

**Keeping the household fed and clean has always been seen as women's work, either as a paid employment or as an unpaid duty at the end of the working day.**

Many working-class women started and ended their working lives as domestic servants. Educational and employment legislation tried to push girls into domestic service, but most left as soon as they could. Even today, cleaning, cooking and personal care are often seen as 'women's work', with few prospects and low pay.

Since 1900, there have been repeated campaigns for women's domestic work to be recognised and paid – either through family allowances or as 'wages for housework'. At the same time, other women have been fighting for flexible hours and nursery provision to enable them to stay in work while caring for their families.

For many women, especially those with young or elderly dependents to care for, the home is also the site of paid work. Clothes, matchboxes and even metal chains have all been made in home workshops, and today clerical, sales and teaching work may also be carried out at home.