

History of The Women's Budget Group

1988-2020



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wbg WOMEN'S
BUDGET
GROUP

Contents

Foreword

Introduction

Timeline of key events

Four Nations partnership

WBG in Hansard

Key people

Acknowledgments

Foreword by The Rt. Hon. Harriet Harman KC MP

The Women's Budget Group has been such a valuable organisation throughout my decades in Parliament.

In the 1990s its focus on the importance of women's independent access to income shaped attitudes and policy towards protecting mothers' rights to receive "Family Allowance". This had an important influence on the 1997 Labour Government's creation of child credit and working parents credit, which successfully lifted hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty and helped women gain financial independence.

The recognition of women's unpaid work to the wider economy and society has been a founding principle of WBG's approach. Its reports on the Commission on a Gender Equal Economy and Creating a Caring Economy represent a landmark vision of how our economy could be reimaged to serve the interests of all.

I have witnessed the ways in which the response to a feminist approach to economic policy has changed over the decades that WBG has operated. In the 80s we were usually scoffed at by many men MPs when we spoke about 'women's issues' in the House. But with the help of groups like the Women's Budget Group we persisted. WBG is now a major voice in both Houses of Parliament as well as in our committees and All-Party Groups and the analysis of Hansard indicates how much its impact has grown.

WBG's reputation for detailed and accurate analysis on a range of issues, from taxation, to childcare, to housing and employment from a feminist perspective now commands respect from across the political spectrum.

The responses that WBG makes to government's annual Budgets and Spending Reviews are incisive, well-grounded and eagerly awaited reports.

Some years ago I called WBG the IFS (Institute of Fiscal Studies) of Feminist Economics. But it is more than that. It is a beacon of hope and support for those of us striving to make our

country fairer and healthier and I sincerely hope it will continue to flourish in the years and decades to come.

Introduction

The UK Women's Budget Group has grown from an informal network of feminist economists and social policy experts in the 1980s to a thriving policy think tank which today employs a professional staff of 15 and manages a budget of £1.2m. Initially focussed on providing a systematic response to annual government budgets it has widened its activities to encompass a range of issues in public policy which affect women or are informed by women's role in the economy and wider society.

As well as studies of particular sectors and groups such as childcare, housing, violence against women, lone parents, migrant women, taxation and pensions, it also produces macro-economic analyses of fiscal and monetary policy.

WBG's main focus is on the Westminster budget, but it has now been joined by sister women's budget groups in the devolved nations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

From a small network of committed feminist academics and professionals, it is now supporting new generations of feminist economists and has become a respected source of public policy expertise and analysis.

As well as being a respected source of economic analysis within Parliament and policy circles with an increasingly international profile and reach, WBG is also involved in providing training and support for local groups engaged in policy initiatives and campaigns.

The rapid visibility and scope of WBG's work is evidenced by the exponential growth of mentions in Parliament which is illustrated in the Hansard section of this report. The Labour Government from 1997 was eager to incorporate gender analysis into some of its policy initiatives and enabled formal and informal relationships to develop, particularly with the Treasury. The influence of WBG played a major part in the design of Gordon Brown's fiscal measures to reduce child poverty, recognising international research that indicates the importance of income going directly to women (as the main carers for children).

WBG's work since 2010 when the Conservative-led coalition Government inaugurated decades of austerity has been less appreciated by governments but WBG has achieved important channels of communication with feminist politicians from all parties.

The history of the UK WBG is a history of challenge, perseverance, creativity and dogged hard work. In 1995, Dawn Primorolo, who was then Shadow Treasury Minister, challenged the Government about the lack of analysis of UK Government policies on men and women, and in particular the misleading deployment of the household as the basic unit of analysis for assessing the distributional impact of policies. Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer insisted that "The Hon Lady cannot be serious", an attitude that still prevails in some Government circles.

But WBG was both serious and persistent, buoyed by the commitment to women's economic equality and empowerment in the Platform for Action issued at the end of the UN World Conference on Women in 1995 in Beijing. The Platform called for the integration of a gender perspective in budgetary decisions. UNIFEM, the precursor to UN Women, advocated gender analysis of government budgets in their report on Progress of World's Women in 2000, This report was co-ordinated by WBG member Diane Elson and mentioned the UK WBG as a good example of action to hold governments to account for the impact of their budgets on gender equality.

With international commitment to what became known as Gender Budgeting, or Gender Responsive Budgeting, the WBG was able to seize the opportunity offered by the election in 1997 of a government open to working with WBG. It facilitated discussions with the Treasury on key policy targets including the eradication of child poverty, which required tackling women's poverty as a strategic tool of achieving this ([Women Count](#)).

WBG is unique within the landscape of women's organisations in the UK. Whilst partnering with grassroots and intermediary groups which are involved in organising and service delivery on the ground, WBG is focused on providing the analysis and vision for the public policy measures necessary to achieve change on a macro scale. Feminist Economics rightly foregrounds the central role of care for all; whilst this is a universal need, it is women who

provide the bulk of caring work from which society benefits, and a large proportion of care work, especially that carried out by women, is unpaid and invisible.

WBG has insisted that investment in the social infrastructure, such as social care, education, childcare and other public services, is as important as investment in the physical infrastructure in modern economies. This approach was summarised in [Plan F – a Feminist approach to economic strategy](#). The report of the Commission on a Gender Equal Economy titled [Creating a Caring Economy: A Call to Action](#) is a groundbreaking analysis of what an economy committed to gender equality and environmental justice might look like, and the [Feminist Green New Deal](#) focuses on immediate and long term policies to achieve this.

WBG's vision of equality necessarily encompasses racial equality, evidenced by the partnership with the Runnymede Trust which [reported in 2017](#) on the cumulative impact assessment of the changes to taxes, benefits and public spending since 2010 on Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women.

Another significant development in the history of the UK Women's Budget Group was the adoption of a four Nations approach and the development of Women's Budget Groups in the devolved nations of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. The Scottish Women's Budget Group (SWBG) began as an informal network of feminist activists and policy professionals who were actively engaged in developing gender equality strategies across government in the newly developed administration post-2000. With support from the [UKWBG Four Nations Project](#) WBG has supported the group in establishing itself formally as a registered charity, with similar initiatives in Northern Ireland and Wales. The Northern Ireland Women's Budget Group (NIWBG), is now hosted by the Belfast-based charity Women's TEC. The Welsh WBG was initially hosted by Chwarae Teg (Fair Play) in 2020, and currently by [WEN Wales](#).

The UK Women's Budget Group was a product of second-wave feminism which questioned the inequities of conventional economic policy in the last decades of the twentieth century. Now a professional organisation with salaried staff, WBG continues to rely on the expertise and goodwill of feminists who are committed to furthering the vision of a gender-equitable

economy and society and to exploring innovative and effective policy measures which will achieve these ends.

Timeline of Key Events

1980s The concept of a Women's Budget Group emerges

1988

- The idea of a UK Women's Budget Group is first proposed by Georgina Ashworth at a conference on Information Technology and the Clothing Industry, organised by Professor [Swasti Mitter](#) in Brighton.
- Georgina was the founder of CHANGE, an educational charitable trust and think tank focusing on gender and international development.
- The idea was warmly received, but no one signed up to get involved. So, the idea continued to gestate.

1989

- Georgina Ashworth visits Australia where the Federal Government has introduced a 'Women's Budget' in their Affirmative Action Act of 1986.
- Georgina develops the concept of the WBG further through discussions with [Helen l'Orange](#), head of the Australian Government's Women's Bureau, [Eva Cox](#), women's rights activist and co-founder of the Australian Women's Economic Think Tank, and in the UK with [Fran Bennett](#), then of the Child Poverty Action Group (now Associate Fellow at the University of Oxford).

1990s Influencing Government

1990

- Meetings with women's organisations, including the Women's National Commission and NAWO (the National Association of Women's Organisations) to discuss the potential of a women's budget group.
- Journalist [Lesley Abdela](#) asks for a briefing on women's budget perspectives for her forthcoming Sunday Times interview with then Chancellor John Major. (Published on 22 April 1990).

- The briefing, written by Georgina Ashworth, under the auspices of NAWO, is further developed into a position paper for a UK Women's Budget Group. Recommendations included a Gender Impact Statement and a continuous process of consultation between the Treasury and women's organisations to address the 'myriad of financial anomalies emerging from women's historic dependent status, that hit women very hard today and place them in a variety of poverty traps.'
- Major's policy adviser [Judith Chaplin](#) is a key champion of a women's budgeting approach within the Conservative Government (until her untimely death in 1993). She arranges a follow-up meeting between the nascent WBG and the Chancellor on 22 October 1990. Major comes to the NAWO offices for the meeting. It is attended by Georgina Ashworth, NAWO Director Jane Grant, and other NAWO members. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher resigns just a month later and Major takes over the top job. Gender budgeting is no longer a top priority.
- The Labour Party Treasury team invites the nascent WBG team for a meeting on 22 November, attended by Shadow Chancellor John Smith, Paul Boateng MP and Margaret Beckett MP.

1991

- The Women's Budget Group formalises as a coalition of feminist economists and activists that provides systematic responses to government budgets.
- The interdisciplinary Gender Unit at the London School of Economics (LSE), led by (now Professor Dame) [Henrietta Moore](#) provides a base and secretarial assistance. Georgina Ashworth continues to coordinate budget responses and key events from her base at CHANGE until 1998.
- Policy group members of the WBG in the 1990s include: Fran Bennett, Henrietta Moore, and Gail Wilson, LSE; [Susan Himmelweit](#), Open University; [Jay Ginn](#), University of Surrey; [Elizabeth Sclater](#), Older Women's Network; [Jan Pahl](#), University of Kent; Statistician Holly Sutherland from Cambridge University; [Muriel Nissel](#) from the Policy Studies Institute. [Ruth Lister](#) (now Baroness) adds her wisdom on poverty and children to some of the later meetings; [Jane Millar](#), working on social and family policy of the

University of Bath; Dulci Groves, University of Lancaster (Pensions expert); Julia Brophy, Rights of Women.

1992

- From 1992 WBG meets annually on the day the Chancellor of the Exchequer presents his Spring and/or Autumn Budget to Parliament and gives an instant gender analysis.
- The WBG gender analysis has grown to include personal and corporate taxation, social security, transport, agriculture, company law, childcare and so on.

1995

- WBG is [mentioned in parliament for the first time](#). In a debate on Budget Resolutions and Economic Situation on 3 December 1995 shadow Treasury Minister Dawn Primarolo says: *“The Women's Budget Group pointed out that, unlike an increasing number of countries, the United Kingdom does not publish an assessment of the differential effects of fiscal and public expenditure on women as distinct from men. The House and Conservative Members are so preoccupied with male-only interpretations that they do not realise that using the household as a focal economic unit is now recognised as producing gross social inequalities—inequalities which they do not challenge.”*
- Chancellor Ken Clarke, responded: *“The hon. Lady cannot be serious.”*

1996

- The WBG budget response group is filmed live by the BBC over a five-hour period, alongside the usual male-dominated business organisations, Trades Unionists and pundits. WBG members' analysis of the budget and the Chancellor's speech runs through the BBC coverage. For the first time budget analysis includes a women's perspective.
- WBG is mentioned in parliament for the second time. Angela Eagle presses the Chancellor on why, unlike Australia, Canada and South Africa, the UK has no gender assessment of the budget, citing WBG.

1997

- WBG attracts external funding for the first time. The group is invited by Audrey Bronstein of Oxfam UK, to put together a funding bid. The subsequent grant to be channelled through the Fawcett Society, enables short-term funding of an assistant. Fawcett provides a home for the WBG for several years to follow.
- The Labour Party wins the General Election in May 1997. Minister for Women, Joan Ruddock meets with WBG representative Susan Himmelweit and Fawcett CEO Shelagh Diplock. Subsequent meetings with HM Treasury officials follow.
- [Janet Veitch](#), then a civil servant working for the Ministers for Women as the lead for gender mainstreaming across Whitehall, becomes a key mentor and advocate for the WBG. In 1999 Janet would become Director of the UK Women's National Commission.
- Key partner organisations include Fawcett, Maternity Action, Working Parents and the TUC.

1998

- WBG launches a high-impact campaign 'From the Purse to the Wallet' which aims to influence the way government pays social security to families. The campaign launches at an event in Church House, Westminster on 12 February 1998. Minister of State, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Dawn Primarolo, gives the [keynote speech](#) at the event.
- Just prior to the 'Purse to the Wallet' campaign launch the Government accepts WBG's recommendation that the new Tax Credit payments can be made to the main carer rather than the main income earner
- Susan Himmelweit becomes the founding Chair of the WBG.
- From 1997 WBG is hosted by the Fawcett Society, led by Shelagh Diplock and supported by Dr Mary-Ann Stephenson (then Campaigns officer). The group remains an informal collective of academics, trade unionists and women's rights activists focused on the UK budget and economic policies.
- On 19 November 1998, WBG delivers training to HM Treasury officials on how to conduct gender audits of their work. This includes presentations from gender budgeting experts in South Africa, Canada and Norway.

- Susan Himmelweit presents ‘The Need for Gender Impact Analysis’ at an ESRC seminar series on Equal Opportunities, UMIST.
- Following consultation with the WBG, HM Treasury confirmed their intention to add a box to Budget reports about how they will in the future take account of unpaid work.

1999

- The Scottish Women’s Budget Group is founded as a voluntary network. Founding members include Professors Angela O’Hagan and Ailsa McKay.
- **International connections:** WBG expands its international influence with a presentation, by Susan Himmelweit, at the New York UNDP/ UNIFEM Workshop On Pro-Poor, Gender- And Environment-Sensitive Budgets, on ‘The UK Women’s Budget Group: Trying To Make Macroeconomic Policy More Women-Friendly’.

2000s Building the foundations

2000

- WBG continues to input to relevant government consultation events including a roundtable on Maternity Entitlements at Work, jointly organised by the Women’s Unit and the Department for Employment and Education
- **International connections:** WBG has become part of a burgeoning international gender budgeting movement and is invited to share the experience of gender budgeting in the UK at the Commonwealth’s Inter-Agency Workshop on Improving the Effectiveness of Integrating Gender into Government Budgets in London and at an International Workshop on Gender Auditing of Government Budgets, jointly organised by the Italian Department for Equal Opportunities, the National Commission for Equality and Equal Opportunities Between Men and Women and the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, in Rome

2001

- WBG takes on its first employee, part-time coordinator Donna St Hill, with funding from the Barrow Cadbury Trust (paid through the Fawcett Society). Policy work is still undertaken by volunteer members.

- WBG holds a "Pre-Budget Response Seminar" at the House of Commons. Susan Himmelweit presents 'Taking the Long View: What Women and Children Need from the Budget'
- WBG broadens its scope to provide gender analysis of economic policies across government departments. In addition to annual Budget analysis, WBG responds to government consultations on income tax, child tax credit and several other areas.
- 'Making Gender Count: the work of the Women's Budget Group' is presented by Susan Himmelweit and Fran Bennett to the Social Policy Association
- **Scotland.** Diane Elson and Susan Himmelweit are invited to present to the Scottish Executive on 'The Case for Gender Analysis Of Budgets' and 'Engaging With The Policy Making Process: The UK Women's Budget Group'.
- **International connections:** Susan Himmelweit spoke at a UNIFEM-OECD-Nordic Council of Ministers-Government of Belgium meeting on "Towards Gender Responsive Budgeting" in Brussels, on 'Tools for Budget Impact analysis: taxes and benefits'.

2002

- WBG starts to formalise its governance with the appointment of newly appointed Fawcett CEO [Dr Katherine Rake](#) as Chair. [Kate Bellamy](#) is Project Officer. WBG remains hosted by the Fawcett Society.
- In addition to Budget responses the following consultation responses are prepared: Department for Work and Pension's 13th Households Below Average Income Report [;](#) Department for Trade and Industry Report Full and Fulfilling Employment: Creating the Labour Market of the Future [;](#) Department for Work and Pensions Modernising Annuities [;](#) HM Treasury revised Green Book - Including Gender Impact Analysis [;](#) Department for Work and Pensions Measuring Child Poverty [;](#) Inland Revenue Working Tax Credit (Child Care Charges) Regulations
- **International connections:** WBG's approach to gender and revenue analysis was shared at the East African Gender Budgeting Conference event in Uganda and at the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and Women's Alternative Visions Everywhere (VADO/WAVE) event in Italy.

2003

- On 24 April 2003 the Women's Budget Group incorporates as a Company Limited by Guarantee. The founding directors are: [Sylvia Walby](#), Susan Smith (Oxfam Gender Adviser), Katherine Rake, Susan Himmelweit. Kate Bellamy is the founding Company Secretary. They are joined later in 2003 by: [Rebecca Gill](#), Janet Veitch, Imogen Radford, and Hilary Land.
- WBG members act as technical advisors to a joint Treasury/Department of Trade and Industry pilot project to 'test the feasibility and added value of gender analysis of expenditure'. It looks at programmes funded by the Small Business Service to deliver support to small enterprises in disadvantaged areas and among groups under-represented in business ownership and a mentoring project for start-up businesses. The pilot also analyses the New Deal for Lone Parents and the New Deal for people aged over 25. The resulting [Gender Analysis of Expenditure Project report](#) is published by HMT and the DTI in 2004.
- **International connections:** Susan Himmelweit is invited to share the experience of WBG I at the Institute for Women's Policy Research in Washington DC. She also speaks about "Gender Dimensions of taxation and implications for tax policy in Developing Countries" for the Commonwealth Secretariat Revenue Panel in Barbados.
- Consultation responses in addition to the annual Budget review include: Department for Work and Pensions Green Paper Simplicity, security and choice: Working and saving for retirement; House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs Call for Evidence on the Aspects of the Economics of an Ageing Population; House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee Childcare Inquiry; Department for Trade and Industries' Accounting for People Taskforce consultation; HM Treasury Future builders fund for Voluntary and Community Sector Public Service Delivery.

2004

- WBG holds its first Annual General Meeting in September 2004.
- Katherine Rake, Susan Himmelweit and Sylvia Walby are now co-chairs of WBG
- **International connections:** Susan Himmelweit presents "The experience of the UK Women's Budget Group" to the Feminist Network of the Netherlands.

- Consultation responses include HM Treasury Allsopp Review of Economic Statistics; HM Treasury Budget 2004; Department for Trade and Industry's Working Time - Widening the Debate; Office for National Statistics (ONS) Atkinson Review Interim Report

2005

- Kate Bellamy, Susan Smith and Adele Baumgardt are co-chairs of WBG. Erin Leigh is appointed Project Officer.
- WBG's Poverty Working Group launches its report '**Women's and children's poverty: making the links**' in the House of Commons on March 9, 2005. The report and event combine academic knowledge and grassroots experience, including a research paper by Ruth Lister, and presentations by women living in poverty. It brings together partners from SPAN UK, Oxfam GB, ATD 4th World, Gingerbread, One Parent Families, the Child Poverty Action Group, the African Families Foundation, and the Barrow Cadbury Trust.
- **International connections.** WBG is active in building an international gender budgeting network. In 2005 WBG visits Sweden and the Netherlands to share and learn from other groups. The group is also working with gender budgeting groups in the devolved nations (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) to reflect on lessons learned from South Africa and Yemen and make plans for a toolkit particular to policymakers in the UK.
- Reports and responses include: Department for Work and Pensions 16th Households Below Average Income Report; Hansard Society consultation on parliamentary scrutiny of expenditure; Department of Health Social Care Green Paper Independence, well-being and choice; Department for Trade and Industry Work and Families: Choice and Flexibility; HM Treasury Budget 2005; WBG Report: Women's and children's poverty: making the links; [Women and Work Commission](#) HM Treasury, Department for Education and Skills, Department for Work and Pensions, and the Department for Trade and Industry's Choice for parents, the best start for children: a ten-year strategy for childcare; Pensions: Challenges and Choices, The First Report of the Pensions Commission; HM Treasury Pre-Budget Report 2004.

2006

- Kate Bellamy, Adele Baumgardt and Alifia Chakera are co-chairs of WBG. Erin Leigh is promoted to Senior Project Officer.
- In 2006 the new Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) is announced, and WBG meets with HM Treasury ministers and officials, and the Women and Equality Unit, to ensure that gender is mainstreamed and highlighted within the CSR. Using the forthcoming public sector duty to promote gender equality, the WBG makes the case that any major policy will be subject to the duty, including the work of HMT.
- **Voices of Experience: participatory action research** Building on the work of the WBG's Poverty Working Group 'Women's and Children's Poverty' report, WBG conducts participatory action research with women living in poverty, working with grassroots women's organisations in Birmingham, Cardiff and London.
- WBG receives short-term funding from Barrow Cadbury Trust (BCT), Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), and the Oxfam UK Poverty Programme.
- Reports include: A Gender Lens on PSAs; DWP Pensions White Paper; DTI Additional Paternity Leave and Pay consultation; EOC Code of Practice consultation on the forthcoming public sector duty to promote gender equality; HM Treasury's Budget 2006; HM Treasury's Pre-Budget Report 2005; Pensions Commission A New Pensions Settlement for the Twenty-First Century; Department for Work and Pensions Opportunity for All; Women and Equality Unit's Advancing Equality for Men and Women: Government proposals to introduce a public sector duty to promote gender equality

2007

- Janet Veitch, Hilary Fisher and Clare Cochrane are co-chairs of WBG. Sarah Lesniewski is appointed Senior Project Officer.

- WBG runs a seminar for civil servants from HM Treasury on the 'gender pay gap' and runs a consultation with members of the Women and Equality Unit, HMT, DWP as part of the Voices of Experience participatory research project.
- The Gender Equality duty comes into force in 2007. WBG expresses hope that it will increase the use of Gender Budgeting and Gender Impact Analysis.
- The Voices of Experience project undertakes participatory mapping of women living in poverty's experiences of claiming state financial support; capacity building through a deliberative forum using gender budgeting, and training on direct engagement with policymakers; direct engagement between policymakers and participants.
- Reports include **Incapacity Benefit Research** - WBG and Child Poverty Action Group, 2007; HM Treasury's Pre-Budget Report and Comprehensive Spending Review 2007; HM Treasury's Pre-Budget Report 2006.

2008

- The Voices of Experience report is launched in the House of Commons.
- WBG's Incapacity Benefit report is launched at a well-attended seminar, highlighting the difficulties currently experienced by claimants and by carers, with assistance from the Child Poverty Action Group and using funding from the Nuffield Foundation.
- Our response to the Treasury's Pre-Budget Report and Comprehensive Spending Review contributes to a new PSA (public service agreement) to help tackle gender discrimination.
- WBG presents evidence on the performance of the UK government to the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York and [gives evidence](#) to the Canadian Parliamentary Select Committee's enquiry into gender budgeting.
- Treasury Minister Angela Eagle MP hosts a lunch in the House of Commons for members of the Women's Budget Group to discuss the gendered impacts of some aspects of Government fiscal policy.
- WBG connects with sister organisations to influence EU policy at the European Gender Budget Network (EGBN) meeting in Bilbao, Spain.

- WBG gets on a more sustainable financial footing with a grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to fund core costs and strategic planning.
- Membership reaches 200.
- WBG moves to the offices of the Child Poverty Action Group (GPAG).
- Reports: HM Treasury's Budget 2008; Evidence from the UK WBG to the Canadian Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

2009

- In May WBG holds a very popular event at 11 Downing Street on 'Women, Money and Power'" with journalist Bea Campbell in conversation with Angela Eagle.
- [Diane Elson](#) takes over as Chair of WBG and [Polly Trenow](#) becomes the WBG coordinator.
- As a result of the Global Financial Crisis WBG loses all of its external funding and has a budget of just £5,000 during 2009. These financial constraints continue until 2016.
- The organisation conducts a strategic review and puts together a business plan.

2010s Austerity and the power of association

2010

- WBG produces an analysis of the Election Manifestos of the main parties, highlighting the implications of their economic policy proposals for gender equality.
- **The gendered impact of austerity** Soon after the 2010 election the new Government produces an 'emergency budget' introducing a period of austerity. WBG analysis shows that women will be the biggest losers from any cuts to both social security and public services.
- WBG's austerity gender analysis is widely covered by the media and cascaded through presentations to women's organisations and to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Sex Equality.

- **Judicial review** The lack of a gender impact assessment in the June 2010 budget led the Fawcett Society to ask for a judicial review of whether the Government in its Emergency Budget had complied with the Section 31 requirements of the Equality Act. WBG provides technical advice and support to the Fawcett Society, and our analysis is cited by the barrister representing the Fawcett Society. Permission for a judicial review is not granted but HM Treasury does accept that it had not fully complied with Equalities duty by not publishing a gender impact assessment.
- The MC welcomes as new members Claire Annesley, [Angela O'Hagan](#) (Scottish WBG), Scarlet Harris (TUC), Susan Himmelweit returns and [Ruth Pearson](#). [Jackie Longworth](#), [Pam Wain](#) (Treasurer) and Diane Elson (Chair) continued as members.
- Austerity hits non-profit funding, including WBG. Staffing consists of a part-time coordinator, Jillian Foster.
- The Women's National Commission, set up to represent women's organisations within government, is closed down in December 2010.
- Reports: Written Evidence Submitted by the WBG - White Paper on Universal Credit - Work and Pensions Committee; WBG Response to Coalition Government's Spending Review 2010; [WBG Response to Emergency Budget June 2010](#); [WBG Report on Budget Proposals in Party Manifestos May 2010](#)

2011

- **Local Government projects.** Between 2011 and 2014 WBG produces a series of toolkits and workshops to help local women's groups hold their local authorities to account using gender budgeting.
- **Collaboration with LSE.** WBG partners with the London School of Economics to deliver an event 'Budgeting for Gender Equality: Is Government Economic Policy Fair to Women?' and a series of blog posts.
- WBG publishes a pioneering briefing paper on the gendered impact of changes in indirect taxes by WBG members, Jerome De Henau and Cristina Santos. We use this in our analysis of the November Autumn Financial Statement to show how the freeze in fuel duty benefits women far less than men. The analysis is presented in the House of

Commons, at the invitation of Yvette Cooper (Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities).

- The Sunday 12 February Editorial in *The Observer* references the work of the WBG in a discussion of the impact of economic and social policy on women.
- A Policy Advisory Group is established to formalise WBG members' role in producing analysis.
- **Plan F** is launched, a pre-budget briefing calling for a feminist plan for recovery, that creates jobs through investment in social as well as physical infrastructure.
- **Welfare reform.** WBG submits written and oral evidence to the House of Commons Public Bill Committee, on the proposed Universal Credit, highlighting the risks in plans to pay UC to one individual in a household. The Committee Stage report on the Bill mentions WBG evidence, as does the House of Lords proceedings. WBG members are invited to brief the All Party meeting of peers and to meet with civil servants working on the Bill.
- **Supporting women to lobby for local policy change.** WBG delivers two projects to help women's organisations and their members engage with local economic and policy development. *Making Your Voice Heard- A Toolkit for Grass Roots Lobbying* is developed in partnership with Platform 51 and disseminated through workshops in Wolverhampton and an online toolkit. *Challenging Equality Impact Assessments and Local Government Budgets from Women's Point of View* is delivered with partners in Somerset and Norfolk.
- The Northern Ireland Women's Budget Group (NIWBG) is formed on a voluntary basis.
- Diane Elson and Susan Himmelweit advise the Icelandic Government on Gender Budgeting, including running a training workshop for its Finance Ministry and other officers.
- Reports: Letter to PM David Cameron on proposed changes to child benefit 12 March 2012; The Impact on Women of the Autumn Financial Statement 2011; The Impact on Women of Budget 2011; Moving the State Pension Age Goalposts for Women: the broader context Gender analysis of the changes in indirect taxes introduced by the coalition government, 2010-2011.

2012

- Amy Watson takes over as part-time Coordinator. WBG has barely any funding and continues to draw on the skills and expertise of members.
- WBG's work on the payment of Universal Credit to joint claimants is referenced in Lords Hansard, 23 Jan 2012 and receives widespread media coverage. WBG experts are invited to be members of DWP UC working groups and to submit and present evidence to the Work and Pensions Select Committee on the proposals for implementation of Universal Credit.
- Fran Bennett discusses Universal Credit and women's financial independence on BBC Radio 4 Women's Hour.
- Reports: The Impact on Women of Autumn Financial Statement 2012 and Welfare Benefits Up-rating Bill 2013 Autumn Financial Statement 2012 -; The Impact on Women of Budget 2012; Pre-Budget Briefing, March 2012 - Plan A Has Failed, It Is Time for Plan F; Pre-Budget Briefing Press Release - No to Tax Cuts, Yes to Plan F.

2013

- WBG has become a 'go to' expert for parliamentarians and the media. Members present a pre-budget briefing to the Women's PLP on 12 March 2013 and speak about WBG analysis at a meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Sex Equality on 24 April 2013. WBG members also share WBG budget analysis on Sky TV News TV on 20 March 2013.
- WBG member Howard Reed produces a quantitative analysis on the distributional impact of limiting the nominal increase in working age benefits and tax credits (except Disability Living Allowance) to 1% for the next three years. This is cited in an article in *The Guardian*, Monday 7 January 2013.
- WBG member Jay Ginn submits evidence to the Work and Pensions Select Committee in February 2013: Gender Effects of the Single Tier Pension and Associated Reforms. She gives oral evidence to the Committee on 27 February 2013.
- WBG reports are used in efforts to hold the UK government to account for meeting its obligations under the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women.

- Susan Himmelweit, member of the WBG Management Committee, is invited by the EHRC to join its Expert Advisory Group for its work with the Treasury on making the equality impact of fiscal policy.
- WBG now has 250 members.
- Reports: The Impact on Women of Budget 2013: a budget for inequality and recession; Further Commentary on Budget 2013.

2014

- WBG continues to survive on a shoestring with very little external funding. Grants of £4000 from Unison and £1,000 from the Ruth Lister Fund are invaluable in sustaining WBG's work
- Rosalind Worsdale is appointed Co-ordinator (until September 2015) funded by an Essex University Internship scheme.
- WBG research finds that women, and low-income women in particular, continue to be worst affected by the Government's continued policy of fiscal austerity, with the economic recovery not being felt by many. This is reported widely in the national press and by the BBC.
- WBG begins a new initiative of producing shorter, 4-6 page briefing papers, those include: To ensure economic equality for women, we need a plan F - a short paper outlining WBG's alternative feminist economic strategy for economic equality; Budget 2014 - Giveaways for men, paid for by women; Recognising marriage in the tax system will not benefit women.
- Reports: The Impact on Women of the Coalition Government's Spending Round 2013 The Impact on Women of Autumn Financial Statement 2013; The Impact on Women of Budget 2014: No recovery for women.

2015 - 2020 Professionalising and scaling up

2015

- Eva Neitzer is appointed Development Manager (part-time) of WBG (until 2017).

- WBG research finds that women continue to suffer from the Government's policy of fiscal austerity. **Public sector cuts and social security reforms** continue to have a disproportionate impact on women - particularly low-income women, single mothers and single women pensioners - whilst a lack of investment in care, affordable housing and high-quality paid work leaves women economically vulnerable. Furthermore, we show that the tax breaks and giveaways announced by the Chancellor this financial year, such as raising the **Personal Tax Allowance**, disproportionately benefit men over women.
- Following the Autumn Statement and Comprehensive Spending Review, an Opposition Day Debate is convened in the Commons on 9 December 2015 to discuss the **impact of austerity on women**. WBG analysis is cited several times by Members of Parliament in the course of the debate.
- A small grant of £1,670 is secured from the Irene Bruegel Fund by the Lipman-Miliband Trust to fund the production of a series of short briefing papers on '**How to create an equitable and caring economy**,' in the run-up to the General Election.
- **Plan F** is promoted in the national press and at the TUC women's conference. A motion welcoming Plan F is introduced in the Scottish Parliament by Christina McKelvie MSP. The motion is supported by eighteen MSPs.
- WBG continues to engage with and comment on the changes to social security provisions, particularly regarding the newly established and more draconian sanctions regime. WBG members Fran Bennett and Susan Himmelweit contribute to the Fawcett Society's '**Where's the Benefit?**' inquiry, set up to investigate the disproportionate impact on women of the changes to Jobseekers Allowance. Fran Bennet gives evidence based on WBG analysis of Universal Credit to the Financial Inclusion Commission for their report 'Improving the Financial Health of the Nation'. WBG also contributes to a Women's Aid report on Universal Credit and financial abuse.
- WBG is represented on the EHRC's Fair Financial Decisions - Expert Advisory Group, set up to review if HM Treasury had fulfilled its equality duties in producing the 2010 spending review.
- **Training:** WBG moves up a gear in terms of delivering training and dissemination activities. Three workshops are run based on the WBG Local Government Toolkit,

including one for the Unison Local Government Conference; WBG partners with Women's Resource Centre and St. Paul's Institute to convene a debate on women and the economy, 'What's Gender Got To Do With It? Women and the Economy roundtable', bringing together a broad group of campaigners, policymakers and academics; WBG holds a one-day training event to empower members and supporters to make more use of WBG analysis and to feel confident in speaking about WBG policy and research to new audiences. Materials from the training sessions are made available on the WBG website.

- **Regional policy:** Sue Cohen and Jackie Longworth represent the WBG on the Economic Subgroup of the Women's Commission in Bristol, a body supported by the Mayor's Office with some leverage in the city. The Economic Subgroup is now putting pressure on the mayor's office and the LEP to begin to enact the gender equality vision in practice.
- **Reports:** The impact on women of the Autumn Financial Statement 2014: why it's time to put care at the heart of the economic recovery; WBG Response to Budget 2015: 'The WBG calls for rebuilding the foundations before fixing the roof.'
- **Briefing papers:** Plan F: A Feminist Economic strategy for a Caring and Sustainable Future - written in collaboration with the Scottish Women's Budget Group; Budget 2015 - Don't Fix the Roof while the Foundations Crumble; How do Election Party Manifestos measure up to a Plan F for a Caring Economy?

2016

- WBG has over 400 supporters.
- Income is still relatively modest, totalling £33,127, from the Amiel and Melburn Trust, ITUC, PSA Care Commission and a generous donation of £5,000 from Diane Elson.
- WBG models the employment and economic impacts of investing two percent of GDP in the care sector in seven OECD countries. The new research shows that across all seven countries investing in care yields significantly greater employment and economic benefits than a comparable investment in construction, generating increases in overall employment ranging from 1.2% to 3.2%, depending on the country,

and closes the gender gap in employment due to the predominance of women in these sectors.

- **Training:** WBG runs a series of training events to build the capacity of feminists and other activists to mobilise against gender inequitable austerity policies and engage with public decision-makers. Workshops are held in Bristol, Glasgow and Manchester. A joint event is held with the Scottish Women's Budget Group on 'Women and the economy in a post-election Scotland'.
- A new partnership is launched with the Political Studies Association (PSA) **Commission on Care**. Management Committee member, Ruth Pearson, serves as a commissioner for this inquiry into the crisis of care in austerity Britain. WBG also provides communications and dissemination support to the Commission. The Commission launches its final report at the House of Lords in November 2016, calling on the Government to take urgent and comprehensive action to tackle the crisis in care for older people, with a particular focus on the gendered dimension of the crisis.
- WBG Chair Diane Elson serves as a member of the Advisory Committee to the IMF Project on Gender Budgeting and gives a keynote presentation on '*The Origins And Future of Gender Budgeting*' to the IMF conference on Fiscal Policies and Gender Equality, Washington DC, November 2016.
- Applications for grants successfully generated £140,131 of funds during the 2016/17 financial year. WBG is successful in two multi-year grant applications to the Barrow Cadbury Trust and Open Society Foundation, enabling new projects on the impact of austerity on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women and capacity-building around gender budgeting for civil society organisations internationally.
- Submissions: to parliamentary inquiries, including the Gender Pay Gap inquiry convened by the Women and Equalities Select Committee.
- **Reports:** Women's Budget Group response to the 2016 Budget: 'Women paying for the Chancellor's tax cuts'
- **Briefing papers:** Childcare: Investing in a System of Universal, Free and High-quality Childcare (February 2016); Here to Stay: Women's Self-employment in a (post) Austerity Era (March 2016); Investing in the Care Economy to Boost Employment and Gender Equality (March 2016); 10 years of austerity - Cumulative impact assessment, 2010-2020 (March 2016); Costing and funding free universal childcare of high quality

(November 2016); AFS 2016: Executive briefing on the Autumn Statement 2016 (November 2016)

2017

- WBG now has over 500 supporters.
- Successful fundraising enables WBG to increase the Director role to a 4/5 post shared by Eva Neitzert and Mary-Ann Stephenson. Pam Cole becomes Chair. Increased staff capacity enables WBG to start to scale up its activities and impact.
- Funding from the Barrow Cadbury Trust enables WBG to document for the first time the distributional impact of changes to tax, benefits and public spending at the intersection of income, gender and ethnicity. Undertaken in partnership with the Runnymede Trust, this analysis shows that women continue to experience adverse, and disproportionate, impacts as a result of the government's policy or fiscal austerity and that Black and Asian women have borne by far the greatest burden.
- WBG's profile continues to grow. WBG is cited by academics, NGOs and in the following publications: The BBC, BuzzFeed, Common Space, Daily Mail, Equality & Diversity Forum, The Guardian, Huffington Post, The Independent, IPPR Blog, Labour List, Left Food Forward, Local Gov, The Metro, The Mirror, Open Democracy, Politics.co.uk, Public Finance International, The Sunday Times, The Mandarin, The New European, The New Statesman, Times and Star, UK in a Changing Europe.
- An increased focus on external and parliamentary relations results in a significant increase in references to WBG in parliamentary debates. WBG receives 29 Hansard mentions across House of Commons and House of Lords debates, as well as a number of additional references to our work in various committee meetings and in the Scottish Parliament. Mary-Ann Stephenson gives written and oral evidence to the Women and Equalities Select Committee. Mary-Ann Stephenson and Jerome De Henau meet members of the Shadow Treasury team, on 2 March 2017.
- Dawn Butler MP writes a letter to Justine Greening MP, signed by a cross-party group of 127 MPs demanding that the government publish a **gender impact assessment of**

the budget. She also put down an amendment for the committee stage of the Finance Bill, in the week beginning 18 December.

- Countries in which members have presented the work of the WBG include Canada, Columbia, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Korea, Lebanon, Morocco, New Zealand, Vietnam and Zambia.
- **2017 General Election.** Following the announcement of a snap general election on 17 April 2017, the Women's Budget Group- in coalition with the Fawcett Society, Maternity Action, Girlguiding UK, The Young Women's Trust, Rape Crisis and Rosa - put together resources and events to raise the profile of gender equality and women's human rights during the election campaign. This includes analysis of all party manifestos against the priorities set out in Plan F and a women's hustings in central London on the 22 of May which sought to ask candidates from across the political spectrum how they planned to defend women's rights post-Brexit.
- WBG publishes our landmark report ***Intersecting Inequalities: The Impact of Austerity on BME Women.*** Written in collaboration with the race equality think-tank Runnymede Trust and local partners Coventry Women's Voices and Reclaim: a youth charity in Manchester, the report combined an intersectional distributional assessment of the cumulative impact of changes to taxes, benefits and public spending on services from 2010-2020 with qualitative research on the lived experience of austerity for women in Coventry and Manchester. The report was launched to a packed committee room in the House of Commons in October 2017, jointly hosted by the APPG on Race and Community and the APPG on Sex Equality. The report is widely cited in parliament and by the mainstream media, including the Guardian the Daily Mail the Independent, BuzzFeed Huffington Post and the Sunday Times.
- Diane Elson briefs journalist Elizabeth Winkler, leading to an article in The Economist on 23 February, about gender budgeting that mentions WBG. Following her participation in an official panel at the annual meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, in New York in March Diane is asked to brief the New York Times on Trump's proposals. The article uses the analysis Diane recommends and mentions WBG.
- WBG develops a series of introductory resources on feminist economics designed to

engage an audience of interested, but not already engaged, women and activists.

- **Submissions** are made to the Government consultation on Industrial Strategy. the Fawcett Society Commission on Sex Equality Legislation and the UN's Independent Expert on foreign debt and human rights for his report on the impact of economic reform policies on women's human rights.
- **Briefings:** Universal Credit: A briefing from the UK Women's Budget Group (November 2017); The Equality impact of tax and benefit changes - why an impact assessment is needed (December 2017); Pre-budget briefing: Taxation (March 2017); Childcare: Key policy issues (March 2017); Pre-budget briefing: Social security (March 2017); Savings and investments: Key gender issues for policymakers (March 2017);. Violence against women and girls: A briefing (March 2017); Social care: A system in crisis (March 2017)

2018

- WBG has over 700 supporters.
- Mary-Ann Stephenson takes over as Executive Director, working 4 days per week. WBG also has two other part-time members of staff.
- Nicky Morgan MP, Chair of the Treasury Select Committee, invites WBG to give evidence to the Committee on the **gendered impact of the 2018 Budget** before they question the Chancellor. As a result the Treasury Select Committee recommends that the Treasury carry out a full impact assessment of tax and social security decisions. The Treasury Select Committee has continued to ask for the WBG's views on successive budgets.
- WBG organises a joint meeting with the All Party Parliamentary Group on Responsible Taxation on **women and tax**, where we present our research on the impact of tax changes since 2010. Nicky Morgan MP (Conservative), Chair of the Treasury Select Committee and Annalise Dodds MP (Labour), Shadow Treasury Minister also speak at this meeting.
- Following the Autumn Budget, Stella Creasy MP puts down an amendment to changes to tax rates to require the Office for Budgetary Responsibility to carry out a gender

impact assessment of all tax changes. Unfortunately, this amendment does not get selected for debate, but her amendment is widely shared on Twitter using the hashtag **#feministbudgettakeover**.

- In September 2018, with funding from the Open Society Foundations, WBG publishes **Women Count: a casebook for gender-responsive budgeting groups** and launches an accompanying website. The casebook contains case studies about different areas of our work over the past twenty years to support organisations wanting to do similar work in other countries. During the year we present the casebook at conferences, meetings and workshops in Australia, Colombia, Kenya, Morocco, New Zealand, Turkey and Vietnam and at meetings with representatives from Canada and Argentina.
- WBG publishes two reports exploring the **impact of austerity on women**, funded by the Smallwood Trust. The reports combine national data and policy analysis with qualitative research with our partners in Coventry and the women they support. **'The Female Face of Poverty'** explores the causes and consequences of women's poverty. **'Life Changing and Life Saving: funding for the women's sector'** is launched as a joint publication with the Women's Resource Centre. Both are launched at meetings in Parliament.
- WBG launches an **Early Careers Network (ECN)** for PhD students and early career scholars working with a feminist approach to economics or other relevant social science subjects, with funding from the Feminist Review Trust.
- Following the launch of our joint report with the Fawcett Society ***Exploring the Economic Impact of Brexit on Women*** at the end of March 2018 WBG continues to raise the issue of Brexit and women throughout the year.
- **Social Security and Violence Against Women** Universal Credit and Financial Abuse: exploring the links - a joint report with the End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW) and Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA) is launched at a very well-attended parliamentary event hosted and chaired by Heidi Allen MP from the Work and Pensions Select Committee. Follow-up meetings with Ministers and officials at the Department of Work and Pensions discuss the findings of this report and WBG proposals for separate payments of Universal Credit.

- **Visit of UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty** WBG makes a submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty, Phillip Alston, in advance of his mission to the UK. WBG is involved in pre-meetings and roundtables during the visit. His report cites WBG research and shares our conclusion that austerity had disproportionately affected Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women.
- **Austerity and women's human rights** Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, an Independent Expert on foreign debt and human rights, comes to the UK for a round table meeting on the 4th of December to present the findings of his report to the UN General Assembly on Austerity and Women's Human Rights. Other speakers at the event were Diane Elson, presenting WBG work on austerity, and Angela O'Hagan talking about her role as Chair of the Equality Budget Advisory Group for the Scottish Government.
- The UK Open Government Network commissions the WBG to carry out a research project examining how principles/mechanisms of open government have helped to advance or defend women's rights in England. For our case study, we focused on the closure of the **women's refuges, and the vital role freedom of information requests** (FOIRs) play in making available the data necessary to expose and challenge the extent and severity of cuts to these services, at both a local and national level.
- **Briefings:** Universal Credit and Financial Abuse briefing (February 2018). In October we publish a briefing on trade and gender post-Brexit and meet with officials at the Department of International Trade to discuss their work developing a gender-sensitive trade policy. In advance of the 2018 autumn budget WBG produces briefings on - Childcare, Disability, Education, Employment/ Public Sector Pay, Health, Housing, Parental Leave, Pensions, Savings, Social Care, Social Security, Taxation, Trade and Investment, Transport and Violence Against Women and Girls.

2019

- WBG supporter number increases to over 1,400.
- Janet Veitch takes over as Chair of WBG.
- During the 2018/19 financial year, WBG generates £183,955 in funds. WBG recruits three new members of staff, taking our team up to 6 (4.8 full-time equivalent).

- **The Commission on a Gender-Equal Economy** is established by the WBG in Spring 2019, with the objective of developing a set of policies to bring about a gender-equal economy across the four nations of the UK. The Commission brings together seventeen experts from academia, civil society, business, unions and the media. It is chaired by Professor Diane Elson and aims to proactively develop alternative economic policies to promote gender equality across the UK.
- The Commission launches in April 2019 and holds five meetings during the year in London, Cardiff, Glasgow and Belfast. At each meeting Commissioners discuss papers submitted in response to our calls for evidence as well as papers commissioned specifically for the project. In London, Cardiff, Glasgow and Belfast Commissioners meet with politicians, civil servants and representatives of local women's and equalities organisations.
- The Commission receives substantial positive media coverage from a diverse range of publications including: The Independent, HuffPost, BBC Woman's Hour, The Guardian, and the Wales Centre for Public Policy's Podcast.
- WBG coordinates an open letter, published in the Guardian, with 40+ women and equality organisations supporting our calls for investment in social infrastructure, VAWG services and equality impact assessments.
- In February 2019 we welcome the recommendation from the **Treasury Select Committee** that the next Budget should include a 'quantitative analysis of the equalities impact of individual tax and welfare measures in all cases where data are available'.
- In response to the publication of the Government's 'Operation Yellowhammer' WBG publishes a response to the Government's report, analysing the **gendered impact of a 'no deal' Brexit**.
- In October 2019, the UK Government publishes the text of the **Withdrawal Agreement Bill** setting out the terms under which the UK would leave the European Union. The Women's Budget Group analyses this document and the accompanying impact assessment in brief as to what it would mean for women and produces a briefing. This briefing was presented by Jenna Norman, Public Affairs Officer, at an event hosted by the S&D block in the European Parliament with Mary Honeyball and Jackie Jones MEP.

- The first conference for WBGs **Early Career Network** is held in Manchester in 2019. It is followed by a panel event on career management and progression event in Cambridge in March 2019 with the Gender and Working Lives Group.
- In March 2019 WBG launches **Triple Whammy: The Impact of Local Government Cuts on Women**, written by WBG member and former Head of Local Government at Unison, Heather Wakefield. The report shows how central government cuts to local government funding are affecting women as users of public services, workers in the public sector and unpaid carers who have to increase their work when services are cut.
- WBG work as part of a coalition of over 30 women's organisations on a joint manifesto and campaign materials for the **2019 election** (funded by the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust). This work receives considerable media coverage.
- During 2019 WBG continues to work to promote the **Gender Responsive Budgeting case book** at meetings, workshops and conferences in Australia, Colombia, France, Turkey and at the International Association for Feminist Economics (IAFFE) conference in Glasgow. WBG also delivers a series of webinars with organisations in Kenya wanting to promote gender-responsive budgeting and host a delegation from the Western Balkans and Moldova who want to find out more about WBG's approach to gender budgeting.
- WBG publishes ***Benefits or barriers? Making social security work for survivors of violence and abuse across the UK's four nations.*** by Marilyn Howard at a well-attended meeting in Parliament. WBG continues to work with the End Violence Against Women Coalition and Surviving Economic Abuse to raise the findings of this work with Ministers.
- As part of the '**Make Devolution Work for Women**' project in Sheffield, WBG produces a joint report with Fawcett, providing data on the costs and benefits for the Sheffield City Region to invest in **free universal childcare**. WBG subsequently produces similar breakdowns of the cost of free universal childcare for other local authorities at their request.
- ***A Home of Her Own*** on women and housing, the third report with partner organisations in Coventry, is finalised and launched in Parliament at a joint event with the Women's Housing Forum. The panel is chaired by Helen Hayes MP with speakers

from WBG, Coventry Women's Aid, St Mungo's and the Women's Housing Forum. The report generates coverage in the Times, the Big Issue, the Independent, BBC Vanessa Show, Refinery29 Inside Housing, and FiliA amongst others. A follow-up event is held at Coventry City Council.

- WBG member Jackie Longworth and Management Committee member Sue Cohen support the **Women of Lawrence Hill** group developed out of a Rosa funded project "Woman to Woman" delivered by Bristol Women's Voice and supported by WBG. Local women are trained in interviewing one hundred women from the diverse inner-city area of Lawrence Hill to find out what they need to access employment opportunities in the adjacent Temple Quarter Enterprise (TQE) area and to use this information to inform and influence decision-makers and employers involved in the TQE development.
- WBG makes presentations, delivers training and provides expert advice on gender budgeting at events in Morocco, Vietnam, Colombia, New Zealand, Canada and Australia. Briefings on gender-responsive budgeting are delivered to delegations visiting the UK from Vietnam (senior civil servants and NGOs), Zambia (senior civil servants), Korea (parliamentarians), Ghana (parliamentarians from the select committee on gender and children), Kyrgyzstan (parliamentarians) and Venezuela (parliamentarians). Webinars and virtual round tables are held with participants from across sub-Saharan Africa and Australia.
- WBG is quoted by the BBC, Bustle, Buzzfeed, Financial Times, Guardian, Huffington Post Independent, Left Foot Forward, Metro, Mirror; New Statesman, New York Times, Politics Home, Politics.co.uk, Public Finance, Red Pepper, Times as well as numerous local papers and various blogs.
- WBG holds a series of successful events with the **Early Career Scholars** programme in Sussex, Kent, Glasgow, Norwich, Oxford, and Liverpool. The celebration of the 50th anniversary of economics teaching at SOAS saw the launch of the SOAS Feminist Economics Network, a hub of FE in partnership with the Women's Budget Group's own ECN and steered by ECN members.
- **Submissions:** written evidence to eight parliamentary/Government inquiries and the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty.

2020

- WBG has over 1700 supporters.
- The WBG team has also grown over this past year, and there are now 10 members of staff.
- In March 2020 when the extent of the threat of Coronavirus became clear WBG takes the decision to close the office and work from home.
- WBG publishes an immediate analysis of the **potential gender and other equality impacts of the pandemic**. With a large number of other organisations WBG signs a joint letter to the Prime Minister calling on him to provide support to civil society organisations to enable them to respond to the pandemic. WBG also co-signed a joint statement with over 40 women's organisations highlighting the importance of ensuring the Government response takes account of the needs of women and girls, and a joint letter in support of the Step UP Migrant Women campaign calling for support for migrant women with no recourse to public funds during the pandemic. Over the year WBG carries out 3 waves of polling and publishes a series of briefings drawn from the polling findings in partnership with the Fawcett Society and partners in the 4 nations. In addition, WBG publishes 8 reports and 21 briefings on the impact of the pandemic on different groups of women.
- WBG responds to 13 departmental and parliamentary inquiries on the **impacts of COVID-19**. The Women and Equalities Select Committee's report into the gendered impact of COVID-19 reflects many of WBG's concerns and recommends that the Government examine WBG's proposals for a **care-led recovery**.
- WBG works in partnership with academics at LSE/Queen Mary (on the first round of polling), the Universities of Nottingham and Warwick (on the impact of Covid on working-class women), and UCL Centre for Life- course Studies (on the impact of Covid on unpaid care responsibilities).
- In July WBG publishes a report on the **impact of COVID-19 on women in Coventry** at a webinar hosted by Coventry MP, Zarah Sultana. WBG also commissions a SORI report on the partnership.

- WBG publishes a report about the importance of creating an opportunity to place the rights of women and other marginalised groups front and centre of trade policy. This briefing is promoted at an event '**Can Free Trade Agreements help secure gender equality and social justice?**' at Chatham House in January 2020.
- The final report of **WBG's Commission on a Gender Equal Economy** is published in September 2020. The report - ***Creating a Caring Economy: a Call for Action***, shines a light on the structural inequalities exposed and exacerbated by Covid-19 and asks 'do we want to go back to business as usual? What kind of world do we want to create? What kind of economy do we want to make?' The report calls for an economy based on the values of care, wellbeing, and sustainability, and sets out eight steps for action, with concrete recommendations for change.
- The work of the Commission generates 41 pieces of media coverage, findings are presented to MPs of all parties, across the four nations of the UK through over 20 meetings, and at 22 meetings of civil society and academic groups.
- In October 2020 WBG publishes ***The Case for Sustainable Funding for Women's Centres***, a report written in collaboration with Women in Prison, Brighton Women's Centre, Anawim - Birmingham's Centre for Women, The Nelson Trust and Together Women. The report calls on the Government to deliver the objectives of the Government's Female Offender Strategy by reducing the number of women in prison through investing in Women's Centres.
- WBG publishes a response to the Government's Spending Review in November 2020 arguing that Covid spending aside the spending review amounts to a **de facto return to austerity** for many government departments and local authorities.
- As part of a commitment to share learnings for gender-responsive budgeting and ensure a four nations approach to research and evidence, WBG continues to meet with partners (Scottish Women's Budget Group, Northern Ireland Women's Budget Group and the Welsh Women's Budget Group incubated by Chwarae Teg) on a monthly basis to ensure a joined up and complementary approach. A fundraising group is set up to work on joint funding applications for the project and for the partners in the devolved nations.
- The Scottish WBG is formalised as a registered charity. The Northern Ireland WBG is established as a project within the Belfast-based charity Women's TEC, and appoints

a coordinator, Alexandra Brennan. The Wales WBG is formed. Those developments are enabled by the WBG Four Nations project funded by the Open Society Network.

- **Reports:** In September 2020 WBG publishes *Creating a Caring Economy: a call to action*, the final report of the Commission. We also published a report on the economic situation of migrant women and a report on the case for sustainable funding of women's centres.

Four Nations Partnership

The UK Women's Budget Group's history is closely entwined with those of its partner WBGs in the devolved nations of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. This section summarises the key events shaping each of those WBGs.

Scotland

The Scottish Women's Budget Group was founded in 1999/2000, on the cusp of devolution, as a voluntary organisation of women activists, academics and practitioners in gender policy and politics. Founding members included Angela O'Hagan and Ailsa McKay whose involvement with gender budgeting and feminist economics benefitted from contact with UKWBG members, particularly Diane Elson and Susan Himmelweit, and who were also inspired by gender budgeting initiatives through the European Women's Lobby following the UN Platform For Action agreed at the 1995 Beijing Conference.

Despite very limited capacity and resources, the SWBG was influential in establishing the importance of a gender budgeting framework in the new devolved administration. It established early access to government and parliamentary institutions, pushing gender budgeting onto the political agenda as a transformative approach to public policy decision making. The first ten years of the group saw the SWBG establish itself as a key actor in the Equality and Budget Advisory Group (EBAG) which included representatives from a range of government departments and external bodies including the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The change of government in Scotland in 2007 shifted government objectives from social justice to economic growth; which required a refocus of the SWBG approach. Whilst still focusing on engendering the budgetary process, it produced a range of policy analyses highlighting the centrality of women as a driver of economic growth and the significance of the care economy, including childcare as economic infrastructure, a precursor of the approach taken in the UKWBG Commission on a Gender Equal Economy.

The SWBG was formalised in 2020 as a registered charity, supported by the UKWBG 4 Nations project, funded by the Open Society Foundation

Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Women's Budget Group (NIWBG) was formed on a voluntary basis in 2011 and contributed to civil society in varying ways until the formalisation of the group in 2020 through the creation of a Coordinator position. The aim of the NIWBG is to achieve a gender-equal economy. The members of the NIWBG scrutinise policy and budgetary matters with a gendered lens to bring attention to the different ways in which women and men are affected by government-level decision-making. It aims to provide policy- and budget-makers with policy analysis to secure substantive equality for women and men through the assessment of gender impact.

The NIWBG works with a range of organisations in Northern Ireland on devolved issues and with sister organisations in Wales, Scotland, England and the Republic of Ireland on cross-border issues. The NIWBG is made up of organisations and individuals from the women's sector, the trade union movement, academia, financial experts and economists, and wider civil society in Northern Ireland with the purpose of advocating for women and securing a gender-equal economy. The NIWBG is also represented on the Women's Policy Group NI, the Equality Coalition, the All-Island Women's Forum (NWCI), the APG on Early Education and Childcare (Stormont), and the APG on UNSCR 1325, Women, Peace and Security (Stormont).

The Northern Ireland Women's Budget Group (NIWBG) was established in direct response to the austerity agenda and associated proposals in relation to social security policy and payments. The UK Coalition Government's emergency austerity budget of 2011 was to have a significant and disproportionate impact on women and the NIWBG wanted to ensure that these impacts were highlighted.

The initial convener of NIWBG was Lynn Carvill, the Chief Executive of the Women's TEC. Several of the initial coordinating group were involved with a range of European Women's Organisations including the European Women's Lobby, and the Women's European Platform

which were committed to introducing Gender responsive budgeting to the EU's budget process.

Over recent years the NIWBG has collaborated on work around the critical need for childcare infrastructure and participated in a major campaign evidencing and drawing attention to the gendered impact of welfare reform. This campaign resulted in key operational changes to how universal credit would be implemented in Northern Ireland. NIWBG have worked closely with the UKWBG and the SWBG hosting a pan-island conference in Belfast in May 2018 – 'Budgetary Impact Analysis – A Catalyst for Economic Growth?' In late August 2019, the NIWBG held a strategic planning day identifying the strategic priority areas for the forthcoming year.

In 2020 the group was established as a project within the Belfast based charity Women's TEC, and appointed a coordinator, Alexandra Brennan. This change was funded by a Four Nations (NI, Scotland, Wales, England) project funded by the Open Society Network that included the established Scottish Women's Budget Group (SWBG), the formalisation of the NIWBG, and the creation of the Wales Women's Budget Group (WWBG).

Wales

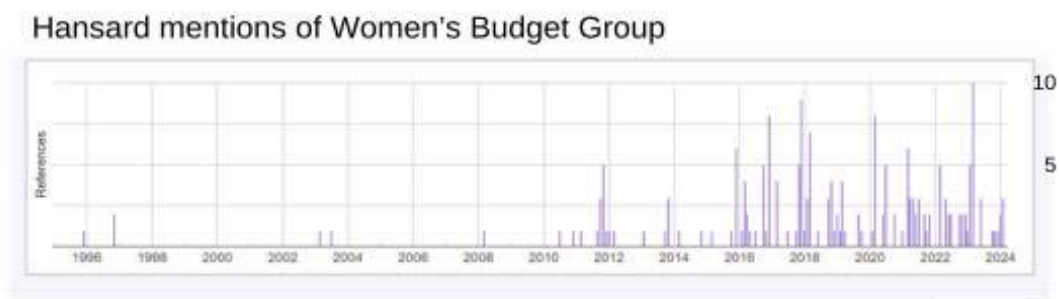
The Welsh Women's Budget Group (WWBG) was formed following the recommendation of 2019 Gender Equality Review which set out clear evidence for tackling gender equality through gender budgeting within a mainstreaming approach. Initially a project of Chwarae Teg, which was the leading gender equality organisation in Wales, the WWBG was not an organisation in its own right. The Senedd (Welsh Parliament), and the Welsh Treasury showed increasing interest and support for Gender Budgeting as the result of the Gender Equality Review process which was authored by Cerys Furlong, and Natasha Davies (CEO and Head of Policy and Research at Chwarae Teg).

With the support of the Open Society Grant in 2020 the WWBG is now a registered Charity and is hosted by the Women's Equality Network Wales (WEN) following the closure of

Chwarae Teg in 2023. WWBG is involved in the budget setting process in the Welsh parliament in addition to scrutiny of the budget through increasing capacity for gender budgeting in wider society. The first coordinator of WWBG was Rebecca Rickard who was succeeded by Hannah Griffiths in 2023.

WBG in Hansard

Hansard is the official record of UK parliamentary debates. Mentions in the Houses of Parliament serve as a useful indicator of WBG's influence on policy.



The first mention of WBG on 4th December 1995 illustrates just how revolutionary the concept of a budget analysis from a feminist perspective was. When Shadow Treasury Spokesperson Dawn Primarolo MP, claimed that many women were stuck in a poverty trap due to lack of childcare and eldercare, and that, “The Women's Budget Group pointed out that, unlike an increasing number of countries, the United Kingdom does not publish an assessment of the differential effects of fiscal and public expenditure on women as distinct from men. The House and Conservative Members are so preoccupied with male-only interpretations that they do not realise that using the household as a focal economic unit is now recognised as producing gross social inequalities—inequalities which they do not challenge”. The Chancellor Ken Clarke was incredulous, exclaiming: “The honourable Lady can not be serious.”

Primarolo replied: “The low political representation of women in the UK also means that women's diverse views and needs are not heard. Yes, Chancellor, I am serious: 52 per cent of the population are women and his Budget does nothing to assist them.”

In 1995 women comprised just 9% of UK Members of Parliament. That proportion was to double to 18% of MPs at the next election in 1997. It has gradually increased and today just over a third of MPs are women.

Despite Primorolo's lively introduction of gender budgeting into the parliamentary sphere in 1995, and further interventions in the 1996 Budget debate by Angela Eagle MP, the New Labour Government of 1997 managed to almost entirely avoid mention of gender budgeting or the Women's Budget Group in the Houses of Parliament during its term of government.

Despite its low profile in the debating chambers, the WBG was increasingly active within the broader governmental sphere, with Treasury Minister Dawn Primorolo delivering the keynote address at a WBG event and the WBG invited to deliver gender budgeting training to HM Treasury officials in 1998. The WBG met regularly with Ministers and officials in the Treasury and Women and Equality Unit during the New Labour term and provided technical assistance to a Treasury gender budgeting pilot programme.

Between 1996 and the UK Coalition Government of 2010, the Women's Budget Group was mentioned in Parliament only three times. In 2003 Labour MP Vera Baird introduced WBG analysis of the pay gap into a debate on women's pensions and Women & Equalities Minister Patricia Hewitt mentioned that she had had discussions about women and pensions with the WBG. In an International Women's Day debate in the House of Lords in 2008, Baroness Gould stressed that the Government continued to work with the WBG on promoting gender equality in the UK. While in the 2008 Commons International Women's Day debate Conservative MP Dame Eleanor Laing commended the concept of gender budgeting to the government.

In 2011 Professor Ruth Lister was appointed to the House of Lords as a life peer, sitting on the Labour benches. Baroness Lister was one of the first members of the WBG and remains an active member. During the austerity debates around the Welfare Reform Bill and the introduction of Universal Credit in 2011 and 2012, and in later debates about Welfare Reform, Baroness Lister ensured that a gendered perspective, including WBG policy analysis, was part of the debate. The Committee Stage report on the Welfare Reform Bill mentioned WBG evidence. WBG members were invited to brief the All Party meeting of peers and to meet with civil servants working on the Bill.

In 2013 and 2015 WBG research was wielded by female Labour MPs to make significant contributions to Commons debates focused on women and the economy. In the 2013 debate on Women and the Cost of Living, Lillian Greenwood and Alison McGovern, put forward detailed WBG analysis to make their points.

In the 2015 debate on Women and the Economy WBG research was presented by MPs Kate Green, Angela Crawley, Ruth Cadbury and Seema Malhotra. Kate Green also referred to [analysis commissioned by Yvette Cooper MP from the House of Commons Library](#), which, building on WBG research, found that: “women will be hit three times as hard as men by the cuts in this year’s summer Budget and in the autumn statement. That is three times as hard in six short months, and in just two spending announcements. Many of the Chancellor’s policies that are inimical to the interests of women remain firmly in place.”

Up until 2016 WBG research appeared to be only visible to female MPs. That changed substantially in 2016 with the WBG mentioned by 5 male MPs including the Opposition front bench. During 2016 the WBG was mentioned in the House of Commons 22 times, compared to just 16 mentions in the preceding 20 years (there were 20 mentions in the Lords during that time). From 2016 onwards this increase has remained consistent.

In March 2016, SNP MP Neil Gray became the first male MP to draw on WBG research to question government policy in the Commons in Welfare Reform questions. That was followed three days later by WBG research being referred to by Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell in the Budget debate. He said: “time and again, it is women who have borne the brunt of the Chancellor’s cuts. Recent analysis by the Women’s Budget Group showed that 81% of tax and welfare changes since 2010 have fallen on women.”

In May 2016, Jeremy Corbyn MP, leader of the Opposition, used the Queen’s Speech debate to attack the Government’s austerity policies, especially the impact on women. *“Women have been hit hardest by the cuts. More than 80% of cuts fall disproportionately on women. As the Women’s Budget Group has pointed out, all the cuts mean that opportunities for women are systematically reduced and diminished in our society.”*

In October 2016 Peter Dowd MP (Lab) raised concerns about potential inequalities in the Savings (Government Contribution) Bill, referring to WBG analysis on pensions. Personal finance academic and member of the WBG's Policy Advisory Group, Jonquil Lowe, was invited to give evidence to the Bill Committee on behalf of the WBG.

In December 2016 the Women's Budget Group was mentioned by name for the first time by a Conservative MP. In his response to the Opposition Day Debate, on the impact of the Government's Autumn Statement on Women, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, David Gauke, questioned the reports of the House of Commons Library and the Women's Budget Group, suggesting that they were inherently flawed. Sarah Champion MP later raised a point of order with the Speaker requesting that the Minister apologise to the House of Commons Library staff and to the WBG, pointing out that while calling into question the integrity and analysis of independent research, the Treasury has continually refused to carry out its own gender impact analysis of its economic policies, as is prescribed in the Equality Act 2010.

WBG analysis continued to be used widely by Labour and SNP MPs to challenge Government economic and fiscal policy in 2017 with 29 Hansard mentions, as well as additional references in various parliamentary committee meetings and in the Scottish Parliament. Mary-Ann Stephenson gave written and oral evidence to the Women and Equalities Select Committee. Susan Himmelweit, Mary-Ann Stephenson and Jerome De Henau met members of the Shadow Treasury team, 2 March 2017.

The WBG's collaborative report with the Runnymede Trust and local partners in Coventry and Manchester on the impact of austerity on BME women was referenced several times during 2017. Fiona McTaggart MP (Lab) raised the disproportionate impact on Asian women during the Universal Credit debate in March. Dawn Butler MP (Lab) referenced the report in a number of debates and it was brought up by other MPs during a November debate on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) women.

In December 2017 Dawn Butler proposed an amendment requiring the Finance Bill to include an effective equality impact analysis. Butler and four other Labour and SNP MPs, including

shadow Treasury minister Anneliese Dodds, used WBG data to make the case for embedded gender impact analysis in Finance Bill debates in 2017 and 2018.

In 2018 WBG research was used to underpin several questions around Welfare Reform and Universal Credit and the projected negative impact of proposed reforms on the poorest (female-led) families or where there is domestic abuse.

In March 2018 in a Lords debate on the EU (Withdrawal) Bill, Baroness Lister raised concerns about the potential impact on women, citing WBG analysis. In October, the WBG briefing on Trade and Gender post-Brexit was referenced by Angela Crawley MP (SNP) in a Commons debate on the Bill.

Other important parliamentary activity during 2018, outside of the debating chambers, included an invitation to WBG by Nicky Morgan MP (Con), Chair of the Treasury Select Committee, to give evidence to the Committee on the gender impact of the 2018 Budget before they question the Chancellor.

WBG also organised a joint meeting with the All Party Parliamentary Group on responsible Taxation on women and tax, where they presented research on the impact of tax changes since 2010. Nicky Morgan MP (Conservative), Chair of the Treasury Select Committee and Annalise Dodds MP (Labour), Shadow Treasury Minister also spoke at this meeting.

Following the Autumn Budget, Stella Creasy MP put down an amendment to changes to tax rates to require the Office for Budgetary Responsibility to carry out a gender impact assessment of all tax changes. Unfortunately the amendment did not get selected for debate.

By 2019 WBG analysis had become a feature of the annual Budget, and International Women's Day debates. The organisation's briefings were used to inform MPs' speeches and questions across a range of debates in 2019 including: Taxation of Low-income families, Social Security, EU Exit, Pension Credit, Child benefit and Immigration.

The Budget debate of 2020 saw several mentions of the WBG, and for the first time, alongside analyses of disproportionate gender impacts of tax and benefits, mention of WBG's proposals

around investment in social infrastructure. Seema Malhotra (Lab) said:

“As the Women’s Budget Group says, for women especially, levelling up means investment in people, not just road and rail. However, the Budget needs to do more than simply make funds available; it needs wraparound on how communities and local places will be engaged for the long term, and how decisions will be made.”

While Rebecca Long-Baillie offered a direct quote from the WBG: *“We may have more roads and fewer potholes as a result of this budget, but the prospects for investing in social care and tackling child poverty remain bleak.”*

WBG research was directly quoted, at length, again in the tenth sitting of the Finance Bill in June 2019, where Alison Thewliss MP (Lab) drew attention to the Government’s failure to publish effective equality impact assessments. In a July Finance Bill debate, Caroline Lucas MP (Green Party) pointed to the WBG’s proposal for a care-led recovery. The care-led recovery was also raised in the debate on the Economy on 8th July.

2020 was dominated by Covid-19 and WBG’s briefings on the gendered economic impact of the pandemic were mentioned by several MPs. WBG research was used to press for consideration of women’s more vulnerable position in the labour market in the fiscal response to the situation.

This history ends in 2020, 29 years after the formalisation of the Women’s Budget Group. It took 4 years for WBG to be mentioned in parliament, and then the concept of gender budgeting was met with disbelief and derision.

During the New Labour years, 1997 - 2010, WBG was barely mentioned in Parliament’s debating chambers. Instead, the organisation briefed and met with MPs, Ministers and officials.

The return of Labour to opposition in 2010 and the particularly egregious gendered impact of austerity legislation brought WBG research back into the Houses of Parliament. However, austerity had also impacted WBG’s operating budget and the organisation barely survived on

the slimmest shoe-string until 2015. During that time lobbying and briefings were mostly conducted by academic members of the organisation in their own time.

Since 2017 WBG has had a professional team and continues to be supported by a committed network of academics and experts. This expanded capacity has resulted in significant and sustained increases in Hansard mentions.

Engagement with WBG analysis has become increasingly cross-party over time. In recent years the Conservative Chairs of the Treasury and Women and Equality Select Committees, Nicky Morgan and Caroline Nokes, have engaged with the WBG and invited the organisation to present evidence to their committees. And looking ahead, since 2020 several female Conservative MPs have made statements in the House about the disproportionate impact of Covid restrictions (Caroline Nokes) and the need for greater investment in childcare costs and funding (Laura Farris and Siobhan Baillie).

By providing consistently high-quality and timely briefings on the gendered impact of government economic policies, WBG has become a trusted source of information for politicians on all sides of the political divide. This has gone hand-in-hand with an increase in the proportion of female MPs from 9% to 34% during that time.

Twenty-nine years ago, WBG and the concept of gender budgeting were viewed with uncertainty and some alarm in the House of Commons. Today, debates about differential gender impacts are taken for granted. There is still a great deal of work to do, but strong foundations are in place.

Key People

Year	Chair	Executive lead
1991		The interdisciplinary Gender Unit at the London School of Economics (LSE), led by (now Professor Dame) Henrietta Moore provides a base and secretarial assistance. Georgina Ashworth continues to coordinate budget responses and key events from her base at CHANGE until 1998.
1997		From 1997 WBG was managed from the Fawcett Society, led by Shelagh Diplock and supported by Mary-Ann Stephenson (then Policy officer)
1998	Susan Himmelweit becomes the founding Chair of the WBG.	
2001		WBG took on its first employee, part-time coordinator Donna St Hill
2002	Dr Katherine Rake is appointed as Chair of WBG.	Kate Bellamy is WBG Project Officer.
2003	WBG is incorporated as a Limited Company.	
2004	Katherine Rake, Susan Himmelweit and Sylvia Walby are co-chairs of WBG	

2005	Kate Bellamy, Susan Smith and Adele Baumgardt are co-chairs of WBG	Erin Leigh, Project Officer
2006	Kate Bellamy, Adele Baumgardt and Alifia Chakera are co-chairs of WBG	Erin Leigh, Senior Project Officer
2007	Janet Veitch, Hilary Fisher and Clare Cochrane are co-chairs of WBG	Sarah Lesniewski, Senior Project Officer
2008	Janet Veitch, Hilary Fisher and Clare Cochrane are co-chairs of WBG	Sarah Lesniewski, Senior Project Officer
2009	Janet Veitch, Hilary Fisher and Clare Cochrane are co-chairs of WBG	
2010	Diane Elson takes over as Chair of WBG	Polly Trenow becomes the WBG coordinator part-time.
2011		Jillian Foster becomes WBG coordinator part-time.
2012		Amy Watson takes over as part-time Coordinator.
2014		Rosalind Worsdale is appointed Co-ordinator funded by an Essex University Internship scheme.

2015		Eva Neitzer is appointed Head of Coordination and Development (part-time) of WBG (until 2017).
2016	Pam Cole becomes Chair	Successful fundraising enables WBG to increase the Director role to a 4/5 post shared by Eva Neitzert and Mary-Ann Stephenson by the end of 2016.
2017		Mary-Ann Stephenson takes over as 4/5 Executive Director. WBG also has two other part-time members of staff.
2019	Janet Veitch becomes Chair.	WBG recruits three new members of staff, taking the team up to 6 (4.8 full-time equivalent).
2020		

Acknowledgments

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Hilary Land

Jackie Longworth

Liz Lord

Angela O'Hagan

Mary-Ann Stephenson

Janet Veitch

The report is not exhaustive and we would be happy to hear from people who would like to add any additional information or recollections that could contribute to the history of the Women's Budget Group.