



## GMB Women Workers

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With women making up over 50% of our membership, GMB campaigns and fights for better rights, pay and conditions for all women at work.

Ensuring that equality is at the forefront of everything we do - making work and society a better, safer place for everyone - is part of our core values.

We campaign and lobby the government at both a local and national level on a range of equality issues - so being a member of GMB is about ensuring that women's voices are heard not just at work but also in wider society.

We run national online events in Women's History Month as well as throughout the year. Find all the details at our [equality events page](#).

Get in touch with us if you are passionate about gender equality and are looking to get involved!

### Why is women's equality important?

Despite making up 50% of the workforce and the historic victories for all women to get the vote, equal pay and maternity pay - women workers are still a long way off being treated



equitably in the workplace. In many sectors, the situation for women workers is getting worse.

Women are still paid less than their male workers in many workplaces for work of equal value, are still discriminated against if they have children or other caring responsibilities. Women are still more affected by public sector cuts.

Facing issues around childcare, sexual harassment, menopause, domestic abuse and low pay to name a few, women find themselves working harder to combat discrimination, pay inequality and to be recognised for their talents.

## What issues do women workers face in the workplace?

### Maternity leave

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According to the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Women returning from maternity leave are more likely to face discrimination in the workplace than they were a decade ago, with around 54,000 new mothers are losing their jobs across Britain every year – almost twice the number identified in similar research undertaken in 2005.

### Pay

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While the gender pay gap fell to 17.9% in 2018, meaning that women currently still make only 80% of men's median hourly wages, women who work full time are still paid less than men. Despite the equal pay act coming in to force in 1975, women's work across industries is often still undervalued, underpaid and under recognised.

### Flexible Working

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Women are still more likely to have caring responsibilities, with many still facing difficulties caused by refusal for flexible working, for example to organise childcare.

### Menopause

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Women workers make up 50% of the workforce and around seven in ten workers of menopausal age are in work. GMB members have spoken out about the number of problems women and trans men experiencing the menopause face in the workplace - including hot flushes, irregular heavy periods, anxiety and memory issues, sleep problems and joint and

muscle pain. Whilst most employers still do not have policies to support workers experiencing the menopause, members can face disciplinary action as a result of triggering sickness absence policies, through no fault of their own.

## Pensions

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Currently women workers are fighting for fair transitional relief for women born in 1950s who are facing hardship and poverty because of the Government increasing their state pension age without any adequate notice.

## Domestic Abuse

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Women are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse, with one in four women experiencing domestic abuse in their adult life. Domestic abuse has a devastating impact on individuals and their families. People experiencing domestic abuse are often subject to disciplinary action or job losses, often through no fault of their own.

## Public Sector Cuts

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65% of public service workers are women, and almost a quarter of all working women are employed in the public sector. Public sector cuts have a major impact on women workers and even more so on BAME women workers. Women workers are not only more like to lose their jobs under austerity, but also to lose vital services and social security payments, as on average, one fifth of women workers' income is made up of benefits in comparison to one tenth of men's.

## Leadership

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In 2018 only 23.7 % of Chief Executive and senior officials were women. It is said there are more chief executives called Steve or Dave who head up companies than women or Black Asian minority ethnic workers. Women are still likely to be in lower paid, less secure and part time work.

## Sexual Harrassment

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1 in 2 women have been sexually harassed at work but 4 out of 5 feeling unable to raise it at work. Despite these huge numbers, currently there is no duty on employers to prevent sexual harassment.

# How does being a member of GMB make a difference to women's lives?

Our Women members tell us that being a GMB member makes a huge difference to their working lives.

## Support when you need it

On an individual basis, on average, union members get higher pay than non-members. They are also likely to get better sickness and pension benefits, more paid holiday and more control over things like shifts and working hours. This is because workers, through their union can join together to negotiate pay and conditions.

## GMB is the trade union for everyone

We have members working in public services and private companies, in full and part-time jobs. We exist to get a better deal for our members and to support you when you need help. This includes if you experience sexism or face discrimination in the workplace, individually or as something that affects you and your colleagues.

Collectively, GMB is committed to tackling, with our women members, structural barrier to women workers and dismantling institutional sexism.

If you need help or advice, you should contact your rep or GMB regional office.

## GMB Women Winning in the workplace!

Recently GMB women activists in Glasgow played a leading role the largest ever equal pay strike in UK history. Thousands of care sector workers took over the streets of Glasgow to demand historic equal pay justice and won.

From winning on sick pay for outsourced workers in the NHS and supporting our members at Asda fighting for equal pay GMB women are leading the way on making our workplaces fairer and more inclusive for everyone.

GMB launched the Work to Stop Domestic Abuse employer charter in Parliament, lead by women activists, courageously speaking out on the difference that a supportive employer can make to the lives of workers experiencing domestic abuse. Over 50 MPs signed up to it with 48 hours and thousands of workers now covered by the policy.



GMB has long campaigned for employers to support women at work experiencing issues with menstruation, menopause and period dignity with employers around the country signing up to our policies, ensuring that thousands of women workers have the adjustments they need.

## Intersectionality

GMB also recognises the additional impact that gender plays in barriers in the workplace, for example:

- Women disabled workers accessing reasonable adjustments
- LGBT+ woman facing additional barriers in coming out and facing harassment
- Young and BAME women dealing with stereotypes and prejudice

## Want to get active around women's rights at work?

Join GMB Sisters! GMB's regional self-organised groups (SOG). Open to all self-defining women, this is a great place to meet likeminded people and organise around issues important to you.

We organise a range of activities and campaigns, from developing toolkits on the menopause in the workplace to organising conferences and training on issues and topics such as equal pay, imposter syndrome and public speaking.

We oppose all forms of prejudice and discrimination, acting as a contact and support for all regional GMB women members. It's free to join as a GMB member and the SOG aims to create a safe space to discuss and tackle issues around gender equality, wherever you work.

GMB also organises, participates in and celebrates a number of events across the year including: Women's History Month, Eleanor Marx day, the Women Chainmakers festival in Cradley Heath, and sends delegates and motions to TUC Women's Conference.

GMB Sisters also work alongside other Self-organised groups and supports events like LGBT+ history month, Trans Remembrance Day, Black history month.

GMB National Women's Conference currently runs annually in February and all regions are invited to send up to 6 delegates.

For more information on getting active around women's issues in your workplace or in joining your regional GMB Sister's women's group get in touch with your regional equality officer for more information.

