

Mover: Unison

Seconded: Labour International

Composite Motion: Women's Equality after the Coronavirus Pandemic

Conference calls on the Labour Party to develop a comprehensive COVID-recovery plan that specifically addresses the needs of women.

Conference notes with concern the serious impact the pandemic has had on women's equality: especially when it comes to jobs and employment.

Conference believes that a commitment to gender equality in the workplace and in training must lie at the heart of plans for a sustained and just recovery.

Conference notes that women have been affected disproportionately by the pandemic and for the most vulnerable it has been even worse.

Women are more likely to be in agency/zero-hour/part-time work and so are at high risk of COVID-related unemployment.

Women are 69% of low wage earners, 54% of zero hours contract workers and have 74% of part time contracts.

In the childcare sector, 96% of workers are female and one in eight workers earns less than £5 per hour.

These inequalities grew during the years of Tory austerity and have been exacerbated by the pandemic and Government responses.

Women on furlough or who took unpaid leave for childcare reasons may be more likely to be selected for redundancy.

Poverty during the pandemic has been exacerbated for women compared to men.

Conference notes COVID-19 has exacerbated inequalities experienced by women in the UK in particular BAME women, working class women, women on low-incomes, disabled women, mothers and carers.

Single parents (90% women) and mothers of children with disabilities have been seriously affected, struggling to balance full-time childcare and work.

78% of workers employed in COVID-19 high risk roles were women, many in low paid roles.

The Government's economic recovery plan 'build back better' favours male dominated sectors.

Research recently undertaken by Queen Mary University of London found that 24% of BAME mothers and 38% of disabled mothers they surveyed reported that they were struggling to feed their children.

Conference notes the appalling loss of lives/livelihoods from Tory incompetence, corruption, failure to reduce transmission/eliminate spread SARS-CoV-2, exacerbated by austerity, privatisation and the disproportionate impact on women, especially women of colour and disabled women.

The virus doesn't gender discriminate, but women are disproportionately represented in health/social care as workers/residents.

Women are disproportionately responsible for childcare/home schooling; less eligible statutory sick pay, loans, grants.

Looking through a wider inequality lens, women are also disadvantaged in society through issues associated with the judiciary and there are extremely worrying patterns that women are not being supported by both the establishment and the legal process.

This is backed up by the fact that from over 58,000 allegations of rape only 2,102 ended with a successful prosecution. The horrific murder of Sarah Everard also brought into sharp focus the vulnerability that women face when simply walking the streets.

We resolve that these inequalities are urgently addressed through the benefits system, wages, employment legislation and health provision. For example, increasing child benefits and making childcare sustainable.

The Party must put women at the heart of policies, increasing pay and benefits, making childcare affordable and accessible, ensuring these policies are at the heart of Labour's policies and challenge the Tories to do the same.

We call on the Party to:

- Support Labour-led councils to take actions for women and their families, to support the Poverty Emergency declaration, as put forward by Cheshire West and Chester Council, and to promote Community Wealth Building initiatives such as those supported by Preston Council and North Ayrshire Council.

- Campaign for the necessary legislation and funding to make women's working lives easier and to get gender equality back on track including day one rights to flexible working, parental and carers' leave and accessible, affordable childcare and social care.
- Demand that the Government commit fully to gender pay gap reporting and for gender pay 'action plans' to be mandatory.
- Develop a campaign for the implementation of CEDAW into domestic legislation to help eliminate discrimination and ensure gender equality.
- Develop policy that tackles the very wide problems of misogyny in society and the judicial blind-spots that all act as a major disincentive for women to challenge abuse of various kinds.
- Bring together prominent women's groups and women's role models to help lead the debate around possible campaigns to tackle these gender-based inequalities
- To reaffirm its support for flexible working from day one, and to prioritise lobbying the Government to make flexible working, by design, from day one a right for all workers.
- Support women to train for well paid jobs in green industries.

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