



JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF WOMEN 50P SPRING 2020

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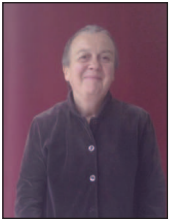
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# women and OHS...



**SUSAN MURRAY RETIRED FROM HER POST AS NATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVISER AT UNITE IN APRIL 2018**

**SHE WORKED WITH THE IUF (THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION ORGANISATION FOR FOOD AND FARM WORKERS) TO HELP DEVELOP MAKING WOMEN VISIBLE IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**T**RADE unions help make workplaces safer and healthier for all workers, women and men, but often women's occupational health and safety (OHS) is neglected, putting workers at risk of injury and ill-health.

In spite of many and continuing efforts by women trade unionists since the 19th century

■ Many women trade union members complain that their health and safety issues, such as gender-related violence, discriminatory dress-codes, exposure to chemicals, inappropriate and ill-fitting personal protective equipment, stress, pregnancy, menstruation and menopause and access to safe, clean and secure sanitary and washing facilities are not being adequately addressed.

■ Gender segregation in jobs continues though women now make up 48.5% of the global workforce and women and men may be exposed to different physical and psychological risks in the workplace.

■ At the beginning of the 20th century married women were designated in the British census as "unoccupied" though they were of course fully occupied on unpaid household tasks. It is still the case that women carry out the vast majority of "invisible", heavy and unpaid work in the home: caring, cleaning and cooking in addition to going out to paid work. This double jeopardy to their health is not well recognised.

■ Women's OHS is under-researched, leading to a data gap, and therefore OHS research carried out on men is often applied arbitrarily to women

## it's an international issue

In response to their affiliates' concerns, the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) has launched *Making Women Visible in Occupational Health and Safety*, a resource to encourage the integration of gender into workplace health and safety.

This resource includes a brief outline of the problem, specific concerns raised by IUF affiliates, and proposals for action.

Plugging the data gap by finding out what is actually happening requires trade union action to make women workers visible so their issues can be addressed. The resource includes an illustrated briefing on do it yourself research including body and hazard mapping, and a checklist of

issues which can help trade union members fully integrate gender into occupational health and safety.

A gendered approach to OHS emphasizes that it is the employers' responsibility to make the workplace safe for every worker and exposes the dangers of behaviour-based safety, which makes the individual worker responsible for workplace safety.

Gender sensitivity is more than comparing men's and women's disease and injury rates. It is a re-examination of workplace reality that imposes changes

in the usual way of proceeding in order to improve the quality of information about male and female workers.

Messing et al "Be the fairest of them all: challenges and recommendations for the treatment of gender in occupational health research". *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, 43, 618-629.

**MAKING WOMEN VISIBLE IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**  
[HTTP://WWW.IUF.ORG/W/SITES/DEFAULT/FILES/MAKINGWOMENVISIBLEINOHS\\_ENGLISHWEB.PDF](http://www.iuf.org/w/sites/default/files/makingwomenvisibleinohs_englishweb.pdf)

## we're working for **free**



**W**OMEN in Britain work an average of two months for free each year, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) revealed on 4 March 2020, Women's Pay Day.

The analysis was released just before the TUC kicked off its women's conference in London and called on the government and businesses to take meaningful action on the pay gap.

It revealed that the average gender pay gap is 17.3 per cent, which means that women have to wait 62 days before their pay rate catches up with pay earned by men

In parts of Britain where the gender pay gap is wider, women have to work for free for longer: the South East has a gap of 20.5 per cent, meaning that its Women's Pay Day won't arrive for another 12 days.

Regional variations in the pay gap are likely to be caused by differences in the types of jobs and industries that are most common.

In some industries – even those dominated by female workers, such as educa-

tion and social care – women have to wait until April or May for their Women's Pay Day, as on average they earn much less per hour than men.

This is because they are more likely to be in part-time jobs or lower-paid roles.

In education the gender pay gap is 25.4 per cent, so the average woman effectively works for free for more than a quarter of the year.

And in professional, scientific and technical jobs, the average woman waits 88 days for her Women's Pay Day on March 28.

The longest wait comes in finance and insurance, where the gender pay gap is the equivalent of 123 days.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady warned that the economy remained "stacked against working women" and that, at the current rate, it would take another 50 years to close the gap.

She said: "No more excuses: government must get on and sort the gender pay gap now."

"Just publishing gender pay gaps isn't enough. Companies must be required to explain what steps they'll take to close their gender pay gaps – bosses who don't comply with the law should be fined."

"And employers must do more to help women balance family responsibilities and work. Flexible working should be a day-one right for everyone at work."

She said that every woman should be in a union to get the pay they deserve.

Since 2011 the gender pay gap has fallen by an average of just 0.4 percentage points a year. At this rate it will take around **50 years** to achieve pay parity between men and women.



# vibrant and inspiring

NAW EC MEMBER LIZ PAYNE REPORTS ON  
THE 2020 TUC WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

**F**ROM 4 to 6 March more than 300 women – delegates, observers, visitors, media and exhibitors – gathered at Congress House in London for the 2020 Women's TUC – three days of discussion, fringe meetings, workshops, networking and simply being together in sisterhood.

The scene was set in the opening speeches by Ged Nichols, TUC president, and Francis O'Grady, TUC general secretary. Ged told a packed hall that this could be the most important Women's TUC in recent times. Years of austerity and the dismantling of the benefits system had left Britain one of the most gender-unequal societies in the developed world he told the conference. Now was the time to roll back the injustice and hold the government to account. These were testing times, but Ged urged that we join together because "collective action works".

Francis O'Grady's contribution gained her a standing ovation. The new prime minister had himself brought deplorable ideas into the heart of government. "Extremism is being normalised" she said. But strong and growing unions could stand up to right-wing populism, the targets of which were trade-unionists, socialists and feminists. She told the conference that we must stand together and organise to push back sexism and racism in the workplace.

The debate opened with motions on equal rights and equal pay. First up was a composite entitled 'New Deal for Women Workers', proposed by CWU and seconded by UNISON. Speakers pointed to the unacceptable gender pay gap in this the fiftieth anniversary year of the Equal Pay Act 1970, the segregation of women in low paid jobs and the huge number of women in uncertain work – also reflected in the high proportion of agency workers who are female. This composite was voted as the Women's TUC motion to take to the TUC Congress in September. We urge all unions to promote its contents and support it fully by fighting for the implementation of its demands.

Other motions in this section included a call to end pregnancy and maternity discrimination. 54,000 women in the UK lose their jobs as a result of pregnancy despite legislation expressly forbidding this discrimination, and a condemnation of the plight of outsourced workers, the majority of them women on "very, very low pay".

The debates on women's health in the workplace covered major issues including period dignity, recognition of and provision for women experiencing the menopause, women and malnutrition and serious issues concerning work-related mental health. A motion on the latter was

moved by Accord in a powerful speech that drew attention to the impact of huge job losses in the banking sector on the mental health of those who remained as well as those lost through redundancy. Those left behind were working long hours to try and get through the enormous workload created by the layoffs, as well as covering their own ongoing jobs, often working through lunch breaks and well into the evenings. This was reinforced by other women who went to the rostrum to draw attention to the stress caused by huge understaffing in the NHS, schools and other sectors. Several described education workplaces as 'toxic', with colleagues additionally under constant threat of abuse.

Motions on 'Public Services, Women and the State' covered the plight of hundreds of pregnant women prisoners given the woefully inadequate and sometimes abusive care in prisons; the desperate situation of migrant women charged an average of £6,000 for NHS maternity care, and the disproportionate number of women and their children thrown into poverty through years of austerity measures and cuts in services. Not only was the impact of homelessness graphically described by a GMB speaker but also the way in which it can come upon any one of us – suddenly, almost without warning, so that we find ourselves without refuge and support in a dangerous and hostile world. Hers was an astonishing personal account, reminiscent of 'Cathy come Home'.

A major focus was on the shocking level of violence against women and girls. Conference condemned the 'one violent crime a minute' against women – assaults at work, at home, on public transport, in the street and online. They both ruin lives and cost lives. A clear message was adopted on sexual harassment: It is never OK! An emergency motion 'Justice for Survivors of Rape: Cyprus Rape Case' proposed by the NEU, condemned "the appalling misogynistic treatment of the 19-year-old woman in the recent case...widely reported on 8 January". The motion called on the TUC Women's Committee to urge affiliates to support an appeal to clear her name. The proceedings in Cyprus, it stated, were symptomatic of a global failure of justice systems to deliver on women's and girls' rights. A key to tackling this, the motion stressed, is through education – on the significance of consent, respect for appropriate boundaries and on the reality and absolute unacceptability of abuse and violence against women and girls.

In the international debate, conference considered the state of women's rights 25 years on from the fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing titled 'Action for Equality, Development and Peace'. Despite progress the 1995 goals were far from met and the struggle must continue. Other motions focussed on

human rights in Turkey, solidarity with the women of Latin America and the plight of Palestinian children. Conference heard that 700 children were in prison at any one time having been prosecuted in criminal courts which have a 95% conviction rate. This was having a knock-on effect also on children's access to education as many parents feared to send their children to school lest they be picked up and taken into custody while away from home. The safety, security and education of children was crucial as 40% of the population of Palestine is under 15 years old.

Lastly but very importantly a series of motions on education and young women included the importance of celebrating black women and girls in education, the imperative of relationship and sex education and support, sexist attitudes forming a barrier to the career progression of women teachers and the crucial need for better financial support for student midwives.

The debates were interspersed with guest speakers, workshops and fringe meetings. Samira Ahmed (NUJ), who won her fight for equal pay in broadcast journalism, told the full conference that you do not always win but you always have to fight. She praised the ground-breaking struggles of the women at Ford Dagenham and Grunwick and said that she had been inspired by them. She paid tribute to her union the NUJ and urged women to join their unions. A packed fringe on equal pay was held on the first evening at which Caroline Underhill of Thompsons Solicitors spoke on equal pay and the law. Michele Roberts, RMT's president, spoke on the scourge of outsourcing with its devastating impact on women's pay and Jackie Marshall of POA set out the very unequal treatment of women employees in terms of jobs, pay and conditions in the prison service and the imperative of change.

As always, the exhibition stalls brought a wealth of information, literature and campaigning energy to the event; they included CND, Cuba Solidarity, Maternity Action, National Pensioners' Convention, Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Stand up to Racism, War on Want and the Women's Budget Group.

It was indeed one of the most vibrant TUC Women's Conferences in recent times and I feel sure that the identification of the biggest issues for women, the resolve to fight together for their resolution and the inspiration and confidence we gained from being together will give us strength as we go through the difficult and dangerous days ahead and on into what will undoubtedly be a massive struggle for our rights in a very changed post-Covid-19 Britain.

LIZ PAYNE ATTENDED THE TUC WOMEN'S  
CONFERENCE AS AN OBSERVER FOR HER  
TRADE UNION COUNCIL

# falling through the gap

**SOME SELF-EMPLOYED WORKERS ARE FALLING THROUGH THE GAP SAYS MOLLIE BROWN, AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF WOMEN**

**C**HANCELLOR Rishi Sunak has won huge praise for the measures he has announced on support being made available to the self-employed.

It's been announced that these workers will get 80 per cent of their self-employed net earnings in the form of a self-employment support grant.

Some pointed out that waiting till June isn't ideal – but many were relieved just to have some help. The announcement was certainly welcome and will help many self-employed workers through these unprecedented times.

But a group of us were hanging onto that word the Chancellor frequently used: "majority". Those that are "majority self-employed" would benefit.

It stuck with me and gave me a bad feeling. Upon further inspection it was clarified that 50 per cent of your income must come from self-employment for you to qualify for the grant.

It would stand to reason as an initial thought that this is to prevent people being able to access both the employed workers' support and self-employed support, however what it actually means for those in this group is that they are discriminated against for having two income types, and can only get support for one part of that income.

Many people do not earn enough on an employed minimum wage alone, or a part-time contract. This is after all a time when underemployment is considered a global phenomenon.

To rectify this many look to ways to generate alternative extra income and become self-employed alongside their employment. For instance, 60 per cent of their income could come from employment, the other 40 per cent from "self-employment".

For example, a full-time retail worker might in the evening work as a self-employed delivery driver. This would previously have been applauded as the right thing to do, to generate more income for yourself rather than expect the state to owe you a living.

But what it appears to mean in a global pandemic is that when you lose all your income you are only eligible for 80 per cent of 60 per cent. You don't qualify for a self-employment support grant for the other 40 per cent of your pre-crisis income.

It seems that the government is still so preoccupied with ensuring people don't get "too much" that it's leaving large numbers with nowhere near enough.

On top of this, those that haven't declared a profit for the last three years also miss out, despite HMRC advice that most new businesses wouldn't turn a profit for at least two years. Further,



those in their first year of self-employment are also not entitled to claim.

The eligibility criteria are as follows: your self-employed trading profits must be less than £50,000 and more than half of your income come from self-employment. This is determined by at least one of the following conditions being true:

- Having trading profits/partnership trading profits in 2018-19 of less than £50,000 and these profits constitute more than half of your total taxable income

- Having average trading profits in 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19 of less than £50,000 and these profits constitute more than half of your average taxable income in the same period.

If you started trading between 2016-19, HMRC will only use those years for which you filed a self-assessment tax return.

So to be clear: if you rely on self-employment for 40 per cent of your income you aren't eligible for that portion of your income. If you started your business in the last tax year you aren't eligible. If you failed to make a profit on a new business in the last three years you aren't eligible.

There are simple solutions to all three problems, but I can only guess whether the government is worried about "affordability" or if this is just an ill-thought-out measure announced to please the majority.

For those who fall through the gaps the only option is to claim universal credit, if you aren't over the threshold on 80 per cent of your earnings from employment.

This means there are stark inequalities in how self-employed people are being treated. One could be receiving assistance of £600 a week, another as little as £91 a week.

Even the universal credit option has drawbacks. The benefits system cannot cope with the volume of claims being put in now.

Already short-staffed due to years of cuts, this is made worse as staff have to self-isolate after developing Covid-19 symptoms. There were over three million new claims recorded last week.

Many are not aware that if you are

receiving any other social security that welfare support will be stopped if you apply for universal credit – including housing benefit, child tax credits, payments people rely on to get by week to week.

Then the five-week assessment period kicks in. Though claimants have been advised that they will get an advance payment, many don't realise that their first payment will be assessed on the five weeks prior: when people will have received their last month's pay or the self-employed will be receiving final invoices that they have been desperately chasing for work carried out.

We are also aware that the other announcements of support have not turned out to be what they seemed.

"Security for renters" and the three-month mortgage holiday announced are not as rosy as presented. Even the support for the employed appears to be causing confusion for so many and people are being left in destitution while being prevented from going out to work and earn an income.

This will continue to cause problems with people breaking the rules of self-isolation set by the government. The confusion causes genuine anxiety and people are turning on each other – pointing the blame in all directions except for the right one.

The systems they have put in place are simply nowhere near good enough.

They fail to support the worst off in society and are created around the idea that we are all untrustworthy. It is again a Conservative government that is putting money before lives and the measures it has put in place are full of inconsistencies.

The disparities in available support lead to workers working when it isn't safe to do so and it is costing lives daily. The labour movement urgently needs to call out the gaps in government provision and fight for emergency measures that protect all workers' incomes.

**THIS ARTICLE FIRST APPEARED IN THE MORNING STAR ON WEDNESDAY 1 APRIL 2020**

## UK sick pay

The UK's Statutory Sick Pay is the second lowest in Europe and is in breach of international law.

Workers are entitled to just £94.25 a week when they off sick – significantly less than the National Minimum Wage.

The majority of EU Member States provide a higher rate of pay. Only three countries – including the UK – apply a flat rate of Statutory Sick Pay to all workers, and we are one of only four that do not extend this protection to the self-employed.

# women's aid continues

## WOMEN'S AID SAYS THEY ARE STILL HERE TO HELP DURING THE PANDEMIC

**W**E know that Covid-19 will have serious impacts on the lives of women and children. Survivors are telling us that they are feeling unsafe with the prospect of being isolated in the house with their perpetrator. We want to reassure survivors and local specialist services that we are here for you and we will be doing everything we can to support you during this challenging time.

Try and keep a mobile phone with you at all times if possible. The police are a key service when in immediate danger. Do not be afraid to call 999 in an emergency.

### silent solutions

Familiarise yourself with The Silent Solution system. This is a system for victims of domestic abuse who might be afraid of further danger and escalation of harm if they are overheard when calling 999 in an emergency.

When somebody calls 999, an operator will ask which emergency service is required. If you are not able to ask for help, your call will be forwarded to a police system and you will hear an automated message.

If 55 is pressed by the caller, the system will detect this. The operator will then transfer the call to the relevant police force as an emergency.

National helplines, email, text and live chat support services, and local specialist services, are currently open for business as usual, although their delivery is likely to have to adapt over the coming weeks.

### help and support

Some local support services in the community may be temporarily suspended. This will mean that some survivors will feel particularly isolated.

If you were accessing counselling that has now been suspended; some counselling services can continue to provide helpline support. For example, Supportline provide a confidential telephone

helpline and email counselling service. Particularly to those at risk of abuse or are isolated: [www.supportline.org.uk](http://www.supportline.org.uk)

Women's Aid is continuing to provide the following services:

■ The Survivors' Forum is an online resource for survivors of domestic abuse. The Survivors' forum can be accessed 24/7. This is a place where survivors can support each other and share their experiences.

■ Women's Aid Live Chat is currently available Monday to Friday 10-12pm. This could be a safer way to access some support; particularly if an abuser might also be in the property so it would be unsafe to make a telephone call.

■ Women's Aid Email Service is still operating and can also provide support.

**FOR DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT NATIONAL AND LOCAL SUPPORT SERVICES GO TO: [HTTPS://WWW.WOMENSAID.ORG.UK/INFORMATION-SUPPORT/](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/)**

# hollow praise indeed

**I**N June 2017, MPs Jeremy Corbyn, Diane Abbott, Jonathan Ashworth, Emily Thornberry, John McDonnell and Nicholas Brown tabled an amendment to the Queen's Speech calling on the Government "to end the public sector pay cap and give the emergency and public services a fair pay rise". This was in the context of seven years of austerity and aimed at ending what had been effectively a pay cut for nurses, police and firefighters. The amendment, taken only weeks after the terrorist attack at London Bridge and the consequent fine words for public servants' valour, was defeated by 323 to 309 votes. Tory and DUP MPs cheered as the pay rise was defeated.

Diane Abbott's words from 2017 are worth remembering in 2020: "It is one thing... to praise public service workers for their bravery, heroism and effectiveness at times of national emergency but we need to treat them fairly every other day of the year".

Remember these names...

## Tory

Nigel Adams (Selby and Ainsty)  
Bim Afolami (Hitchin and Harpenden)  
Adam Afriyie (Windsor)  
Peter Aldous (Waveney)  
Lucy Allan (Telford)  
Heidi Allen (South Cambridgeshire)  
Stuart Andrew (Pudsey)  
Edward Argar (Charnwood)  
Victoria Atkins (Louth and Horncastle)  
Mr Richard Bacon (South Norfolk)  
Mrs Kemi Badenoch (Saffron Walden)  
Mr Steve Baker (Wycombe)  
Harriett Baldwin (West Worcestershire)  
Stephen Barclay (North East Cambridgeshire)  
Mr John Baron (Basildon and Billericay)  
Guto Bebb (Aberconwy)  
Sir Henry Bellingham (North West Norfolk)  
Richard Benyon (Newbury)  
Sir Paul Beresford (Mole Valley)  
Jake Berry (Rossendale and Darwen)  
Bob Blackman (Harrow East)  
Crispin Blunt (Reigate)  
Nick Boles (Grantham and Stamford)  
Mr Peter Bone (Wellingborough)  
Sir Peter Bottomley (Worthing West)  
Andrew C Bowie (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine)  
Ben Bradley (Mansfield)  
Karen Bradley (Staffordshire Moorlands)  
Mr Graham Brady (Altrincham and Sale West)  
Jack Brereton (Stoke-on-Trent South)  
Andrew Bridgen (North West Leicestershire)  
Steve Brine (Winchester)  
James Brokenshire (Old Bexley and Sidcup)  
Fiona Bruce (Congleton)  
Robert Buckland (South Swindon)

Alex Burghart (Brentwood and Ongar)  
Conor Burns (Bournemouth West)  
Alistair Burt (North East Bedfordshire)  
Alun Cairns (Vale of Glamorgan)  
James Cartlidge (South Suffolk)  
Sir William Cash (Stone)  
Maria Caulfield (Lewes)  
Alex Chalk (Cheltenham)  
Rehman Chishti (Gillingham and Rainham)  
Mr Christopher Chope (Christchurch)  
Jo Churchill (Bury St Edmunds)  
Colin Clark (Gordon)  
Greg Clark (Tunbridge Wells)  
Mr Kenneth Clarke (Rushcliffe)  
Mr Simon Clarke (Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland)  
James Cleverly (Braintree)  
Geoffrey Clifton-Brown (The Cotswolds)  
Dr Thérèse Coffey (Suffolk Coastal)  
Damian Collins (Folkestone and Hythe)  
Alberto Costa (South Leicestershire)  
Robert Courts (Witney)  
Mr Geoffrey Cox (Torridge and West Devon)  
Stephen Crabb (Preseli Pembrokeshire)  
Tracey Crouch (Chatham and Aylesford)  
Chris Davies (Brecon and Radnorshire)  
David T. C. Davies (Monmouth)  
Glyn Davies (Montgomeryshire)  
Mims Davies (Eastleigh)  
Philip Davies (Shipley)  
Mr David Davis (Haltemprice and Howden)  
Caroline Dinenage (Gosport)  
Mr Jonathan Djanogly (Huntingdon)  
Leo Docherty (Aldershot)  
Julia Dockerill (Hornchurch and Upminster)  
Michelle Donelan (Chippenham)  
Ms Nadine Dorries (Mid Bedfordshire)  
Steve Double (St Austell and Newquay)  
Oliver Dowden (Hertsmere)

Jackie Doyle-Price (Thurrock)  
Richard Drax (South Dorset)  
James Duddridge (Rochford and Southend East)  
David Duguid (Banff and Buchan)  
Mr Iain Duncan Smith (Chingford and Woodford Green)  
Sir Alan Duncan (Rutland and Melton)  
Mr Philip Dunne (Ludlow)  
Michael Ellis (Northampton North)  
Mr Tobias Ellwood (Bournemouth East)  
Charlie Elphicke (Dover)  
George Eustice (Camborne and Redruth)  
Mr Nigel Evans (Ribbles Valley)  
David Evennett (Bexleyheath and Crayford)  
Michael Fabricant (Lichfield)  
Sir Michael Fallon (Sevenoaks)  
Suella Fernandes (Fareham)  
Mark Field (Cities of London and Westminster)  
Vicky Ford (Chelmsford)  
Kevin Foster (Torbay)  
Dr Liam Fox (North Somerset)  
Mr Mark Francois (Rayleigh and Wickford)  
Lucy Frazer (South East Cambridgeshire)  
George Freeman (Mid Norfolk)  
Mike Freer (Finchley and Golders Green)  
Mr Marcus Fysh (Yeovil)  
Sir Roger Gale (North Thanet)  
Mark Garnier (Wyre Forest)  
Mr David Gauke (South West Hertfordshire)  
Ms Nusrat Ghani (Wealden)  
Nick Gibb (Bognor Regis and Littlehampton)  
Mrs Cheryl Gillan (Chesham and Amersham)  
John Glen (Salisbury)  
Zac Goldsmith (Richmond Park)  
Mr Robert Goodwill (Scarborough and Whitby)



Michael Gove (Surrey Heath)  
 Luke Graham (Ochil and South Perthshire)  
 Richard Graham (Gloucester)  
 Bill Grant (Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock)  
 Mrs Helen Grant (Maidstone and The Weald)  
 James Gray (North Wiltshire)  
 Chris Grayling (Epsom and Ewell)  
 Chris Green (Bolton West)  
 Damian Green (Ashford)  
 Justine Greening (Putney)  
 Mr Dominic Grieve (Beaconsfield)  
 Mr Sam Gyimah (East Surrey)  
 Kirstene Hair (Angus)  
 Robert Halfon (Harlow)  
 Luke Hall (Thornbury and Yate)  
 Mr Philip Hammond (Runnymede and Weybridge)  
 Stephen Hammond (Wimbledon)  
 Matt Hancock (West Suffolk)  
 Greg Hands (Chelsea and Fulham)  
 Mr Mark Harper (Forest of Dean)  
 Richard Harrington (Watford)  
 Rebecca Harris (Castle Point)  
 Trudy Harrison (Copeland)  
 Simon Hart (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire)  
 Mr John Hayes (South Holland and The Deepings)  
 Sir Oliver Heald (North East Hertfordshire)  
 James Heappey (Wells)  
 Chris Heaton-Harris (Daventry)  
 Peter Heaton-Jones (North Devon)  
 Gordon Henderson (Sittingbourne and Sheppey)  
 Nick Herbert (Arundel and South Downs)  
 Damian Hinds (East Hampshire)  
 Simon Hoare (North Dorset)  
 George Hollingbery (Meon Valley)  
 Kevin Hollinrake (Thirsk and Malton)  
 Mr Philip Hollobone (Kettering)  
 Adam Holloway (Gravesham)  
 John Howell (Henley)  
 Nigel Huddleston (Mid Worcestershire)  
 Eddie Hughes (Walsall North)  
 Mr Jeremy Hunt (South West Surrey)  
 Mr Nick Hurd (Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner)  
 Mr Alister Jack (Dumfries and Galloway)  
 Margot James (Stourbridge)  
 Sajid Javid (Bromsgrove)  
 Mr Ranil Jayawardena (North East Hampshire)  
 Mr Bernard Jenkin (Harwich and North Essex)  
 Andrea Jenkyns (Morley and Outwood)  
 Robert Jenrick (Newark)  
 Boris Johnson (Uxbridge and South Ruislip)  
 Dr Caroline Johnson (Sleaford and North Hykeham)  
 Gareth Johnson (Dartford)  
 Joseph Johnson (Orpington)  
 Andrew Jones (Harrogate and Knaresborough)  
 Mr David Jones (Clwyd West)  
 Mr Marcus Jones (Nuneaton)  
 Daniel Kawczynski (Shrewsbury and Atcham)  
 Gillian Keegan (Chichester)  
 Seema Kennedy (South Ribblesdale)  
 Stephen Kerr (Stirling)  
 Julian Knight (Solihull)  
 Sir Greg Knight (East Yorkshire)  
 Kwasi Kwarteng (Spelthorne)  
 John Lamont (Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk)  
 Mark Lancaster (Milton Keynes North)  
 Mrs Pauline Latham (Mid Derbyshire)  
 Andrea Leadsom (South Northamptonshire)  
 Dr Phillip Lee (Bracknell)  
 Jeremy Lefroy (Stafford)  
 Sir Edward Leigh (Gainsborough)  
 Sir Oliver Letwin (West Dorset)  
 Andrew Lewer (Northampton South)  
 Brandon Lewis (Great Yarmouth)

Dr Julian Lewis (New Forest East)  
 Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger (Bridgwater and West Somerset)  
 Mr David Lidington (Aylesbury)  
 Jack Lopresti (Filton and Bradley Stoke)  
 Mr Jonathan Lord (Woking)  
 Tim Loughton (East Worthing and Shoreham)  
 Craig Mackinlay (South Thanet)  
 Rachel Maclean (Redditch)  
 Mrs Anne Main (St Albans)  
 Alan Mak (Havant)  
 Kit Malthouse (North West Hampshire)  
 Scott Mann (North Cornwall)  
 Paul Masterton (East Renfrewshire)  
 Mrs Theresa May (Maidenhead)  
 Paul Maynard (Blackpool North and Cleveleys)  
 Sir Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire Dales)  
 Stephen McPartland (Stevenage)  
 Esther McVey (Tatton)  
 Mark Menzies (Fylde)  
 Johnny Mercer (Plymouth, Moor View)  
 Huw Merriman (Bexhill and Battle)  
 Stephen Metcalfe (South Basildon and East Thurrock)  
 Mrs Maria Miller (Basingstoke)  
 Amanda Milling (Cannock Chase)  
 Nigel Mills (Amber Valley)  
 Anne Milton (Guildford)  
 Mr Andrew Mitchell (Sutton Coldfield)  
 Damien Moore (Southport)  
 Penny Mordaunt (Portsmouth North)  
 Nicky Morgan (Loughborough)  
 Anne Marie Morris (Newton Abbot)  
 David Morris (Morecambe and Lunesdale)  
 James Morris (Halesowen and Rowley Regis)  
 Wendy Morton (Aldridge-Brownhills)  
 David Mundell (Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale)  
 Mrs Sheryl Murray (South East Cornwall)  
 Dr Andrew Murrison (South West Wiltshire)  
 Robert Neill (Bromley and Chislehurst)  
 Sarah Newton (Truro and Falmouth)  
 Caroline Nokes (Romsey and Southampton North)  
 Jesse Norman (Hereford and South Herefordshire)  
 Neil O'Brien (Harborough)  
 Dr Matthew Offord (Hendon)  
 Guy Opperman (Hexham)  
 Neil Parish (Tiverton and Honiton)  
 Priti Patel (Witham)  
 Mr Owen Paterson (North Shropshire)  
 Mark Pawsey (Rugby)  
 Mike Penning (Hemel Hempstead)  
 John Penrose (Weston-super-Mare)  
 Andrew Percy (Brigg and Goole)  
 Claire Perry (Devizes)  
 Chris Philp (Croydon South)  
 Christopher Pincher (Tamworth)  
 Dr Dan Poulter (Central Suffolk and North Ipswich)  
 Rebecca Pow (Taunton Deane)  
 Victoria Prentis (Banbury)  
 Mr Mark Prisk (Hertford and Stortford)  
 Mark Pritchard (The Wrekin)  
 Tom Pursglove (Corby)  
 Jeremy Quin (Horsham)  
 Will Quince (Colchester)  
 Dominic Raab (Esher and Walton)  
 John Redwood (Wokingham)  
 Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg (North East Somerset)  
 Mr Laurence Robertson (Tewkesbury)  
 Mary Robinson (Cheadle)  
 Andrew Rosindell (Romford)  
 Douglas Ross (Moray)  
 Lee Rowley (North East Derbyshire)  
 Amber Rudd (Hastings and Rye)  
 David Rutley (Macclesfield)  
 Antoinette Sandbach (Eddisbury)  
 Paul Scully (Sutton and Cheam)

Mr Bob Seely (Isle of Wight)  
 Andrew Selous (South West Bedfordshire)  
 Grant Shapps (Welwyn Hatfield)  
 Alok Sharma (Reading West)  
 Alec Shelbrooke (Elmet and Rothwell)  
 Mr Keith Simpson (Broadland)  
 Chris Skidmore (Kingswood)  
 Chloe Smith (Norwich North)  
 Henry Smith (Crawley)  
 Julian Smith (Skipton and Ripon)  
 Royston Smith (Southampton, Itchen)  
 Sir Nicholas Soames (Mid Sussex)  
 Anna Soubry (Broxtowe)  
 Dame Caroline Spelman (Meriden)  
 Mark Spencer (Sherwood)  
 Andrew Stephenson (Pendle)  
 John Stevenson (Carlisle)  
 Bob Stewart (Beckenham)  
 Iain Stewart (Milton Keynes South)  
 Rory Stewart (Penrith and The Border)  
 Mr Gary Streeter (South West Devon)  
 Mel Stride (Central Devon)  
 Graham Stuart (Beverley and Holderness)  
 Julian Sturdy (York Outer)  
 Rishi Sunak (Richmond (Yorks))  
 Sir Desmond Swayne (New Forest West)  
 Sir Hugo Swire (East Devon)  
 Mr Robert Syms (Poole)  
 Derek Thomas (St Ives)  
 Ross Thomson (Aberdeen South)  
 Maggie Throup (Erewash)  
 Kelly Tolhurst (Rochester and Strood)  
 Justin Tomlinson (North Swindon)  
 Michael Tomlinson (Mid Dorset and North Poole)  
 Craig Tracey (North Warwickshire)  
 David Treddinick (Bosworth)  
 Mrs Anne-Marie Trevelyan (Berwick-upon-Tweed)  
 Elizabeth Truss (South West Norfolk)  
 Tom Tugendhat (Tonbridge and Malling)  
 Mr Edward Vaizey (Wantage)  
 Mr Shailesh Vara (North West Cambridgeshire)  
 Martin Vickers (Cleethorpes)  
 Theresa Villiers (Chipping Barnet)  
 Mr Charles Walker (Bromborough)  
 Mr Robin Walker (Worcester)  
 Mr Ben Wallace (Wyre and Preston North)  
 David Warburton (Somerton and Frome)  
 Matt Warman (Boston and Skegness)  
 Giles Watling (Clacton)  
 Helen Whately (Faversham and Mid Kent)  
 Craig Whittaker (Calder Valley)  
 Mr John Whittingdale (Maldon)  
 Bill Wiggin (North Herefordshire)  
 Gavin Williamson (South Staffordshire)  
 Dr Sarah Wollaston (Totnes)  
 Mike Wood (Dudley South)  
 Mr William Wragg (Hazel Grove)  
 Jeremy Wright (Kenilworth and Southam)  
 Nadhim Zahawi (Stratford-on-Avon)

## DUP

Mr Gregory Campbell (East Londonderry)  
 Nigel Dods (Belfast North)  
 Sir Jeffrey M. Donaldson (Lagan Valley)  
 Paul Girvan (South Antrim)  
 Ian Paisley (North Antrim)  
 Emma Little Pengelly (Belfast South)  
 Gavin Robinson (Belfast East)  
 Jim Shannon (Strangford)  
 David Simpson (Upper Bann)  
 Sammy Wilson (East Antrim)

# women on the front line: women's budget group

**WOMEN ARE ON THE FRONT LINE OF COVID-19 SAYS DR MARY-ANN STEPHENSON, DIRECTOR OF THE WOMEN'S BUDGET GROUP**

**T**HERE are over three million people in jobs at high risk of exposure to Covid-19 in the UK – 77% of them are women. Over a million of these workers are low paid – 98% of them are women.

"We'd known that workers on the frontline at most risk of Covid-19 were often badly paid and mainly women, but these figures are still a shock. It can't be right that many of those at the sharp end, providing services under pressure and at high risk of getting sick themselves are earning so little. Many will not even qualify for sick pay. This should be a wakeup call – we don't just need action now, we need change in the future to properly value this essential work

"Women are now playing a critical role in tackling the spread of Covid-19 through providing care work and other crucial services, yet the work of women has always been vital to the economy but has remained underpaid and undervalued.

"The most immediate action the Government needs to take is to ensure that sick pay is extended to all those who need it and is enough to live on. If frontline workers were to get sick, they need to be able to afford to live and eat and currently this is not the case for far too many. In the longer term we need to ensure that these vitally important jobs, largely done by women, are properly valued and properly paid.

"The Covid-19 crisis has exposed the serious flaws in our system but it also shows that we can and must do things differently."

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE GENDERED AND OTHER EQUALITY ASPECTS OF COVID-19 VISIT [WWW.WBG.ORG.UK](http://WWW.WBG.ORG.UK)**

# iraqi women's league

## IRAQI WOMEN'S LEAGUE CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES MOST IN NEED

**S**INCE the Uprising started in October 2019, protestors in Iraq have been demonstrating against the Government and for an end to sectarian, corrupt politics. The protestors' demands are straightforward – the restoration of democracy, the delivery of basic rights to the people of Iraq – water, electricity, schooling and an end to corrupt and nepotistic practices.

The protests are well established in eight of the major cities across Iraq with tented communities erected (sit-in) to ensure continual presence in the main squares. However, the protestors take the public health crisis we are witnessing today incredibly seriously and following the decision of the Iraqi Crises Coordinating Committee (ICCC), protests have been paused. The tented communities remain, but in line with the guidance issued by the ICCC only two people are allowed in the tent at a time to limit the spread of the Coronavirus.

The Iraqi Women's League (IWL), which had been participating heavily in the sit-in and protests delivering aid and other support to protestors for the last five months has now launched a campaign – Help and Complement each other – to support those communities whose livelihoods have been lost due to the movement restrictions.

The campaign, which was launched at the start of March, and continues today, aims to confront the issues caused by the pandemic. The Iraqi Women's League is cooperating with local police in targeted effort to help the families of martyrs, widows, orphans and the poor. The humanitarian assistance IWL is delivering takes the form of food packages with essential items as well as hygiene products to help families ward against the spread of the virus.

The Iraqi Women's League has been going door to door with food and hygiene packages for those living on the bread line and in poverty in the towns and villages surrounding Baghdad, whose earnings have dried up as a result of the lockdown to stop the spread of the virus.

The League has been able to mobilise youth groups and other supporters to donate food through local branches of the League in towns like Najaf and Nasriyah. With police protection the League has been able to deliver these much needed supplies to those in need, most of whom do not receive any social security from Government. This support has been gratefully received by those who have received package and the Women's League is committed to continuing this work for the duration.



## The Iraqi Women's League appeal to Iraqi President to help those in most need

On the 5 April the Iraqi Women's League send a letter to the Iraqi President Barham Saleh asking him to help the two million Iraqi divorced and widowed women and more than four million orphans in needs of urgent help in this difficult time.

The letter asked him to save the neediest in our society by lowering the price of the electric ampere unit and the rent. They urged him to order the urgent delivery of the essential food aid by the government and coordinate that with civil society organisation.

The letter warned that this epidemic will lead to a more serious epidemic if no urgent actions are taken.

They asked the United Nations, European Union and other International Donor Organisations' representatives in Iraq to direct their help and to save the poorest in the Iraqi society.

## iran update

**F**ROM the start, the handling of the coronavirus tsunami in Iran has exposed the true colours of the dictatorial regime. Elections took place on 21 February. By that date, the government knew that the virus was spreading. But it suppressed news of the outbreak and called on everyone to come out and vote. Only on the afternoon of polling day did the government concede that there was a danger and by then it was too late.

Women bear the brunt of the lockdown, as the measures reinforced their inequality under the law. Already second-class citizens they now find themselves isolated at short notice behind closed doors with domestic abuse and violence escalating unchecked.

Iranian prisons, given their insanitary conditions and overcrowding, are especially unsafe places and readers of *Sisters* are familiar with the hundreds of women prisoners locked up for years in Shar-e Rey, a converted chicken farm.

In March the authorities grudgingly announced that those serving less than five-year terms for non-violent offences could go home and some have been told they need not return. But some women political prisoners serving long terms are in danger of their lives. At the same time, the corrupt establishment is letting high profile drug dealers and embezzlers go free. Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Peace Laureate, hit the nail on the head when she asked

on 6 April why the president's brother should be let out while human rights activist, Narges Mohammadi and human rights lawyer, Nasreen Sotoudeh are not.

By 5 April nearly 60,000 people had been infected and 4,000 had died according to government figures. But people have little confidence in what the regime tells them. Unconfirmed reports suggest that up to four times as many have caught the virus, with at least 16,000 already dead. The regime is about to force thousands back to work, without protection or any possibility of distancing, in a desperate bid to stave off total economic collapse and save its skin.

Unrelenting US sanctions have compounded the catastrophe and the US government will yet be judged for the loss of life and intense human suffering it has knowingly and deliberately caused to millions.

This is why the Democratic Organisation of Iranian Women is calling on us to support its work by:

- Demanding that the Iranian government follows World Health Organisation guidelines on slowing the spread of COVID-19

- Calling on the regime to ensure the safety of all women detainees and to release all political prisoners now.

- Campaigning for an immediate end to US economic and banking sanctions on Iran and the provision of medical and humanitarian aid as a matter of urgency.

BY LIZ PAYNE WITH INFORMATION FROM  
DOIW 9 APRIL 2020



# The best laid plans...

IN early March, as the Covid-19 pandemic started to take hold, it became evident that we would have to postpone the NAW annual general meeting planned for the end of April. The Executive Committee intends to combine the residential autumn conference with the AGM in November, assuming that it is safe and practicable to do so. The present position is that we have booked the NASUWT's education centre for the weekend of 7 and 8 November. Further information, including the annual report, and nomination papers will be issued nearer the time.

The NAW Executive Committee will meet "virtually" on Saturday 25 April.

Many other events have also been cancelled or postponed including the annual MAY DAY rallies that take place around the country and the Durham Miners' Gala – the biggest celebration of the labour and trade union movement.

The South Yorkshire Festival at Wortley Hall, where the NAW has a regular stall has also been cancelled. Although this takes place in August it requires months of planning with the Hall and many other organisations central to its success currently closed.

The NAW is also a sponsor of the annual Sylvia Pankhurst Memorial Lecture. The Sylvia Pankhurst Memorial Committee is currently holding the date – Saturday 8 August, and feminist academic Selina Todd has agreed to speak. However, this obviously depends on the availability of Wortley Hall. Information will be posted on the SPMC website [www.sylvia pankhurst.gn.apc.org](http://www.sylvia pankhurst.gn.apc.org)

**stay safe and positive!**

## what's on...

**NAW Executive Committee** meetings are open to *all* members. The next will be a "virtual" meeting on **Saturday 25 April**.

If you would like to attend please contact the Secretary on [naw@sisters.org.uk](mailto:naw@sisters.org.uk) or at NAW, Bridge House, Newport Street, Hay on Wye, Powys HR3 5BG



## May Day greetings to all members and your families!



## join the NAW now!

*I would like to join the NAW. Here is £20 for the annual subscription (£10 unwaged) which includes my subscription to **sisters**, the journal of the NAW.*

*Our organisation would like to affiliate to the NAW. Enclosed is: £20 (local organisation/NAW branch), £45 (regional organisation), £60 (national)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

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