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**Attention: News Editors and social affairs
correspondents**

3 pages

Women's low pay is the key to tackling child poverty, says TUC

The TUC publishes a briefing today (Friday) which reveals that tackling women's low pay is key to ending child poverty in the UK.

The Iron Triangle draws together research from the TUC, the End Child Poverty coalition and the Fawcett Society and finds that women's low pay not only causes their poverty, but also has huge implications for their children's living standards.

The Government has committed to halving child poverty by 2010, but *The Iron Triangle* explains that the poverty of children is inextricable from the poverty of their mothers. Half of all poor children – 1.4 million – are being raised in working households, and a clear majority of children in poverty (57 per cent) live in a family where one or more adults have jobs.

Working women are far more likely than men to be in low paid jobs. The TUC briefing reveals that 30 per cent of working women have an income of less than £100 a week, compared to just 14 per cent of men. The full-time work gender pay gap currently stands at 17.2 per cent, with the average male hourly wage £14.98 compared to £12.40 for women.

Women are also far more likely to work in poorly paid part-time jobs – more than 75 per cent of part-time workers are female – with an average hourly wage of £9.65, and a 35.6 per cent pay gap with male part-timers.

Another essential link between low pay, women's poverty and child poverty is the employment discrimination that many mothers face. Mothers in Britain are far more likely to be poor than anywhere else in Europe and from the moment they conceive a child women face immediate financial penalties – thousands lose their jobs and many more face disadvantage and reduced opportunities in the workplace.

In addition, after having a child many mums become trapped in part-time, low-paid and low status work. They are more likely to be in insecure jobs as temps or homeworkers, where they have fewer employment rights. This is why the TUC is rallying union support for a national demonstration against child poverty, organised by the End Child Poverty coalition, on Saturday 4 October.

Midlands TUC Regional Secretary **Roger McKenzie** said: “The TUC’s Commission on Vulnerable Employment recently found that some of the country’s most vulnerable workers are women – and having a child puts a woman at an even greater risk of being poor.

“As 40 per cent of households are now headed by single mothers, this has concerning implications for tackling child poverty.

“The Government has promised to end child poverty by 2020. But the number of children in poverty has risen over the last two years. It’s vital the Government tackles low pay and takes action to stop discrimination against mothers now.

“This is why we are calling on unions to support the End Child Poverty coalition’s national demonstration – Keep the Promise – on 4 October.”

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- *The Iron Triangle* is available at: <http://www.tuc.org.uk/extras/irontriangle.pdf>
- The TUC is a member of the End Child Poverty coalition. The Campaign to End Child Poverty includes children’s and other charities, social justice groups, faith groups, trade unions, businesses and many others concerned about the unacceptably high levels of child poverty in the UK who are working together for change. For more details visit: www.endchildpoverty.org.uk
- The report of the TUC’s Commission on Vulnerable Employment can be downloaded from: www.vulnerableworkers.org.uk
- All TUC press releases can be found at www.tuc.org.uk
- Register for the TUC’s press extranet: a service exclusive to journalists wanting to access pre-embargo releases and reports from the TUC. Visit www.tuc.org.uk/pressextranet
- A series of TUC rights leaflets are available on our website and from the *know your rights line* 0870 600 4 882. Lines are open every day from 9am-9pm. Calls are charged at the national rate.

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