

Health Impact Assessment: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women, employment and health inequalities.

Many women experienced an exacerbation of inequalities during the COVID-19 pandemic in a number of areas including employment.

Population Groups Impacted by COVID-19 and Employment



Female carers and lone mothers



Women affected by violence and abuse



Women from ethnic minority backgrounds



Women with chronic conditions and/or disabilities



Women's income and employment type

e.g., furlough, part-time, zero-hour, precarious and low-income



Younger and older women

Key Statistics



Of the 3.2 million workers in high risk roles during the pandemic, **77% were women**, and over a million of these workers are paid below 60% median wages with a staggering **98% of all those paid below the median being women¹**.



The women's charity, Refuge, saw a **60% increase in monthly calls** from April 2020 to February 2021, compared with the start of 2020, with **72% of these calls from women experiencing domestic abuse²**.



A total of **69% of women in the UK are low earners**, increasing the likelihood that they will be in low-paid and insecure employment.



A survey conducted by the TUC found that **half of flexible working requests from working mothers are denied³**.



In the UK there are **2.9 million lone parents**, of which **90% are women⁴**.



58% of all carers in the UK are women⁴.

Determinants of Health and Wellbeing majorly impacted by COVID-19 and employment

Social and community influences on health:



Family relationships and roles



Violence against women and coercive control

Economic conditions:

Working conditions

Unequal loss of income

Unemployment

Changes in employment status



Working environment affecting mental health and wellbeing



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Mitigating actions

Due to the risk of increased exposure to VAWDASV¹ in the workplace (online or in person), there is a need to integrate service delivery and improved access for women to mental and physical health services and other welfare and support systems⁵.



Employers can implement a mechanism for women to safely report issues without feeling pressured so that casual or institutionalised sexism and misogyny can be eradicated.



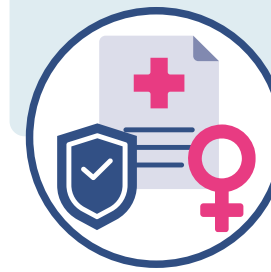
Employers should offer more support, for example flexible deadlines and working hours and employee assistance programmes, which will help relieve the pressures that home working brings⁶.



To highlight the impact on women across society, in relation to increased exposure to VAWDASV and mental load from home working. Greater recognition is needed from employers of the emotional and mental strain on women in public health emergencies, who are working, supporting family relationships and may also be experiencing violence and abuse.



There is increased scope for policy and action on women's health and wellbeing across all sectors.



Potential areas of future research

Long-term impact of changing employment culture from the COVID-19 pandemic on women's wellbeing.

The long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on career progression and opportunities for women.

Research into the longer-term impacts of the new virtual working environment on VAWDASV including coercive control on women's health and wellbeing is needed.

There is limited evidence of the impact of COVID-19 on employment of women in different geographical areas, i.e., rural and urban.

Identify how low-income groups and lone women parents were impacted given the significant challenges posed by women changing roles and working from home.

References:

1 Women's Budget Group (2020), 2 Suleman et al. (2021), 3 Brown (2021), 4 Glasgow Centre for Population Health (2021), 5 Seedat and Rondon (2021), 6 Feng and Savani (2020)

¹Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence