

# Homeworking: Here & Now

**'I can look after my three children who are very young and I can work at the same time, because childcare is very expensive which I cannot afford.'**

**'Some people don't think it is real work. Because I work at home they think it's a hobby which makes me really angry.'**

**'There are no alternatives because I can't work outside because I don't know English. It is very hard to learn now I am 50.'**

**H**omeworkers face many obstacles as they seek to earn a living from home. They experience low pay – often below the national minimum wage - irregular work and a lack of employment protections. In addition, the welfare system does not work well for people whose work is irregular. Most homeworkers are women, working at home because they need to look after their children – but there are other issues such as ill health, discrimination, disability, language barriers and immigration status that lead women to work at home.

**'Homeworking: Here and Now'** explores the lives of homeworkers living in the North of England. The report is based on interviews with homeworkers, explaining the obstacles they face in their own words. Homeworkers are often invisible and unrecognised workers. This report seeks to provide homeworkers with a voice and to highlight the changes they would like to see to make it less difficult to earn a living from home.

**You can read the key recommendations from the Homeworking: Here and Now report overleaf, and download the full report from <http://www.homeworkersww.org.uk/resources/publications>**

## Homeworkers WorldWide

Homeworkers Worldwide (HWW) exists to support and build solidarity with homemaker organisations all over the world. HWW works to make homebased workers visible both through our own campaigning and advocacy work and in partnership with other organisations. HWW supports the demands of homebased worker organisations for recognition and rights as workers.

## Northern Homeworking Project

In 2010 HWW established the Northern Homeworking Project (NHP). The NHP, based in Northern England exists to ensure UK homeworkers have a voice. We work with UK homeworkers to map the different kinds of work women are doing at home and to identify their main concerns. We work together with homeworkers to campaign on their key demands and lobby other organisations to incorporate these demands into their own work on poverty and livelihoods.

## Our recommendations

Homeworkers raised a huge range of issues during this project and we have not been able to address them all in these recommendations. Our recommendations simply highlight some key steps we believe the government should take in order to make it less difficult for women to earn a decent living working at home.

## Next steps – 'Women and Work Network'

Whilst we have focussed specifically on homeworkers throughout this project we recognise that many of the issues raised are common to other women in low paid and precarious work. We therefore intend to build on this project by linking up with other organisations concerned with issues of women and low paid work to build a network for research, advocacy and campaigning around these issues. If you are interested in getting involved with this work we would love to hear from you.

## Contact us

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# hww recommendations

- ◆ **Revise the law on employment status to deliver fairness and clarity, ensuring that all working people have the same set of basic rights.**
- ◆ **Increase the availability of free and affordable childcare.**
- ◆ **The earnings disregard for calculating benefits should be set at a level high enough to make a real difference to those in irregular work.**
- ◆ **The government should calculate benefits for the self-employed based on actual earnings (after expenses) rather than hours worked.**
- ◆ **Universal Credit should not be paid in a single payment per household, but shared between couples to promote equality. There should be an individual rather than a household earnings disregard.**
- ◆ **The government should not introduce a system of welfare 'conditionality' that does not take into account the caring responsibilities that limit the options of women in particular.**
- ◆ **Grant asylum seekers the right to work and ensure that permission to work remains for people whose claim for asylum is refused, but who are unable to return home through no fault of their own.**
- ◆ **Greater support for homeworkers is needed at a local level, to tackle isolation, build solidarity and feed into national campaigning.**