

Commission on a Gender-Equal Economy

PAPER 1

Public Services in a Gender-Equal Economy (Overview paper)

Professor Hilary Land, November 2019

Disclaimer: This paper was commissioned by the Women's Budget Group to inform the Commission on a Gender-Equal Economy. An input to the Commission, it has been written by an independent author and should not be taken to represent the views of the Commission on a Gender-Equal Economy or the Women's Budget Group.

Executive summary

- The ethos underpinning the provision of public services has shifted from one of shared interests and collective responsibilities to one based on individualism and competition. The severe cuts to local government budgets since 2010, coupled with privatisation of public services, particularly in England, illustrate this very clearly.
- Women are the majority of workers in every public service and provide most of the unpaid care looking after children and adults. They are badly affected by reduced budgets, the former directly in the loss of jobs and the latter indirectly by loss of services.
- Public parks have been sold, bus services privatised and cut. Dependence on cars has increased, harming the well-being and health of local communities - the antithesis of much-needed green policies.
- The need for every public service is growing for demographic reasons – there are more old people over 65 years and more children needing health and education services. More mothers with pre-school children are in the labour market and, since raising women's state pension age to 65 years, more older women are also in employment, many with caring responsibilities.

Key recommendations:

- **Investment** is needed in the **social infrastructure** as well as the physical infrastructure
- A free **National Care Service** is needed on a par with the NHS with a well-trained and well-paid care workforce.
- A national service providing **free childcare services** and a workforce trained on a par with primary school teachers is needed.
- **Investment in local public service workforces** could help mitigate the threat to women's jobs from technological developments and cut travel time and therefore costs to the individual as well as to the environment.

- **Local authorities need sustainable and adequate budgets** funded from progressive local taxes and central government grants. Public service providers should be accountable to the local community.
- **Public services could be provided in a variety of ways**, including by the public sector and by user-led organisations and social enterprises. Many out-sourced public services should be brought back in-house, but there may be room in some services for private, for-profit businesses provided they were effectively regulated and compliant with conditions set out in clear public service contracts.

1. Introduction

The expansion of the welfare state immediately after the Second World War was continued by the two Labour governments of the 1960s and 1970s. Their economic and social policies were still based on Keynesian theories. This paper will examine the consequences of the shift to neo-liberalism which started 40 years ago, focussing on the last decade of austerity. This is the period when the deepest cuts to public services, which make up such a significant part of our social infrastructure, have occurred. The impact of these cuts on vital local services combined with continued and growing dependence on private markets to deliver these services, particularly in England, has been very damaging. Both the cuts in public services and leaving them to the market to be delivered have affected women of all ages more negatively than men, with the well-being of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups and people with disabilities most badly harmed.

It is important to note that responsibilities for health, local government, housing, education and transport are devolved to Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. The Scottish government has also had powers to raise income tax rates and change tax thresholds since 1999.¹ The Scottish government has therefore had the powers and some resources as well as the political will, to protect public services from the extent of cuts and privatisation experienced in the rest of the UK, and in some services to plan and make positive innovations. These will be discussed briefly in the appropriate sections below.

Since April 2019, the Welsh government has also had powers to raise income tax rates but it is too soon to see how this is being used. In 2015 the Welsh government passed the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act based on a “sustainable development principle.” The Statutory Guidance explains that this means any public body “must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present generation are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This method of ‘Tracking the Act’ is being taken seriously.

The paper will first outline why the need for public services for people of *all* ages has been growing across the UK over the past 10 years and will continue to do so. Second, the paper will describe why it is important to those who work in public services, as well as to those needing them, that these services are adequately funded from *local* government, supplemented by central government grants to take account

¹ Emmerson, C., 2019 The IFS Green Budget, p183-184

of differing levels of local need, resources and income. At least three-quarters of public services workers are women and the accountability of providers of public services to them, those who use and rely on them as well as to the wider community is important. The consequences of the extensive privatisation of residential and domiciliary social care and children's services in England are used to illustrate this. Some comparisons are made with policies in other parts of the UK. Finally, ways consistent with moving towards a sustainable, gender-equal economy, including the Green New Deal, proposals for Universal Basic Services and ways of commissioning smaller and more local services, will be discussed.

2. Demographic trends and changing employment patterns and need for support

Demographic changes have increased the need for public services, particularly those for which local authorities across the UK have a *statutory* responsibility, namely adult social care, children's social services and services for those who are unintentionally homeless. These trends are set to continue, making it even more urgent that policies with the objective of achieving gender equality are taken seriously *and* implemented. This is most obvious in England where public spending on adult social care, for example, has been cut more severely than in Scotland or Wales.²

At the same time, the composition of the labour market in the UK has changed. More mothers of dependent children, including of pre-school children, are in paid employment. More women over the age of 50 years, many of whom have caring responsibilities, are also in paid work. Nevertheless, in the UK in 2018, one in four of 50-64 year old men and women with caring responsibilities for children or adults, were not in paid employment.³ This was one of the highest proportions in the EU.

- Between 2008 and 2018 in the UK the number of old people aged 65-84 years of age increased by 23% to 10.6 million and those aged over 85 years by 22.8% to 1.6 million. This reflects increases in life expectancies at the age of 65 years. However, the increase in *healthy* life expectancy has not kept pace, especially in the more deprived areas in England where, for both men and women, it is at least 7 years less than for those living in the least deprived areas. The differences in healthy life expectancies between local authorities *within* in each country of the UK is greater than the variations *between* the countries.⁴
- In 2015 it was estimated there were 850,000 people in the UK diagnosed as living with a form of dementia, three times as many as in the 1970s. This will increase to a million by 2025. They pose particular challenges for social care and health services as well as family carers.
- The annual number of births in the UK increased by 23,000 year on year from 601,500 in 2001 until 2007. After falling slightly in 2008, numbers increased steadily to peak at 813,000 in 2012 and then decreasing again to 744,000 in 2017.⁵ There are therefore larger cohorts of children currently moving through the school system than in the previous decade. This is putting pressure on children's health and social care services as well as on schools.

² Carers UK 2019, *The State of Caring Report 2019*, p4

³ ONS, (March 2019), *Living Longer: caring in later working life*, ONS.p5

⁴ ONS, (Dec 2018), *Health state Life Expectancies, UK 2015-2017*

⁵ ONS.(2019) *Vital Statistics in the UK, births ,deaths and marriages, Nov. 2018 update*

- There are more children being diagnosed as having special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). In England by early 2019 1.3 million pupils (14.9%) were identified as having SEND. Local authorities have the responsibility to make provision for them, but reduced support services both within and outside of school, coupled with cuts in mental health services, have resulted in children with SEND accounting for half of the children being permanently excluded from school.⁶
- In some local authorities in England, there are also more adults of working age (16 -64 years) with SEND receiving care than adults aged over 65 years. The average cost of LA support to an adult with SEND is twice that for a child with SEND.
- Local authorities across the UK also have responsibilities for the growing number of children in homeless families. In 2019 there were 125,000 children in temporary accommodation.⁷
- Carers UK estimate there are now between 6.6 and 8 million unpaid carers across the UK looking after adult members of the family or friends who need care.⁸ Half are over 50 years old and three fifths are women. Carers also need reliable social public services to sustain their own health and well-being.⁹ It is estimated that 4 million care workers would be needed to replace the amount of care currently provided by unpaid carers.¹⁰
- The rise in women’s state pension age from 60 to 65 years means more women are combining caring with paid employment. This is increasing the need for formal social care services to replace some of the care they were providing. Too few employers have developed policies to enable workers to combine paid work and the care of adults; as a result, more of these older women carers are unable to stay in or re-join the workforce and are facing poverty.¹¹
- While carers across the UK have the right to *request* support from their local authority, a growing proportion of those who do so only get advice. Public spending on care for older and disabled people is much higher in Scotland and Wales than in England.¹²
- In 2019 three out of four mothers of dependent (under 16) children were in work compared with two out of three in 2001.¹³ There was little difference across the different parts of the UK. Almost three in ten with a child aged 14 years or under said they had reduced their working hours for childcare reasons.

3. The Current State of the Funding and Delivery of Public Services

Local government has had to bear many of the consequences of cuts in funding for the services which make a major contribution to our social infrastructure. Far from increasing local authority (LA) grants and other sources of income, central government’s financial support to LAs in England has been halved since 2010. Greater dependence on council tax and business rates means poorer authorities with the

⁶ Office of the Children’s Commissioner, England, (Sept 2019), A Manifesto for Children,p8.

⁷ Ibid, p7

⁸ Carers UK, 2019, The State of Caring p4

⁹ Carers UK, 2019, The State of Caring p4

¹⁰ AgeUK, Later Life in the United Kingdom, 2019

¹¹ Cribb and Emmerson, 2017, Can’t wait to get my pension: the effect of raising the state pension age on income, poverty and deprivation, IFS Working Paper W17/10

¹² Health Foundation blog 2019, The real cost of a fair adult care system <https://www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/blogs/the-real-cost-of-a-fair-adult-social-care-system>

¹³ ONS, 2019, Families and the Labour Market, UK

greatest needs can raise the least resources. The increases in LA funding announced in the Spending Review in September 2019 reduces the cuts experienced by English LAs since 2010 by only 15%.¹⁴

The consequences for public services are serious and take little account of the importance of protecting and developing a social infrastructure which is not only environmentally sustainable, but also creates accessible local public spaces which citizens of all ages can enjoy. The impact of cuts on public services also varies according to the extent to which services have been outsourced to private providers and/or workers have lost their jobs or had their pay, conditions and security worsened. Over three quarters of the workforce in the public services are women. There are well established trade unions and professional associations to represent those employed in education, health services and local government. These professions have recognised qualifications, pay and career progression and louder voices in policy changes. In contrast, social care and childcare workers have benefitted from the introduction of the minimum wage twenty years ago, but still remain close to the margins of the labour market. Privatisation, which has intensified that marginalisation, has been used much more extensively in England. Altogether nearly a million local government employees in England have lost their jobs since 2010.¹⁵

Funding

- Local government has *statutory* responsibilities for providing social care services for the growing numbers of frail elderly, people with disabilities and children in need of care as well for the unintentionally homeless. By 2018, social care services for adults and children in England accounted for 54% of total local government expenditure compared with 45% in 2010.
- English councils are facing a funding gap of £3.1 billion for 2019-20. If no action is taken, this will increase to £8 billion by 2024-25. By this time adult social care services will account for £3.6 billion and children’s services £3.1 billion of the shortfall.¹⁶
- The gap between local authorities’ income and their expenditure on these statutory services means savings have had to be made elsewhere. Grants to voluntary societies who depend on them for core funding and sometimes the use of buildings, have been cut. For example, in England over the past decade women’s refuges have been closed and organisations supporting women experiencing domestic violence have had to curtail their activities. The London Black Women’s Project, which has been running specialist BME refuges for 32 years, is at risk of closure in November 2019. The End Violence Against Women estimate 150 Rape Crisis centres are currently needed in England and Wales but there are now only 44.¹⁷

Public space

- Some parts of our socially important infrastructure have been sold off. This is “... *threatening the future of other vital council services such as parks, leisure centres and libraries, which help to*

¹⁴ Emmerson, (2019), op.cit

¹⁵ WBG (2019), Triple Whammy: the impact of local government cuts on women <https://wbg.org.uk/analysis/reports/triple-whammy-the-impact-of-local-government-cuts-on-women/>

¹⁶ Phillips, D and Simpson P.(2019) Changes in councils’ adult social care and overall service spending in England, 2009–10 to 2017–18 Briefing Note, BN 240(2019), IFS, London, p2

¹⁷ End Violence Against Women Coalition(2019) Letter to Chancellor of the Exchequer, October 18 2019

keep people well and from needing care and support and hospital treatment".¹⁸ Since Margaret Thatcher's election, about 10% of the entire British land mass has passed into private hands.¹⁹

- Fifty years ago, there was no difference between children from different income groups with respect to their access to *and* use of safe green or play spaces. Now children in the least deprived areas are *nine* times more likely to enjoy access to safe play and recreation.²⁰ The most affluent 20% of wards in England have five times the amount of green space as the most deprived 10%. Children from deprived areas are more likely to be born underweight but later become obese. Overall, the area around the home where children are allowed to go unsupervised has shrunk by 90% since the 1970s.²¹
- In 2018, the Scottish government, together with Inspiring Scotland, formed Scotland's Play and Learning Coalition, which is committed to supporting 'life-enhancing outdoor play and learning for all of Scotland's children and young people' between 2019-22. It includes 'opening up more of our communal and publicly-managed spaces for playing and learning'.²²
- The Welsh government in their Plan for all Children and Young people 2019-2022 also recognised 'the centrality of family and safe play in the community.'²³ The Children's Commissioner's (Wales) Report March 2017, p10) has expressed concern about the closures of play, youth and leisure services and the number of children who do not feel safe in public spaces.
- Overall there is growing evidence that more women too, especially, those with disabilities and BAME and LGBT women do not feel safe in public spaces.
- In 2018, the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee recommended, parks should be seen not only as a vital part of our social infrastructure but also a part of a wider *green* infrastructure relevant to national strategic issues such as obesity, flooding and climate change.²⁴

Transport

Meanwhile, the October budget 2018 announced £25.3 billion more for motorways, trunk and A roads and £3.5 billion for new networks of local roads. In contrast, LA funding for buses has been cut by 46% since 2010, resulting in a loss of 134 million miles involving 2,000 bus routes across UK. This confirms the Select Committee on Housing, Communities and Local Government's' conclusion that the "traditional grey infrastructure, such as roads, is in our view often prioritised over green infrastructure."²⁵

- This has a bigger impact on women because they use transport very differently from men. Their journeys are shorter but often more complex because they are required to fit in with the fixed timetables of other services, when for example, escorting children to and from school, or visiting

¹⁸ Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, England (2017), Autumn Short Survey, p2

¹⁹ Christopher, B. (2018). *The New Enclosures*, Verso, p329

²⁰ National Children's Bureau, *Greater Expectations*, 2013

²¹ Office of the Children's Commissioner England (2018), *Playing Out*.

²² Scotland's Outdoor Playing and Learning Coalition (2018) *Playing outdoors is fundamental*.

²³ The Office of the Children's Commissioner Wales(2017) Report , p10)

²⁴House of Commons, Communities and Local Government Select Committee ,Public Parks, 7th Report of Session 2016-17,HC 45, Feb, 2017

²⁵ Idem

another member of the family to accompany them to a GP's appointment. Reductions in the frequency and reliability of buses make this more difficult for women because they are more dependent on buses and use cars, trains and bicycles less than men.

- In the absence of affordable public transport, it is harder for women to make their voices heard and contribute to local policy debates - and more important, become active local councillors. Experience as a councillor can be an important stepping stone for women to becoming an MP. In a study in Bristol ten years ago, travel and childcare expenses, together with the timing of meetings, were key issues raised by those wanting to increase women's representation on consultation meetings about local services.²⁶

Social care

Scotland introduced free personal care for those aged over 65 years in 2002 and the onset of 'austerity.'²⁷ In April 2019 this was extended to include people of all ages who are assessed as requiring it. This is supported by £30 million of new funding to local authorities across Scotland. The SNP are currently proposing to go further and abolish charges for those in receipt of domiciliary services with help with housework, laundry, and shopping. This is a much-needed development because the well-being of someone needing personal care is seriously undermined by having to live in a dirty and unhygienic home because they cannot afford any help with housework.

There is now strong evidence that markets do not deliver sufficient residential care services either for adults or children when *and* where they are needed. In England, where the privatisation of social care services was forced on local government in 1990s, its funding has yet to move towards being placed on a fair and sustainable footing. Unlike health services which are funded from general taxation and free at the point of use, residential and domiciliary social care services are still means-tested.

The number of hours of domiciliary care provided fell by 3 million between 2015 and 2018.²⁸ It is now estimated that there are 1.4 million people with unmet care needs, in England. This is 48% more than in 2010. There are now 'care deserts'. Out of around 7,500 postcode districts in England, 30% of them had no care beds. Only a third had a care home bed with nursing.²⁹

Business models in the market for care services: who bears the risk?

- The business model on which the larger residential care providers depend is totally inappropriate for the provision of care services. They are made up of private equity and hedge funds, and account for a fifth of residential care places in England. They are often laden with debt acquired to fund their expansion. A rate of return of 12% for their shareholders means that fees are at least 20% higher than if the rate of return was 5%, which would be more reasonable

²⁶ Perrons, D et al(2007),Divisions and Working Time in the New Economy, Edward Elgar.

²⁷ Personal care includes support with personal hygiene, issues with mobility, food preparation and support at mealtimes, and assistance with dressing or getting in and out of bed.

²⁸ Age UK (2019) Later Life in the United Kingdom 2019.

²⁹ Incisive Care (May 2019), Care Deserts: the impact of a dysfunctional market in adult social care provision, Age UK London

for a service for which there is effectively guaranteed state funding, expanding need and therefore a stable future.³⁰

- As more LAs have to keep the fees they pay as low as possible, providers move out of areas with few self-funders who can be charged an estimated 41% higher fee for the same level of provision. Instead large providers concentrate on wealthier areas with high and rising property prices. At the same time as complaining of increases in the minimum wage many avoid paying corporation taxes through complex corporate structures often based largely overseas. “Too big to fail” private equity firms like Four Seasons can walk away unscathed because it is the LAs who have a duty of care for the residents they have placed with them.

Who pays the price?

- Wages account for at least 60% of the costs of private providers of residential care. They are not required either by regulation or competition to invest in training or to employ trained staff. Few pay more than the minimum wage, or develop pay progression and a career structure. In some parts of England - in Greater London for example, there is heavy reliance on workers from both within and outside the EU.
- The domiciliary sector has similar characteristics. Four out of five workers in domiciliary care are women and half of all domiciliary workers are on zero hours contracts. Training is measured in days and turnover is high, which is particularly detrimental to the quality of care provided because good care is based on familiarity within a trusting relationship and this takes time to establish. Having a number of different carers visiting for fifteen minutes to deliver a ‘package of care’ cannot provide care of any quality.
- In 2018, one in ten children in the care of LAs in England were in residential care. The geographical distribution of children’s homes is also uneven. A quarter of English LAs no longer manage *any* homes in their area.³¹ Privately owned homes which account for three-quarters of the total in England are concentrated in certain parts of the country where the cost of the much smaller properties needed are lower, for example in the north-west. Wages are lower where there is less competition in the unskilled labour market and there are no requirements to employ trained staff. LA’s pay rates for workers in LA managed homes are 50% higher than those in the private sector. They also have a higher staff to child ratio.³²
- There may be good safe-guarding reasons for sending children far from their families and ‘bad influences’, but distance makes it harder for social workers and family members to monitor the children’s well-being and progress and therefore hold providers to account.³³ In any case these children are at risk of becoming targets for drug dealers running ‘county lines’ and child abusers.³⁴

³⁰ Foundational Economy Collective (2018), Foundational Economy, Manchester University Press Manchester, p67

³¹ Narey, M Report on Residential Care, 2016

³² Idem

³³ Idem

³⁴ Office of Children’s Commissioner (England) (Sept.2019), op.cit..

- As is the case in social care services for adults, it is hard to hold private providers to account because if a resident is hurt there has to be proof that harm not only occurred but was *intended*. The larger providers have deeper pockets from which to pay lawyers to defend their practices. Halving government grants to legal aid over the past decade have made it almost impossible for families to challenge bad practice either of the LA with a duty of care towards their child or the home owner.

Childcare services

In contrast to the rest of the UK, access to government funding in England to pay providers of childcare is determined by the employment status of the parent(s). Most providers are in the private sector, with the exception of SureStart children's centres, which were funded since the 1990s by LAs to provide free childcare for all pre-school children in poorer areas in England, irrespective of parental employment status. Budget cuts means 1,000 SureStart centres have closed despite evidence of a very positive and lasting impact on poorer children's health and development, as well as improvements in their own *and* their mother's confidence and well being.³⁵

Since 2018, dual earning parents receive 30 hours childcare/week for 38 weeks paid directly from central government. Lone parents receive 15 hours/week when they have a child aged two. Hourly rates on which payments are based are estimated to be 20% less than needed to cover nurseries' costs leaving a total funding gap of £662million.³⁶ In deprived areas, nurseries are closing because poorer mothers are unable to make up the difference by paying more for 'extras' (like meals!). Lone mothers on universal credit, who are now expected to work once their youngest child is three years old, are in great difficulty.

In Scotland, the picture is distinct. Three years ago, almost half the daycare services were being provided by local authorities and nearly a third in the private sector. Childminders made up a quarter of the workforce. In 2020, every three and four year olds' entitlement to free early learning and child care will be almost doubled to 1,140 hours/year and will include two year olds from families with low incomes (an income at or below that used to establish eligibility for free school meals).³⁷ The Scottish government also has plans to further increase investment in the training of the workforce, including childminders, and making it more diverse with respect to age, gender, ethnicity and disability.³⁸

Housing

Housing was a public service before Thatcher's 'Right to Buy' policy, which gave council tenants the right to purchase their dwelling at a generous discount, was introduced in 1980. Then, a third of households in Britain lived in council dwellings. Now, only one in six rent what is called social housing, which includes LA and housing associations dwellings. The failure to allow LAs to use the proceeds of these

³⁵ Cattan, S., Conti, G., Farquharson, C and Ginja, R.(2019) The Health effects of Sure Start, IFS.

³⁶ All Party Parliamentary Group on Child Care and Education, July 2019,

³⁷ An income at or below that used to establish eligibility for free school meals

³⁸ Early Learning and Childcare Skills Steering Group (2017), Skills Investment Plan: Prospectus for Scotland's Early Learning and Childcare Sectors, Edinburgh.

sales to replace the dwellings sold in this way, and a housing market which has not built sufficient affordable dwellings either to buy or rent, has had dire consequences.

- Between the early 1950s and late 1970s 200,000-300,000 dwellings were built annually in England. This compares with a *total* of 400,000 since 2010. There are now many parts of the country where housing to buy or to rent is becoming unaffordable to a woman on median earnings.³⁹
- Homelessness has increased particularly among children and lone mothers, who account for two thirds of homeless families in England. Official statistics show there are 124,000 homeless children living in temporary accommodation which can mean living in shipping containers, office blocks and B&B's, sometimes far from their relatives, friends, school and parents' employment. There are estimated to be a further 92,000 people who are 'sofa surfing' with friends or family.⁴⁰
- 'The Right to Buy', which was abolished in Scotland in 2016, emphasised the value of a house as a financial asset to be passed on to children, rather than a public service providing secure homes. People were not told at the time the 'Right to Buy' was introduced in 1980 that should they need residential care when they got older, they would have to sell their house to pay for it. This has resulted in considerable resistance to the sensible suggestion of increasing inheritance tax in order to contribute to the funding of social care.
- The shift from subsidising bricks and mortar to cash in the form of housing benefit, in the absence of rent control, is in effect subsidising landlords.

A rare positive proposal is The Green New Deal's commitment from 2025 to build houses which will be energy saving and meanwhile retro-fitting the existing housing stock. This will increase local employment in the building trade as well as reducing carbon emissions.

4. Ways Forward to a Sustainable, Gender-Equal Economy

Universal Basic Services (UBS)

The future of public services, which could meet everyone's basic needs while avoiding the problems outlined above, could take form of an entitlement to Universal Basic Services. The case is being made by the Foundational Economy Collective⁴¹ as well as by Anna Coote and Edward Percy in *The Case for Universal Basic Services* (forthcoming).⁴² Both argue strongly in support of investing in the collective provision of public services. Coote and Percy extend the definition of public services discussed in this paper to include access to digital information and motorised transport. The key features of UBS are as follows:

- **Services** are defined as 'collectively generated activities that serve the public interest.'
- **Basic** means: 'Services are essential and sufficient (rather than minimal) to enable people to meet their needs'.

³⁹ WBG (July 2019) A Home of her Own, housing and women

⁴⁰ Office of the Children's Commissioner England, Bleak Houses August 2019

⁴¹ Foundational Economy Collective 2018, op.cit.

⁴² Anna Coote and Edward Percy, The Case for Universal Services, forthcoming

- **Universal** means: everyone is entitled to services that are sufficient to meet their needs, regardless of ability to pay.
- Services are genuinely participative, controlled by the people who need them and use them, and supported rather than always directly provided by the state.

As described above, most public services are still publicly *funded* out of local or national taxes, but they are not all collectively *provided*. Outsourcing to the private sector in the name of individual choice, competition and efficiency, Coote and Percy argue, weakens the value of social citizenship and undermines solidarity.⁴³ It erodes the relational basis of services and the ethos of shared interests and collective responsibility. Instead, Coote and Percy argue for power to continue to be devolved to local government while enabling residents to have more effective control within a democratic framework where the state retains key responsibilities.

Recommended Next Steps

1. **Local government**, with funding placed on a firm and sustainable footing, would play a central part in a gender-equal economy.
 - Authorities would receive additional central government funding to ensure, in addition to council taxes and business rates, their income was sufficient to meet the needs of the local population.
 - Other sources of revenue and capital funds in addition to council tax (based on updated property values) and business rates, such as a land tax could be explored. In the long run, gender-equal economic policies should be aiming to reduce inequalities between local areas and regions.
2. **Outsourced social care and childcare services**, in particular those owned by hedge funds and private equity companies, **should be brought back in-house**.
 - This does not mean excluding all for-profit businesses, provided they replace the creation of *shareholder* value with *stakeholder* value.⁴⁴ As R. H. Tawney pointed out: *“The important question is not whether an undertaking is described as private or public; it is whether, if it is private, adequate guarantees can be established that it performs a public function and whether, if it does it performs it effectively.”*⁴⁵
 - Such guarantees could include having to demonstrate that they are domiciled in the UK, subject to UK taxation law and contracts without ‘commercial confidentiality’ clauses limiting full openness and transparency.⁴⁶
 - They would also have to comply with working standards and practices such as those set out in Unison’s Residential Care Charter for example.
 - LAs could re-build their own in-house provision, include small and medium enterprises as well as support user-led organisations and social enterprise. Encouraging ‘co-production’ based on professionals and citizens sharing the planning and delivery of

⁴³ Ibid. p21

⁴⁴ Mazzucato, M 2018, *The Value of Everything*, Penguin, p268

⁴⁵ Tawney, R.H, (1964) *Equality*, Allen and Unwin, London p183

⁴⁶ TUC, 2019, *The Doomsday Book: Public Services Contracts*

services, could ensure that ‘services are valued because they are social, collective and participatory.’⁴⁷

3. **Invest in social care services** for which there is a growing and long term need in every LA could mitigate the threat of women’s jobs being replaced by technology or relocated to another country. As research for the WBG has found, such investment in parts of the social infrastructure can create more jobs than equivalent investment in the physical infrastructure.⁴⁸
4. **Create a National Care Service on a par with the NHS.** This would involve a large investment in training and the development of skills and expertise. Staff working in adult social care services would have a clear career progression and by aligning their pay and conditions with health care workers and sharing part of their training as happens in Germany, for example, co-operation between health and social care systems would be facilitated, particularly at the local level. This would also require national bodies setting and regulating standards which, with the exception of England, already exist.
5. **Introduce free childcare services** as the right of every child and available after parental leave ends. The Sure Start centres in England provide a good model. Scotland’s *Skills Investment Plan: Prospectus For Scotland’s Early Learning and Childcare Sector* “, provides an excellent model of a programme to develop the skills, pay and careers of workers in this sector. Scotland is also addressing the need to fill the gap between parental leave ending and the child reaching the age of three as well as expanding after-school provision.⁴⁹
6. **Make adult education and (re-)training opportunities affordable, including free travel and help with care responsibilities** when necessary and available to women and men throughout adulthood. Part-time further education and higher education, recognised as being of particular importance to women who wish to re-train after breaks from employment having had children, for example, would attract financial support to cover fees and maintenance. (Part-time student numbers fell by 61% between 2012 -2018 when grants were replaced by loans). Civic education is also important at every age. Universities would be encouraged to re-open their continuing education departments to strengthen their connections with their local communities.
7. **Reintroduce bursaries for key occupations** where there are staff shortages and training involves substantial hands-on experience, such as childcare, health and social care. The abolition of bursaries for student nurses which were so important in enabling mature students, especially women, to enter the nursing profession led to a fall of 18% in applicants for nursing places in England in 2016.
8. **Encourage closer partnerships between professional healthcare workers and patients’ families.** There are many ways in which professional health care workers in the NHS for example could recognise the skills and experience of their patients’ families and work in a closer partnership with them. In the 1960s, mothers successfully campaigned to accompany

⁴⁷ Gannon,Z and Lawson,N. Co-Production. The modernisation of public services by staff and users, Compass 2008

⁴⁸ De Henau, J., Himmelweit, S., Lapniew, Z. And Perrons, D. 2016, Investing in the Care Economy: A gender analysis of employment stimulus in seven OECD countries, 2016

⁴⁹ Scottish Government, Skills Investment Plan: Prospectus for Scotland’s Early Learning and Childcare Sector, Edinburgh, 2018

their children in hospital instead of being limited to very short visits at prescribed times which were strictly observed. Now parents are seen as important partners in their children's care. In 2014 Nicci Gerrard campaigned for carers of a family member suffering from dementia to have the right (not the duty) to accompany them in hospital.⁵⁰ Two years later hospitals began to agree to this.

9. **Housing should be seen as a public service** and subsidised by giving local authorities access to funds to build sufficient affordable and energy-efficient housing to tackle homelessness and meet local needs to rent. All existing houses urgently need to be well insulated and retro-fitted with carbon neutral heating systems in line with the Green New Deal. Housing standards should be improved and much higher proportion designed and built with the needs of people with disabilities taken into account.
10. A gender equal economy which took the Green New Deal seriously would **use public funds for transport very differently**, cease giving the private car priority over public transport in general and travel by bus cheaper if not free.
11. All of these policies need to take place in a **safe, sustainable and healthy environment**. Local, public green spaces and parks are important for all of us to experience, especially young people, not only to enhance their well being but also to better understand and value what we could lose if global warming is not checked. 'The right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child' is enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Children.

⁵⁰ Gerrard, Nicci What Dementia Can Teach Us About Love, Allen Lane, London.2019