

[News story: Dstl supports new science challenge for girls in Salisbury](#)

As the world marks International Women's Day, staff at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) Porton Down have been leading the way in an initiative to inspire girls to take up careers in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

The Salisbury Soroptomist STEM challenge put to girls in years 8 and 9 in Salisbury schools was to research, design and develop a sustainable prototype to improve life for people living in poverty in the developing world. The teams entering this first year of the event in Salisbury have produced some innovative ideas for supporting vulnerable communities.

Organisers are part of the Soroptomist International, a global women's voluntary organisation, which is setting up a new club in Salisbury.

Lisa Scandling, who has worked at Dstl as a scientist for 30 years, is one of the organisers of the challenge. She said:

This challenge has been enthusiastically supported by Dstl, and it fits in well with Dstl STEM initiatives. Dstl has provided judges and mentors for the event, and it's a fantastic way of working with the local community to inspire more girls to follow STEM careers.

The Soroptomists focus on transforming the lives of women and girls, locally, nationally and globally, through education, empowerment and enabling initiatives. We hope that the challenge will encourage pupils to look at how they can use their talents and skills to help others too.

The final judging and award ceremony will take place at South Wilts Technical College on March 19, when the winners will be announced by the Mayor of Salisbury.

More information on the event can be found on the [Soroptomist International website](#)

[News story: Government takes action to](#)

tackle domestic abuse

Domestic abuse comes in many forms, shattering the lives of victims and their families, and in recognition of this the government has put forward proposals for new laws which would transform our approach to this terrible crime.

[The consultation launched today](#) (Thursday 8 March) by the Prime Minister Theresa May, Home Secretary Amber Rudd and Justice Secretary David Gauke, will seek views on measures to be included in the government's draft Domestic Abuse Bill.

To ensure we get this landmark legislation right we now want to hear from all those who have been affected by abuse, from survivors, frontline professionals, charities and the public, to gather views on how, together, we can best put a stop to it once and for all.

Our tough new approach includes new Domestic Abuse Protection Orders to better shield victims against further abuse by enabling courts to impose a range of conditions on abusers. These could be compulsory alcohol treatment, attending a programme to address their underlying attitudes or addictions, and using electronic tagging to monitor them. Under the proposals, breaching the order would become a criminal offence.

We have also proposed the creation of a statutory aggravating factor in sentencing, similar to those already in law for hate crimes, for domestic abuse to toughen sentences when it involves or affects a child, and the creation of a Domestic Abuse Commissioner to hold the government to account. Economic abuse will be recognised for the first time as a type of domestic abuse, covering controlling circumstances in which victims have finances withheld, are denied access to employment or transport, or are forced to take out loans and enter into other financial contracts. Our recognition will improve understanding among frontline professionals, law enforcement officers and prosecutors so we can take action more quickly and effectively to better support victims.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

This year we celebrated the centenary of achieving votes for women in this country, and today we recognise International Women's Day. But while we have made great strides towards equality and opportunities for women, the fact there are still thousands of people suffering from domestic abuse shows how much work we still have to do.

Domestic abuse takes many forms, from physical and sexual abuse, to controlling and coercive behaviour that isolates victims from their families and has long-term, shattering impacts on their children. The consultation we are launching today includes a number of proposals which have the potential to completely transform the way

we tackle domestic abuse, providing better protection to victims and bringing more perpetrators to justice.

We know that domestic abuse affects those from all walks of life. Victims can be young and old, male and female, and I hope as many people as possible will come forward to give us their views and share their experiences, as we seek to put an end to this abhorrent crime for good.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

It is appalling that in twenty-first century Britain, nearly 2 million people every year – the majority of them women – suffer abuse at the hands of those closest to them.

Through this Bill I want to fundamentally change the way we as a country think about domestic abuse, recognising that it is a crime that comes in many forms – physical, emotional, economic. This is about creating a society that protects individuals and families at the earliest opportunity, before such abuse has a chance to escalate.

This is a once in a generation opportunity to transform our entire approach to this terrible crime. I call on everyone, but especially those who have suffered abuse in any form, to speak out and help shape the way we approach this crime for years to come.

Justice Secretary David Gauke said:

The damage caused by domestic abuse can last a lifetime. We have a duty not only to support those affected but to prevent others falling victim in future.

We continue to improve the way domestic abuse is dealt with throughout the justice system, but there is undoubtedly more we can do.

By proposing to give courts greater powers, from a new protection order to tougher sentences, we are sending a clear message that domestic abuse in any form will not be tolerated.

As part of the consultation the government will also be seeking views on how to allocate some of the £20m funding announced last year.

Studies have shown that adults who as a child witnessed domestic abuse are far more likely to experience abuse by a partner as an adult, and so an £8 million fund will be allocated to support children who witness domestic abuse, and help with their recovery through locally commissioned projects.

Meanwhile £2 million will be dedicated to supporting female offenders who have been victims, as over 60 per cent have indicated they have experienced domestic abuse.

As part of these important initiatives designed to make tackling domestic abuse everybody's business, £2 million will be used to extend a healthcare pathfinder pilot across further hospital trusts and help direct domestic abuse victims to the full range of services they need.

This government is also completely committed to developing a sustainable funding model for refuges, and to ensuring that there is no postcode lottery when it comes to provision across the country. That is why we are reviewing the way in which refuges and supported housing are delivered.

We have heard the need for sustainable funding for refuges which is why we asked all the charities and organisations working on the frontline to feed in their expertise and come forward with their ideas as to how best to deliver this on the ground. That process is ongoing – and we have been clear no options are off the table as we work with them to ensure women requiring support in their time of need are not let down.

Yesterday changes also came into effect making it easier for the estimated 12,000 survivors of domestic abuse living in refuges to register to vote anonymously. They will now be able to register to vote without their name and address appearing on the electoral roll, and without the fear of their former partners finding their address.

Suzanne Jacob OBE, Chief Executive of national domestic abuse charity SafeLives, said:

This is a true opportunity to have a national conversation about how to end domestic abuse, for good. We are ambitious for women and girls – we want every single one to be able to live safely at home and in their own relationships.

We welcome the focus on the urgent need to hold perpetrators to account and to prioritise the needs and safety of women and girls. The time for piecemeal sticking plasters is over, we need radical change, and we will stand side-by-side with survivors to make this happen.

Katie Ghose, Chief Executive of Women's Aid, said:

We are delighted that the government is marking International Women's Day by launching the consultation on the landmark Domestic Abuse Bill. We want to make sure that the Bill makes a real difference to the lives of survivors of domestic abuse. We will be working with survivors, members who deliver life-saving domestic abuse services and the wider violence against women and girls sector to ensure that the law, policy and practice makes domestic

abuse everyone's business. We want to see the Bill encompass and go beyond changes to the criminal justice system to include policies on housing, education, health, immigration and the welfare system to name but a few, to ensure that every survivor and her child can safely escape domestic abuse.

The consultation will also seek views on legislation, as well as other steps that can be taken to tackle the harms caused by domestic abuse and support victims and survivors to rebuild their lives. These include:

- Potential for the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, known as Clare's Law, to be enshrined in legislation. This allows police to disclose information about previous violent offending by a new or existing partner and build better protection for victims, and has already been rolled out operationally across the country.
- Proposals to give domestic abuse victims the same status in court as those who have suffered modern slavery or sex offences, so that they would be automatically eligible for the range of special measures available in criminal proceedings, such as giving evidence behind a screen or via video link.

Sandra Horley, CBE, Chief Executive of national domestic violence charity Refuge, says:

Refuge applauds the intentions of the government to put survivors at the heart of its efforts to stamp out domestic abuse.

We have worked closely with the government up to this point and look forward to continuing to do so, especially on a new national model for refuges. It is very welcome news that the government has announced its commitment to sustainable refuge funding alongside the launch of the consultation.

As the largest provider of refuges, supporting more than 6,000 women and children a day across our services, we believe that guaranteeing the life-saving and life-changing services needed by victims of domestic abuse will go a long way towards protecting and supporting the people at the very heart of the proposed Bill.

Jo Todd, founding Chief Executive of domestic abuse charity Respect, said:

This is a once in a generation opportunity to create a step-change in how we deal with domestic abuse. I look forward to reading the consultation and hope to see every strand focus on the needs of survivors and their children, and the creation of safe, effective

responses to perpetrators.

[Press release: UK Government and Chwarae Teg join forces to #PressforProgress to mark International Women's Day](#)

Governments, business and society must continue to be bold if we are to deliver real change for women in Wales and the world, Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns said today as the UK Government marks International Women's Day (8 March).

This year's theme is #PressforProgress – a call to action for the world to take concrete steps to help achieve gender parity more quickly.

And right across Wales today, men and women alike will take part in impressive programme of rallies, concerts, workshops, conferences and performances to send out the message that continued awareness and action is required to ensure that women's equality is gained and maintained in all aspects of life.

The UK Government in Wales and Welsh gender equality charity Chwarae Teg will play their part on Monday 12 March when they join forces to host an International Women's Day themed business breakfast at the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales in Cardiff Bay.

Giving women and girls the support and opportunities to progress from the classroom right through to the boardroom will top the agenda at the event which will also look at ways to break down workplace barriers and how to build inclusive workplaces for the benefit of the Welsh economy.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

For too long, not enough has been done to help women to fulfil their true potential. That is something that we, as a Government, have been working hard to address.

The past few months have seen a real sea change in attitudes to women and gender equality, and the UK Government wants to seize and build upon that strength of feeling and drive forward even more change.

That is why I'm delighted to be working together with Chwarae Teg to welcome women together at this event to celebrate the advancement and achievements of women in business, but to also pause and reflect on the many challenges that lie ahead.

Chwarae Teg Chief Executive, Cerys Furlong, said:

Our vision at Chwarae Teg, is for Wales to become a world leader in gender equality. It is only when women have equal representation and equal access to the workplace that the economy of Wales can truly flourish.

Chwarae Teg works with businesses and organisations across Wales to help them to tackle the barriers that women face and to build inclusive workplaces to the benefit of everyone. Women must be seen and heard at all levels and across all of society.

More women at the table means that the issues affecting women are discussed and solutions are found, leading to better services and better legislation for all. Women must also feel safe in the workplace, we want to see a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and abuse leading to a shift in working cultures.

There are now 44,000 more women in work in Wales than there was in 2010, and the UK Government is making significant strides in delivering the changes and creating the conditions required for women from all walks of life who want their horizons broadened and aspirations lifted.

How the UK Government is leading by example:

- The UK has become one of the first countries to introduce gender pay gap (GPG) reporting requirements. This law will mean all large employers have to publish their GPG figure, shining a light on where women are being held back.
- Introducing Shared Parental Leave to offer choice to eligible parents when it comes to childcare, and allow mothers to return to work sooner if they wish to.
- Rolling out tax free childcare schemes benefitting thousands of families in Wales.
- Pledging to end violence against women at home and abroad by introducing tough new laws to protect women from domestic violence, forced marriage and FGM.
- Launching the [Industrial Strategy](#) – a long-term plan to build a Britain fit for the future by helping businesses create better, higher-paying jobs in every part of the UK.

Notes to Editors

- International Women's Day is a day of global celebration marking the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and

future.

- Chwarae Teg is a charity working in Wales to support the economic development of women as well as working with businesses and organisations to develop and improve working practices

News story: Record number of women on FTSE 100 boards

- Record 309 women on FTSE 100 boards, new data reveals
- A quarter of FTSE 350 board positions now filled by women
- FTSE 100 firms on track to hit target of a third of board positions being filled by women by 2020

New data to mark International Women's Day reveals more women than ever before are on boards of the UK's largest companies.

These figures show 309 positions – almost 29% – of FTSE100 board positions are held by women, up from 12.5% in 2011. In FTSE 350 companies, the number of women chairs has risen from 17 to 20 while the number of women on boards has increased to 25.2%.

If progress matches the same gains made over the last three years then a third of board positions will be filled by women by 2020 – the target set by the Government-backed Hampton-Alexander Review.

Business Minister Andrew Griffiths today urged businesses to renew their commitment to tackling gender inequality.

Business Minister Andrew Griffiths said:

International Women's Day is about celebrating women's achievements and I am delighted to see that a record number of our largest companies' board positions are now filled by women.

There has been a lot of progress in recent years with high-flying women breaking down barriers to more than double the number of women on FTSE 100 boards but there is still a lot more to do to ensure that women are not held back in the workplace.

Sir Philip Hampton, chair of the Hampton-Alexander Review said:

Today is a day to celebrate the efforts of all women and men who have worked hard to ensure a women's place is absolutely in the boardroom.

British business and the UK economy are all the better for it and we have now created a strong platform on which to build.

Under new laws, over 1,400 companies have reported their gender pay gaps revealing an overall pay gap of 18.4%. All companies with more than 250 employees must report their gender pay gaps by April 4 (30 March for the public sector).

Tackling the gender pay gap is part of the Industrial Strategy Government's long-term plan to build a Britain fit for the future, with the ambition to help businesses create better, higher-paying jobs and ensure everyone can be successful in the workplace. Bridging the gender pay gap could add £150 billion to the UK economy by 2025 .

Notes to Editors:

Figures for women on boards of FTSE companies published on 6 February by BoardEx, a business intelligence provider, show:

- FTSE 100 is at 28.7% up from 27.7% in October
- FTSE 250 is at 23.4 % up from 22.8%
- FTSE 350 is at 25.2% up from 24.5%
- All-male boards down from 10 to 8
- The number of women Chairs across the FTSE 350 has gone up from 17 to 20

[News story: James 2 and Vertrouwen report and flyers published](#)

MAIB's report on the collision between the fishing vessel Vertrouwen and the motor cruiser James 2, resulting in the sinking of James 2 with the loss of 3 lives in Sussex Bay on 6 August 2017 is now published.

The report contains details of what happened, subsequent actions taken and recommendations: [read more](#). This page also contains a short video about the investigation findings.

[Safety flyers to the fishing vessel industry and sea angling community](#) summarising the accident and detailing the safety lessons learned, have also been produced.

Press enquiries

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