

United Kingdom



Women in decision-making: **1/5**
Socio-economic position of women: **2/5**
Violence against women: **1/5**

UNDERSTANDING UK²

In terms of political decision-making, women's representation is higher in the devolved administrations of Scotland (35%) and Wales (42%) than at UK level. In Northern Ireland, however, it is only 19.5%. At the UK level, only the Labour Party has an internal quota system for 35% women on its lists.

50.9% of women in the UK work full-time, as compared to 70.4% of men. In Northern Ireland, the gap is as high as 30%. The number of women working part-time is more than triple that of men (43.3% vs. 12.6%). Almost 30% of those women with care responsibilities who are in part-time work or classified as "inactive" say this is due to inadequate care services. Only 44% of dependent elderly persons receive formal care. Regarding childcare, provision is good for children over 3. However, only 35% of those under 3 are in formal care. Indeed, women's employment rate drops by 16.3% when they have children under 12.

Long periods spent outside the labour market for care duties, coupled with a gender pay gap of 19.5%, lead to lower savings and pensions for women. Women's pensions in the UK are on average 2/3 the size of men's and 24.5% of women over 65 are at risk of poverty.

At least 1 in 4 women experience domestic violence in their lifetime and between 1 in 8 and 1 in 10 women experience it annually. Less than half of all incidents are reported to the police, but they still receive one domestic violence call every minute in the UK. On average, two women a week are killed by a violent partner or ex-partner. This constitutes nearly 40% of all female homicide victims.³

In Scotland, a broader violence against women policy approach has seen substantial funding uplifts for rape crisis services. Abortion remains severely restricted in Northern Ireland.

TRENDS:



In February 2011, a government-commissioned report recommended voluntary targets for 25% women on the boards of the largest 100 companies by 2015. While the number of women non-executive directors has risen from 15.6% in 2010 to 21.5% in 2012, the proportion of women executive directors has gone only from 5.5% to 6.7%.

In March 2011, the UK changed its visa rules to give foreign partners of UK citizens and residents who flee relationships after violence access to support services. Legislation and other measures are under consideration to tackle violence against women, including prostitution and human trafficking.



The Women's National Commission, an independent government advisory board, was abolished in December 2010. A number of measures have been instituted, which make it harder to oppose government legislation on the grounds that it will disproportionately affect women or other social groups negatively.

Austerity measures and funding cuts are affecting women disproportionately. Women's associations predict that twice as many women than men will lose their jobs in the public sector by 2017.¹

In England and Wales, legal aid has been cut for victims of violence against women, as has funding for shelters and other local services. Funding for childcare provision has been cut by 24% since 2011 and tax credits for working parents have been reduced.

Highlights

22%
women in
parliament and
20% women senior
ministers

16%
women on boards

No women
presidents of the
largest companies

19.5%
gender gap in full-
time employment
rates

35% of
infants under 3 in
formal childcare

23.8%
gender gap in
employment for
parents of children
under 12

¹ Fawcett Society.

² Some gendered policy areas apply across the UK, but a range of issues are devolved to the Northern Irish, Scottish and Welsh administrations. In some cases differential outcomes are indicative of particular approaches at the sub-national level.

³ Women's Aid UK