

# Charter for Women

This updated National Assembly of Women Charter is supported by Unite

## In society

- Highlight the feminisation of poverty and campaign to reverse cuts in social provision, the welfare state and public services.
- Campaign for decent local authority grant funding for voluntary organisations that campaign for women's equality to ensure a strong voice advocating for women's equality for all women.
- Expose the ideologies that are used to perpetuate women's inequality (for example, the notion of 'family values' and the 'family wage').
- Draw attention to the role of the media and other cultural agencies in shaping gender identities that reinforce the unequal relationships between men and women.
- Campaign for greater support for lone mothers, carers and women subject to domestic violence, coercive behaviour, stalking and other abuse.
- End the oppression of Lesbian, Bisexual and Trans+ women.
- Improve access and rights to abortion.
- Campaign for Period Dignity with free period products available in workplaces and public buildings and an end to VAT on period products.
- Ensure that women and girls are entitled to the full range of free and high quality educational provision

## At work

- Campaign to end institutional and other forms of racism and ensure that the status and pay of Black women workers is a bargaining priority.
- Campaign to reduce the gender pay gap and highlight its causes.
- End job segregation by improving access to apprenticeships, training and opportunities for women in non-traditional areas.
- Campaign to ensure that unions fight more equal value claims through the mechanism of collective bargaining.
- Campaign for access to justice for women, with restoration of legal aid.
- Campaign to change equal pay law to permit 'class action' (group claims) and remove employer 'get out', strengthen the legislation to ensure employers are required to be open and transparent and with employees and close the loopholes that employers regularly use to avoid equal pay.
- Campaign to raise the level of national minimum wage to at least half, and rising to at least two-thirds of male median earnings.

## In the labour movement

- Tackle the under-representation of women and Black women in labour and trade union movement structures by proportionality and other measures.
- Campaign to maintain and extend women's self-organisation in trade unions.
- Campaign for the right to organise a trade union, statutory rights for union equality reps, and the right to take industrial action.
- Campaign for sectoral collective bargaining, delivered through a Ministry for Labour, with an oversight of ensuring the gender pay gap is closed.
- Ensure the accountability of women's structures to women.
- Maintain and extend women's committees, women's courses

(from nursery to further and higher education) and subject choice.

- Campaign for gender sensitive occupational health and safety, personal protective equipment and work stations and environments designed by and for women.
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- End women pensioner poverty by reducing the state pension age to 60 and increasing the State pension in line with average earnings.
- The principle of women only spaces to be upheld – and where necessary extended. Gender neutral spaces should be additional to women's spaces.
- Maintain the exemptions in the Equality Act that allow for single sex services or requirements that only a woman can apply for a job.
- Ensure that women have an absolute right to self-organisation as women.
- Extend sisterhood and solidarity to our sisters internationally in recognition that women across the world face similar sex-based discrimination.

- Demand that statutory pay audits be implemented in the private and public sector and remedial action taken.
- Demand full-time rights for part time workers.
- Root out bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace.
- End casualisation and especially abusive zero hours contracts.
- Campaign for a fully funded national child care service with affordable child care including pre-, after-school and holiday provision.
- Campaign for a shorter working week for all and rights to flexible working.
- Improve maternity leave and pay, including properly paid paternity leave.
- Ensure that women do not suffer disproportionately from the impact of robotics and artificial intelligence in the workplace.
- End modern day slavery, people trafficking, racist immigration laws and campaign for the free movement of people.

and other measures to ensure that women's issues/concerns are collectively articulated and actioned.

- Maintain women-only short lists in the Labour Party.
- Campaign to raise the profile of the TUC, STUC and Welsh TUC's women's conferences as the 'parliaments of women'.
- Campaign for:
  - o a Ministry for Women's Equality
  - o a fully funded independent Equality and Human Rights Commission with powers to take action when the Equality Act 2010 is breached
  - o restoration of the Women's National Commission

Ensure that by these means women's collective voices are not only heard but are acted upon.



# Unite Charter for Women

at the Workplace, in the wider community, in the union



# unite

## theUNION

**Unite4Women**  
**Pay up! Link up! Speak up!**

*For us the price of progress is eternal vigilance – we must ensure that women's demands are heard and acted on.*



*Unite women are part of the long struggle for women’s equality, and it’s important to celebrate all that has been achieved. But, continuing discrimination, unequal pay, harassment and violence against women, and the under-representation of women in leadership in their full diversity at all levels, are clear calls to action. We can’t wait. Now is the time for equality.*

Diana Holland,  
Assistant General Secretary – Equalities

*Unite strives for equal work, equal pay and an equal voice as we push for positive change through representation and collective strength in workplaces across the nations. Our focus on ensuring equality running through the heart of any strategy to win for workers means we are the progressive force for women.*

Alison Spencer-Scragg,  
National Officer for Equalities - Women

*I will take our equalities agenda into the heart of Unite – the workplace. As a woman, I have heard enough empty rhetoric and witnessed too much handwringing when it comes to delivering at the bargaining table for women. Working with our women workplace activists we agree on bargaining priorities for women and ensure that progress is measured and monitored and issues such as equal pay, flexible working, better maternity protection and affordable childcare are firmly on the negotiating table.*

Sharon Graham,  
General Secretary

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The Unite Charter for Women was initially proposed by the Unite National Women’s Committee and agreed at Unite’s First Policy Conference.

This new Charter has been revised in line with 2021 National Women’s Conference, Policy Conference and Sharon Graham’s manifesto.

The Charter encompasses “A Charter for Women” supported by Unite and TUC Women’s Conference (back cover) and calls for action by Unite reps, members, negotiators, officers, staff and organisers to implement the Charter at the workplace, in Unite, the wider trade union and labour movement, with relevant organisations that share our policy and aims, and in lobbying the government.

Support Unite Charter for Women. Action for Equality.

Unite National Women’s Campaigns



- Unite Charter for Women
- Equal Pay
- Women’s Health
- Violence against Women

**Women at the Workplace:**

**Pay up!**

- an industrial campaign for equal pay regionally and nationally – mandatory pay audits incorporated into bargaining agendas of all our workplace negotiators
- ensuring union negotiators promote and check implementation of flexible working policies and choice, alongside enhanced paid maternity, paternity and parental leave
- a national campaign on breast and cervical screening and early detection through the workplace – particularly encouraged in workplaces where there is shift work
- encourage women to become representatives and monitor involvement of women at workplace level including older women
- elect union equality reps and negotiate with employers for paid release
- good workplace policies covering sexual harassment and domestic violence within the workplace, including recognition for Unite listening support network on harassment, bullying and discrimination
- a national campaign to close the gap between men and women’s pension

**Women in the Wider Community:**

**Link up!**

- a national campaign to challenge violent and abusive attitudes against women and girls and campaigning on the International Day to End Violence against Women 25 November
- continued support for a woman’s right to choose
- gender balance in public appointments
- active support for Unite women in political and public life
- Unite involvement on International Women’s Day 8 March regionally, nationally and internationally, and celebrating Women Chainmakers’ achievements on a minimum wage every September

**Women in the Union:**

**Speak up!**

- Unite to strive to be an example of best practice in tackling under-representation and supporting the involvement of women, including recognition of childcare and other caring responsibilities, that women are more likely to be low paid and to be in part-time work and the value of union education, shadowing and mentoring
- Audit of women’s involvement throughout Unite as the basis of a cohesive Action Plan on all women’s involvement
- Promoting Unite Women’s Week education course
- Encouraging women members to build their involvement through direct contact e.g. reps surgeries where members can talk confidentially, and production of a short guide to getting involved in Unite