

# One million women unemployed, a quarter unemployed long-term <sup>[1]</sup>

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**Source:** Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR)

**Format:** Press release

**Publication Date:** 7 Aug 2011

*Link to press release no longer available*

Text of the press release:

More than one in four women unemployed in the UK have been out of work for more than a year, according to analysis of official statistics by thinktank IPPR. Latest figures reveal that more than 260,000 women have been unemployed for over 12 months. Total unemployment has slightly fallen over the last year but the number of women unemployed has risen. The number of people unemployed in the UK is 2.45 million (down by just 20,000 since last year), of whom 1.026 million are women (up 42,000 since last year), with 268,000 (up 15,000 since last year) of them out of work for over 12 months.

IPPR analysis shows that women's position in the labour market is becoming increasingly insecure. More than 40 per cent of redundancies in the last quarter were among women, up from just over 30 per cent. IPPR analysis shows that cuts to public sector jobs are disproportionately affecting women. Over the last year, employment in the private sector has increased by 520,000 but employment in the public sector is down by 143,000. The official classification of 'public administration, health and education' is the only broad sector of the economy where more women than men are employed.

Dalia Ben-Galim, IPPR Associate Director, said:

"During the recession, unemployment among men increased much more than among women. But our analysis of the latest figures show that this experience is now being reversed, in large part because of the government's public spending cuts.

"Behind the headline unemployment figures, more people are experiencing long spells out of work and long-term unemployment is rising steeply. Women are increasingly joining the ranks of the long-term unemployed and the prospects for female employment are likely to remain gloomy for some time to come. Cuts to childcare tax credits mean that for some women, work no longer pays and they are better off staying at home.

"Being out of work for more than a year can have a scarring affect, making it harder to get a job as well as having a negative impact on one's health and wellbeing. The government should ensure that everyone who has been out of work for a year should be guaranteed a minimum wage job."

Research evidence shows that being unemployed for one year or more can reduce chances of finding work, as well as having a negative impact on one's health and wellbeing.

The OECD says that the UK has some of the most expensive childcare in the world. The average cost of childcare is £97 a week (for 25 hours) with costs in London and the South East rising to an average of £115 a week. Changes to the child care element of the working tax credit mean that childcare costs are rising. The Resolution Foundation has shown that the average family has lost £436 a year, with some losing up to £1,300, because of the cut from 80 to 70 per cent in the cost of care that parents can claim since April. A second earner on average earnings in the UK loses 32 pence of every additional pound earned in taxes and lost benefits.

IPPR wants fundamental reform of the welfare state to guarantee everyone out of work for more than a year a job on the national minimum wage. The 'job guarantee' would mean people refusing to take work after a year of unemployment would lose their benefits. IPPR also wants a reformed welfare state to provide universal childcare to parents of all children to encourage full employment.

The UK employment rate lags behind other European countries where women are better represented in the labour market, partly due to better childcare provision. Norway has the highest female employment rate in Europe (73.3 per cent), with Denmark (71.1 per cent) and Sweden (70.3 per cent), while the UK is significantly lower (64.6 per cent).

Regional breakdown:

- North East: 123,000 unemployed, of whom 55,000 are women
- North West: 292,000 unemployed, of whom 118,000 are women
- Yorkshire and the Humber: 227,000 unemployed, of whom 82,000 are women
- West Midlands: 226,000 unemployed, of whom 94,000 are women
- East Midlands: 183,000 unemployed, of whom 86,000 are women
- South East: 253,000 unemployed, of whom 113,000 are women
- South West: 170,000 unemployed, of whom 64,000 are women
- East of England: 199,000 unemployed, of whom 85,000 are women
- London: 397,000 unemployed, of whom 180,000 are women
- Scotland: 205,000 unemployed, of whom 87,000 are women
- Wales: 115,000 unemployed, of whom 42,000 are women
- Northern Ireland: 61,000 unemployed, 21,000 are women

**Related link:** News: "Child care cuts spark rise of the stay-at-home mum" [2]

**Region:** Europe [3]

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