

# Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee

11th Meeting, 2021 (Session 6), Tuesday 7 December 2021

## Women's Unfair Responsibility for Unpaid Care and Domestic Work

Note by the clerk

### Introduction

1. The Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee agreed to hold a number of roundtable meetings about subjects within its remit.
2. It held the first roundtable meeting at its Business Planning Meeting in August when it heard from Equalities and Human Rights organisations about the impact of Covid on protected groups.
3. On 30 November 2021, it heard from civil justice stakeholders on the operation of remote hearings during the pandemic and their proposed plans for the future.
4. On 14 December 2021, it will hold its third roundtable. The subject will be Women's unfair responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work during and following Covid. The Committee will hear from stakeholders representing women with protected characteristics about the impact of Covid on those groups.
5. Ahead of that roundtable session, the Committee agreed that it would be helpful to hold an introductory session with groups representing women's rights to hear more detail on the issues arising. The organisations attending the session have recently published reports highlighting a number of areas of concern.
6. The Committee agreed to undertake work in this area following evidence it received as part of its pre-budget scrutiny. Members heard that the burden placed on women in relation to unpaid caring duties for elderly parents and children and an increase in domestic work during lockdown, and as the country emerges from the pandemic, is likely to have a long-term negative impact on their future rights and economic prospects.
7. Today's introductory session will focus primarily on the financial impact on women particularly those in protected groups and on the impact on women's mental health. The session will also explore the impact on women entrepreneurs and what support has been made available for women in business.

## Participants

8. The following people will be taking part in the panel session—
- **Ruth Boyle**, Policy and Parliamentary Manager, Close the Gap;
  - **Eilidh Dickson**, Policy and Parliamentary Manager, Engender;
  - **Professor Norin Arshed**, Chair in Entrepreneurship and Innovation, School of Business, University of Dundee.

## Format

9. The meeting will be held in hybrid format with some Members of the Committee and witnesses attending in person and others joining virtually.

## Topics

10. The session will be a chance to discuss topics such as:-
- **The impact of the pandemic on financial insecurity for young women and how this compares to the experience of older women;**
  - **Access to training and development opportunities during and after the pandemic;**
  - **The impact of the pandemic on women's mental health;**
  - **The experiences of female essential workers particularly those with additional responsibilities such as caring for children or elderly relatives;**
  - **Whether there are groups of women who are further disadvantaged such as lone parents or women with disabilities;**
  - **The impact of the pandemic on women entrepreneurs and their businesses;**
  - **The increase of violence against women and how this is being addressed;**
  - **What support has been available or is required to address these issues.**

**Clerks to the Committee  
December 2021**