



## WHOSE POVERTY IS IT ANYWAY?

Government statistics (1) tell us how many children and pensioners are living in poverty and unwittingly reveal why the numbers are proving so hard to bring down – the failure to acknowledge the gendered nature of poverty. Children and older people do not live in isolation. Who is it that’s providing for these children? Who are these pensioners and what has been their experience in the education system, labour market and pensions system? Engender believes that only gendered statistics will provide real insight into exactly who is in poverty and why... and only a gendered analysis will produce policies which will reduce poverty.

**Engender** (2) is urging the government to recognise that one of the root causes of poverty is systemic gender inequality that undervalues ‘women’s work’ whether in the home as carers of children and the infirmed or in low paid ‘C’ grade jobs [caring, cashier, catering and cleaning]. It is important to acknowledge that women are more likely to be poor, that over 90% of lone parent families are women and that many women enter into their ‘retirement’ with little or no pension.

Despite women’s move into the formal job markets they remain the primary unpaid carers in our society. Their resulting need for flexible work pushes them into low paid part-time jobs and reduces their opportunities for career progression. Even those women who do not have children pay the price, just the assumption that they might get pregnant is enough to limit their promotion prospects, so much so that a female graduate leaving college slips 15% behind her male counterpart within two years.(3) Despite 30 years of legislation the gender pay gap persists! Women working full-time are paid on average 17% less than men, and women working part-time paid 36% less than men working full-time.(4)

A lifetime of low paid or part-time work means that a woman’s average retirement income is 53% of men’s. (5) Recent Fawcett Society research found that only 17% of women have a full basic state pension on the basis of their own contributions, compared to 78% of men. And as a result, 1 in 5 single female pensioners live below the poverty line.(6)

Niki Kandirikirira, Engenders Executive Director said “Until we acknowledge women’s poverty in statistics, address the gender pay gap, challenge the assumptions, stereotypes and prejudices that result in occupational segregation and value women’s paid and unpaid caring roles, child and pensioner poverty are unlikely to be significantly reduced.”

Engender holds that it is vitally important to make people, organisations, institutions and policy makers aware of the disproportionate level of poverty faced by women and its impact on women, families and Scotland’s development. To this end we have produced a series of postcards to

highlight the issues we believe are contributing to poverty in Scotland (see notes 7 and attachments)

A society where women and men are truly treated equally will be better for all of us to live in. Tackling gender inequality is crucial for achieving a fairer and more rewarding society for **everyone**.

### **Press Contact**

Karen Dargo, Engender, Tel: 0131 558 9596 (w) or 07870855779 (m)

### **Notes to editors:**

- (1) Family Resources Survey, Households Below Average Income Dataset 2005/06, Tackling Poverty, Inequality and Deprivation, Scottish Govt consultation, 2008
- (2) **Engender** is a membership organisation that works in Scotland and Europe on an anti-sexist agenda to increase women's power and influence and make visible the impact of sexism on women, men and society. It provides information, analysis, training, advice and networking to those people, organisations and institutions who seek to achieve equality and justice
- (3) Pay and Income (women and men in Britain series), EOC Briefing, 2003
- (4) Closing the Gender Pay Gap – TUC, March 2008
- (5) Age Taking Stock – EOC Scotland, April 2006
- (6) Fawcett Society, Facts on women's savings and debts, 2007  
<http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/index.asp?PageID=338>
- (7) Engenders 'Everywoman' postcard campaign – August 2008

# EVERYWOMAN

...because women are more likely to be poor than men

**BUY NOW, PAY LATER — WHO GETS THE CREDIT?**  
Consumer lending and making ends meet means women spiralling into debt and poverty

**IT'S STILL A RICH MAN'S WORLD**  
Mums doing sums—balancing care, lower pay and debt. Are we avoiding the issue... the gendered nature of poverty?

**IT ALL ADDS UP**  
Lone parents are more likely to experience persistent poverty than two parent families...and 9 out of 10 lone parents are women

**HORRORSCOPES:** Your credit is running out!!!

© www.johnbirdall.com

# EVERYWOMAN

...because women are more likely to be poor than men

**YOU CAN'T HAVE IT ALL!**  
Why should having children mean low pay, limited career options and job insecurity for women?

**MOVE OVER DARLING**  
Being overlooked for promotion because you may have children one day – the everyday assumptions our bosses make about us.

**WHOSE POVERTY IS IT ANYWAY?**  
The truth about child poverty—it's about women's low income!

**HORRORSCOPES:** Find out if your unpaid caring will ever be valued

# EVERYWOMAN

...because women are more likely to be poor than men

**JOIN THE F-PLAN**  
Flexicurity— your way to manage the dual roles of earning and caring

**BRITAIN'S PENSION SHAME**  
Taken time out to care? 4.3 million women miss out on the full state pension

**THE GREAT TRADE-OFF**  
Why do we have to trade pay and security for flexibility when returning to work after child care?

**HORRORSCOPES:** Take some time to look after your self, all that caring for your family could leave you poor in your old age

# EVERYWOMAN

...because women are more likely to be poor than men

**SUGAR & SPICE AND ALL THINGS NICE...**  
But does that mean you can't fix a boiler?

**VALUE JUDGEMENTS — WHAT ARE WOMEN WORTH**  
Cleaning, caring, catering, and cash register, what a coincidence! All low paid and seen as women's jobs

**OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION**  
— it starts and ends in the nursery. Gender stereotyping means we pay more to fix our cars than to care for our precious children

**SECRETS OF THE SALARY SLIP**  
Why men have bigger packets

**HORRORSCOPES:** From the end of October you will work for free, because you are a woman

# EVERYWOMAN

...because women are more likely to be poor than men

## BACK AGAINST THE WALL

Our young girls pushed into prostitution and sexual exploitation by poverty.



## DON'T GIVE UP YOUR DAY JOB

Unsafe streets make it difficult for women to move to and from work at night

## ESCAPE FROM A LIVING HELL

How refuges help women escape the poverty that traps them into staying with violent men.... But that's after the event!

**HORRORSCOPES:** Transport systems designed with men in mind continue to frustrate you as you juggle work, child care and staying safe.

Dialogue with a rapist (detail) © Alexis Hunter

# EVERYWOMAN

...because women are more likely to be poor than men

## VALUE JUDGEMENTS – WHAT ARE WOMEN WORTH?

Cleaning, caring, catering and cash register. What a coincidence! All low paid and seen as women's jobs

## WHOSE POVERTY IS IT ANYWAY?

The truth about child poverty - it's about women's low income

## BRITAIN'S PENSION SHAME!

4.3 Million women miss out on the full state pension because they care

## ESCAPE FROM A LIVING HELL

How refuges help women escape the poverty that traps them with violent men...But that's after the fact!

## BUY NOW AND PAY LATER – WHO GETS THE CREDIT?

Consumer lending and making ends meet means women spiralling into debt and poverty

## PLUS...

*The F-plan: Flexicurity - balancing your dual roles of earning and caring. It's still a rich man's world: the gendered nature of poverty. Secrets of the Salary Slip - why men have bigger packets. How gender stereotyping means we pay more to fix our cars than to care for our children..... & MUCH MORE.*

bridges

engender  
www.engender.org.uk

