The number of self-employed women has increased by 63% since 2008. Women earn 40% less (£7,500) than men (£12,500) from their self-employed earnings as visual artists.

Self-employed artists don't just make their own work. They have to be CEOs, social media experts, administrators, tech gurus and part time accountants. All of this on top of their real occupation but not counting the three other jobs they take to pay rent and buy the materials they need.

Many are successful - by which I mean they still work like crazy and do all the additional roles listed but no longer have to do three *extra* jobs.

In AUE's recent Members Survey we found:

- 79% of AUE members do not earn enough from their art practice to live on, with most members having to take on additional jobs.
- Over half of respondents earned under £15,000 annually from all types of work. 72% earned less than £20,000 and 96.4% earned below the UK median wage.

Two thirds of respondents did not have a regular income and many relied on savings to get through. Many have no sick pay beyond statutory sick pay, no paid holidays and no ability to provide for maternity or parental leave. The work is often seasonal, intermittent and/or project-led. Self-employment is sometimes through choice but often because one-off contracts are all that's available.

Self-employment can give some workers opportunities and flexibility but it can equally be almost impossible to manage. When desperate for work some artists set their prices too low, subsequently working for a couple of pounds an hour. Forced with impossible choices, many young artists and curators are forced to give up.

No wonder many European countries subsidies their creative industries and Ireland has a Basic Income for the Arts (BIA) scheme.

We ask the TUC and Women's Committee to ensure that employers, whatever their size of workforce, have a legal responsibility to ensure that pay pro rata and the conditions of service offered to part-time workers is equivalent to those in full-time contracts.

We ask that we lobby the government to establish a support network for self-employed/freelance women workers. Including providing telephone and online advice.

Finally, we as that the TUC lobby the government to provide a support package for low-paid, self-employed/freelance women workers that would enable them to ensure they have opportunities to provide themselves with education and training courses and help with childcare issues.

Rights for Self Employed Women Workers, Self Employed Speech 26

Loraine Monk, Co-Chair of Artists' Union England