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Women's Pay: Creating independence

For Women's History Month, and tying in with our current pay campaign, Elizabeth blogs about how women's pay impacts on independence and the ability to make choices about their own lives.

When I was in school I managed to get a local paper round and I loved that it gave me more choices and independence, now that I had some regular pay. Both my Nan and Gran took time to advise me to keep my own bank account and make sure I always had my own money. I had no idea what they were talking about, where else would my money go if it wasn't my account?

I was taking for granted the relatively recent rights for women to receive fair pay for the same work as men ([Equal Pay Act 1970](#)) and to be able to access their pay in their own accounts without a partner's permission ([Sex Discrimination Act 1975](#)). My grandmothers lived the first part of their lives without these rights and saw how it impacted women's ability to access healthcare, leave marriages and support their own social lives and interests. It wasn't even until 1982 that a woman could walk into a pub and be sure that she could buy herself a drink with her own money after a long day at work (until 1982, it was legal to refuse service to a woman in a British pub).

Even without the current cost-of-living crisis, access to healthcare is often hampered for women by the cost of travel (rising bus and petrol prices and many women in Ireland still having to travel abroad for abortion care) or tackling the challenges of managing caring responsibilities whilst managing their own health. Today many women still face challenges in accessing credit due to lower earnings or taking career breaks because of ill health, to raise children or to focus on other caring responsibilities. These factors can also make it harder for women to escape from domestic abuse or more likely to become victims of [economic abuse](#).

I [joined PCS](#) as I recognised the need for the work PCS does in representing the voice of women in the workplace and the specific challenges that women face when it comes to pay and the power to choose.

Women can get involved in PCS further by [becoming a rep or advocate](#) or emailing equality@pcs.org.uk to find out about the national women's forum and regional groups.

[Read more about our current pay campaign.](#)