

NFWI 2015 Annual Meeting Resolution short list briefings



Overview

The NFWI Public Affairs Department has compiled these notes to support members' discussions on the 2015 shortlisted resolutions. The notes outline the key issues addressed in the resolutions, the current policy environment on the issues raised, and some of the main groups already working on the subjects.

Please use the notes to inform your further research.

1. The next 100 years

As we mark 100 years of the WI, we deplore the unacceptable level of gender discrimination that still exists. We call on decision makers to remove barriers preventing today's women and future generations reaching their full potential.

2. Plant a tree for the future

The NFWI urges Her Majesty's government to start a continuous national broadleaf tree planting programme to replace vital woodlands lost in previous decades. WIs in consultation with their local councils and community groups will be asked to plant trees in celebration of their centenary and to benefit future generations.

3. Public access defibrillators

There is an urgent need to widen public access to defibrillators to significantly increase the survival rate following a cardiac arrest. This meeting urges WI members to work with their communities to install public access defibrillators.

4. Failing to care – assessment of need in long-term care

This meeting calls on HM government to remove the distinction between nursing care and personal care in the assessment of the needs of individuals, in order to advance health and wellbeing.

5. Cutting back on food waste

Everybody loses when good food is thrown away. We call on WI members to reduce their own food waste and all public and private sector organisations to do more to minimise food waste and protect our finite resources.

6. Ending FGM

This AM welcomes the progress that has been made towards ending Female Genital Mutilation. We call on political leaders and the UK public to maintain momentum behind all efforts to eradicate this abuse of human and child rights.

7. To curb the use of antibiotics

In view of the problem of increased microbial resistance to antibiotics, this meeting urges HM government to work with health professionals and the public to raise awareness of, and encourage the appropriate use of, antibiotics in human and animal healthcare.

These briefing notes are available online at www.thewi.org.uk/campaigns/resolutions-and-mandates and on the WI Moodle. For further information contact:

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1. The next 100 years

As we mark 100 years of the WI, we deplore the unacceptable level of gender discrimination that still exists. We call on decision makers to remove barriers preventing today's women and future generations reaching their full potential.

Proposer's position

This resolution has been proposed as a symbolic and overarching resolution that makes a clear statement about the WI's values, while opening up debate about the status of women at home and in society and public life more widely. While the NFWI Centenary provides an important platform to reflect on the past and celebrate the WI's rich history, credentials, experience and expertise, it also offers an opportunity to look forward, consider some of the challenges that women in 2015 face and begin dialogue on our collective ambitions for the next 100 years.

Outline

Over the years the WI has built up a strong campaigns portfolio on a wide range of different social, economic and environmental issues. The vision set out in the WI's campaigns agenda and the reputation that members have built as responsible, active citizens have contributed to the WI's place as part of the social fabric of the nation.

Early WI campaigns were frequently progressive, women were encouraged to use their committee and charring experience for election onto local councils and engage in innovative campaigns on issues such as the need for women magistrates (1929), representation of women as governors on school management boards (1933), equal pay (1943), alternatives to imprisonment for convicted mothers (1949), and the recognition of rape within marriage (1975).

This impressive campaigns legacy has no doubt contributed to positive change in the role and status of women. In the UK women are in a strong position from which to influence the social, economic and political landscape, yet numerous obstacles remain that impede women's full involvement in public and private life including discrimination, limited access to decision-making and lack of resources and economic opportunities.

This resolution and, if successful, the campaign that follows would present opportunities for involving members of all ages, harnessing the voices and experiences of WI members at different stages of their lives, from those getting into employment, to women adapting to motherhood, or those moving into retirement.

Economic equality

Women play a central role in the UK economy both as consumers and workers. About 70 per cent of household purchasing power is estimated to be the responsibility of women. More women are in work than ever before yet women's economic inequality remains high. Evidence illustrates that women are more likely to be employed in low paid, part time and insecure work.¹ Despite 60 per cent of university graduates being women, they are still paid 16 per cent less than men per hour of work. In addition, they are more likely to interrupt their

¹ Fawcett Society, Women and the Economy, <http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/activity/women-and-the-economy/#sthash.4Q9F9qet.BCuRhbl1.dpuf>

working life to care for others. As a result, the gender gap in pensions stands at 39 per cent. Widows and single parents — mainly mothers — are a particularly vulnerable group.²

Decisions on the economy, particularly around tax and spending have a major impact on women's lives; a number of reports have raised concerns that recent budgetary and austerity measures have been hitting women harder than men. At the same time growth plans have been criticised for leaving women behind with 60 per cent of 'new' private sector jobs going to men.³

Analysis of the cumulative impact of measures introduced by the Coalition Government since 2010 examining cuts to social security benefits, changes in direct and indirect taxes such as VAT and fuel duties, and cuts to services, suggests women have lost a significant proportion of disposable income. Single parents have lost 15.1 per cent while single pensioners have lost 11.6 per cent - both groups in which women predominate.⁴

Social equality

Violence against women

Violence against women (VAW) is a violation of women's fundamental human rights and is both a cause and a consequence of women's inequality. It is commonly conflated with domestic violence, although it is much broader than this and includes rape and sexual violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, stalking, sexual exploitation, crimes in the name of 'honour', and sexual harassment. VAW affects large numbers of women and girls and is most commonly perpetrated by known men. While data is affected by under-reporting, the latest research suggests around 1.2m women suffered domestic abuse in 2012-13.⁵

On her recent UK visit Rashida Manjoo, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women observed: "violence against women remains a pervasive challenge throughout the United Kingdom." She noted the worrying statistics on the levels of violence against women: in England and Wales, 30 per cent of women reported having experienced domestic abuse and 77 women were killed by their partners or ex-partners in 2012/13 (according to the Home Office and Office for National Statistics); austerity measures have had a disproportionate impact on women, and their access to justice has been restricted due to changes to legal aid; and concerns about the treatment of women in detention.

Women and the media

The way in which women are portrayed in the media has been criticised for fuelling and reinforcing stereotypes of women – by sexually objectifying them, classifying them in their relationships to others, e.g. as 'wives and mothers' for example, and characterising them by their looks or their age. Women's under-representation more generally, particularly in 'serious' news items, is also a concern. The Leveson Report, which looked at press standards, criticised the depiction of women in the media saying they "often failed to show consistent respect for the dignity and equality of women generally."

² European Commission, 'Gender Equality: Steady Progress', Press release, 14/04/2014, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-423_en.htm

³ New analysis shows how far away UK is from balanced, fair labour market. 25th Sep 2013. Fawcett's response to new analysis from the Office National Statistics around women in the labour market. <http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/new-ons-report-shows-how-far-away-uk-is-from-balanced-fair-labour-market/#sthash.6dzHexnv.dpuf>

⁴ Women's Budget Group. Briefing: 'To ensure economic recovery, we need a plan F.' http://www.wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Plan-F_WBG-Parties-briefing_Sept-2013_final.pdf

⁵ ONS 2012

The WI is not immune to such discourse in the press. In August 2013, the Daily Mail Online published an article in which manor house owner William Cash described a group of paying female visitors to his house, who he believed to be WI members, as “arch-moaners” noting, “trying to round up 30 women of a certain age and herd them towards the car park was a bit like shoeing wayward geese.” His article on the visit was published without offering adequate opportunity for the women concerned to a right of reply.

Body image

The Government’s Body Confidence campaign has reported that today’s narrowly defined beauty ideals, combined with their volume and pervasiveness has become a significant threat against young women’s health and wellbeing. Seven out of ten girls (68 per cent) believe that women are judged more on their appearance than on their ability.⁶

Political and public life

Women remain chronically under-represented in public life. Despite making up half the global population, women hold only 15.6 per cent of elected parliamentary seats in the world⁷. In the UK, women currently hold 32.6 per cent of public appointments, despite Appointments Commission targets to boost this to 50.⁸ While in Parliament, progress on women’s representation has stalled; the number of women MPs has increased by just 4.1 per cent in the last 15 years.⁹

The UK is ranked 57th in the world with regards to the number of women in national parliaments. At the current rate of change, a child born today will be drawing her pension before she sees equal numbers of men and women in the House of Commons. The EHRC estimates that it will take 14 general elections to achieve parity in Parliament.

A ground breaking review of women on boards published by Lord Davies in 2011 found women made up only 12.4 per cent of the members of FTSE 100 boards, despite clear evidence about the enhanced performance of more balanced boards and the fact that boards make better decisions when a wider range of voices can be drawn on¹⁰. Davies challenged all FTSE 350 companies to set targets for the number of women they expected to have on their boards and executive committees by 2015 and recommended that FTSE 100 boards should aim for a minimum 25 per cent female representation on their boards by that date. Cranfield University research has suggested women are now making up 20 per cent of FTSE 100 board membership

The global context

Around the world the plight of girls and women has been under the spotlight in recent months. Last summer’s international ‘Girl’s Summit’ in London highlighted gaps in progress examining FGM, as well as domestic violence and child marriage. Despite the optimism of the Summit, the kidnapping of hundreds of girls in Nigeria this year demonstrates that gender equality is far from a reality for most of the world’s women.

⁶ Girlguiding, Girls’ Attitudes Survey 2013

⁷ [source: [Lopez-Claros, Zahidi](#)].

⁸ The Feminist Review Trust. [Unintended Consequences: the impact of the government's legislative programme on women in public roles](#). A Study by the Centre for Women & Democracy, 2011.

⁹ Fawcett Society <http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/stats-and-facts-on-women-in-power/#sthash.gfkZ9w8M.L6WKnvch.dpbs>

¹⁰ BIS, Women on Boards, 2011

International Monetary Fund Managing Director Christine Lagarde regularly highlights the importance of increasing the economic participation and advancement of women for boosting growth. The World Economic Forum's 2014 Global Gender Gap report highlights that even in the most equal societies women lag behind in terms of economic participation and opportunity.¹¹

Participation and opportunity vary significantly across regions. The example of education illustrates this. Through the MDGs world leaders set out to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. Progress on this goal has been tremendous, the UN states that enrolment in primary education in developing regions reached 90 per cent in 2010, up from 82 per cent in 1999, which means more children than ever are attending primary school. Yet, the world remains far from meeting the goal and too many girls are missing out on education. 57 million children remained out of school in 2011; over 30 million of these are girls. Many of them are amongst the poorest and most marginalized citizens in the world; some will live in remote rural areas, others are growing up amid war and instability.¹²

Gender inequality is heavily embedded in access to education. Even in the richest households, girls are more likely to be out of school than boys. In many parts of Africa and Asia, girls' caring roles and household commitments mean that they are the first to be kept home from school if they are needed to work elsewhere. Being female, poor and living in a country affected by conflict are three of the main factors keeping children out of school, yet education improves women's life chances like nothing else. And of course, with educated women that participate in the labour market more likely to create a 'virtuous circle of development' and re-invest more in their families and communities, it's clear that the gender gap hurts everyone, not just women.

Arguments for the resolution

- This resolution makes a clear statement about the WI's values.
- This resolution would support the NFWI to look forward in the centenary year, and develop a programme of work examining some of the key social and economic challenges that women of all ages face.
- This resolution fits with the ethos of the WI and some of the organisation's progressive, early campaigns.

Arguments against the resolution

- The NFWI would be likely to experience a backlash, particularly through social media.
- Some members might feel that the battle for equality has been won.

Further information

Government Equalities Office

100 Parliament Street, London, SW1A 2BQ

W: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/government-equalities-office>

T: enquiries@culture.gsi.gov.uk

World Economic Forum (Switzerland)

91-93 route de la Capite,

CH-1223 Cologny/Geneva

Switzerland

¹¹ Global Gender Gap Report 2014, World Economic Forum, Switzerland.

¹² <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkqd.shtml>

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2. Plant a tree for the future

The NFWI urges Her Majesty's government to start a continuous national broadleaf tree planting programme to replace vital woodlands lost in previous decades. WIs in consultation with their local councils and community groups will be asked to plant trees in celebration of their centenary and to benefit future generations.

Proposer's position

The proposer is concerned about the huge loss of forested areas in the UK, which were particularly affected during and after the First and Second World Wars, when many areas of broadleaf and ancient woodland were lost due to a combination of increased demand for timber, land management, building development, new roads and progressive farming methods. This loss has resulted in a decrease in carbon capture, and a loss of habitat for birds, animals and other wildlife. Building development and diseases, such as ash dieback, are a continuous threat to our trees. Many trees which die of old age are not being replaced. The proposer is concerned that tree planting schemes have been ad-hoc and short term and would like to see an ongoing and stable continuous scheme for planting broadleaf trees.

Outline of issue

Broadleaf trees are typically those with broad flat leaves and tend to be deciduous. They are distinguished from conifers which are cone-bearing and tend to be evergreen with thinner, sometimes needle-like, leaves. Broadleaf trees are beneficial on a number of levels. Most native trees to the UK tend to be broadleaf, and native trees have been shown to be the best at supporting a wide range of wildlife.¹³ An influential study from 1961 showed that oak, for example, supported up to 284 species of insect, whereas spruce, a type of conifer, supported only 37.¹⁴ A recent study of an urban area showed that the top five trees for supporting invertebrates were all native, and this in turn could have an impact on other animals such as bird populations, due to the increased availability of food for wildlife.¹⁵ Woodland consisting of broadleaf trees has been shown to contain twice as many rare species when compared to any other UK habitat.¹⁶

In addition to supporting wildlife, trees and woodland provide a range of more general environmental, economic and social benefits including:

- Supporting around 167,000 jobs
- Opportunities for recreation, along with the health and social benefits these bring
- Outdoor education and social inclusion initiatives
- Protection from flooding and soil erosion
- Cooling in urban areas
- Uptake of atmospheric carbon

¹³ POST Note 'UK trees and forests' Number 275, January 2007.

<http://www.parliament.uk/Templates/BriefingPapers/Pages/BPPdfDownload.aspx?bp-id=POST-PN-275>

¹⁴ Southwood, T. 'The number of species of insect associated with various trees' Imperial College 1961.

http://www.britishecologicalsociety.org/100papers/100_Ecological_Papers/100_Influential_Papers_05_5.pdf

¹⁵ Helden A., Stamp, G., Leather, S. 'Urban biodiversity: comparison of insect assemblages on native and non-native trees' Urban Ecosyst (2012)

https://cdn.harper-adams.ac.uk/document/profile/Helden_et_al_2012.pdf

¹⁶ POST Note 'UK trees and forests' Number 275, January 2007.

<http://www.parliament.uk/Templates/BriefingPapers/Pages/BPPdfDownload.aspx?bp-id=POST-PN-275>

- The potential to be used as a lower carbon alternative to steel and concrete, for example, in construction.¹⁷

In the UK, woodland has been in gradual decline since the middle ages, and reached an all-time low of 5% by the start of the 20th Century. The First and Second World Wars led not only to an increase in demand for timber, but they also saw a dedicated effort to bring in more land for the creation of woodland and the eventual creation of the Forestry Commission. Following the Second World War, woodland was competing with agriculture for good quality land, and tree planting was eventually side-lined to areas which were unsuitable for agriculture. This meant that much of the land would only have been suitable for conifers.¹⁸ In later decades, the wider environmental and social benefits of woodland (other than primarily as a basis for timber production) were recognised and these have increasingly been factored in to government policy on woodland creation.¹⁹

The area of woodland in the UK is estimated to be 3.14 million hectares (at 31 March 2014). This represents 13% of the total land area in the UK, 10% in England, 15% in Wales, 18% in Scotland and 8% in Northern Ireland.²⁰ England and Wales have comparatively low areas of woodland compared to the rest of the EU, where coverage is 37%.²¹ Broadleaf woodland accounts for a total of 1,532,000 hectares, or 49%, of total woodland coverage in the UK. However the vast majority of this is in privately owned forests, which accounts for a far higher percentage of broadleaf trees. In Forestry Commission owned land, 15% of trees are broadleaves with the remainder comprising of conifers.²²

The government's (January 2013) Forestry and Woodlands Policy statement commits to increasing the woodland coverage in England to 12% by 2060.²³ Grants are available for landowners for the creation and upkeep of woodland, covering both broadleaf and conifer trees. At the time of writing however the main scheme is suspended.²⁴

While the scheme remains in flux, some ad hoc funding provision has been made. In January 2014, the government announced that £6m would be invested in new planting over 2014-15, as part of a £30m investment for woodlands in England, with the remainder of the money being spent on management of existing woods.²⁵ The funding would create 2,000 hectares of new woods and was made available to applications which had already been committed to, with no new approvals. This commitment was welcomed by conservation

¹⁷ All examples cited from POST Note 'UK trees and forests' Number 275, January 2007.

<http://www.parliament.uk/Templates/BriefingPapers/Pages/BPPdfDownload.aspx?bp-id=POST-PN-275>

¹⁸ <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/CMON-4UUM6R>

¹⁹ POST Note 'UK trees and forests' Number 275, January 2007.

<http://www.parliament.uk/Templates/BriefingPapers/Pages/BPPdfDownload.aspx?bp-id=POST-PN-275>

²⁰ Forestry Commission, Woodland Area, Planting and Restocking 2014 Edition

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/WAPR2014.pdf/\\$FILE/WAPR2014.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/WAPR2014.pdf/$FILE/WAPR2014.pdf)

²¹ 'Woodlands for Wales: The Welsh Assembly Government's Strategy for Woodlands and Trees' 2009. [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/EnglishWfWstrategy.pdf/\\$FILE/EnglishWfWstrategy.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/EnglishWfWstrategy.pdf/$FILE/EnglishWfWstrategy.pdf) at p. 11

²² Forestry Commission, Woodland Area, Planting and Restocking 2014 Edition

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/WAPR2014.pdf/\\$FILE/WAPR2014.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/WAPR2014.pdf/$FILE/WAPR2014.pdf). Using figures on p.5.

²³ Government Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement, January 2013.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/221023/pb13871-forestry-policy-statement.pdf

²⁴ See further <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-6DCCEN> and

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-6dcegu>

²⁵ £6m of government funding to plant 4 million trees in England this year, The Guardian online, 9th January 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jan/09/6m-government-funding-plants-4-million-new-trees>

campaigners, though they warned that the level of planting the government had pledged to maintain was too low to reach the 12% target in England.²⁶ It is unclear as to when, or if, new funding will be available for woodland creation, and what format it will take. The situation for the 2015/16 planting scheme remains fluid, although the Forestry Commission has indicated recently that an interim grant should be made available in 2015.

In Wales, the Woodland for Wales Strategy,²⁷ published in 2009, sets out the Welsh government plan for trees for the next 50 years. This is supported by the Woodland for Wales Action Plan,²⁸ which outlines the actions the government will take in the next five years to achieve some of these objectives. The Welsh government has committed to plant 100,000 hectares of new woodland in Wales by 2030 (based on 2010 figures).²⁹ It hopes to achieve this through the *Glastir* scheme, which offers farmers and landowners in defined areas of Wales the opportunity to receive funding for planting and maintaining new woodland on their land. In addition the *Plant!* scheme dedicates to growing a tree for every child born or adopted in Wales since 2008.³⁰ In its report, 'Progress reducing emissions and preparing for climate change in Wales' the Committee on Climate Change found that at the present rate, Wales would struggle to meet its tree planting targets.³¹

Arguments for the resolution

- This would provide a good resolution to tie in with the centenary; it would allow current WI members to leave a legacy for future generations and future WI members and would also bring communities together.
- The UK still has extremely low coverage of trees; planting more trees, be they native or non-native, can only be a good thing and would help build awareness of the low coverage in the UK.
- The threat of tree disease is making it all the more important to plant trees for the future.
- The UK government has recently been criticised for its environmental credentials, the woodland creation grant in England has been suspended and despite renewed efforts to increase woodland creation, targets are unlikely to be met.³² A campaign in this vein would be a good way of building awareness of environmental degradation more generally.

²⁶ 'Great news on our grants campaign' Woodland Trust blog, 9th January 2014

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blogs/planting-trees/great-news-on-our-grants-campaign/>

²⁷ Woodlands for Wales, Welsh Government 2009.

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/EnglishWfWstrategy.pdf/\\$FILE/EnglishWfWstrategy.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/EnglishWfWstrategy.pdf/$FILE/EnglishWfWstrategy.pdf)

²⁸ Woodlands for Wales Action Plan

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/WoodlandsforWalesActionPlan2.pdf/\\$FILE/WoodlandsforWalesActionPlan2.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/WoodlandsforWalesActionPlan2.pdf/$FILE/WoodlandsforWalesActionPlan2.pdf)

²⁹ See further: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-8LGCK9> and

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/BWW_Planner_News_No25.pdf/\\$FILE/BWW_Planner_News_No25.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/BWW_Planner_News_No25.pdf/$FILE/BWW_Planner_News_No25.pdf)

³⁰ Forestry in Wales Quick Guide, November 2013.

<http://www.assemblywales.org/Research%20Documents/Forestry%20in%20Wales%20-%20Quick%20guide-04112013-227779/gg11-0031-c-English.pdf>

³¹ 'Progress reducing emissions and preparing for climate change in Wales' the Committee on Climate Change, January 2013 http://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/1673_Welsh-Rep-2013FINALWEB.pdf

³² The UK Parliament Environmental Audit Select Committee report 'An environmental scorecard' published in September 2014, gave the government a 'red card' for its efforts to reduce health-damaging air pollution, protect biodiversity and prevent flooding in a scorecard assessment of its green policies during this Parliament.

Arguments against the resolution

- The UK government and Welsh government both have woodland strategies and various tree planting programmes in place.
- According to some conservationists, limiting tree planting to native or single species can make woodland areas more susceptible to disease, climate change and predation³³ (it should be noted however that this resolution specifies broadleaf trees more generally, which can also be non-native, and does not preclude non-native broadleaf species from being planted).
- Identifying land for planting trees or the creation of new woodland can be difficult.

Groups to contact for further information

The Woodland Trust

Kempton Way Grantham Lincolnshire NG31

Tel: 01476 581135 (England) or 08452 935860 (Wales)

Email: england@woodlandtrust.org.uk or wales@woodlandtrust.org.uk

Web: www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Forestry Commission

620 Bristol Business Park, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol, BS16 1EJ

Tel: [0300 067 4000](tel:03000674000)

Email: fe.England@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.forestry.gov.uk

Woodland Heritage

P.O. Box 168, Haslemere, Surrey, GU27 1XQ

Tel: 01428 652159

Email: enquiries@woodlandheritage.org

Web: www.woodlandheritage.org

³³ Russell, T. 'Non-native trees are not the enemy' The Telegraph, 11th January 2013
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/gardeningadvice/9790453/Non-native-trees-are-not-the-enemy.html>

3. Public access defibrillators

There is an urgent need to widen public access to defibrillators to significantly increase the survival rate following a cardiac arrest. This meeting urges WI members to work with their communities to install public access defibrillators.

Proposer's position

The proposer is concerned that the delay in accessing defibrillation devices following a cardiac arrest significantly decreases survival rates.

Outline of issue

Current UK survival rates among people who have a cardiac arrest outside hospital remain extremely poor, varying from 2% to 12%. Every year an estimated 60,000 out of hospital cardiac arrests occur in the UK, only 30,000 of which are treated by emergency medical services.³⁴ Bystander action in these cases, when every second counts, can be the difference between life and death.³⁵

Electrical defibrillation is the process of administering a shock to a person suffering a sudden cardiac arrest to try and restore the normal rhythm of the heart. The scientific evidence to support early defibrillation is overwhelming; the delay from collapse to delivery of the first shock is the single most important determinant of survival. If defibrillation is delivered promptly, survival rates as high as 75% have been reported. The chances of successful defibrillation decline at a rate of about 10% with each minute of delay; basic life support will help to maintain a shockable rhythm, but is not a definitive treatment.³⁶

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are easy to use, compact, portable and very effective. They are designed to be used by lay people; the machines guide the operator through the process by verbal instructions and visual prompts. They are safe and will not allow a shock to be given unless the heart's rhythm requires it. They are designed to be stored for long periods without use and require very little routine maintenance. Several models are available from the manufacturers or through medical equipment companies.³⁷ AEDs made available to the public are referred to as Public Access Defibrillators (PADs).

There are already a number of PADs across the country. They are often situated in areas where large numbers of people gather; such as sports centres, train stations, shopping centres and workplaces. They are occasionally situated in telephone kiosks.³⁸ Organisations including Community HeartBeat and Arrhythmia Alliance work with communities to install PADs. Current campaigns have focussed on particular areas, such as workplaces, football clubs, schools and rural villages. Asda, alongside the British Heart Foundation, has recently installed PADs in all of its stores nationwide.³⁹ In April 2014 the Department of Education announced a deal that would allow schools to purchase defibrillators at a reduced price.

³⁴ Malhotra, A. Improving the UK's performance on survival after cardiac arrest. BMJ 2013;347:f4800 <http://www.bmj.com/content/347/bmj.f4800>

³⁵ British Heart Foundation. Policy statement Emergency Life Support (June 2012) https://www.bhf.org.uk/pdf/ELS_policy_statement_June2012.pdf

³⁶ <http://www.resus.org.uk/pages/aed.pdf>

³⁷ A guide to Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). Resuscitation Council (UK) and British Heart Foundation (December 2013) http://www.resus.org.uk/pages/AED_Guide.pdf

³⁸ See more at <http://www.communityheartbeat.org.uk> and <http://www.communityheartbeat.org.uk/adoptatelephonebox.php>

³⁹ Asda Project, March 5th 2014 <http://www.ipad-aed.com/asda-the-bhf-to-create-over-18000-lifesavers-with-ipad-sp1-aed-an/>

Whilst there are a lot of PADs being installed around the country, there is currently no coordinated campaign to ensure that there is adequate coverage. Current campaigns are run at community level; local people tend to raise funds, work out where to place the devices and then organise installation. This seems to have led to the installation of many new PADs across the country, but these localised campaigns often start when someone dies of a cardiac arrest nearby and they are not necessarily driven by a demand or a need for PADs. These current initiatives require a lot of community engagement and are generally supported by national charities but will not necessarily provide coverage of PADs in all areas where they are needed. As well as a lack of a coordinated national campaign, there is also a lack of data showing where PADs are currently located, and showing how many there are in use. This lack of data makes it very difficult to provide a coordinated campaign for more public access defibrillators where they would be needed.

There are some concerns that the use of AEDs without wider knowledge of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) can limit the effectiveness of defibrillation. According to the New York Times, there is some research to indicate that after a heart has been idle for a few minutes, the best course is to first apply CPR, because getting oxygen to the heart and brain makes it more likely that an electric shock will restart the heart.⁴⁰ Furthermore, there are concerns about defibrillation being administered by lay people, without appropriate training. Although basic training in their use is the ideal, both the Resuscitation Council and the British Heart Foundation state that untrained people have used the devices successfully to save lives and a lack of training (or recent refresher training) should not be a barrier. Provided someone is prepared to use the AED they should not be inhibited from doing so. They state that in the United Kingdom, there are very few legal barriers to PAD. A rescuer who has acted appropriately to help a victim of sudden cardiac arrest should not be sued, regardless of the outcome.⁴¹

Arguments for the resolution

- Out of hospital cardiac arrests affect around 60,000 people a year in the UK. Only about 30,000 of which are treated by the emergency medical services.
- Ambulance response times, in both urban and rural areas, are not good enough to promptly administer defibrillation in many cases. Time is crucial, and this delay can be overcome with defibrillators that can be accessed by nearby members of the public.
- This campaign requires a national voice, but is also very local; WI members would be well-placed to get involved.

Arguments against the resolution

- Defibrillators are already available in many of the busiest places, and places with most demand, such as gyms. They might be less effective in areas with more dispersed populations.
- There is a lack of information on how many PADs there currently are, where they are located and whether there is actually a gap in provision.
- There are many communities installing public access defibrillators already, and this is something WIs could work on locally – is a national resolution needed?

⁴⁰ Do It Yourself: The Home Heart Defibrillator, The New York Times, 3rd May 2005. <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/03/business/03jolt.html?ei=5088&en=84d7afacd0fd7943&ex=1272772800&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&pagewanted=all&position=&r=0>

⁴¹ A guide to Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). Resuscitation Council (UK) and British Heart Foundation (December 2013) http://www.resus.org.uk/pages/AED_Guide.pdf

Existing and related campaigns

Community HeartBeat Trust - a national charity focused on provision of life saving defibrillation services to local communities.

The Community Heartbeat Trust, PO Box 168, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 1AX

Tel: 0845 86 277 39

Email via website: <http://www.communityheartbeat.org.uk/contact.php>

<http://www.communityheartbeat.org.uk>

Arrhythmia Alliance, Hearts and Goals Campaign - campaign to install AEDs in communities and make them as common as fire extinguishers.

Arrhythmia Alliance, PO Box 3697, Stratford Upon Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 8YL, UK

Tel: 44 (0)1789 867 531

Email: info@defibssavelives.org

Web: <http://www.defibssavelives.org/>

Groups to contact for further information

Resuscitation Council UK

5th Floor, Tavistock House North, Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9HR

Tel: 020 7388 4678

Email: enquiries@resus.org.uk

Web: <http://www.resus.org.uk>

British Heart Foundation

Greater London House, 180 Hampstead Road, London NW1 7AW

Tel: 0300 330 3322

Email via website: <http://www.bhf.org.uk/contact-us.aspx>

Web: www.bhf.org.uk/

Community HeartBeat Trust

PO Box 168, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 1AX

Tel: 0845 86 277 39

Email via website: <http://www.communityheartbeat.org.uk/contact.php>

4. Failing to care – assessment of need in long-term care

This meeting calls on HM government to remove the distinction between nursing care and personal care in the assessment of the needs of individuals, in order to advance health and wellbeing.

Proposer's position

The proposer is concerned that local authorities are failing to assess the social care needs of individuals lawfully and are denying them access to free NHS Continuing Care. This leaves many families having to rely on local authority social care, to which they may have to contribute financially.

Outline of issue

The social care system is facing an enormous challenge at a time of growing demand and constrained resources. The Independent Commission on the Future of Health and Social Care in England has stated that 'nothing less than a fundamental rethink of how health and social care should be funded and provided is needed to create a system fit for the future.'⁴² Care Forum Wales chair Mario Kreft has described the level of morale and motivation in Wales' care sector as 'probably the lowest that it has been in 30 years'.⁴³

This resolution is concerned with one small aspect of the social care system – free NHS Continuing Care - and its interaction with the rest of the user-pays system provided by local authorities. For comparison, in England the NHS spent an estimated £2.8 billion on social care in 2011-12, whilst in 2012-13, local authorities provided £19 billion worth of care services.⁴⁴ The Welsh government says there are around 5,500 people in Wales who receive NHS Continuing Care.⁴⁵ In comparison, almost thirty times as many Welsh people receive social care from local authorities.⁴⁶

This resolution is based on the allegation that many people are denied access to NHS Continuing Care despite a National Framework being in place to guide authorities in England since 2007⁴⁷ and in Wales since 2004.⁴⁸ To be eligible for NHS Continuing Care, individuals' must have a complex medical condition. The Money Advice Service advises that most people with long-term-care needs will not qualify for NHS Continuing Care: 'There's no clear-cut list of health conditions or illnesses that qualify for funding and not everyone with ongoing

⁴² The Commission on the Future of Health and Social Care in England, 'A new settlement for health and social care.' The King's Fund, September 2014
http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/files/kf/field/field_publication_file/Commission%20Final%20%20inter%20active.pdf

⁴³ BBC online. 'Care homes face nurse recruitment 'crisis,' claims forum'. 17 Aug 2014,
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-28822454>

⁴⁴ Public Accounts Committee. 'England faces great adult social care squeeze '. 10 Jul 2014.
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/public-accounts-committee/news/adult-social-care-substantive/>

⁴⁵ Wales Online. 'Only 29 people come forward to claim wrongly-paid care home fees - leading to fears families will lose out'. 15 July 2014, <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/only-29-people-come-forward-7420854>

⁴⁶ BBC Online. 'Carers' needs part of bill to 'transform' social care.' 13 Jan 2014,
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-21237216>

⁴⁷ Care to be Different . 'NHS Continuing Healthcare. <http://www.caretobedifferent.co.uk/paying-care-home-fees/nhs-continuing-healthcare>

⁴⁸ Alzheimer's Society, 'NHS Continuing Healthcare', April 2013,
http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=1321

health needs will be eligible. The assessment is quite strict, and being frail isn't enough.⁴⁹ But it encourages people to investigate whether they are eligible because, as the charity Age UK notes, the financial impact on families could be significant.⁵⁰ There are several court cases which campaigning groups publicise to ensure people and their carers know the case law which supports access to free NHS Continuing Care,⁵¹ but few families have actually sought the compensation they could claim for being wrongly denied access.⁵² The Alzheimer's Society is calling for health bodies to raise awareness amongst the public and to support individuals and their carers with applying for NHS Continuing Care. It does not call for a change to the criteria, nor for its abolition as the resolution implies.⁵³

If people are unable to access free NHS Continuing Care – whether by not meeting the criteria or being improperly assessed – they are left to the local authorities' system. The underlying reason that this outcome is so devastating for families is that there is chronic underfunding for social care, and many families find they may have to pay towards some of the costs, or are not eligible at all. Public funding for adult social care reduced by 10% between 2010/11 and 2013/14.⁵⁴ The London School of Economics estimates that half a million people who would have been receiving care in 2009 are now squeezed out of the system because of funding cuts.⁵⁵ 87.5 % of councils now provide support only to those with substantial or critical needs.⁵⁶ Age UK reports that almost 900,000 older people in England and Wales who struggle with such basic tasks as washing and dressing are being left to fend for themselves.⁵⁷ In its view, 'spending on older people's care in England will need to double from its current level of 0.5% of GDP to around 1% by the mid-2020s if it is to deliver good-quality care'.⁵⁸

Many politicians, health advocates, charity groups and health think tanks have called for the distinction between health and social care systems to end and the money to be merged altogether.⁵⁹ They believe the distinction between the *entire NHS and social care budget* – let alone between NHS Continuing Care and local authority care – is wasteful, unsustainable

⁴⁹ Money Advice Service. 'Are you eligible for NHS Continuing Care funding?'

<https://www.moneyadvice.org.uk/en/articles/are-you-eligible-for-nhs-continuing-care-funding>

⁵⁰ Age UK. 'Factsheet 20: NHS continuing healthcare and NHS-funded nursing care. July 2014.

http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Factsheets/FS20_NHS_continuing_healthcare_and_NHS-funded_nursing_care%20_fcs.pdf?dtrk=true

⁵¹ See Care to be Different, <http://www.caretobedifferent.co.uk/>

⁵² Wales Online. 'Only 29 people come forward to claim wrongly-paid care home fees - leading to fears families will lose out'. 15 July 2014, <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/only-29-people-come-forward-7420854>

⁵³ Alzheimer's Society, 'NHS Continuing Healthcare', April 2013,

http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=1321

⁵⁴ Age UK. 'Agenda for later life.' 2014. http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/For-professionals/Policy/ID202014_agenda_for_later_life_report_2014.pdf?dtrk=true

⁵⁵ Care and Support Alliance. 'CSA Response to the Barker Commission's final report on the future of health and social care. 4 September 2014. <http://careandsupportalliance.com/2014/09/04/csa-response-to-the-barker-commissions-final-report-on-the-future-of-health-and-social-care-4-september-2014/>

⁵⁶ Age UK. 'Care in Crisis'. 2014. http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Campaigns/CIC/Care_in_Crisis_report_2014.pdf?epslanguage=en-GB?dtrk%3dtrue

⁵⁷ John Bingham. '900,000 elderly needing care left to fend for themselves'. The Daily Telegraph. 14 Aug 2014. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/elderhealth/11030930/900000-elderly-needing-care-left-to-fend-for-themselves.html>

⁵⁸ <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/professional-resources-home/public-affairs/reportage/past-issues-of-reportage/reportage-august-2011/viewpoint-social-care-funding/>

⁵⁹ Chis Ham. 'Integrated Care in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales: lessons for England.' 2013, http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/files/kf/field/field_publication_file/integrated-care-in-northern-ireland-scotland-and-wales-kingsfund-jul13.pdf

and not meeting the needs of our ageing population.⁶⁰ The Independent Commission on the Future of Health and Social Care in England (the Barker Commission) concluded that moving to a single, ring-fenced budget for the NHS and social care, with a single commissioner for local services was appropriate for a health and care system fit for the 21st century.⁶¹ Importantly, the Commission 'recommends a focus on more equal support for equal need, which in the long term means making much more social care free at the point of use.' In short, Commissioners also want the distinction between social and nursing care removed, but not just in relation to the Continuing Care programme. To do this, the Commission said an extra £5 billion will be needed and so a 'comprehensive review of various forms of wealth taxation needs to be undertaken.'⁶²

Both the English and Welsh governments have taken steps to bring health and social care together. In June 2013, the Westminster government earmarked £3.8 billion, later called the 'Better Care Fund', to support health and social care services to work together. It is unclear at this stage how the Better Care Fund and its resulting local plans will affect access to NHS Continuing Care. In Wales, Local Health Boards, local authorities and others already have to co-operate in the production of a single social care plan for their shared populations.⁶³

Two outcomes are possible if the resolution is achieved. All people eligible for social care would be entitled to it free on the NHS, completely swamping the NHS budget without the extra funding, as the Barker Commission estimates.⁶⁴ Or, all people currently entitled to NHS Continuing Care would be moved onto the local authority system. Neither would solve the underlying problem of chronic under funding. The recent passing of the Care Act and the Social Services and Wellbeing Bill in Wales (soon to pass) has introduced consistent

⁶⁰ Including but not limited to, The King's Fund (e.g. <http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/blog/2013/05/beyond-dilnot-need-wider-reform>), The Nuffield Trust (e.g. <http://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/publications/reforming-social-care-options-funding>), Carers UK (<http://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/carers-manifesto>), Alzheimer's Society (e.g. http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=833&pageNumber=2), AdAss (Association of directors of adult social services) <http://www.adass.org.uk/ADASS-calls-for-fundamental-reappraisal-of-the-role-of-the-NHS/>; Dilnot Commission (<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130221130239/http://www.dilnotcommission.dh.gov.uk/our-report/>), The Barker Commission (http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/files/kf/field/field_publication_file/Commission%20Final%20%20interactive.pdf), the Public Accounts Committee (<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/public-accounts-committee/news/adult-social-care-substantive/>); Age UK, <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/professional-resources/home/public-affairs/reportage/past-issues-of-reportage/reportage-june-2011/june-2011-radical-reform-of-social-care-funding-is-needed-now/>; the Care and Support Alliance (<http://careandsupportalliance.com/2014/07/14/csa-press-release-response-to-public-accounts-committee-report-10-july-2014/>)

⁶¹ The Commission on the Future of Health and Social Care in England, 'A new settlement for health and social care.' The King's Fund, September 2014 http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/files/kf/field/field_publication_file/Commission%20Final%20%20interactive.pdf

⁶² The Commission on the Future of Health and Social Care in England, 'A new settlement for health and social care.' The King's Fund, September 2014 http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/files/kf/field/field_publication_file/Commission%20Final%20%20interactive.pdf

⁶³ Chis Ham. 'Integrated Care in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales: lessons for England.' July 2013, http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/files/kf/field/field_publication_file/integrated-care-in-northern-ireland-scotland-and-wales-kingsfund-jul13.pdf

⁶⁴ The Commission on the Future of Health and Social Care in England, 'A new settlement for health and social care.' The King's Fund, September 2014 http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/files/kf/field/field_publication_file/Commission%20Final%20%20interactive.pdf

standards for local authorities to assess people's needs so they get access to free, or partly-free care on the same basis as everyone else across the nations. This should end the post-code lottery of assessment. Richard Hawkes, Chair of the Care and Support Alliance (representing 75 health charities) welcomed the Care Act and the Better Care Fund, calling them 'bold and ambitious bids to address the crisis, and move us closer to a preventive, more integrated, system that keeps people out of crisis and living independently.'⁶⁵ But, 'sitting behind this is a bigger picture of chronic underfunding, which has led to a dramatic year-on-year rationing of care.'⁶⁶

Arguments for the resolution

- Surveys suggest social care is as important an issue as health,⁶⁷ and many people rightly worry about the financial costs they may have to face in the future as well as their overall wellbeing.
- The complexity and variety of the health and social care system is deeply unfair and leaves thousands of people without the right support to lead fulfilling and healthy lives.

Arguments against the resolution

- The resolution is not in keeping with the policy direction of other major health charities and think-tanks, particularly the Alzheimer's Society, which is calling for NHS Continuing Care to be better promoted, not merged with social care.
- There may be thousands of people being unfairly denied access to NHS Continuing Care, but the London School of Economics estimates there are half a million people with care needs who are receiving no social care at all since the funding cuts began.
- The resolution does not address the wider problem of finding a sustainable solution to paying for the social care needs of millions of people into the 21st century; there is a risk that the NFWI could look out of touch on the issue by calling for an impractical and unworkable 'solution' to the funding challenge.

Groups to contact for further information

The Alzheimer's Society

Devon House, 58 St Katharine's Way, London, E1W 1LB

Tel: 020 7423 3500

Email: enquiries@alzheimers.org.uk

Web: <http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/>

Age UK

Tavis House, 1-6 Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9NA

Tel: 0800 169 6565

Email: <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/contact-us/>

Web: <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/>

⁶⁵ Care and Support Alliance. 'CSA Press Release: The English public has given a 'vote of no confidence' in the care system. 31 Aug 2014. <http://careandsupportalliance.com/2014/08/31/csa-press-release-the-english-public-has-given-a-vote-of-no-confidence-in-the-care-system-31-august-2014/>

⁶⁶ Care and Support Alliance. CSA Press Release: Response to Public Accounts Committee Report on Adult Social Care. 10 July 2014. <http://careandsupportalliance.com/2014/07/14/csa-press-release-response-to-public-accounts-committee-report-10-july-2014/>

⁶⁷ Care and Support Alliance. 'CSA Press Release: The English public has given a 'vote of no confidence' in the care system. 31 Aug 2014. <http://careandsupportalliance.com/2014/08/31/csa-press-release-the-english-public-has-given-a-vote-of-no-confidence-in-the-care-system-31-august-2014/>

Care and Support Alliance

Tel: 0207 923 5723

Email: csa@nas.org.uk

Web: <http://careandsupportalliance.com/>

Care to be Different

Suite 10, Unit 3, Blackhill Drive, Wolverton Mill South, Milton Keynes, MK12 5TS

Tel: +44 (0)1908 582231

Email: <http://www.caretobedifferent.co.uk/contact/>

Web: <http://www.caretobedifferent.co.uk/>

5. Cutting back on food waste

Everybody loses when good food is thrown away. We call on WI members to reduce their own food waste and all public and private sector organisations to do more to minimise food waste and protect our finite resources.

Proposer's position

The proposer is concerned about the consequences of food waste for both individuals and society. This includes the economic impact on households, the environmental degradation caused by the production of methane and other gases by rotting food in landfill sites, as well as the unfairness of a situation in which people are malnourished and dying of hunger in the less developed world whilst millions of tonnes of edible food is being wasted in more developed countries. The proposer would like to see greater action taken by WI members to reduce their own food waste, and for public and private sector organisations such as schools, hospitals and retailers to take steps to reduce the amount of food waste that they generate.

Outline of issue

Food waste is problematic on a number of different levels, including:

- **Cost:** At the consumption stage, food waste costs the average UK household £680 per year.⁶⁸ Waste collection and disposal is the fourth largest area of council spending at £7 billion a year.⁶⁹
- **Environmental factors:** Food production is energy and resource intensive. For example, the amount of water wasted globally in growing crops that never reach the consumer is estimated at 550bn cubic metres.⁷⁰ Food waste sent to landfill produces methane, a greenhouse gas, which represents 40% of the UK's methane emissions.⁷¹
- **Resource availability:** At a time when 1.4 billion people worldwide are overweight or obese, another 850 million lack sufficient calories and are undernourished.⁷² With the global population set to increase from 7 billion to 9 billion people by 2050, stresses on food availability are likely to intensify.

Within the food value chain, food waste predominantly occurs at three stages: during production level, handling and storage level, and consumer level. In North America, Europe and Oceania, more than half of food waste occurs at consumption stage. Conversely, in South and Southeast Asia and in Sub-Saharan Africa, the two stages closest to the farm (i.e. production and storage) account for the majority of food waste – between two-thirds, and three-quarters.⁷³

⁶⁸ 'UK households wasting less food, figures show.' The Guardian, 15th November 2011

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/nov/15/food-waste-uk-homes>

⁶⁹ See further: http://www.local.gov.uk/productivity/-/journal_content/56/10180/3510540/ARTICLE#sthash.B6xJUcpY.dpuf

⁷⁰ Sedghi, A. 'How much water is needed to produce food and how much do we waste?' Cited in The Guardian data blog, 10th January 2013 <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2013/jan/10/how-much-water-food-production-waste>

⁷¹ Anaerobic Digestion. POST Note, Number 387 September 2011 http://www.parliament.uk/documents/post/postpn387_anaerobic-digestion.pdf

⁷² Cited in Garnett, T., 'Three perspectives on sustainable food security: efficiency, demand restraint, food system transformation. What role for LCA?' Journal of Cleaner Production (2013), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2013.07.045>

⁷³ Lipinski B. *et al* 2013. 'Reducing Food Loss and Waste'. World Resources Institute. http://pdf.wri.org/reducing_food_loss_and_waste.pdf

In the region of 89 million tonnes of food are wasted each year in the EU. If no action is taken, by 2020 this figure could rise to 126 million tonnes. According to the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), in 2012 British consumers wasted 7 million tonnes of food, 4.2 million tonnes of which was avoidable.⁷⁴ Despite a 21% reduction in the amount of food wasted between 2007 and 2012, households are still wasting the equivalent of six meals per week. The main reasons include over-buying, serving large portions and confusion over food labelling.⁷⁵

An investigation by the Observer in 2013 showed that some hospitals were throwing away up to a quarter of their food, a problem largely blamed on its quality.⁷⁶ The Sustainable Restaurant Association provides an accreditation scheme to restaurants. In 2011 it launched a 'Too Good To Waste' campaign in response to the 600,000 tonnes of food that UK restaurants throw away every year.⁷⁷ The campaign encourages diners to take leftovers home with them, and provides advice to restaurants on reducing waste and promoting leftover use. Organisations such as FareShare work with supermarkets and manufactures to recover edible food that would otherwise be wasted or diverted to non-human consumption and donates it to local charities and projects across the UK.

Half of the food wasted in the UK occurs at production level. This is due to a combination of factors including climate stresses, pests and disease, and produce being rejected by retailers. According to a report by Global Food Security, UK farmers are forced to discard upwards of 40% of their produce because it does not fit a retailer's strict grading standard. Farmers will sometimes overproduce in order to ensure they meet contract quotas. In the absence of alternative markets, edible produce may end up being used as animal feed or ploughed back into the ground.⁷⁸ Supermarkets periodically relax rules on accepting 'ugly' or 'cosmetically imperfect' fruit and vegetables from farmers, for example where there has been crop damage from severe weather.⁷⁹ Tesco claim that they have been selling 'uglier' fruit and veg as part of their value range for years.⁸⁰ However, responding to a House of Lords Committee that looked at the issue of food waste, Tesco's Group Food Sourcing Director acknowledged that supermarkets had a greater role to play in educating the public that imperfect fruit and veg is just as good as perfect fruit and veg.⁸¹

In April 2014, the House of Lords EU Committee published a report, following an inquiry into food waste. *Counting the Cost of Food Waste: EU Food Waste Prevention*,⁸² states that

⁷⁴ Household Food and Drink Waste in the United Kingdom 2012, WRAP.

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/hhfdw-2012-main.pdf.pdf>

⁷⁵ Food waste: 'Six meals a week' thrown away by Britons. BBC, 7th November 2013.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-24846612>

⁷⁶ 'Hospitals are wasting 82,000 meals a day.' The Observer, 29th June 2013.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/jun/29/hospitals-throw-away-quarter-of-food>

⁷⁷ See further <http://www.thesra.org/some-good-thing/too-good-to-waste/>

⁷⁸ Food Waste within Global Food Systems, p.9 <http://www.foodsecurity.ac.uk/assets/pdfs/food-waste-report.pdf>

⁷⁹ See for example 'Ugly fruit gets a makeover as store cuts waste', The Independent, 1st June 2014.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/news/ugly-fruit-gets-a-makeover-as-store-cuts-waste-9466943.html>

⁸⁰ The EU Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment and Energy Sub-Committee. 'The EU's contribution to food waste prevention' Oral and written evidence, Evidence Session No. 15, 10th December 2014 p. 374

<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/eu-sub-com-d/food-waste-prevention/food-waste-evidence-volume.pdf>

⁸¹ *ibid.* p. 375

⁸² House of Lords Select Committee, press release 'Urgent Action on Food Waste Needed' 6th April 2014 <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/eu-environment-and-agriculture-sub-committee-d/news/lords-eu-sub-d-food-waste-report/>

efforts across the EU to reduce food waste are 'fragmented and untargeted' and argues for a European-level strategy. The report highlighted the need for retailers, in particular supermarkets, to act more responsibly in limiting food waste by both farmers and consumers. It called on supermarkets to move away from incentives such as 'buy one get one free' schemes which can increase household waste and to work harder to avoid cancelling orders of food that had already been grown by producers, a practice which leads to unsold, but perfectly edible, food being ploughed back into the fields or left unharvested. The UK Parliament's Environment Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee is currently undertaking an inquiry examining the consumer element of food security.

In England, the government's Waste Prevention Programme strategy ('Prevention is better than cure; the role of waste prevention in moving to a more resource efficient economy') sets out the role of waste prevention in moving to a more resource efficient economy and explores the role of others, such as local authorities. It also sets out ways in which industry and the public sector can contribute to reducing the amount of waste they generate.⁸³

In Wales, the overarching government strategy on waste 'Towards Zero Waste: One Wales: One Planet'⁸⁴ sets out waste reduction targets of 65% by 2050 and looks at ways of preventing and dealing with waste. In order to meet its targets the strategy states that households will need to reduce the amount of waste they produce by 1.5% year on year. Action on food waste in the commercial and industrial sector, which generates 30% of the total ecological footprint impact in this sector, will also have to be a priority, along with paper and card (which generates 15% of the total), and chemicals (12% of the total).

There are a number of government led initiatives to try and encourage reduction of food waste including:

- **The Courtauld Commitment**, a UK-wide voluntary agreement aimed at improving resource efficiency and reducing waste within the UK grocery sector. The third Courtauld Commitment was agreed in 2013, and includes measures to reduce household food waste, and prevent and reduce grocery ingredient & product waste. It has a target of a 5% reduction in household food waste by the end of 2015 (from a 2012 baseline).⁸⁵
- **The Grocery Code Adjudicator** seeks to reduce unfair practice by supermarkets towards their suppliers. This potentially includes cancellation of contracts which can leave suppliers with a surplus of food that they are unable to market.
- **The Waste Resources Action Programme**, a government funded programme set up in 2000 to help recycling take off in the UK and to create a market for recycled materials. WRAP works with UK businesses, trade bodies, local authorities and individuals to offer practical advice. In November 2013, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs announced that WRAP's annual funding in England would be reduced from approximately £25 million to approximately £15 million.⁸⁶

⁸³ 'Prevention is better than cure; The role of waste prevention in moving to a more resource efficient economy' HM Government, December 2013
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/265022/pb14091-waste-prevention-20131211.pdf

⁸⁴ 'Towards Zero Waste, One Wales: One Planet' Welsh Government, June 2010.
<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/desh/publications/100621wastetowardszeroen.pdf>

⁸⁵ <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/courtauld-commitment-3>

⁸⁶ Cited in <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/eu-sub-com-d/food-waste-prevention/154.pdf>

- **The Innovation in Waste Prevention Fund**, a scheme administered by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which awards grants to innovative partnerships that reduce waste.⁸⁷
- **The Hospitality and Food Services Voluntary Agreement** is an agreement which businesses from across the sector can sign up to. It aims to reduce food and associated packaging waste by 5% by the end of 2015 (against a 2012 baseline).⁸⁸

Arguments for the resolution

- WI members are passionate about reducing food waste and well placed to campaign locally (for example with hospitals) on this issue.
- Food waste was a problem that was repeatedly identified in the WI's programme of work on food security 'The WI Great Food Debate' and would provide a good follow up campaign.

Arguments against the resolution

- The WI has already done considerable work on this issue, including through the 'Love Food, Hate Waste' campaign with WRAP.
- It is likely that many members are already active in their homes and communities in reducing the amount of food that they waste.

Existing/ related campaigns on the issue

Too Good To Waste

25 Gerrard Street, London, W1D 6JL
 Tel: 020 7479 4224
 Email: hello@thesra.org
 Web: <http://www.toogood-towaste.co.uk/>

Love Food, Hate Waste

c/o WRAP The Old Academy, 21 Horse Fair, Banbury OX16 0AH
 Email via website: <http://england.lovefoodhatewaste.com/content/contact-us>
 Web: <http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/>

Groups to contact for further information

WRAP (Waste Resources Action Programme)

The Old Academy, 21 Horse Fair, Banbury OX16 0AH
 Email via website: <http://www.wrap.org.uk/help/contact>
 Web: <http://www.wrap.org.uk/>

Feedback (previously Feeding the 5000)

Fitzroy House, 18 Ashwin Street, London, E8 3DL
 Tel: 020 3051 8633
 Email: hello@feedback.org
 Web: <http://feedbackglobal.org/>

FareShare

Unit 7 Deptford Trading Estate, Blackhorse Road, London SE8 5HY
 Tel: 020 7394 2468
 Email: enquiries@fareshare.org.uk
 Web: <http://www.fareshare.org.uk/>

⁸⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/reducing-and-managing-waste>

⁸⁸ <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/hospitality-and-food-service-agreement-3>

FoodCycle

Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, London, E2 6HG

Tel: 020 7729 2775

Email: hello@foodcycle.org.uk

Web: foodcycle.org.uk

6. Ending FGM

This AM welcomes the progress that has been made towards ending Female Genital Mutilation. We call on political leaders and the UK public to maintain momentum behind all efforts to eradicate this abuse of human and child rights.

Proposer's position

The proposer acknowledges recent progress towards eradicating FGM both in the UK and internationally, but at a time when the first UK prosecutions have only recently been announced, she remains concerned that there is much more to do to secure eradication.

Outline of issue

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is described by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is a form of child abuse. There are a number of cultural, religious and social reasons why FGM is undertaken within communities. Reasons such as social acceptance; family honour; preservation of a girl's virginity or chastity; custom and tradition; hygiene and cleanliness; and the mistaken belief it enhances fertility and eventually makes childbirth safer for the infant are often cited.

Prevalence

WHO estimates that 140 million girls and women worldwide have been subjected to some form of FGM. In some parts of the world FGM is commonplace. In Africa, where up to forty two countries are thought to carry it out, it's estimated that three million girls a year are at risk⁸⁹. The practice is also widespread in some Asian countries and the Middle East. A recent report from the International Development Select Committee notes the example of Iraqi Kurdistan, where more than 70% of women have undergone female genital mutilation.⁹⁰

A study by Equality Now and City University released in July 2014 estimated 137,000 women and girls in England and Wales are living with the consequences of FGM⁹¹. Data from English hospitals published by the Health and Social Care Information Centre in October 2014 indicated that 1,279 women are being treated by the NHS for FGM related issues⁹². The figures, the first ever of their type, are key to helping understand the scale of the problem and assisting authorities to begin to tackle it more effectively.

The effects of FGM

The procedure is traditionally carried out by a woman with no medical training and without anaesthetics and antiseptic, using knives, scissors, scalpels, glass or razor blades. The short-term effects of FGM include: severe pain; shock; bleeding; wound infections, including tetanus; and blood-borne viruses such as HIV and hepatitis B and C.

⁸⁹ WHO, Female Genital Mutilation (Factsheet 241) 2013, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/>

⁹⁰ House of Commons International Development Committee (2013) *Violence against women and girls*, London

⁹¹ City University and Equality Now (July 2014) *Female Genital Mutilation – updated statistical estimates*, London

⁹² Health and Social Care Information Centre, *FGM (September 2014) Experimental Statistics* (2014) <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB15711/fgm-sep-2014-exp-rep.pdf>

Long-term, consequences include: chronic vaginal and pelvic infections; abnormal periods; difficulties passing urine and persistent urine infections; kidney impairment; damage to the reproductive system; cysts and the formation of scar tissue; complications in pregnancy; pain during sex and lack of pleasurable sensation. Some women die due to infection, blood loss or trauma in the immediate period after the event. Others need further surgery to open the lower vagina for sexual intercourse or childbirth.⁹³

Human rights, the UK situation and the international response

FGM is recognised internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. It reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes, and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women. In December 2012, the UN General Assembly unanimously passed a resolution banning the practice of FGM.

In the UK it has been a serious criminal offence under the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 to perform FGM or to assist a girl to perform FGM on herself. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 strengthened this law to criminalise FGM being carried out on UK citizens overseas. Anyone found guilty of the offence faces a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison.

The UK government launched a Call to Action and Action Plan on Violence against Women and Girls in 2011 (updated in 2013), which included actions to tackle FGM. In November 2012 it committed an additional £50,000 funding to support frontline agencies tackling FGM.⁹⁴

This work was followed by an announcement of Department for International Development (DfID) funding of £35 million for a worldwide campaign to 'end FGM in a generation.' DfID aims to offer support to communities that practise FGM, whilst also ensuring that legislation and policy is in place and implemented. The fund includes provision for communications aimed at 'social change,' including in the UK, and further research. The finance means that the UK is the biggest international donor to efforts to tackle FGM.

In June 2013, the International Development Select Committee criticized a lack of action to tackle FGM in the UK, claiming that it undermined the UK's credibility in challenging FGM overseas. It noted: "Witnesses recommended that the UK must put aside political correctness and adopt a far more robust, cross-agency approach, where the police proactively track girls at risk of female genital mutilation and step in to prevent parents having the procedure performed on their daughter(s)". The Committee highlighted that there remains a great deal to do to tackle FGM in the UK. It reported it was "appalled to discover that, despite 148 referrals of female genital mutilation cases in the past four years, police and social services do not place at risk girls on the Child Protection Register."

Recent developments

There has been a major push to galvanize action in recent months to end FGM. The 2014 Girls' Summit in London saw Prime Minister, David Cameron announce a series of measures alongside the Home Secretary and International Development Secretary including:

⁹³ NHS Choices, *Female Genital Mutilation*, 2013, <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/female-genital-mutilation/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

⁹⁴ HM Government (2013) *A call to end violence against women and girls, action plan*, London: The Stationery Office

- a £1.4 million FGM Prevention Programme, launched in partnership with NHS England to help care for survivors and safeguard those at risk
- new police guidance from the College of Policing and an inspection programme by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) that will look at how the police handle cases of FGM
- a consultation on proposals to introduce new civil orders designed to protect girls identified as being at risk of FGM
- new legislation that will mean parents can be prosecuted if they fail to prevent their daughter being cut
- new legislation to grant victims of FGM lifelong anonymity from the time an allegation is made
- a new specialist FGM service which will include social services, to proactively identify and respond to FGM; this will be supported by an ongoing package of work led by the Chief Social Worker, Isabelle Trowler
- new programmes to prevent child and forced marriage in 12 developing countries
- an international charter calling for the eradication of these practices within a generation.⁹⁵

Following the Summit further details of measures are emerging. Amendments to the Serious Crime Bill tabled in Parliament on 20 October 2014 include a new legal duty on parents to protect daughters and new FGM protection orders that could see at risk girls have their passports confiscated so that they cannot be taken out of the country.

The role of professionals

The Summit followed a series of high profile campaigns that have resonated with the public including a *Guardian* newspaper backed petition launched on Change.Org that called for more information about FGM to be taught in schools. The petition, launched by a 17 year old Bristol schoolgirl, Fahma Mohamed, attracted almost 250,000 signatures. It resulted in then Education Secretary, Michael Gove, agreeing to meet Fahma and write to primary and secondary school head teachers with guidance to remind them of their duties to protect schoolchildren.

The growing consensus that too many girls have been let down has seen other professional bodies take action to ensure that frontline professionals are supported to identify and intervene to protect girls at risk of FGM⁹⁶. A recent intercollegiate report from key health bodies including the Royal Colleges of Midwives, and of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, highlighted the critical role that health and social care professionals have to play in identifying, sharing information and reporting cases of FGM. The report made recommendations for those professionals that will be pivotal to bring about the changes required to eradicate the practice. Some of these recommendations are now being realised, for example on the need for more systematic reporting and evidence gathering. As noted above, the first ever data on prevalence in the UK, drawing on hospital records, was published in October 2014; a move heralded by Public Health minister, Jane Ellison, as a: "major milestone on the road to ending FGM in one generation here in the UK."

Prosecutions

The first UK Prosecutions, also recognised as a 'watershed moment,' were announced in March 2014. They follow a concerted action plan developed by the Director of Public

⁹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-hosts-girl-summit-2014-a-future-free-from-fgm-and-child-and-forced-marriage>

⁹⁶ RCOG, RCN, RCM, Equality Now, Unite, *Tackling FGM in the UK: intercollegiate recommendations for identifying, reporting and recording* (2013) London

Prosecutions (DPP) to improve prosecutions and develop closer working between police and prosecutors throughout an investigation. Amid concern about failures to bring cases to prosecution, the Crown Prosecution Service has been re-reviewing a series of cases, to gauge the possibility of a prosecution, potentially through the use of child protection legislation.

Metropolitan Police Commander Mak Chishty, the national lead on FGM, has explained that while evidence has not been in place to support convictions, it is important to view convictions in context:

"My strategy is to eradicate this barbaric practice, so by the time you get to charges it's almost too late.

"Although charges have an important place, I want it to stop altogether. The best way to get it to stop is through communities themselves dropping the practice, and they do this through heightened awareness in terms of health, and understanding that it's not religious, it's not culture, it's not superstitious."

Arguments for the resolution

- The resolution is in keeping with WI campaigns on violence against women and girls.
- The resolution is in keeping with the WI's commitment to promoting women's human rights.

Arguments against the resolution

- This issue has previously been highlighted as part of other VAWG/women's rights campaigns. Does it need its own resolution?
- While there remains a great deal to do to tackle the issue in the UK the DPP's work with police and civil society groups to review cases is a step in the right direction which, combined with government commitments to major funding, the Education Secretary's efforts to raise awareness in schools, clear leadership from professional health bodies, and social change campaigns, has renewed and developed focus on this important issue.

Related mandates

This meeting deplores the fact that women's human rights continue to be violated worldwide and calls upon the governments of the world to adhere to the commitments made at the Fourth UN Convention on Women 1995, 'that women's rights are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights' and to implement policies to this end.

NFWI Executive Committee, 1995

Groups to contact for further information

NSPCC

Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London, EC2A 3NH

Tel: 020 7825 2500

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Web: <http://nspcc.org.uk>

Daughters of Eve

Tel: 07983030488

Email: daughtersofeve@hotmail.co.uk

Web: <http://www.dofeve.org/about-us.html>

Orchid Project

23 Riding House Street, London, W1W 7DU

Tel: 020 7637 5453

Email: info@orchidproject.org

Web: <http://orchidproject.org/>

7. To curb the use of antibiotics

In view of the problem of increased microbial resistance to antibiotics, this meeting urges HM government to work with health professionals and the public to raise awareness of, and encourage the appropriate use of, antibiotics in human and animal healthcare.

Proposer's position

The proposer is concerned that the overuse of antibiotics is causing bacteria to become immune to them and that in the future, people will die of illnesses that have been treatable for many years. The proposer wants to see the more responsible prescribing of antibiotics in human healthcare, and for antibiotics in animal healthcare to only be used for therapeutic purposes, and not as a preventative measure.

Outline of issue

Antibiotics are essential medicines for treating bacterial infections in both humans and animals. There are a number of different types of antibiotics and the treatment works by fighting against bacterial infections. Modern medical and veterinary practice relies on the widespread availability of effective antimicrobials to prevent and treat infections in humans and animals. In the UK, 79% of antibiotic prescribing occurs via general practice, 15% from hospitals, and 6.2% via other community prescribers (such as the dentist).⁹⁷ In addition to their use in more common bacterial infections, antibiotics are also critical for their use in clinical interventions, such as organ donation and certain cancer therapies, as well as in routine operations. It is estimated that 30% of antibiotic use in the UK is for the treatment of farm animals⁹⁸ – the vast majority (95%) is in the pig and poultry sector.⁹⁹

Bacteria can adapt and find ways to survive the effects of an antibiotic; microbial resistance to antibiotics is increasing and expected to become more problematic over time. Indiscriminate or inappropriate use of antibiotics means that bacteria are being exposed to concentrations of antibiotics that are not sufficient to kill them, and act as a catalyst for bacteria to develop resistance. Meanwhile, discovery of new antibiotics to treat existing and resistant microbes has slowed significantly. Combined, this means that anti-infective treatment options are becoming much more limited. Healthcare associated infections such as MRSA and *C. difficile* are already resistant to several classes of antibiotics and are incredibly difficult to treat. It is estimated that MRSA alone could cost the UK economy anywhere between £3-11 billion.¹⁰⁰

England's Chief Medical Officer has warned that routine operations could prove to be deadly in the next 20 years unless antibiotic resistance is dealt with. With antibiotic resistance on

⁹⁷ English surveillance programme for antimicrobial utilisation and resistance (ESPAUR), Public Health England 2014
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/362374/ESPAUR_Report_2014_3.pdf

⁹⁸ Antibiotic Resistance in the Environment, POST Note Number 446, October 2013
<http://www.parliament.uk/Templates/BriefingPapers/Pages/BPPdfDownload.aspx?bp-id=post-pn-446>

⁹⁹ Overuse of drugs in animal farming linked to growing antibiotic-resistance in humans, Levitt, T., The Ecologist, May 23rd 2011
http://www.theecologist.org/News/news_analysis/897405/overuse_of_drugs_in_animal_farming_linked_to_growing_antibioticresistance_in_humans.html

¹⁰⁰ Cited in http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/Factsheets/SB_11-80.pdf at p.11

the increase, new drugs taking around 12 years to develop,¹⁰¹ and very few new products in the research and development pipeline, there is a limited amount of time for antibiotic resistance to be tackled, or new treatment options to be developed.

Why is resistance growing?

A report, *Ensuring Access to Working Antimicrobials*, published by the Science and Technology Select Committee noted that improved stewardship of existing antibiotics to increase the length of time they would be effective, alongside more innovation in discovering new treatments was necessary to ensure ongoing access to antimicrobials. It noted that GPs were often under pressure to prescribe antibiotics to patients when this was not appropriate, with scare stories in the media, short consultation times, and delayed prescriptions – where a patient was given a prescription and told to wait a few days and ‘see how they felt’ before taking the medication – contributing to this. However, it also highlighted the important role that government had to play in ensuring that clinicians were supported to prescribe correctly through awareness campaigns targeted at the public. The report also considered the use of antibiotics in animals, and called on Ministers to limit the use of antibiotics in farm animals to therapeutic applications highlighting that, although a lot of the evidence was circumstantial and that more research was needed, there was a danger that antimicrobial resistance could be passed from animal pathogens to human pathogens.¹⁰²

Inappropriate prescribing

In the UK, antibiotics are prescription-only medicines, however GPs often come under criticism for using antibiotics inappropriately. A study published in August 2014 by Public Health England and University College London found that the number of patients given antibiotics for minor ailments had increased significantly in recent years. In a study of 500 GP practices, researchers found that in 1999, 36% of patients were given antibiotics for coughs and colds, but by 2011 this figure had risen to 51%. The study also found big variations between GP practices. Further figures released by Public Health England in October 2014 found that between 2010 and 2013, antibiotic prescribing amongst GPs had risen by 4%, and amongst hospital doctors by 12%. It also found that the highest rates of resistance in England were seen in the areas where antibiotic prescribing was highest.¹⁰³

The slow rate of infection diagnosis can also prove problematic, and can result in the wrong antibiotic being prescribed to treat an infection. The sometimes lengthy process of testing a bacteria in a laboratory means that doctors will often have to make a ‘best guess’ at which antibiotic the bacterial infection will be most sensitive to, rather than wait for laboratory results.

Patient pressure

Patients also have a role to play, and are often criticised for demanding antibiotics from their doctors when they are not needed, not completing courses of antibiotics or taking them incorrectly, or saving antibiotics and then self-medicating (inappropriately). All this means that bacteria are able to develop resistance more quickly. On 7 July 2014, a Joint Statement on Antimicrobial Resistance was issued by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and key health bodies calling on patients to take some responsibility for

¹⁰¹ Developing new medicines, Association of British Pharmaceutical Industries
<http://www.abpi.org.uk/industry-info/new-medicines/Pages/default.aspx>

¹⁰² House of Commons Science and Technology Committee, *Ensuring Access to Working Antimicrobials*, 7th July 2014.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmsctech/509/509.pdf>

¹⁰³ English surveillance programme for antimicrobial utilisation and resistance (ESPAUR), Public Health England 2014.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/362374/ESPAUR_Report_2014_3.pdf

strengthening their own defences against disease, by considering alternatives to antibiotics or allowing minor viral infections to clear up in their own time.

Antibiotics in animal healthcare

30% of antibiotic use in the UK is for the treatment of farm animals, the vast majority in the pig and poultry sector. Globally, approximately 70% of antibiotics are used in agriculture.¹⁰⁴ There has been some debate about the effect of exposing farm animals to antibiotics prophylactically – i.e. giving low dose antibiotics to prevent infections occurring, or where infections are suspected. This is common in more intensively reared animals, Christopher Thomas, professor of molecular genetics at Birmingham University offers the example of an intensive chicken rearing facility where the risk of infection spreading means that the whole population will be treated – even though only one or two animals might be infected: “it’s quite commons for vets to decide they need to treat all the chickens in the facility just in case [the infection] has already spread to others that are not noticeably sick”.¹⁰⁵ The Ecologist reports: “UK scientists say the misuse of antibiotics in intensive chicken farms had allowed salmonella in particular to spread, with the antibiotics acting as masking agents for proper sanitation and the confined housing allowing germs to spread...rapidly.”¹⁰⁶

The Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics is calling on the government to take urgent action to reduce antibiotic use in farming by banning or phasing out the routine preventative use of antibiotics on farms. According to the Alliance, just under half of all antibiotics used in the UK are given to farm animals for treating or preventing the diseases caused by intensive farming. As a result of this practice, animals are less likely to develop resistance to diseases, and bacteria will become more resistant to treatment.

There is also concern that antibiotic resistant bacteria, such as salmonella and campylobacter, is being transmitted to humans – this includes via infected meat and farm runoff. Veterinary leaders have called on people not to be overly concerned given the UK farming industry is so well-regulated and uses fewer antibiotics than other EU countries.¹⁰⁷ According to the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA) the extent to which antibiotic resistance can move from bacterial populations in animals to those in humans is limited. While the Science and Technology Committee has called for more research in this area.¹⁰⁸ As with antibiotic prescriptions for human health, some farmers are badly informed about antibiotic overuse in animals, and vets report that they are under pressure to prescribe antibiotics.¹⁰⁹

It has been proposed that other ways which antibiotic use could be reduced in animal healthcare, without impacting on animal health, could include more research into alternatives to antibiotics in food production – for example bacteriophages, reducing crowding on farms and therefore disease outbreaks, limiting the use of medically important antibiotics such as fluoroquinolones to use in human health, reducing bacteria in manure and slurry through composting and aeration, and better education and support for farmers on reducing antibiotic use.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ POSTnote 446 October 2013.

¹⁰⁵ Is the rise in antibiotics use on farms a threat to humans? Harvey, F. *The Guardian*, 11 June 2013

¹⁰⁶ Overuse of drugs in animal farming linked to growing antibiotic-resistance in humans, Levitt, T., *The Ecologist*, May 23rd 2011

¹⁰⁷ Is the rise in antibiotics use on farms a threat to humans? Harvey, F. *The Guardian*, 11 June 2013

¹⁰⁸ House of Commons Science and Technology Committee, *Ensuring Access to Working Antimicrobials*, 7th July 2014

¹⁰⁹ *The Ecologist*, May 23rd 2011.

¹¹⁰ POSTnote 446 October 2013.

Government response

The Standing Medical Advisory Committee made recommendations as early as 1998 on the dangers of antimicrobial resistance and for limiting the prescription of antibiotics, following a request from the then Chief Medical Officer, Sir Kenneth Calman.^{111 112}

In recent years, calls to tackle antimicrobial resistance have gained momentum. England's Chief Medical Officer, Professor Dame Sally Davies, last year likened the threat of antibiotic resistance to terrorism, suggesting what are currently routine operations could become deadly in just twenty years and cautioning that antimicrobial resistance was a global ticking time bomb. The UK recently considered placing antibiotic resistance onto the National Risk Register,¹¹³ (although this did not eventually occur) and the issue was raised at the G8 summit in Northern Ireland last year where Science Ministers agreed more decisive action to tackle resistance.¹¹⁴

In 2013, the UK government published a five year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy, alongside the devolved administrations, which sets out actions to address the problem of antimicrobial resistance. The strategy acknowledges that more needs to be done to educate patients and the public more generally about appropriate antibiotic use. It includes actions for the human healthcare sector, as well as the livestock and veterinary sector, setting out how understanding of antimicrobial resistance will be improved, and priorities for conserving the effectiveness of existing treatments.

Animal keepers will be encourage to work more closely with veterinary surgeons to ensure antibiotics are administered correctly and consider farm assurance schemes to ensure 'best husbandry' to reduce the number of antibiotics that need to be used.¹¹⁵ A high level steering group has been tasked to implement the strategy. The first annual progress report is due to be published in November 2014. Whilst the strategy has been broadly welcomed as a positive step forward, there has been criticism by some in the medical profession that these are merely "words on paper in Government offices and they do not really filter down to the man or woman behind the desk with the prescribing pad."¹¹⁶

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), the government body responsible for issuing national advice and guidance on health and social care, recently announced that it will draft two new guidelines on the use of antimicrobials; the first relating to the effective stewardship of antibiotics in health and social care, and the second with a public health function aiming to change public attitudes and behaviours in relation to

¹¹¹ The Path of Least Resistance, The Standing Medical Advisory Committee, 1998 <http://antibiotic-action.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Standing-Medical-Advisory-Committee-The-path-of-least-resistance-1998.pdf>

¹¹² *ibid.* at p. 143

¹¹³ 'Too much of a good thing' The Telegraph, 2013.

<http://s.telegraph.co.uk/graphics/projects/antibiotic-resistance/>

¹¹⁴ G8 Ministers pledge to act on bacterial antibiotic resistance, The Financial Times, 13th June 2013. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/172341bc-d428-11e2-a464-00144feab7de.html#axzz3GJqnuPLJ>

¹¹⁵ UK Five Year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy 2013 to 2018, Department of Health, September 2013.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/244058/20130902_UK_5_year_AMR_strategy.pdf

¹¹⁶ Ensuring access to working antimicrobials. Science and Technology Committee, 7th July 2014, at p.13.

antibiotics.¹¹⁷ It is reported that these will be published in May 2015, and March 2016 respectively.¹¹⁸

The Prime Minister warned in July 2014 that the world could soon be ‘cast back into the dark ages of medicine’ and has called on global governments and drug companies to work together to develop new antibiotics. He has established an expert review to look at the economics relating to antimicrobial resistance, and will look at how pharmaceutical companies can be encouraged to invest in new antimicrobials, how the global community can work together and balancing the need for the development of new drugs with maintaining the efficacy of existing drugs.¹¹⁹

In May 2014, the World Health Organisation was requested to develop a draft global action plan on antimicrobial resistance. The action plan will go through consultation before being presented to the World Health Assembly in May 2015.¹²⁰

Arguments for the resolution

- According to the Royal College of GPs, patients and the public need to be aware of the risks associated with inappropriate use of antibiotics and how to use them responsibly. Awareness raising amongst the public and societal change is also a priority identified in the UK government’s five year strategy on antimicrobial resistance. The WI could use its network to raise awareness amongst the public.
- The dangers of antibiotic resistance are too profound to be ignored. Action is needed now if the availability of effective antibiotics is to be preserved until new treatment options are found.
- This is a huge problem globally but the UK has already been praised by the WHO for being a leader in tackling this. The UK can use its influence by exerting pressure on the global stage for other countries to act.

Arguments against the resolution

- The government has a five year strategy in place which focuses on public engagement, and emerging NICE guidelines should ensure that prescribers are more stringent in their use of antibiotics.
- Evidence on the extent to which antibiotics are used in animal healthcare is unclear.
- This is a huge problem globally – will action at UK level really make a difference?

Existing campaigns

NHS Antibiotic Awareness Campaign:

- <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/ARC/Pages/AboutARC.aspx>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/european-antibiotic-awareness-day-resources>

Since 2008, ‘European Antibiotic Awareness Day’ (EAAD) has been held in November each year to raise awareness of these issues among health professionals and the public.

¹¹⁷ Press release ‘Tackling the rise in antibiotic resistance’ 13th October 2014.

<http://www.nice.org.uk/news/article/tackling-the-rise-in-antibiotic-resistance>

¹¹⁸ ‘NICE working to tackle antimicrobial resistance’ PMLive 14th October 2014.

http://www.pmlive.com/pharma_news/nice_working_to_tackle_antimicrobial_resistance_606287

¹¹⁹ Prime Minister warns of global threat of antibiotic resistance, Press Release, July 2nd 2014.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-warns-of-global-threat-of-antibiotic-resistance>

¹²⁰ World Health Organisation. http://www.who.int/drugresistance/amr_global_action_plan/en/

The **Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics** campaign was founded by Compassion in World Farming, the Soil Association, and Sustain in 2009. Contact Alison Craig for further information: acraig@saveourantibiotics.eu

Antibiotic Action – This campaign is funded by the British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy, focusing on the need to research and discover new antibiotics.
<http://antibiotic-action.com/>

Further information

Department of Health

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/antimicrobial-resistance-amr-information-and-resources>

E-mail: amr@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

E-mail: postmaster@vmd.defra.gsi.gov.uk

Tel: 01932 338316

Website: http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/public/antibiotic_strategy.aspx

Royal College of GPs

Tel: 020 3188 7400

Website: <http://www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/target-antibiotics-toolkit.aspx>