

**Press Release**

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## Claire Perry welcomes a strengthening of Women's Voices in politics

The publication of a consultation into how the Government can better connect with women has been welcomed by Devizes MP Claire Perry.

The Strengthening Women's Consultation was aimed at discovering the challenges and priorities facing women today, and identifying how the Government could better engage with women on these issues.

The top priorities identified included:

- issues relating to the workplace, and women's experience of work
- tackling violence against women and girls
- access to leadership positions in politics and in business
- more engagement including with senior women in business and women entrepreneurs.

Commenting Claire Perry said:

'Women still face barriers which stop some from achieving their full potential. The conclusions of this consultation show just how bad this is; if as many women as men started businesses we would have an extra 150,000 start-ups each year.

'With more female Conservative MPs than ever before, we have made an important leap but it's still a long way off from a parliament that better represents our country.

'It is vital that Government keeps open a proper dialogue so that women's voices are heard in business and in Government.'

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 0207 984 8121

### Notes to editors

- On 8 November 2011 a Written Ministerial Statement was published detailing the outcome of the government's Strengthening Women's Voices consultation. The consultation was launched in 7 March 2011 and closed on 15 June to seek views on how the government can better engage and listen to women.
- **More women than men feel they lack the skills to start a business.** In 2009, 36.5 per cent of women felt they had the skills to start a business, compared with 52.5 per cent of men (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2010, [link](#)).

**Last week Home Secretary and minister for women and equality Theresa May announced a series of policies which were aimed at increasing female involvement in business:**

- **5,000 new mentors for female entrepreneurs.** The funding for the mentoring scheme will be £700,000 over the next three years (*Home Office Press Release*, 4 November 2011).
- **Women's Business Council.** The Home Secretary announced that the government will establish a Women's Business Council, to provide advice to government on what it can do to maximise women's contribution to future economic growth (*Home Office Press Release*, 4 November 2011).
- **Flexible Working and Parental Leave.** The Government carried out a wide-ranging consultation with women. One key finding was that women felt there was a need for greater flexibility from employers, which the Government will address by extending flexible working to all employees and by allowing parents to choose how best to share their parental leave after having a baby (*Home Office Press Release*, 4 November 2011).