

# UNISON

## Caerphilly Branch

### UNISON Women's Newsletter – A Woman's Work



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#### Maternity Rights Extended

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has published its response to its consultation on pregnancy and maternity discrimination. New enhanced protections reflect what UNISON asked for in our response to the consultation.

- Legal protections against redundancy for pregnant women and new mothers are to be extended by six months resulting in these women receiving up to 2 years of legal protection.
- The redundancy protection period applies from the point the employee informs the employers that she is pregnant, whether orally or in writing.
- The reforms will also cover those adopting or on shared parental leave.

A new task force will also develop an action plan and advise the government on what further steps it and other organisation should take to help pregnant women and new mothers stay in work.

For more on this visit: <http://bit.ly/327IHmi>

#### Menopause Guidance

Women are roughly half of the UK workforce and about 3.5million are over the age of 50, nearly all of whom will be experiencing the menopause. The effects on a woman's physical and emotional health can significantly impact on how she carries out her work and her relationships with her colleagues.

UNISON believes that employers have a responsibility to take into account difficulties women may experience during the menopause, not least under health and safety legislation, and to take account of these in sickness absence policies.

As recognised and referred to in many of the policies implemented by Caerphilly County Borough Council - "...staff are our most valuable asset". Given that approximately 3800 staff are female and between the ages of 40 – 65, and approximately 880 are between the ages of 35 – 40, dealing with the issues that the menopause may bring is, and will continue to be, undoubtedly an important workforce issue.

The Authority has been proactive in its approach and has implemented a [Menopause Guidance in the workplace](#) which is welcomed by Caerphilly UNISON but we will continue to push for a full policy.

## Women and Pensions – Backto60 Update

Some 3.8 million women born in the 1950s must wait to find out the results of a court case about how the government delayed their state pension for up to six years.

The Judicial Review against the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) took place in the Royal Courts of Justice on 5 and 6 June and Caerphilly Unison Chair Lianne Dallimore and Women's Officer Michaela Hawkins were in attendance. The judgement is yet to be published, but here is a summary of the key arguments.

The case asks for compensation for women born between April 1950 and April 1960 on the basis of a combination of age and sex discrimination and the government's failure to properly inform those affected.

The campaign group [Backto60](#) have long argued that many women received little or no personal notice of changes to their State Pension age, and therefore did not have time to make other plans.

In court, the DWP defended the changes as a measure designed to equalise the State Pension age between men and women, and to ensure intergenerational fairness between those receiving the State Pension, and younger taxpayers funding them.

The DWP insisted that the Government had taken "extensive" steps to notify women of the changes. The DWP also said that "personal notifications would have been difficult if not impossible prior to 2003".

Yet the legal team for Back to 60 headed by world leading QC Michael Mansfield, produced internal documents showing the DWP was aware on at least six occasions, in 1998, 2000, 2007, 2011, 2012 and 2015, that information about changes to State Pension age was not reaching the women affected.

As reported by top investigative journalist David Hencke in the *Byline Times*, [civil servants repeatedly warned ministers](#) about problems ahead. The memos reveal that ministers rejected proposals to send out a mass mailing with tax paperwork in 1997. They also predicted criticism of the DWP's failure to communicate with the women affected in 2007, and refer to "widespread ignorance" of the changes with only three years to go. Direct mailing only started in 2009 – just a year before the State Pension age started to go up, and 14 years after the initial legislation in 1995.

At heart, the case is all about money. The legal representative for the DWP said that raising pension age to 66 also aimed to "make pensions affordable...and to control government expenditure at a time of great pressure on public finances".

In practice the hearing did not ask to reverse the State Pension age changes for both men and women, but just for compensation for women born in the 1950s who have and will continue to be adversely effected.





Millwall football club pay men 80% more than women. While female staff at Ryanair take home 72% less than their male colleagues. And in the UK, on average, men earn **18%** more than women.

This is the gender pay gap – the difference between men and women’s average earnings.

UK organisations with 250 or more employees are now legally obliged to publish their gender pay gap data. This means we can track how seriously employers are taking it and work with them to make our workplaces more equal.

This is why UNISON is leading a nationwide campaign to #BridgeTheGap. UNISON represents over one million women, making us the largest women’s organisation in the UK.

Caerphilly CBC published its latest [Gender Pay Gap report](#) on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019

## Myth busting with the first female General Secretary of the TUC

Frances o’ Grady is the first female General Secretary of the TUC in its 151 year history. From an interview with the independent about her role she intends to “nail some myths” about the trade union movement being male dominated.

Frances says that “we are seeing very large numbers of women workers in the public sector being sacked....having pay squeezed, living standards under attack. Women are feeling particularly hard done by”.

She continues “three in ten of our union leaders are women, 50 per cent of our membership of the TUC is women, this is a very different trade-union movement to the one a generation ago”. This branch couldn’t agree more with that statement – just ask our very own Secretary Lianne Dallimore who says “women now form a large part of the workforce than ever before – with over 1 million female Unison members their voices will be heard”.

## A Woman’s work – Roadshow and competition

To celebrate the valuable contribution that women make to the workforce please come along to our roadshow at Ty Penallta Canteen on **October 1<sup>st</sup>** between 11am and 2pm – there will be loads of information you can pick up as well as plenty of Unison ‘freebies’ AND....donuts!

We’re also running a fantastic competition via email and across all our social media platforms with a brilliant prize: £50 of theatre vouchers that can be used nationwide! Simply answer the question below:

As at 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 what percentage of the **CAERPHILLY UNISON** membership are women?

The closing date is October 4<sup>th</sup> - Email the answer to [caerphillyunison@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:caerphillyunison@caerphilly.gov.uk) or message us the answer via Facebook or Instagram! Good luck!