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WOMEN'S TALK

The communications union

THE MAGAZINE OF THE WOMEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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CANCER STOLE MY PARTNER

A CWU member gives
a moving account of
their tragic experience

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SISTERS OF SOLIDARITY

BILLY HAYES
GENERAL SECRETARY



"I never paid enough stamps", my mother used to say. This referred to her paid employment being too short to qualify for a full state pension. This historic inequality has been overcome for the next generation, but new inequalities are arising from the Government's pension policy – notably for those women whose pension entitlement is to be delayed by two years.

Only by women's campaigning can these injustices be righted.

CWU Annual Conference agreed, following the lead of CWU Women's Conference, that the under-representation of women and black members in the union's leadership must be tackled. Diversity and equality benefit everyone. But it is those most affected by discrimination who make the biggest contribution to the fight against discrimination. Sisters doing it for themselves. Keep fighting.

Billy Hayes

Taking a stand

KEVIN SLOCOMBE
HEAD OF COMMS

Trade unions are routinely stereotyped as a macho band of brothers. In reality, women outnumber men in the union movement.

The media is forever typecasting 'union barons' for their militancy and this is becoming more extreme as public sector unions are pushed into striking to defend jobs, services and pensions. We need more women to stand up and challenge this perception of unions, to stand for union positions, to push the cause of justice and equality for all, as well as

stand up to attacks on all workers. Women are worst affected by government attacks – stand up for everyone.
 kslocombe@cwu.org



K Slocombe

Fight to win

ANNMARIE McCALL
EDITOR

Welcome to the summer/autumn edition of *Women's Talk*. The Women's Advisory Committee has been working hard on proportionality and representation within the union, with some very interesting findings. It's been said that "it's a fight you're not going to win", and I wonder was this kind of thing said to the suffragettes? History tells a different story.

We would like to start a letters page in the next edition, sent in by you the readers, so please write in with your letters on anything, it's your page. Simply email it in word format to annmarie.mccall@hotmail.co.uk or call me on 01772 256600.



A. McCall

“SAVE OUR NURSERY” SAY POSTAL PARENTS

CWU is backing the fight against the closure of the “fantastic” Royal Mail nursery at Mount Pleasant in London that has been earmarked for closure in November

Childsplay, which is run by Ofsted-regulated care provider Kiddy Care – has provided the service for postal workers’ children since 1994, but cost-cutting plans threaten to axe the nursery.

Since the closure announcement, local CWU members have made every effort to persuade Royal Mail to think again, organising petition-signing, taking the case up with local media and politicians and holding public protests. North London MP Emily Thornberry has met Royal Mail’s senior management to urge them to reconsider the planned closure, but its future is still uncertain.

Demos and deliveries

In May, parents and their children demonstrated outside Mount Pleasant, chanting “save our nursery”, and waving home-made placards urging the company to keep Childsplay open.

Protesting delivery worker Angela McNaughton, who has worked at the site for 12 years, said that the nursery was “a fantastic resource”, where she can take her one-year-old daughter Micha while she works her shifts. Her colleague Paula Areses, whose two-year-old Helena enrolled at the nursery nine

months ago, was full of praise for the nursery staff, who she described as “really nice people”.

Annette Montague’s daughter Shellheem ‘graduated’ from Childsplay last November, but, with a new baby arriving in August, Annette is hoping that the centre can be saved. Her message to Royal Mail is: “Please think again and think about your workers.”

HR worker Louise Simpson is employed at another Royal Mail site, but she is able to make use of the nursery for her two-year-old son Nathaniel. “What they do here is great,” she said. “And what really impresses me is the continuity – there’s a very low staff turnover at Childsplay and that’s extremely important for the children.”

Local CWU branch secretary Roger Charles told *Women’s Talk*: “The nursery is unique – the only one of its kind in the company – and makes a huge difference to the lives of working

17
... number of years the Mount Pleasant nursery has been open

families. Rather than closing it, Royal Mail should be boasting about what a good example this is of a modern employer putting family-friendly policies into practice.”

CWU head of equalities Linda Roy told *Women’s Talk* that she hoped Emily Thornberry’s meeting with the company would “persuade them to change course”.

She said: “It’s great that the MP for the area is actively supporting this campaign. We’re all determined to save Mount Pleasant nursery.”

● Sign the petition at: <http://www.cwu.org/save-mountain-pleasant-nursery.html> or join the Facebook group ‘Save Mount Pleasant Nursery’





CWU members turned out in force for the rally

Half a million turn out for TUC London demo

DEMONSTRATION

Up to 500,000 people attended the TUC rally on March 26 – and I was one of them!

We all knew it would be a well attended event, but we had no idea that half a million would turn out to march through the streets of central London.

Whistles blared,

and the CWU had the biggest turn out of proudly displayed banners I have ever seen. Many people commented on them and took pictures.

One thing that struck me on the day was the smaller groups of people – women in particular – that were there to fight back against the cuts

to local services such as nurseries, libraries and care schemes. That's when I realised that nobody can truly say they have not been affected by the government cuts.

The feeling of unity on the day was overwhelming, especially when we marched under a bridge with people waving from above

and our ears rang with the deafening sounds of chanting and drums banging as we came out the other side.

1/2m ... people attended the TUC rally

I felt proud to be standing shoulder to shoulder with other trade unionists and

public sector workers, students, and women who have probably never before taken part in such a major demonstration.

It's something I'll never forget. The mood was friendly but we got across our message that, young or old, our voices will be heard.

● Article by Kate Hudson

CWU women come face to face with women of Whitehall

POLITICS

Last year's inspiring talk by Nan Sloan – the founder of the Centre for Women and Democracy – about the importance of women being politically active led a group of CWU

North East women to organise a visit to Parliament.

The trip, organised in January, aimed to increase members' understanding of political issues, how the system actually works and how to become

more involved.

The 'Palace of Westminster' tour guide was great, answering many questions on a range of subjects, giving a brief history of the building, detailing the current day-to-day activities and explaining how Parliament works.

The CWU members then visited some of the historical rooms, before heading into the Commons to watch a debate taking place.

Given that the main aim of the trip was to increase women's involvement in

politics, it was good to see the main protagonists in the debate were both women: Home Secretary Theresa May and her Labour shadow Yvette Cooper discussing the Counter Terrorism Act.

● Article by Jean Sharrocks

Proportionality is tackled nationally

DEBATE

The proportionate representation of women and minority ethnic members within the CWU was the main equality topic on the agenda at CWU National Conference in May.

Delegates approved a resolution calling on the NEC to fully implement the union's rules on equality and

proportionality, to promote and encourage proportionality and fair representation of all members, reinforcing the union's policy position.

The issue was debated at a packed fringe meeting the day before the motion was voted on. CWU national equality officer Linda Roy outlined the shortfall of both

female and black and ethnic minority (BEM) reps at national and regional levels.

She said: "There are no women regional secretaries, only three women branch secretaries among postal branches, and only 10 among telecoms branches – out of 144 branches nationwide."

Linda warned that the current state of

affairs is not representative of CWU's membership and that it "appears to be the result of barriers which are preventing female and BEM activists taking senior positions".

Linda's department is using regional women's committees to gather information about engagement and will be pushing this work on over the next year.

CWU women's conference

CONFERENCE

The CWU women's conference is going from strength to strength, said Jackie Gatward in her opening address at this year's conference.

Up to 69 branches have attended conference since the first one in 1999, and this year's conference continued to debate the real issues.

General Secretary Billy Hayes warned that "the coalition government is hitting hard at the most vulnerable people" and that women are going to be hit harder than men as the public sector

workforce is mostly female. While Linda Roy, CWU's Equality Officer, spoke about improvements in women's equality.

"Women of today have more choices and careers, and improvements have been made in family friendly policies," she said. "But equality in gender still has a long way to go. Within the union, the macho culture has started to change – with equality and diversity training now

mandatory – but barriers still have to be overcome."

Guest speaker Denise Marshall, Chief Executive of women's charity Eaves, spoke about why she is so passionate about her work. She returned the OBE she received for services to disadvantaged women in protest at government cuts, which have threatened the charity's work.

● Article by Annmarie McCall



Women's Day 100th celebration

CELEBRATION

The CWU's Women's Advisory Committee and Regional Women's Committee had a joint meeting and luncheon to mark the 100th International Women's Day.

Some members went on to Congress House, where the TUC hosted a huge night of music and politics, which showcased the TUC's international development work that's empowering women in developing countries.

www.cwu.org

InBrief

Trafficking helpline

In June, charity Stop the Traffik, in partnership with The Metropolitan Police, launched a new freephone number for victims of trafficking. Posters advertising the number show women attached to strings like puppets, with the strapline: "Stop traffickers controlling you. You make the call. We'll make it stop". The freephone number – 0800 783 2589 – is manned from 9am to 5pm.

Stop forced marriages!

Closer links will be forged by CWU with organisations working to prevent young gay women being forced into marriages against their will, following a policy motion at CWU conference. CWU will campaign to ensure "this invisible but all too real abuse is exposed to the glare of publicity...and that victims are able to access the various organisations that can help them". LGBT Advisory Committee chair Dave Daniel pointed out that forced marriage is already recognised by international law as a "serious form of abuse".

OUR PRIVATE LIVES ARE OUR OWN



Should employers be able to ask female job applicants about plans for starting a family? Following recent comments on the subject by businessman Alan Sugar and former government minister Ann Widdecombe, **Karl Stewart** and **Pauline Granstan** investigate...

In a **House of Lords debate in March**, Mr Sugar (a Lord since 2009) said: "I believe the employment regulations for women, whereby the prospective employer is not able to inquire about the interviewee's status regarding children or childcare – or indeed their intention of becoming a parent – is counterproductive."

"Some women may agree with me on this," he added. "I say women should be forthcoming when being interviewed."

The star of BBC television's *The Apprentice* continued, urging women to "declare

their status regarding children and childcare so as to pre-empt the unanswerable questions in the mind of the interviewer".

Writing in her *Daily Express* newspaper column the next day, Ms Widdecombe insisted "Alan Sugar is right", and revealed that she has herself had "lost three secretaries to full-time motherhood".

The former MP, almost as famous for her samba-dancing moves on the BBC's *Strictly Come Dancing* show as her politics, argued that prospective employers have every right to know details of female applicants' private lives.



Image: Morgan Lane Photography / Shutterstock

“It is a nonsense to pretend that it is not in an employer’s interest to know,” she wrote.

Oblivious to equality

Both Mr Sugar and Ms Widdecombe clearly have something in common – they both seem oblivious to the meaning of equality.

Simply put, they both think that women job applicants should be obliged to reveal details of their private lives to interviewers; details that men by contrast are not expected to divulge.

But do the opinions of this pair matter? If they are echoing the private views of the majority of employers,

then, yes, they do matter – particularly if this means that women are being pigeon-holed into certain jobs and are being treated differently in the workplace to men because of their gender.

These kind of remarks by high-profile public figures can also feed through to the workplace. A study carried out by online parenting organisation Netmums last year showed high levels of resentment from colleagues against women returning from maternity leave.

Women an asset to companies

But other research indicates that companies that employ more women can be more successful.

For example, in a poll of business executives carried out by UK consultants The Aziz Corporation, half the respondents – with a majority working in financial services – said they believed having “more women in senior positions could have prevented some of the excesses seen before the recession”.

The same article found that those firms that encouraged a culture of rewarding excessive risk – widely considered to be a stereotypical ‘male’ attribute – had contributed to the financial crisis.

Therefore, when employers adopt similar attitudes to those aired by Alan Sugar and Ann Widdecombe, they are, more than likely, missing out on hiring just the sort of people they need to drive them through the recession and successfully out the other side.

Tackling sex inequality

It’s fair to say then that sex discrimination in the workplace hurts individuals and can also do irreparable harm to companies. So how do we debunk sexual inequality?

US sex equality campaigner Elizabeth Cady Stanton puts it this way: “We hold this truth to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal.”

Of course, no reasonable person in the UK would disagree with Ms Stanton’s statement, but how do we address sex discrimination at work today?

We trade unionists need to press for human resources departments to devise more objective and stringent criteria for evaluating interviews and put in place training, and educate managers who are responsible for hiring new recruits.

In particular, the dangers of dismissing candidates on the grounds of stereotype must be highlighted.

Job interviews, promotions, equal pay for work of equal value and disparity in pay are complex issues and it is true that the new Equality Act goes some way towards addressing some of these problems, but the battle goes on for trade unionists – men and women together – to win real and meaningful equality for all.

Below:
You’re fired! Can women’s private lives affect their job prospects?





Image: Olnaydur / Shutterstock

“THE DOCTOR WAS CRYING AND SAID ‘YOU’VE GOT A MATTER OF WEEKS’. IT’S STILL A BLUR. IT DOESN’T HAPPEN TO YOU DOES IT? IT’S NOT YOUR LIFE BEING RIPPED TO PIECES?”

Noel McClean, CWU NEC member



CANCER STOLE MY PARTNER

On the 10th anniversary of losing his partner Donna to cervical cancer, CWU NEC member **Noel McClean** talks to *Women’s Talk* about the importance of regular screening for women

“It was ten years ago last week”, says Noel as he recalls the day when his partner Donna took her last breath and finally lost her three year battle with cancer.

Losing the bright, determined woman who he loved to cancer, Noel resolved to raise awareness of the disease which in most cases can be cured if diagnosed early.

Smear result

Having moved in together in 1997, along with Donna’s four-year-old daughter, it wasn’t long before the first signs that something was wrong surfaced. Early in 1998, Donna had a recall from an abnormal smear test – regular cervical screening carried out by GPs and practice nurses. After some localised laser treatment to destroy the cells, a check-up later in the year showed that the treatment hadn’t been completely successful.

“We’d only been together a year at this point,” Noel explains. “But the doctors called us both in for an appointment and referred us to the hospital. They suggested Donna had a hysterectomy, which was quite severe for someone her age – in

her mid-20s. Having children wasn’t our top priority, but we would have liked to have had the choice.”

Cancer

Because they had found pre-cancerous activity, Noel and Donna decided that she should go ahead and she had the operation in late 1998.

“Everything seemed to go quiet after that,” says Noel.

Until early 2000, everything seemed to be ok. Donna had checks but nothing abnormal was found. Then out of the blue the couple got the news that doctors had found cancerous cells in her cervix.

“It was May and I was at CWU conference when she rang to tell me” remembers Noel. “She asked me to come home and so I did.”

Most of that summer Donna had radiotherapy and chemotherapy to treat the cancer. “Everyone was quite optimistic because of her age and health,” says Noel. “They put her on an aggressive form of therapy. She was having radiotherapy every day and chemo once a week, which really sapped her energy. Through the whole thing, ▶

▶ Donna was amazing. It was never about her, there was no 'poor me'. She wanted to make sure everyone else was ok. It sounds silly, but I couldn't have got through it without her. She was determined to get through it so we could get on with the rest of lives.

"After the treatment it was a question of keep your fingers crossed. Initially, everything looked okay. Then October to November time they found the cancer had spread to other organs."

Donna was offered a gruesome operation to remove most of her digestive system, leaving her with a colostomy bag for life. Despite pleading from Noel, she declined. Doctors gave her a year, two at the most, but by Boxing Day she'd gone down hill and was in extreme pain.

No more cures

"Once back in hospital in the New Year it switched from being about trying to cure her to palliative care, just trying to manage the pain," continues Noel. "The first week in January we were due a check-up and that's the day I knew she was going to go. She woke up and had a yellow tint in her eyes and I'd read about a yellowing being linked to liver failure. I didn't tell her and we went to the hospital. When they came out the doctor was crying. She said 'you've got a matter of weeks'. The cancer had started attacking her organs, including her liver.

"Some bits are still a blur. It's like it was someone else. It doesn't happen to you does it? It's not your life being ripped



to pieces? Even now, I can't remember the journey home. We must have spoken, must have said some significant things, but I can't remember."

Final days

After two weeks of coping at home, nurses recommended that Donna move to a hospice. "At the Sue Ryder Hospice they were amazing," says Noel. "They took the drugs and sorted all of that out. They had a spare bed so they let me stay there - I moved in."

One day Donna said to Noel "I want to talk to Gemma one last time; I don't want her to remember me as a frail bag of bones". Recalling that moment, Noel says: "She and I both knew she'd never see her daughter again. It was heartbreaking."

Noel stayed on, going for walks with Donna in the grounds. The walks got shorter, and then Donna couldn't walk any more.

On February 5, 2001, Donna went to sleep and didn't wake up the next day, then at 9:45am on February 7 she passed away, aged just 28. "There was no great event," says Noel.

"She didn't die, she just stopped living. I called the nurse and she confirmed it. I said 'thank God', then I said

Above: Donna and Noel pictured (foreground) in the autumn of 2000

'I can't believe I said that', but the nurse said it was quite common. I felt relief."

Anger

In the next few days Noel said he felt alright. "With the funeral arrangements it was like I could still do something for her," he says. "It felt helpful and positive."

But while driving behind the hearse, Noel felt angry for the first time. "There were all these people going about their normal lives" says Noel. "I thought 'what are they doing?' Then I thought 'what am I going to do? Tomorrow? The day after and the day after that?'"

Hope

Despite Donna's story, if cervical cancer is caught early there's a good chance of making a full recovery.

Noel says: "I don't want to scare people; most women I know have had an abnormal smear test at some point. Screening does save lives, there's no doubt about it. It just didn't for Donna."

5K

... number of UK women saved by cervical cancer screening each year

● Noel is now married with three children. CWU works with Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust to raise awareness of the disease. For more information visit: www.jostrust.org.uk

[POETRY]

NOT IN FRONT OF THE NEIGHBOURS

This poem by **Janette Taylor** from Gloucestershire Amal branch is dedicated to all victims of domestic violence. Remember you are neither alone nor forgotten

Her world collapsed with your first slap
In her mind she could not recap, what had made you snap?
Bouquets of flowers you then would bring
As forgiving lies you then would spin

She forced a smile, if brave enough divorce she would file
Regretting, parents' savings spent on her big day
Caused such heart felt pain, the guilt made her stay

Years past, her friends long left, her family feel bereft
A change in her so obvious it's plain to see
If she left him now all loved ones would agree

Her shopping trips demand timing
Or on return walls you'll be climbing
Her fear grows as your tension shows
Will it stop at a tantrum? Heaven only knows

Was it dinner served six minutes late
That made her chip your favourite plate?
Either way it sealed her fate
As paw with jaw did communicate

It ruined lunch and inspired your punch
You then accuse of over-cooked chips
Quickly leading to bloody lips

Clanging saucepans wake you from a light kip
Temper rains down with a wounding kick
'Caring husband' accompanies another hospital trip
"My clumsy wife had another staircase slip"

Sceptical nurses think "Why doesn't she flee?"
As through his palpable lies they plainly see
But it's hard to find renewed courage
When inside you're emotionally damaged

Linked arm in arm together you wave
Suspensions of curious neighbours staved
"They look so happy, could I have heard tears?"
For now at least relieved of fears

The truth you realise what you've got
But you choose not to stop the rot
Always monitoring the phone just in case she tries to phone home

Your love you demonstrate with fear
An anxious grip so intense you ignore all tears
You need her most, this you've found
She's not the weak one; it's the other way around

24-HOUR NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
FREEPHONE HELPLINE: 0808 2000 247

WOMEN ARE “LIONS WHO CAN BITE”

Indian-born factory worker Jayaben Desai's fight for her rights was instrumental in showing women workers should “never accept being treated without respect or dignity in the workplace”, writes **Linda Roy**

Something happened at conference this year which really made me think. I was at a social function when a male rep said: “It’s a fight you’re not going to win.”

When I enquired what he was talking about, he replied: “Getting women involved in the union – it’s a fight you’re not going to win.”

“But I’ve already won,” I said. The rep looked bemused and asked what I meant.

“I’ve already won because you’re talking about women getting involved. You wouldn’t have been 10 years ago,” I explained. On hearing my response he walked off.

The conversation occurred during a conference where delegates conferred honorary membership on former NEC members, and on Jayaben Desai – a name which will be unfamiliar to many readers.

“You are running a zoo”

Indian-born Jayaben came to the UK with her family and settled in Brent, west London, where she found

work at the Grunwick film processing plant in Willesden. Its employees were predominantly Asian women working without trade union representation.

On a Friday in August, 1976, Jayaben was told she had to work overtime.

She refused and said: “What you are running here is not a factory, it is a zoo. In a zoo, there are many types of animals. Some are monkeys who dance on your fingertips, others are lions who can bite your head off. We are those lions, Mr Manager.” Then, Jayaben and her son Sunil walked out.

The following Monday, they, along with four others, picketed Grunwick. They were advised to contact the TUC and subsequently they joined the APEX union. The six were joined by 50 others on the Willesden picket line and a further 25 at a nearby plant all demanding trade union recognition.

The next day, Grunwick boss George Ward offered the strikers reinstatement if they dropped their demand for trade union recognition, but the pickets refused to do so.

Ward dismissed all the

strikers at the beginning of September.

Difficult times

The dispute lasted almost two years, during which time Jayaben and her

fellow strikers enjoyed the support of trade unionists, many politicians and a large section of the general public.

Of particular note was the support of our predecessor union the UPW, whose members in the nearby Cricklewood sorting office refused to cross picket lines to deliver mail to Grunwick.

Some were suspended and they too were awarded honorary membership at conference.

Ward and the Grunwick board refused requests from APEX to negotiate a settlement and they refused to accept an ACAS recommendation to recognise APEX.

A subsequent inquiry set up by the then Labour government, and headed by Lord Scarman, recommended the



75

... number of people who joined the Willesden picket line

reinstatement of the strikers and stated that the company had acted “within the letter but outside the spirit of the law”.

Ward refused to accept the findings of Scarman, and the House of Lords subsequently upheld his right not to recognise a trade union.

Support for Jayaben and her colleagues petered out and, when she and three others went on hunger strike outside the TUC headquarters in protest at its withdrawal of support, APEX suspended them.

The dispute formally ended in July 1978.

Lessons of hope

The Grunwick strike was a seminal moment in the history of the labour movement. It drew attention, from the TUC particularly, to the plight of female migrant workers.

Jayaben Desai passed away last December. She was of diminutive stature – just 4ft 10in – but she was a giant of the labour movement who chose to embark on a fight she thought she could win.

Writing in *The Guardian*, Labour MP Jack Dromey, who was a local trade union activist at the time of the Grunwick strike, wrote: “Defiant to

the end, Jayaben told the final meeting of the strikers that they could be proud.

“We have shown”, she said, “that workers like us, new to these shores, will never accept being treated without dignity or respect.”

Many women have followed her example, and many of them will have been told, like I was in Bournemouth, that they were

embarking on a fight they could not win.

They have won and they will win the fight for gender equality, trade union recognition, abortion rights, the right to vote, equal pay, fairness and justice.

“In a zoo, there are many types of animals. Some are monkeys who dance on your fingertips, others are lions who can bite your head off. We are those lions”

Jayaben Desai



PENSION PRISONERS



BY VERA KELSEY

Proposals to equalise men's and women's state pension age to 65 in 2018 – and raise it to 66 by 2020 – is six years earlier than planned, and women will be big losers, says Wolverhampton and District branch's Vera Kelsey

Around 500,000 women already over 55 will see their state pension age rise by one year because of the latest government decisions. This is on top of increases of three or four years that women were required to accept in the 1995 Pensions Act.

As part of measures to cut government spending, the ConDem government announced that women's state pension age will rise even faster than expected to 65 – by 2018 instead of 2020 as previously planned – and then rise again to age 66 by 2020, instead of 2026.

For men, the increase is

just one year, from 65 to 66.

It is both unfair and disproportionate. A large number of women already past their mid-50s will have no time to make up for the lost pension income they had been expecting.

Women accept the need to equalise pension ages, but this timetable is totally

UNFAIR FOR WOMEN

For some unlucky women – around 33,000 who were born between March 6 and April 5, 1954 – they will have to wait an extra two years before their state pension is paid.

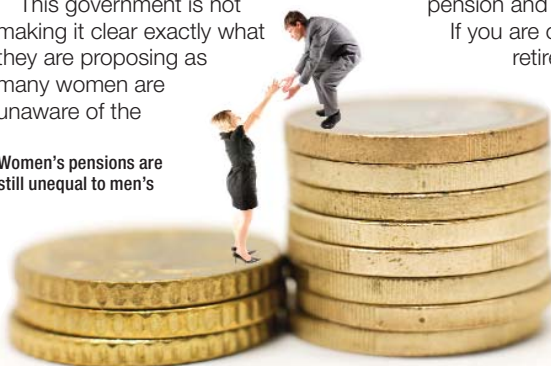
Attacking a generation

Women are already at a disadvantage compared to men. This generation of women now in their 50s earned less and were often barred from joining a private pension scheme when they started work. Many have interrupted their careers to raise children giving them less chance to build up a pension outside of the state system and they will receive less state pension as well.

Ros Altmann, of over-50s group Saga, has criticised the changes, saying: “The proposals are completely unfair. People need 10 years’ notice of a one-year rise in their pension age if they are going to have time to adjust. These women are getting six or seven years’ notice of a two-year change.”

This government is not making it clear exactly what they are proposing as many women are unaware of the

Women’s pensions are still unequal to men’s



plans. Many still do not realise they have to work to 65 let alone these new proposals moving them to 66.

Less painful alternatives

We should all be doing our utmost to raise awareness and pressurise the government to delay the proposed increase in women’s pension age until 2020, allowing women’s pension age to increase from 60 to 65 between 2010-2020, thus bringing equalisation of pension age for both men and women by 2020.

Then, further increases in pension age for both men and women could move in tandem to 66, allowing more time to prepare, affecting fewer people and not interfering with the existing timetable of pension age change and complying with the 1995 Pension Act.

You can get a pension forecast by contacting the Department for Work Pensions using the website www.direct.gov.uk to find out at what age you will receive a state pension and when.

If you are currently approaching retirement age and want more information you can phone: 08456 060 265 or for other age groups call: 0845 3000 168.

WWW.DIRECT.GOV.UK

unfair, especially as they were assured by the new government in its coalition agreement that women’s pension age would not rise again before 2020.

The government’s assurances have been broken, and as from 2018 onwards, women’s pension age is being increased again.



IT’S BOTH UNFAIR AND DISPROPORTIONATE. A LARGE NUMBER OF WOMEN ALREADY PAST THEIR MID-50S WILL HAVE NO TIME TO MAKE UP FOR THE LOST PENSION INCOME



Vera Kelsey, Wolverhampton and District branch

The Disability Advisory Committee needs you!

The Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) requires trade union reps with an interest in disability issues.

The Committee is a key contact for disabled members, or members with a long-term illness that may be covered under the new Equality Act 2010 (formerly the Disability Discrimination Act).

For help and advice,

try contacting your local unit representative, equality officer, disability champion, branch office, or visit the CWU website at:

www.cwu.org

You can also email **equality@cwu.org** or phone on **0208 971 7238**. Join Facebook too for the latest on disability updates or contact DAC members on the CWU Disability Network.



[EMAIL [EQUALITY@CWU.ORG](mailto:equality@cwu.org) FOR MORE INFO]

Regional Women's Committee Secretaries

Get in touch with female activists in your area! CWU has women's committees working in all

regions of the UK. If you've got an issue, fancy getting more involved, or simply want to know more

about the union, drop one of the women below a line. Recent women's events have included afternoon

tea, guest speakers and demonstrations on environmentally friendly cosmetics.

Region	Name	Contact Address	Telephone No.
EASTERN	Amanda Hill	cwueastern5womensofficer@tesco.net	07801 964650
NORTH WEST	Karen Bosson	nwwrc@btinternet.com	07894 423892
MIDLANDS	Vicki Cornelius	corneliusvicki@hotmail.com	07850 737654
LONDON	Linda Kietz	cwu.westlondon@btinternet.com	020 8280 3097
NORTHERN IRELAND	Vivien Holding	Vivien.holding@cwunie.org	07918 664029
SOUTH WEST	Sandy Best	sandybest_65@hotmail.co.uk	01793 584095
NORTH EAST	Jean Sharrocks	j.sharrocks@btopenworld.com	07850 416517
SOUTH EAST	Dianne Hill	Dianne.Hill1@btinternet.com	07747 193133
WALES & MARCHES	Jackie Gatward	GATTYPOST@aol.com	078333 54033
SCOTTISH	Helen Ogilvie	helenogilvie@live.co.uk	07527 472631