

Campaigning handbook 2020-21



Women in UNISON – active, campaigning, leading

Revised September 2019



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Introduction

Over three quarters of UNISON members are women.

UNISON is proud to be the leading trade union for women. We have a solid history of women being at the heart of the union, through enshrining self-organisation into our rule book along with proportionality.

As a union which is two thirds women we do not just talk the talk. Women are the foundation on which UNISON is built.

UNISON's women members have successfully negotiated on key issues such as domestic abuse, equal pay and maternity rights.

Our group of UNISON women members (known as a self-organised group) campaign for equality in the workplace and for improvements to women's rights

in the workplace and in the wider community.

It also supports campaigns aimed at improving women's lives – for example, to change the law to protect women experiencing domestic abuse, or to raise awareness of health issues which mainly affect women.

The campaign ideas in this guide are based on motions passed by UNISON's national women's conferences and is updated each year. It also contains contact details for organisations that UNISON works with that may be able to provide useful information.

All the campaign ideas in this guide are issues that have been prioritised through the democratic structures of women's self-organisation. There may, of course, be other issues that you wish to run campaigns on in your branch or region.

If you run any successful campaigns or have any good ideas you wish to share, please do let us know:

Email: women@unison.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/unisonwomen

Twitter: @WomenInUNISON

Website: www.unison.org.uk/women



“And last year, over 100,000 low-paid workers, most of them women, won the living wage in the NHS.

Band one was abolished.

Most of them women – including some of you in this hall -domestics and catering staff.

A life changing pay deal.

The single largest number of low-paid workers to achieve the living wage, ever.

It was our union that did that – our union!

A victory for women – UNISON women.

Likewise, with our incredible Employment Tribunal Fees victory in the Supreme Court.

You’ve probably heard me mention it before.

I make no apologies for that.

Because this was a monumental victory.

A historic case.

Which will always be known as the UNISON case.

The government were told they’d broken human rights law

Even magna carta.

No-one else was willing to fight this injustice.

But our union was. Winning access to justice for working people – all working people.

And helping those – most of them women – who were denied justice by Employment Tribunal Fees.

And conference, we fight on in the courts.

I was so proud to hear this week, that – after a huge effort from our union – we have been granted the right to appeal the vital “sleep ins” case in the Supreme Court.

Across our country, thousands of care workers

Mostly women

Aren’t paid the proper salary for the work they do.

They’re told, disgracefully, that the hours they spend – at night - looking after vulnerable adults and children, many with significant, challenging needs, isn’t work.

Outrageous. Unacceptable.

But conference, we’ll keep on fighting in the courts to win them the pay, and the back pay they deserve.

We’ll fight, as we have always fought, for decent pay and conditions.

And conference – we’ll win, a victory for low-paid care workers.

Just as we'll win in Birmingham for the incredible homecare strikers.

Fighting a council – a Labour council – who seek to slash their wages by thousands of pounds.

It's immoral, it's wrong and as I told them recently

We will stand by them every step of the way until they win the victory they so richly deserve.

A victory for UNISON – a victory for women.”

Dave Prentis, general secretary,
speaking at the National Women's
Conference, 2019

Effective campaigning – the basics

When you campaign you are trying to persuade people to take a particular course of action in relation to a particular issue. You are also trying to change people's attitudes or opinions.

When you campaign your tools are information, argument and publicity.

Many branch activists are experienced in running campaigns on both local and national issues. However, it's always useful to review your approach, so below are a few basic tips.

Those of you who are new to publicity and campaigning, will find the much more detailed UNISON guide, 'Effective campaigning' (available from the online catalogue www.unison.org.uk/onlinecatalogue stock number 2916) particularly helpful.

This guide is in no way intended to be a final word – as with any campaign there should be room for everybody to contribute ideas.

Objectives are the focus

- A campaign is built on its objectives. Make sure everyone knows the issues around the campaign. Encourage member activity in support of the campaign.
- Objectives also make it possible to review the campaign. Are we achieving what we set out to achieve? The campaign can also have the added benefit of building organisation within the branch and raising the profile of UNISON.

- You need to know where you're going, so you know when you've got there...and when to stop!

A campaign plan is essential

- You will need to create a flexible plan which lists key dates, proposed activities, resources and responsibilities. This means that everyone is aware of the intended progress of the campaign and can prepare for events. It also makes it possible to identify shortfalls in resources.
- Make sure you know about relevant dates and opportunities to get your campaign on track. For example, are there certain meetings your branch might want to attend or lobby? Are there regional UNISON events you could attend to get support from other members or branches? Is there a local event that could provide a useful 'hook' for your campaign?

Who does the planning?

Obviously it is up to the branch activists and committee to agree to a campaign plan. But it may be easier to form a sub-committee or working party to focus primarily on drawing up the plan.

Don't make your planning sub-committee too big. Six to eight committed people is the maximum you need, otherwise you will just be setting up an unwieldy group. The team could then take the plan to the rest of the branch for discussion and agreement.

Drawing up a plan document would be impossible to do from scratch in a full

committee or branch meeting. A small group allows flexibility to meet as and when necessary. The group can continue to meet as events progress, adapting the plan or co-opting others as and when necessary. They can also review each phase as it happens and report back to the rest of the branch. Of course this may not be appropriate for your particular branch. Or you may wish to work with other branches on this basis. Choose whatever suits everyone best. Some branches agree to free up specific individuals in these situations, sharing out



their work so they have more time to concentrate on the campaign.

Don't forget to involve regional staff. Are there organising staff who can help you? They may also have experience of working on campaigns.

Communications — or how to get your message across

It is important to think about who your target audience is and what you want to communicate. Communications may be viewed as 'internal' i.e. within UNISON (either the branch, the region, or nationally) or 'external' i.e. outside UNISON (e.g. the employers, local or national media, trades councils, other trade unions etc.) or a combination of both.

You may want to think about using some of the following methods:

- Press releases, to tell the media about specific events in your campaign or a compelling story in your branch. Don't forget that journalists are interested in anything that will make a story, so think carefully about what interests their readers.
- Briefing meetings for activists and members. Do you want to invite a guest speaker along? What issues do you want to tell people about?
- Could you create any photo opportunities to attract the attention of the press and public but also to provide your branch with stock photographs to be used in your publicity?

Other ideas: newsletters, circulars, emails, noticeboards, word of mouth, workplace meetings, pre-printed envelopes, social events, posters, leaflets, advertising, blogs, website comments, radio phone-ins, writing to newspapers, texts, tweets, Facebook and other social media.

What do you want to communicate?

Think about:

- the aims of your campaign
- back-up information which can fill gaps
- key dates in the campaign timetable
- who is responsible for what
- how the campaign aids recruitment and retention
- messages of support from outside the branch
- appeals for financial support.

Who do you want to tell?

It is worthwhile spending some time identifying the following in relation to your campaign:

- **Direct target**

The group or individual who needs to act to enable you to meet your goal. For example: an anti-BNP campaign might have as its direct target the voting public.

- **Indirect target**

Other groups or individuals your campaign has to reach, because they are influential in enabling you to reach your direct target. For example, it might be the press, and another might be other political parties or other unions. You may not agree with everything the indirect target says, but they can help you get to your direct target, so you need a relationship with them.

- **Allies**

These are your close friends, that you would trust enough to share your campaign plans with.

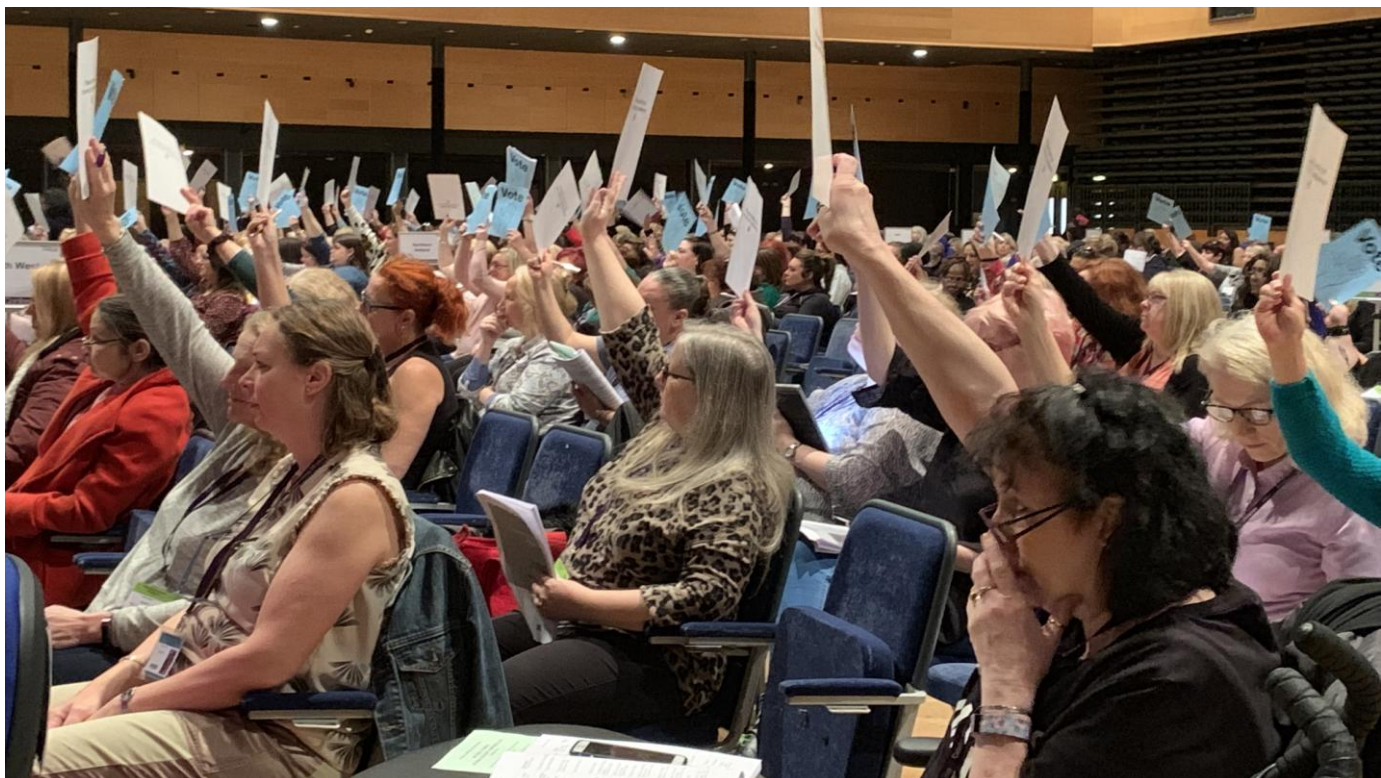
Raising public awareness

There are various ways in which you can raise public awareness and obtain further support. Many activities will be similar to those that you run in the workplace except that they have a wider audience.

They could include:

- putting on an exhibition, for example in the local library
- running a street stall
- having a stand at a local event such as a May Day rally or summer fair
- handing out leaflets or stickers
- getting people to sign a petition
- organising a public meeting with a keynote speaker
- participating in local seminars and other events, for example by providing speakers, by having an information stand or by sending delegates who will make a contribution from the floor
- providing speakers to local groups, schools and colleges
- holding some form of demonstration or visual stunt
- publicising your activities in the local media.

Hold a sponsored event or get your message printed on T-shirts, caps, badges, mugs or pens which you can sell to supporters – it can all help publicise your campaign as well as raise funds for further activities.



A public event can also provide an opportunity to involve other campaigning groups and local or national celebrities, as well as being a good story for the local media.

A survey is a very good way to raise awareness and to obtain evidence to strengthen your case. The survey does not need to be complicated – in fact the shorter and simpler the survey form is, the more likely people are to fill it in.

Another way to raise awareness is to hold a special meeting. The meetings might be branch or open meetings to which non-members are also invited.

The speaker could be someone from within the union, including someone from another branch or someone from an outside organisation. You could also show a video, as an event in itself or as part of the special meeting.

Lobbying

The reason for lobbying your MP is in order to get them to take some action, so you need to understand exactly what MPs can do before you decide whether lobbying your MP is appropriate.

The sorts of things that MPs can do are:

- write to a minister and get a personal reply
- ask a written or an oral parliamentary question
- put down an Early Day Motion
- present a Private Member's bill
- present a Ten Minute Rule bill
- sponsor or speak in a parliamentary debate.



You will have to decide the best way to lobby your MP – how to contact them, where to contact them and in what capacity. You will also have to decide whether it is best to lobby them as individual constituents or as a campaign group or both. You could:

- write to them at their constituency or the House of Commons
- visit them at their constituency surgery (an appointment is advisable)
- visit them at the House of Commons (always make an appointment first)
- join a mass lobby being organised nationally
- invite them to a meeting.

MPs do take notice of letters, especially individual letters from their constituents. And the more they get, the more likely they are to take notice.

There are also various groups of professionals that you might wish to

approach as part of a campaign. Lobbying a local organisation can be less confrontational than lobbying individuals and more productive than lobbying their national body. The first step is to identify your targets and then to decide what message you want to get across to them.

You should try to:

- gain their understanding of, and sympathy for, the issues
- propose action that they can take as part of their daily professional lives
- work with, rather than against, them.

Importance of recruitment

No UNISON campaign can neglect the importance of recruitment and retention of members. Running a well-planned and high profile campaign in itself demonstrates that UNISON is worth joining. UNISON campaigns should show members that their concerns are being addressed and hence aid retention.

Recruitment opportunities need to be identified in your planning and also picked up on, as they arise in the course of your activity.

See our joining page for more information: www.unison.org.uk/join

Evaluation

The importance of reviewing cannot be overstressed. There's no point reinventing the wheel, so ensure that you learn from your and others' experiences. At every stage your plan needs to be looked at and the activities reviewed. We can all learn from successes and mistakes.

Think about how you might review activities. You will need to ask:

- was the campaign a success?
- did we achieve all our objectives?
- what worked well?
- what mistakes did we make?
- what could we have done better?
- what lessons have we learned?

For example, did you run a recruitment stall but nobody turned up? Where did you put it? What time was it there? How did you publicise it? Where did you publicise it?

And don't forget that successes need to be shared with others. Don't assume that you were the last to think of an idea. Get your rep to report it to your regional self-organised group committee or the regional recruitment and organisation committee.

And don't forget to tell UNISON InFocus, the magazine for activists.



Economic Policy and Women in UNISON

The role of women in society has changed because the change to the State Pension Age has forced most women to continue working for an extra 6 years. According to statistics, around 3.34 million women are carers and many women find themselves having caring responsibilities for not just children but for their own parents and other family members at the same time as working.

Social care is the very bedrock of our society; women bear the brunt of the care crisis. It is a known fact that majority of paid and unpaid care workers are women. These cuts therefore impact negatively on women with a disproportionate impact on members of disadvantaged groups which include Black, disabled and LGBT women.

Since the recession of 2008 the economic picture has become extremely challenging.

Refuge services for women who have experienced domestic abuse across the country have been affected by brutal public sector cuts. According to a research conducted by Women's Resource Centre (WRC), 152 councils across England had cut spending on services for vulnerable women by an average of £44,914 per council. Also, research conducted by NatCen Social Research for UNISON in 2016 shows the disproportionate impact of public spending cuts on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) women.

The Women's Budget Group has continued to criticise the Tory government's lack of meaningful gender impact assessment of their budgetary decisions. Their research showed that choosing to repay the deficit through

cutting spending, rather than increasing taxation, further entrenches inequality.

It is a fact that women have suffered as a consequence of the government's economic policy.





Cuts and austerity measures are leaving the majority of women without support, placing them at risk and plunging them into poverty. The Fawcett Society has called the impact a 'triple jeopardy' to highlight a threefold attack on women via job cuts in the public sector, a reduction in the core public services that women rely on themselves and those they care for, and slashed benefits – all of which threatens a huge step back in women's equality.

The number of people attending food banks for emergency support continued to rise in 2017 according to the Trussell Trust. The charity's report, 'Early Warnings: Universal Credit and Foodbanks', highlighted that although the rollout of the new Universal Credit system for administering benefits has been piecemeal so far, foodbanks in areas of partial or full rollout are reporting significant problems with its impact, with people in insecure or seasonal work particularly affected.

When it comes to prioritising essential items such as food and bills, women's dignity and health issues are also being compromised. One of the most expensive items a woman has to buy is sanitary protection and with teenage daughters, the cost to a family can be phenomenal. Yet VAT at 5% is still charged on sanitary products.

Although the government announced that VAT on sanitary products would be scrapped, they have since gone quiet on when or if this will happen.

The introduction by the government of the so called 'tampon tax' to use this money to fund violence against women services, highlights the need for secure central funding whereby women's services are seen as the responsibility of all of society.

Women and Automation

Automation and digitisation of jobs is changing the nature, quality and distribution of employment, not just within sectors such as manufacturing and distribution but in the sphere of public services too.

It is predicted that between 25% and 40% current UK jobs could be lost to automation and digitisation. A study by the Reform think-tank has also predicted that 250,000 job losses will come from public service employers. These losses are likely to impact women more than men. This has given rise to a significant challenge for not only the world of work but also the ways in which trade unions organise within these workplaces.

Technology has already made a significant impact on the jobs that women carry out. Such as the role of a secretary and personal assistant. These roles have become both deskilled and more highly skilled due to the ability of a manager to deal with their own emails. The challenge for trade unions is to ensure that technology works to enhance and enable the creation of higher skilled, better paid jobs and improve the lives and work of women.



Women and the housing crisis

UNISON's housing campaign is calling on the Government for secure, affordable, safe and decent housing for all – including the low paid, women, the young, the homeless and other vulnerable groups. Last year, UNISON had the opportunity to respond to two government consultations on housing, one on reforming social housing, which included proposals to improve standards and regulation in social housing as well as increase housing supply and the other on improving security and stability in private renting.

With respect to the consultation on social housing, UNISON made the case to the Government that social housing providers, in particular councils, should be given greater financial flexibilities to invest in housing and supported with significant grant funding, if they are to be at the heart of a building programme to tackle the housing affordability crisis and deliver more social and genuinely affordable housing to meet growing housing need. We also supported proposals to improve consumer standards and regulation - in the wake of the Grenfell tragedy – and called for tenants to have a stronger voice in housing matters to ensure that issues that matter to them are heard and resolved.

With respect to the consultation on the private rented sector, UNISON called on the Government to go much further with its reforms to ensure that private renters have greater tenure security, stability and rent certainty in private renting. We called for a new tenancy system, based on the Scottish Private Residential Tenancy Agreement, (introduced by legislation in December 2017), which provides indefinite (permanent) tenancies, has ended no-fault evictions by abolishing fixed terms, and provides private

renters with greater security, stability, longer notice periods and protection from frequent rent increases. We also called for a more robust redress system for handling disputes, including the establishment of a specialist housing tribunal or court, as the Scottish Government has done, and for a system of rent caps to limit rent increases to stop private landlords from making unreasonable increases to rent.

With increasing numbers of our members and citizens forced into the private rented sector, because of the under-supply of social housing and un-affordability of home-ownership, many face unwanted moves or being evicted through no fault of their own. To this end, UNISON has joined the “End Unfair Evictions” campaign led by Generation Rent. This calls on the Government to abolish the law on Section 21 – which allows private landlords to evict tenants without any reason when their fixed term tenancies end and is the biggest cause of homelessness in England.

UNISON is also working with the Homes for All Campaign, led by Defend Council housing, to campaign for secure housing for all and for an end to homelessness.

The union also backs the “Safe Cladding and Insulation Now” campaign led by Fuel Poverty Action Group. This is calling for a comprehensive ban on combustible materials in high rise residential buildings; for the immediate removal of unsafe cladding, while ensuring that residents are safe from fire and cold; and guarantees that residents will not have to pay extra to keep their homes warm.

UNISON continues to raise the profile of the union around our housing priorities. For example, we have produced a number of reports on housing affordability and implications on public service workers, which we have highlighted in our responses to Government and national consultations.

Domestic abuse support services

Uncertain budgets are making the work of domestic abuse services harder every year. Many organisations providing support services for victims/survivors of domestic abuse are running an area of their services without any dedicated funding at all. Some receive no financial support at all from their local authority; nearly one in ten refugees and one in five community-based services who responded to the Women's Aid annual survey reported that they received no local authority funding in 2017/18.

Organisations of course have an impact on the services they are able to offer. Just under a third of services responding to the survey have had to reduce the amount of support they are able to provide to each survivor since 2014, due to funding issues.

For many women, refuges are the only option left when leaving an emotionally or physically abusive partner. But refuges are often full to capacity, having to turn dozens of women away.

According to the Crime survey for England and Wales, since 2010 violent crimes against women have increased significantly.

Domestic violence tends to increase during difficult periods for society, such as recessions. In these austere times with cuts to police and the criminal justice system and to services, vital support mechanisms have diminished or disappeared at a time when they are most needed by women.



LGBT women

A key finding of research conducted by NatCen Social Research for UNISON in 2016, in which nearly two thirds of the respondents were women, was that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people face a double bind of having a greater reliance on public services due to the discrimination and prejudice they face, but the dedicated services they need are being massively cut or closed as they are seen as less of a priority for public and charitable funding. Specialist mental health and support services are particularly affected.

Campaign ideas

- Gather information from regional women's groups on the impact of the cuts on women's lives, the extent of redundancies and the reduction in pay and hours within the public and voluntary sectors that particularly impact on women members, including those experiencing double disadvantage, such as Black, disabled and LGBT women.

- Raise awareness locally and in your region of this impact on women's lives, and how the loss of posts traditionally held by women are impacting on services.
- Work closely with other regional self-organised groups and the young members forum, other unions and trade union networks where appropriate, to campaign against the increasing drive for private rather than public sector provision.
- Campaign to protect those services used primarily by women, and provided primarily by women (including Sure Start centres) that support women caring for children who are facing challenges in that care.
- Make contact with local Women's Aid, refuge, Rape Crisis centres and other local domestic abuse services to support any fundraising events they are holding, support their campaigns against cuts in funding for specialist services and increase awareness of the issues they face.
- Lobby MPs to create a dedicated domestic abuse support funding stream, appropriate for the level of need.
- Promote and work with the Valuing Maternity Campaign to campaign for properly funded and resourced maternity services.
- Continue to organise women workers in the homecare service sector, support the UNISON campaigns for more funding and better quality homecare services, and promote the Ethical Care Charter.
- Investigate and raise awareness of the issues of the impact of cuts on the social work profession, issue guidance to women members on the steps that they can take to protect their health and their professional careers.
- Encourage members who can afford to do so to support food banks with donations of less popular items – particularly sanitary protection, toiletries, baby products, which are often overlooked by donors.
- Encourage your branch or regional women's group to link up with local food co-ops.
- Work with your individual members, regional women's committees and networks to lobby government ministers about the need to provide secure, affordable, decent housing for all, increasing social housing and increasing regulation in the private sector, and to ensure that the housing needs of women are taken into account in housing policy.
- Campaign for a national local authority house building programme and more local authority housing provision.
- Encourage women members to get involved in decision-making bodies such as in the NHS or groups representing our communities, schools and health bodies, so that they can influence the future of our public services.
- Negotiate with employers to provide salary advance schemes to their staff, where a short term advance on pay is provided as an alternative to seeking a loan.
- Renew and increase efforts in the campaign for a Living Wage for low paid workers and a decent pay increase for all workers in line with the cost of living.
- Continue to highlight campaigns to remove VAT on sanitary products.
- Help ensure that members are aware of the assistance available to them in crisis via branch welfare officers or UNISON Welfare 'There for You', including the credit union service.

And don't forget, when you are planning your campaign, to talk to co-workers about the issues and recruit non-members into UNISON.

More information



- **UNISON campaigns**

www.unison.org.uk/our-campaigns
including

- **Protect our children's education**
(campaigning against school cuts in England)
- **Mental health matters**
(campaigning for better investment in mental health services)
- **Save our local services**
(campaigning against cuts to council services)

- **Resources for women members**

www.unison.org.uk/women

- **Save care now campaign**

www.savecarenow.org.uk

- **There for you**

Offering a unique confidential advice and support service just for members of UNISON and their dependants.

www.unison.org.uk/there-for-you



The TUC brings unions together to draw up common policies on issues that matter to people at work. They represent more than 5.6 million workers in 50 unions.

The Trade Union Congress
Congress House
Great Russell Street
London WC1B 3LS
Tel: 020 7636 4030
www.tuc.org.uk

- **Women and the Cuts toolkit**

www.tuc.org.uk/equality-issues/gender-equality/tuc-women-and-cuts-toolkit

- **Women and Poverty**

www.tuc.org.uk/equality-issues/gender-equality/poverty



The WBG brings together feminist economists, researchers, policy experts and activists to work towards our vision of a gender equal society in which women's financial independence gives them greater autonomy at work, home, and in civil society.
Email: admin@wbg.org.uk
www.wbg.org.uk

- **Women and austerity**

<http://wbg.org.uk/resources/women-and-austerity/>



The UK's leading charity campaigning for gender equality and women's rights. They want to see a society in which individuals can fulfil their potential regardless of their sex.

The Fawcett Society
Unit 222, Southbank House
Black Prince Road
London SE1 7SJ
Tel: 0203 598 6154
Email: info@fawcettsociety.org.uk
www.fawcettsociety.org.uk



The leading national umbrella organisation for the women's sector, working towards linking all aspects of the women's movement.

Women's Resource Centre
United House
North Road
London N7 9DP
Tel: 020 7697 3450
Email: admin@wrc.org.uk
www.wrc.org.uk



A leading coalition of specialist women's support services, researchers, activists, survivors and NGOs working to end violence against women and girls in all its forms.

End Violence Against Women Coalition
134 Southbank House
Black Prince Road
London SE1 7SJ
Tel: 020 3735 8219
Email: admin@evaw.org.uk
www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk



The UK's leading charity committed to ending inequality and improving the health and well-being of pregnant women, partners and young children.

Maternity Action
52-54 Featherstone Street
London EC1Y 8RT
Tel: 020 7253 2288
Email: info@maternityaction.org.uk
www.maternityaction.org.uk



Campaigning for professionally managed, secure, decent and affordable private rented homes in sustainable communities.
www.generationrent.org



Helping millions of people every year struggling with bad housing or homelessness through advice, support and legal services, and campaigning to make sure that one day, no one will have to turn to them for help.
www.shelter.org.uk



The national charity for homeless people helping people directly out of homelessness and campaign for the changes needed to solve it altogether.
www.crisis.org.uk

Women in the workplace

Gender pay gap

The gender pay gap is the difference between men and women's average earnings. The UK has one of the biggest gaps in Europe at 18.1%.

Discrimination, bias in hiring and pay decisions plays a large role in gender pay gap. According to the Living Wage Foundation, 62% of those earning less than the living wage are female. Men tend to take up the majority of more senior roles and women's time out to have and care for children impacts their career progression. Additionally, women are still more likely to work in lower-paid and lower-skilled jobs.



This is why UNISON is leading a nationwide campaign to #BridgeTheGap. UNISON represents over one million women, making us the largest women's organisation in the UK.

In the UK, organisations with 250 or more employees are now legally obliged to publish their gender pay gap data.

The gender pay gap should not be confused with equal pay – paying men and women the same for doing the same job has been a legal requirement since the 1970 Equal Pay Act. Unfortunately not all employers comply and some people are still paid unequally for equivalent work in the UK – this can contribute to the gender pay gap. UNISON actively campaigns for fair and equal pay.

A Living Wage

The idea behind a living wage is very simple: that a person should be paid enough to live decently and to adequately provide for their family. At its heart is an ethical argument for preventing in-work poverty and ensuring workers are not exploited through low wages.

The stereotype that young workers are of less worth than older workers is enshrined in the National Minimum Wage legislation, which prescribes age-related differentials. This has been compounded by the government's decision to introduce a further age-related tier of the minimum wage (mis-named the 'living wage' even though it is below the accepted Living Wage rate set by the Living Wage Foundation.)



Evidence suggests that national minimum/national living wage non-compliance is endemic across the social care sector.

Zero hours contracts

A 'zero hours contract' is a permanent (as opposed to casual) contract with no defined hours. There is a requirement that the employee will work hours as set by the employer. These hours may alter from day to day, or week to week.

Under zero hours contracts, there is no guarantee of earned income or regular hours, making it difficult to arrange dependant care, access working tax credits, benefit from cheaper travel or opportunities at work such as training, as well as having a detrimental impact on work-life balance. This practice also saves the employer money as zero hours contracts can avoid 'on-costs' such as sick pay, holiday pay and pension contributions.

According to data from the Office of National Statistics, these contracts

disproportionately impact on women workers, and they are primarily focused on work traditionally undertaken by women, such as cleaning and caring work. However there is increasing use across all fields, including widespread use throughout the NHS and generally in the public sector.

Some employers use the complexity around the definition of employment status to act around employment law. Workers are sometimes forced to adopt self-employed status, or employers manipulate working hours or time limits in a particular employment to avoid having to provide pensions or other employment rights.

Some evidence shows that unscrupulous employers are using these contracts to remove employees with health and disability issues from the workplace, imposing them on individuals as the only alternative to redundancy but then never subsequently contacting them for work. Women members who are reliant on paid employment are being faced with difficult decisions, whether to accept the contract to avoid redundancy although regular

employment is not guaranteed, or leaving voluntarily and having to wait to be eligible to claim state benefits.

Bullying and harassment

With increasing numbers of workers in the public sector accepting redundancy and voluntary severance because of the cuts, those women who are left in the workplace are experiencing an increase in stress as work pressures mount. Bullying, in its various manifestations has noticeably increased. This can also affect vulnerable clients, as pressurised members may hesitate to raise concerns about unsafe working practices caused by the cuts.

There is evidence that young women in the workplace are being patronised, harassed and bullied, reinforcing stereotypes that young workers are of less worth than older workers.

Sexual harassment at work

According to a recent UNISON research *"It's Never Ok"*, nurses, care assistants, cleaners and other NHS staff have suffered lewd sexual insults, groping and even rape while at work.

8% of healthcare staff reported being sexually harassed in the past year; being subjected to offensive 'banter', smirked at and suggestive gestures are regular occurrences for some.

64% of respondents reported verbal abuse, such as unwanted remarks and jokes as the most common complaint.



Nearly a quarter (22%) of the healthcare staff reporting harassment said they had been sexually assaulted. Some had also been the victim of criminal offences such as rape, up-skirting, indecent exposure or inappropriate touching.

According to figures published by the TUC, 52 per cent of all women and nearly two thirds of women between the ages of 18 and 24 have experienced sexual harassment at work which includes groping, sexual advances and inappropriate jokes.

A joint report by UNISON and the London School of Economics also highlights that a staggering 49% of police staff surveyed had heard sexualised jokes being told repeatedly at work; and one in five had received sexually explicit email or text message from a colleague.

Most women who said they experienced sexual harassment at work did not tell their employer about what was happening in case it impacted negatively on their relationships at work or their career prospects.

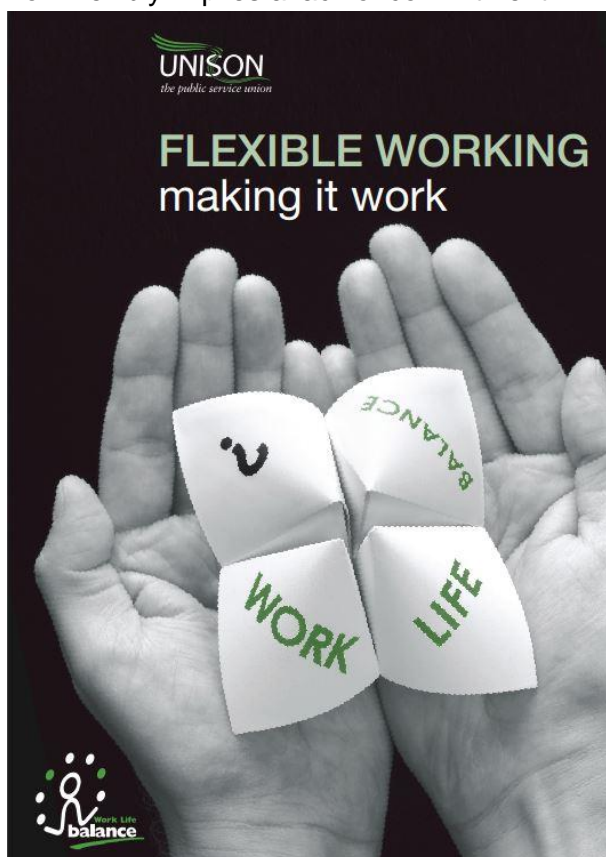
UNISON has a long and proud record of challenging harassment at work but despite our efforts, sexual harassment remains an endemic problem within our workplaces.

#metoo transformed the debate about sexual harassment. Sexual harassment isn't just a problem for celebrities. It's happening in ordinary workplaces everywhere. It affects us too. Our #metoo campaign <https://www.unison.org.uk/our-campaigns/ustoo/> calls on the government to take immediate action on sexual harassment in the workplace.

Flexible working

Flexible working gives women workers the ability to fit their work life around home life, particularly crucial as women continue to take the lion share of caring responsibilities for both children and elderly relatives.

However too many employers view flexible working as only benefiting the employee. Some employers even believe that a desire to work flexibly implies a lack of commitment.



Apart from enhancing work-life balance for employees, with the added health benefits, and reducing the need to travel, flexible working can significantly improve productivity, enabling organisations to reduce costs, for example with home working, whilst improving efficiency and boosting motivation and morale.

Despite numerous attempts to ensure that employers have a consistent approach to dealing with flexible working requests, there are still widespread differences. It is important for all women to be aware of their rights both in requesting flexible working and achieving a satisfactory outcome.

Reasonable adjustments

The TUC's comprehensive research on disability and employment published in May 2015 showed that whilst the employment rate

for all disabled people is much lower than non-disabled, people with mental ill-health fare the worst.

Employers need to fully comply with their duty to provide reasonable adjustments for all disabled workers, particularly disabled women workers with mental ill-health.

Health and safety

A substantial number of our women members work in jobs which contain all the factors of hazardous working, including risks from chemicals, manual handling, fatigue, infection risks, violence and stress. Because of the type of work that women traditionally do, women are more likely to suffer work-related stress, musculoskeletal disorders and health problems such as dermatitis.

But in the workplace, employer liability and risk assessment duties are being substantially weakened, whilst enforcement of health and safety law is increasingly left up to significantly diminished and less effective HSE and Local Authority Officers.



Workplace dress codes

Many women workers do not wish to dress in accordance with gendered stereotypes of what is 'appropriate women's dress'. Yet some employers continue to have dress codes with a number of gender-specific requirements that have no place in a modern, progressive society. Such dress codes are often difficult or impossible to follow for some

women, many non-binary workers and trans women who are at the beginning of, or are considering social gender transition.

Employers should only have dress codes that serve a legitimate purpose, such as maintaining a desired image with customers and clients, or aiding staff visibility, and this can be attained without gender-specific dress requirements. Staff should be able to choose from what has been historically defined as the 'male' or 'female' items without the need to explain why.

Campaign ideas

- Monitor and review pay structures and raise awareness of information and training available to branches to enable equal pay audits to be carried out.
- Raise awareness of the double disadvantage that the gender pay gap and austerity measures have on women.
- Work alongside Black members self-organised groups to raise awareness of the disproportionate impact of low paid work on Black women.
- Use equality impact assessments to help ensure that women are not disproportionately affected by cuts and workplace policy changes.
- Lobby and campaign for free, publicly funded and publicly provided, high quality universal childcare.
- Raise awareness of the loopholes that allow employers to exploit workers on zero hours contracts.
- Lobby the government for further legislative change to close the loopholes and create a level playing field so that all workers benefit from all employment rights.
- Campaign for an end to the age discriminatory bandings in the National Minimum Wage, and for the payment of a real Living Wage.
- Promote UNISON's Ethical Care Charter for the homecare sector.
- Raise awareness and help women recognise the signs of bullying and harassment, particularly sexual harassment, and to know what actions they can take including challenging inappropriate behaviour.
- Encourage employers to use and follow bullying and harassment or dignity at work workplace policies and publicise where sexual harassment or other forms of bullying or harassment have been successfully challenged in workplaces.
- Ask for a dedicated steward or branch officer at your branch, responsible for supporting women to address their specific problems including sexism in the workplace, and ensure that training is available for that role.
- Raise awareness of the right to request flexible working and the procedure for flexible working requests in the workplace.
- Review flexible working policies and implementation, and negotiate with employers for increased opportunities for flexible working, particularly taking into account any disproportionate impact on women workers of the implementation of shift patterns.
- Promote policies within the workplace to support the healthy work-life balance for women members and share with other workplace representatives in your branch or region areas of good practice.
- Work with employers to set up scrutiny panels to measure the effectiveness of policies which protect and support the right of women to work and develop within the workplace.
- Raise awareness of the Access to Work help available for women with mental health impairments, and actively support disabled women in the workplace in accessing training, career progression and reasonable adjustments.

- Campaign and lobby for the strengthening of health and safety protections in the workplace, and demand that gender factoring is taken into account in workplace risk assessments.
- Highlight the relevance to women of health and safety legislation and encourage more women members to become health and safety reps.
- Highlight the need for a gender-neutral dress and uniform policy in the workplace, examine existing employer dress codes and raise issues of discriminatory attitudes and practices within branches of collective bargaining structures.

And don't forget, when you are planning your campaign, to talk to co-workers about the issues and recruit non-members into UNISON.

More information



- **Resources for women members**

www.unison.org.uk/women

- **Gender Pay Gap**

<https://www.unison.org.uk/our-campaigns/bridgethegap/>

- **Equal Pay**

www.unison.org.uk/get-help/knowledge/pay/equal-pay

- **Minimum wage and national living wage**

www.unison.org.uk/get-help/knowledge/pay/minimum-wage

- **Save care now campaign**

(including the Ethical Care Charter)
www.savecarenow.org.uk

- **Sex discrimination**

www.unison.org.uk/get-help/knowledge/discrimination/gender-discrimination

- **Sexual harassment**

<https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2016/12/24159.pdf>

- **Bullying and harassment**

www.unison.org.uk/get-help/knowledge/discrimination/bullying-and-harassment

- **Flexible working**

www.unison.org.uk/get-help/knowledge/working-patterns

- **Vulnerable workers**

www.unison.org.uk/get-help/knowledge/vulnerable-workers

- **There for you**

Offering a unique confidential advice and support service just for members of UNISON and their dependants.
www.unison.org.uk/there-for-you

- **Health and safety**

www.unison.org.uk/get-help/knowledge/health-and-safety



The TUC brings unions together to draw up common policies on issues that matter to people at work. They represent more than 5.6 million workers in 50 unions.

The Trade Union Congress
Congress House
Great Russell Street
London WC1B 3LS
Tel: 020 7636 4030

www.tuc.org.uk

- **Gender equality**

www.tuc.org.uk/equality-issues/gender-equality

- **Sexual harassment**

www.tuc.org.uk/equality-issues/sexual-harassment

- **Bullying**

www.tuc.org.uk/workplace-issues/health-and-safety/bullying



The UK's leading work-life balance organisation. The charity helps working parents and carers and their employers find a better balance between responsibilities at home and work.

www.workingfamilies.org.uk

Working Families
Cambridge House
1 Addington Square
London SE5 0HF
Tel: 020 7253 7243

Legal advice for parents & carers: 0300 012 0312 or advice@workingfamilies.org.uk

Working Families (Scotland) / Family Friendly
Working Scotland
Robertson House
152 Bath Street
Glasgow G2 4TB
0141 353 5627



The UK's leading charity committed to ending inequality and improving the health and well-being of pregnant women, partners and young children.

Maternity Action

52-54 Featherstone Street

London EC1Y 8RT

Tel: 020 7253 2288

Email: info@maternityaction.org.uk

www.maternityaction.org.uk



The Health and Safety Executive

The national independent watchdog for work-related health, safety and illness. It provides information and advice and also produces leaflets and detailed guidance on health and safety law.

www.hse.gov.uk

Women, welfare and pensions

Welfare reforms

The Tory government's welfare reforms, benefit cap, introduction of universal credit and changes to tax credits are having a damaging effect on women, their families and their lives.



Women rely more on tax credit and benefits than men, in particular due to their caring responsibilities, relative economic inequalities and poverty. Working tax credits and child tax credits are designed to help low-paid workers and low-income families, and millions of women are dependent on these tax credits.

Already the changes made to working tax credit, requiring couples to work at least 24

hours between them (with 1 of the couple working at least 16 hours), has meant that hundreds of thousands of women and children have lost out. To expect workers to find additional working hours in a time of cuts and job losses was unrealistic, yet these families have been targeted for a significant cut in their household income.

And meanwhile, thousands of women in work continue to suffer poverty, low pay and lack of job security.

The universal credit scheme will have a disproportionate impact on low-income families, as money often runs out before the weekend and a single monthly payment makes managing a family budget harder.

The introduction of payments to only one person in a household, can threaten women's financial security if their partner insists on being the person receiving payment and refuses to meet household bills, reinforcing the 'male breadwinner' model. The evidence is that when money is short, women often go without: women tend to be the 'shock absorbers' of poverty.

Universal Credit will also add to the complexity around access to passported benefits, including energy efficiency schemes. These initiatives include warm home discount to help with electricity bills over the winter period and the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), a government scheme to improve energy efficiency in the home including the provision of replacement boilers, saving money on heating bills.

Pensions

In 1995 the Conservative government made provision to increase the pension age of women from 60 to 65 so that it would be in line with men's retirement age. The Pension Act of 2011 implemented a much faster timetable than originally envisaged to bring in the changes.

Many women were unable to make alternative plans for their retirement and as a result of the lack of notice, retirement plans have been shattered with devastating consequences. The changes affect over 2.5 million women. Women are historically significantly lower paid and more likely to have to rely on their state pension alone.

The impact of the changes is compounded by an expectation that women are the prime carer and as a consequence, are more likely to have to work part-time. This inevitably impacts on pensions.

Women up and down the country have felt so aggrieved by the changes that they have come together to set up several campaign groups calling on the government to re-think the timetable in order to make it a much fairer transition for women affected by the changes.

UNISON has a proud record of campaigning with WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequality) for fair transitional relief for 1950s

women who are facing hardship and poverty because of the Government's acceleration in increasing their state pension age without adequate notice.

We are aware that our members support a number of different campaigns fighting for pension justice for women. UNISON works with all the WASPI groups including the Backto60 campaign, where appropriate, and where there is an alignment with UNISON policy.

Additionally, UNISON continues to campaign, lobby and negotiate for decent occupational and state pensions for all our members. UNISON is particularly concerned about many of our women members who have been left bereft of either a full occupational or state pension.

UNISON has developed its own work programme and training courses on women and pensions to build union capacity on pension issues.

Housing benefit and young women

The removal of housing benefit for young people between the ages of 18 and 21 puts more vulnerable women at further risk.

Young women may be escaping abuse at home, be thrown out of their family home, be



care leavers or migrants. Many families are now unable to maintain a spare room for use in crisis since the implementation of the infamous 'bedroom tax'. Whilst homelessness is dangerous for all people, it impacts disproportionately on young women as they could be more likely to be at risk of sexual exploitation and abuse, fleeing one



abusive relationship into another, by being forced in shared accommodation.

The limited availability of social and council owned housing is an added concern. As a result women are forced to look for housing in the private sector, where there are less securities and higher rents.

Campaign ideas

- Raise awareness of the implication of the introduction of universal credit, changes to working tax credit and child tax credit, as well as wider welfare reform and cuts such as the shared accommodation rate, the bedroom tax and the removal of housing benefit for young women.
- Campaign against the changes and monitor their impact on UNISON members.
- Work with individual members, regional women's committees and networks to lobby government ministers about the effect the welfare reforms are having on women and their families.
- Make links and work with your local WASPI campaign to urge the government to look at improved transitional arrangements for women born on or after 6 April 1951, including writing to your MPs and the Department for Work and Pensions.
- Continue to defend and protect members' rights to fair pay and pensions, including recognition of the impact of low pay and caring responsibilities on many women's ability to achieve a decent pension.
- Work with UNISON's Labour Link and Young Members to condemn the removal of housing benefit for young women and to lobby against this policy.
- Liaise with local community organisations and public sector alliances to support those most in need, and campaign jointly to raise public awareness of the impact that this government's welfare reforms are having on the most vulnerable in our society.
- Continue the campaign for decent pay for our members, including a real Living Wage.
- Work with Labour Link to campaign for a fair and just tax system that tackles inequality and supports the most vulnerable.
- Help ensure that members are aware of the assistance available to them in crisis via branch welfare officers or UNISON Welfare 'There for You'.

And don't forget, when you are planning your campaign, to talk to co-workers about the issues and recruit non-members into UNISON.

More information



- **Resources for women members**

www.unison.org.uk/women

including 'Women and Pensions' and 'Fighting for a fair transition to the new state pension age (WASPI)'

- **There for you**

There for You offers a unique confidential advice and support service just for members of UNISON and their dependants.

www.unison.org.uk/get-help/services-support/there-for-you



The WBG brings together feminist economists, researchers, policy experts and activists to work towards our vision of a gender equal society in which women's financial independence gives them greater autonomy at work, home, and in civil society.

Email: admin@wbg.org.uk

www.wbg.org.uk



The UK's leading charity campaigning for gender equality and women's rights. They want to see a society in which individuals can fulfil their potential regardless of their sex.

The Fawcett Society
Unit 222, Southbank House
Black Prince Road
London SE1 7SJ

Tel: 0203 598 6154

Email: info@fawcettsociety.org.uk

www.fawcettsociety.org.uk

Gingerbread

Single parents, equal families

Providing expert advice, practical support and campaign for single parents.

Gingerbread

520 Highgate Studios

53-79 Highgate Road

London NW5 1TL

Single parents' helpline: 0808 802 0925

Email: info@gingerbread.org.uk

www.gingerbread.org.uk



**One Parent
Families Scotland**

Providing help to all single parent families in Scotland; mums, dads, young parents and kinship carers.

One Parent Families Scotland

13 Gayfield Square

Edinburgh

EH1 3NX

Helpline: 0808 801 0323

Helpline Email: helpline@opfs.org.uk

Tel: 0131 556 3899

Email: info@opfs.org.uk

www.opfs.org.uk



The leading national charity working to end poverty among children, young people and families in the UK.
www.cpag.org.uk

Child Poverty Action Group
30 Micawber Street
London N1 7TB
Tel: 020 7837 7979
Email: info@cpag.org.uk

CPAG in Scotland
Unit 9, Ladywell
94 Duke Street
Glasgow G4 0UW
Tel: 0141 552 3303
Email: staff@cpagscotland.org.uk



A women's charity working in a number of ways to help women through the law. They aim to provide women with the legal advice and information they need to understand and use the law and their legal rights. They also work to improve the law for women and increase women's access to justice.

Rights of Women
52-54 Featherstone Street
London EC1Y 8RT
Tel: 020 7251 6575
Email: info@row.org.uk
www.rightsofwomen.org.uk



A campaign group that fights the injustice done to all women born in the 1950s affected by the changes to the State Pension Law (1995/2011 Acts).
www.waspi.co.uk



Helping millions of people every year struggling with bad housing or homelessness through advice, support and legal services. They campaign to make sure that one day, no one will have to turn to them for help.
www.shelter.org.uk



The national charity for homeless people helping people directly out of homelessness and campaign for the changes needed to solve it altogether.
www.crisis.org.uk



Campaigning for professionally managed, secure, decent and affordable private rented homes in sustainable communities.
www.generationrent.org

Raising the profile of women in society

Women's rights have never been easily won. Most, if not all have been as a consequence of years of struggle.

In spite of the continued existence of discrimination against women and the barriers to women's participation at all levels of society, women are continuing to make progress in taking up leadership roles. This is important in not only challenging the predominance of male power in our society, but also in providing positive role models for young women.

The state of girls' rights

2016 research conducted by Plan UK into the state of girls' rights in the UK identified that despite being the fifth richest country in the world, the UK is failing to meet the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals and

therefore failing girls in this country.

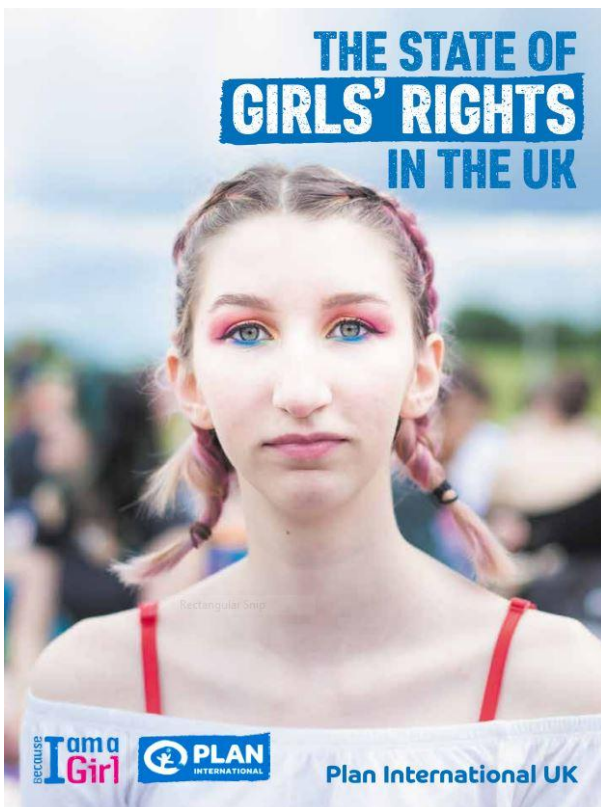
For example the research found that one in five women in the UK reported some experience of sexual touching, groping, flashing, sexual assault or rape whilst they were in or around school, with reports of sexual offences in the UK having more than doubled in recent years to an average of ten per school day.

The research also discovered that a girl's location is critical to whether she might enjoy her rights based on life expectancy, child poverty, reproductive health and educational outcomes.

CEDAW

In July 2013, the UK government was called to give evidence to a UN committee with regard to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The CEDAW report highlighted a number of key areas of concern for the UK:

- Austerity and women
- Legal aid and employment tribunal fees
- Abolition of the National Women's Commission
- The UK national strategy for implementation of the Convention
- Women only shortlists
- Violence against women
- Female genital mutilation
- Human trafficking
- Women into public life
- Employment and economic empowerment
- Health care
- Women in prisons
- Disadvantaged groups of women
- Welfare reform



UNISON and the TUC participated in the process of submitting a 'shadow report' along with partner NGOs and co-ordinated by the Women's Resource Centre, to which UNISON is affiliated. This shadow report drew attention to the government's failings as identified in the CEDAW report, and work now continues to put pressure on the government to take the necessary action to meet the recommendations.

A subsequent shadow report from the Women's Resource Centre in June 2016, particularly focused on Legal Aid reforms and women's access to justice.

Women in prison

The last Labour government commissioned the Corston Report which recommended small, multifunctional non-custodial centres for women to be widely dispersed across the country.

However governments since have failed to implement many of the recommendations of the report. A significant proportion of women convicted of non-violent crimes and who pose no risk to society are still being incarcerated.

For the vast majority of women in the criminal justice system, solutions in the community would be much more appropriate. Imprisonment should be used only in cases where women pose a threat to public safety.

“

It is timely to bring about a radical change in the way we treat women throughout the entire justice system and this must include not just those who offend but those at the risk of offending.

– THE CORSTON REPORT 2007



Women in custody are more likely to have a mental health problem compared with women in the general population. Half have attempted suicide at some point in their lives.

Many of these women were themselves victims: of abuse, manipulation and violence. Some women have been forced to use crime as a means to escape their exploiters or as a cry for help. But a different approach - such as through the work of women's centres - requires secure funding.

Statistics from the Women in Prison campaign group reveal that for 85% of mothers in prison, prison was the first time they had been separated from their children for any significant length of period. Imprisoning mothers for non-violent offences has a damaging impact on children and carries a cost to the state of more than £17 million over a ten year period.

Women in the media

The growing sexualisation of women and girls in the media promotes attitudes which underpin and legitimise gender inequality and violence against women by portraying women as objects and not real people.

Online porn is disturbingly cruel and violent, teaching that a woman's sole purpose is to be used, abused and perpetrated upon for a man's pleasure.

Internet porn in the UK receives more traffic than social networks, shopping, news and media, email, finance, gaming and travel.

Increasingly our society is becoming desensitised to this bombardment from the sex industry and

normalising of pornographic images. The pornography industry has pushed its way into our lives, distorting our concept of sex and sexuality.



Studies show that after viewing pornography, men are more likely to report:

- decreased empathy for rape victims
- a belief that a woman who dresses provocatively deserves to be raped
- anger at women who flirt but then refuse to have sex
- decreased sexual interest in their girlfriends or wives
- increased interest in coercing partners into unwanted sex acts.

And women often feel like they don't measure up to the writhing, oiled, voluptuous female bodies in this pornified culture. Some women report that this self-objectification goes so deep that during sex they are less concerned with what they feel than with how their bodies look.

Sex and relationship education (SRE)

Sex and relationship education is compulsory for children over the age of 11 but provision is patchy. Where it is provided, it does not include awareness of the violent mainstream pornography that has become normalised in society and is facilitating the sexual harassment of girls in schools by boys.

Evidence gathered by the parliamentary women and equalities committee for their

2016 report on sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools, as they state "paints a concerning picture: the sexual harassment and abuse of girls being accepted as part of daily life; children of primary school age learning about sex and relationships through exposure to hard-core pornography; teachers accepting sexual harassment as being "just banter"; and parents struggling to know how they can best support their children."

Evidence from the End Violence Against Women Coalition shows that over a recent three year period, 5,500 sexual offences were reported to the police as having taken place in schools, including 600 rapes. Alarming numbers of young women report that they experience unwanted sexual activity, see sexual images and hear sexual name calling. There is very little information about consent and virtually none about LGBT relationships or gender identity issues.

All children should receive high quality, age appropriate SRE that fosters gender equality and that is LGBT inclusive. This should be compulsory in all primary and secondary schools.

Hate crime

Nottinghamshire Police became the first force in the country to recognise and record misogyny as a hate crime. It applies to a range of incidents reported to the police, from street harassment through to physical intrusions on women's space. It is defined as "incidents against women that are motivated by an attitude of a man towards a woman and includes behaviour targeted towards a woman by men simply because they are a woman." It does not change the offence but the misogyny category acts as a flag or 'qualifier' on the incident log. For example an incident of anti-social behaviour would become anti-social behaviour with a 'misogyny hate crime qualifier.'

However all forms of hate crime are still likely



to go unreported and unrecorded and there have historically been low levels of prosecution. This is made worse by cuts to hate crime advice and support services.

The five recognised strands of hate crime (homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, race and faith assaults) are not equally protected in law in either England and Wales or Scotland. Disparities in law and sentencing policy suggest a 'hierarchy of hate crime' that undermines confidence.

Safe travel

The Rail Safety Standards Board, commenting on the long-running dispute at Southern Railway, highlighted that the changes to guards' duties that management wants to impose are more about profit than enhanced passenger safety. Such measures – not only on Southern Railway but throughout the rail industry – will increase the risk to passengers, particularly the most vulnerable women as well as denying

essential support for disabled travellers in order to make transport accessible. Public transport is really important to everyone as is safe and accessible travel. But when railway and tube stations are left unstaffed, disabled women and deaf women are placed in a more vulnerable situation as attacks on women and disability hate crime are increasing.



Meanwhile bus services are being cut and disappearing at an alarming rate and receive far lower subsidies than rail services. Statistically, buses are used more by women than men and bus service cuts lead to increased social isolation particularly amongst the poorer and older women.

Campaign ideas

- Contact the Minister for Women and seek commitments to further women's equality as well as upholding and protecting the gains that have been made.
- Encourage women to become involved in public life such as working with Labour Link, or taking up public duties such as becoming school governors or local councillors.
- Encourage discussion of the issues about occupational segregation and gender stereotyping in the workplace.
- Promote the recommendations of the CEDAW report and campaign for the implementation of the observations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

- Urge the government to fulfil the recommendations of the Corston Report and support the work of Women in Prison to raise awareness of the need for more community focused, non-custodial sentences for women affected by the criminal justice system.
- Raise awareness of UNISON's views that full decriminalisation of the sex industry and its profiteers is an infringement on women's rights and support the 'End Demand' campaign to implement a Sex Buyer law.
- Actively promote UNISON's policy and opposition to pornography and work with other campaigning groups to raise awareness of the harms of living in a pornified culture.
- Lobby MPs and parliamentary groups for improved media regulation, protections from the harms of pornography and to implement the 38 recommendations from the women and equalities committee inquiry into sexual harassment and sexual violence in UK schools.
- Lobby for compulsory age appropriate sex education at all levels of school to include information about consent, respect, violence against women and the harms of pornography.
- Write to newsagents or other shops to request that they classify lads' mags as soft porn rather than as lifestyle magazines, and request that they do not display them close to children's literature.
- Lobby employers to ensure that publications available within public buildings, such as libraries and hospitals do not include material portraying a sexualised depiction of women.
- Raise awareness of the seriousness of hate incidences, the need for adequate funding of hate crime services and encourage women to report them, either directly to the police or via third party reporting such as the True Vision website.

- Publicise and support National Hate Crime Awareness Week #NHCAW in October.
- Call for other police services to start treating misogyny as a hate crime.
- Lobby and campaign against cuts in railway staffing and for the prioritisation of passenger safety as well as accessible transport for disabled travellers.
- Campaign for decent bus services regardless of postcode and more government funding to keep these vital links for women and their families.

And don't forget, when you are planning your campaign, to talk to co-workers about the issues and recruit non-members into UNISON.

More information



- **Resources for women members**
www.unison.org.uk/women



The UK's leading charity campaigning for gender equality and women's rights. They want to see a society in which individuals can fulfil their potential regardless of their sex.

The Fawcett Society
Unit 222, Southbank House
Black Prince Road
London SE1 7SJ
Tel: 0203 598 6154
Email: info@fawcettsociety.org.uk
www.fawcettsociety.org.uk



The leading national umbrella body for women's charities, with over 500 members.

Women's Resource Centre
United House, North Road
London N7 9DP
Tel: 020 7697 3450
Email: admin@wrc.org.uk
www.wrc.org.uk

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/cedaw/pages/cedawindex.aspx



A children's charity that strives to advance children's rights and equality for girls all over the world.

Plan International UK
Finsgate, 5-7 Cranwood Street
London EC1V 9LH
Tel: 0300 777 9777
<https://plan-uk.org/>



A leading coalition of specialist women's support services, researchers, activists, survivors and NGOs working to end

violence against women and girls in all its forms.

End Violence Against Women Coalition
134 Southbank House
Black Prince Road
London SE1 7SJ
Tel: 020 3735 8219
Email: admin@evaw.org.uk
www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk

CULTURE REFRAMED

U.S. health promotion effort to recognise and address pornography as the public health crisis of the digital age. Culture Reframed responds to the pornography crisis by providing education and support to promote healthy child and youth development, relationships, and sexuality.
www.culturereframed.org



Supporting women to avoid and exit the criminal justice system and campaign for the radical changes needed to deliver support services and justice for women.

Women in Prison
Elmfield House, 5 Stockwell Mews
London SW9 9GX
Tel: 020 7359 6674
Email: info@womeninprison.org.uk
www.womeninprison.org.uk



A national charity working for less crime, safer communities and fewer people in prison.

The Howard League for Penal Reform

1 Ardleigh Road
London N1 4HS
Tel: 020 7249 7373
Email: info@howardleague.org
www.howardleague.org

UK FEMINISTA

They believe everyone has a crucial role to play in bringing about equality between women and men. They are dedicated to supporting people to take action and create lasting change.
<http://ukfeminista.org.uk/>



Existing to catalogue instances of sexism experienced by women on a day-to-day basis.
<http://everydaysexism.com/>



Campaigning to protect children from sexualisation and commercialisation.
Email: info@childeyes.org
www.childseyeline.org



A women's charity working in a number of ways to help women through the law. They aim to provide women with the legal advice and information they need to understand and use the law and their legal rights. They also work to improve the law for women and increase women's access to justice.

Rights of Women
52-54 Featherstone Street
London EC1Y 8RT
Tel: 020 7251 6575
Email: info@row.org.uk
www.rightsofwomen.org.uk



True Vision is a police funded web site designed to provide the public with information about hate crime or incidents and how to report it.
www.report-it.org.uk



Fighting for better public transport, walking and cycling, for the sake of communities and the environment.

Better transport
16 Waterside
44-48 Wharf Road
London N1 7UX
Tel: 020 7566 6480
Email: info@bettertransport.org.uk
www.bettertransport.org.uk

Women's role in the union

Women are the foundation on which UNISON is built. There are many inspiring women in our union structures, many of whom hold senior roles.



We need to nurture new women members to come forward as activists, as stewards and as leaders that truly reflect the makeup of our membership. Recruiting new members, improving density and increasing the women's activist base have never been more important. We must find different ways to approach members and potential members, to get the message out to show them that they are not isolated and that we are still stronger together.

Trade unions play a vital role in improving the employment conditions of women and advancing workplace gender equality. Women in all countries are the largest group of marginalised citizens and workers. We also know that the workplace offers a unique opportunity to improve women's lives and opportunities. Belonging to a trade union increases women's ability to challenge their inequality of opportunity. Ending discrimination at work is an essential step in making that a reality.

Learning opportunities

UNISON has a comprehensive education system nationally and regionally that covers courses from improving English and maths to leadership and mentoring, and there is an educational grant scheme to help towards fees or course costs.

Often women members need to be particularly encouraged to take on positions of leadership within UNISON, and to attend leadership and other courses, including lobbying skills, use of local media, public speaking and assertiveness skills, as well as IT and social networking skills which can be useful for campaigning activities.



Mentoring and buddying

Buddying and mentoring by experienced women activists are valuable ways of nurturing new activists without 'throwing them in at the deep end' of trade union activity. It

helps to allay fears about what is expected and helps women gain an understanding of various trade union roles before taking them on.

By mentoring, women can be guided through trade union processes which can at first appear daunting. It is also an opportunity for those with experience at local, regional and national levels to pass on their experience and knowledge to new activists and act (in a voluntary capacity) as an aide towards the organising approach promoted by UNISON.

Become a health and safety rep

UNISON has launched a new campaign, Be on the safe side, to recruit more safety reps in workplaces across the UK – as the need for them becomes greater than ever.

The union has campaigned tirelessly on health and safety issues to protect its members at work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It has also supported its safety reps in carrying out their difficult role, whether ensuring that members have access to correct PPE, conducting workplace risk assessments or addressing the particular risks to Black and vulnerable workers.

The words Health and Safety may conjure up visions of clipboards, regulations and paperwork, but it's really not like that.

Being a Safety rep means you will be playing a crucial role in making sure your workplace is safe, secure and clean for all your colleagues and service users.

You'll also gain new skills and meet others who are passionate about workplace safety.

Find out how to become a safety rep at <https://www.unison.org.uk/unison-health-and-safety/become-safety-rep/>

Equality reps

TUC research published in 2010 found that less than half of equality reps surveyed were women (46%) but that this was unsurprising due to the lack of equality facility time. The research also reported that equality reps greatly enhance employers' equality work and have a positive impact in the workplace.

The activities that equality reps undertook included:

- providing advice and information on equality matters
- encouraging and supporting workplace diversity and fairness
- workplace mapping and tackling discriminatory patterns
- assisting with flexible working
- supporting and advising members on sexual harassment issues
- encouraging discussion of sex equality issues on the collective bargaining agenda.

Proportionality

UNISON has a proud record on working towards equality both in its internal structures and in its bargaining and campaigning agenda. One of the key strategies for UNISON to achieve equality of representation and engagement within UNISON has been proportionality.

Proportionality is defined as “the representation of women and men in fair proportion to the relevant number of female and male members comprising the electorate”. With women's membership running at more than three-quarters of UNISON, women are still proportionally under-represented in our conference delegations, branch committees, and regional committees.



Of those women attending, Black, young and low-paid women are still under-represented, and many branches send no delegates or visitors at all to women's conference.

But much work is still to be done on achieving and maintaining proportionality, particularly to ensure the active involvement of low paid women as well as ensuring that members who identify outside the gender binary (who do not identify as male or female) are not excluded.

Young women

It is essential that we devise ways to attract more young women into our movement, and ensure that our agenda is one in which their aspirations are met, and that our organisation is one in which they can reach their full potential as UNISON members.

Young people engaging with other young

people has proven to be very effective. For example in the Northern region a general fighting fund post held by a young woman, focussed on working with young people, and recruited hundreds of new members. In addition to this, there is a very active young members' group that has run a number of successful campaigns.

Numbers of young women attending women's conference also continue to be low and this needs to be addressed by branches, alongside improving young members' participation in the women's self-organised groups at all levels of the union.

Low paid and part-time women

Women are often amongst the lowest paid and in the past twenty years the proportion of young women in low-paid roles has trebled. Many of the roles low-paid women workers undertake include working unsociable hours, which may prevent them from attending meetings.

Ensuring members know of the benefits of being in UNISON is the key to increasing participation. Often there are barriers to participation such as finance, childcare, respite care, education and resources, and these need to be properly identified and addressed.

Black women

A high percentage of Black women members can be seen working in health, social care and local government, many as low paid members. However we see very few Black women represented at branch, regional and national level, despite statistics telling us that Black people are amongst those most likely to join a union.

At a time when division is often being promoted in our communities, it is crucial that UNISON continues to lead the way in showing that diversity in our society adds value to us all.

Freedom of Information requests carried out regionally in local authorities in recent years revealed that Black women are more likely to be selected for redundancy than their white counterparts, even though they are poorly reflected in number within the workforce.

Even though all Black women members are automatically part of their branch's women's self-organised groups, the progression for Black women to regional women's SOGs is sometimes difficult because

Branches should encourage and enable Black women members to attend the regional women's group to help ensure that the union's structure is fully inclusive and truly reflects the diversity of women's self-organisation.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) women

Inclusive language is important in ensuring that all LGBT women within the women's movement and UNISON women's self organisation feel welcome and valued. Language, and our understanding of language is constantly evolving and we should always be mindful of this. It can often be easy to continue to use words and phrases without fully



of the different ways regional women's SOGs are organised.

considering the effect that these may have on already marginalised groups of women within women's self-organisation.



For example, some people use the word 'straight' as if it is an opposite to 'LGBT', which amongst other issues, ignores the fact that many trans women are straight. Sometimes our language silences the voices of people who identify as non-binary – that is, people who do not identify as either male or female, or who identify as both male and female.

Quite often bisexual women face biphobia not only from heterosexuals, but from the LGBT community as well. They face allegations of sitting on the fence and of not making their minds up, or of being promiscuous. It is important that the experiences of bisexual women are considered in workplace negotiations and equality proofing, and that UNISON is active in educating members and removing myths and stereotypes surrounding bisexuality.

Campaign ideas

- Celebrate and promote the achievements of inspiring women within the union.
- Seek out and promote positive role models for Black women, disabled women, LGBT women, young women and low-paid women, especially those who contribute to delivery of public services, who have made a positive difference in their workplace, union or community and who contribute to political life.
- Where branches have good practice in recruiting and organising women, seek to share these with other branches, and campaign to ensure that appropriate

funding is available to support women's self-organisation.

- Identify areas where predominantly women work (such as home care, school meals, teaching assistants etc) and focus on campaigning over issues such as low pay, poor conditions, zero hours contracts, term-time only work etc that particularly affect women workers.
- Reach women through community-based activities such as getting existing women members to staff stalls at community events.
- Encourage wider use of social media, the UNISON conference app and Organising Space by women, and ensure members keep their membership and contact data up-to-date.
- Encourage women to participate in self-organised groups, young members organisation and to attend national women's conference, and ensure that your branch structure is easy to access, including using social media and publicity relevant to young women, Black women and LGBT women, and reviewing language used to ensure it is inclusive.
- Research the barriers that stop low-paid women from participating and campaign for branches to provide expenses in advance where possible.
- Encourage branches to support cross-sector geographical women's meetings.
- Raise the issue with regions and branches about the need to actively work towards proportionality including use of the new proportionality toolkit, **'Getting the balance right: A toolkit for achieving proportionality in UNISON'** (www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2017/02/24224.pdf or order from the www.unison.org.uk/onlinecatalogue, stock number 3714) and work with the other self-organised groups and young members' forum to identify and address any barriers to attendance.
- Collaborate with student unions, nursing and technical colleges etc. to raise

awareness of the benefits of union membership and to recruit eligible students into membership at the end of their period of study (such as running recruitment and information stands at student events).

- Encourage the use of workplace learning to recognise and improve women's abilities and opportunities, highlighting the benefits that UNISON training can offer our female members.
- Promote and participate in the mentoring and buddying schemes across UNISON.
- Encourage branches to promote and support women's training including Women into Leadership training and buddying and mentoring training courses.
- Make sure that bisexuality is included within the diversity implications section of every document and policy, promote UNISON's factsheets on LGBT workers and the annual UNISON network meeting for bisexual members, held each July and Bisexual Visibility Day held each September 23.
- Campaign for the right of our women activists for facility time to perform their trade union duties.

And don't forget, when you are planning your campaign, to talk to co-workers about the issues and recruit non-members into UNISON.

More information



- **Resources for women members**

www.unison.org.uk/women

- **Resources for Black members**

www.unison.org.uk/Blackmembers

- **Resources for disabled members**

www.unison.org.uk/disabledmembers

- **Resources for LGBT members**

www.unison.org.uk/out

- **Resources for young members**

www.unison.org.uk/youngmembers

- **Learning for you**

UNISON's learning and organising services (LAOS) co-ordinates trade union education and lifelong learning opportunities for members. This includes training and development for union reps as well as personal and career development courses ranging from Skills for Life through to professional qualifications.

www.unison.org.uk/get-involved/learning-development

- **Support for learning**

www.unison.org.uk/get-involved/learning-development/financial-support

- **Get active in your workplace**

With information on helping your branch, becoming a rep or steward, mentoring or buddying new activists, as well as resources for activists

www.unison.org.uk/get-involved/in-your-workplace/



Founded in 1903, the WEA (Workers' Educational Association) is a charity and the UK's largest voluntary sector provider of adult education, delivering 9,700 part-time courses for over 70,000 people each year in England and Scotland.

www.wea.org.uk



WEA Cymru provides community education, including community development and on-line learning in communities and workplace education.

www.weacymru.org.uk



Unionlearn is the learning and skills organisation of the TUC. It works to assist unions in the delivery of learning opportunities for their members as well as managing the Union Learning Fund (ULF).

www.unionlearn.org.uk

Women and politics

Women, especially working class women, remain massively underrepresented in the political and decision making process that influences our lives, including at a local level.

The Fawcett Society has argued that there has been little improvement in the level of women councillors in the last ten years, with the number dropping in Scotland and Wales.

Local authorities have a huge amount of power and provide many of the services women rely on. With more and more powers promised via devolution, women are missing out on influencing decisions.

There are many hurdles women face when standing for local election such as trying to combine work and caring responsibilities with running a campaign. Women councillors are often pigeon-holed into traditionally female portfolios such as children's or adult social care and are rarely in the cabinet when spending decisions are made if meetings are held at awkward times.



Council meetings should be run to allow engagement of all its councillors including people with caring responsibilities and/or jobs to attend.



Women's vote

Statistics show that many women do not use their vote and do not feel that casting their vote is important, often because they do not believe it will change anything.

However the turn out in the Scottish independence vote and EU referendum demonstrates that voter apathy can be overcome, and it is therefore essential that we continue to campaign to ensure that women vote to protect what's left of our public services in the next and future elections.

Local and general elections provide a real opportunity for women to show the government how they feel about the attack on their jobs, services and pensions by placing their vote and making a difference.

While many women may think they don't 'do' politics, they do care about issues that are political – education, crime, the environment, health care and safer neighbourhoods.

But as discontent at austerity and falling living standards grow, and in the aftermath of the EU referendum result, we are also witnessing increased hate crime and concerted attempts to create divisions among British society for example by scapegoating migrant workers and Muslims. The small minority of Muslim women who wear the niqab are particularly being targeted as part of a wider attempt to stoke up racism and Islamophobia.

With the upsurge of the BNP and other far-right groups such as the English Defence League in our communities, it is more important than ever that women exercise their right to vote. The BNP's attitudes to Black workers, migrant workers and asylum seekers are well known. Less well known is their attitude towards women. The BNP believes that hard-won rights for women discriminate against men.

Leaving the European Union

The impact of Britain leaving the European Union has the potential to be extremely



damaging for workers, and public service workers in particular.

The impact of the loss of employment protections as a result of Brexit will disproportionately affect women, particularly women in the public sector. Women are more likely to be in vulnerable employment; work part time and face outsourcing as a result of the government's privatisation agenda. Women facing multiple discrimination are even more adversely impacted. Research has shown that that Black and disabled women are far more likely to be unemployed, in low paid work or employed in work below their skill levels, whilst Black workers are significantly more likely to be subject to disciplinary proceedings than their white colleagues.

There is particular concern about the potential for weakening maternity and carer's rights, as many employers are reverting to the statutory minimum rather than enhanced occupational schemes in a bid to cut staffing costs, particularly when competing for contracts. Whilst the UK is relatively generous in its current provision, this is underpinned by European Law and it is put at risk by Brexit.

There are major implications for the many EU women working in social care who may be unable to continue to work in the sector, due

to the minimum salary requirement for remaining in the UK.

The government has introduced an EU settlement scheme that will allow EU citizens and their family to continue to live and work in UK. EU citizens who have been resident in the UK for more than 5 years will be eligible to apply for a settled status and those who have been a resident for less than 5 years will be eligible to apply for a pre-settled status until they have lived in the UK for 5 years and can then gain a settled status. This will help some people remain in the UK.

UNISON's advice to those that are eligible is that they do not rush into the application process as they have until 30 June 2021 to apply and that also to continue to seek guidance through the UNISON website and their local branch.

While the government has assured EU citizens that they are using this as an opportunity to make the application process as easy as possible, UNISON will be monitoring the process closely and working with affected branches to provide support and advice. It is important to know that there will be no change to the rights and status of EU citizens living in the UK until 2021.

UNISON will also be monitoring employers to make sure they are not discriminating against EU citizens due to negligence or misinformation. UNISON is still campaigning to ensure that the Settlement Scheme retains all existing EU citizens' rights.

Campaign ideas

- Promote and raise awareness of UNISON guidance about settled status. One for EU members - *UNISON guidance on the EU settlement scheme and settled status* and the other for branches - *Branch guidance for supporting European Union (EU) members September 2018*. Both guidance are available on the UNISON website.

- Working within Labour Link, regions and branches, encourage and support UNISON women to participate in the political processes, including in discussions around Brexit, and to stand for election at all levels of the political spectrum.
- Support a 50:50 cabinet structure within local and national government and promote the 50:50 Parliament campaign.
- Produce and distribute information on encouraging women to register to vote including postal voting, and how they can use their votes to influence change.
- Work with young members groups to turn out the young women's vote.
- Encourage members to become individual members of anti-fascist organisations such as Hope Not Hate.
- Work with other self-organised groups on joint campaigning work against the BNP and the far-right.
- Raise awareness of the implications of voting for the Conservatives and UKIP and the threat they both pose to women and to workers rights, public services and our society.
- Actively support Labour women candidates who are trade unionists and who support UNISON's values, and encourage members to get involved in local constituency Labour Party groups to assist with canvassing and campaigning work on behalf of candidates who support UNISON's aims.
- Develop greater links with MEPs and encourage members to engage in local opportunities (such as consultations) around Brexit.
- Provide opportunities for political education and engaging with international solidarity campaigns within women's self organisation groups.
- Support the Fawcett Society campaign #FaceHerFuture.

And don't forget, when you are planning your campaign, to talk to co-workers about the

issues and recruit new members into UNISON.

More information



- **Resources for women members**

www.unison.org.uk/women

- **Migrant workers**

www.unison.org.uk/get-help/knowledge/vulnerable-workers/migrant-workers/



The UK's leading charity campaigning for gender equality and women's rights. They want to see a society in which individuals can fulfil their potential regardless of their sex.

The Fawcett Society
Unit 222, Southbank House
Black Prince Road
London SE1 7SJ
Tel: 0203 598 6154
Email: info@fawcettsociety.org.uk
www.fawcettsociety.org.uk

- **Local and Equal**

www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/local-and-equal

- **Face Her Future**

www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/face-her-future



A cross-party campaign aiming to encourage, inspire and support political engagement. Their vision is a parliament where men & women legislate the laws of our land, together, in roughly equal numbers.
www.5050parliament.co.uk



The campaign for 50% representation in the Scottish Parliament, councils and on public boards.
www.women5050.org



Hope Not Hate uses research, education and public engagement to challenge mistrust and racism, and helps to build communities that are inclusive, celebrate shared identities and are resilient to hate.

HOPE not hate
PO Box 1084
Wembley HA9 1HT
Email: info@hopenothate.org.uk
www.hopenothate.org.uk



Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks (MAMA) is a secure and reliable service that allows people from across England to report any form of Anti-Muslim abuse. It is an independent, non-

governmental organisation which works on tackling anti-Muslim hatred.
<http://tellmamauk.org/>



An organisation fighting for better immigration policies because they believe that getting it right will keep this country fair, inclusive and tolerant.

Migrants' Rights Network
33 Corsham Street
London N1 6DR
Tel: 020 7336 9412
Email: info@migrantsrights.org.uk
www.migrantsrights.org.uk



An organisation for EU citizens living in the UK and British Europhiles, taking its name from the number of EU citizens living in the UK, that is both a support and a pressure group.
www.the3million.org.uk



Existing to secure the election of more Labour women to public office at every level and to support Labour women to play a full part in the Party.
Email: contact@lwn.org.uk
www.lwn.org.uk



The women's section of the Fabian Society with priorities to support, promote and connect women with Labour politicians and leading women in the public sphere.

Email: fabianwomen@fabians.org.uk
<https://fabianwomen.org.uk>

Women as parents and carers

Pregnancy, maternity and parental rights

In this time of austerity measures, maternity, adoption, surrogacy and parental provisions are often being targeted by employers seeking to make savings in their budgets.

Pregnancy discrimination already affects tens of thousands of women each year and the problem is ongoing as shown by the 2015 research published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. For example, it was found that one in nine mothers were dismissed or unfairly made compulsorily redundant, others experienced harassment relating to pregnancy or were discouraged from attending ante-natal appointments. One in 20 reported receiving a cut in pay or bonus after returning to their job.

Moreover, women returning from maternity leave find that flexible working requests are increasingly refused without proper consideration of the feasibility of part-time working or job-shares. In many cases little provision is made for a re-introduction to work which can make returning to work difficult and in some cases traumatic, especially for mothers dealing with health problems including postnatal depression.

But the introduction of employment tribunal fees has reduced access to justice to challenge maternity discrimination.

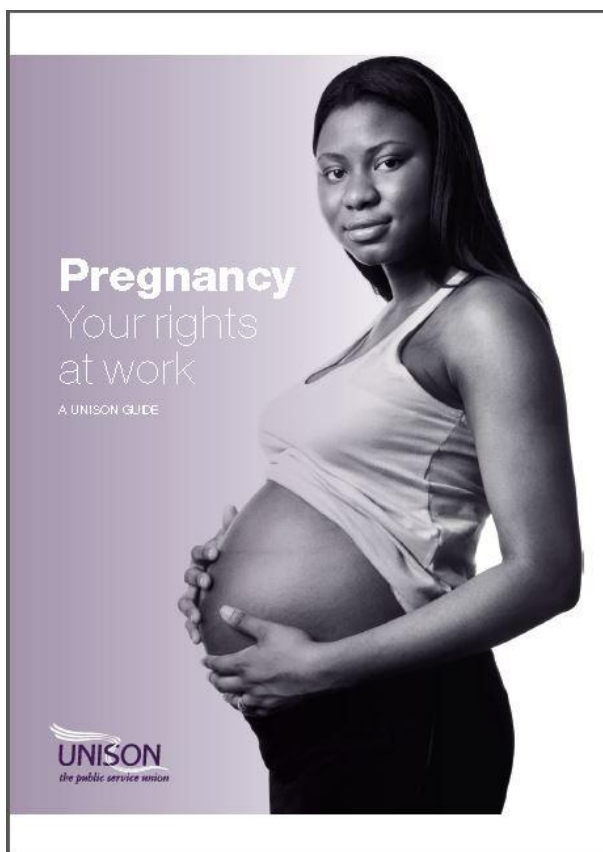
The wage penalty of motherhood

A 2016 report published by the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation showed how the gender pay gap is growing year on year after childbirth.



Many women are forced to leave better paid jobs due to the pressure of caring responsibilities and the lack of flexible working. Without more well paid part-time jobs and affordable childcare the gender pay gap will take years to close. By the age of 42, mothers who are in full time work are earning 11% less than full-time women workers without children.

It is among the lowest educated women that the pay gap has increased the most. The pay gap widens for 12 years after childbirth for mothers to the point that they are earning 33% less an hour than men.



Many women take a part-time position when they return from maternity leave, not always because they want to spend more time with their children but often because of the financial burden of costly childcare and the inflexible approach of employers.

Rights of intended parents through surrogacy

Women entering into surrogacy or adoption arrangements, or those undergoing assisted conception treatment, particularly LGBT women, also experience discrimination and unfavourable treatment in the workplace.

Despite surrogacy being legal in the United Kingdom, the intended parents have few legal rights unless they are male. An intended father can gain shared parental responsibility as soon as the child is born by registering the child in his name, naming him as the father on the birth certificate or by immediate application for a parental responsibility agreement.

An intended mother however has to wait six weeks before they can apply to the courts for a parental order to give them full and permanent parental rights over the child. This can be a very lengthy process. An intended parent who has applied or intends to apply for a parental order and expects to be granted it by the courts now has the right to adoption leave and pay, not least as a result of UNISON campaigning.

But intended mothers should have rights on a par with maternity rather than adoptive rights, which would also allow for time off for pre-natal appointments and the birth of the child.

Childcare

Meanwhile the lack of affordable childcare remains one of the key issues for women members, if they are to be effectively enabled to have access to full working lives.

In the UK approximately 5.5 million working mothers of dependent children pay for childcare. With increasing costs of



Download the product barcode scanner to identify Nestlé products

The Nestlé Boycott

Nestlé is the target of a boycott because it aggressively markets baby milk in ways that undermine breastfeeding and break international marketing rules.

Executives know babies fed on formula are more likely to become sick than breastfed babies. In poor conditions, they are more likely to die.

Executives put company profits before health - the boycott gives malpractice a financial cost and forces changes.

For further details and other concerns about Nestlé, such as its exploitation of water resources, see the site.

**Let Nestlé know you boycott its products
And spread the word**

www.babymilkaction.org/nestlefree

childcare, other household bills and stagnant or reducing salaries, women are finding it harder and harder to stay in work.

For parents of disabled children, the problems are exacerbated. Finding carers with suitable skills and experience is very difficult, creating further barriers to employment and greater hardship for the family.

The cost of childcare is closely linked to the economic viability of working women and those seeking employment. The reality for many women members is that their choices are limited, and for too many they feel they have no choice or options.

Increased government support for working parents is needed as well as better provision by employers.

Breastfeeding

UNISON supports a woman's right to decide whether she breastfeeds, and believes that the choice should be a genuine one, with support available for breastfeeding at work or outside the home.

Employers must be aware of their responsibility to ensure that women returning to work after maternity leave who are breastfeeding should be given adequate breaks to rest and express milk and have a proper workplace risk assessment, taking the fact they are breastfeeding into account.

The Department of Health recommends that babies are exclusively breastfed for six months. UNISON believes that women must be comfortable breastfeeding in public, and that suitable facilities should be available to enable this. The taboo on women breastfeeding in public is an example of the sexualisation of women's bodies: breasts can only be regarded as objects that arouse rather than in their natural function of feeding a baby.

A major campaign issue for advocates of breastfeeding is the tactics that baby food companies use to encourage women to use their products. Often it can be argued that this advertising goes against the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes. Promotion of infant formula in the general media or in shops is against UK law.

In addition, the use of controversial chemical, Bisphenol-A (commonly abbreviated to BPA) in baby bottles is still available in the UK, despite clear scientific evidence linking even low level exposure to increased risk of breast cancer and other chronic conditions.

Supporting women after stillbirth

Around one in 200 births in the UK are stillbirths. Stillbirth is one of the most devastating experiences any family can go through. Grieving for the loss of a baby is a very personal and difficult experience and it may be helpful to talk to a counsellor, especially when there is difficulty in coping.

In all too many cases when a baby is stillborn there is no obvious cause. These baby's deaths remain unexplained, which can be hard for grieving parents who want to know why their baby died.

Families going through such a difficult time would need a lot of help and support. Trying to make decisions after your baby has died may feel almost impossible, but it is important to ask for support so that you know what the options are. When grieving, it can help to think that you were supported at the time to make important decisions.

Miscarriage – What are your rights?

Under the law, if your baby is born alive at any time in a pregnancy, even if it's alive for only one second, you are entitled to all of your maternity rights. However, if your baby is stillborn before the end of the 24th week of pregnancy, it is treated as a miscarriage.

Miscarriages can be distressing, terrifying and daunting. It is estimated that one in six pregnancies will end in a miscarriage.

Unfortunately, you cannot qualify for maternity leave or pay if you have a miscarriage. However, you can take sick leave for as long as your GP signs you off sick. You should

follow your employer's sickness reporting procedure and this should be treated as a pregnancy related sickness.

Your employer must count any sick leave related to your miscarriage separately and this must not be used against you for disciplinary and redundancy purpose. You should not be treated unfavourably by your employer because of a pregnancy related illness. It would be an unlawful pregnancy and maternity discrimination under Section 18 (2) of the Equality Act 2010, and any dismissal would be automatically unfair.

Under the Equality Act 2010, there is protection against discrimination relating to pregnancy or pregnancy related sickness for two weeks from the end of pregnancy for women who are not entitled to maternity leave. During this protected period, you are protected against discrimination related to your miscarriage. If you are treated unfairly after the protected period, you may have a claim for sex discrimination if you can show that you have been treated less favourably than a man who has taken sick leave.

If your employer treats you unfairly because of your miscarriage, for example, by refusing work or a promotion or if you have been disciplined or dismissed, you should get advice as soon as possible.

If you've experienced a miscarriage, you can get help and support from organisations listed below:

Campaign ideas

- Lobby the government for further improvements in maternity and parental allowances and leave, including better paid leave for partners and initiatives to encourage equal parenting roles, as well as improved maternity services to support a safe and healthy pregnancy.
- Promote campaigns that seek to improve childcare provision and lower the costs of childcare, whilst protecting the terms and conditions of staff working in the childcare sector.

- Negotiate with employers for improvements to local terms and conditions, in excess of the statutory minimum.
- Raise awareness among members of the rights of all parents, and the threat to the existing provisions and campaign for better enforcement of legislation against pregnancy discrimination and improved access to justice.
- Ensure union reps and activists in your branch and region receive up-to-date training on maternity and other parental rights.
- Provide support to women returning to work after maternity leave and on negotiating policies on Keeping In Touch days.
- Negotiate with employers to exclude IVF and assisted fertility treatment from sickness absence procedures.
- Encourage the Labour party to support the legal right for both parents to have parental responsibility from birth in surrogacy arrangements and for maternity rights for the intended mother.
- Remind employers of their responsibilities to women who are breastfeeding when they return to work.
- Work with the coalition members of the Breastfeeding Manifesto to produce and distribute positive images as widely as possible and supply details of breastfeeding support groups, the benefits of breastfeeding, and the details of employers' responsibilities to women who are breastfeeding.
- Campaign to pressure the government to tackle the aggressive marketing techniques used by infant formula companies and to adopt the full International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes.
- Lobby the government asking them to support the campaign to end the use of BPA in all products intended to come into contact with our food and drinks.

- Continue to support UNISON's campaign to end employment tribunal fees in the interest of all women members.

And don't forget, when you are planning your campaign, to talk to co-workers about the issues and recruit non-members into UNISON.

More information



- **Resources for women members**

www.unison.org.uk/women

- **Leave information including maternity, paternity and parental leave**

www.unison.org.uk/get-help/knowledge/leave/

- **Pay information including maternity, paternity and adoption pay**

www.unison.org.uk/get-help/knowledge/pay/



The TUC brings unions together to draw up common policies on issues that matter to people at work. They represent more than 5.6 million workers in 50 unions.

The Trade Union Congress
Congress House
Great Russell Street
London WC1B 3LS
Tel: 020 7636 4030
www.tuc.org.uk

- **Pregnancy discrimination**

www.tuc.org.uk/equality-issues/gender-equality/pregnancy-discrimination



The UK's leading charity committed to ending inequality and improving the health and well-being of pregnant women, partners and young children – from conception through to the child's early years.

Maternity Action
52-54 Featherstone Street
London EC1Y 8RT
Tel: 020 7253 2288
Email: info@maternityaction.org.uk
www.maternityaction.org.uk



The UK's leading work-life balance organisation. The charity helps working parents and carers and their employers find a better balance between responsibilities at home and work.
www.workingfamilies.org.uk

Working Families
Cambridge House, 1 Addington Square
London SE5 0HF
Tel: 020 7253 7243
Legal advice for parents & carers: 0300 012 0312 or advice@workingfamilies.org.uk

Working Families (Scotland) / Family Friendly Working Scotland
Robertson House
152 Bath Street
Glasgow G2 4TB
0141 353 5627



Providing expert advice, practical support and campaign for single parents.

Gingerbread
520 Highgate Studios
53-79 Highgate Road
London NW5 1TL
Single parents' helpline: 0808 802 0925
Email: info@gingerbread.org.uk
www.gingerbread.org.uk



Providing help to all single parent families in Scotland; mums, dads, young parents and kinship carers.

One Parent Families Scotland
13 Gayfield Square
Edinburgh
EH1 3NX
Helpline: 0808 801 0323
Helpline Email: helpline@opfs.org.uk
Tel: 0131 556 3899
Email: info@opfs.org.uk
www.opfs.org.uk



The leading national charity working to end poverty among children, young people and families in the UK.
www.cpag.org.uk

Child Poverty Action Group
30 Micawber Street
London N1 7TB

Tel: 020 7837 7979
Email: info@cpag.org.uk

CPAG in Scotland
Unit 9, Ladywell
94 Duke Street
Glasgow G4 0UW
Tel: 0141 552 3303
Email: staff@cpagscotland.org.uk



Existing to celebrate, champion and campaign for our Children's Centres. Its aims are to publicise the great work of Sure Start, to campaign against the government's cuts to it – and to generate new ideas for the future.
Email: laboursurestart@gmail.com
<http://laboursurestart.com/>



As part of a global network called IBFAN (the International Baby Food Action Network), this campaign group acts to stop misleading marketing by the baby feeding industry. They aim to protect breastfeeding and babies fed on formula to prevent unnecessary death and suffering.
www.babymilkaction.org



Breast Cancer UK is calling for a ban on the use of BPA in food and drinks packaging on the basis that studies show that low dose exposures to BPA have been shown to have an adverse effect on the mammary gland.
www.breastcanceruk.org.uk/our-campaigns/no-more-bpa/

www.nomorebpa.org.uk



Sands (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity) offers a confidential helpline for parents, families and healthcare professionals affected by stillbirth: 020 7436 5881 or 0808 164 3332. The team is available to speak to from 9.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday, and 6pm to 10pm, Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

You can also send an email to the helpline at email_helpline@uk-sands.org.

Sands also operate local support groups run by bereaved parents and family members. For more information and to find the group nearest to you please visit <https://www.sands.org.uk/support/how-we-offer-support/sands-groups>.



The charity Tommy's offers a helpline run by midwives who have experience in talking about pregnancy loss and have had bereavement training. Call 0800 0147 800, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

The Tommy's website has information on what to expect when you've had a miscarriage or giving birth to a stillborn baby, spending time with and creating memories with a stillborn baby and coping with grief following a stillbirth. For more information please visit their website at <https://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/pregnancy-complications/pregnancy-loss/stillbirth-information-and-support>.



The charity Cruse Bereavement Care offers a helpline, face-to-face and group support following the death of someone close. Their helpline is open Monday to Friday 9.30am – 5pm on 0808 808 1677. Face-to-face and

group support is delivered by trained bereavement volunteers across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

For more information please visit <https://www.cruse.org.uk/bereavement-services/get-help>.

Other Self-help groups

There are many other self-help groups in the UK for bereaved parents and their families. You can [search for bereavement support services in your area](#).

These groups are usually run by healthcare professionals, such as baby-loss support workers or specialist midwives, and parents who have experienced stillbirth.

ACAS

For advice on employment rights or for Early Conciliation if you are thinking of making a tribunal claim www.acas.org.uk

Helpline: 0300 123 11 00 (offers telephone interpreting service)

Citizens Advice

For information about your rights and to find details of local advice bureau, see: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Factsheets available in English, Welsh, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu and Chinese

If you live or work in Wales call 03444 77 20 20. For England, call 03444 111 444 or check your local bureau's contact details as it is not available in all areas yet.

Civil Legal Advice

If you are eligible for legal aid you can get free legal advice on 0345 345 4 345 (offers translation service). To check your eligibility, see: www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice

Equality Advisory Support Service

Help and advice on discrimination and human rights

www.equalityadvisoryservice.com

Helpline: 0808 800 0082 Mon – Fri 9am – 7pm, Sat 10am – 2pm

Textphone: 0808 800 0084

Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

For information and advice about discrimination law

www.equalityhumanrights.com

For information for employees and employers about pregnancy and maternity rights in the workplace see:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/our-work/key-projects/managing-pregnancy-and-maternity-workplace

GOV.UK

The government's online information service www.gov.uk

Jobcentre Plus

To make new telephone benefit claims or request claim forms, including Maternity Allowance and Sure Start Maternity Grant: 0800 055 6688 Mon – Fri 8am – 6pm

For ESA/JSA/Income Support claims: 0800 169 0310 Mon – Fri 8am – 6pm

For Maternity Allowance claims: 0800 169 0283 Mon – Fri 8am – 6pm

For Sure Start Maternity Grant claims: 0800 169 0140 Mon – Fri 8am – 6pm

Universal Credit helpline – if you cannot make an online claim: 0800 328 9344 Mon – Fri 8am – 6pm

Universal Credit helpline – for new claims and existing online claims: 0800 328 5644.

HM Revenue & Customs

Tax Credit Helpline: 0345 300 3900 Mon – Fri 8am-8pm, Sat 8am-4pm, Sun 9am -5pm

Child Benefit: 0300 200 3100 Mon – Fri 8am-8pm, Sat 8am- 4pm

For queries about Statutory Maternity Pay, Adoption Pay, Paternity Pay and Shared Parental Pay:

Employees helpline 0300 200 3500

Employers helpline 0300 200 3200

For detailed guidance for employers on SMP, SAP, SPP and Statutory Sick Pay see www.gov.uk/government/collections/statutory-pay

HMRC Statutory Payments Disputes Team

For payments of Statutory Maternity Pay/Adoption Pay/ Paternity Pay/Shared

Parental Pay or Statutory Sick Pay when your employer is insolvent or refusing to pay: 0300 0560 630

Insolvency Service Helpline

What you can claim when your employer goes out of business:www.gov.uk/your-rights-if-your-employer-is-insolvent/claiming-money-owed-to-you

National Insolvency Unit Helpline 0300 678 0015/0017 Companies House 0303 1234 500

Redundancy payments enquiry line 0330 331 0020

Turn2us

Online benefits calculator and grant search www.turn2us.org.uk

Ending violence against women

Violence against women is a major campaigning issue for UNISON. We campaign to increase the rate of reporting it as a crime, and to improve the criminal justice system so that more perpetrators are punished.

Violence affects the lives of millions of women worldwide, in all socio-economic and educational classes. It cuts across cultural and religious barriers, impeding the right of women to participate fully in society.

UNISON recognises that men and boys can also be the victims of violence and that there has been a rise in domestic abuse in same sex relationships.

UNISON is opposed to all violence, whatever the gender or age of the perpetrator or victim.

But in a sexist society, male violence against women plays a particular role in limiting the participation of women in all areas of civil life, including trade union activity.


Women continue to order their day and lives around the restrictions to safety and freedom of movement which the background threat of men's violence imposes, sometimes without them even realising it. Not going out alone after dark, or holding your keys in your hands whilst walking home in case you are attacked, are sadly done because of a fear of violence from men.

Despite significant social changes men continue to grow up within a deeply misogynistic male dominated culture where violence against women is commonplace and acceptable.

However, it is still the case that women report that when they have been a victim, they are not believed. They may face allegations that they inflicted the injuries on themselves and/or inappropriate questioning of their mental health status, alcohol consumption and sexual history.

The fear of stigma and the fear of not being believed prevent many women from reporting violence and abuse.

If any incident or allegation is raised within UNISON or within a workplace there must, of course, be a fair and impartial investigation that protects the rights of all parties, and our branches manage this on a daily basis. For example, in a situation where a member has put in an allegation against another member, each member has a representative who is there to protect their individual interests and to support them, but any investigation resulting



UNISON
the public service union

We won't look the other way

Domestic abuse takes many forms – physical, emotional, psychological, sexual and financial and it affects victims in the workplace and beyond. That's why it's an issue for everyone including UNISON.

We are here to help and support our members.

- We provide emergency assistance, including financial aid if necessary, through our charity There For You.
- We negotiate workplace policies to support and assist staff experiencing domestic abuse.

Anyone can be a victim, regardless of gender, age, culture, ethnic origin, disability or sexual orientation and anyone can be a perpetrator – partners, spouses, parents, children or carers.

So if you need our help go to unison.org.uk/get-help or call our trained advisors on 0207 121 5620 (Monday to Friday).

You can also call UNISON on 0800 0 857 857 (text phone 0800 0 967 968). Lines are open 8am-midnight, Monday to Friday, and 8am-4pm on Saturdays or email thereforyou@unison.co.uk

Your branch may also be able to help. You can contact them directly or through UNISONdirect – details above.

UNISON – we won't look the other way

from their allegations is independent, fair and impartial.

Likewise, if legal advice were sought in a situation where both a complainant and the person complained of sought UNISON's assistance, the same test would be applied to both parties in that there would be separate legal evaluation of the complaint and the defence, and separate representation for both parties, where this was judged appropriate within UNISON's legal guidelines.

But it is essential that anyone reporting abuse is confident that reporting such an incident would be taken seriously, and that all women who complain of male violence, both in and outside of the trade union movement, have the right to be listened to, their allegations taken seriously and properly investigated with appropriate action being taken if proven.

Ask for Angela

Ask for Angela is a campaign to help people who feel unsafe while on a date. This campaign is designed to reduce sexual abuse on night outs. It encourages people to discreetly ask for help by going to the bar and simply 'Ask for Angela'. The phrase 'Ask for Angela' alerts bar staff to the cry for help so they can help resolve the situation.

It originated in a pub in Lincolnshire in 2016 but has now been adopted by many bars and pubs nationally.

Information about the scheme and the code word 'Ask for Angela' is displayed on the back of male and female toilet doors in a variety of venues as a visual aid to prompt its customers about safety precautions and how 'Ask for Angela' works.



The Istanbul Convention

In 2011, the Council of Europe adopted the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention). It was drafted in response to the growing recognition in the early years of the 21st century that member states had vastly

- design a comprehensive framework, policies and measures for the protection of and assistance to all victims of violence against women and domestic violence
- promote international co-operation with a view to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence



differing approaches to matters of domestic violence and violence against women. The document sets out a legal framework for protecting women and girls from all forms of gender-based violence.

The purposes of the Convention are to:

- protect women against all forms of violence, and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence
- contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and promote substantive equality between women and men, including by empowering women

- provide support and assistance to organisations and law enforcement agencies to effectively co-operate in order to adopt an integrated approach to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence.

The Council of Europe recognises, as UNISON does, that women and girls are affected by gender-based violence to a far greater degree than men and that the violence they suffer “constitute[s] a serious violation of the human rights of women and girls and a major obstacle to the achievement of equality between women and men.”

The UK government signed the Istanbul Convention on 8 June 2012 but has not yet ratified it. However the government’s

domestic violence and abuse bill confirmed in the June 2017 Queen's Speech will mean some offences committed by British citizens anywhere in the world can be prosecuted in the UK.

This paves the way for the UK to ratify in full the Istanbul Convention. However, this may be affected by Brexit.



Domestic abuse

As the Home Office has stated in their report on domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking (findings from the British Crime Survey) “women are the overwhelming majority of the most heavily abused group. Among people subject to four or more incidents of domestic violence from the perpetrator of the worst incident (since age 16), 89 per cent were women.”

One in four women will be victims of domestic violence in their life time, with women being at great risk of repeat victimisation and serious injury. Two women are killed every week in

England and Wales by a current or former partner. One incident of domestic violence is reported to the police every minute although domestic violence remains chronically under reported.

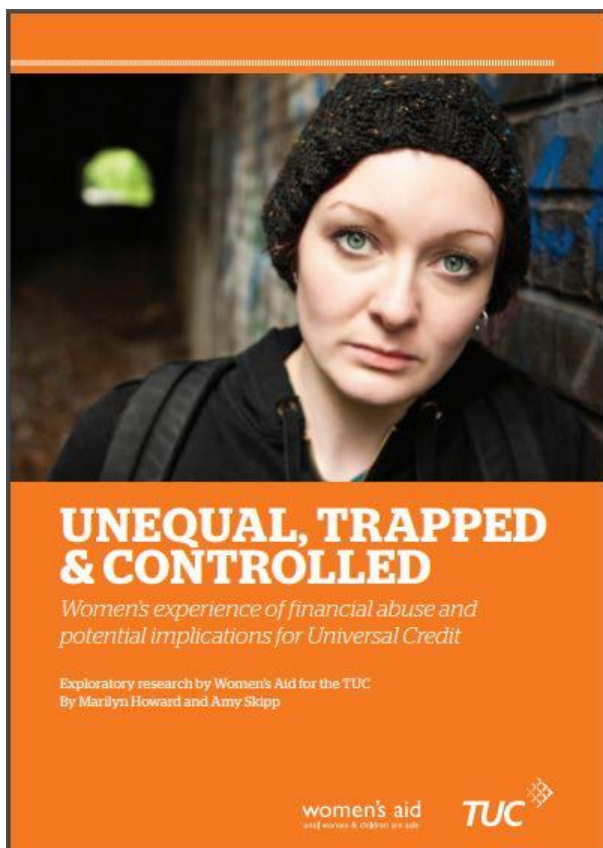
For women in an abusive relationship, the workplace can be an important protective factor. It offers time away from the abuser, space for women to be themselves and valued for their skills and abilities, a source of income that provides some autonomy and independence and communication with work colleagues that reduces isolation.

It should also be able to provide support to make a disclosure and seek help, but, as a TUC survey showed, too often women suffer in silence – too afraid, or perhaps too ashamed to tell their employer. But women are more likely to turn to a trusted union rep, and with violence at home undoubtedly impacting on job performance, it is important that victims/survivors have a tradeunion on their side.

Workplace domestic abuse policies

For women to be able to remain in employment whilst experiencing domestic abuse, employers need to have robust domestic abuse policies in place. Union reps and managers need to be aware and trained in the use of such policies and should remain vigilant in implementing them.

For example, the importance of this is shown in research finding that 50% of victims have curtailed or stopped work due to stalking. 75% of domestic violence stalkers will turn up at the workplace and 79% of domestic violence stalker will use the work resources to target the victims.



UNISON believes that domestic abuse training should become statutory in public sector organisations such as the police, NHS, local government and social services. It is vital that members of staff can identify the different aspects of domestic abuse and the impact that it has on both women and children. This could then lead to women suffering from domestic abuse receiving an informed and proactive response such as being signposted to supportive organisations, potentially both saving lives and supporting those women experiencing abuse.

The right to safety and justice is also often denied to employed women because of restrictions on access to legal aid, the discriminatory practice in the application of housing benefit and restrictions on access to much of the refuge accommodation.

The definition of domestic violence and abuse

The government has agreed a core definition:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional.

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.”

Coercive control and jealous surveillance are important indicators that a victim of domestic violence is at high risk of harm.

Coercive control is a term that was developed by the academic Evan Stark to describe a form of partner abuse that survivors report as being akin to a form of domestic or intimate terrorism. “It is a pattern of behaviour which seeks to take away the victim’s liberty or freedom, to strip away their sense of self. It is not just women’s bodily integrity which is violated but also their human rights.”

However recent statistics have shown that about 85% of victims sought help on average five times from professionals in the year before they got effective help to stop the abuse. On average victims experience fifty incidents of abuse before getting effective help.

UNISON remains concerned that the police and other criminal justice agencies continue to fail women who report these crimes to them.

Cuts in public spending are also having a detrimental impact on services that are reliant on funding such as women's refuges. Violence against women services are essential for women to access safety, justice and to rebuild their lives. Authorities are increasingly adopting a 'one size fits all' approach, denying the need for specialist services for Black women, disabled women, LGBT women or older women.

Older women

A pattern of behaviour of coercive control is especially relevant to many older/elderly women. Some older women have been subjected to a form of control previously tacitly accepted by society whereby men were permitted, even encouraged, to 'control' their wives. In such a scenario women may well have internalised this approach and even perceived it as 'normal' for married couples.

It is often assumed that domestic violence is

mainly experienced by younger women, and that older women's experiences can be put under the category of 'elder abuse'. Older women may experience even more barriers to disclosure than younger women, and may therefore be more reluctant to report violence.

As a result, despite women over the age of 45 making up 22% of the national population, they are known to be a group who under-report sexual and domestic violence and abuse.

Older women may experience more barriers to disclosure than younger women, and may therefore be more reluctant to report violence.

These barriers include:

- Stigma and shame
- Fear of consequences such as financial insecurity and leaving a lifetime home environment
- Older women may not see their experiences as relevant
- Lack of understanding about what constitutes abuse
- Physical frailty or disability
- Older women's experiences of violence may be historic and therefore

Lifting the lid on financial abuse

1 in 5 adults are victims – around 9.2m* people



1 in 3 victims tell no-one



6 out of 10 victims are women



Linked to other forms of abuse in 8 out of 10 of women victims



*18% of 50.9m UK Adult population ONS 2014
Source: Money matters report 2015

they may have forgotten the incidents, or see them as no longer relevant

- Isolation
- Confusion, disassociation, prolonged trauma
- Cultural issues.

Disabled women

More than 50% of disabled women in the UK may have experienced domestic abuse in their lives, and statistics show that disabled women may be assaulted or raped at a rate that is at least twice that of non-disabled women.

Domestic abuse can mean that medication, food and/or money are withheld by the abusive partner and/or carer, which can make it even harder for disabled women to get out of controlling relationships.

Research has also shown that people with severe mental illness experience a substantially increased risk of domestic and sexual violence, as well as higher prevalence of family violence and adverse health impacts following victimisation.

STALKING CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE



**WOULD YOU KNOW THE SIGNS?
OR WHAT YOUR LEGAL OBLIGATIONS ARE?
DO YOU HAVE A WORKPLACE STALKING POLICY?**

Many stalking victims feel unsafe and unable to work. A stalking policy is important for ensuring a safe environment for all members of staff.

Paladin can help with expert advice, workplace policies and training.

paladin
National Stalking Advocacy Service

0207 840 8960
info@paladinservice.co.uk
www.paladinservice.co.uk



CIC Number 8361675



KGA
KENT GROUP ASSOCIATES

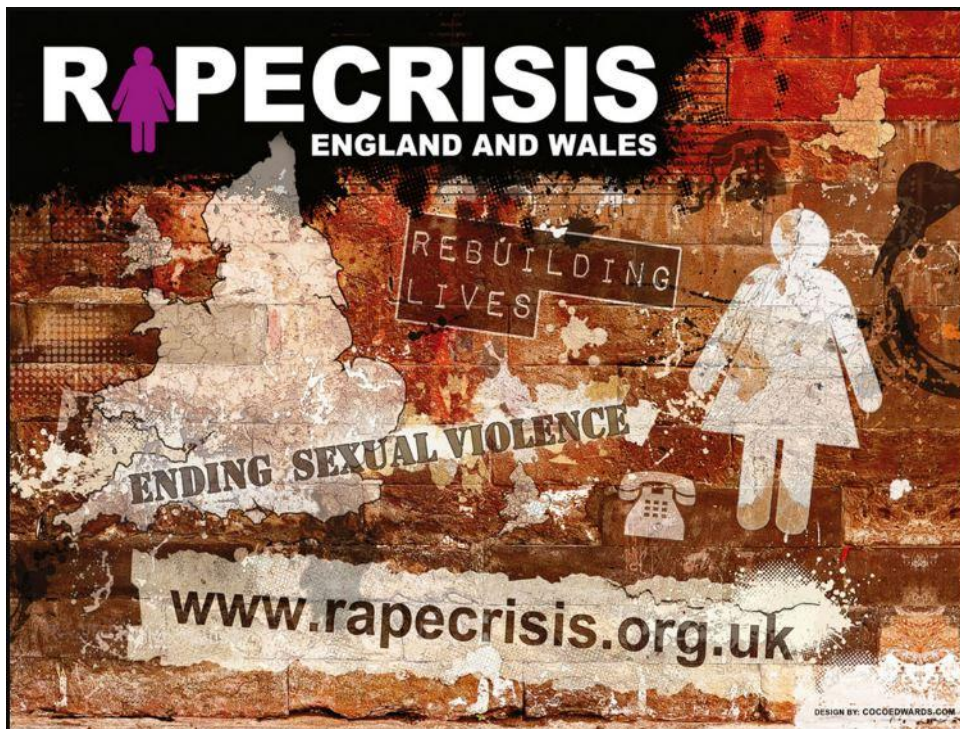
Stalking

Data from the Crime Survey of England and Wales shows up to 700,000 women are stalked each year (2009-12) although the British Crime Survey (2006) estimated 5 million people experience stalking each year. There are no official statistics on the percentage cyberstalked. Office for National Statistics (2013) stated it was 1 in 6 women and 1 in 12 men although Paladin, the national stalking advocacy service still believes these figures to be grossly underestimated.

Victims do not tend to report to the police until the 100th incident. When it is reported, there is a lack of understanding and low priority is often given to cases by the criminal justice system. In many situations the pattern of stalking is missed and effective risk assessment, management and a co-ordinated response is lacking, putting women's lives at risk.

As a result of a stalking law reform campaign, two new offences of stalking have been enacted, but women are still not being adequately supported, nor are cases being taken seriously, despite high profile media cases of women who have been stalked and murdered, and failures being identified in the

Contrary to popular myth, the majority of those (approximately 90%) who are raped know the perpetrator prior to the offence. Rape conviction rates vary between different police forces across the country. For every rape reported, many more are not reported.



Many local authorities have no specialised support services to help the victims of rape. The number of Rape Crisis centres has fallen, although the demand for their services is huge and growing, and there are increasing waiting lists to access the services provided.

Rape Crisis member organisations across England and Wales responded to 171,000 helpline

way their cases were handled.

Rape

Statistics collected for England and Wales alone show that nearly half a million adults are sexually assaulted in England and Wales each year. One in five women aged 16-59 has experienced some form of sexual violence since the age of 16. But only around 15% of those who experience sexual violence choose to report to the police.

Rape victims in court are still routinely interrogated about their sexual history, what they were wearing and how much they had had to drink when they were raped. Rape is always the responsibility of the perpetrator, never the victim.

calls in the 12 months to 31st March 2016, an average of over 3,000 a week. 58,000 individuals received an on-going Rape Crisis service(s), an increase of 16% since 2014-15. 95% of all service users were female.

Forced marriages

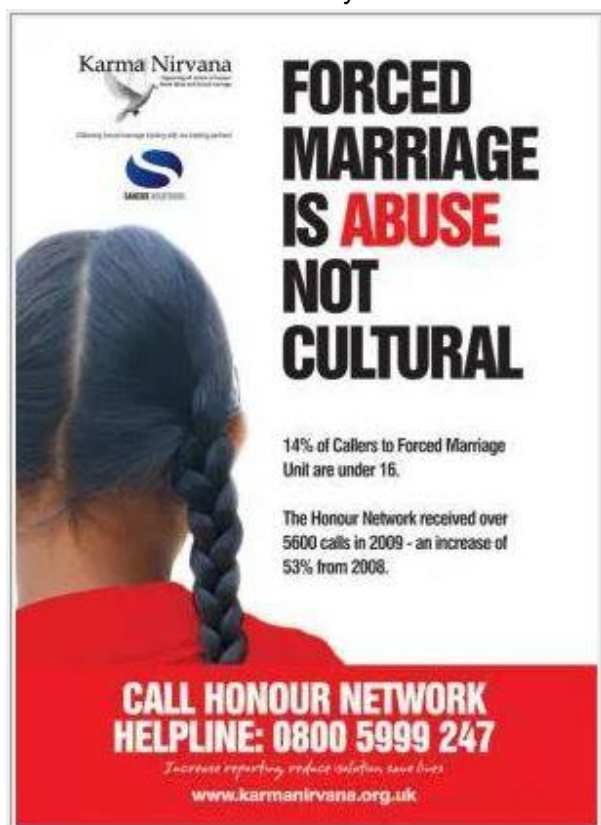
Domestic abuse affects women from all ethnic groups although the form the abuse takes may vary. The particular issue of forced marriage and honour based violence places women, children and vulnerable adults at risk of rape, physical and mental harm and can end in murder.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage where you have a choice

as to whether to accept the arrangement or not. The tradition of arranged marriages has operated successfully within many communities and countries for a long time.

Forced marriages are where the individual (usually a woman) is coerced into marrying someone against their will. Women and young girls who may be subjected to such a marriage need to be made aware of their rights and the help available to them to make informed choices.

In 2016 the Forced Marriage unit of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office gave advice and support to 1,428 people on this matter. They work with embassy staff across the world to rescue those who have been lured or forced abroad to be forcibly married.



Karma Nirvana's 'Honour Network', the first national helpline for victims of forced marriages and so called honour violence, regularly sees a spike in calls in the run up to the summer holidays, some are from girls saying they fear they will be married off abroad.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM and sometimes referred to as female circumcision) refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice of female genital mutilation is widespread across the globe but in particular, FGM appears to be a central African cultural injunction rather than a faith based injunction.

Sometimes called infibulation, there are 4 types of this procedure. These range from cutting to burning away exposed genitalia. The procedure is usually carried out by women within the community. The belief is that FGM shows purity, cleanliness and good moral values, and will result in a successful marriage.

However the practice is clearly a violation of women's rights and children's rights and the impact on the health of these women and girls is immense. FGM puts their lives at risk and the lives of their unborn children, causing severe pain and bleeding, scarring, shock, infections, injury to nearby genital tissue, urinary, menstrual and childbirth problems and sometimes even death.

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 replaced a 1985 Act, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, raising the maximum penalty from 5 to 14 years in prison. It also made it an offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out FGM abroad even in countries where it is legal. The practice is illegal in the UK and it is also illegal to arrange for a child to be taken abroad for FGM.

There are an estimated 137,000 women and girls affected by FGM in England and Wales. However, the true extent is unknown, due to the 'hidden' nature of the crime. The girls may be taken to their countries of origin so that FGM can be carried out during the summer holidays, allowing them time to 'heal' before

they return to school. There are also worries that some girls may have FGM performed in the UK.

Over half of doctors in London have stated that they have treated women and young girls who have had this practice forced upon them.

Breast ironing

Breast ironing is another form of mutilation practised in Cameroon, Togo and other African countries. It aims to deter unwanted male attention, pregnancy and rape by delaying the signs of a girl becoming a woman. The girls as young as 10 years old are having their chests pounded with hot objects including irons, pestles and hot stones constantly for as many as five months.

As well as being extremely painful it creates problems including abscesses, cysts, infection, tissue damage and the disappearance of one or both breasts.

According to UN estimates, up to 3.8 million girls worldwide are affected. British schools and teachers have been alerted about how to recognise this awful abuse of young girls and seek appropriate assistance. It is thought that about 1,000 girls in West African communities across the UK have been subjected to the practice, but the figure could be much higher.

Women and the sex trade

UNISON has set policy on prostitution at both national women's conference and national delegate's conference. We have taken the stance that prostitution is a form of violence against women and support the idea of tackling demand through adopting a Nordic style law that decriminalises the sale of sex and criminalises the buyers and pimps while funding exit strategies.

In countries where this has been implemented, it has been proved to be

successful in reducing the demand for prostitution and changing public attitudes towards the sex trade.

NORDIC MODEL NOW!

Campaigning for the Nordic Model approach to prostitution in the UK

0 men will suffer physical harm if prostitution is abolished

1,000,000s of women will be spared physical harm if prostitution is abolished

The Nordic Model decriminalises those who are prostituted, provides services to help them leave, and makes buying sex a criminal offence, in order to reduce the demand that drives sex trafficking.

- Women and girls are not commodities for others to get rich on
- Gender equality is not possible while men can buy women and girls
- Prostitution is not the answer to women's poverty

Prostitution is incompatible with human rights

In contrast, in Germany and New Zealand where they have fully decriminalised or legalised prostitution activity they have seen an increase in trafficking, organised crime and inflation of both the legal and illegal trade, with no tangible evidence that women are safer.

Islamophobia

According to the group, Hope not Hate, anti-Muslim hatred remains more socially acceptable today than it has ever been and is often encouraged by certain groups in the media and political spectrum. Anti-Muslim prejudice remains a huge problem in the UK. Statistics show that people continue to see Muslims differently to other religious groups. Figures show that 18% of the public hold extreme negative views of Muslims and 41% of people feel that Islam poses a threat to the British way of life. Anti-Muslim prejudice is concentrated among those who see

immigration and multiculturalism in a negative way.

Islamophobic incidents rose sharply after the terror attacks in the UK in 2017; the Home Office reported a five-fold increase following the Manchester attack and a two-fold rise after the London Bridge attack.

The spikes include attacks on mosques, physical and verbal abuse against Muslims, anti-Muslim graffiti and online hate.

There was on, an average, one incident a week against a mosque between May 2013 and June 2017. This all takes place against a backdrop of a 23% rise in religious and race-related hate crimes in the 11 months following the Brexit vote, according to figures from police forces released after a Freedom of Information request.

It's been reported that women were often attacked because of their visibility, which makes them vulnerable.

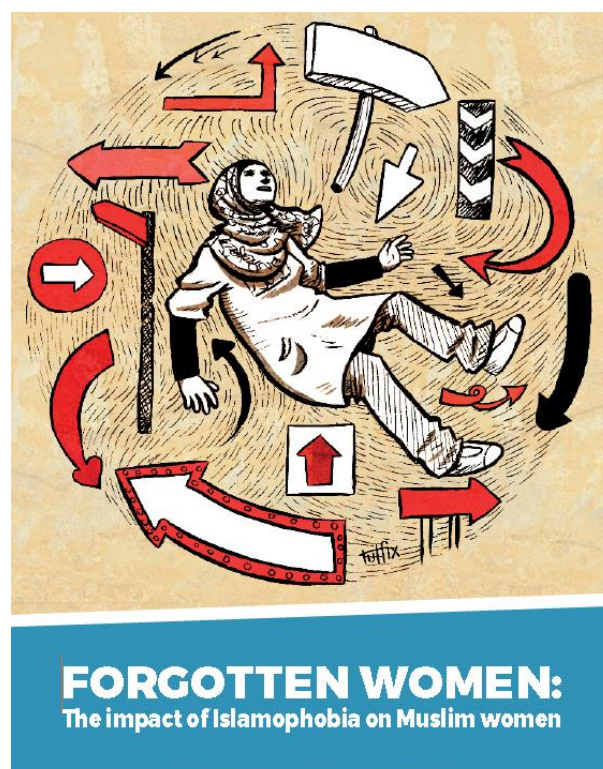
Muslim women suffer from the same inequalities as other women (access to employment, gender pay gap, glass-ceiling, domestic, verbal and physical violence, etc.) but additional factors such as perceived religion or ethnicity deepen these gender gaps.

According to a report by the ENAR (European Network Against Racism), Muslim women are sometimes depicted as oppressed or dangerous by the media. Reports show that many news stories related to Muslim women are related to violations of women's right, which contributes to constructing negative stereotypes and fails to consider Muslim women as a diverse and heterogeneous group. Images of Muslim women and Muslim women wearing religious garments in particular, are often used to illustrate news items focused on the danger of an 'Islamic invasion', which contributes to considering Muslim women as a threat to European societies.

There has been an "intensification of Islamophobic sentiment, policy and practice in Britain" according to a landmark report

produced by the Runnymede Trust, Islamophobia: Still a Challenge for Us All.

Given the continued debates and misconceptions around both Muslim women and feminism, It is time debunk some of the more common stereotypes about feminism and Muslim women in order to promote a shared understanding of equal treatment in a diverse society.



Campaign ideas

- Raise awareness of the effects of domestic abuse, rape and sexual violence on women, and provide information for members at their branches on where to seek help if they become victims/survivors.
- Negotiate a workplace domestic abuse policy – a model policy is available from the UNISON guide 'Domestic violence and abuse: a trade union issue' (online catalogue)

www.unison.org.uk/onlinecatalogue stock no 3477).

- Use the UNISON poster and leaflet, 'We won't look the other way' (online catalogue www.unison.org.uk/onlinecatalogue stock no 2539 and 3558) in your workplace and elsewhere to raise awareness of the issues and its effects across the entire female age spectrum.
- Offer training for activists to make them aware of domestic abuse policies in their workplace, and how these can be used to support members.
- Ensure that any policies negotiated with employers are sensitive to the particular needs and circumstances of women including Black women, disabled women, LGBT women and older women – particularly on issues such as coercive control, mental health, self-harm and suicide that are often related to violence and sexual abuse.
- Encourage employers to hold details of relevant women's organisations, local charities, informal social groups, religious groups and inter-governmental organisations in order to signpost those affected by domestic abuse, rape, stalking, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- Champion the work of community and voluntary organisations dealing with the issue of ending violence against women, and develop relationships with external refuges, Rape Crisis centres and other support organisations to provide information to members and to encourage women members to become involved as volunteers or in fundraising.
- Raise the awareness of the difference between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage, and of the Forced Marriages Act that allows local authorities and members of the public to apply for an injunction if they think a child is at risk of being taken out of the country.
- Promote the Home Office leaflet 'Female Genital Mutilation – The Facts' www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-leaflet and help raise awareness of those who have already suffered and to prevent the practice of (FGM).
- Support the White Ribbon campaign, which focuses on men speaking out and educating men and boys on ending violence against women.
- Participate in a local Reclaim the Night march – or if there isn't one near you, organise one – held each November to raise the issue of violence against women and make the point that women have the right to feel safe on the streets at night.
- Campaign for the restoration of legal aid for family issues including domestic abuse without the current stringent requirement for proof of domestic abuse. In spite of amendments to the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act, the legal aid regulations continue to restrict access to legal advice and representation to women affected by domestic violence.
- Challenge proposals to cut specialist services for women experiencing domestic abuse and request equality impact assessments from local authorities where services are being denied funds.
- Lobby the government on the benefits of statutory training on domestic abuse within the public sector.
- Work with relevant organisations to campaign for a better sentencing policy; continued reform of the judicial process to improve reporting and conviction; a national violence against women strategy; proper funding for Rape Crisis centres, and for full ratification of the Istanbul Convention.
- Raise awareness of the effects of Islamophobia on Muslim women and Muslims generally, and provide information for members at their branches

on where to seek help if they become victims.

- Promote the European Network Against Racism report – Forgotten women: The impact of Islamophobia on Muslim women.
- Promote the Runnymede report – Islamophobia – still a challenge for us all.
- Publicise to your members the help that is available to them through UNISON's charity 'There for You'.

And don't forget, when you are planning your campaign, to talk to co-workers about the issues and recruit non-members into UNISON.

More information



- **Resources for women members**

www.unison.org.uk/women

- **There for you**

There for You offers a unique confidential advice and support service just for members of UNISON and their dependants.

www.unison.org.uk/thereforyou



The TUC brings unions together to draw up common policies on issues that matter to people at work. They represent more than 5.6 million workers in 50 unions.

The Trade Union Congress
Congress House
Great Russell Street
London WC1B 3LS
Tel: 020 7636 4030
www.tuc.org.uk

- Violence against women
www.tuc.org.uk/equality-issues/gender-equality/violence-against-women



A leading coalition of specialist women's support services, researchers, activists, survivors and NGOs working to end violence against women and girls in all its forms.

End Violence Against Women Coalition
134 Southbank House
Black Prince Road
London SE1 7SJ
Tel: 020 3735 8219
Email: admin@evaw.org.uk
www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk



The national charity working to end domestic abuse against women and children.

Women's Aid Federation of England
PO BOX 3245
Bristol BS2 2EH
Tel: 0117 944 44 11
Email: info@womensaid.org.uk
Freephone 24 hr national domestic violence helpline: 0808 2000 247
Email: helpline@womensaid.org.uk
www.womensaid.org.uk



The lead organisation in Scotland working towards the prevention of domestic abuse.

Scottish Women's Aid
2nd Floor, 132 Rose Street
Edinburgh EH2 3JD
Tel: 0131 226 6606
Domestic abuse helpline: 0800 027 1234
www.scottishwomensaid.org.uk



Campaigning and lobbying for improvements in public policy and government legislation in relation to women and children experiencing domestic abuse in Wales.

Welsh Womens Aid
Pendragon House, Caxton Place
Pentwyn
Cardiff, CF23 8XE
Tel: 02920 541 551
Email: admin@welshwomensaid.org.uk
Live Fear Free Helpline: 0808 8010 800
Email: info@livefearfreehelpline.wales
www.welshwomensaid.org.uk



The lead voluntary organisation in Northern Ireland addressing domestic and sexual violence and providing services for women and children.

Women's Aid Federation NI

129 University Street
Belfast BT7 1HP
028 9024 9041
info@womensaidni.org
24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence
Helpline: 0808 802 1414
Email: 24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org
www.womensaidni.org



The charity is committed to a world where domestic violence is not tolerated and where women and children can live in safety.

Tel: 020 7395 7700
Email: info@refuge.org.uk
Freephone 24 hr national domestic violence
helpline: 0808 2000 247
Email: helpline@refuge.org.uk
www.refuge.org.uk



Rape Crisis England & Wales is a feminist organisation that exists to promote the needs and rights of women and girls who have experienced sexual violence, to improve services to them and to work towards the elimination of sexual violence.

Rape Crisis England & Wales
Suite E4, Josephs Well
Hanover Walk
Leeds LS3 1AB
Email: rcewinfo@rapecrisis.org.uk

Rape Crisis helpline: 0808 802 9999 between 12 noon- 2.30pm and 7 – 9.30pm any day of the year

www.rapecrisis.org.uk



The national office for the rape crisis movement in Scotland.

Rape Crisis Scotland

46 Bath Street

Glasgow G2 1HG

Tel: 0141 331 4180

Email: info@rapecrisisscotland.org.uk

Free Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline, 6pm to midnight: 08088 010302

www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk



National Stalking Advocacy Service

A trauma-informed service established to assist high risk victims of stalking in England Wales following the highly successful Stalking Law Reform campaign in Parliament spearheaded by Laura Richards and others.

Paladin

PO Box 72962

London N7 1DZ

Tel: 020 3866 4107

Email: info@paladinservice.co.uk

<http://paladinservice.co.uk>

National Stalking Helpline:

0808 802 0300

www.stalkinghelpline.org



An award-winning British human rights charity supporting victims of honour based abuse and forced marriage.

Karma Nirvana

PO BOX 515

Leeds LS6 9DW

Email: info@karmanirvana.org.uk

Helpline: 0800 5999 247 9am to 9pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 4pm weekends

www.karmanirvana.org.uk



Safeguarding rights & dignity

FORWARD (Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development) is a leading African diaspora women's campaign and support organisation, committed to gender equality and safeguarding the rights of African girls and women.

FORWARD

Suite 2.1, Chandelier Building

8 Scrubs Lane

London NW10 6RB

Tel: 020 8960 4000

E-mail: forward@forwarduk.org.uk

www.forwarduk.org.uk

The NSPCC have a helpline where you can report concerns about FGM: 0800 028 3550
Email: fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk



Since 2004, the London Feminist Network has organised an annual, national women's Reclaim the Night march against rape and all forms of male violence against women.
www.reclaimthenight.co.uk



MILLION WOMEN RISE

A movement that believes that male violence against women and children is a global pandemic. Their campaign to end violence against women is an international struggle for female emancipation and liberty.

Million Women Rise
c/o Women's Resource Centre
United House
North Road
London, N7 9DP
Email: info@millionwomenrise.com
Tel: 07 727 419634
www.millionwomenrise.com



The largest global effort of men working to end male violence against women aiming to educate and raise awareness of violence against women, and to engage men in these issues.

White Ribbon House
1 New Road
Mytholmroyd
Hebden Bridge HX7 5DZ
Tel: 01422 886545

Email: info@whiteribboncampaign.co.uk

www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk



A campaign calling on the UK government to end demand for sex trafficking and exploitation through prostitution by adopting the Sex Buyer Law.

Email: contact@enddemand.uk

www.enddemand.uk



A women's charity aiming to provide women with the legal advice and information they need to understand and use the law and their legal rights. They also work to improve the law for women and increase women's access to justice.

Rights of Women
52-54 Featherstone Street
London EC1Y 8RT
Tel: 020 7251 6575
Email: info@row.org.uk
www.rightsofwomen.org.uk



The leading national umbrella body for women's charities, with over 500 members.

Women's Resource Centre
United House
North Road

London N7 9DP
Tel: 020 7697 3450
Email: admin@wrc.org.uk
www.wrc.org.uk



The ENAR report: Forgotten women: The impact of Islamophobia on Muslim women.

www.enar-eu.org



The Runnymede report, Islamophobia – still a challenge for us all

www.runnymedetrust.org

Women's health

Women having control over their own bodies is central to achieving women's equality, and UNISON is committed to campaigning to ensure that women have all the information they need to make choices about their health and well being.

Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia, also called fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS), is a long-term chronic condition that causes pain all over the body.

As well as widespread pain, people with fibromyalgia may also have increased sensitivity to pain, fatigue, muscle stiffness, difficulty sleeping, problems with memory and concentration, irritable bowel syndrome and headaches.

The exact cause of fibromyalgia is unknown, but it's thought to be related to abnormal levels of certain chemicals in the brain and changes in the way the central nervous system (brain, spinal cord and nerves) processes pain messages carried around the body. It's also suggested that some people are more likely to develop fibromyalgia because of genes inherited from their parents. In many cases, the condition appears to be triggered by a physically or emotionally stressful event.

Anyone can develop fibromyalgia, but it is 10 times more common in women than men. The condition typically develops between the ages of 20 and 60, but can occur in people of any age, including children and the elderly. It's not clear exactly how many people are affected by fibromyalgia, as it is difficult to diagnose; although research has suggested it could be a relatively common condition.

There isn't a cure for fibromyalgia, but there are treatments to help manage the symptoms. Many people with fibromyalgia who get treatment can manage their symptoms and

live a full life. The condition doesn't damage your joints or affect your lifespan

Protecting women's mental health

The issue of work-related stress continues to be a major concern. UNISON branches have been successful in negotiating workplace policies on stress and mental wellbeing and supporting members to remain in work, and UNISON has won compensation for members forced out of the workplace by unsympathetic employers.

UNISON's research has shown that some of the major causes of work-related stress are being set unrealistic deadlines, lack of control and conflicting demands, repetitive work, boredom and lack of job satisfaction, job insecurity, low pay, working alone, bullying and harassment.

All of these factors are particularly **predominant in the female workforce, with low paid, Black, disabled and LGBT women more vulnerable to many of these situations. Young women too are especially under pressure as they are new to the world of work, often experience the lowest levels of pay, and can experience high levels of bullying and harassment.**

Women may additionally be juggling caring commitments for children and older relatives with their work; facing physical health problems and potentially be in financial difficulty as a result of lifelong low pay, loss of a partner or relationship breakdown.

UNISON reps report that they are seeing increasing numbers of women seeking advice and support for stress-related issues, often

presenting as increased sickness absence, poor timekeeping or poor performance, but frequently and worryingly also reporting depression and suicidal thoughts.

Other mental health problems are also more prevalent in women, with anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorders twice as common and eating disorders as high as ten times more common.

limits which mean they are struggling to cope. This is impacting on users too with many staff reporting an increase in waiting times for services and less access to services generally, services that are proportionately more used by women.

It is essential that women are provided with the proper support to enable them to remain in the workforce in a secure and supportive environment.



mentalhealth MATTERS



Isolation in old age can also lead to mental health problems such as depression, exacerbated by the cuts in services in health, public transport, day centres and other community facilities.

Post-natal depression can have a particularly detrimental impact on day-to-day living and lead to the need to have additional periods of time off work to address the issue. Yet mental health problems remain a generally taboo subject.

Meanwhile mental health services are struggling to cope with unprecedented demand while, at the same time facing cuts and chronic underfunding. UNISON members are at the sharp end of providing mental health services and they are being pushed to



white women, and were diagnosed with a worse prognosis than those in other ethnic groups.

It is recognised that there is a need to provide culturally sensitive care and support to Black women

and minority ethnic women that is tailored specifically to their cultural values and beliefs.

Breast cancer awareness and better treatment

Key to the continuing campaign for a breast cancer free future for all girls and women, is the improvement of the treatment of cancer patients, including improving services for people with lymphoedema.

It is important for women, whether they are ultimately diagnosed with breast cancer or not, that the time spent waiting for an appointment or results is as short as possible and that when they choose to make their conditions known they are supported in the workplace. Many women diagnosed with breast cancer do not know what help and support they are entitled to. Many suffer genuine hardship when facing breast cancer and undergoing treatment for this devastating disease.

Research also shows that Black and Asian women diagnosed with breast cancer in the UK have poorer relative survival rates than

Ovarian cancer

Ovarian cancer is the fifth most common cancer in women in the UK, affecting around 6,800 women. It is the highest gynaecological killer of women in the UK and the fourth most common cause of death from cancer in women, with two out of every three cases of ovarian cancer being diagnosed when the disease has spread, thus limiting the treatment options.

Survival rates from ovarian cancer are low in the UK, with only 30% of women diagnosed with the disease surviving five years beyond diagnosis. The survival rates have hardly improved over the past twenty years. There needs to be an improvement in early stage diagnosis techniques and further research in prevention, detection, treatment and cures of ovarian cancer.

Ovarian cancer was once known as a 'silent' disease in that the symptoms can be vague, but evidence now shows that any of the following three symptoms, if they occur on most days, can suggest ovarian cancer:

- Persistent pelvic and abdominal pain
- Increased abdominal size/persistent bloating – not bloating that comes and goes
- Difficulty eating and feeling full quickly.

Occasionally other symptoms such as urinary symptoms, changes in bowel habit, extreme fatigue or back pain may also be experienced on their own or at the same time as those listed above. Again, it is most likely that these symptoms are not ovarian cancer, but may be present in some women with the disease.

It's important that all women are made aware of the possible symptoms and to get them properly diagnosed as soon as possible.

Cervical cancer

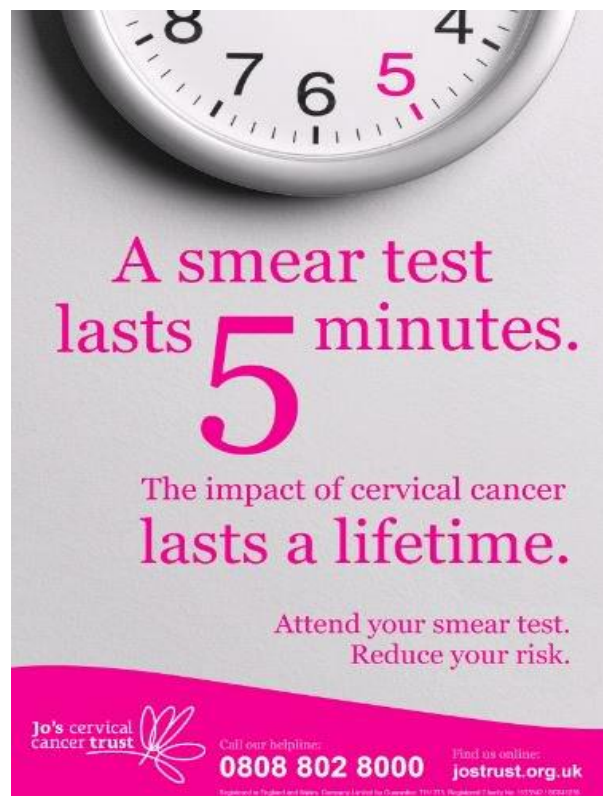
Cervical cancer remains the most common cancer in women under the age of 35 and yet cervical cancer screening can prevent up to 80% of cases of the disease. Up to 3,000 women are diagnosed each year and up to 1,000 women die per year in spite of screening being available.



Stomach pain?
Bloating?
 Struggling to eat?
Weeing more often?

For more information talk to Ovarian Cancer Action today
 Call 0300 456 4700
 or email info@ovarian.org.uk


Don't ignore these symptoms.
 If you're experiencing any of these symptoms of ovarian cancer on most days don't wait for them to go away.
Talk to your GP.
 Also look out for back pain, diarrhoea or constipation and persistent tiredness.



A smear test
 lasts **5** minutes.

The impact of cervical cancer
 lasts a lifetime.

Attend your smear test.
 Reduce your risk.

Jo's cervical cancer trust 

Call our helpline:
0808 802 8000

Find us online:
jostrust.org.uk

Registered in England and Wales. Company Limited by Guarantee. 1911511. Registered Charity No. 1059601/1059602/1059603

High-risk human papillomavirus (HPV) infection is the main potentially avoidable risk factor for cervical cancer, linked to an estimated 100% of cervical cancer cases in the UK. Some other factors may relate to cervical cancer risk partly because they are related to HPV.

In most cases HPV is shed from the body and causes no harm, however for some the virus causes changes to the cells of the cervix that if left untreated can develop into cervical cancer.



1 in 4 women do not attend cervical screening, a potentially life-saving test.

Cervical cancer is largely preventable through regular cervical screening and the newly introduced HPV vaccination programme – which UNISON campaigned to make available free of charge.

Delay in first screening can result in a greater risk of being diagnosed with cervical cancer or high-grade abnormal cells – this diagnosis will often require invasive and radical treatment. If diagnosed earlier the level of intervention is often less radical and less invasive.

As women are becoming sexually active at a much younger age, screening should start within 2 years of becoming active but yet it is only available for women aged between 25 and 65. Screening stops at 65 as it is believed that most women will have settled with one long-term partner by 65. However

statistics show that more women than ever before are getting divorced in their 60s and enjoying renewed sexual activity.

Black women and cervical cancer

Recent studies have found that more Black women do not attend a screening appointment compared to white British women, perhaps due to lack of knowledge about the process and the benefits in preventing cancer.

Black women are also more likely to develop cervical cancer and to die from it, perhaps as a consequence of less access to screening and follow-up health care, as well as a lower level of awareness of symptoms.

Endometriosis and Adenomyosis

Endometriosis and adenomyosis are chronic and painful conditions where cells from the



lining of the womb are deposited in other parts of the body instead of being lost during menstruation.

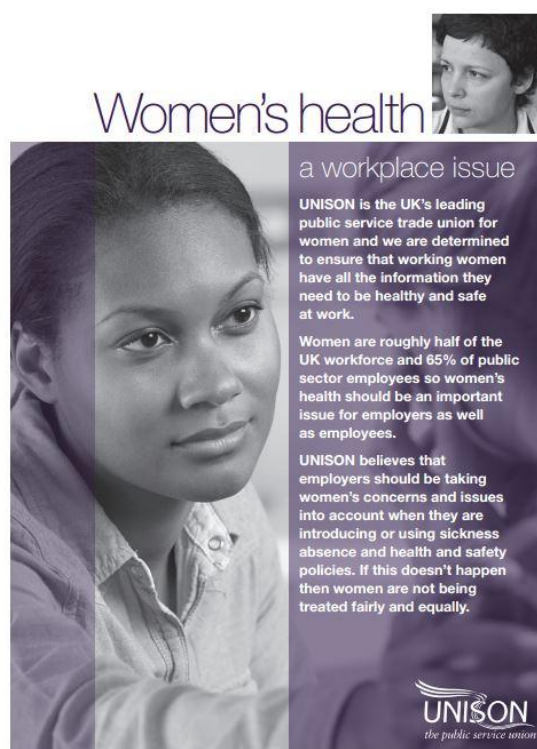
These cells continue to change in size and bleed in response to a woman's normal menstrual cycle. This can affect bowel, bladder and kidney function, and cause pain in joints and bleeding from the sites where cells are. The impact is more than gynaecological, particularly if other organs are affected.

Endometriosis is the second most common gynaecological condition in the UK. It affects more than 1.5 million women in the UK beyond puberty, regardless of age, ethnicity and reproductive history.

The symptoms include: persistent pain, heavy and irregular periods, painful urination, bowel problems, particularly diarrhoea and bloating, back and joint pain, depression and pain during sex.

Endometriosis is a condition to which there is no cure, only treatment. It can have a massive impact on a woman's life including difficulty in fulfilling work and social commitments. Yet it is a condition of which many people are unaware and many women can find it hard to talk about and to get support.

Few HR and Occupational Health departments are well informed about this disease; sickness absence and health and safety policies are often not supportive of women with this condition.



Women's health

a workplace issue

UNISON is the UK's leading public service trade union for women and we are determined to ensure that working women have all the information they need to be healthy and safe at work.

Women are roughly half of the UK workforce and 65% of public sector employees so women's health should be an important issue for employers as well as employees.

UNISON believes that employers should be taking women's concerns and issues into account when they are introducing or using sickness absence and health and safety policies. If this doesn't happen then women are not being treated fairly and equally.

UNISON
the public service union

Fibroids

Fibroids are small benign tumours that grow on the walls of the womb, inside and out, and can range from a single growth to multiple. For most women they give no cause for concern and grow unnoticed. But, for others, the genetic disorder can mean heavy and painful periods and lead to fatigue and anaemia. In the worst cases, it can make conceiving more complicated, cause infertility and increase the risk of miscarriage. Common indications are pain, heavy menstrual bleeding, pressure on adjacent organs such as the bladder.

Black women suffer disproportionately from fibroids and are three to five times more likely to develop them than white women. Black women also tend to have larger, more numerous fibroids at diagnosis. Fibroids seem to occur at a younger age and grow more quickly in Black women as well.

Those who are overweight, started puberty early, or have not had children, are also more

likely to have fibroids. The most common form of treatment for fibroids is a hysterectomy, the removal of the womb. Fibroids are the reason behind 30% of hysterectomies in white women and over 50% of hysterectomies in Black women.

For women still hoping to conceive, they can undergo a myomectomy which removes the fibroids, but leaves the womb untouched. However, myomectomies have a high recurrence rate of about 75% meaning a life spent in and out of hospital.

Fibroid embolisations – an alternative treatment – involves injecting grain-sized particles into the womb using small needles that cause the fibroids to dry up and shrink by 60%. The recovery period is two weeks and although there are a few side effects, including abdominal pain and passing big blood clots, the treatment has almost permanent results without the need for a full operation.

Although the procedure is available on the NHS, GPs rarely recommend it or present it to patients as one of their options.

Group B Streptococcus

Group B streptococcus (GBS) also known as group B strep, is one of many different bacteria that live inside a body. About a third of us have GBS in our gut without even knowing it.

About a quarter of women also have GBS in their vagina although there will not be any obvious symptoms. GBS bacteria can also be passed from a woman to her baby during labour and this doesn't usually cause problems. Most women who carry GBS bacteria have healthy babies. Only in rare cases does GBS cause serious illness and even more rarely, death of the baby. However even a low risk can be avoided through one simple test and countries who

use the test have seen the incidence of death in babies due to GBS infection fall by 71-86%.



There is currently no routine testing for Group B Strep during pregnancy within the NHS. If it is known that the expectant mother is a carrier of Group B Strep simple precautions can be taken that reduce the mortality rate.

Sickle Cell

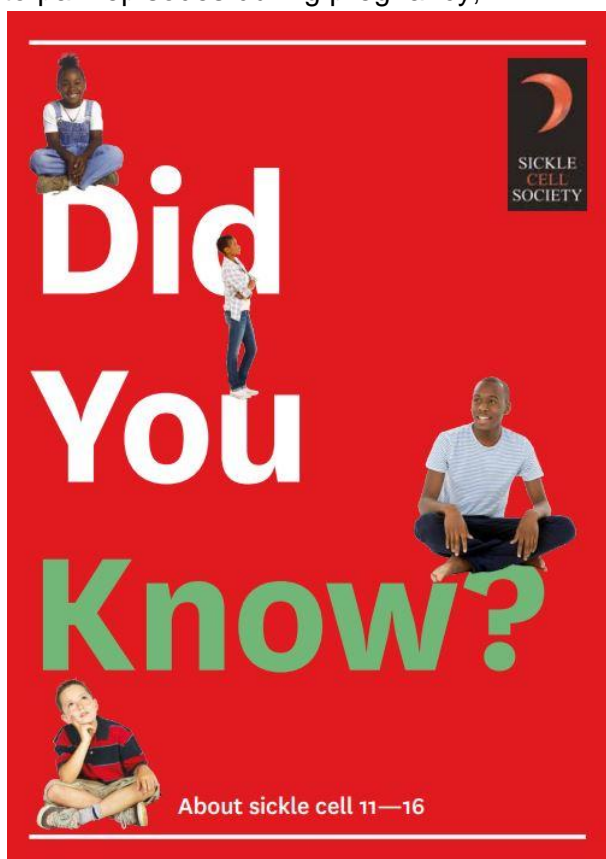
Sickle cell disease is the name for a group of inherited blood disorder that affect the red blood cells. The most serious type is called sickle cell anaemia.

Whilst sickle cell is more commonly associated with people with an African or Caribbean family background in the UK, awareness needs to be raised about how sickle cell disease also affects people of nationalities such as South American, Middle Eastern, Eastern Mediterranean and Asian origin.

Whilst most people will have heard of sickle cell disease, the majority will not really understand the disease and how it impacts on the lives of those with the disease.

For example, women with sickle cell need to be considered as being at high risk during pregnancy. Being pregnant can result in a worsening of their chronic illness and the sickle cell illness can exacerbate complications during pregnancy and in extreme cases this can lead to loss of the foetus and/or the mother.

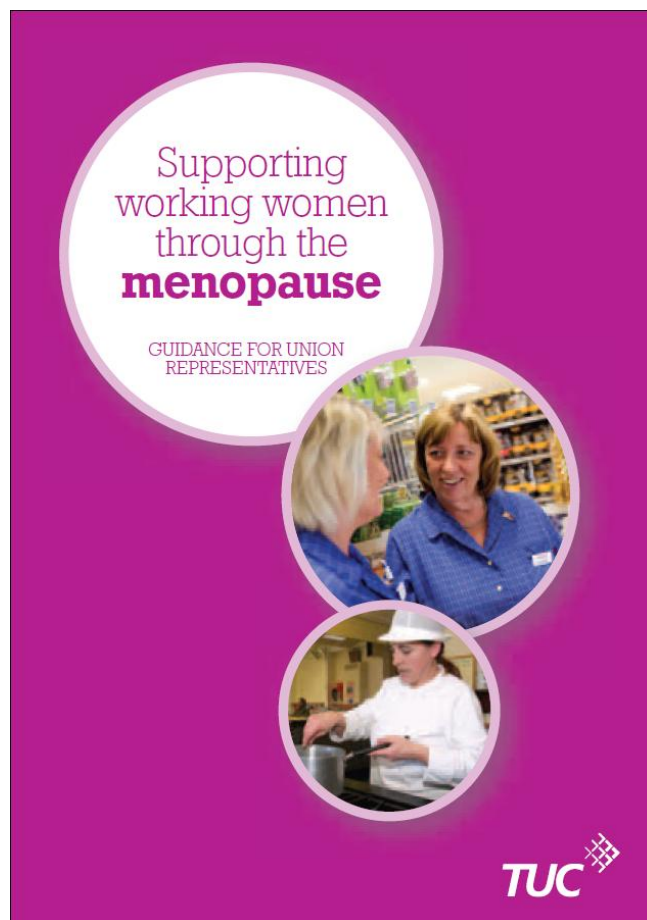
Women with sickle cell are also more prone to pain episodes during pregnancy,



especially in the last few months of pregnancy.

Caring for children with sickle cell can put a strain on all the family but because women still bear most of the responsibility for family caring, this will have a disproportionate impact on the working life of the mother,

especially considering that one or more children in one family might have sickle cell



and need care during painful episodes.

Menopause

Women experiencing debilitating menstrual and menopausal symptoms continue to experience pressure and prejudice about having 'women's problems'. Although symptoms may last a comparatively short time, they can frequently trigger formal monitoring procedures at work.

In a number of workplaces, gender specific illnesses/conditions are dealt with outside the absence/sickness policies. UNISON believes that absences as a result of issues relating to pregnancy, the menopause or the menstrual cycle/periods should not be recorded in the same way as any other sickness absence.

All menopause-related sickness absence should be recorded as an ongoing issue,

rather than individual absences. Many employers use the Bradford Factor to evaluate sickness absence, which penalises frequent short term absences by assigning a negative score to the employee whilst making allowances for a few periods of long-term absence.

Working time arrangements should be flexible enough to ensure that they meet the needs of menopausal women, who may require leave suddenly at short notice. They may also need more or lengthier comfort breaks during the day. But menopause remains a hidden issue and is often trivialised by management and HR departments.

Dementia

According to the Alzheimer's Society, women are disproportionately affected by dementia:

- Over 500,000 people with dementia – 61% – are women
- Women in their 60s are almost twice as

are more than twice as likely to provide intensive, 24-hour care than men

- Female carers report feeling less supported than their male counterparts.

Furthermore, as the state pension age has increased and women are being required to work longer, the impact on them – both as sufferers and as carers – is likely to increase.

For those with early onset dementia – more than 40,000 people aged under 65 in the UK – the situation is particularly complex, particularly as many of them will wish to continue to work after diagnosis.

For the women acting as carers, the difficulties in combining their work and care responsibilities will be immense. Less than half of carers surveyed reported that their employers offered some support with their caring responsibilities, whilst 1 in 5 carers leave work or opt to work part-time in order to cope.



likely to develop Alzheimer's disease over the rest of their lives as they are to develop breast cancer

- Dementia is the leading cause of death for women in the UK, accounting for 12% of women's deaths in 2013
- Between 60 and 70% of all unpaid dementia carers are women, and women

Women and heart attacks

A heart attack is a serious medical emergency in which the supply of blood to the heart is suddenly blocked, usually by a blood clot. A lack of blood to the heart may seriously damage the heart muscle and can be life threatening. Symptoms of heart attack include chest pain, shortness of breath, feeling weak or lightheaded and an overwhelming feeling of anxiety.

Most women don't realise that heart disease can be a bigger risk than cancer because there is a notion that women do not get heart disease and that heart attacks happen to men.

On the contrary, an average of 98 women per day are admitted into hospital every year in the UK following a heart attack. According to the British Heart Foundation, heart disease is the single biggest killer of women all over the world. It kills more than twice as many women as breast cancer in the UK each year. Fortunately, this can be changed because 80 percent of heart diseases may be prevented with education and action.

As a woman gets older, their risk of developing heart disease increases. It is therefore important to be aware of the risk factors that can affect the possibility of developing a heart disease. The more risk factors, the higher the risk. Risk factors include smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, not doing enough physical activities and being overweight.

Identifying and managing the risk factors early on could help lower the risk of developing a heart attack in the future.

It is recommended all women over the age of 40 visit their local GP or nurse for a health check to check their risk of developing a heart disease. You can also request for an NHS health check if you are aged between 40 and 74 and live in England. Similar schemes are available in other parts of the UK.

- Promote policies within the workplace to support the healthy work-life balance for women members and that protect the working conditions of our women members.
- Negotiate sickness absence management workplace policies that are fair and non-discriminatory, and that have agreements on gender specific illness/conditions.
- Raise awareness of how some conditions such as premenstrual syndrome or other menstrual disorders that affect women but are short-lived should not result in the use of conduct or capability procedures.
- Urge branch secretaries to prioritise negotiating protection for women with menopause in line with the UNISON guide, in their health and wellbeing workplace policies.
- Use the UNISON factsheet on 'Women's health – a workplace issue' (www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2017/01/24203.womenshealth.pdf) and bargaining guide 'Women's reproductive health issues' (www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2017/05/Womens-reproductive-health-issues.pdf) within your branch to raise awareness of the issues amongst members and union reps and to help them in workplace negotiations.
- Raise awareness of how some conditions such as premenstrual syndrome or other menstrual disorders that affect women but are short-lived should not result in the use of conduct or capability procedures.
- Support the work of women's health charities and research organisations.
- Negotiate disability leave with employers (further information from 'Disability leave – model agreement and Disability leave – question and answer

Campaign ideas

factsheet' available at www.unison.org.uk/disabled-members).

- Raise awareness of the rising rate of stress-related mental health problems and how they can best be reduced, managed and controlled.
- Negotiate with employers to make adequate provision through employee assistance programmes etc. for employees experiencing stress and mental health issues, and to ensure that they are promoted properly, especially to young women employees.
- Promote guidance on work-related stress and mental wellbeing through branches, regions and women's networks, and use the UNISON factsheet on 'Women's mental health issues – not to be ignored at work' ([/www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2017/02/24227.pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2017/02/24227.pdf)).
- Promote the National Mental Health Day on 10 October each year.
- Get your branch involved with UNISON's 'Mental Health Matters' campaign, further details at www.unison.org.uk/our-campaigns/mental-health-matters
- Work with Labour Link, relevant voluntary sector organisations and others to campaign for proper investment into mental health services.
- Spread awareness of breast cancer and lymphoedema, and the treatment and support services available in your area.
- Negotiate with employers for women to have the right to attend screening sessions during work time without loss of pay, (check out the bargaining guide 'Time off for medical appointments and health screening' www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2017/05/Medicalscreeningleave.pdf) and for those diagnosed to be fully supported during their treatment and, when appropriate, their return to work.
- Make sure women members with breast cancer and lymphoedema are aware of their rights under the Equality Act, and in particular the requirement for reasonable adjustments.
- Lobby the government and MPs to ensure cancer services are improved through the whole cancer journey; from prevention and early diagnosis through to survivorship and end of life and for increased public funding of research.
- Lobby for funding and to raise awareness of the need for personalised prosthesis, wigs and other specialised equipment for Black women who are undergoing treatment for breast cancer.
- Raise awareness amongst UNISON members of the symptoms of ovarian cancer, the relatively simple tests available that could aid early detection.
- Campaign for leaflets and information regarding women's health to be produced in community languages other than English that are accessible and widely available.
- Help ensure that the economic burden of a cancer diagnosis is reduced by raising awareness of any benefits women are entitled to claim and the support available from UNISON's charity There for You.
- Campaign for the government to have the age restrictions lifted on cervical screening and to make screening available to all women.
- Raise awareness among UNISON members of the symptoms of cervical cancer and the importance of attending regular screening (smear tests).
- Raise awareness of endometriosis and of the cost to women suffering from this condition financially and physically.
- Raise awareness of fibroids, and how it disproportionately affects Black women and the different treatment alternatives, particularly the alternatives to hysterectomies.

- Raise awareness and highlight the importance of Group B strep screening, and promote the campaign for routine testing in pregnancy on the NHS.
- Provide guidance to women in your branch on the symptoms and effects of Group B strep.
- Raise awareness of sickle cell disease and provide advice and guidance to women in your branch on the impact of the disease particularly in pregnancy, as well as negotiating appropriate support in the workplace.
- Encourage members to take part in Dementia Awareness training and negotiate improved caring leave, flexible working rights and 'adjustment leave' (a period of leave to allow time to resolve problems caused by a life changing event or illness for an individual or their dependants) at your workplace.
- Encourage more women members to become health and safety reps and ensure that women members' concerns and priorities are adequately reflected in the workplace health and safety agenda.

And don't forget, when you are planning your campaign, to talk to co-workers about the issues and recruit non-members into UNISON.

More information



- **Resources for women members**

www.unison.org.uk/women

- **Stress**

www.unison.org.uk/get-help/knowledge/health-and-safety/stress

- **Gender, safety and health**

This guide (available from the online catalogue, stock number 1982) highlights the different health and safety risks that female and male workers are exposed to at work.
www.unison.org.uk/onlinecatalogue

- **Menopause and work guide for UNISON safety reps**

This guide (available from the online catalogue, stock number 3075) considers menopause as an occupational health issue.
www.unison.org.uk/onlinecatalogue

- **There for you**

There for You offers a unique confidential advice and support service just for members of UNISON and their dependants.
www.unison.org.uk/thereforyou



Providing advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding.
www.mind.org.uk

Mind

15-19 Broadway

Stratford

London E15 4BQ

Tel: 020 8519 2122

Email: supporterservices@mind.org.uk

Mind Cymru

3rd Floor, Castlebridge 4

Castlebridge

5-19 Cowbridge Road East,

Cardiff CF11 9AB

Tel: 029 2039 5123

Email: supporterservices@mind.org.uk



SAMH, the Scottish Association for Mental Health, is Scotland's leading mental health charity.

SAMH
Brunswick House
51 Wilson Street
Glasgow G1 1UZ
Tel: 0141 530 1000
Email: enquire@samh.org.uk
www.samh.org.uk



Inspire (the new name for Niamh, the Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health), focuses on promoting wellbeing for all through our mental health, intellectual/learning disability and professional wellbeing services.

Inspire
Central Office
Lombard House
10-20 Lombard Street
Belfast BT1 1RD
Tel: 028 9032 8474
NI/UK: hello@inspirewellbeing.org
Ireland: dundalk@inspirewellbeing.ie
www.inspirewellbeing.org



Dedicated to achieving the primary prevention of breast cancer by campaigning to reduce our exposure to the carcinogenic and

hazardous chemicals in our environment and everyday products.

Breast Cancer UK
BM Box 7767
London WC1N 3XX
Tel: 0845 680 1322
www.breastcanceruk.org.uk



The only UK wide charity providing care, information and support to people affected by breast cancer.

Breast Cancer Care
Chester House
1-3 Brixton Road
London SW9 6DE
Email: info@breastcancercare.org.uk
Tel: 0345 092 0800
Breast health enquiries: 0808 800 6000
www.breastcancercare.org.uk



The UK's largest breast cancer charity (formed from the merger of Breakthrough Breast Cancer and Breast Cancer Campaign) dedicated to funding research into this devastating disease.

Breast Cancer Now
5th Floor Ibex House
42 - 47 Minories
London EC3N 1DY
Tel: 0333 20 70 300
www.breastcancernow.org

Scotland office:
222 Leith Walk
Edinburgh EH6 5EQ



A membership organisation, registered charity and the UK's national patient support organisation for lymphoedema.

Lymphoedema Support Network
St. Luke's Crypt
Sydney Street
London SW3 6NH
Tel: 020 7351 0990
Information and support: 020 7351 4480
Email: admin@lsn.org.uk
www.lymphoedema.org

Be Breast Aware

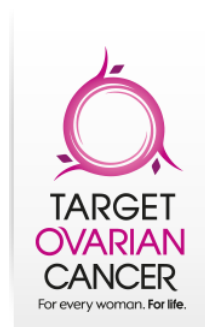
A leaflet to explain to women how to be aware of changes in their breasts.

Available in 18 languages and large print.
www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-breast-screening-awareness-leaflet



The UK's ovarian cancer research charity.
They fund research to save lives.

Ovarian Cancer Action
8-12 Camden High Street
London NW1 0JH
Tel: 0207 380 1730
Email: info@ovarian.org.uk
www.ovarian.org.uk



The UK's leading ovarian cancer charity, working to improve early diagnosis, fund life-saving research and provide much-needed support to women with ovarian cancer.

Target Ovarian Cancer
2 Angel Gate
London EC1V 2PT
Tel: 020 7923 5470
Email: info@targetovariancancer.org.uk
Support Line: 020 7923 5475
support@targetovariancancer.org.uk
www.targetovariancancer.org.uk



The only UK charity dedicated to women and their families affected by cervical cancer and cervical abnormalities. They offer a range of information and support and raise awareness about how cervical cancer can be prevented and campaign for best care and treatment.

Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust
CAN Mezzanine
49 – 51 East Road
London N1 6AH
Tel: 020 7250 8311
Helpline: 0808 802 8000
Email: info@jostrust.org.uk
www.jostrust.org.uk



endometriosis uk

Working to improve the lives of people affected by endometriosis and to decrease the impact it has on those with the condition and their families and friends.

Endometriosis UK
Suites 1 & 2,
46 Manchester Street,
London W1U 7LS
Helpline: 0808 808 2227
Tel: 020 7222 2781
www.endometriosis-uk.org



UK based voluntary not-for-profit organisation which is run by volunteers. It provides balanced information, independent of health care provider's interests.
www.britishfibroidtrust.org.uk



The only UK charity dedicated to eradicating group B Strep infections, including meningitis, in babies.

Group B Strep Support
P O Box 203
Haywards Heath
RH16 1GF
Tel: 01444 416 176
Email: info@gbss.org.uk
www.gbss.org.uk



Supporting and representing people affected by sickle cell disease to improve their overall quality of life.

Sickle Cell Society
54 Station Road
London NW10 4UA
Tel: 020 8961 7795 and 020 8961 8346
Email: info@sicklecellsociety.org
www.sicklecellsociety.org



The UK's leading dementia support and research charity, for anyone affected by any form of dementia in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Alzheimer's Society
43-44 Crutched Friars
London EC3N 2AE
Tel: 0330 3330 804
Email: enquiries@alzheimers.org.uk
National Dementia Helpline:
0300 222 11 22
www.alzheimers.org.uk



The leading dementia organisation in Scotland, campaigning for the rights of people with dementia and their families and providing

an extensive range of innovative and personalised support services.

Alzheimer Scotland
160 Dundee Street
Edinburgh EH11 1DQ
Tel: 0131 243 1453
Email: info@alzscot.org
Dementia Helpline: 0808 808 3000



A charitable organisation that aims to help educate and support women with their healthcare by providing unbiased, accurate information.

Women's Health Concern
Spracklen House, East Wing
Dukes Place
Marlow
Buckinghamshire SL7 2QH
Tel: 01628 890199
www.womens-health-concern.org



Fibromyalgia Action UK provides information and support to sufferers and their families. In addition, the Association provides medical information for professionals and operates a national helpline.

Fibromyalgia Association UK
0300 999 3333
www.fmauk.org

12 Seedhill Road, 3007 Mile End Mill
Paisley, Scotland.PA1 1JS



**British Heart
Foundation**

The British Heart Foundation is a charity organisation in the United Kingdom. It funds research to beat heartbreak from heart and circulatory diseases and their risk factors.

Heart Helpline - for medical enquiries: 0300 330 3311

Phone lines are open Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm
Saturdays 10am - 4pm

Email: hearthelpline@bhf.org.uk

For all other enquiries please visit:
<https://www.bhf.org.uk/>

Abortion rights

UNISON believes that a woman's right to choose with regard to abortion is fundamental to her political, social and economic equality. Control over whether, when and how many children to have is crucial to control over every other aspect of a woman's life.

An overwhelming three quarters of people in Britain support a woman's right to make her own abortion decision.

died but one estimate is that 15% of all maternal deaths were a result of botched backstreet abortions.

The 1967 Abortion Act gave women limited access to safe abortions but that right has had to be defended many times since 1967 and our trade union movement has always been central to that defence. Many women are still unable to access an abortion within the NHS and the law creates unnecessary obstacles and delays which discriminate against women.

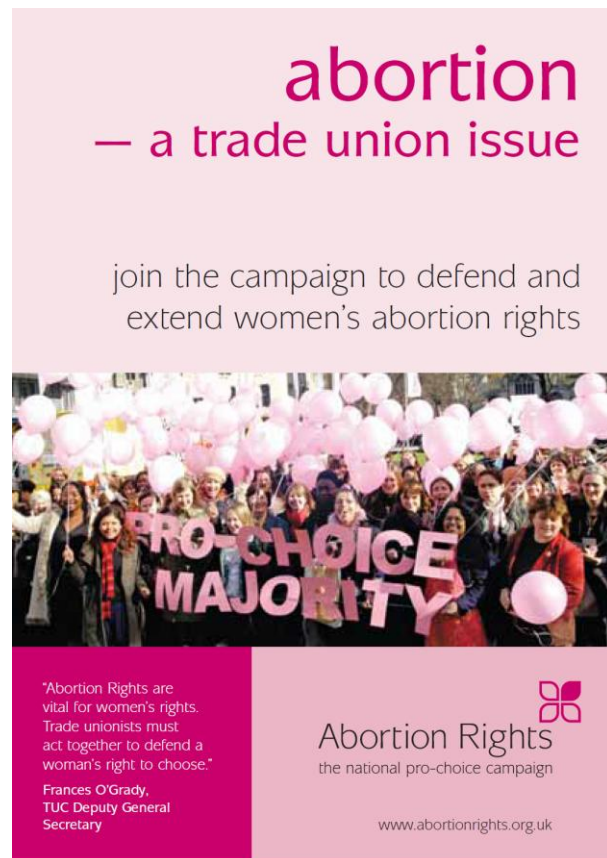
Attacks on UNISON's pro choice policy and support of Abortion Rights UK continue, along with groups picketing outside of UK abortion clinics, with the intention of harassing intimidating women and clinic staff.

The 1967 Abortion Act gave women limited access to safe abortions, but only under specific grounds and if signed off by two doctors.

The Offences Against the Person Act 1861, which made abortion a criminal offence, was still law in Northern Ireland until July 2019. MPs passed a cross-party amendment compelling the government to bring forward regulations to decriminalise abortion in Northern Ireland. The amendment also authorises the Secretary of State to make regulations on abortion, which must come into force by March 2020.

This changes everything. Now the case for full decriminalisation of abortion across England, Scotland and Wales can be made.

The UK government is now obligated to bring forward secondary legislation to decriminalise abortion in Northern Ireland, and to legalise abortion provision. This is the beginning of the end of the abortion ban in Northern Ireland.



The poster features a pink background with the title 'abortion — a trade union issue' in pink and black text. Below the title, it says 'join the campaign to defend and extend women's abortion rights'. A central photograph shows a group of women holding pink balloons and a large sign that reads 'PRO-CHOICE MAJORITY'. At the bottom left, a quote from Frances O'Grady, TUC Deputy General Secretary, states: 'Abortion Rights are vital for women's rights. Trade unionists must act together to defend a woman's right to choose.' The bottom right section contains the 'Abortion Rights' logo, the text 'the national pro-choice campaign', and the website 'www.abortionrights.org.uk'.

In 2017, the Abortion Act was 50 years old. Prior to 1967 around 100,000 illegal abortions were carried out each year in Britain and it is estimated that 35,000 women were hospitalised each year due to botched back-street abortions. No one really knows how many women actually

The ban that has seen thousands of women make lonely journeys to England, Wales and Scotland for abortions that are available to women in the rest of the UK. Those without the means to fund their own travel and accommodation had the option of either carrying an unwanted pregnancy, or risk facing life in prison if caught buying abortion pills online.

There will of course be more battles over this issue. There will still be battles over the shape of legislation, provision, access and medical oversight. Yet, we're confident that they are winnable battles now that the main and fundamental principle has at last been recognised. Women will no longer be denied the right to control her body.

Women must have access to unbiased, unprejudiced, clinically sound and researched information regarding all pregnancy choices including abortion, free from interference and intimidation.



International abortion rights

Internationally, it is estimated that nearly 70,000 women die each year due to botched terminations. They seek them because their government denies them the right to a safe abortion, even in extreme cases such as where their life is in danger or they are the victim of rape.

For example in October 2016 women in Poland took to the streets in huge numbers to prevent the total banning of abortion in their country, organising a 'women's strike' that tens of thousands took part in.

Reproductive rights are under attack from religious and far right extremists across the globe and this attack is part of a broader attempt to control both sexual and reproductive freedoms in the name of 'family' and 'traditional' values. They seek to control and curtail the rights and equality both of women and of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, with United States organisations in particular pushing a programme of anti-LGBT legislation, abstinence based sexual health education and limits to family planning and abortion in Africa.

Campaign ideas

- Raise awareness on the issues facing women choosing to exercise their rights to seek an abortion.
- Publicise the 1967 Abortion Act anniversary events and hold local events.
- Continue to work with and support affiliated and sympathetic organisations such as Abortion Rights UK, Alliance for Choice and the Back Off campaign in highlighting and defending a women's right to choose until this legislation is in place.
- Lobby MPs on a statutory 'buffer zone' for all pickets outside clinics.
- Hold a 'speak out' event where women tell stories about their experiences of abortion, to explode abortion myths – women who have abortions are not feckless and irresponsible!
- Work with and support affiliated and sympathetic organisations such as Abortion Rights UK, Alliance for Choice

and the Back Off campaign in highlighting these attacks on women's rights and defending a women's right to choose.

- Work with appropriate women's groups to research and ascertain the scale of activity of pro-life groups and the impact of these campaigners on a woman's choice.
- Encourage women to undertake leadership and political training and to get involved in politics and their trade union; ensuring women's issues are debated predominantly by women.
- Circulate The Abortion Rights Newsletter through women's networks.
- Work with your regional TUC to ensure a co-ordinated approach in challenging and lobbying against any detrimental changes to abortion counselling.

And don't forget, when you are planning your campaign, to talk to co-workers about the issues and recruit non-members into UNISON.

More information


Abortion Rights
the national pro-choice campaign

The national pro-choice campaign. They campaign to defend and extend women's rights and access to safe, legal abortion.

Abortion Rights
18 Ashwin St
London E8 3DL
Tel: 0207 923 9792
Email: choice@abortionrights.org.uk
www.abortionrights.org.uk



The TUC brings unions together to draw up common policies on issues that matter to people at work. They represent more than 5.6 million workers in 50 unions.

The Trade Union Congress
Congress House
Great Russell Street
London WC1B 3LS
Tel: 020 7636 4030
www.tuc.org.uk

- **Abortion rights**
www.tuc.org.uk/equality-issues/gender-equality/abortion-rights



There has been an upsurge in anti-abortion activity outside clinics in the UK. Women attending pregnancy advice and abortion centres are now regularly exposed to groups of anti-abortion activists standing directly outside. This campaign aims to establish protest-free zones outside centres to provide the reassurance and security women and healthcare staff need.
<http://back-off.org/>



Alliance For Choice

An activist organisation that campaigns for abortion rights in Northern Ireland and supports the Repeal the 8th Campaign and the Abortion Rights Campaign in the rest of Ireland.
www.alliance4choice.com

Women internationally

UNISON's international policy includes contact with international organisations and sister unions abroad - sharing experiences, solidarity work and involving members to defend and promote public services and the people who provide them throughout the world.

For millions of refugees, the prospect of a better life in Europe has driven many to make the treacherous journey across the Mediterranean. Thousands have died en route. Their misery, which makes them easy prey for people smugglers, is part of a global phenomenon that produces almost \$26bn a year.



Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, Afghanistan and parts of sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia have all been affected. Among the displaced, women and children remain the most vulnerable. Never-ending uncertainty, lack of privacy, lack of educational resources, violence, abject hunger and poverty, the threat of being trafficked into slavery are everyday realities faced by

many.

UNISON is regularly involved in a number of projects which aim to assist trade unions abroad to increase their capacity, to defend their rights and to enable them to promote development by improving the lives of working people and creating a more just society.

Modern slavery and human trafficking

While war and conflict inflict suffering on everyone, women are disproportionately affected by forced displacement, destruction of civilian infrastructures, civil rights violations and by sexual and gender-based violence. The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reports that women and girls comprise about half of any refugee, internally displaced or stateless population.

Trafficking women and children specifically for sexual exploitation is a high-profit and low risk endeavour for traffickers and the fastest growing criminal enterprise in the world. A U.S. Department of State 2007 report estimated that 600,000-800,000 men, women and children are trafficked across international borders each year. Approximately 80% are women and girls.

Since Qatar was awarded the 2022 World Cup in 2010, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has exposed numerous violations of the rights of the more than one million migrant workers, including stories of increasing numbers of women and children in detention centres, and rising discontent and unrest in workers in squalid labour camps.

Workers describe being forced to work in 50C heat without drinking water by employers, who withhold salaries for several months and retain their passports to prevent them leaving the country. Sickness is endemic, living conditions are frequently

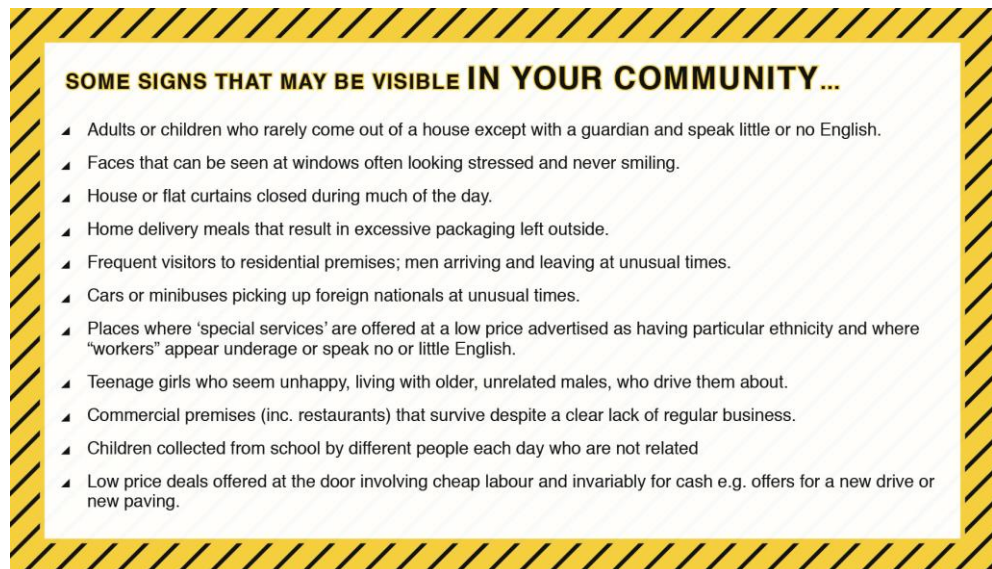
overcrowded and insanitary, and many workers are going hungry. There is also evidence that contracted workers including porters, admin workers, cleaners, gardeners etc, providing support services to universities in Doha including University College London's (UCL) Doha campus, are subject to abuses.

The UK is also a significant destination country for many women, children and men to be trafficked. But latest figures show that UK nationals are also being targeted for modern slavery.

Vulnerable young girls and women are drawn into slavery by traffickers and groomers often on the promise of paid work, or getting rid of their own or their family's debts, or the promise of attention and emotional support.

However, once involved they may find that the 'work' is in the sex industry, often prostitution, where they are compelled to engage in non-consensual, often abusive sexual acts, working for no or little pay, for long hours, and with little or no thought about protection of their health or safety.

Another area of concern is the position of live-in domestic workers, often from overseas, who may be subjected to physical and verbal



abuse, imprisonment within their employers' home, denial of access to telephones/internet, and removal of their passports to prevent escape. Such women are often forced to sleep in kitchens or cellars, not allowed to mix with other people, and may also be subject to sexual abuse by family members. These women may also be denied access to healthcare, even for serious illnesses.

All sex trafficking and slavery violates basic human rights, including the rights to bodily integrity, equality, dignity, health, security, and freedom from violence and torture.



**International Day of the Girl Child
11 October**

International day of the girl child

The United Nations international day of the girl child, inaugurated in 2012, is celebrated on October 11. The day aims to help galvanise worldwide enthusiasm for goals to better girls' lives, providing an opportunity for them to show leadership and reach their full potential.

One issue that is standing in the way of girls' progress is child, early and forced marriage.

Girls who are child brides miss out on education, are more vulnerable to physical and sexual violence, and bear children before they are physically or emotionally prepared. The cycle of violence that begins in girlhood, carries over into womanhood and across generations.

IS CHILD MARRIAGE CHILD LABOUR?		
How does "child marriage" measure up against the ILO's criteria for child labour?		
	CHILD LABOUR	CHILD MARRIAGE
ANY FORM OF CHILD LABOUR		
Is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children	✓	✓
Interferes with children's schooling	✓	✓
THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR		
Include slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children	✓	✓
HAZARDOUS WORK		
Exposes children to physical abuse	✓	✓
Exposes children to psychological abuse	✓	✓
Exposes children to sexual abuse	✓	✓
Forces children to work long hours	✓	✓
Forces children to work long night shifts	✓	✓
Unreasonably confines children to the premises of their employer	✓	✓
Could result in a child's death	✓	✓
Could result in a child's injury, illness or permanent disability	✓	✓
Should not be done under the age of 18	✓	✓
SEE THE DIFFERENCE? NEITHER DO WE.		

UN and UNICEF statistics show that:

- Globally, one in seven adolescent girls aged 15 - 19 is currently married or in union.
- In developing countries (excluding China), one in every three girls is married before reaching age 18. This means the futures of 47,700 girls are derailed every day.
- Girls who are married early often face a cascade of other human rights abuses. They are more vulnerable to physical and sexual violence. They are often pulled out of school to take on domestic

responsibilities. They are less able to advocate for themselves and their rights.

- Child marriage is often followed by pregnancy, even if a girl is not yet physically or mentally ready. Every day, over 20,000 girls under age 18 give birth in developing countries—over 7 million a year.
 - Educated girls are more likely to delay marriage and pregnancy. With secondary schooling, girls are up to six times less likely to marry as children compared to girls who have little or no education.
 - Across the globe, rates of child marriage are highest in sub-Saharan Africa, where around 4 in 10 girls marry before age 18; about one in eight were married or in union before age 15. This is followed by Latin America and the Caribbean and the Middle East and North Africa, where 24 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively, of women between the ages of 20 and 24 were married in childhood.

UNISON supports the call by AIDS-Free World for the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to consider child marriage as child labour. Then they would be included in child labour statistics, and in international action to end child

labour.

Child marriage is not merely a harmful traditional practice; it is a crime. It is child labour in its worst form, and a complete violation of a girl's human rights.

Although there is much practical work to be done to support young women and girls, the United Nations international day of the girl child is nonetheless an important development which should be supported as an opportunity to celebrate and to educate.



Figures quoted in 'The Guardian' estimate that 22,000 women will die this year because of unsafe abortions, and 8.4 million more will suffer serious illness or injury. Millions more

Donald Trump and implications for women's rights

As one of his first acts as President, Donald Trump decided to put the rights of women at risk by reinstating the so-called 'global gag rule'. The rule blocks US federal international funding for non-governmental organisations that provide abortion counselling or referrals, advocate to decriminalise abortion or expand abortion services – even though the US does not fund these services itself.

The global gag rule, also known as the Mexico City policy, was first introduced by Ronald Regan in 1984. This rule has been routinely removed by Democratic Presidents but re-instated by Republicans. Evidence from the Bush administrations proved that the global gag rule was a barrier to the provision of safe & effective sexual & reproductive health services for women in Africa and Central / South America.

Not content with re-instating the gag rule, Trump is extending the rule's powers so that it no longer applies solely to family planning assistance given by the US government, but also to funding given to NGOs focusing on disease control.

will lose access to contraceptives and condoms because the NGOs who once provided them with such services will no longer exist.

Campaign ideas

- Support and build on links with trade union women overseas and global women's organisations and get involved with international solidarity campaigns that highlight all forms of discrimination and violence against women.
- Affiliate your branch to those international organisations that are a priority for UNISON.
- Raise awareness amongst women members of UNISON's Trade Union International Development Fund that provides funding for international initiatives between UNISON and sister unions in other countries, and to encourage them to apply for such funding.
- Encourage UNISON women members to become involved by becoming Branch International Officers.
- Promote awareness of women-specific atrocities in countries that fall within the

international work programme, and encourage regional international committees to include a gender element to their work programmes.

- Raise awareness across UNISON about the importance of messages of solidarity to persecuted human rights defenders.
- Engage with the UN Committee on the Ending of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and push for the UK government to actively support action to end violence against women internationally.
- Support the international world day against trafficking in human persons on 30 July.
- Support the Play Fair Qatar campaign and raise awareness of the campaign.
- Raise awareness amongst members in your branch about trafficking and how to recognise potential signs of victims of modern slavery and what to do – more details at www.stopthetraffik.org/uk/page/spot-the-signs.
- Celebrate and raise awareness of international women's day on 8 March and the international day for the elimination of violence against women on 25 November.
- Encourage regional women's groups to work with regional young members' forums to mark the international day of the girl child on October 11 and promote the day and linked events among members.
- Raise awareness and support the AIDs Free World 'Child Marriage is Child Labour' campaign.
- Promote the ILGA-Europe website for the latest European anti-hate crime campaigns.
- Support Abortion Rights and other appropriate international partners in campaigning against Trump's attacks on women's rights.

And don't forget, when you are planning your campaign, to talk to co-workers about the

issues and recruit non-members into UNISON.

More information



- **Resources for women members**

www.unison.org.uk/women

- **Working internationally**

www.unison.org.uk/about/what-we-do/working-internationally



The TUC brings unions together to draw up common policies on issues that matter to people at work. They represent more than 5.6 million workers in 50 unions.

The Trade Union Congress
Congress House
Great Russell Street
London WC1B 3LS
Tel: 020 7636 4030
www.tuc.org.uk

- **International issues**

www.tuc.org.uk/international-issues



International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

This is the main international trade union organisation, representing the interests of working people worldwide.

ITUC
Boulevard du Roi Albert II, 5, Bte 1

1210 Brussels, Belgium
Email: info@ituc-csi.org
www.ituc-csi.org

- **Women**

www.ituc-csi.org/women



Europe's trade unions came together to form the ETUC, so as to speak with a single voice on behalf of European workers and have a stronger say in EU decision-making.

ETUC

Boulevard Roi Albert II, 5
B-1210 Brussels, Belgium
Email: etuc@etuc.org
www.etuc.org

- **Gender equality**

www.etuc.org/issue/gender-equality



Public Services International is a global trade union federation representing 20 million working women and men who deliver vital public services in 150 countries.

Public Services International
45 avenue Voltaire
BP 9
F- 01211 Ferney-Voltaire Cedex
France
Email: psi@world-psi.org
www.world-psi.org

- **Gender equality**

www.world-psi.org/en/issue/gender-equality

- **Ending violence against women**

www.world-psi.org/en/issue/vaw



Representing more than 20 million workers from over 900 trade unions in the fastest growing sectors in the world – skills and services.

Uni Global Union
8-10 Avenue Reverdil
CH - 1260 Nyon, Switzerland
Email: contact@uniglobalunion.org
www.uniglobalunion.org

- **Equal opportunities**

www.uniglobalunion.org/groups/equal-opportunities/news



Representing 8 million public service workers across Europe.

EPSU
Rue Joseph II, 40, Box 5
1000 Brussels, Belgium
Email: epsu@epsu.org
www.epsu.org

- **Women and gender equality**

www.epsu.org/search/networks/women-gender-equality



Amnesty

Working to protect men, women and children wherever justice, freedom, truth and dignity are denied.

Amnesty International UK
Human Rights Action Centre
17-25 New Inn Yard
London EC2A 3EA
General enquiries 020 7033 1500
Email: sct@amnesty.org.uk
www.amnesty.org.uk

- **Women's Human Rights**
www.amnesty.org.uk/issues/womens-human-rights
- **United States of America**
www.amnesty.org.uk/issues/united-states-america



A movement of people who are committed to global justice.

War on Want
44-48 Shepherdess Walk
London N1 7JP
Tel: 020 7324 5040
www.waronwant.org



Child Marriage is Child Labour is a campaign by **AIDS-Free World**, an international advocacy organisation whose work on child marriage stems from the concern that girls forced into marriage prematurely are at an especially high risk of contracting HIV from their older, more sexually experienced 'husbands' – and HIV now affects adolescent girls at rates much higher than those of their male counterparts.

<http://childmarriageischildlabour.com/>



A maternal health charity aiming to make birth safer in Sub Saharan Africa, by providing medication to treat eclampsia and post partum haemorrhage. They also facilitate midwifery training programmes in several countries to help train and update qualified midwives to enhance their clinical skills in caring for mother and baby.

Email:
angela.gorman@lifeforafricanmothers.org
Tel: 0044 (0)2920 343774
<http://lifeforafricanmothers.org/>



Working to end slavery throughout the world. Together with local organisations they work to secure the freedom of those affected by slavery and press for effective implementation of laws against slavery.
Tel: 020 7501 8920
Email: info@antislavery.org
www.antislavery.org



A TUC campaign to raise awareness - working with football fans - of the abuse of worker rights to World Cup workers in Qatar.
www.playfairqatar.org.uk



Campaigning for garment workers' rights worldwide. They support garment workers' efforts to improve their working conditions and change the fashion industry for the better. They raise awareness, provide information and promote international solidarity between workers and consumers.

Labour Behind the Label
The Easton Business Centre
Felix Road
Easton
Bristol BS5 0HE
Tel: 0117 941 5844
Email: info@labourbehindthelabel.org
www.labourbehindthelabel.org



In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. It aims to be a dynamic and strong champion for women and girls, providing them with a powerful voice at the global, regional and local levels.
www.unwomen.org

- **International day of the girl child**

www.un.org/en/events/girlchild/index.shtml



A children's charity that strives to advance children's rights and equality for girls all over the world.

Plan International UK
Finsgate, 5-7 Cranwood Street
London EC1V 9LH
Tel: 0300 777 9777
<https://plan-uk.org/>

- **International day of the girl**

plan-international.org/because-i-am-a-girl/international-day-of-the-girl



A coalition of organisations and individuals that have come together to protest against Donald Trump's planned state visit to the UK.
www.stoptrump.org.uk

Get involved

This guide is an introduction to some of the issues that women's self organisation has identified as priorities.

There are many more campaigns, and many more sources of information and support.

Keep up to date on our web pages at **www.unison.org.uk/women**

Facebook page at **www.facebook.com/unisonwomen**

Twitter **@WomenInUnison**

Get involved in your branch or regional women's group to make sure you hear about what's going on.

Getting help from UNISON

There is a wealth of expertise within UNISON that is available to support you when you run campaigns.

www.unison.org.uk/our-campaigns

As a first point of call, check the website for contact details that relate to individual issues or call **UNISONDirect 0800 0857 857** for details of your regional contact.

There for you (formerly UNISON Welfare) may be able to provide support if you or members are dealing with any of the issues raised in this guide. 'There for you' is a unique confidential service offering advice and support just for

UNISON members and their families, including:

- Financial assistance
- Debt advice
- Wellbeing breaks
- Support and information

'There for you' is a registered charity (No 1023552).

To find out more call **020 7121 5620** or email: **thereforyou@unison.co.uk** or visit the website:

www.unison.org.uk/thereforyou



Three simple ways to
join UNISON today:



Join online at
joinunison.org



Call us on
0800 171 2193



Ask your UNISON rep
for an application form