



UKPAC



December 2018

# UKPAC Newsletter

## INCOMING NEW OFFICERS

The UKPAC met in November and has a new look. New Chair, me, a new Communications Officer, Kathy Warrick with Kay Richmond in her new role as Federation Programme Director. We also had regional officers Esther Roberts, Sian Kent, Sharon Richardson, Janice Wilson, Yvonne Freeman, Diane Hill, Ana Williams, and Bobbie Sheldrake attending for the first time as well as proxies Margaret Clark and Carol Roxburgh. Thanks to Yvonne Gibbon attending her last meeting as she takes up her new role as APD for Education. Support was given to the committee by a number of observers – who all made valuable contributions to the discussions - including Federation President Sue Williams, President Elect Isobel Smith and other experienced Soroptimists. Thank you to everyone for their contributions and help in moving the agenda forward.

Kay Richmond and the previous committee have spent a long time negotiating new TOR and how to build on this work was discussed. Collaborative working and working more closely with the FPAC and FMB was agreed in order to maximise outcomes for women and girls. It was also agreed that branding - without hot irons but something almost as drastic - is needed to make it clear to all members that the UKPAC is part of SIGBI and works as a subcommittee of the FPAC. Rethinking how we report our work is also needed as the years of "encouragement" by Programme Action Officers is seen as nagging and is ineffective. Action has begun.

## THE FOCUS OF UKPAC

It was agreed that **Violence Against Women (VAW)** should remain the main focus of UKPAC, and as part of this, work with the Prison Reform Trust (PRT) will continue. The Transforming Lives document has a single aim: fewer women sent to prison across the UK.

To achieve this we seek systems change that will:

- improve/strengthen the governance of women's justice
- promote problem solving justice – especially for women whose offending is linked to abuse, trauma and coercive relationships
- strengthen pathways into mental health and social care
- promote non-custodial options and outcomes for mothers of dependent children
- reduce the use of custodial remand
- reduce the number and proportion of BAME and foreign national women in prison
- end prosecution of trafficked women
- strengthen multi-agency collaboration in local areas with greater use of early intervention and community orders for women.
- give a voice to women with direct experiences of the criminal justice system
- rebalance expenditure away from prisons and in favour of community-based women's support services

This is a tall order for an organisation with no legislative power, but it is amazing how far we have come since this document was published. The Ministry of Justice Female Offender Strategy was published on 28 June 2018 and we like to think that our lobbying contributed to this document supporting most of these objectives and committing to reducing women's imprisonment and recognising women's needs and vulnerabilities within the criminal justice system. However, there is a big **BUT** – **not enough funding and no timetable to drive it.**

**We need to pressure government to adequately fund women's support services and to influence the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review in the spring. If we all lobby, we are more likely to effect change.**

[sigbi.org/ukpac](http://sigbi.org/ukpac) [facebook.com/UKPACc](https://www.facebook.com/UKPACc) [@UKPACc](https://twitter.com/UKPACc)



Women inspiring action,  
transforming lives



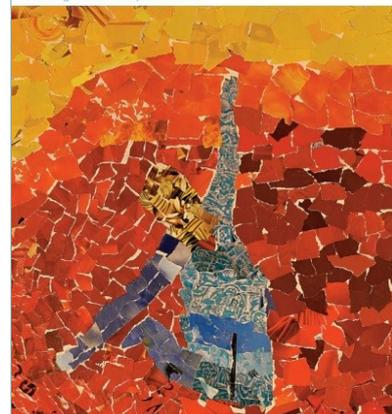
Liz Dominey UKPAC Chair



Kathy Warrick UKPAC  
Communications Officer



Transforming Lives  
reducing women's imprisonment



THE AVERAGE ANNUAL COST OF A PRISON PLACE IN ENGLAND AND WALES IS £37,648. THE COST IS MUCH HIGHER FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S PRISON PLACES.





**#STILL MARCHING FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO TAKE PART IN THE DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THEIR LIVES**



Helen Pankhurst

We represent over 100 activists, politicians and women's rights organisations working in the worlds of domestic, international, and political policy and campaigns. We have come together to mark the 2018 centenary of the first women's votes in the UK and to use the centenary of some women getting the vote to highlight what we are [#StillMarching](#) for in the UK and worldwide.

#### WHAT WE WANT

Greater women's political participation and leadership, especially in local and national politics;  
An end to the violence, harassment and abuse of women, including women in politics and leadership;  
Targeted efforts to address economic inequalities that prevent women engaging in politics and decision-making.  
[@CentenaryAction](#)

#### **The Centenary Action Group (CAG)** [centenaryaction.org.uk](http://centenaryaction.org.uk)

The Centenary Action Group is a cross-party campaigning coalition convened by Helen Pankhurst and represents over 100 activists, politicians and women's rights organisations. It wants to use the centenary of some women getting the vote to highlight remaining inequalities and to help deliver real change for women and girls in the UK and worldwide on key issues. CAG enables collaboration within the women's rights sector on key issues to maximise opportunities for change.

At the UKPAC meeting we didn't manage to discuss CAG, but this is an important lobbying group and Irene Cockroft from SIGL deserves special mention for her work.

The current lobbying focuses on increasing transparency and accountability in party candidate selection processes, ending workplace harassment and tackling the online abuse of women and girls.

On Monday the 29th October 2018 The UK Chancellor of HM Treasury announced a new "digital services tax" of 2% on tech giants such as Facebook, Google and Amazon and it is expected to raise an additional £400m a year. *"It is only right that these global giants, which are profitable in the UK, pay their fair share in supporting our public services,"* - Philip Hammond

CAG is therefore calling on the government to invest at least 1% of this new tax in ending online abuse.

- Women are 27 time more likely to be harassed online globally than men. *European*

#### *Women's Lobby 2017*

- 23% of women have experienced online abuse or harassment at least once *Amnesty International – Toxic Twitter Report 2018*
- $\frac{3}{4}$  of women made some changes to the way they use social media platforms as a result of online abuse- *Amnesty International – Toxic Twitter Report 2018*
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) women MPs receive 41% of abusive tweets- *Amnesty International, 2018*
- Diane Abbott received even more abuse in the six weeks leading up to 2017's snap general election, when 45.14% of abusive tweets were aimed at her. 73% girls close down their social media account - *Plan International Survey 2018*

Kay Richmond, as UKPAC Chair, signed a letter in response to the

#### UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women Report **"Violence Against Women in Politics"**

The report recognises violence against women in politics as a violation of their human rights affecting the whole of society. The Special Rapporteur asserted that member states have an obligation to eradicate and prevent violence against women in politics. 2018 marks 100 years since the passing of the Representation of the People Act giving some women the right to vote. As an empowering and enabling organisation we as Soroptimists must work to remove barriers to women in political life and support these campaigns.

Special Rapporteur report: [un.org/en/ga/search](http://un.org/en/ga/search)