



Working With Women

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We will never be a successful society in which all are able to achieve their potential until we have equality for women.

Women continue to face discrimination and sexism– hampering life chances and collectively damaging our society and our economy.

Furthermore, the austerity policies of this government, slashing public services and entitlement to social security, have hit women hardest.

We won't change everything overnight, but we all have to do more together to achieve greater equality and opportunity for all.

In launching our Working With Women document, my campaign is setting out some ideas to achieve those goals:

- Work towards universal free childcare, and offering opportunity for all through a [National Education Service](#)
- End the cuts to public services and welfare that drive more women and families into poverty, including the cuts to services for ending violence against women and girls, including refuges and support for domestic violence and rape survivors.
- Make companies to publish equal pay audits, and giving all workers equal protections from day one at work with no fees at employment tribunals, challenge discrimination in the workplace and achieving equal and higher pay for all.
- Invest more in skills training and high quality apprenticeships with an emphasis on challenging outdated gender stereotypes
- Challenge everyday sexism, with Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education in schools that includes sex and relationship education
- Commit to a 50% women shadow cabinet, and work towards 50% of Labour MPs being women, if elected Labour leader

But we want to hear your ideas too, so if there is something missing, [please let us know](#).

JEREMY CORBYN FOR LABOUR

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Women and girls have the right to participate in all parts of society. They should be free from violence and able to fulfil their potential but are constrained by government policies and societal discrimination

Let's look at this over a women's life cycle

GIRLS

Girls do better in education than boys but face a female forfeit in the workplace. This can't be right. Girls still leave school and many find work in the 5 Cs (catering, cleaning, caring, cashiering and clerical). These are valuable jobs which deserve higher pay and more respect.

Why does this happen? In part because "the careers service in this country is on life support". Not my words but those of John Cridland the head of the CBI. We need to make sure that every girl and boy has access to proper careers advice and work experience. Gender stereotyping means that too few girls go into science, technology, engineering and maths - jobs which are better paid and often have better conditions.

We need to invest more in skills training and high quality apprenticeships with an emphasis on girls being encouraged and supported to fulfil their own dreams and ambitions – this starts at a young age. There is a huge waste to the UK's economy when young women don't fulfil their potential. We also need to encourage boys into jobs like childcare, ending the stereotype that caring or other jobs are the sole domain of women.

Mumsnet campaigns like Let Girls Be Girls are vital. Girls face constant bombardment of hyper-sexualisation and boys hyper-masculinity in the media, in retail and particularly online. This distorts their view of what a healthy relationship is and in particular what consent means. PHSE should be mandatory in all schools and ensure that it covered healthy relationships too.

WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

- 57% of those on the minimum wage are women, with 27% of women earning less than the living wage compared to 16% of men. Despite 45 years since Labour's Equal Pay Act, UK women still face an average 19.1% pay gap. For every £1 a man earns women earn 81p; the gap is larger for women working part time and for Black and Minority Ethnic women. At last this Government has had to concede that companies with over 250 employees must report on their gender pay gap – but why just 250? Should we be like Sweden and Finland and make it 25 employees? We should targets for ending women's pay gap.

- We need to challenge discrimination in the workplace – the pay gap is the result of occupational segregation (where women occupy lower paid roles), outright discrimination and women still shouldering most caring responsibilities. We can achieve equal and better pay for all, and support career progression for all women through better trade union recognition and collective bargaining.
- Women are constrained by the lack of good affordable childcare and genuinely flexible employment that works for them. It's a complete waste that we have qualified women employed below their skills levels or having to stay at home even though they may not want to. This also means that women end up as the poorest pensioners.
- We can afford comprehensive childcare for those that want to return to employment. The Women's Business Council report found that we could add 10% to our GDP by 2030 if we could equalise men and women's economic participation. That would reduce our national debt by 1/3 and earn full time working women £190k over their life time - this represents £40.8 billion lost to the economy and boasting women's enterprise could deliver £60 billion extra to the economy.
- Measures like the introduction of employment tribunal fees (£250 rising to £950) and having to take a case within 3 months, even after a woman has just given birth, has seen sex discrimination cases down by 91%. The Equality & Human Rights Commission has said that 54,000 women a year lose their jobs while pregnant. Fees must be scrapped, and all workers given protection against unfair dismissal from day one.
- Women do the lion's share of all care work – unpaid care in this country is a major issue – women who are caring for children, older and disabled people with no remuneration whatsoever. This needs to be fully recognised and valued a skilled work, which is why we must oppose George Osborne's attack on tax credits. Many women are having children later in life which means they are often sandwiched between looking after children whilst trying to care for older relatives making it impossible to return to employment. The postponement of the changes to carer's costs till 2020 will make this worse.

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION

- Women are unrepresented in decision making across society. There are more men called John leading FTSE 100 companies than women. It's good that at last we have 25% women on FTSE 100 boards - but if we took an exam and only got 25% people would say we failed. Men still make up 93% of executive directors of FTSE 100 companies and 96.5% of Chairs and Chief Executives.
- This is replicated in parliament – women make up only 29% of the Houses of Parliament and around 30% on local councils. This just can't be right. In the Labour Party we should fully commit to gender parity with a 50:50 shadow cabinet. Women are now 40% of our MPs in the Commons – and we must get that to 50%.

AUSTERITY

- Research says that 70% of the cuts have fallen on women. They are the primary users of services - on behalf of themselves, their children and those they care for. Women are often doubly hit by public service cuts as they work in the public services in much higher numbers than men – this is forcing women into lower paid, less secure work with worse terms and conditions.
- Women and children experiencing domestic and sexual violence have also been severely affected by austerity. The reductions to legal aid have had a major effect for women trying to escape violence. Specialist services for Black and Minority Ethnic women have been especially hard hit. The recent Mirror campaign highlighted the huge number of refuges being closed down and the services being cut. This puts womens' lives in danger – already two women die a week at the hands of their current or ex-partner, and can have terrible long term impacts on the physical and mental health of women and children. Violence against women needs to be stopped – at the root causes. That's why PHSE is vital and schools supported and we need to tackle the social norms that persist as MumsNet is doing with We Believe You Campaign.
- Reductions in child tax credits' will make things worse and suggestions that a mother should tell a benefits officer her third child was conceived as a result of rape is frankly insulting. All children matter, none deserve to live in poverty – and we should oppose these cuts.
- The needs of Black and Minority Ethnic Women are often overlooked partly because they are so unrepresented and the intersectionality of the impact of the cuts on them. We have also seen the whipping up of racism against migrant women and asylum seekers which has restricted the access to health, pregnancy and violence against women services of often very vulnerable and traumatised women.
- We should protect womens' rights and their reproductive health, opposing the cuts to health services that are restricting womens' rights in practice and take action to stop anti-choice protesters from restricting access to abortion services.

WHAT WE WOULD DO

- Make PHSE mandatory with a focus on healthy relationships
- Invest more in skills training and high quality apprenticeships with an emphasis on challenging outdated gender stereotypes
- Cut fees for employment tribunals and extend the period a mother can take a case
- Work towards providing universal free childcare
- Recognise women's caring roles through tax and pension rights
- Reverse the cuts in local authority adult social care and invest in a national carers strategy, under a combined National Health & Care Service
- Properly fund Violence Against Women and Girls Services and make it easier for women to be believed and get justice
- Make employers report on the gender breakdown and pay of their workforce
- Work to get more women, including ethnic minority and disabled women, into local and national positions in the Labour Party

FGM

We must address the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) as a form of gender-based violence. In order to effectively address the issue, teachers and health workers should be supported with routine training on how to help victims and efforts must be redoubled to gather data more effectively on women who have undergone FGM. Where necessary both court orders and FGM protection orders should be used to protect women at risk. The key to ending FGM within a generation will be raising awareness of issues such as FGM, forced marriage and child marriage via the school curriculum and working with local authorities in making every effort to engage parents and local communities.

EVERYDAY SEXISM

A new generation of feminists has emerged in recent years – led by younger women combatting the experience of everyday sexism, and using social media as a powerful tool to expose day-to-day examples of sexism in every aspect of women's lives. Our movement must respond positively to this and think about how as a government Labour could work to challenge the root causes of everyday sexism. In 2015 it is not acceptable that women cannot walk streets and be in public spaces without being whistled, shouted at or endure other forms of offensive behaviour.

This not only includes making PSHE, including sexual health and relationships education mandatory, but actively promoting and ensuring that our laws on sexual assault and protection from harassment are implemented. Women should not feel ashamed, or made to feel belittled, by reporting behaviour they find intimidating to the police.

