admissions to hospitals would be likely to result in a reduction of 180 acute hospital beds over the next 3 to 5 years. This estimate is based on the development of alternative services, which would lead to increased levels of care in primary and community settings and therefore reduced admissions; the draft plans, which were published as part of the consultation, show targets for reduced hospital admissions for older people and those with long term conditions due to the implementation of TYC. • Strengthening Cross border links with GB and Ireland. • Mental Health: joined-up approach between GPs, hospitals and specialists <p>Some concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiting lists • Cleanliness • Staff shortages (overall there will be a modest reduction (around 3%) in our workforce over the next three to five years) • Access to GP's • A&E waiting times • Elderly care (To be referred to as bed blockers! how must that feel to be old, helpless, sick and dependent!) • Carers – women more likely to be carers than men. • Mental health issues on the rise for women in NI <p>Current issues</p> <p>'Royal Victoria Hospital A&E review hears system 'dysfunctional'- concerns about staffing levels, bullying, intolerable pressure and a dysfunctional healthcare system.</p>

Childcare and women living in disadvantaged and rural areas
Roundtable discussion prompts for facilitators

Issue	Prompts/ information
<p>Childcare Strategy NI</p>	<p>-December 2012; Consultation on the Childcare Strategy was launched.</p> <p>-September 2013, Bright Start, a <u>Strategic Framework and Key First Actions</u> was launched. (<i>Bright Start is not the full, final Childcare Strategy</i>. It sets out 15 key first actions that can be put in place to address the issues identified in the consultation.)</p> <p>Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of 0-3 provision • provision for children from ethnic minority families is not detailed • Does not take proper account of the potential impact of welfare reform on childcare • Future of Childcare funding for women's organisation/community based childcare <p>-A management forum has been set up made up of all relevant government departments and other stake holders including childcare partnerships and lead by OFMDFM to oversee the first key actions.</p> <p>-OFMDFM plan to publish the substantive and more detailed Strategy for Affordable and Integrated Childcare in 2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single, coordinating department with overall responsibility for childcare has been promised in full strategy
<p>Community based accessible childcare</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniqueness and holistic approach of community based childcare in addressing social and economic exclusion • Community based childcare makes important contribution to government policies such as child poverty, childcare and social inclusion. (Delivering Social Change agenda) • The importance of community based childcare being within 'Pram pushing distance' • Community based childcare is either free or affordable • Funding for community based childcare is piecemeal and on a year to year basis. • Limited resources to meet the growing demand for community based childcare • Vital that Early Years and Childcare strategies ensure resources are available for the sustainability of community based childcare.
<p>Childcare for the 0-3's</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-3 childcare is not in the current Bright Start document. • 0-3's is essential if our government is serious about targeting families and children in areas of disadvantage. • The Childcare Strategy's prime objectives is to support families and children throughout NI, particularly those who are most disadvantaged. • To break the cycle of inequality, support at the 0-3 age stage is vital. • Early intervention is crucial if we are to address the endemic inequality that still plagues the disadvantaged in our communities.
<p>Access for women who live in rural areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bright start documents proposes to address the accessibility of childcare in rural areas by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ introduction of a 'Rural Child-minder Start-Up Package', ○ Commitment to support 'locally based transport schemes in rural areas, servicing networks of child-minders in rural locations', ○ Commitment to a social enterprise programme, potentially generating up to 1,000 new affordable, school age childcare places. • Issue to be considered with Bright Start and Rural Childcare: • Strong rural representation on the proposed Childcare Management Forum would be 'essential' to ensuring equity in rural provision in Bright Start's first key actions. • How effective will the proposed rural transport schemes be within Bright Start given difficulties with similar ongoing schemes? • The appropriateness of relying on NIMDM 2010 to target delivery in deprived areas. • Why another pilot was required given the proven effectiveness of a previous DARD's Rural Childcare Programme 2010?

Women's Regional Consortium

Education & Training for women in disadvantaged and rural areas

Issue	Prompt's / information
<p>Access for women to community based education and training</p>	<p>Issues faced by womens organisation providing education and training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding i.e. Big Lottery, ESF, DEL, NEET's (Pathways to Success), DEL Learner Access and Engagement Programme(LEAP) • Project based funding • Piecemeal funding for programmes • Short term – difficult to plan and develop services • Funding for core activity • Applying for funding and or tendering • Minimum number of participants required to be enrolled per class • Funding for accredited courses • Value of non accredited courses and targeting the 'hardest to reach women'. • Value of partnership working <p>Issues to consider for women accessing education/training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare • Transport • Cost • Flexibility and choice • Confidence • School runs • The need for Education/training based in the community to help overcome the barriers above
<p>Access to apprenticeships for women living in disadvantaged and rural areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEL is currently reviewing apprenticeships in NI. It is intended that the new model will transform the current model: by addressing challenges to existing provision, including, for example, a lack of flexibility and a disconnect between labour supply and employer demand. <p>What are the issues and barriers for women accessing apprenticeships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeships require an employer even when there was an abundance of construction work it was still near impossible to find an employer to take on a woman. • Classes tend to be all male which makes it hard for women to be stand alone. In architecture you can find a lot of women but the "network" to employment is still traditional – golf clubs. • The hours required can border on the ridicules working weekends which excludes women with children or family responsibilities.
<p>Access for women in rural areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local educational opportunities are essential for women in rural areas • Women in rural areas have a lack of personal transport • Poor public transport in rural areas • Poor road networks • Location of childcare

Consortium Launch Report: Policy and Socio-economic Context

This section briefly contextualises the women's views captured in this report by considering the wider policy and socio-economic environment within which the Consortium launch took place, and against which women at the launch were motivated to ensure their 'voices' were explicitly heard, and their views subsequently relayed to government, on all four of the key policy areas under review in the roundtable.

Austerity and exceptionality

Clearly, in recent years, the policy context in Northern Ireland has been dominated and innately shaped by austerity-driven dynamics and exceptional fiscal constraints, the aggregate impact of which has been manifest in severe retrenchments in social expenditure and substantive associated tax and benefit reform.

Research suggests that households in Northern Ireland could be disproportionately affected by such reform, as compared to elsewhere in the United Kingdom. For example, research from the Institute for Fiscal Studies indicates that concurrent tax and benefit reform will '*disproportionately affect*' households at the bottom of the Northern Irish income distribution scale, as compared to their counterparts in the rest of the United Kingdom.¹ Moreover, NICVA-commissioned research suggests that welfare reform will result in a '*substantially larger* [financial loss to the Northern Ireland economy] than [to] any other part of the UK'.²

Of course, the cumulative adverse effect of such reform in the Northern Ireland case is exacerbated by the convergence of other exceptional socio-economic factors, including stagnant and static incomes and rises in the cost of living, such as utility and food prices, contributing to increased levels of

¹ J. Browne, 'The impact of tax and benefit reforms to be introduced between 2010–11 and 2014–15 in Northern Ireland, IFS Briefing Note 114', Institute for Fiscal Studies: London, 2012. It is forecasted that these households will lose almost 10 percent of their income.

² C. Beatty and S. Fothergill, The impact of welfare reform on Northern Ireland: a research paper, NICVA: Belfast, 2013.

vulnerability and associated actual/projected increases in poverty.³ Recent¹⁰ research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation affirms this trend by showing that rising childcare and energy costs, in tandem with stagnant incomes and benefit cuts, have extended the poverty gap in the United Kingdom by 'creating [an] *unprecedented* erosion of household living standards'.⁴

Impact on women

So, the combination of cuts under austerity measures, rises in the cost of living and static/stagnant incomes has imposed exceptional additional financial burdens on already vulnerable families in disadvantaged and rural areas across Northern Ireland. But from a gendered perspective, the crucial point here is this: as compared to men, women in these areas may be disproportionately affected by this trend given the aggregate impact of a range of pre-existing patterned gender imbalances and other factors, which can contribute to benefit dependency, further constraining their economic participation and reinforcing the gender pay gap.⁵ For example, the lack of available and affordable childcare,⁶ combined with women's roles as primary care givers⁷ and the fact over 90 per cent of lone parent households in Northern Ireland are female-headed,⁸ can have the aggregate effect of further restricting women's already constrained participation in the labour market⁹ and increasing benefit reliance.

³ See, for example, G. Horgan, 'Welfare reform: implications and options for Northern Ireland', University of Ulster: Belfast, 2013, p.2. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.socsci.ulster.ac.uk/irss/documents/KESS2-2.docx>

⁴ D Hirsch, A minimum income standard for the UK in 2013, JRF: London, 2013.

⁵ See, for example, Government Equalities Office, The gender pay gap in the UK: 1995 to 2007, Research Findings No. 2010/2, GEO: London, 2010.

⁶ On this, see R. McQuaid, H. Graham and M. Shapira, Childcare: maximising the economic participation of women. Equality Commission Northern Ireland: Belfast, 2013; also, B. Hinds, The Northern Ireland economy: Women on the edge? A comprehensive analysis of the impacts of the financial crisis, Women's Resource and Development Agency: Belfast, 2011.

⁷ Carers' UK, Valuing carers: calculating the value of carers' support, CUK: London, 2011.

⁸ R. Russell, Northern Ireland Assembly, Research and Information Service Research Paper - Census 2011: Key Statistics at Northern Ireland and LGD level, NIA: Belfast, 2013.

⁹ The nature of participation of women in the labour market in Northern Ireland, in no small measure due to their constrained work choices as primary carers in families, is such that women, as compared to men, continue to disproportionately participate in part-time, low paid and sporadic work. And, the nature of the gender pay gap in Northern Ireland is such that women continue to earn less than men across a range of sectors. See Department of Finance and Personnel for NI, Labour market statistics bulletin: women in Northern Ireland, (September 2012). Available at,

http://www.detini.gov.uk/women_in_northern_ireland_september_2012_final_version.pdf

See also, NISRA, Northern Ireland statistics & research agency results from the Northern Ireland annual survey of hours and earnings 2012, NISRA: Belfast, 2012.

In short, the policy and socio-economic context within which the Consortium launch took place, and against which women at the launch were particularly motivated to 'have their say' on the policy areas under review at the roundtable, is characterised by the convergence of exceptional socio-economic factors, the cumulative impact of which research affirms as actual/projected increases in vulnerability and poverty.

Launch event – engagement platform

Clearly, in such a fundamentally constrained policy, fiscal and socio-economic context, it is especially important that women in disadvantaged and rural areas should have sustained and meaningful opportunities to articulate their perspectives on policy proposals that affect them and to, subsequently, suggest to government potential remedial actions.

The launch event proffered just such an engagement opportunity, extending a significant platform to over one hundred women from disadvantaged and rural areas to articulate their needs, interests and perspectives across key policy areas that fundamentally impact their everyday lives and, ultimately, to have these contributions relayed to policymakers through the compilation and dissemination of this evaluative report.

Indeed, since its establishment at the start of October 2013, the Consortium has proffered such women several opportunities to articulate their views on major policy consultations that innately affect them, by convening a series of engagement events in urban and rural areas. Feedback from these events has informed Consortium consultation responses across a range of key policy areas: pension reform, improved outcomes for children and young people, the remodelling of the apprenticeships system and the future of consumer representation. In each of these responses, the Consortium has conveyed the substantive concerns of women about how proposed policy might potentially adversely impact them and their families, especially within the current socio-economic context of actual/projected rising poverty and vulnerability.



As it moves forward with its policy work in the coming months and beyond,¹² the Consortium will continue to proffer such engagement opportunities to affected women, ensuring that robust, evidence-based consultation responses are submitted to government on their behalf, and that their 'voices' are consequently 'heard' and 'actively listened to' in the public sphere.

Welfare Reform

A number of issues were raised on Welfare Reform, including:

Lack of information – there is a fear that people are unaware of exactly what these changes could mean or that there is misinformation causing distress and fear.

Welfare reform seems to be a target led approach and not genuine needs assessment

Universal Credit –

- As this is set to be one monthly payment going to the 'head of the household' there are serious concerns that this will have an extremely detrimental effect on women.
- In a patriarchal society such as ours the head of the household is often considered to be the man, therefore there are concerns that some women will have little or no access to money in families where there are difficulties.
- There are further concerns that changing from weekly or fortnightly payments to monthly payments may have a negative impact. Families that are not used to budgeting on a monthly basis could be left with little or no money at the end of the month, this in turn can lead to debt.

Bedroom tax –

- Fears people will be forced to move from their homes particularly when there is a lack of social housing
- Misinformation causing fear
- Concern over the ages of children that will be expected to share a room
- Some couples can't share a room when disability/age becomes a factor
- Carers room in a house is often vital

Social Housing Reform -

- Separate from bedroom tax
- Will look at the future of the NI Housing Executive

Disability payments -

- Bringing a lot of stress and worry to those with disabilities to complete forms that are sent out more frequently.

Pensions -

- Pension age rising to 67. This is a rise of 2 years for men but 7 years for women, meaning a much higher net loss for women - is there an equality issue.

Forms –

- Concern that forms are too complicated, they need to be simplified to make it easier for people to access the benefits they need

Welfare Reform Suggestions for actions

- Talk to DSD about getting information on welfare reform and ensure it is fed right down to grass roots women.
- Develop a questions and answers sheet on Welfare Reform
- Campaign & raise awareness on Welfare reform particularly in rural areas
- Evidence of how universal credit is working in pilot areas
- Simplify benefits to allow older people to access them
- Lobby MLAs not to adopt Westminster reforms
- Lobby MLAs on pension changes
- Offer more budget/money management training

Welfare Reform

Comments on the ground

“Changing to Universal Credit for the head of the household is taking us back decades.”

“We need awareness raising for those who will be impacted and this needs to be resourced.”

“Some people will not be able to budget monthly payments and will spend it all without it stretching to the end of the month.”

“There is a need to increase benefits, people are struggling, they might then go to money lenders and end up paying high interest and getting into a cycle of debt.”

Health & Social Care

A number of issues were raised in relation to health and social care.

Hospitals

- Lack of staffing in hospitals
- Cleanliness
- Bring back matrons on every ward
- Waiting lists

Mental health care

- Lack of resources for mental health care
- Under funding of mental health services
- Lack of access to counselling and support as an alternative to prescribed drugs
- Post conflict women have been left to pick up the pieces
- Need for campaigns to raise awareness

Carers

- Need more support for the elderly and their carers
- Carers need more money – often carers are saving money as those in need of help are being looked after at home and don't go into care.
- Carers are more likely to be women - they are often expected to look after the elderly and children. Many women give up their job to care for the family.
- Carers are often not recognised or the work they do
- More funding, that is easier to access, from HSCT for equipment for use in the home to assist carers

Transgender

- GP is first point of contact,
- More training needed for medical workers
- More post after care surgery needed.

Addition health and social care issues

- Lack of awareness of Integrated Care Partnerships (ICP), are women involved in the ICPs
- Access to affordable, warm, dry wheelchair accessible rental housing in rural areas.
- Respite for single parents especially when they have problems
- Need to strengthen local community support groups
- More help needed with funding/grant applications
- Get out of hours systems fit for purpose

Health and Social Care Suggestions for action

- Lobbying MLAs on need for improved mental health services
- Better communication and awareness of the Transforming your care
- Raise awareness of work done by carers in families and need for support
- Lobby for more funding for funding for community/voluntary sector to run health programmes – the consortium can help by ensuring more streamline funding, making organisations aware of the funding cycle and being a voice to support women's organisations
- Lobby for improvements to out of hours system
- Make Consortium the central point for women to get information on funding

Welfare Health & Social Care

Comments on the ground

“We need measures that illustrate social impact as well as economic benefit.”

“The government is implementing cut backs but are expecting the same work to be done.”

“Care of an aging population is one of the most important health and social care issues.”

“We should be suggesting solutions rather than problems”

Childcare

Childcare issues that highlighted during the Womens Regional Consortium were:

Funding for community based childcare provision –

- Funding for community based childcare is piecemeal and on a year to year basis. There is no job security for staff. Funding restricts the development of the service.
- Womens Centres are frustrated with the Womens Centre Childcare Fund (WCCF), an annual emergency fund from DSD. Womens Centres rely on this funding to provide childcare for women and their children and need more sustainable funding.
- There is a lack of support for organisations who want to set up childcare as a social economy business.
- Without proper resources for childcare women and children are being disadvantaged.

Childcare Strategy and Bright Start –

- There are frustrations that childcare has been in a vacuum for the last 8 years. Nothing significant has changed to develop childcare in Northern Ireland.
- There is no lead department to oversee childcare in Northern Ireland.
- There is no 0-3 childcare provisions within the Bright Start first key actions.

Rural Childcare and Bright Start-

- Rural women do not know about the recent Bright Start first key actions.
- Limited childcare places in rural areas.
- Rural transport is needed to enable access to childcare.
- Rural provision needs more funding than urban.
- How effective will the proposed rural transport schemes be within Bright Start given difficulties with similar on-going schemes?
- Why is another pilot required given the proven effectiveness of the previous DARD's Rural Childcare Programme 2010?

Childcare costs –

- Women are working to pay childcare costs. This is similar to paying a second mortgage.
- Childcare costs are high in Northern Ireland compared to other EU countries.
- Working women need annual leave to fit in with school holidays and also to be flexible to help them with their childcare needs.

Access to childcare

- There is a lack of childcare places for 3-4 year olds.
- There is a lack of support and childcare for immigrant women.

- Women have a greater reliance on grandparents who may also be caring for parents. This may be a burden on older women; children should have different relationships with their granny.
- Childcare provision for children with rare disabilities needs to be taken into account.

Women in education training and employment –

- Childcare underpins everything. Womens access to training, education and employment, this is not sustainable without childcare.
- Women claiming benefits are being told to go to work, but there is a lack of childcare to enable them.
- Childcare is needed to break the cycle and get mums into society again.

Childcare as a career option -

- Childcare workers are undervalued; nursery and childcare workers are low paid workers.

Suggestions for actions.

Women at the launch suggested possible actions to deal the issues they identified. They stated there needs to be:

Funding for community based childcare –

- Resources for the WCCF, ring-fenced for womens centre childcare services.
- Partnership working among the womens sector to share expertise and develop programmes.
- More support and funding for childcare.
- Long term funding for the sustainability of childcare services.
- Standardisation within monitoring of childcare funding.

Childcare Strategy and Bright Start-

- The WCCF included within the Childcare Strategy.
- A lead department for childcare; DHSSPs or DSD.
- Analysis of childcare models that work; OFMDFM should look at cross-border models of childcare.
- The inclusion of 0-3 childcare in the Childcare Strategy to break the cycle of inequality.

Rural Childcare and Bright Start-

- Information provision on Bright Start/ Childcare to rural areas.
- Resources available to subsidise rural childcare places.
- More funding to develop rural childcare.
- An analysis of the results of DARD pilot survey and more for childcare models that work.
- Strong rural representation within the proposed Childcare Management. Forum to ensure equity in rural provision in Bright Start's first key actions.

Childcare costs –

- Increase child tax credit for women and families.
- Increase childcare financial assistance to families.
- A cap on childcare rates.

Access to childcare-

- An increase of state provision of childcare.
- An increase of Sure Start services.
- More choice of provision for families.
- An increase of childcare provision for ethnic minority children and families.
- Training for childcare staff on working with children with disabilities.

Childcare and women in education training and employment

- A link with the childcare infrastructure to getting women into work.

Childcare as a career option

- Increase recognition and up value childcare as a career option.
- Development of quality assurance of current childcare provision

Comments on the ground

“WCCF must be in the Childcare Strategy”

“Funding is needed from government”

“People are working for nothing and paying for childcare”

Education and training

Education and Training issues highlighted during the Womens Regional Consortium launch were:

Funding for Community Based Education

- Funding applications want evidence based information.
- Lack of knowledge within groups on procurement and tendering processes.
- Lack of core funding available for womens organisations.
- Funding criteria is keeping educational attainment low as it prevents progression and development.
- ESF funding is about getting women into employment, women do not have choice to do training for health and well-being/ increase confidence.
- Minimum number of participants required to for a class is too high.

Older Women and Education

- Needs of older women have to be addressed. Not all service users are young mothers with prams.
- There is a lot of concentration on employability and childcare but not on older women.
- Womens centres/organisations create opportunities for older women. Womens centres/organisations have become a lifeline for older women helping them to make friends and get support.
- Older single women are often forgotten about.
- Need training for older women.
- Victim support- victims of the NI conflict – women support each other locally.

Apprenticeships

- No promise of a job when they are completed.

Rural areas

- Lack of provision particularly in rural areas.
- Number of participants in a class can be a problem for those in rural areas.
- Women in rural areas have a lack of personal transport.
- Poor public transport in rural areas.
- Poor road networks.
- Location of childcare.

Access to education and training.

- Lack of affordable childcare provision to enable access to education and training.
- Mental Health issues are rising, this stops women accessing education.
- Cost of education is very expensive.
- Transport to get to the place of provision.

- Lack of equipment for disabled people and those over 20 stone.

Accredited and Non-accredited training

- 'Steps to work' training not always what is required.
- Non accredited training not valued, not funded yet transitional for many and saving the health service – cross departmental.
- Importance of soft skills to encourage engagement is not recognised.
- Women lack personal finance skills.

Gaining employment

- No jobs available when a woman completes training, a back to work scheme, placements.

Suggestions for actions

Women at the launch suggested possible actions to deal the issues they identified. They stated there **needs to be:**

Funding for Community Based Education

- Promotion the feminist education model.
- More resources needed for community based education and training.
- Holistic cross departmental working and funding that is likely to save money in the long run.
- Increased awareness of information on funding through the Consortium website.
- Shared learning and expertise through workshops organised by the Womens Regional Consortium.
- Provision of information and training for procurement and tendering through the Womens Regional Consortium.
- Discussions for future planning, coordination and information, strategic planning for all areas by the Womens Regional Consortium.
- Continuation of the lottery project. This is a lifeline for many in womens centres, confirmation of who will take the lead in new programme.
- A women only space.

Older Women and Education

- Research for the 55-80 year olds.
- More activities for older people: DIY – give women independence and confidence.

Apprenticeships

- Voluntary work for young people – training, qualification and then employment.

Rural areas

- Provision of local educational opportunities are for women in rural areas.

Access

- Provision of education and training outside Belfast and Derry
- A connection to Government Departments other than DEL – not just about the training women need but also support and guidance to help them access education/training.
- Support for those with disabilities.

Accredited and Non-accredited training

- Courses that provide women with hands on practical skills.
- Courses to raise awareness of money issues.
- More Health and Well -being programmes.
- History projects/ course that focus on local and Northern Ireland history.
- Recognition that womens lives and responsibilities result in them having the need to dip in and out of education.
- Peace building/Cross Community programmes for women.
- Awareness of transgender people through education.

Gaining employment

- Jobs for newly qualified teachers.
- An increase of tourism by the tourist board – this will create more employment opportunities for women.

Comments on the ground

“Barrier to education is childcare, crèche facilities are needed”

“Mental health issues prevent women entering education”

“We need to have discussion as to future planning”

“Maintain a women only space.”

Other issues

Other Issues highlighted during the Womens Regional Consortium launch were:

- The future of the Womens Regional Consortium
- Not enough women in government.
- Lack of women only advice
- Domestic Violence and support for women
- Reproductive rights of women in Northern Ireland
- The legacy of the troubles

Suggestions for actions

Women at the launch suggested possible actions to deal the issues they identified. They stated there **needs to be:**

- Future of the Consortium:
 - o The development of a case for the Womens Regional Consortium in advance.
 - o Invitations sent to other funders at Consortium events.
- Development of a womens only advice service.
- Increased support for domestic violence services for women.
- Access to full reproductive rights, include abortion.
- Referendum on abortion: make women make the choice that affects them the most.
- Extension of 1967 abortion act to NI.
- Full recognition of women as victims under UNSCR 1325 due to legacy of 'The Troubles'.
- Full deployment of CEDAW, political participation including voter registration.
- None wordy easy snap shot of 1325 and CEDAW.

Engagement & Training Questionnaire

As part of the launch the following engagement and training questionnaire was given out during the round table discussions.

Engagement and training questionnaire

Name/Organisation:
Contact number:
Email address:

Have you/your organisation had any engagement with the Women's Regional Consortium			
YES		NO	

Would you/your organisation engage with the Womens Regional Consortium from now on			
YES		NO	

What do you feel would be the best method of engagement

If you answered no please explain why.

Please identify what are the training needs within your organisation			
Project management		Listening ear/support	
IT Skills (basic)		Childcare	
IT Skills (advanced)		Leadership	
Finance & Governance		Management of committee meeting	
HR		Funding applications	
Procurement		Public Speaking & presentation skills	
OTHER			

If you selected other please expand here.

What is the best method of contacting you/your organisation?

Engagement & Training Questionnaire Results

Engagement and training questionnaire

Total Number of Respondents
71

All figures relate to number of respondents

Have you/your organisation had any engagement with the Women's Regional Consortium			
YES	41	NO	21

Would you/your organisation engage with the Womens Regional Consortium from now on			
YES	62	NO	0

What do you feel would be the best method of engagement	
Email - 13	Through local orgs - 07
Website - 10	Info/ads local press - 04
Networking events - 09	Workshops - 03
Other Suggestions	Focus Groups, Seminars, Lobbying, Meeting MLAs, Eportal, Collaborative Work, Blog, Online forums

Please identify what are the training needs within your organisation			
Project management	18	Listening ear/support	26
IT Skills (basic)	15	Childcare	17
IT Skills (advanced)	15	Leadership	23
Finance & Governance	24	Management of committee meeting	19
HR	13	Funding applications	24
Procurement	19	Public Speaking & presentation skills	29
OTHER			

Other Suggestions	
Budgeting	
Classes for Older Women	
Lobbying	
Campaigning	
Social Media	
Health & Well Being	
Sensory Impairment	

Engagement & Training Questionnaire Report

Total Respondents 71

41 respondents said they had engaged with the Consortium (57.8%)

21 respondents said they had not engaged with the Consortium (29.6%)

62 respondents said they would engage with Consortium from now on (87.3%)

0 respondents said they would not engage with the Consortium from now on

9 respondents did not answer the above questions (12.7%)

Best Method of Engagement

Email - 18%	suggested by 13 respondents
Website - 14.1%	suggested by 10 respondents
Networking events – 12.6 %	suggested by 09 respondents
Through local orgs eg FWIN – 9.9%	suggested by 07 respondents
Meetings – 5.6%	suggested by 04 respondents
Info/ads in local press – 5.6%	suggested by 04 respondents
Workshops – 4.2%	suggested by 03 respondents
Facebook – 4.2%	suggested by 03 respondents

Other suggestions included:

Focus groups, Seminars, Lobbying, Meeting MLAs, Eportal, Collaborative Work, Blog, Online forums

Training needs within organisations

Public Speaking & Presentation Skills – 40.8%	suggested by 29 respondents
Listening ear/support – 36.6%	suggested by 26 respondents
Finance & Governance – 33.8%	suggested by 24 respondents
Funding Applications – 33.8%	suggested by 24 respondents
Leadership – 32.4%	suggested by 23 respondents
Management of Committee Meetings – 26.8%	suggested by 19 respondents
Procurement - 26.8%	suggested by 19 respondents
Project Management - 25.4%	suggested by 18 respondents
Childcare – 23.9%	suggested by 17 respondents
IT (Basic) – 21.1%	suggested by 15 respondents
IT (Advanced) – 21.1%	suggested by 15 respondents
HR – 13.3%	suggested by 13 respondents
Budgeting – 8.5%	suggested by 06 respondents
Classes for Older Women – 7.1%	suggested by 05 respondents

Other suggestions included:

Lobbying & Campaigning, Social Media, Health & Well Being, Effective Campaigning, Sensory Impairment

Women's Regional Consortium Launch Action Plan



Women's Regional
Consortium

Womens Regional Consortium Welfare Actions

WRC Target	Action
<p>Advocacy and Leadership for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas (D&RA's)</p> <p>This target has functional areas of taking the views of women on issues affecting their everyday lives and represent them to government, statutory agencies and representative bodies.</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will represent issues raised by women from disadvantaged and rural areas with relevant Government Departments, their agencies and local councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet (when required) with OFMDFM representatives to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - highlight the need for clear and succinct information on welfare reform - to ensure that the needs of women in D&RA's are included and in any welfare reforms - to ensure welfare reform is based on genuine needs assessment and not target led
<p>Influence Policy for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas</p> <p>This target has functional areas of advising women of on-going policy which have an impact on them, seek their views on proposals and collating findings through a formal consultation response to assist in influencing policy on behalf of women</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will identify and collate the views from women in D&RA to influence policy consultations on welfare reform in Northern Ireland by focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The need to ensure women are kept up-to-date on any planned changes - Ensuring the any welfare reforms do not see women taking a 'step back in time' in terms of 'head of household' payments - The need for child benefit - - Incorporate the views into a consultation document and present it to the relevant government department. Provide a briefing of the effect of proposed policies on women through the membership and the consortium website. <p>Policy Consultations the Consortium will/have responded to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DSD's Development's <i>Proposals for a Pensions Bill - Equality Impact Assessment</i>.
<p>Research for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas. This target has functional areas of taking on board the needs of women through conducting appropriate new research and presenting findings to appropriate bodies</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will underline the needs of women in D&RA's within a welfare reform report. This report will highlight the impact on women of Welfare Reform and will be completed during January 2015- March 2015.</p>
<p>Service Support for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas. This target has functional areas of providing information and advice, promoting good practice, shaping funding bids, providing networking opportunities and support for women specific issues</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will organise and facilitate regional support services workshops/meetings for the benefit of women in D & RA to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure the flow of info on welfare reform - Share best practice - Support each other's work - Encourage knowledge transfer - Promote upcoming sources of funding
	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will communicate women's organisations providing information on welfare reform through the regional consortium website portal, emails, telephone and e-zines.</p>
<p>Engagement for Women in Disadvantaged & Rural Areas</p> <p>This target has functional areas of engaging with women to identify on an on-going basis their specific regional support needs, engage with neighbourhood renewal partnerships, local councils and other regional partners</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will increase and develop sub-regional and local networks and promote networking generally in areas of disadvantage and rural areas, and support initial contact with Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships, Local Councils and their other local voluntary and community sector Groups by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaging with women's organisations in D&RA on a regular basis by email to identify their on-going support needs. - Encouraging women sector representation within the area of Welfare Reform

Womens Regional Consortium Health Actions

WRC Target	Action
<p>Advocacy and Leadership for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas (D&RA's) This target has functional areas of taking the views of women on issues affecting their everyday lives and represent them to government, statutory agencies and representative bodies.</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will represent issues raised by women from Disadvantaged and Rural Areas with relevant Government Departments, their agencies and local councils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet with DSD and Local Councils (when required) to discuss need for healthcare services <p>The Womens Regional Consortium will engage on an on-going basis Women's Centres Network to ensure their Health Care needs are being met.</p>
<p>Influence Policy for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas This target has functional areas of advising women of on-going policy which have an impact on them, seek their views on proposals and collating findings through a formal consultation response to assist in influencing policy on behalf of women.</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will identify and collate the views from women in D&RA to influence policy consultations on Health care in Northern Ireland by focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of health facilities for women in rural areas - The need to strengthen community support groups - Recognition for carers - Access to mental health services, especially for women in post conflict situation <p>- Incorporate the views into a consultation document and present it to the relevant government department. Provide a briefing of the effect of proposed policies on women through the membership and the consortium website.</p>
<p>Research for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas This target has functional areas of taking on board the needs of women through conducting appropriate new research and presenting findings to appropriate bodies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Womens Regional Consortium will incorporate the views of women from D&RA on current health issues and make recommendations within research reports produced.
<p>Service Support for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas This target has functional areas of providing information and advice, promoting good practice, shaping funding bids, providing networking opportunities and support for women specific issues.</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will organise and facilitate regional support services workshops/meetings providing Healthcare Information for the benefit of women in D & RA to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage partnership working - Share best practice - Support each other's work - Encourage knowledge transfer - Promote upcoming sources of funding - Promote the participation of women in non-traditional training & employment initiatives <p>The Womens Regional Consortium will collate Health Care Information information on on-going basis on sector-specific issues and disseminate information through the consortium website, e-zine newsletters.</p> <p>The Womens Regional Consortium will identify health care issues on regional consortium website portal</p>
<p>Engagement for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas This target has functional areas of engaging with women to identify on an on-going basis their specific regional support needs, engage with neighbourhood renewal partnerships, local councils and other regional partners.</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will increase and develop sub-regional and local networks and promote networking generally in areas of disadvantage and rural areas, and support initial contact with Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships, Local Councils and their other local voluntary and community sector Groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focusing on the needs of women's organisations in D&RA's providing Health Care Information and Support <p>The Womens Regional Consortium will meet with DSD, DEL and local councils to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health Care shortages for women in D&R areas - Needs for improved mental health care provision - Need for more funding for voluntary and community sector for health programmes - Need for more support for carers

Womens Regional Consortium Childcare Actions

WRC Target	Action
<p>Advocacy and Leadership for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas (D&RA's) This target has functional areas of taking the views of women on issues affecting their everyday lives and represent them to government, statutory agencies and representative bodies.</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will represent issues raised by women from disadvantaged and rural areas with relevant Government Departments, their agencies and local councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet (when required) with OFMDFM representatives to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - highlight the need for the sustainability of Womens Centres Childcare Fund and to maintain a focus on the childcare needs of women in D&RA's. - to ensure that the needs of women in D&RA's are included and resourced as part of the Childcare Strategy - Ensure that women from D&RA represented in the Childcare Management Forum. - Meet with DSD to discuss the future of the Womens Centre Childcare Fund
<p>Influence Policy for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas This target has functional areas of advising women of on-going policy which have an impact on them, seek their views on proposals and collating findings through a formal consultation response to assist in influencing policy on behalf of women</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will identify and collate the views from women in D&RA to influence policy consultations on Childcare in Northern Ireland by focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The need for childcare resources to support women from D&RA's - The important link between childcare and getting women back into education and employment - The recognition of the value of childcare - Incorporate the views into a consultation document and present it to the relevant government department. Provide a briefing of the effect of proposed policies on women through the membership and the consortium website. <p>Policy Consultations the Consortium will/have responded to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People (OFMDFM) - DEL's Review of Apprenticeships Interim Report and Consultation Document - Forthcoming Childcare Strategy (due for release 2014)
<p>Research for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas This target has functional areas of taking on board the needs of women through conducting appropriate new research and presenting findings to appropriate bodies</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will highlight the needs of women in D&RA's and make recommendations to support them within a research Report on Bright Start, the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Affordable and Integrated Childcare: a Strategic Framework and Key First Actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet with OFMDFM to review the recommendations
<p>Service Support for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas This target has functional areas of providing information and advice, promoting good practice, shaping funding bids, providing networking opportunities and support for women specific issues</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will organise and facilitate regional support services workshops/meetings providing childcare working for the benefit of women in D & RA to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage partnership working - Share best practice - Support each other's work - Encourage knowledge transfer - Promote upcoming sources of funding - Supported the implementation of minimum standards for childcare. <p>The Womens Regional Consortium will collect & collate information and statistics for the WCCF funded groups and liaise with DSD/VCU to ensure the sustainability of childcare services for women in D&RA.</p> <p>The Womens Regional Consortium will communicate women's organisations providing childcare through the regional consortium website portal, emails, telephone and e-zines to highlight the developments of Childcare strategies.</p>
<p>Engagement for Women in Disadvantaged & Rural Areas This target has functional areas of engaging with women to identify on an on-going basis their specific regional support needs, engage with neighbourhood renewal partnerships, local councils and other regional partners</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will increase and develop sub-regional and local networks and promote networking generally in areas of disadvantage and rural areas, and support initial contact with Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships, Local Councils and their other local voluntary and community sector Groups by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaging with women's organisations in D&RA on a regular basis by email to identify their on-going support needs. - Encouraging women sector representation within the Childcare Partnerships - Meeting with Childcare Partnerships, Early Years, Local Councils to support Childcare services for women in D&RA

Womens Regional Consortium Education & Training Actions

WRC Target	Action
<p>Advocacy and Leadership for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas (D&RA's) This target has functional areas of taking the views of women on issues affecting their everyday lives and represent them to government, statutory agencies and representative bodies.</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will represent issues raised by women from Disadvantaged and Rural Areas with relevant Government Departments, their agencies and local councils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet with DSD and Local Councils (when required) to discuss the future of the Community Investment Fund (CIF). <p>The Womens Regional Consortium will engage on an on-going basis Women's Centres Network to ensure their Education and Training needs are being met.</p>
<p>Influence Policy for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas This target has functional areas of advising women of on-going policy which have an impact on them, seek their views on proposals and collating findings through a formal consultation response to assist in influencing policy on behalf of women.</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will identify and collate the views from women in D&RA to influence policy consultations on Education and Training in Northern Ireland by focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The importance of a woman only space - The need for resources and core funding to develop community based education for women in D&RA's. - Education and training for older women (55+) - Barriers to accessing education: Childcare, transport, mental health issues <p>- Incorporate the views into a consultation document and present it to the relevant government department. Provide a briefing of the effect of proposed policies on women through the membership and the consortium website.</p> <p>Policy Consultations the Consortium will/have responded to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DEL's Review of Apprenticeships Interim Report and Consultation Document
<p>Research for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas This target has functional areas of taking on board the needs of women through conducting appropriate new research and presenting findings to appropriate bodies.</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will produce a report (by September 2014), based on education and training needs and gaps in service provision identified by the membership and other women's Groups working in areas of disadvantage and rural areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to outline the unaddressed educational and training needs of women from rural and disadvantaged areas, and associated gaps in provision, as identified by those affected. - to clarify the key contributory factors underlying this shortfall in provision and participation. - to formulate recommendations for public policies and actions directed at improving educational and training opportunities for those affected.
<p>Service Support for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas This target has functional areas of providing information and advice, promoting good practice, shaping funding bids, providing networking opportunities and support for women specific issues.</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will organise and facilitate regional support services workshops/meetings providing Education and Training working for the benefit of women in D & RA to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage partnership working - Share best practice - Support each other's work - Encourage knowledge transfer - Promote upcoming sources of funding - Promote participation of women in non-traditional training & employment <p>The Womens Regional Consortium will collate Education and Training information on on-going basis on sector-specific issues and disseminate information through the consortium website, e-zine newsletters.</p> <p>The Womens Regional Consortium will identify and promote training opportunities on regional consortium website portal including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procurement and tendering training, Childcare level 5 training and Public speaking and presentation skills <p>The Womens Regional Consortium will promote women's sector training through a series of Women in Decision Making & Leadership workshops to support skills within women's organisations for participation in advocacy and leadership.</p> <p>The Womens Regional Consortium will provide women's organisations with support, helping to shape Education and Training funding bids for the benefit of Women in D&RA. - Focus on areas and groups that are underrepresented.</p>

<p>Engagement for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas</p> <p>This target has functional areas of engaging with women to identify on an on-going basis their specific regional support needs, engage with neighbourhood renewal partnerships, local councils and other regional partners.</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will increase and develop sub-regional and local networks and promote networking generally in areas of disadvantage and rural areas, and support initial contact with Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships, Local Councils and their other local voluntary and community sector Groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focusing on the needs of women's organisations in D&RA's providing education and training.
	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will meet with DSD, DEL and local councils to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Investment Fund (CIF). - Neighbourhood Renewal - European Social Fund - Community based education for women

Womens Regional Consortium Other Actions

WRC Target	Actions
<p>Advocacy and Leadership for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas (D&RA's)</p> <p>This target has functional areas of taking the views of women on issues affecting their everyday lives and represent them to government, statutory agencies and representative</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will invite <u>other</u> funders to Womens Regional Consortium events</p>
<p>Influence Policy for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas</p> <p>This target has functional areas of advising women of on-going policy which have an impact on them, seek their views on proposals and collating findings through a formal consultation response to assist in influencing policy on behalf of women</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will advise women of on-going policy (when they arise) and how they will impact them relating to seek their views on proposals and collate findings through a formal consultation response on the issues identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women only advice - Domestic violence - Abortion and reproductive rights - Legacy of the troubles <p>Policy consultations the consortium will/have responded to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DHSSPS and DOJ's Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy (2013-2020)
<p>Research for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas</p> <p>This target has functional areas of taking on board the needs of women through conducting appropriate new research and presenting findings to appropriate bodies</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will produce a specialist advice report for women living in D&RA's that will support the development of womens advice services by December 2014.</p>
<p>Service Support for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas</p> <p>This target has functional areas of providing information and advice, promoting good practice, shaping funding bids, providing networking opportunities and support for women specific issues</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will invite womens organisations providing domestic violence support, working for the benefit of women in D & RA to regional support service workshops/meetings.</p>
<p>Engagement for Women in Disadvantaged and Rural Areas</p> <p>This target has functional areas of engaging with women to identify on an on-going basis their specific regional support needs, engage with neighbourhood renewal partnerships, local councils and other regional partners</p>	<p>The Womens Regional Consortium will raise awareness within organisations supporting women from D&RA on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abortion Act 1967 - UNSCR 1325 - CEDAW

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