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#EmbraceEquity on Pay

For Women's History Month, Ellen blogs about the gender pay gap and how it particularly impacts on women who are also disabled, black or LGBT+

The theme for International Women's Day this year is #EmbraceEquity. This particularly applies to the fight for fair pay for women.

As a disabled, working-class woman, the fight for [equal pay for women](#) speaks to my heart. Women in my family have always had to work. The wives have typically earned less than their husbands, despite having the same education. Work has been on top of housework, childcare, and, for some, managing lifelong disability – often a full-time job in itself.

The usual excuse for the [gender pay gap](#) is that women have more junior roles than men. But it's also the sectors we work in. Roles requiring attributes traditionally associated with women such as emotional intelligence or caring are paid less. A prime example of this is support for disabled people, skilled and high-risk work which frequently commands little more than the minimum wage.

The gender pay gap is decreasing at a slow rate. It actually rose slightly among full-time employers from 2021 to 2022. In a cost-of-living crisis every penny counts. And it's intersectional women (how being a women and also black, disabled and/or LGBT+ intersects with each other) who are worst impacted. Intersectional women are most likely to be in low paid, insecure work, battling multiple discrimination, often juggling care for both children and elderly relatives. Black people make up 50% of the social care workforce and women perform over 85% of the direct care jobs.

I spoke at the PCS national equality seminar and some of the women delegates talked about the impact of pay and the cost-of-living crisis on them. One delegate said, "I am struggling to survive on my wage – the money isn't there and if you are on a lower wage, it's even worse."

Another delegate said, "Due to childcare responsibilities, I am unable to work full time which makes it difficult for me, especially when looking to create a lifelong career within the civil service. However, in recent months I have had to consider

the possibility of working full time to assist the household financially.”

It's time for change.

#EmbraceEquity #IWD2023 #WHM2023 #PCSEquality2023