



SOUTH EAST REGION'S WOMEN'S NEWSLETTER



NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE 2010



This year's National Women's Conference is being held in Gateshead from the 18th-20th February. As of 2008, every branch is entitled to send at least one woman delegate to conference. Despite this, only 32 out of 130 branches in the South East are sending delegates to Conference.

This is an improvement on numbers of delegates at last year's women's Conference but is still well below our South East entitlement. If your branch has not sent anyone to National Women's Conference, please ask them why. With women making up over 75% of the union's membership, more effort needs to be made as 32 delegates does not even represent 50% of branches in the South East. UNISON's National Women's Conference is open to all women members not just women who are actively involved in the union at branch level. In fact, many women become more involved in trade union activity because they have attended events such as Women's Conference or other regional women's training courses and events, where women can see for themselves the broad range of issues that affect women, both domestic and International, that UNISON is involved in.

This year, the following motions from the South East are being submitted:

- Sexual Exploitation of Women in the media
- Returning to Work after Maternity leave
- Stop the Demand for Prostitution
- Statutory Domestic Abuse Training for Public Sector Workers

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THE REGIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE FOR 2010

The new Regional Women's Committee was elected at the AGM on the 3rd October 2009. As Ginny Eaton from the Surrey County branch enters her second year as Chair of the Committee, Fiona Heneghan from Surrey County and Charlie Dacke from Fareham Local Government have been elected as Vice-Chairs of the Committee.

A full list of elected representatives is available on the South East Women's page of the UNISON website. A calendar of meeting dates and regional events is also available on the website. If you have any issues or ideas you would like to raise, please contact the representative from your branch. Alternatively, you can contact the Regional Women's Officer, Fiona Roberts, or f.roberts@unison.co.uk.

Over the years there has been significant change and attitudinal shift in both women's and society's thoughts about women's equality and emancipation. Many from a younger generation feel that 'all the battles have been won for women', with more women in the boardroom, greater equality in legislative rights, and an increased critical mass of women's visibility as impressive role models in every aspect of life, one could think that women have gained true equality. The unfortunate fact is that women are still not paid equally to that of their male counterparts, women are still not present in equal numbers in business or politics, and globally women's education, health, the sexual objectification and violence against women are still issues of grave concern. UNISON membership comprises 75% women members and has a proud history of campaigning on women's rights issues. We work towards ensuring equality for women, not just in the workplace but in society, nationally and internationally.



MILLION WOMEN RISE MARCH



For the third year, UNISON will be supporting the Million Women Rise march which will take place in London on Saturday 6th March (information below) and we hope that you will be able to join us. We support the Million Women Rise (MWR) march because we believe that a woman's right to live free from violence and / or the fear of violence has not been achieved. Women continue to be attacked and violated in many different ways, in our homes, in our streets, on our public transport, at our places of work. The government, the TV and newspapers do very little to address this issue; instead they often blame women for wearing the wrong clothes or being in the wrong place.

Violence devastates the lives of women, their families, and their communities. It also threatens to undermine efforts to bring about long lasting and peaceful development. Therefore the campaign to end violence against women is an international struggle for female emancipation and liberty.



This year, the Million Women Rise March takes place on Saturday 6th March.

Meet other UNISON South East women members at 12pm opposite Hyde Park on Park Lane (Nearest tube is Marble Arch)

The route will follow Oxford Street, Regents Street and Piccadilly with a rally and celebration from 3pm– 4.30pm in Trafalgar Square.



OXFORD AND ARUN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY FESTIVALS

The Regional Women's Committee are going to be running UNISON Women's stalls at Oxford on the 8th March, and Arun on the 6th March. If you would like to get involved, please contact Jenny at the address below.

There has been a marked increase in the number of International Women's Day events running in the South East Region, since the introduction of the Public Sector Equality Duties. If your employer is running an event and your branch is involved, we would love to hear about it. Please forward information (and any pictures) to Jenny Mason at j.mason@unison.co.uk

Regional Women's Forum

In 2009 the women's committee got together with the Eastern Region to run a joint Women's Forum. Approximately 55 women members attended the weekend and it is planned to run the Forum with Eastern next year as it was a very well received event with excellent speakers and workshops



Regional Women's Forum 2009

Women's Lives Course

Early in the year a presentation was given to a group of 40 women members on this course. A large number of women left the course encouraged to take up the role of branch women's officer, to start women's groups and were eager to attend further training courses for women during 2009.

Branch Women's Officers

There has been an increase this year in the number of branch women's officers requesting guidance and information on how to carry out their role effectively. This has presented an opportunity to carry out effective branch women's officer inductions with some great results. For example, Zeba Rao, Reading local government branch mapped the women members in her branch and set about recruiting those who were not yet members. She successfully recruited every single woman in her department and was recently elected to the Regional Women's Committee. A new course for branch women's officer will be included on the women's training programme for 2010 which will also offer an opportunity for branch women's officers to share ideas and network. .

Women's History Course

Having previously run short women's history workshops as part of larger events in the region, this course was predicted to be popular – and it was! The course was fully subscribed to and the evaluation forms and one-to-one feedback were very positive.

Branch Women's Groups

The women's committee are very pleased at the increased level of activity in branch women's groups in the region. The Kent local government women's group is up and running and have been active this year in attending the million women rise march and forwarding a motion to women's conference for 2010. The Isle of Wight women's group was launched early in December and attracted just under 40 women to their launch day.



Joyce Milford, Julia O'Connell and Ginny Eaton at the launch of the Isle of Wight Women's Group

International Women's Day

This year the Women's committee included in their action plan and budget a small amount of financial support to enable them to be sponsors of the Oxford International Women's Festival. The Women's committee have budgeted next year to sponsor Oxford International Women's Festival and Arun International Women's Day event.

Please note that the full version of the Women's Annual Report is available on the South East Women's webpage at <http://www.unison.org.uk/southeast/women.asp>.



WOMEN'S COURSE 2010



Every year, UNISON runs a series of dates for Women only courses:

Women's History (Residential)

16th-18th April, T&G Eastbourne

This course will cover women's suffrage, women and politics, feminist theories, women and the trade union movement, women in public life.

Bullying and Harassment

5th-6th May, Ranger House Guildford

This course will cover types and patterns of behaviour, legal overview, the path of a formal complaint, conducting investigations, collective responses, and workplace policies.

Branch Women Officer Training

3rd- 4th June, Ranger House Guildford

The course will clarify the tasks and responsibilities associated with this role and equip branch women's officer with the knowledge and tools to carry out their role effectively.

Assertiveness Training (Residential)

13th-15th October, T&G Eastbourne

This course aims to build women's confidence through participative group work with a focus on behaviour types, body language and practice in using assertive behaviour.

Regional Women's Forum

T & G Centre, Eastbourne

Residential: 2nd, 3rd and 4th July 2010

Friday afternoon to Sunday lunchtime

Closing Date: 4th June 2010

Available to Women members in all South East regions

The Regional Women's Forum is an annual event organised by the Regional Women's Committee to give women members and women stewards the opportunity to meet each other, network and share experiences and examples of good practice. With 1 million women members in UNISON, this event inspires, informs and builds the confidence of women to become active in their branches and raise awareness of issues that affect women in the workplace and society.

If you have ever thought about getting involved in the Union and making a difference then come along to the Women's Forum and learn about women in UNISON and how we work together to make changes.



How to apply

Details of even more training courses and events and application forms can be downloaded from the UNISON website at <http://www.unison.org.uk/southeast/education.asp>

Further Information

If you need further information about this programme or any other education matters, please contact Jenny Mason on 0845 355 0845 or j.mason@unison.co.uk



CONTACT WOMEN IN UNISON

Please do! We'd love to hear from you. Tell us what you liked (or didn't) about this newsletter. Send us a contribution to the next one.

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