

# International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

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**Labour councils -**  
stop making cuts now

**Jeremy Corbyn -**  
guarantee that an incoming Labour government would replenish any reserves Labour councils use to avoid cuts to domestic violence services and refuges

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This year, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November) is taking place during the general election campaign.

With the possibility of the election of a Corbyn-led government, this is an ideal opportunity for campaigners, socialists and domestic violence service users and staff to set out the policies that would be necessary to help women experiencing domestic violence and abuse.

Reforms have been won by the labour movement, socialists and women that have challenged oppression, inequality, sexism, domestic violence and abuse. Yet two women a week are killed by a current or ex-partner and many women suffer in silence.

The Campaign Against Domestic Violence (CADV) was launched by Militant, the forerunner of the Socialist Party in the early 1990s and involved trade unions and other organisations. They won important legal changes and protections for women suffering violence and abuse.

But the last decade of capitalism in crisis has threatened many hard won reforms. Women's

refuges have lost £7 million in funding, cut by both Labour and Tory councils.

30 women's refuges have closed, and the welfare system no longer offers a proper safety net to women trying to leave a violent partner.

Around 1 in 10 women trying to leave a violent relationship will end up sleeping rough before finding accommodation, and about 46% of women sofa-surf whilst waiting for a place in a refuge.

Workers' rights have also been under attack. The rise of zero-hour contracts and precarious working conditions can leave all workers feeling vulnerable in the workplace, especially women who need adjustments because of trying to leave a violent partner.

Women in violent relationships lose an average of 137 hours work and pay a year, and 10% of women in violent relationships will lose their jobs as a result.

In addition, low pay, precarious and inadequate hours and attacks on benefits undermine the ability of women to be financially independent.

86% of cuts to the welfare system have come out of women's pockets. Cuts to social and childcare have pushed these responsibilities back on to women and their families.

The hated Universal Credit has pushed many into debt and hardship. Combining benefit payments into one per household can give total financial control to abusive partners.

Many Tories and their rich and powerful backers may no longer feel able to express blatant sexism. But austerity and a system in crisis is responsible for the cuts in services that have so cruelly impacted on women.

Socialists, services users and staff should use this general election to outline what is really needed to defend women's rights and their lives. A programme for women suffering domestic violence and abuse must campaign on more than expanding the limited number of refuges and beds

**Ultimately, we want a socialist society which drastically changes women's position and brings about an end to sexism, inequality and oppression.**

## **HERE ARE SOME IMPORTANT POINTS TO HIGHLIGHT IN THE GENERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN:**

### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES**

- No more council cuts
- Restore domestic violence service funding
- Corbyn should guarantee that an incoming Labour government would replenish any reserves Labour councils use to avoid cuts to domestic violence services and refuges now
- Secure funding for all domestic violence refuges and support services, including specialised services where needed
- Build enough council homes with genuinely affordable rents to solve the housing crisis. Everyone has the right to a decent home
- Cap private sector rents
- End privatisation in the NHS
- For specialist trained staff and high-

quality domestic violence awareness training.

- For fully funded, safe and confidential health services to support women experiencing violence and abuse

### **LEGAL RIGHTS**

- Reverse cuts to legal aid
- Access to specialist-trained and high-quality domestic violence solicitors so that no woman is priced out of legal representation
- For specialist-training at all levels of the judiciary and police, with democratic community and working-class oversight, as part of a programme to democratise the justice system through democratic election of judges and police committees

### **RIGHTS AT WORK**

- For an active, combative trade union movement which defends women in the workplace
- Special leave for women experiencing violence and abuse and safe-guarding

from violent partners at work

- Specialist training for trade union reps so they can support women at work
- End zero-hour and precarious employment practices. Job security and flexibility
- Decent wages and benefits which start immediately a woman leaves a violent partner
- Scrap Universal Credit
- For affordable and accessible, publicly funded quality child and social care, run in the interests of services users, workers and the community – not for profit

### **SOCIALISM**

- End poverty, inequality and oppression
- Take over the banks and major monopolies under democratic workers control and management
- Use the wealth in society for the benefit of the many not the few