



**UNISON national women's committee**

Annual report 2014/15

# Women members fighting for a fairer society



**UNISON**  
the public service union

# National Women's Committee

## Annual Report 2014/15

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Enhance our capability to meet the recruiting, organisational and representational challenges posed by austerity measures including cuts, workforce reductions, reorganisations, attacks on facility time and privatisation. Ensuring the union is relevant to all members who provide public services regardless of the economic sector in which they work.	
<b>Objective 2</b>	
Protect and secure fair pay and terms and conditions, high quality-employment, and pensions for UNISON members, promoting equality and challenging discrimination, and promoting UNISON's alternative.	
<b>Objective 3</b>	
Develop our public service campaigns in support of quality public services, in defence of the NHS, and all public services, building our political influence, forging alliances with unions, appropriate campaigning and community groups to challenge the austerity programme, including challenging the attacks on the Welfare State. To campaign for a change in Government	
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## Introduction

Welcome to national women's conference. I hope that your time in Southport is interesting, informative and inspiring, that you enjoy conference and make the most of the opportunity to meet sister activists and friends – old and new.

This year has been particularly challenging for our members, with pay disputes in the majority of service groups and further jobs cut – with even more to follow in 2015 if this government is not kicked out of office. We must all play our part in making sure that we do not have another term of ConDem cuts, or – worse still – UKIP MPs in Westminster.

The proportion of women working in the public sector is higher than ever – well over three quarters of all public sector jobs are now held by women. So when jobs are lost, those are women's jobs – and our members. In UNISON it is essential that we follow those jobs when they are handed over to the private sector, that we continue to recruit and organise those workers and that we do our best to ensure that the terms and conditions they operate under are as good as they can be. As you read this annual report I hope you will find much to inspire you in 2015. There are some great stories about the very positive work that women in the regions are doing to improve women's lives in their local communities and internationally.

Nationally, I have been delighted to again chair the women's committee and to speak out on the issues our women members care about – whether that be cuts to services, ending violence against women or benefit cuts and the impact on vulnerable women. For things to change we need more women in positions of influence, in our government, judiciary and media just for starters! In UNISON we are often held up as a shining example of how positive action can and does level the playing field – at least in the trade union movement – and I am hugely proud to be part of that movement.

So congratulations to everyone who has been involved in disputes, in demonstrations, in taking forward the work of our women's groups at branch, regional and national level and in your local communities.

I look forward to the debate at conference, to hearing your many stories, and to working alongside you to create a better society for all women.

Yours in sisterhood  
Eileen Best  
Chair, national women's committee



L to R: Committee chair Eileen Best with NWC members  
Jo Morgan and Debbie Hollingsworth

## NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

### ACTION ON CONFERENCE DECISIONS 2014

As always, there were a wide range of decisions taken at conference in 2014. These decisions rely not just on action from the national women's committee, but from the regional women's groups and networks, other departments and committees in the union, and on our partnership working with organisations who share our aims.

This report summarises that work, and hopefully provides some inspiration for your campaigning, recruiting and organising work in 2015 and beyond.

There are many sources of information, including the UNISON website. The women's pages can be found here: [www.unison.org.uk/women](http://www.unison.org.uk/women)

In addition the women's Facebook page [www.facebook.com/unisonwomen](http://www.facebook.com/unisonwomen) and Twitter account @womeninUNISON grow in popularity. We use this media to share information about the campaigns we support, the groups we are working with and activities we are participating in. Please 'like' our page, follow us on twitter and retweet when you feel moved to do so.

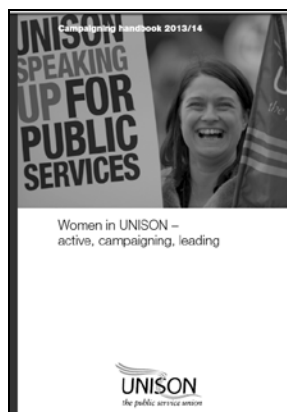
Information is circulated to and through regional women's networks; also to activists through the equality e-bulletin and e-focus. Articles on many of the issues raised have also appeared in the UNISON journals, on the UNISON main website and social media.

Where motions called for lobbying they were referred to Labour Link, and to the Connect service used by UNISON where appropriate. Regional women's networks were also asked to engage in lobbying on specific issues and around events, as MPs respond to individual constituents as well as pressure groups.

UNISON is affiliated to a wide range of groups and where possible we have worked with them as well as local, regional and national community groups.

Finally, the women's campaign guide is available as a download. This guide includes information on how to organise a campaign, the priority campaigns identified as a result of motions to national women's conference, suggestions for action and partner organisations. This is updated annually following women's conference.

<https://www.unison.org.uk/upload/sharepoint/On%20line%20Catalogue/21869.pdf>



#### Your essential guide to :

- How to organise a campaign
- Women and the cuts
- Workplace issues
- Pensions
- Welfare reform
- Women in public life
- Parents and carers
- EAW
- Women's health
- International campaigns

## RECRUITING, ORGANISING, REPRESENTATION AND BARGAINING SUB-COMMITTEE

The national women's committee has adopted a women-focused cuts campaigning strategy which complements the action being taken by regions, branches, service groups and other self organised groups.

As a union of over 1 million women, the focus of much of UNISON's campaigning work around the cuts has been the disproportionate impact of the cuts on women, and the particularly harsh impact on Black, disabled and LGBT women. Information has been updated over the course of the year, and circulated through the women's committees and networks, via UNISON communications and the women's social networking sites.

An essential part of this strategy was to continue to update guidance and promote the use of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and the use of equality impact assessments to oppose and ensure fairness in cuts. A revised PSED factsheet was issued following women's conference 2014 and can be found here:

<https://www.unison.org.uk/upload/sharepoint/Briefings%20and%20Circulars/Public%20Sector%20Equality%20Duty%20Factsheet.pdf>

The committee also agreed to continue to promote the use of the the political education project training course and roll out of campaigning etc via regional and branch women's groups. The political education project resources are available for use in regions and branches, with bite-size training modules included on subjects including lobbying skills, campaigning and community engagement. New resources are developed in response to situations which arise, where appropriate.

### Fawcett Society research

The Fawcett Society was commissioned to produce a report '*The changing labour market 2: women, low pay and gender equality in the emerging recovery*', funded by the GPF.

This follows the publication of '*The changing labour market: delivering for women, delivering for growth*' in 2013 which warned that without urgent action the proportion of women in the UK working for low pay was set to increase, whilst the pay and experiences of low paid women were simultaneously in decline. '*The changing labour market 2*' provides a detailed look at how low paid women are faring in the emerging recovery and includes analysis of national employment data and a survey of 1,003 low paid women.

Key findings from the employment data analysis:

- Whilst the UK economy is in recovery and levels of economic inactivity amongst women are at a record low, almost a million women (946,000) remain out of work.

- Where there has been growth in the jobs market, much of this has come from a rise in low-waged and insecure jobs in typically feminised sectors of the economy such as accommodation and food services.
- These trends are having significant implications for women's position in the labour market.
- Female under-employment (i.e. those working in part-time or temporary jobs where they would prefer full-time, permanent roles) is nearly twice the level it was at the start of the financial crisis in 2008 - some 789,000 women are working part-time who would rather be in full-time employment.
- There has been a 35.4 per cent increase in the numbers of women in self-employment since the start of the crisis, equating to an additional 371,000 women. Self-employed women are typically very low paid and, on average, earn around 40 per cent less than men in self-employment.
- Overall, low paid women comprise 1 in 4 of all female employees in the UK, equating to around 3 million women.
- Earnings have been significantly lagging behind inflation for many years. This is hitting those on low pay particularly hard. Even with the planned increase to £6.50 this October the national minimum wage will only reach 2005 levels in real terms.
- The inequality gap between men and women is widening. Last year the gender pay gap increased for the first time in five years and now stands at 19.1 per cent for all employees. This is driven in part by the shape of the recovery. Women already comprise two-thirds of those in low paid and insecure jobs. The increasing levels of women in these types of work, along with the declining value of low pay, is contributing to the widening gap.

Key findings from the survey of 1,003 low paid women:

Low paid women are experiencing a significant decline in their living standards: nearly 1 in 2 said they felt worse off now than five years ago. The most commonly cited reason for feeling worse off was the rising cost of groceries and bills (40 per cent), illustrating that low paid women are feeling the cost of living crisis sharply.

For many low paid women, work alone is not providing an adequate route out of financial hardship: 48 per cent were receiving some kind of benefit and 53 per cent said they would 'never' or 'rarely' be able to make ends meet without it.

A significant minority said they had to turn to other sources for assistance with basic needs: nearly 1 in 10 had obtained a loan from a pay day lender in the last twelve months; nearly 1 in 12 low paid women with children had obtained food from a food bank in the past twelve months.

High levels of low paid women are working below their skill or qualification level. A staggering 22 per cent of those earning below £7.44 per hour had degree level qualifications and 36.8 per cent described themselves as '*overqualified and over-skilled*' for their current job. The most common reason cited for this was a lack of appropriate jobs (41 per cent), suggesting that the growth in low-wage sectors and jobs is further exacerbating the trend for women to work below their skill and qualification levels, one of the key causes of the gender pay gap.



The phenomenon of 'zero-hours' contracts is ushering in a new era of insecure work amongst a substantial minority of the low-paid – over 1 in 8 (14 per cent) women self-identified as being on a zero-hours contract, with this figure rising to nearly 1 in 3 for those in London (32 per cent). The majority of women did not exercise a positive choice for this type of contract but felt compelled to accept it, either because it was the only work available (40 per cent), or because they felt under pressure from the employer (17 per cent) or job centre (8 per cent).

Fears about job security are widespread amongst low paid women: 23 per cent feared that if they spoke out about pay and conditions they could lose their jobs.

Concerning numbers of low paid women are experiencing maternity discrimination: 1 in 10 of those returning from maternity leave in the last five years were given a more junior role. For 40 per cent of those, this was either because their role had been made redundant or given to someone else against their wishes.

The report received widespread coverage in the media , with articles in the Sunday Mirror, Independent, Guardian, New Statesman, Evening Standard and Telegraph, as well as many major regional papers; TV and radio coverage, including Women's Hour, Sky and the BBC.

A fringe meeting was held at national delegate conference to release the preliminary findings of the report.

[www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/women-economy/](http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/women-economy/)

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## Action on motions

### MOTION 1: Women active in UNISON

Called on the national women's committee (NWC) to research the levels of women's activism and report back to conference 2015; produce material promoting the benefits of being a woman activist; highlight the importance of having active, low paid women members at all levels; defend low paid women's seats.

ACTION	UPDATE
Communications	Million Voices factsheets have been updated, including a generic equalities factsheet. Women's issues and images have featured in materials designed in support of industrial action/demonstrations etc which have take priority .
Regional Action	Regional women's committees and networks were asked to take action on relevant points within their own annual workplan. Each region has reported on their activities in section 3 of this report.
Service group liaison	Service groups were asked to ensure that their structures meet UNISON's proportionality and fair representation guidelines and to ensure that positive measures are taken to encourage women's involvement at all levels.

## **MOTION 2: Supporting education for women**

Called on the NWC to work with the NEC to include women's studies where bursaries are available for TU and labour studies. Publicise the bursaries to women.

*The lack of reference last year to UNISON bursary support for women's studies at all levels up to and including Master degree level, alongside trade union and labour studies, was an unintentional oversight. This was corrected when the 2014 UNISON bursary advertising was posted on the website in early January - see [www.unison.org.uk/for-members/unison-learning/financial-support/](http://www.unison.org.uk/for-members/unison-learning/financial-support/) for the link to the bursaries criteria and application form. The bursary scheme and support for women's studies was publicised in e-focus. In addition the scheme is promoted to members through our lifelong learning channels and union learning rep activity.*

## **MOTION 3 : Young women's role models**

Called on the NWC to work with RWCs to identify young women as role models, and publicise their work; consider inviting a young woman to address NW conference 2015.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>
Regional action	RWCs were encouraged to work with the regional young members' group and to identify young women role models and speakers at regional events.

## **MOTION 4: Zero hours**

### **MOTION 6: Zero hours contracts (ZHC)**

Called on the NWC to recommend to the UK and Scottish governments that legislation be introduced to limit zero hours contracts; raise awareness of the disproportionate impact on women; research the impact on women; use the findings of the research to campaign against their use.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>
Lobby government	The Labour Party has announced a range of measures to end the exploitation of workers through ZHCs as part of their manifesto for 2015.
Research	The research commissioned from the Fawcett Society on low paid women covered the issue of ZHCs.  *Officers also participated in the UNISON group feeding into the EHRC Cleaning Sector Taskforce, aiming to improve practice in the cleaning sector where zero hours contracts are prevalent. A seminar at national women's conference 2015 focused on the findings of that research. The EHRC report is here: <a href="http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/commission-finds-firms-are-failing-protect-key-rights-cleaning-workers">www.equalityhumanrights.com/commission-finds-firms-are-failing-protect-key-rights-cleaning-workers</a>
Service group liaison	Service groups were asked to reflect the disproportionate impact of ZHCs on women in their campaigning and bargaining work. A national women's committee amendment to a motion on this issue was carried at the local government service group conference and therefore becomes the property of the service group.



\*The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has published a report which argues that employers in the commercial cleaning industry are failing to meet their responsibilities to their staff in relation to pay, holiday or sick leave and dealing with their concerns.

The report found that many cleaners feel that their employer, client firms and the public do not treat them with the dignity and respect. The EHRC made the following recommendations:

- Improve working conditions for cleaning operatives
- Raise awareness of employment rights
- Establish more responsible procurement practices.

The Commission established a taskforce to consider the findings of this report, identify practical examples of good practice and propose ways of embedding these across the cleaning sector. Members of the taskforce include Sodexo, Interserve, Facilicom, Enhance Office Cleaning, Building Futures Group, NHS Property Services, ISS, KPMG, BIS, TUC, RMT and UNISON.

The report set out the following as examples of good practice for the cleaning industry:

- Cleaning firms providing tender proposals for contracts at both the market rate (often minimum wage) and at a living wage rate;
- Clients setting the contract value to cover the costs of paying workers a living wage and including living wage clauses in contracts;
- Clients introducing daytime cleaning to reduce their energy and security costs, so allowing cleaning firms to offer workers regular sociable hours, with opportunities for longer or full time hours;
- Clients integrating contractor workers into their workforce through involvement in the client firm's training, staff meetings and social events;
- Clients and cleaning firms valuing cleaning staff: in some cases this meant basic social niceties such as greeting or thanking individuals; in other cases, firms had specific events or awards to recognise good team work or performance;
- Clients and cleaning firms providing training that broadened skills and opened career opportunities: this included induction into clients' policies and procedures, and access to customer service training or to health and safety training leading to accreditation.

### **MOTION 7: Social work profession**

Called on the NWC to work with appropriate national and regional committees to investigate the impact of social work pressures on women, their careers and their health; issue guidance to branches on how to mitigate this.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>
Regional action	RWCs were asked to provide information/case studies to support work on this motion.
Issue guidance	A national women's committee amendment to a motion on this issue was carried at the local government service group conference and therefore becomes the property of the service group.

### **MOTION 8: Home care workers**

Called on the NWC to work with the LGSG to promote the Ethical Care Charter; raise awareness of the impact of ZHC and poor terms and conditions; encourage support from branches and regions for the Pay Up for Travel Time campaign. (See action points under motions 4/6 for ZHC issues) Discussions have taken place with the local government team leading on home care on how the NWC can support the UNISON home care campaign.

Members will be aware of the UNISON *Ethical Care Charter* which aims to assist councils who provide or commission home care to help improve care standards. However, in March 2014, the National Audit Office reported that an estimated 160,000-220,000 workers in the adult care sector in England alone are paid below the national minimum wage. An investigation by Revenue and Customs of care providers between 2011 and 2013 found 48 percent were guilty of non-compliance, leading to one home-care provider alone paying £600,000 in penalties to its workers.

This situation arises where staff are paid only by the minutes they spent with clients rather than their rostered working hours; are employed on zero hours contracts; are not paid travelling time and are paid very low 'on call' rates.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>
Regional action	RWCs were asked to promote the campaign and work to raise awareness within branches.
Liaison with service group	The NWC is working with the service group to identify workers paid under the minimum wage for legal cases; identify good and bad practice in care provision and to ensure that this issue is prioritised at regional level.
Promote the ethical care charter	The campaign has been promoted via facebook and twitter.
Lobbying	Members are/were encouraged to write to their MP seeking support for the charter: <a href="http://www.unison.org.uk/at-work/local-government/key-issues/homecare/write-to-your-mp-homecare/">www.unison.org.uk/at-work/local-government/key-issues/homecare/write-to-your-mp-homecare/</a>

### **MOTION 9: Childcare**

Called on the NWC to work with Bargaining Support to survey members on childcare provision; develop a model bargaining claim; continue to work with Gingerbread on the Make it Work campaign.

As all political parties develop their manifesto commitments in the run-up to the 2015 election, the UNISON funded Gingerbread campaign was intended to ensure that the voices of single parents are heard loud and clear in the debate on childcare. This will not only help to influence political debates around support for working families, but will also ensure that the needs of single parents – who are disproportionately at risk of poverty and most in need of childcare to be able to go out to work – are seen and heard at the centre of this key policy area.

Gingerbread ran an online survey from their website asking their members about their experiences of finding summer holiday childcare. The results of that survey and other campaigning work during the year raised the profile of the need for affordable childcare, which is set to be a key election issue.

ACTION	UPDATE
Partnership working	Funding was secured through the GPF to support the Gingerbread <i>Make it Work</i> campaign.
Regional action	RWCs were asked to promote the survey and support campaign work at a regional level.
Lobbying	The government launched a consultation on affordable childcare in autumn 2014. Officers from MPU, policy and education services liaised on a response covering the perspective of both service users and providers.

#### **MOTION 10: Equality for bisexual women workers**

Called on the NWC to work with the LGBT SOGs at all levels to publicise the 2012 bisexuality report, including via social media; promote the bisexuality factsheets; publicising the bisexuality network meeting and visibility day; addressing bisexuality in regional women's equality training and events.

ACTION	UPDATE
Publicity	Bisexuality visibility day and members network day were publicised through the social media and women's networks.
Regional action	Regions were asked to promote the events and to review training materials as detailed in the motion.

#### **MOTION 11: Aspirational women in the workplace**

Called on the NWC to promote the use of EIAs; work with regions and branches to support the progression of women activists; work with regions to develop mentoring schemes; work with the TUC and STUC women's committees to highlight the lack of visibility of women in senior positions.

ACTION	UPDATE
Promote the use of EIAs	Existing UNISON policy and practice.
Regional action	Regions were asked to consider initiatives to support the progression of women activists and to develop mentoring schemes. Details of regional actions are in section 3 of the report.
NWC buddying and mentoring training	The NWC participated in a session on buddying and mentoring at the 2014 AGM.
Liaison with TUC/STUC	The TUC equality audit <a href="http://www.tuc.org.uk/equality-issues/equality-audit/equality-audit-2014-improving-representation-and-participation-trade">www.tuc.org.uk/equality-issues/equality-audit/equality-audit-2014-improving-representation-and-participation-trade</a> sets out action being taken by affiliate unions to improve equality and fair representation in trade unions.

#### **MOTION 12: Empowering women in the public sector**

Called on the NWC to work with LAOS and Labour Link to educate, mentor and support women to achieve their full potential, including on public bodies.

ACTION	UPDATE
Refer to LAOS	Training has been developed as part of the political education package.

Liaison with Labour Link	Close links have been developed with the Fabian women's network and details of their mentoring scheme were circulated via regional networks. UNISON staff and activists are also involved as mentors in the mentoring scheme.
Regional action	Regions were asked to organise buddying and mentoring training and promote initiatives within branches.

### **MOTION 13: Benefit Cap**

Called on the NWC to raise awareness of the benefit cap; research the impact on women; use the research to campaign against the cap.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>
Campaign	Responsibility for campaign work around welfare reform and benefits rests with the policy and public affairs department. There is guidance and information available on the UNISON website here:  <a href="http://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/help-with-problems-at-home/welfare-reform/all-articles/">www.unison.org.uk/get-help/help-with-problems-at-home/welfare-reform/all-articles/</a>
Research	The GPF commissioned Fawcett Society research includes reference to reliance on benefits.

### **MOTION 14: Women under attack**

Called on the NWC to work with RWCs and other UNISON structures to highlight the impact of the cuts and the need for greater public investment in those areas which impact most on women's lives.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>
Highlight the impact of the austerity measures on women	UNISON campaign materials and messages focus strongly on the impact on women, with women featuring prominently in all publicity materials, articles and resources. The women's Million Voices factsheet was also updated.

### **MOTION 15: The economy is not working for women**

Called on the NWC to report to conference 2015 on redundancies affecting women in the public sector; work with Labour Link to ensure the impact on women of public sector policies are a priority for the Labour Party; promote There For You.

### **Women Deserve Better**

More than 5500 UNISON members responded to our survey on their experiences as women over 50 in the workplace. The results of the survey were launched for International Women's Day 2014 in the report *Women Deserve Better*.

The report covers a wide range of issues – from considerations approaching retirement and women's health, to caring for dependants, flexible working and career progression – particularly with the extension of the retirement age.

The report attracted a great deal of media interest and will be used to inform our policy into the future, and to seek to shape the political manifesto of the future government.

The policy recommendations identified in the report are as follows:

### **Approaching retirement**

- Look to extend the availability of phased/flexible retirement options to more employers
- Consider mechanisms to widen access to partial pension take-up by older staff working reduced hours

### **Health**

- Consider how to develop the idea/practice of allowing older female (and male) workers to change job roles for health/physical reasons
- Consider how to widen good management practices on supporting women workers facing difficulties going through the menopause
- Consider how to widen access to shorter hours or flexible working patterns for older female (and male) workers for health/physical reasons (see 'flexible working' below)

### **Working hours and working patterns**

- Look to extend the availability of phased/flexible retirement options to more employers
- Consider mechanisms to widen access to partial pension take-up by older staff working reduced hours

### **Caring for dependants and looking after the household**

- Continue to push for the strongest possible statutory right of access to flexible working for all workers
- Ensure employers are aware that requests for flexible working/time off to deal with emergencies are as important to care for adults as for children; ensure employers are aware that older workers may need these provisions to care for grandchildren who live with them
- Consider mechanisms to ensure that flexible working and emergency time off is understood and accessible in all sectors organised by UNISON and for workers in all grades/job types
- Encourage government and employers to introduce a scheme of 'adjustment leave' – effectively a longer period of compassionate leave, possibly of six weeks to three months - to allow time to make arrangements for, for example, a sudden and life changing incident in a family member's health.

### **Part time workers increasing their hours**

- What mechanisms might there be to give part timers more opportunities to increase their paid hours?
- What mechanisms might there be to ensure part timers aged 50+ are given opportunities to train for and have access to higher grade jobs? (See also 'career progression' below.)
- Consider whether the tax and benefits system is distorting hours offered and worked

### **Career progression**

- Ensure that the training agenda within the union and in employers recognises the aspirations of women aged 50+
- Work to ensure that employers' grading structures and recruitment and promotion mechanisms recognise the aspirations and experience of women aged 50+

- Consider pressing for equal opportunities policies and managers' equality training to specifically address older women workers' aspirations
- Campaign for implementation of the Equality Act 2010 provision on dual discrimination which would provide protection for older women

<https://www.unison.org.uk/upload/sharepoint/Policies/women%20deserve%20better%20v2b.pdf>

ACTION	UPDATE
Work with Labour Link	Public sector job losses and the impact on women are at the forefront of work with the Labour Party.
Public sector redundancy information	916,000 public sector jobs have been lost since the start of 2010 (from ONS Statistical Bulletin, Public Sector Employment, Q2 2014 – released September 2014) However this figure has caveats about reclassification of FE staff, nationalised banks etc. Many posts are also lost through people moving on or retiring rather than redundancy. Information on redundancies as such would involve Freedom of Information requests to every public body.
Promote There For You	There for You is promoted via women's social media and through regional networks, including encouraging members to join the Octopus fund raising lottery, information on school uniform grants, debt advice etc as and when information is available.

#### **MOTION 16: The disproportionate impact of austerity measures in relation to unemployment and redundancy on Black women**

Called on the NWC to work with the NEC, other UNISON bodies and Fawcett to determine strategies to counteract multiple discrimination; work with Labour Link; work with the NBMC to develop information on challenging unfair redundancies; campaign against the detrimental effect of the new Immigration Bill; campaign against any ban on women's right to choose whether or not they wear the niqab.

ACTION	UPDATE
Partnership working	Work continues with the Fawcett Society, including the GPF funded research referred to earlier in this report.
Liaison with the NBMC -	The NWC and NBMC operate a liaison representative system to ensure that there is good representation of Black women's views in all our campaigning work.
Service group liaison	Service groups were asked to continue to monitor redundancies, particularly for unfair selection. Also to monitor and resist restrictions on women's religious dress.

#### **MOTION 38: Health and Safety**

Called on the NWC to work with the NEC to campaign for the reinstatement of Section 47 of the HSAW Act; ensure that gender factoring is taken into account in workplace risk assessments; work with Labour Link to reverse the damage to H&S legislation; raise the profile of the relevance to women of H&S legislation.

ACTION	UPDATE
Lobby for legislative change	UNISON's health and safety unit, as part of PPA, has responsibility for legislative change in this area.

UNISON H&S gender guide	Promoted via women's networks, available on MPU stall at NDC and service group conferences where applicable.
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### **MOTION 39: Supporting the women victims of stalking**

Called on the NWC to explore ways of working with Paladin; promote the H&S guidance 'It's not part of the job'; promote UNISON model domestic abuse policy.

UNISON is supporting the Paladin campaign for reform of domestic violence legislation. The Paladin website explains the issue as follows:

The laws used to prosecute domestic violence – including breach of a restraining order, damaging property, assault, burglary, rape, kidnapping and murder – do not describe its essence. It misses the fact that domestic violence is about fear and a pattern of continuing acts. However, the Crown Prosecution Service only prosecutes for a single event and tends to focus on the injury level. As a direct result, the seriousness of the pattern of abuse is not identified or understood, victims become entrapped, abuse and rape become normalised and no-one goes to prison without injuries being present. Put simply, the criminal law does not conceive many women in abusive relationships as victims of ongoing abuse.

Unacceptable controlling, domineering and demeaning behaviours currently fall outside the law and cumulative harms are ignored when each abusive incident is treated as an isolated offence. Victims often report that "the violence isn't the worst part" of being abused and that the non-violent forms of abuse can be more devastating than physical or sexual violence. However, current law also leads to minimisation of abuse by police and courts. Only 3 men are convicted and punished for abuse for every 100 reports of abuse by men.

On 20th August 2014, the Home Secretary announced a consultation to seek views on whether the current law on domestic abuse needs to be strengthened to offer better protection to victims. It is specifically focused on whether we should create a specific offence that captures patterns of coercive and controlling behaviour in intimate relationships, in line with the government's non-statutory definition of domestic abuse. The conclusions were not available as this report was prepared.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>
Partnership working	UNISON has been working closely with Paladin and the TUC on joint working to improve stalking legislation, lobbying and campaigning. Stalking Awareness Day concentrated on stalking in the workplace, and it is hoped to develop a relationship with Paladin to support UNISON members who are affected – particularly as many are vulnerable given the client based nature of their work.
Promote H&S guidance	Information was circulated via social media and women's networks.
Promote the model domestic abuse policy	The model domestic abuse policy was updated in 2014 and is available as a download from the website.



## CAMPAIGNING AND WOMEN'S HEALTH SUB-COMMITTEE

### **MOTION 17: Women and the housing crisis**

***Note – this motion was carried at national delegate conference and therefore becomes UNISON policy – action to be taken by the NEC***

Called on the NWC to work with the NEC, Labour Link, other departments, community and partner organisations to lobby the government for housing action and policy; increase legislation on private sector landlords.

### **MOTION 18: Local Housing Allowance - Shared Accommodation Rate**

Called on the NWC to raise the profile of and campaign against the shared accommodation rate and its likely impact on women; research the impact on women.

On 25 November, members of the national women's committee were in parliament to attend the launch of a new UNISON report 'A new housing benefit deal for young people'. The event was chaired by Sharon Hodgson MP, Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities. The event had been organised jointly by MPU and PPA. The report called for a joined-up response to prevent young people becoming homeless, including abolition of the shared accommodation rate (SAR) for all young people. It particularly focused on the impact of SAR and the local housing allowance on young vulnerable women. Other speakers included Professor Ian Cole from Sheffield Hallam University who had researched into the impact of the local housing allowance, Katherine Sacks-Jones from Crisis and Chris Bryant MP, Shadow Minister for Welfare Reform. The report can be found here:

<https://www.unison.org.uk/upload/sharepoint/Toweb/WHY%20WE%20NEED%20A%20NEW%20HOUSING%20BENEFIT%20DEAL%20FOR%20YOUNG%20PEOPLE.pdf>

ACTION	UPDATE
Work with Labour Link	The Labour Party announced measures to increase controls on private sector landlords and rental agencies, and hosted the launch of the UNISON report.
Partnership working	PPA lead and have established working relationships with housing groups, including Shelter and Crisis. UNISON is also a member of the Social Security Consortium.
Work with There For You	Information on assistance available to members – grants, referral to Shelter and/or Turn To Us was promoted via social media. Also There For You is considering the potential for an online benefits checker for the UNISON website.

### **MOTION 21: Save the NHS, save women's local health services**

Called on the NWC to work with the NEC and Maternity Action to campaign for properly resourced and funded maternity services; work with Labour Link for greater funding as part of the 2015 general election campaign.

### **MOTION 22: Maternity and its impact on women's careers**

Called on the NWC to provide material for a 'maternity and your rights' campaign at local and national level; develop further training; produce template policies; lobby MPs for universal childcare; raise awareness and encourage participation in the EHRC pregnancy discrimination survey.

Pregnancy and maternity discrimination is now more common in UK workplaces than ever before, with as many as 60,000 women forced out of their job in 2014. It is also harder than ever to challenge such discrimination: the supply of free legal advice has been decimated by funding cuts and the abolition of almost all civil legal aid. And, since July 2013, upfront fees of up to £1,200 to pursue an employment tribunal claim for pregnancy, maternity or sex discrimination have had a devastating impact on women's access to justice.

With pregnant women, new mothers and their families also facing the biggest living standards crisis in a generation, the government elected in May 2015 must take robust action on this issue. The scale of the problem – and the detrimental impact on women, their families, and on gender equality – demands a collective response by ministers across government.

To this end, the Alliance Against Pregnancy Discrimination in the Workplace – UNISON, the TUC, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, the Fawcett Society, Maternity Action, NCT, the Royal College of Midwives, Unite, Working Families, and YESS – has drawn up the following manifesto, setting out eight key policy actions for the government elected next year.

- Senior ministers across government should send a strong message to employers that economic 'hard times' are no excuse to flout the law on pregnancy and maternity discrimination. This ministerial lead should be supplemented by a high-profile government information campaign aimed at improving the awareness of both workers and employers of the law and best practice.
- The new Minister for Women & Equalities should, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders such as the members of this alliance, lead on drawing up a cross-departmental plan for rapidly implementing the recommendations from the Equality & Human Rights Commission's current inquiry into pregnancy discrimination – due to report in mid-2015 – which have consensus support.
- The Ministry of Justice should abolish the hefty, upfront fees for discrimination and other employment tribunal claims introduced in July 2013. There is now broad consensus that the Ministry got it badly wrong on fees, which in the words of the CBI "should never be a barrier to justice". With the overall number of employment tribunal cases down by 65 per cent, and sex and pregnancy discrimination claims down by 84 per cent and 38 per cent respectively, it is now clear that the fees regime is little more than a charter for rogue employers.
- The Department for Business, Innovation & Skills and the Ministry of Justice should, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, identify and implement further measures to improve compliance with employment tribunal awards, to ensure that women awarded financial compensation for pregnancy or maternity discrimination by a tribunal actually receive the money due to them. It is simply unacceptable that 50 per cent of all awards go unpaid by the employer.
- The Ministry of Justice should work to deliver a significant injection of funding into the specialist information and advice services that pregnant women and new mothers need to help protect their rights and entitlements.

- To ensure that all new parents receive the minimum income for healthy living (as recommended by the Marmot Review), encourage more shared parenting, and so reduce the scope for discrimination, the Department for Work & Pensions should immediately restore the real value of statutory maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave pay, and of maternity allowance, lost as a result of below-inflation annual uprating since April 2013. It should then plan a series of annual increases to bring parity with the National Minimum Wage by 2020, and with the Living Wage in the longer term. It is simply unfair to expect new parents to get by on just 60 per cent of the National Minimum Wage at a time when their outgoings have grown enormously. And, in the words of one small employer, it is “immoral and damaging to society to force new mothers back into work before they [are] ready”.
- To incentivise small employers to ‘do the right thing’ by pregnant women, and to assist with the associated costs (including accrual of holiday pay during maternity leave), the Department for Work & Pensions and HM Treasury should raise the rate at which small businesses can recover statutory maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave pay, from the current 103 per cent to 110 per cent, and should act to raise awareness among small employers of the provisions for advance funding by HMRC.
- The Department for Business, Innovation & Skills should use the first available legislative opportunity to create a statutory right to time-off and facilities for breastfeeding at work, and clear legal protection against harassment or discrimination for exercising this right.



[www.tuc.org.uk/equality-issues/gender-equality/pregnancy-discrimination/pregnancy-test-ending-discrimination-work](http://www.tuc.org.uk/equality-issues/gender-equality/pregnancy-discrimination/pregnancy-test-ending-discrimination-work)

The TUC report *The Pregnancy Test* says pregnancy and motherhood can seriously affect a woman’s career. Around a quarter of women don’t return to work after maternity leave, and one in six of the mums who do go back, change jobs because their employer won’t allow them to work reduced or flexible hours. It identifies ten ways pregnant women and new mothers are mistreated at work and five things that need to change.

ACTION	UPDATE
Partnership working	<p>UNISON is represented on the Alliance Against Pregnancy (AAPD) Discrimination - manifesto above.</p> <p>GPF funding was secured for the Valuing Maternity campaign to secure better workplace rights for mothers, with our partners Maternity Action. A campaign fringe meeting was held at TUC women’s conference and information is included in the women’s health pack.</p>
Pregnancy discrimination survey	UNISON supported the TUC survey on pregnancy discrimination, which was promoted via social media and through the women’s networks.

Pregnancy discrimination survey (continued)	We are also involved in discussions with the EHRC on their planned widescale survey on pregnancy discrimination which is due to report in mid-2015. The survey will be promoted via the women's and service group networks when released.
Work with Labour Link	The national women's officer participated in a Labour Party summit roundtable on parental rights, hosted by Chuka Umunna, then shadow secretary of state and Lucy Powell, shadow minister for childcare and children.
Regional campaigning	RWCs were asked to work with the regional service group, branches and community organisations to protect women's health services.
Work with service groups	Service groups have been asked to monitor any attack on occupational maternity and parental rights during the course of implementation of recent legislation.
Education and training	Note - Working Families deliver a maternity and parental rights 1 day course for all reps at national level/1 day introductory work-life balance course at regional level. There is also an equality activity in the UNISON stewards' course raising awareness of women's issues.
Guidance	The maternity rights bargaining guide has been updated. <a href="http://www.unison.org.uk/knowledge/employment-rights/maternity-leave/overview/">www.unison.org.uk/knowledge/employment-rights/maternity-leave/overview/</a>

#### **MOTION 23: Group B Streptococcus**

Called on the NWC to campaign for the Strep B test to be available to all pregnant women; raise awareness of the importance of screening; provide guidance on the symptoms and effects

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>
Guidance	Information is included in the women's health pack.
Partnership working	Campaigning/petition by the Group B Streptococcus Support Group promoted via social media and the women's networks, stand at women's conference 2015.

#### **MOTION 24: No age restrictions for cervical cancer screenings**

Called on the NWC to campaign to have screening age restrictions lifted and better services; highlight the importance of screening; provide guidance on the symptoms and effects.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>
Guidance	Information from Jo's Trust included in the women's health pack and promoted via social media and the women's networks.
Campaigning	Details of the Sophie's Choice petition calling for smear tests to be available for women from the age of 16 were circulated to regions and via social media.

## END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (EVAW) SUB-GROUP

### **MOTION 25: Violence against women**

Called on the NWC to work within UNISON structures on a campaign against VAW - in society and the TU movement; to extend screening for domestic abuse to all areas of health care; to ensure that policies and strategies are sensitive to the needs of women; champion the work of community and voluntary sector organisations working in this area; for full implementation of the CEDAW recommendations.

### **MOTION 27: Domestic abuse – support for women in employment**

Called on the NWC to highlight the barriers for working women accessing support as victims of domestic abuse; for all women fleeing domestic abuse to automatically qualify for housing benefit; campaign for less restrictive means testing for legal aid; encourage employers to sign up to the DoH pledge on domestic violence; share good practice; signpost There For You.

### **MOTION 28: Support for those suffering domestic abuse**

Called on the NWC to encourage branches to challenge cuts to women's services; encourage the adoption of workplace domestic abuse policies; encourage branches and regions to offer training on domestic abuse; work with the TUC.

### **MOTION 29: Domestic abuse**

Called on the NWC to work with RWCs to ensure all employers have a domestic abuse policy and are able to signpost sources of help; promote UNISON's resources; develop relationships with partner organisations.

### **MOTION 32: UNISON policy on violence against women**

Called on the NWC to work with the NEC to ensure that UNISON policy on domestic abuse as a gendered issue is understood; issue a strategy document encompassing all aspects of violence against women.

### **MOTION 33: End violence against Black women**

Called on the NWC to work with the NEC and PSI to develop a EVAW resource pack for global unions to use; work with community based organisations to raise awareness of domestic violence; works with NBMC to develop a Black women's resource pack; develop a campaign pack; review existing UNISON guidance and update as necessary.

### **COMPOSITE C: Male violence against women**

Called on the NWC to organise a fringe at NDC; campaign to develop UNISON policy in line with the motion; develop a resource pack; work with the NEC on issuing guidance; circulate UNISON's model domestic abuse policy.

UNISON Labour Link hosted a Labour Party event – Putting women's safety centre stage – at the UNISON centre in July 2014. With keynote speakers including Yvette Cooper MP and Vera Baird QC and Gloria de Piero MP (Shadow Women and Equalities Minister), together with a host of other MPs and campaigners, the event addressed the issues of :

- How do we create a state response to violence against women that is truly victim-centred?
- Public places, women's spaces? A new settlement for safety in work, on public transport and in the streets
- What kind of world are our young women growing up in?

The Labour Party report from the event and further consultations has made a series of recommendations:

- Establishing a new commissioner with responsibility for tackling violence against women and girls and tasked with developing minimum standards of service provision at all levels;
- Introducing a statutory obligation on government, local authorities and other responsible bodies at the local level, to develop integrated domestic and sexual violence strategies;
- Sustaining the Rape Support Fund and establishing a new national refuge fund to provide vital support for women and children in need;
- Ensuring better access to legal aid by widening the categories of evidence to support an allegation of domestic abuse and banning charges for such evidence.

The report can be found here:

<http://www.yourbritain.org.uk/agenda-2015/policy-review/everywoman-safe-everywhere>



Yvette Cooper

### **End Demand campaign**

The End Demand campaign was launched at a parliamentary event in October 2014 with the aim of helping to end sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. A broad alliance of organisations and individuals, including UNISON, called for national action to tackle the demand that drives the trade in sexual exploitation. In order to reduce demand, the alliance will be calling on government to:

- Criminalise the purchase of sex;
- Decriminalise the sale of sex; and
- Provide support and exiting services for those exploited through prostitution.

This is often referred to as the 'Nordic Model'. It has been shown to be highly effective in reducing demand for sexual exploitation and particularly in changing public attitudes.

<http://enddemand.uk/about/end-demand/>

ACTION	UPDATE
Partnership working	UNISON continues to work with End Violence Against Women Coalition and the Women's Resource Centre on the ending violence against women agenda.
Work with Labour Link	<i>Putting Women's Safety Centre Stage</i> Labour Party event hosted at the UNISON centre, sponsored by Labour Link, attended by in excess of 100 delegates, and covered by the media.
Guidance	The workplace model policy and advice on domestic abuse in the workplace have been updated and circulated via women's networks and UNISON bulletins. A wider EVAW strategy document is in development.
Signpost support from There For You	Included in the revised domestic abuse guide.
UNISON policy	A revised motion has been submitted to national women's conference 2015, and support will be sought for this to be a national women's conference motion to NDC.

#### CAMPAIGNING AND WOMEN'S HEALTH SUB-COMMITTEE CONTINUED

##### MOTION 34: Product regulation

Called on the NWC to work with the NEC, politicians, women's groups and branches to raise awareness and campaign for improved regulation of products; investigate the possibility of UNISON members' discounts; encourage affiliation to the Women's Environmental Network (WEN).

ACTION	UPDATE
Member discounts	Referred to the membership services committee – advised that branches are not encouraged to negotiate local schemes but information on discounts negotiated nationally is on the website here: <a href="http://www.unison.org.uk/for-members/member-offers-and-entitlements/exclusive-deals-and-offers/">www.unison.org.uk/for-members/member-offers-and-entitlements/exclusive-deals-and-offers/</a>
Affiliation to WEN	Referred to RWCs May 2014.

##### MOTION 35: Pay day loans

Called on the NWC to work with the NEC and appropriate departments to lobby and campaign for tougher regulation; raise awareness of assistance from There For You; seek to ensure that UNISON does not invest in unscrupulous companies involved in pay day loan activities.

Our There for You credit union service offers UNISON members access to low-interest loans and a range of savings products through our UK network of partner credit unions. For members dissatisfied with current banking arrangements, struggling with exorbitant interest rates charged by payday and other lenders or simply looking for an ethical alternative, credit unions may provide just the solution.

UNISON has established a network of credit unions covering the UK where members and their families can both save and take out low-interest loans - in many cases, through payroll deductions.



Many members are using payday loans and other high-interest loan products - often getting caught in a trap of spiralling debt. UNISON is promoting credit unions as financial and ethical co-operatives that will serve members in a safe and responsible way and promote financial wellbeing. More information is available here: <http://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/help-with-problems-at-home/there-for-you/credit-unions/about-credit-unions/>

ACTION	UPDATE
Work with Labour Link	Financial Conduct Authority proposals for cap on interest rates announced in July 2014.
Promote There For You	Promoted via social media and UNISON journals, including in connection with the credit unions.
Information to members	NWC reps commented on proposed There For You/Pay Plan guide on managing money.
Raise awareness	Promoted information/campaigning on credit unions, against loan sharks and Turn to Us on social media and via women's networks.

### **MOTION 36: Food banks**

Called on the NWC to encourage branch and regional groups to work with local food banks and food co-ops to support those in need and to raise awareness of the impact of austerity measures and the growth of food banks; work with the NEC in continuing to oppose government policy which has led to this situation.

ACTION	UPDATE
Promote Food Bank services	Articles on regional work in support of food banks were featured in U magazine Summer 2014 and in eFocus August 2014.

### **MOTION 37: Free sanitary products for all women**

Called on the NWC to work with other organisations to campaign for free sanitary products for all women.

ACTION	UPDATE
Partnership working	change.org petition identified and information circulated via social media and women's networks.

### **MOTION 40: Traditional values vs women's rights**

Called on the NWC to work with the NEC to raise awareness of the situation in Russia, the attempts to promote the "traditional values" agenda in the UN; encourage branches and regional groups to mark international women's day by supporting Amnesty International and ILGA Europe campaigns to promote women's rights against traditional values propaganda.

ACTION	UPDATE
Joint working	An IWD statement was issued and the action points referred to PDCC and the international committee.

### **MOTION 41: Defending the women of Colombia in their peace process (motion remitted)**

Called on the NWC to highlight the strengths of the relationship between UNISON and the communities of SW Colombia.

ACTION	UPDATE
Joint working	Action points were referred to the international committee.

**MOTION 42: Sexualisation of women in the media**

Called on the NWC to continue to support the No More Page 3 campaign; work with sister unions and promote materials highlighting the impact of these images; encourage branches to lobby employers to exclude such material.

**MOTION 43: Lose the lads mags campaign**

Called on the NWC to continue to support the Lose the Lads Mags campaign; circulate materials to SOGs and young members; encourage members to lobby retailers in support of the campaign.

ACTION	UPDATE
Continue links with NMP3 and Lose the Lads Mags	UNISON provided office space for the NMP3 campaign team for the launch of their campaign single. The campaigns were also promoted via social media and women's networks. The campaign groups have been promoted via social media and through the women's networks as appropriate.
TUC joint working	The TUC are supporting the campaigns.

**COMPOSITE B: CEDAW**

Called on the NWC to work with the NEC and TUC for full implementation of the CEDAW recommendations; monitor all relevant activities and raise awareness of the government's failings; encourage members to use their vote and raise awareness of the implications of UKIP in power.

ACTION	UPDATE
Monitor implementation of the CEDAW recommendations	UNISON is part of the women's engagement network, a collective of women's organisations whose work includes monitoring and responding to CEDAW issues.
UKIP	Promoted Hope Not Hate campaign via social media. The NWC submitted an amendment to NDC 2014 seeking to raise awareness of women's issues and UKIP which was carried.



# REGIONAL REPORTS

## Eastern

Austerity measures have had an impact on attendance at RWC organised events. This has prompted a review and new ways of operating for the RWC, so it has been a quieter than usual year.

In March 2014, the RWC amended its constitution to better support the work the RWC wanted to prioritise. The RWC have been pleased to welcome a number of new faces in 2014.

Our priorities have been in progressing the actions and resolutions agreed at national women's conference in 2014, promoting issues where we can and cascading information to branches and branch women's officers.

We have reviewed and revamped our 'Setting up Branch Women's Groups' document which will shortly be printed and issued to all branch equality coordinators and branch women's officers.

In the spring we agreed that we would look at offering different training/input to the women in our region as some recent training offered had struggled with numbers and women were feeding back that they were finding it harder to get time off to attend such events. We therefore agreed to organise a one day regional women's conference for which funding is agreed and planning is now underway for this to happen in early 2015.

Our three day women's assertiveness course ran again this year – it was very well received and the course is scheduled to run twice in 2015.

A third women's development weekend is also being planned for 2015 and again this will be aimed at new activists. Feedback from the

previous weekends has been very positive so we are confident that this will be well received once again.

We are also going to be seeking information from all of our branches/women's officers about who has a domestic abuse policy agreed in their work place and we will be supporting those that are trying to get one implemented.

Members of the RWC have attended events such as the Safer for Women, Labour Party Consultation event at UNISON Centre and the Representation of Women in the Media event at Westminster.



Barbara Staddon, NWC Eastern Region rep

Our RWC continues to support the Essex Feminist Collective (EFC) - many of whom are UNISON members - in their work campaigning around a change in licensing for lapdancing clubs in Colchester. EFC organised for Object to facilitate a training event for all Colchester Borough councillors. Other on-going campaigns include getting the Essex street lights turned back on as well as on-going support for campaigns such as No More Page 3, Let Toys be Toys and Stop Porn Culture.

Our challenge in 2015 will be in initiating and replicating the EFC style campaigning and activism across the Eastern region counties.

## East Midlands

The East Midlands women's network has gone from strength to strength in 2014. Attendance at meetings has continued to improve and there have been many good discussions about women's priorities and organising in branches.

The network has given strong support to the all-SOG campaign for a legal right to facility time for equality reps in line with that for learning and health and safety reps. A representative of the network joined other SOG reps to meet with the Labour opposition spokesperson on equality, Gloria de Piero. The women's network rep made the point that the lack of a legal right to equality facility time, aside from making equalities a second class issue, was also discriminatory to women as women's time is heavily pressurised due to caring responsibilities.

Members of the network have also been busy promoting 'Lunch and Learn' sessions (1 hour workshops with food) on how UNISON supports women at work. In particular the session on supporting older women workers has been very popular covering the menopause and how UNISON can help. One member of the network got her branch to analyse capability dismissals and discovered that they had all been older women. Equally other research has shown that union members get better outcomes and women members use this to support their recruiting work.

Also as part of recruitment and organising work the network has commissioned some International Women's Day posters and members are planning IWD events with their branches. They are aiming to involve senior members of the employer in photo calls and organising sessions on why women should join UNISON.

In light of the costs of employment tribunals, network women have also had discussions

about putting sex discrimination and women's equality issues on to the collective bargaining agenda. Asking employers for relevant statistics on the women they employ can allow analysis that shows where discrimination is occurring.

Material from national women's organisations (Women's Aid, National Abortion Campaign, Fawcett Society) has been regularly circulated to all members of the women's network. This has also helped with local organising and campaigning and has supported women in branches to set up local UNISON women's groups.

Two equality days have been held this year which the network has been actively involved with. These have provided opportunities for networking and joint working with the other regional SOGs. Conference skills sessions continue to be held for new delegates to national women's conference.

Last but far from least, network women have been involved in pay actions – from picket lines to work to rules. Low pay is an issue women feel is heavily discriminatory as it indicates the value placed on 'women's work'. Some very angry East Midlands women attended the demo in London on 18<sup>th</sup> October!

## Greater London

The committee held its 2014 AGM in early October and welcomed a number of new members from different service groups.

All key officer positions were elected to, including those of education officer and publicity officer, which had previously been vacant. Representatives were also elected from the women's committee to all other regional committees and sub-committees where they will continue to play an active part in raising awareness of and promoting women's issues.

The committee meets 4 times per year including the AGM, which is normally held in October. Once again, all service groups are currently taking an active role in the committee. Attendance at meetings has been improving and the committee has welcomed some interesting guest speakers on issues such as how the government's austerity measures and cuts to local council services are having a disproportionate impact on women, which has provoked some lively discussions!

The committee has recently amended its constitution to reflect recent changes to branch structures – particularly in the health service group – and also created a number of reserved low paid seats and seats for both young members and retired members who had not previously been represented on the committee. It is hoped that these changes will encourage members from all sections to get involved in the women's committee. Over the coming year, the committee also intends to build a wider network of women activists in the region and establish more regular communications about issues that matter to women members.

In 2010 the committee started to establish international links through sponsorship of a project run by the Nicaraguan community movement. The project specifically assisted women in the community as they are the main carers for both children and the elderly in their families. We have continued to develop links and have supported a number of initiatives including a 2011 project that provided latrines for several communities, and a 2012 project that provided educational materials. In 2014 we supported a project which provided roofing materials to ensure safe and secure housing for a number of families in the community.

We will be running our annual training day in mid-January 2015 for delegates and visitors to national women's conference, aimed especially at new delegates. In previous years the training day has been successful and very well received as it helps new and old

delegates de-mystify conference and its procedures.

The committee's workplan each year seeks to prioritise the committee's commitment to increase women's participation in all areas of UNISON. This year the committee has undertaken a survey of branches to assess the proportionality of women stewards and officers in branches within London region. We also surveyed branch women's officers and contacts to identify training and guidance needs and help the committee review the support we provide to women activists. Based on the results of this survey the committee, led by the chair and newly elected education officer, will be piloting a regional training seminar for women to coincide with International Women's Day 2015. If successful, we hope to make this an annual event.

## **Northern**

Throughout 2014 the women's network has been continuing its campaigning work on behalf of women members and women in our communities. As the region which has experienced some of the most draconian local government budget cuts, it is women at the forefront of these cuts; both in terms of jobs and services. Women's unemployment has increased by 11% in the region. No surprise as we are so heavily dependent on public sector employment. Those women in employment in Newcastle are paid 15.8% less than men as the gender pay gap widens. The next 12 months will see the women's network continuing to fight against job cuts that disproportionately affect women and to tackle discrimination that undermines the position of women in today's society. This has influenced our two motions to national women's conference 2015, calling on UNISON to petition the European Parliament to fund retraining for women public sector workers faced with redundancy. We are working closely with Judith Kirton, Darlington MEP on this issue.

The network is grateful for the support and encouragement given by Clare Williams, regional convenor and Nicky Ramanandi as deputy convenor who encourage women's participation and path into leadership roles within the region and at national level.

Throughout the year our motion on women in employment and access to domestic abuse services has been a leading campaign. Working closely with My Sister's Place, Middlesbrough and Sharon Hodgson MP, shadow women's minister, we have succeeded in having this included in the Labour Party strategy on domestic abuse. To achieve this we worked closely with our regional and national Labour Links.

UNISON sponsors the NTUC international women's day event which this year took as its theme corporations, conflict and community resistance. Working with War on Want we are continuing to develop our international work especially in Colombia where the network has supported projects looking at capacity building and organising for the Corteros women's committee and the women's sugar cane cutters committee in the Valle del Cauca area of Colombia.

The network revamped the 10 reasons to vote for circulation in the region, to encourage

women to vote in the local elections and the European elections. Our relationship with Judith continues as she was one of our keynote speakers at the network policy weekend in September.

There was also a presentation from Parliamentary Outreach on the influence of women voting and in understanding the democratic process including the House of Lords.

Members of the network participated in the walk for justice which took place from the law courts on the quayside in Newcastle to the Castle Keep on 30 May to highlight the impact of cuts to legal aid as it affected women. There was a good representation of the legal profession and the probation service too.

Reclaim the Night was another success this year and took place in Newcastle with good local media coverage. The network has a strong presence at this event which grows each year.



Women members in the region have been active in the strike action undertaken throughout 2014. In addition they have been campaigning across the region via the Public Service Alliance on cuts to services affecting women.

2014's policy weekend had the theme of women past, present and future. With over 40 women attending it was clear that the enthusiasm of our women members is still evident and there is a very positive buzz as we prepare for 2015 and the next general election which will have a significant impact on UNISON and women.

## **Northern Ireland**

The Women's Committee has 44 members representing all branches in the region. Over the past year, committee members participated extensively in a wide range of organising and campaigning activity. The following is a synopsis:

UNISON national women's conference: committee members fully participated in all UNISON national and regional conferences and seminars. At national women's conference in February our motions on 'Women under attack' and 'Violence against women' were carried. The delegation also fully participated in the conference.

The ICTU biennial women's conference took place on 6 and 7 March 2014 in Wexford and a full UNISON delegation attended. The UNISON delegation as usual played a prominent role in the conference and our motion on 'UN Resolution 1325 - Women, Peace & Security' was carried. The delegation fully participated in all debates.

ICTU women's committee: UNISON women members are represented on the committee by Pamela Dooley and Margaret McKee. In June 2014, Anne Speed became a UNISON representative following Pamela's retirement.

International Women's Day: UNISON women participated in a wide range of activities in the lead up to the IWD march in Belfast on 8 March. The theme was 'Her Story', exploring women's voices both today and down throughout the ages. In addition the women's committee contributed to the range of events with a discussion and the screening of a film on women, diversity and challenging discrimination.

**Regional Education Programme:** Committee members continued to deliver a significant element of the regional education programme with several hundred women members attending our Building Confidence for Women, Pathways, Women's Health and History and Women Here and Now courses. These courses are particularly designed to encourage more women to become active. The large majority of new women stewards in the steward's induction programme again came through this route in 2013/2014. The Women Here and Now programme has recently been re-vamped to include the history of the trade union movement and the history of our welfare state and NHS.

The new Champions for Change course, piloted by the women's committee, is designed to challenge growing sectarianism and to forge a greater understanding of the anti-discrimination laws on religious belief and political opinion. Committee members have received training from 'Cultural Exchange' to deliver this programme and have committed to increasing steward participation on this important 2-day course.

**Women in prisons:** Following extensive negotiation and a protracted vetting process, the committee has delivered two modules of the UNISON Women's Health & History course to women prisoners in Hydebank. The feedback from the most recent training session on Saturday 31 May was extremely positive and further training dates will be arranged.





Roisin McKinley, Ann Brown, Margaret McKee – NWC Northern Ireland reps attend a launch in Westminster

### ***The impact of welfare cuts on women:***

Following a key training session for committee members delivered by welfare rights advisor, Agnes Frazer, on the potential impact of welfare cuts an extensive programme has been rolled out to UNISON members. To date welfare reform has been blocked in NI and UNISON plays a key role in the campaign against welfare cuts. There are now more people in work receiving benefits than there are out of work claimants here. The clinics and workshops have demonstrated the importance of the welfare benefit system to our members and their families and the devastating consequences of proposed reform.

***Violence against women:*** The women's committee continues to monitor and promote our domestic violence programme. Trained UNISON women stewards continue to provide domestic abuse support to staff across health trusts. In the Belfast Trust 40 domestic violence support workers have now been trained but the committee recognises the importance of monitoring to ensure that the programme is effective and that gaps are filled.

In the SE Trust the head of organising participated in the launch of its domestic violence policy and we are working to ensure that UNISON is seen to lead this programme with trained support workers in place. The policy launch in the Western Trust took place at the end of 2013 and training modules are

now in place to cover activists and members in the Western Trust. UNISON has been fully involved with a number of support workers identified for training in the role. We are currently monitoring how the Northern and Southern Trusts are implementing the domestic violence regional policy and will intervene as appropriate.

***ASIST suicide training:*** In July 2014 the majority of committee members undertook ASIST suicide training in conjunction with West Belfast Suicide Awareness. This comprehensive training has been identified as essential by the women's committee and other lay structures in NI as a consequence of the dramatic rise in suicide, not only amongst young people, but also in what is now the largest group – survivors of conflict from the most disadvantaged communities here.



***Campaigns & demonstrations:*** Throughout the year women's committee members continued to play a full and active role in UNISON demonstrations. In addition to participation at the G8 demonstration, May Day and Manchester NHS marches three key campaigning issues have dominated - the death of Savita Halappanavar and women's right to choose, the Bethany Home scandal and the closure of our NHS care homes. In addition the women's committee has encouraged wide member participation in the demonstrations against welfare reform, against public service cuts and most recently in support of Gaza.

***Bethany Home:*** On 22 July 2013 in Dublin it was announced in the Dail that there would be no redress for Bethany Home survivors.

Bethany Home was a residential home in Dublin for women who were pregnant and single and for their children.

Most of the children born were sent to England, NI and the USA for adoption, but as many as 217 children, who were not adopted, died of starvation. Limited details can be found about where these children were sent and many women have been unable to trace who their families are. Those involved have been denied compensation.

Subsequent to the announcement, Pamela Dooley met with some of the survivors who are desperate to trace their families. All have major problems retrieving documentation relating to their identity. Pamela has also accompanied them to meetings with the Deputy First Minister, MLAs and MPs. Committee members approached their individual church leaders with a view to them accepting some responsibility for the survivors.

In April 2014, Pamela Dooley, head of organising & Anne Speed, head of bargaining, were invited on behalf of UNISON women to attend a ceremony at Mount Jerome Cemetery to unveil the memorial stone in memory of the dead children.

The committee was delighted when, in June 2014, the Taoiseach announced that Bethany Homes would now be included in the Irish government inquiry into institutional abuse. We continue to seek inclusion in a similar inquiry being undertaken by government in NI.

**NHS care homes:** The proposal by the Minister for Health to close the majority of NHS residential homes has been one of the dominant campaigns throughout the year. The majority of the residents in our NHS care homes are women. The committee has been actively involved in opposing their closure. Members have been involved in extensive local campaigns and public meetings, have

ensured it is a key item on the agenda of all branch meetings and supported the tea parties for care home residents held in the Derry and Belfast offices last year. The UNISON campaign has forced a U-turn by the minister, but we continue to campaign for the re-opening of homes to new residents.

**Inez McCormack Film:** ('Inez - A Challenging Woman'): Women's committee members, present and past, have participated in an award winning documentary about our former regional secretary and internationally renowned human rights campaigner, Inez McCormack.

Inez died in January 2013. The film 'Inez - A Challenging Woman' is based on an interview she gave to her friend, writer Susan McKay, in October 2012 shortly after Inez learned that she had inoperable cancer and probably had just weeks to live.



The film includes a wealth of fascinating archive material covering Inez's long career which began when she became a civil rights activist in 1968. She was a passionate advocate of social justice. As Mary Robinson comments in the film, "For women, she was a towering figure." Rosaleen Davidson, one of the women whose career as a trade unionist Inez encouraged, says of her, "She gave a voice to working class women like me."

The film jointly won the best short documentary award at the prestigious Galway Film Fleadh in 2014. The women's committee is planning a Belfast showing.

The women's committee is currently working with the branch development group and a number of branches developing specific programmes to increase the number of women stewards in all occupational groups with special emphasis on support workers in health and education and nurses. The committee has also been involved in the re-vamping of the regional education programme to extend both the women-only element and the equality and human rights training modules.

In May 2014, the women's committee bade a fond but reluctant farewell to Pamela Dooley, head of organising and development, who has championed the work of the women's committees and the equality and human rights agenda for all our self organised groups over UNISON's past 21 years.

***Discrimination against women:*** Women in NI are still concentrated in lower paid, lower status, often part-time work. They have higher rates of economic inactivity due to family and home commitments. They are the greatest losers in the event of cuts to the welfare system. They form 84% of UNISON NI membership. Last year we reported that the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women had made a series of recommendations to the UK government which directly impacted on women in NI. There has been little advance on implementing these recommendations and we set them out in full later in this report to underscore how relevant they are to the UNISON agenda.

From our work, through our own women's committee, and also with women's organisations, we are acutely aware of the additional adverse impact of austerity policies on our women members. It was for this

reason that we made our main move into organising private sector care home workers in 2005 and private sector homecare workers just over a year ago. Our success in defeating CCT and market testing has resulted in the majority of UNISON women members in health and education remaining inside public services. However, their position has been eroded over time.

As a result we have a renewed focus on organising and bargaining campaigns concentrating on low paid, part-time workers in the public service. This runs in parallel with our private sector initiatives. In many instances, such as the current treatment of NHS homecare workers, it is as if the clock has turned back 25 years.

To support our negotiators in challenging the position of women, particularly the most disadvantaged, we have developed new training initiatives to update on existing anti-discrimination laws and to more effectively use the equality duty.

***Making Women Seen and Heard:*** UNISON has reviewed the extensive evidence collected by us through the groundbreaking Making Women Seen and Heard initiative which was funded by the original EU peace programme. Although the issues highlighted by women received commitments for action from both the British and Irish government at the time, most of the issues of discrimination and disadvantage highlighted by the programme remain current issues today. UNISON will now present this work again to the NI Assembly, the Equality Commission and the Irish Government.

***Women's right to choose:*** Abortion law in NI continues to run counter to international recommendations and is far behind that in GB. We are excluded from the 1967 Abortion Act and the continuing criminalising of women from NI seeking abortions denies them equal entitlement to healthcare and equal protection of the law enjoyed by their counterparts in GB.

UNISON is supporting the call for full provisions of the 1967 GB Act to be equally applied in NI. We are also supporting the campaign to repeal the 8<sup>th</sup> amendment in the Republic of Ireland, and for similar legislation to apply in that jurisdiction too.

**International Women's Day 2014:** In March 2014 UNISON members joined the annual celebration of the struggles and achievements of women all over the world with the annual International Women's Day rally. The theme of this year's rally was 'Reclaim the Agenda'.

**Violence against women:** As reported in Section 1 we continue with our programme to challenge violence against women by seeking to influence at the level of government, employers and through awareness raising within the union. Much of the policy work is co-ordinated alongside allies in the women's movement and in the field of equality and human rights.

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):** The UK government reports to the CEDAW committee on its progress in relation to implementation of the convention and women's equality on a four year rolling basis. UNISON NI along with other trade unions, equality and human rights bodies has made submissions over the past 16 years. Many of the recommendations made by the UN committee and which affect our members in NI remain unresolved.

We are currently very concerned that the government's gender equality strategy is being reviewed by OFMDFM without the direct involvement of women in NI.

CEDAW recommendations to the UK government include that it:

- ratifies the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence;

- reports in two years on access to justice issues in relation to violence against women and employment, including legal aid and tribunal reform;
- reports within a year on expediting the amendment of the law in NI to decriminalise abortion;
- in relation to multiple identity, it should introduce measures to mitigate the impact of austerity measures on older women and women with disabilities and to ensure that fertility treatment is available to lesbians;
- implement an overarching strategy to implement the convention - encouraging all parliaments to take the necessary steps between now and next report;
- establish a dedicated section in the Government Equalities Office for the coordination of gender equality across the UK;
- review legislation with a view to incorporating the convention;
- revise legislation in NI to put it on an equal footing with GB;
- consider multiple discrimination in legislative review;
- consider pay secrecy in legislative review.

Additional key recommendations include requiring the UK government (and devolved governments) to:

- establish temporary special measures on participation and representation;
- ensure women's participation post-conflict in line with UN SCR 1325;
- introduce targeted measures to improve the representation of women in parliament;

- assess a new approach to engagement with women and mitigate the negative impact of its policies;
- promote women's economic independence by:
  - ensuring spending reviews focus on balancing the impact of austerity measures on women's rights;
  - enhancing measures to prevent bullying in schools;
  - intensify career guidance activities for non-traditional paths and improve gender awareness of teachers;
  - encourage girls' participation in STEM and apprenticeships;
  - improve data on women in all academic institutions;
  - promoting flexible working;
  - eliminate occupational segregation and narrow the gender pay gap;
  - ensure transparency of salaries;
  - providing affordable childcare;
  - mitigating the impact of welfare reform on childcare costs and care responsibilities;
  - establishing temporary special measures to increase the proportion of women on boards.
- extend the mandate of the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry to include women who entered the Magdalene laundries at age 18 and above and to provide adequate redress to these and other women in similar institutions;
- introduce temporary special measures to increase women's participation in a number of areas including the public and private sectors, particularly women on boards, as well as in political life;
- introduce targeted measures to improve the representation of women in parliament and the judiciary and the participation of women in the post-conflict process in NI;
- maximise the participation of women in areas such as local government and various post-conflict and peace building groups and seek to ensure that effective measures are considered for inclusion in the revised Gender Equality Action Plans;
- afford protection from sex discrimination on an equal footing with women in other parts of the UK, citing specifically recognition of multiple discrimination and prohibition of pay secrecy clauses.

The UK government has been asked by the CEDAW committee to report again in July 2017. The committee has asked again that the UK government establish an overarching framework for the implementation of the convention across the UK.

**Impact of conflict on women:** As reported above,, UNISON through our women's committee and regional committee has continued to press for the UK government to implement UN Resolution 1325 on women in conflict in NI. Earlier in the year the regional secretary and Pamela Dooley in her capacity as chair of the ICTU NI committee gave evidence on behalf of the trade union movement to a special Westminster all-party group.

The resolution reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping and in post-conflict reconstruction. It stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

According to the UK government, however, it does not apply to NI which it argues does not constitute an “armed conflict” as defined under international law.



## North West

The work of the North West region women's committee has been consistent with the objectives of the union and actions identified in the national women's work programme. To that end within the year we had our awareness raised by invited speakers on the subjects of women's refugees and women's role in politics. We were pleased to be able to carry out work raising women's awareness and so offering support and guidance, on the issue of stalking following the presentation at the national conference from Paladin. Regional support has gone to this and a number of other organisations' campaigns including Ending Violence against Women, Maternity Action and Fawcett Society.

The main event this year has been our regional women's conference, which took place on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July, at Arena Point in Manchester. This had a 'keeping women safe' focus and challenged us to address domestic abuse.

The conference started with an informal session about key issues affecting women in our region.

The issues highlighted will be incorporated into our regional work plan going forward from our AGM in September and will include:-

- Impact of cuts on women

- Shift Work and the effect on health (eg increased risk of breast cancer and diabetes)
- Support at work for menopausal women
- Stalking
- Pay
- Cost of living affecting diet and the knock on effect on health
- Support for women undergoing fertility treatment, and improved workplace policies
- Surrogacy and the rights of the intended mother
- Women's pension issues
- So called 'agile' working
- Zero hours contracts and their effect on women
- Endometriosis
- The effect of women's health issues on mental health

The motions which we debated and passed were:-

1. Impact of domestic abuse on working women
2. Increasing participation of low paid and part time women in UNISON (including an education angle also)
3. Encouraging diversity in women's committees to include all self organised groups.

Continuing the keeping women safe theme, we also had a recruitment / awareness raising event, where we went out into Victoria Train Station and Market Street handing out personal alarms, and leaflets about stalking from Paladin. We were also armed with UNISON application forms, and took the opportunity to chat to women, encouraging union membership (and especially UNISON for those women who work in jobs covered by UNISON).

Women in the region have also played a significant part in the campaign to oust the BNP's Nick Griffin from his MEP seat. North West women have played an active role, leafleting, and encouraging other women to use their votes. Hard work which paid off as we saw Teresa Griffin, a UNISON regional organiser from the North West region get elected.

We are now focused on maximising the turnout at the general election.

At the time of writing this report, we have just held our AGM, elected our new committee for 2014-15, and are in the process of drawing up our regional work plan, informed by the issues raised by our women members at our regional conference and cognisant of key areas for other self organised groups which we try to align with our work programme as the opportunity arises.

## **Scotland**

The Scottish women's committee have had a full workload this year and the following report highlights some of the work we have undertaken.

### ***Scotland's strategy to tackle violence against women and girls consultation***

The Scottish government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) developed a national strategy aimed at tackling all forms of violence against women that was published in summer 2014. Instead of a formal public consultation process, they have undertaken a period of focused and targeted consultation and engagement with key stakeholders and interested parties to help inform the development of the strategy. As part of this consultation the SWC met with civil servants and fed into the process. The focus of the plan is prevention and early intervention.

### ***International Women's Day Event, Scottish Parliament : Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2014***

Members of the Scottish women's committee attended the IWD event in the Scottish parliament. Elaine Smith MSP, deputy presiding officer, chaired the event and the theme of the event was 'What do women want and what do we need'. It was a well attended event with delegates occupying the seats usually taken by MSPs which led to several speakers saying that they wished the Scottish parliament was as diverse and reflective of society as that day's event was.

### ***Scottish women's committee conference and AGM***

This year's conference and AGM was held on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> October in West Campbell Street. The event was split into 3 sections. The first section was a discussion under the banner of 'Where now for Scottish women?' The topic was picked long before the outcome of the referendum was known and the aim was to have a discussion around what women wanted to achieve regardless of the constitutional settlement.

We were joined by the following MSPs: Jackie Bailie, Scottish Labour; Alison Johnstone, Scottish Greens; Annabel Goldie, Scottish Conservatives; Sandra White, SNP.

Instead of reverting to the traditional debating style, delegates and speakers were encouraged to engage in a discussion. The topics raised were diverse with the first topic being onshore fracking, which generated a lot of discussion. There was a clear message from all of the speakers for the need to work together post-referendum to ensure that Scotland gets a settlement that meets the needs of society.

This was followed by a workshop on feminist economics which examined the value of unpaid labour by women and how this impacts on the traditional notion of the economy and GDP.



It has been agreed that UNISON would run the full 2 day workshop as part of the SWC work plan as we had agreed that this would be one way in which we could keep the memory and work of Professor Ailsa McKay alive.

The final section of the day was the formal AGM. There were motions on the following topics:

- Women paying the price of austerity
- 50/50 campaign
- Child Benefit
- The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
- Mesh implants
- Female genital mutilation

### ***Work plan 2014***

The Scottish women's committee choose to split into three working groups:

Group A: Inspiring women through education and activism

Group B: Violence against women

Group C: Workplace issues

Full details of the work undertaken by each of the groups can be found in the SWC annual report which can be emailed out on request.

As part of work under group A, the SWC will be running a pilot training course on feminist economics in memory of Professor Ailsa McKay. Ailsa McKay was a professor of economics at the Glasgow Caledonian University. A leading feminist economist, she was known for her research on gender inequalities. She served as an advisor to the United Nations and the Scottish government. Sadly, Ailsa lost her battle with cancer in 2014 but the SWC will be working to ensure both her legacy and equally important her work is kept going.

## **South East**

### ***National women's conference 2014***

The number of branch delegates was similar to 2013 however there was an increase in the number of visitors ie 28 visitors and 4 NEC reps for 2014 compared with 17 visitors and 1 NEC rep for 2013. All of the South East's 7 motions were carried and the two regional delegates Yve White and Ginny Eaton did great jobs in moving the motions and with leading the delegation meeting on the first evening of conference. Generally there was good feedback from SE delegates and visitors about conference and the members thought the workshops were very good.

### ***Women's history month and IWD 2014 - branch events***

The women's recruitment pack was widely circulated to branch women's officers and regional teams to be used on recruitment events during the month. 17 branches held themed International Women's Day events and/or women's history month recruitment events, using the SE women's recruitment folder and the new women's health packs. Sussex Police held a joint event with EVOLVE (Sussex police women's group) on women's health. At this event the branch women's officer launched a report of a survey that she had carried out amongst women staff on the menopause and women's health and safety in the workplace with a view to working with EVOLVE to negotiate with the employer for a workplace agreement. Portsmouth Health ran a women's history recruitment event in suffragette fancy dress! Presentations and talks were also provided by the regional women's officer at branch AGM's.

Also during March we ran a 1-day training event for women who are workplace contacts and the women's history course (part 1). The aim of the 1-day course for women workplace contacts was to encourage them to consider becoming more active in their branches eg becoming a women's officer.

A visit to the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson museum was also included. Guest speaker was Sophia James who was very motivating and well received with great organising advice and tips for the group. Over half of those who attended left the event committed to pursuing a more active role within their branch.

The women's history course ran on the last weekend in March - since first running the course in the South East almost 100 women have now attended the part 1 course. This year the women's history course part 2 will run for the first time in October.



### ***Regional women's committee campaigning***

The committee sadly lost a couple of members due to workplace restructures, redundancies and pressure of work combined with lack of facility time. Notwithstanding this, the meetings during 2014 have been really well attended. In addition, the women's committee set up a sub-group in July to focus on specific areas of work as follows, (1) to take forward the work of national women's conference work programme and (2) campaigns/events/training that has a particular focus for women on issues in the lead up to the general election, culminating in a women's event to celebrate International Women's Day. The group have had two meetings in 2014 and will meet again early in the new year. The sub-group report back to the women's committee.

One of the first pieces of work undertaken by the sub-group was to produce a set of 3 posters aimed at encouraging women to join the 18<sup>th</sup> October TUC demonstration in London which were themed around issues such as equal pay, childcare and low pay. The posters were circulated to all branches via the regional teams and women branch officers and women's committee. A new branch women's training passport has been produced and will be launched at the AGM. A large event for women members is being organised to take place at UNISON centre in March 2015, a couple of months before the general election to highlight women being targeted by this government for some of the worst effects of the 'austerity' measures.



In addition to the campaigning initiatives underway as part of the work of the sub-group, members of the women's committee have run women's equality campaigning events to coincide with recruitment events and/or as stand-alone branch events such as Southampton District who ran an event to highlight cervical cancer and Sussex Police who were involved in a joint women's health event.

The women's committee also submitted an objection letter to a planning application for a lap dancing club in Portsmouth. The women's committee sub-group will look into the viability of developing a 'template objection letter' to lap dancing establishments available to all branch women's officers and branches.

### ***Women's training courses 2014***

The courses that ran this year were all well attended. Two new courses have been developed this year 'women, work and health' and 'women's history part 2'.

New courses for the 2015 programme include sex discrimination and equal pay briefing. There is a very full programme of courses for women next year (10 courses in total) and for the first time some of the courses will be accredited. The new passport for branch women's officers consists of seven modules which, apart from the first module can be completed in any order. Most of the courses will be accredited and on completion of all modules an award will be presented. In addition to these seven modules there are further complementary courses in the Passport.

### ***Regional women's forum 2014***

The regional women's forum ran in late November and was very well attended (50 women). Guest speakers included Laura Richards, CEO Paladin Stalking Advocacy Services, Liz Terry, Director Berkshire Women's Aid, Rebecca McDowall, Swaziland rural women's rights officer ACTSA. The timing of the forum could not have been better, considering the Women's Aid S.O.S. petition had been successful in securing an extra £10 million from the government for a national network of specialist refuges. Laura Richards gave a powerful presentation on stalking and also spoke positively about the expected announcement by Teresa May regarding the amendment to domestic violence law to include coercive behaviour. The workshops at the women's forum included: stress management; domestic

violence - a workplace issue; stop porn culture and how to chair a committee. To pick up on the theme of stress management, there was also a yoga/meditation workshop and a singing workshop. On the last day we looked at women's campaigning themes that could be run in branches and in the region in the run up to the general election in 2015 and some brilliant ideas were put forward – some for the women's committee sub-group to work on and other ideas that branches will work on and disseminate to the wider group who attended the forum.



## ***South West***

The committee's workplan is agreed at our planning day in November (2013) in line with UNISON's aims and objectives and then revised following national conference in February.

### ***Workplan***

Our campaign priorities throughout the year have been:-

- The exploitation of zero hours contracts;

- Encouraging women to vote and take part in all levels of democracy,
- Recruitment – encouraging women to join by promoting the benefits of being a woman member and how to become involved - the women’s recruitment packs are still used at all events throughout the region
- Women and mental health.

The regional development and organising committee has agreed to support the progression of our work on:

- developing a toolkit for branches to monitor and track mental health issues
- fair representation and proportionality - monitoring of regional committees.

### ***Regional conference – Women Get Active***

Much of our work comes together at our regional conference. This year, following feedback from previous conferences, the AGM and conference were held over a weekend September (26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>) in Croyde for the first time. And the general feeling has been that it was the “best yet”. In keeping with several regional and SOG events this year the conference was entitled ‘Get Active’. The weekend was packed with workshops and activities aimed at encouraging and skilling women to become active in the union. Rosie MacGregor, chair of SW TUC, and UNISON retired member was a particularly inspiring speaker who shared her lifetime of trade unionism. Members were enthralled by a presentation from Maggie Parks, Cornwall rape and sexual abuse centre. Describing sexual violence against women as the bedrock of women’s oppression she set out the many ways in which women can become involved in their communities as part of the campaign to end violence against women and girls.

The workshops covered a range of important areas to take forward motions from national women’s conference. Some were politically challenging such as:

- the rise of the right
- ‘Zero hours – zero choice’
- welfare benefits
- women supporting women on the international arena.

Others were around workplace policies and negotiation such as:

- domestic abuse
- sickness absence
- mental health.

Also reflecting our priorities we arranged workshops aimed at empowering women to be more active in their branches and workplaces with:

- mentoring
- organising around education
- campaigning and recruiting for equality, particularly targeting young Black women
- supporting women to manage in these austere days.

We were very proud of the fact that most of the workshops were run by members which was empowering in itself and a good model for all participants.



Unfortunately we were unable to make a film about voting as planned, but we did take photos of women holding placards and wearing 50:50 campaign t-shirts and were tweeting throughout the weekend. The committee has also supported an excellent document developed by Fair Play South West – The South West women’s manifesto. Every delegate was given a copy and urged to use its lists of demands to challenge all prospective parliamentary candidates and local councillors in the run up to the election.

Finally at our conference we held a very successful question time panel with each of the self organised groups represented. It was a brilliant way of helping us all to understand the issues faced by disabled, Black, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender women members in branches and workplaces. It was a model that we have recommended be repeated at regional council.

The less formal benefits of the conference were of course that women were able to network, share and give each other confidence and ideas about their plans for becoming active. There was definitely a sense of women engaging with politics and setting up groups and forums.

### ***Training***

Assertiveness training was delivered in Croyde in July with 15 women attending. It is always a successful course and this year in particular women have become activists as a result. 7 branch women officers were also trained.

### ***The committee***

Sadly two long-standing members of the committee, Jane Carter and Olivia Denis stood down at the AGM for personal reasons. They will be missed for their enthusiasm, commitment and much appreciated willingness to progress pieces of work. We were however delighted that four new members of the committee were nominated at the AGM and we're looking forward to working together in the year ahead.



*South West women showing support for the 50:50 campaign*

## Cymru/Wales

The regional women's committee has had an eventful and productive year, campaigning and organising around various women's issues. These have included bringing motions to regional council, supporting food banks and Women's Aid organisations, supporting various charities associated with women's issues and raising awareness of the increasing pressure on women in their work and family lives. The common thread throughout all our activities is to encourage women to get active within their union and to have the courage and confidence to speak up on issues affecting women throughout their daily lives. It is always encouraging to see new attendees at meetings, conferences and development weekends who go back to their branches with a new level of commitment to make a change and get active within their branch. The women's committee has organised activities and campaigns during its regional meetings, AGM, regional development weekend, national women's conference and most recently at the UNISON NDC conference in Brighton in June. Some of our achievements and activities throughout the year are set out below.

### ***Regional council activities***

The women's committee has moved a number of motions to regional council over the last twelve months. At the 2013 regional women's development weekend, a motion writing workshop was undertaken which gave the attendees the knowledge and confidence to write and move motions to their branches, council and conferences. The committee feels that this is an important aspect of its work and it was great to see our motions carried and accepted as policy of the council. Below are some of the issues that branches agreed to:

- To work with regional officers to carry out branch mapping exercises to identify where women members and potential members are situated.
- To use the branch mapping exercise to plan and undertake member and recruitment events in workplaces where women are employed and especially in establishments such as schools, (being mindful that many lone workers do not have a permanent base).
- To promote regional and national women's campaigns and events such as the women's development weekend and women's committee meetings.
- To encourage women members and activists to attend regional events and to consider taking up the branch women's officer post if the branch does not currently have anyone in that role.
- To refer to the regional calendar when booking meetings and events in order to facilitate maximum opportunity of participation at regional women's committee events.

The committee has also been promoting its activities at regional council by advertising the promotional items available for branches that may wish to put on events for women members. These items have been provided as part of a successful regional pool bid.

The committee has been very successful in collecting for local food banks and Women's Aid during regional meetings. The committee is grateful to all that have contributed so far as the issue of the working poor of society does not seem to be waning and we have committed to help while there is still a need. We recognise that this is in conjunction with our union's campaign for a decent rate of pay for all and benefits for those in need.

### ***National women's conference***

The 2014 conference was held in Brighton and a strong Welsh delegation battled the February storms to attend. We had many speakers up on the stand in the debates and delegates also attended workshops and caucus meetings.

The regional women's committee will be holding a training and information day for 2015 conference delegates prior to the conference and all are welcome. In order to ensure the safety and well being of the regional delegates the women's committee has started to book a recommended hotel so that new and lone delegates know that they always have other delegates close at hand.

It has now been agreed that the region will hold their regional delegate meeting prior to the start of conference. This is to ensure visitors and delegates are connected from the outset and allow an opportunity to discuss business prior to conference start. It's all about looking out for each other and ensuring that all delegates get the best out of the conference.

The regional women's committee has submitted a motion to national women's conference 2015 surrounding the availability of crèche facilities being available to visitors and delegates (not just delegates), and await its acceptance onto the agenda.

### ***White ribbon campaign***

During the 2014 rugby international season members of the women's committee supported by regional staff sold ribbons at the Millennium Stadium for the above charity that campaigns against domestic violence towards women. The event was well received and highlighted the cause in conjunction with the Wales Rugby Union's support for the campaign.

Members of the group also took the chance to raise awareness of the white ribbon campaign in their branches. Thanks to the hard work undertaken by women representatives in South Wales Police branch selling white ribbons to colleagues, the branch was able to donate £225 for RCT Women's Aid. In addition, the branch undertook the collection of women's toiletries which were also donated.



*South Wales Police branch*

### ***Training***

This year the women's development weekend incorporated International Women's Day. To mark this date, we had an international guest speaker from the Democratic Organisation of Iranian Women, Azar Sepehr, speaking on the fight for women's rights in Iran.

The development weekend concentrated on health matters that affect women and how we can assist members struggling with health issues at work. Sessions included those on ovarian cancer, anorexia and bulimia, breast cancer plus the opportunity to learn relaxation and self visualisation techniques.

The theme for next year's development weekend is 'women in public life', as this has been a common discussion point throughout many of the regional meetings. The women's group were pleased to welcome regional organiser, Dave Bezzina (lead for Labour Link in Cymru/Wales) to one of their meetings to discuss women into politics. The session was very informative and prompted further training/awareness raising.

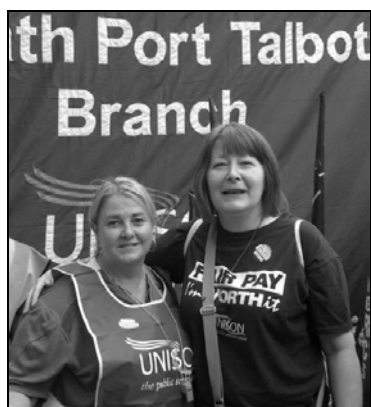
The women's committee are pleased to see the introduction of the 'Pathways into UNISON' course for women members in the Wales region. The course was a huge success, with nearly 20 participants – all of whom have now joined the regional women's group, are taking various steps to become more active within their branch and region and are keen to take the women's movement forward.

### ***National delegate conference (NDC) 2014***

Members of the regional women's committee attended together with many women of the region who are attendees at committee meetings and development weekend.

There was a good contribution to the debates from the Welsh women in UNISON, including some first time speakers.

Women's committee members organised a collection of toiletry and food bank items continuing the successful campaign run at regional council meetings. The Brighton Women's Centre run their own food bank and arranged for the goods to be collected by the staff at the end of the week. Once again the Wales delegation and other regions contributed generously to the collection which was advertised at regional meetings and by leafleting delegates on their arrival at conference. The committee was very pleased that with a little bit of effort and the support of delegates we were able to collect so much during the week. It was a pleasure to see the look of delight on the Brighton Women Centre staff faces when they arrived for the donations. There was so much that we got them a taxi back as they had arrived on the bus and didn't expect so much. Big thanks to everyone who donated and assisted during the week.



Jane Gebbie (above right), one of our representatives on the national women's committee was interviewed about the collection and what the Cymru Wales

women's committee does in relation to supporting local food banks. It is hoped that you all noticed the article in your last U magazine. Jane's efforts have certainly put the Cymru Wales women's committee and region on the map not just regionally but nationally.

### ***Race for Life***

Women members across Wales came together to tackle cancer at the 2014 Race for Life in Cardiff during the summer. 11 women from UNISON took part from local government, education, health and police, raising over £1000! The event was a huge success and the group distributed 'Women in UNISON' sports bottles to race participants, and assisted with the opening of the race by providing a people chain! Well done to all of the women who took part and those who donated too.



### ***Newsletter***

Our summer 2014 newsletter has been distributed electronically to branches and has been greatly received.



## **AGM**

This year was an election year, which was extremely well attended, seeing a few new faces elected to women's committee. Following on from the excellent food bank collections arranged by the women's group throughout the year, the group were pleased to welcome a guest speaker from Cardiff Food bank - Cath Williams. Cath gave an informative overview of the service with some shocking statistics on the increasing usage of food banks across Wales. The session prompted some interesting questions, and prompted a debate regarding the provision of food bank vouchers to individual branches as a welfare option. The group will look to further this issue with a motion to regional council.

## **West Midlands**

Over the past 12 months the West Midlands women's committee has been working towards a leadership event aimed at women in the region. This will replace our workshop based women's day and will be held for the first time in spring 2015. The idea of the day is to engage and encourage women in becoming more active at all levels of the union and more politically active in the community using both training and involving experienced women as role models. The day should help the region with succession planning to ensure there are a new generation of women activists.

We held our first women's committee of 2014 on International Women's Day and showed two short films including Protest and Progress.

This year's UNISON West Midlands awards ceremony was dominated by women activists who are involved at branch level who have developed innovative way to recruit and organise members. Special mention should go to Dawn Downes from George Eliot Hospital and Laney Walsh from Redditch and

Bromsgrove who as a result of their amazing branch work went on to win TUC regional awards.

The region would like to thank Janet Richmond for her work on national women's committee as she comes to the end of her 4 years on the committee.



## **Yorkshire and Humberside**

The regional women's group have continued to meet throughout 2014 and have worked collectively towards another successful year. As previous years, valuable contributions have been made to both the regional equalities plan and regional women's group work plan.

Ongoing regional women's group objectives for the year were set and agreed by the group in line with the regional equalities plan and UNISON's objectives as: encouraging branches to set up SOGs and send members to regional SOGs; developing and providing information for branches on issues affecting women; training for women members in the region; influencing policy making on women's issues; mapping women's equality activity in addition to promoting the inclusion of women members within UNISON.

Actions taken in support of these objectives include planning and implementing a bespoke training package on social media and sexism along with re-registration of delegates to regional women's group, inviting a guest speaker on endometriosis, raising general women's issue awareness and the completion of a policy day.

Branches were encouraged and most did support International Women's Day and wore their UNISON IWD ribbons. The UNISON women's health packs have also been distributed to group members.

As previous years, members of the women's group attended and supported the return to learn and women's lives awards ceremony in Leeds, holding a bespoke women's group stall at the event to promote the group along with distributing application forms, health packs and information regarding self organisation. Local MPs attended the group to present the awards. The event celebrated the fantastic achievements of our women members this year.

The regional office also achieved funding and confirmed two equality events for all of the SOGs to take place on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2014 and 7<sup>th</sup> March 2015 respectively. Volunteers from the women's group will be present at the events to promote the group and chat to people about SOGs and why they are important. Guest speakers include Professor Richardson, Director of Hull University's Wilberforce Institute for the study of slavery and emancipation. The event is informal with a 'coffee table' type discussion and 'vox pop' opportunities for people to record their thoughts on equalities and why it is so important.

Delegates from the women's group have been successfully appointed to represent Yorkshire & Humberside on the relevant committees including regional council, TUC, health and local government forums.

The women's group has successfully written and submitted motions which have been accepted onto the 2015 national women's conference agenda. Both motions submitted this year are based on real issues that impact on women's lives namely endometriosis and changes to working hours.

As in previous years the group continue to support Life for African Mothers by collecting baby clothes and forwarding them on to the charity. In addition the group have also raised money through the sale of raffle tickets and holding a cake bake for McMillan cancer support and UNISON welfare respectively.

The women's group AGM was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> December at Commerce House, Leeds. Elections took place for the majority of positions on the group and new members have been appointed to posts respectively. Thanks were relayed to all members of the group both existing and new for their continued dedication and hard work on behalf of the group and UNISON's equality agenda.



National women's committee vice-chair and Yorkshire and Humberside region member Josie Paszek at the House of Commons

# CONFERENCE REPORTS

## National delegate conference

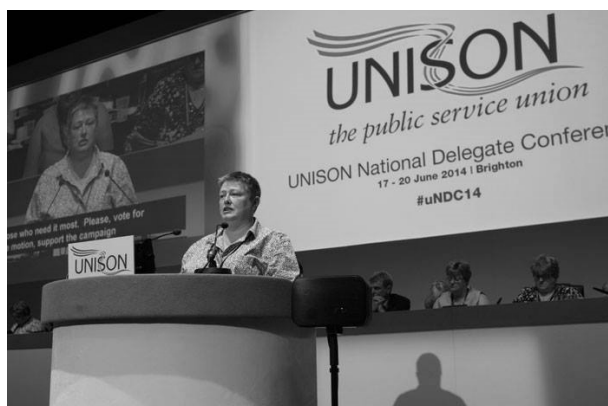
17-20 June 2014

Delegates: Eileen Best, Manjula Kumari

The delegates spoke on a number of motions and amendments on behalf of the national women's conference. We were also involved in organising and chairing two fringe meetings on low pay and austerity, and violence against women – a trade union issue, both of which were chaired by Manjula Kumari.

That national women's conference motion on male violence against women was ruled out of order by SOC on the grounds of legal jeopardy and was the subject of appeals to SOC and a great deal of debate at conference. Ultimately, and to the great disappointment of the delegates, the SOC decision was upheld and the motion was therefore not heard.

*Note: The national women's committee has submitted a motion to women's conference 2015 which addresses the key issues from the 2014 motion and which has passed legal scrutiny.*



Eileen Best, national women's conference delegate

On Wednesday lunchtime we had our fringe meeting on violence against women, which was the biggest fringe meeting of NDC and the biggest fringe the women's SOG has ever hosted with over 150 people in attendance.

Thursday saw the fringe meeting on low pay and austerity – the UNISON members' experience with great speeches from the platform and excellent contributions from the floor. We looked at new research from the Fawcett Society presented by Eva Neitzert which explored the issues of what austerity means for women and how we as a union need to look to the future to be able to face the issues ahead of us. This was particularly interesting given that Eileen Best as chair of the national women's committee had been part of the launching of The Damage report which looks at some of the vital services provided by councils and exploring the long term damage to the public and to the economy by the ongoing austerity cuts.



Manjula Kumari, national women's conference delegate

*Note: Page 4 contains further information on the Fawcett Society research and findings. The Damage report can be found here: <https://www.unison.org.uk/upload/sharepoint/On%20line%20Catalogue/22422.pdf>*

Conference also debated a number of motions on the impact of austerity on women.

Conference agreed to highlight the disproportionate impact of austerity on women and produce organising material aimed at young women to encourage them to join the union.

We spoke on composite E and this speech given from the heart received a lot of support from the floor and afterwards in various outlets. We spoke on the really important composite on zero hours and how this will affect women over and over again. We moved amendment 30.1 and received excellent feedback on this amendment and the speech that we gave on cuts in probation services and how this may affect women. We were also able to give a supporting speech on 88.1 which called for the development of a campaign pack to help fight the cuts to specialist violence against women services and to circulate our guidance on domestic violence to all branches.

Something of relevance to self organised groups was one of the rule amendments. A rule amendment proposed by the disabled members' committee fell after a lively debate about the nature of self organised groups and specific reps on the branch committee.

Conference accepted the arguments put forward by delegates that the amendment as written would allow for people who didn't identify in that self organised group to stand as the SOG officer (for example a non Black person standing to be the Black members' officer) and after a card vote the amendment fell.

All in all it was a full time role at conference and both of us were completely exhausted afterwards but it was an amazing experience and a privilege to represent our women members at national delegate conference.



Lucia McKeever, UNISON president and NWC member

## Higher Education

27 February 2014

Delegate: Althea Barnabis

The national women's committee was represented at the conference by Althea Barnabis from the University of Westminster branch. It was her first time at the conference and she gave a fantastic speech when she moved the NWC motion on 'Increasing the number of Black staff within universities working in support, academic and management roles'. Conference unanimously voted in support of the motion.

There were 27 motions on the agenda and 6 emergency motions on the on-going pay dispute. By mid-morning, to ensure all business was heard, the standing orders committee reduced speaking times. However, it isn't a higher education conference without the traditional referencing back of the standing orders report. In a controversial move, the chair of conference chose to over-rule standing orders and re-arranged the order of business, which saw the debate on the on-going pay dispute moved up the order of business. After a group debate, conference voted to support emergency motion 1 which had been submitted by Glasgow Caledonian University branch and was supported by the service group executive. The motion applauded the work that branches and activists have taken to ensure that the pay dispute has been as successful as possible and sought ways in which the action could be strengthened going forward.

As well as discussing the on-going pay dispute, there were motions on the impact of austerity on higher education; privatisation and casualisation of the HE workforce; discrimination in HE; the impact of restructuring on young workers; the impact of internationalisation of the HE agenda on LGBT workers who may be sent overseas to work; zero hour contracts; living wage and stress and the impact of increasing workloads.

At lunchtime there was a well-attended LGBT caucus and fringe meeting on the impact of zero hours contracts. After lunch the conference heard from a guest speaker, Keith Ewing from Kings College on trade union victimisation and blacklisting in the construction industry.

## **Healthcare service group**

**14-16 April 2014**

**Delegates: Viv Thomson, Karen Narramore**

It was heartening that, as well as being carried overwhelmingly, both of the national women's committee motions had a lot of speakers in support.

The pay debate was lively and inspiring but left us in no doubt of the importance of giving our members the confidence to take action after years of attacks on pay and conditions, and on-going austerity. One speaker spoke very movingly about having to resort to payday loans and the impact on his family. The speaker was male, but the experience has been shared by countless women members. He said "I can't afford to strike – but I *will* strike, because if we don't they'll come back for more and more until there's nothing left. We have to get off our knees."

Christine McAnea, head of the healthcare service group, outlined what would be a long term plan, starting with protest and action days, leading to a ballot. "What faces us in the future if we don't challenge this?" she said.

Conference was opened by Maureen le Marinel, UNISON president who welcomed everyone to Brighton. She spoke on the challenges facing health, especially in England and the need to take action.

Ros Norman addressed conference and moved the annual report. She spoke on the impact of the cuts and planned cuts going forward; the difficulties staff and the health

sector are facing. She mentioned the good work that had taken place at George Elliott Hospital. She also spoke on the need to recruit more members and that we needed to increase density. The annual report was accepted and no questions had been asked.

Dave Prentis was next to address conference. He spoke on the need to continue to defend the NHS and thanked all stewards for the work they do, often in difficult and thankless times. George Osborne was reported to be saying that we've turned a corner but Dave said that this wasn't the case for working people who are around £3k worse off since 2010. He said we needed to make a stand now, or they would come back for more. He spoke on the huge bonuses for bankers and bosses and yet we still have 1 million young people seeking work; the ConDems starving the public sector and selling off to their friends; 70% of the NHS and NHS business is going to the private sector and there is no benefit of this shift and yet there are plans for greater rationing of services.

He said we needed to recruit to make the union stronger and that we need to defend pay and the NHS; that UNISON would support members and branches if they wanted to take industrial action. He finished by saying that it was our job to get this government out and to make sure that Labour understood what was expected of them when they get into government.

We then went into motions and the first nine went through with ease.

The afternoon session started with a panel discussion on integrated health & social care. The panel were Alastair McClellan (chair), Christina McAnea, Dave Watson, Prof Bob Hudson, George Barron and Karen Stevens. There was a good Q&A session following with a wide range of questions being asked and answered.

Tuesday morning started with motions being debated and all motions heard in the morning were passed with the exception of motion 16 which fell due to no one being available to move it. A motion from Scotland on leaving PRB led to a hearty debate with speakers both for and against. Talk was around the need to stand together and concerns around the referendum, but ultimately the motion was lost.

Viv attended the focus group on the big NHS sell-off. There was a discussion around what was happening in the NHS in England and what action, if any, we can take. We heard about the successful campaign at George Elliott hospital where they stopped a sell off through a sustained campaign that involved staff, members and the community. The message was that although there is a lot happening to us, there is still a lot we can do to challenge it and win.

Karen attended the focus group on Be Safe training, led by Gail Adams, UNISON head of nursing. This is a training programme which is being developed, to be rolled out via branches to members, to encourage people to highlight concerns about standards of care and safe staffing levels. We did a practice run through of delivering the workshop, which was useful. Materials are available, and more are being developed, for example the Be Safe reporting form.

On Tuesday afternoon we continued the pay debate, and defending agenda for change terms and conditions, when Viv delivered an excellent speech to Composite C on zero hours contracts. The afternoon session passed without incident with all motions being passed. We had a minute's silence to remember the 96 victims of Hillsborough.

On Wednesday we had a minute's silence in respect of Workers' Memorial Day.

Business moved quickly. There was a really interesting motion and discussion on mental

health issues and the effect that the cuts are having on this sector. Conference ran out of time and four motions were referred back to the HSGE for action.

## **Community**

**28 February – 2 March 2014**

**Delegates: Lesley Discombe, Debbie Hollingsworth**

The NWC submitted two motions.

Barriers to women activists called on the service group executive to consider innovative ways to involve more women activists in the future, and to produce recommendations for branches on how this can be achieved.

Representation of members in the community and voluntary sector called upon the service group executive to work with the NEC and service groups to explore how UNISON's structures can best reflect the needs of members in the community sector; raise the profile of the community service group within UNISON and ensure that community members are easily identifiable on the RMS to enable better recruitment and organising of members in the sector in the future. Both motions were carried.

## **Water, Environment and Transport**

**16 June 2014**

**Delegate: Ivy Carlier**

I attended this conference on behalf of the national women's committee to move motion 3, Recruiting and organising under-represented workers.

The motion was passed without opposition and was supported from the executive by Fran Hill from the public transport committee. Two other female delegates spoke in favour of the motion but one of them did state that men in her branch were beginning to feel isolated.

Other equalities motions were also passed – Getting equality on the bargaining table and Celebrating equality in WET workplaces, from the LGBT committee.

Other motions discussed were around branch organisation, zero hours contracts, job cuts, pensions fund trustees, health and safety subjects, means testing for bus passes, bus service cuts (detrimental to more women of course,) HS2 and not for profit alternatives in the water industry.

The conference was well attended and the number of women attending was a marked increase on previous years (61 monitoring forms returned, showed 28 female, 26 male).

The guest speaker was Angela Smith, MP who was on the shadow environmental team and a lively discussion was held around water services, environmental issues, HS2, re-nationalising the railways and utility services, (no money to do that immediately), Ed Miliband being photographed holding the Sun newspaper and funding bus services.

## **Energy**

**16 June 2014**

**Delegate: Irene Humphreys**

Conference went well, all motions were voted on and passed.

The national women's committee and national disabled members' committee motions became Composite A, Call centres.

The composite called on the service group executive to:

- Re-invigorate promotion of the call centre charter to branches, and encourage them to utilise the knowledge and skills of UNISON reps and branch officers within the companies to negotiate with other companies to sign up to the charter.

- Ensure that branches have the necessary advice and guidance to support them in negotiating reasonable working standards in line with the charter.
- Continue to oppose off-shoring of call centre services.

The cabinet minister for energy was at the conference and gave a speech on what the coalition government was doing for the energy sector and blaming the previous Labour government for all the current problems!

It was also the last conference for Win Wearmouth, a former member of the national women's committee and chair of the SGE, whose retirement was marked appropriately.



**Win Wearmouth**

## **Local government**

**15-16 June 2014**

**Delegates: Elizabeth Cameron, Jane Gebbie**

It was a busy two days in Brighton at UNISON's local government conference debating a wide range of subjects all having an impact on our members. It was encouraging to see more women speaking on these topics and the national women's committee maintaining a high profile throughout conference.

Both of the NWC motions submitted and accepted onto the agenda were composited, obviously hot topics and we feel that this gave more credibility to our motions so we were not completely disheartened when informed that the service group executive would probably want to move them and giving us the opportunity to speak in support. Upon discussion with the SGE it transpired that they would allow us the opportunity to move composite A as it was ALL ABOUT WOMEN! Elizabeth Cameron did so with her usual aplomb.

"Women are at the sharp end of government policies," she said, informing delegates that of the 360,000 jobs so far lost in local government, the majority of them were women's. Unemployment for women is set to rise to about 1.5 million by 2018. The situation for Black women was particularly bad, she said, with 52% of Black women unemployed. Insecurity at work was compounded by cuts to benefits, leading women to pay day loans - just to enable them charge their electricity meters - and the now infamous choice, "heat or eat".

Cathy Bayton of the local government service group executive described the "double whammy" for women who not only made up the majority of the local government workforce, but also used public services "more intensely than men" in caring for children and elderly relatives.

The tales of woe continued in education, where Karen Fisher of the national FE & 6<sup>th</sup> form colleges committee told conference that they were witnessing "the worst financial crisis that colleges have ever faced." The impact of cuts both affects those working in further education, who suffer redundancy, lower pay and worsening terms and conditions, and already disadvantaged young people, who are denied a chance to acquire vital job skills.

"The government is oblivious at best and simply doesn't care at worst," Ms Bayton said. "How many members of this government intend to send their kids to further education colleges after they have finished public school?"

The composite was of course unanimously supported.

Jane Gebbie then spoke in support of the composite on zero hours contracts and informed conference of a Labour Research Department report entitled Women Deserve Better and how women were being offered these contracts as a rising tide of insecurity in the workplace continues. A once marginal and niche element of the labour market continues to expand with employers under no obligation to guarantee a minimum number of working hours. Some employees have no understanding of the contracts they are signing, exploiting the often more vulnerable within our society. These trends are set to continue affecting all you women out there, the backbone of Britain's public services.

Various female speakers highlighted that Black, disabled and LGBT women workers are disproportionately the worst affected members on zero hours contracts and how we need to campaign to highlight their plight.

Elizabeth brought this to life by explaining some of the particular challenges of insecure working and the way the 15 minute visits affect the level of care and the fear and vulnerability of some of the women in the situations they face including bullying and harassment at the hands of the service users they work with, as well as working in vulnerable situations one on one, which needs to be addressed as we go to private contracts.



She also highlighted the impact of cuts in youth services and spoke to challenging discriminatory practices, defending public services motion 52. Amendments to motions submitted by the NWC were not heard but were both supported by the SGE.

Jane then spoke on mental health and young people informing conference that mental health issues at any age are debilitating and we need to ensure that they are treated with the same seriousness as physical health problems. We need to ensure that our future recruits are not denied their right to an adequate standard of health care as it affects approximately one in ten children and young people in society today. Conference agreed to develop a recruitment and organising strategy aimed at increasing membership and participation of women, Black, disabled and LGBT workers and to put equality at the heart of the bargaining agenda, recognising that government austerity cuts are undermining equal opportunities at work.

## **Police and justice**

**16 October 2014**

**Delegates: Sally Fogell, Elisa Vasquez-Walters**

Arrived in Southport after an uneventful journey changing trains at Liverpool to horrible wet and windy conditions – although nowhere near as bad as at Brighton for national women's conference.

This conference is attended by police staff, probation and Children and Family Court service staff. It felt as though the number of probation members there was significantly smaller than last year and this may be a real reflection of how demoralised probation staff are currently feeling. Over the weekend it also became apparent that as branches we are not uniformly organised (ie some members are still in local government branches, some are in police and justice branches and some are in probation only branches).

Conference day on the Thursday was busy with 41 motions to be heard and debated on as well as 17 amendments to motions and an emergency motion.

UNISON president Lucia McKeever opened the conference at 9.30am. Due to the heightened security risk to police forces and police personnel, security measures had been increased for the duration of the conference and advice given in terms of safety away from the venue.

The day went straight into motions where in total 40 were debated. Most of the motions and amendments had speakers in support of the motion with many being voted on unanimously in favour.

Motion 2 (Police and Justice Funding – 2015 General Election) attracted a lively debate from the start.

There were a number of very positive motions around the issue of domestic abuse and ensuring that police staff have access to good support via robust workplace policies. These were happily all supported, including an amendment added to include work with all self-organised groups.

Motion 7, Protecting equality in the probation service, which was one of the national women's committee motions was moved by Elisa Vasquez-Walters, was well supported and we had delegates from the National LGBT committee speak in support as well as a delegate from a police branch. This was voted in favour by delegates unanimously.

Motion 11 was the other national women's motion which was around PCSOs and scene preservation, moved by Sally. This attracted three speakers in support of the motion and was thankfully voted unanimously by the delegates in favour.

The themes of many of the motions were very much around the stopping of privatisation and support around the Worth It campaign. It was announced to conference that police staff would be balloted for industrial action on the issue of the proposed 1% pay increase. Police staff pay has declined in real terms by 13%. Given that it is a similar picture for probation (16% cut in real terms), the feeling was that they would follow suit later in the year.

Motion 12, Police and justice staff are worth it, which was on pay, sparked a lively debate with plenty of support and speakers in favour of the motion especially as a member of the Police Staff Council was in the audience and it was vital to make them understand that pay is a big issue. A point of order was called on the number of speakers for this motion and unfortunately conference delegates voted to stop the debate which was a shame as it could have been a big bargaining tool.

The day was completed with a fringe meeting hosted by the international committee and Justice for Colombia. This was a very moving meeting, hearing about how Colombia is the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade unionist.

Cliff Williams, assistant general secretary addressed conference about issues affecting police and justice staff including:

- Pay
- Restructures
- Privatisation of rehabilitation companies
- Privatisation of probation
- Reduction in numbers of police officers and PCSOs
- Threat to neighbourhood policing.

Elisa attended a plenary session with Kevin Robinson, CEO of Lancashire CRC. He didn't make the best start to the session by thanking UNISON for inviting him to Southend! He talked about how difficult the transforming

rehabilitation agenda has been for probation staff and reassured members that he and other chiefs had tried to resist the government on these changes. However now that privatisation looks almost inevitable "we need to embed probation values into our organisations". Overall he got a mixed reception! The other plenary session available was with Greater Manchester PCC Jim Battle who spoke on police governance.

The Organising in NPS and CRC workshop, with our national officer Ben Priestley, showed up the fact that probation branches need a lot of support at this time, and in reality be out of local government branches in order to be properly heard.

The main speaker for the day was Jack Dromey MP, Shadow Police Minister who spoke about Labour's plans for policing. He then hosted the Labour Link meeting where he reminded us all of some important Labour pledges such as – bedroom tax to be scrapped in 1<sup>st</sup> week of a Labour government, the introduction of a living wage, a freezing of energy bills and a commitment to cleaning up the private rented sector. Elisa asked about her view that parliament continues to look too male and too white and he agreed that this is something that must be tackled.

The afternoon saw plenary meetings with the Deputy Chief Constable of Lancashire Police and with Yasmin Qureshi MP of the Justice Select Committee on Transforming Rehabilitation.

Saturday began with a conference photo supporting the TUC day of protest. This photo and other updates can all be seen by looking under the #pjconf2014 tag on Twitter. Further sessions were available on reform of the Police Staff Council handbook, Police Scotland workshop and Probation: The bargaining agenda.

Overall it was a good conference with some good debate and some robust quality motions being submitted and passed. It was enjoyable and was good to network with some new and some familiar faces.

## **National Black members' conference**

**17-19 January 2014**

**Report from Davena Rankin, NBMC and NWC member**

Conference was opened by Margaret Greer, chair of the national Black members' committee. Margaret welcomed all delegates and visitors and paid a special tribute to Nelson Rohihlahla Mandela.

Conference had a very full agenda with thirty-two motions and four emergency motions timetabled for debate. Despite speaking times being cut on Sunday business was not concluded. Debate focused on the impact of austerity on Black communities and Black workers, encouraging Black activists, the campaign for a living wage, higher and further education, zero hours contracts, stop and search, mental health issues and international LGBT rights. One of the highlights of conference was the number of first time speakers and young members who were present at conference.

### ***Guest Speakers***

#### ***Maureen Le Marinel, President, UNISON***

Maureen used her speech to outline her own and UNISON's continuing support for self-organisation and pointed out that Black workers were stronger in UNISON. She urged delegates to get out and campaign against the BNP in the run up to the European elections. She used her speech to highlight the on-going ideological attacks on public services that were being made in the name of austerity and she particularly highlighted the threat of privatisation to the probation services. She emphasised that two thirds of children living

in poverty are from working households and she spoke about the work of There For You, UNISON's re-named charity.

#### ***Junior Smart, St Giles Trust***

Junior gave an inspirational speech to conference. Junior had been convicted of a drugs-related crime and whilst in prison he discovered a peer-to-peer support system for offenders and started to look at ways in which he could help others. He is clearly passionate about this and has won two prestigious awards from the South London Press for his work and the difference it has made to the lives of young people. St Giles Trust aims to help break the cycle of prison, crime and disadvantage and create safer communities by supporting people to change their lives. Around one-third of their staff are ex-offenders who now support others.

#### ***Dave Prentis, general secretary, UNISON***

Dave opened his speech by thanking the delegates for all the work they did both as union activists and as public service providers. He condemned the Conservative-led coalition for the shocking increase in the use of food banks. He called on the Labour party to stand up for families and public sector workers who are facing hardship due to the on-going pay freeze. He highlighted that thirteen million in the UK live below the poverty line and that in-work poverty was growing due to the increasing use of zero hour contracts and underemployment. He denounced politicians who were engaged in a race to the bottom on immigration and outlined his concerns about UKIP's hidden agenda.

#### ***Sadiq Khan, MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Justice and Shadow Lord Chancellor***

Sadiq opened his speech by calling on delegates to increase their political involvement. There are the European and local government elections this year and he outlined how important it was to elect representatives who understood the impact their actions had on people and communities.

He paid tribute to Del Singh, the Labour Party MEP candidate who was killed in a terrorist attack in Kabul, Afghanistan. Sadiq also praised the role of UNISON who he described as "leading the way" in how trade unions should work with the Labour Party.

### ***Marcia Rigg, Sean Rigg Justice Campaign***

<http://www.seanriggjusticeandchange.com>

Marcia Rigg's brother, Sean Rigg, died in police custody in August 2008 and she is still fighting for justice for her family. She gave an emotional account of her on-going campaign for justice and highlighted inequalities in the mental health care system. She cited Sheffield as an example where only 20% of the general population self-define as BME; whereas over 50% of the patients in mental health institutions are from BME communities. Marcia outlined the events leading up to Sean Rigg's death and the on-going fight to find out what really happened the day Sean died.

## ***Meetings***

### ***Political awareness / Labour Link workshop***

This was a very well attended meeting with at least 60 delegates/visitors in attendance. Sadiq Khan addressed the meeting and asked who was most affected by the cuts and opened the meeting up to debate. He said that people often ask why should they get involved in politics but he believed the question should actually be why aren't you getting involved. He said he could only stay for 20 minutes but in the end took questions from the floor for 40 minutes. Questions included ways in which to fight the BNP/UKIP, stop and search powers, MPs pay rise and equalities. He also highlighted a training course that is offered by Labour for Black activists who want to develop the skills needed to become a councillor, MP, or governor. Sadiq offered to attend future meetings if requested.

### ***Women's Caucus Meeting***

The main topic of debate was the timing of the 2015 national Black members' and

national women's conferences that meant that they would be less than one week apart. This, the delegates agreed, would disproportionately disadvantage Black women from going to both conferences next year. As many attendees had been forced to use unpaid leave for one or both of the conferences it was feared that the change of date could affect both the opportunity to attend both conferences as well as severely affecting women's income during the month of February 2015.



Margaret Greer, NBMC Chair

By a show of hands it was determined that only a small proportion of the women delegates present were planning to attend national women's conference 2014. However, it was felt that the opportunity to go to both conferences should not be further minimised by the timing of conferences.

The caucus welcome the development of the women's health pack and agreed to consider what additional material could be included on health issues specific to Black women.

## **National disabled members' conference**

**25-27 October 2014**

**Delegate: Steph Davies**

This was my first time at national disabled members' conference, not through gatekeeping but pressures of work, so I was pleased to attend for the national women's committee. I was pleased to see colleagues from the national committee also in attendance. Also present was Lucia McKeever, UNISON president, Wendy Nicholls, UNISON vice president and Gloria Mills, national secretary for equalities.

There were plenty of discussions about comments made by Lord Freud regarding disabled workers. Quite rightly, there was a lot of anger and this was reflected in emergency motions that were submitted. I particularly liked the title of one from the national young members forum – ‘It was no Freudian slip.’

Another theme of the conference was the issue of taxing disability benefits – the whole idea of this is shocking, that individuals in receipt of these important benefits have to be having further cuts on their income.

There were also discussions on the threat of UKIP and their popularity. In response to the increase in support for this far right political party, the national disabled members committee (NDMC) had also submitted an emergency motion.

The annual report from the NDMC conveyed the difficulties experienced due to attacks from the Con Dem government.

Areas of work during the last year included:

- Access to Work
- Recruitment
- Difficulties with disabled members in capability proceedings
- Social Care – promoting the Ethical Care Charter and asking for further information
- Welfare reform – mention was made about Iain Duncan Smith recommending that Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment be taxed. The NDMC are campaigning with Labour Link and a petition was circulated on the UNISON website calling for the resignation of Lord Freud following his discriminatory comments about pay of disabled workers.

Lucia McKeever then addressed conference. She is the first woman from Northern Ireland

to hold the post of president. She told conference that she wanted to speak to as many people as possible at the conference and was there all through it. Lucia mentioned that the agenda for the conference was interesting and varied. She also warned regarding next year’s general election – with the current government targeting disabled people and the most vulnerable in society.

She reflected that pay levels have been under inflation for seven years, decisions at having the money either to heat or eat are abhorrent. The only increase that our society has seen has been the increase in the use of food banks, even for those who are in work. She reminded conference about the Britain Needs a Payrise demonstration and the support that was witnessed from the public for our cause.

She urged conference to keep up their campaigning, especially the Ethical Care Campaign and urged them not to accept worker exploitation which is still occurring. In light of this, she mentioned the Political Fund ballot which will launch in November; this has to be done every ten years, but is important for the union to continue its campaigning not just with the Labour Party but in more general terms as well. Lucia highlighted that materials were available to talk to members about the ballot and encourage them to vote.

Lucia spoke about her presidential charity for the year – Meningitis Now. She lost her son within two days of him becoming ill. She has worked with the charity for over 25 years, and it is close to her heart. She asked that members approach their branches to consider donations.

Conference then moved on to the business of motions. Some motions of note are briefly described below:

Disabled members taking the lead on recruitment – this motion called upon NDMC to work with regions to encourage activists with disabilities to get involved with recruitment campaigns; for materials to be aimed at disabled members to attend meetings and a call to set up self organised groups in branches.

This motion attracted some debate about the wording used in the motion – ‘activists with disabilities’ and an amendment called for this to be changed to ‘disabled members’. Debate included discussion about the social model of disability and it was argued that individuals are not disabled by illness alone, but by society not accepting and not providing the adjustments that they need. The amendment fell and the conference approved the unamended motion.

Communicate, communicate, recruit – this motion asked for more literature and support for disabled members to be supplied to regions. An amendment asked for literature to be supplied in all formats. This was opposed as it could not be reasonable to provide literature in many different formats. Debate included the point that the motion asked for bespoke materials, but that branches, regions, SOG’s and service groups should take responsibility to supply these. The motion was amended, and duly accepted.

Equality facility time – There is no legal right to time off for equalities duties for union representatives. The motion was opposed, and an amendment asked for NDMC to work with Labour Link to ensure a manifesto commitment. Opposition to the motion stated that the motion would weaken the union’s position and would be a ‘backward step’.

One speaker said “SOG reps have a place in this union”. The motion was carried.

Disability hate crime – Disappointing that this motion yet again needed to be raised at

conference but it is still an issue for disabled people. In Northern Ireland alone, there were more than 2000 such offences in 2011 that were reported. This was up a third on 2010. Research has shown that 9 out of 10 people with a learning disability have been a victim. The debate included lobbying for a single, clear and uncomplicated definition of disability hate crime. Notably, one speaker noted the wide variety of different hate crimes.

Government welfare reforms and credit unions – this highlighted concern around working tax credit not being available under universal credit and potentially placing thousands of working people at serious detriment, just because they are ‘fit to work’. The motion called for the promotion of credit unions instead of the use of pay day lenders.

Taxing disability benefits – this called for the abolition of plans for welfare reform because of the devastating effect on disabled people with taxes on DLA and PIP. Lord Freud’s statement shows the opinion of those in government. The motion called on conference delegates to vote Labour in the next general election in 2015.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claims – the debate highlighted long delays and months in many cases for people awaiting their claims to be fulfilled. One speaker mentioned that Disability Wales had called for the implementation of the PIP to be postponed until the government has sorted it all out.

Disability related absence – this called for disability leave policies to consider sickness due to a disability should be treated in a fair and supportive manner. Members feel pressured to attend work even when unwell for fear of the employer’s attitude. Amendments asked for Freedom of Information requests to find out how many workers are dismissed through capability.

Another asked for absence leave to allow for fitting of adaptations or if specialist equipment at work breaks down.

Mental health issues for LGBT people – a speaker on this motion spoke of their personal experiences with mental health and applauded the NatCen Research report – Implications of Austerity for LGBT People and Services. The NDMC highlighted issues with accessing pension in ill health, when appealing this decision, it can be financially detrimental for workers.

Members will not be fooled by UKIP's lies – the message in this was clear – UKIP's simple political platform is a mask for a much broader and discriminatory agenda. Speakers encouraged members to campaign against UKIP, and called for the issue of an election campaigning leaflet that offers disability related questions to be asked of any party standing in the general election. One particularly impassioned speaker warned against the dangers of voting for UKIP and having them in power.

Conference heard from Kate Green, MP, Shadow Minister for Disabled People. She stated "The government are happy to waste huge potential which comes from disabled workers." We deserve to be free from discrimination and free from poverty. There has been an announcement of the replacement of the provider of work assessments, but the process and application must change. Kate felt deeply ashamed that disabled people feel bullied in this country.

Kate assured conference that Labour will give disabled people the respect that they deserve and also toughen up the law on hate crime. Kate also asserted that she was determined to make rights a reality for disabled people.

Another guest speaker was Kim Silver, member of the NDMC and national executive council, speaking on disabled people in public life. She described herself as a rottweiler at

heart! Kim has been blind from birth and worked for 38 years for Newham council. She became a magistrate – no exceptions were made in selection and also became a school governor. She was greatly encouraged by Irene Stacey, a colleague on the NEC, and has been part of the NEC for a number of years. She was encouraging and empowering that disabled people can take up public positions and help to get issues for disabled people recognised.

All in all, an excellent conference, truly enlightening to meet so many different people and how they adapt to their working situations.

## **National LGBT conference**

**21-23 November 2014**

**Delegates: Steph Davies, Debbie Hollingsworth**

LGBT conference was a huge success as far as our delegation was concerned. There was a vast array of motions to be debated which were placed under the following subject headings: negotiating LGBT equality, recruiting and organising, campaigning and international.

Issues were raised such as; LGBT rights and collective agreements, LGBT workers rights – home and away, building on our work on tackling biphobia, language matters (which opened up a very interesting debate and concept for future union materials and activism), health related motions, LGBT asylum seekers, tackling homophobic teaching in schools, we need you – Branch LGBT officers (which led to quite a passionate debate with differing opinions), several motions covering the impact of the cuts on the LGBT community with much emphasis on making sure the Tories, Liberals nor UKIP get into power in 2015.

There were two emergency motions accepted to the agenda and conference agreed the motions to NDC 2015. There was also a number of similar motions composited which assisted in making effective use of conference time. However on a negative side the time allocated for speaking was cut halfway through conference which did impact on delegates (especially first time speakers) who had spent considerable time and energy on preparing their speeches.

The national women's committee do not have the right to submit motions but we were honoured to speak in support of two motions which were clearly identified as having a disproportionate effect on women; 'Challenging sexism in the LGBT community' and motion 25 (comp c) 'LGBT housing crisis'.

During conference we heard from 4 speakers all of whom contributed both interesting and informative dialogue with humour thrown in for free. The speakers were Theresa Griffin - MEP for NW of England, Lucia McKeever - UNISON President, Karen Jennings - UNISON assistant general secretary and Virginia Setshedi - Foundation for Human Rights South Africa.



Darienne Flemington (R) LGBT liaison rep to NWC  
with Fiona Hutton, SW region

The last session on the Saturday comprised of discussion groups and the 'Kicking out the Tories - winning for Labour' was quite a heated affair in that whilst people clearly do not want certain parties in power next year

there is distinct political apathy in the country with the additional factor that many simply do not trust Labour to work with the unions for working class people and marginalised groups. There were also a number of specific issues and SOG meetings to attend and as always we held the traditional remembrance time.

Finally, the Saturday night social saw plenty of kilts and legs flying to a fantastic ceilidh followed by the host DJ playing loads of 70 and 80's music - not that we remembered any of the tunes!

### **TUC women's conference 12-14 March 2014**

Conference was attended by 10 delegates from the regions (Northern Ireland and Cymru/Wales were not represented), UNISON's president, members of the TUC women's committee and general council, the chair and officers of the national women's committee and the national secretary, equalities.

UNISON's submissions to the agenda were carried, as follows: Motion 1 - Campaigning through austerity; Motion 12 - Decent childcare for all (composited); Motion 15 - Closure of specialist rape units due to police cuts in funding (amendment to BECTU motion).

In addition UNISON delegates spoke in support of the following motions: Motion 18: ATL - When age isn't immaterial; Motion 20: NASUWT - Women's health, safety and wellbeing (seconded); Motion 28: GMB - ET fees/workplace equality reps (seconded). Eleanor Smith was elected to the Black women's seat on the TUC women's committee, and Lucia McKeever to the general seat.

UNISON hosted a fringe meeting on the Valuing Maternity campaign, which is being part-funded by UNISON GPF, chaired by our president, Maureen Le Marinel.



## **APPENDIX 1**

### **MEMBERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE 2014/2015**

#### **Regional Representatives**

Eastern	Barbara Staddon, Elisa Vasquez-Walters
East Midlands	Julia Davies, Sally Fogell
Greater London	Amanda Bailey, Josie Mangan
Northern	Susan Gray/ Shirley Scott (job share), Helen Winterburn
Northern Ireland	Ann Brown, Roisin McKinley
North West	Teresa Connally, Karen Narramore, June Poole
Scotland	Davena Rankin, Viv Thomson, Liz Young
South East	Charlie Dacke, Debbie Hollingsworth
South West	Kym Bayley, Jo Morgan
Cymru / Wales	Stephanie Davies, Jane Gebbie
West Midlands	Jennifer Forbes, Janet Richmond
Yorkshire & Humberside	Gail Andrews, Josie Paszek, Pam Sian

#### **Others**

National Black Members' Committee	Magda Lezama, Pam Singh
National Disabled Members' Committee	Elizabeth Cameron, Siobhan Donnelly
National LGBT Committee	Eileen Best, Darienne Flemington
Young Members Forum	Melanie Pearson
NEC	Lesley Discombe, Helen Jenner, Margaret McKee
TUC co-optees	Lucia McKeever, Eleanor Smith

#### **Staff**

<b>National Women's Officer</b>	Sharon Greene
<b>Assistant National Officer</b>	Clare Knights

## APPENDIX 2

### CONSTITUTION OF THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

#### Representation

Regions with up to 100,000 women members	Two seats
Regions with more than 100,000 women members	Three seats
Other self-organised groups (SOGs)	Two for each national committee
National young members forum (NYMF)	One seat
National executive council	Three seats

All posts are open to job share.

Each region and self-organised group may nominate a substitute.

When electing representatives, regions are reminded of the requirement to achieve fair representation for the low paid, part time workers, shift workers, Black women, disabled women, lesbians, bisexual and transgender women. Where regions are entitled to three representatives, the third seat must take into account fair representation.

**Term of office:** The committee is elected every two years, taking office after national women's conference.

**Length of service:** Regional, SOG and NYMF representatives shall serve no more than two consecutive terms on the committee. This is to encourage and enable more women to become involved in UNISON activities at a national level.

Once a regional, SOG or NYMF representative has served on the national women's committee, they must take a break of at least one two-year term before they are eligible for re-election either as a full member or substitute to the national women's committee.

**Quorum:** The quorum for meetings of the committee will be no less than one third of the members, excluding the chair.

**Meetings:** The committee will meet no less than four times annually. Further meetings will be held on the recommendation of the committee.

**AGM:** The annual general meeting of the committee will be the first meeting after national women's conference.

**Chair and vice-chairs:** The chair and two vice-chairs shall be elected by the committee at the AGM.

**Voting:** Voting will be by show of hands. A ballot can be held on more sensitive issues, with the consent of the majority of the committee. In the event of a tied vote, the chair will have the casting vote.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the previous meeting will be circulated at least 14 days prior to the meeting. These will be scrutinised for accuracy and, if accepted, signed as a true record.

## APPENDIX 3

### ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Meetings were held in March, September and November

Nominating Body	Name	Possible	Actual
Eastern	Barbara Staddon	3	3
Eastern	Elisa Vasquez-Walters	3	3
East Midlands	Julia Davies	2	2
East Midlands	Sally Fogell	3	3
Greater London	Amanda Bailey	3	2
Greater London	Josie Mangan	3	3
Northern	Susan Gray (job share)	1	1
Northern	Shirley Scott (job share)	2	2
Northern	Helen Winterburn	3	1
Northern Ireland	Ann Brown	3	3
Northern Ireland	Roisin McKinley	3	3
North West	Teresa Connally	3	1
North West	Karen Narramore	3	3
North West	June Poole	3	1
Scotland	Davena Rankin	3	3
Scotland	Viv Thomson	3	3
Scotland	Liz Young	3	3
South East	Charlie Dacke	3	3
South East	Debbie Hollingsworth	3	3
South West	Kym Bayley	3	2
South West	Jo Morgan	3	3
Cymru / Wales	Stephanie Davies	3	1
Cymru / Wales	Jane Gebbie	3	3
West Midlands	Jennifer Forbes	3	2
West Midlands	Janet Richmond	3	3
Yorkshire & Humberside	Gail Andrews	3	2
Yorkshire & Humberside	Josie Paszek	3	3
Yorkshire & Humberside	Pam Sian	3	3
NBMC	Magda Lezama	3	3
NBMC	Pam Singh	3	2
NDMC	Elizabeth Cameron	3	3
NDMC	Siobhan Donnelly	3	1
NDMC (sub)	Maggie Griffin	2	2
LGBT	Eileen Best	3	3
LGBT	Darienne Flemington	3	3
Young Members Forum	Melanie Pearson	3	2
NEC	Lesley Discombe	3	3
NEC	Helen Jenner	3	2
NEC	Margaret McKee	3	3
TUC	Lucia McKeever	3	3
TUC	Eleanor Smith	3	2

## APPENDIX 4

### Glossary

D&O	NEC's development and organisation committee
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
FRMC	Finance & resource management committee (UNISON)
LAOS	Learning and organising services (UNISON department responsible for member training)
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
LLL	Lifelong learning
MPU	Membership participation unit (UNISON department with equalities remit)
NBMC	National Black members' committee
NDC	National delegate conference
NDMC	National disabled members' committee
NEC	National executive council
NEC ELC	National executive council equality liaison committee
NWC	National women's committee
NWO	National women's officer
NYMF	National young members' forum
PDCC	NEC's policy development and campaigns committee
RWC	Regional women's committee
RWO	Regional women's officer
SOG	Self organised group
TUC	Trades Union Congress

### Commonly used terms

Self organisation	Groups facing discrimination meeting and organising to determine their collective agenda and feeding it into UNISON's structure.
SOGs	The four self-organised groups: defined by UNISON national rules as women members, Black members, disabled members and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members.
Positive action	Action to combat the prejudice and discrimination experienced by members of the self-organised groups.
Self-definition	Right of people to define themselves, e.g. as disabled or lesbian.
Proportionality	The representation of women and men in fair proportion to the relevant number of female and male members of the electorate – UNISON has a rulebook commitment to proportionality.
Fair representation	The broad balance of representation of members of the electorate, taking into account such factors as age and low pay, the balance between full-time and part-time time workers, manual and non-manual workers, different occupations, skills, race, sexual orientation, disability and gender identity – UNISON has a rulebook commitment to fair representation.

## **UNISON Organisation**

National delegate conference	Supreme decision-making body of UNISON – annual conference of branch delegates at which the self-organised groups have representation.
NEC	National Executive Council – elected body of lay members.
Lay member	A member who is not an employee of the union.
Lay structure	A body that does not consist of employees of the union.
Regions	UNISON is organised into 12 regions around the country, each with their own regional office and staff.
Service groups	<p>UNISON organises members in the following services – energy, health care, higher education, local government, police staff, transport, community and water and environment.</p> <p>The service group has autonomy to decide the group’s general policy and negotiate on behalf of their members. Each service group has an annual conference of delegates which sets the group’s agenda for the following year.</p>
Sector	A sub-group of a service group, e.g. the nursing and midwives sector of the healthcare service group.
Code of good branch practice	A set of guidelines, including a chapter on self-organisation, drawn up by the NEC which it considers desirable for branches to follow.
UNISON InFocus	Monthly magazine for stewards and activists
UNISON efocus	Weekly email to stewards and activists
U magazine	Quarterly magazine for all members
Labour link levy	A fund made up of contributions from opted-in members used to support the Labour Party.
GPF	General political fund: A fund made up of contributions from opted-in members used for non party-political campaigning.

## APPENDIX 5

### ANALYSIS OF PROPORTIONALITY AND FAIR REPRESENTATION NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE 2014

%

**Have you attended this conference before?**

Yes	No
64	29

**Would you describe yourself as a disabled person?**

Yes	No
16	77

**How would you describe your ethnic origin?**

Asian UK	1.5
Asian Other	0.5
Bangladeshi	0
Indian	1.5
Pakistani	1
Black African	1
Black Caribbean	4
Black UK	3.5
Black other	0
Black mixed heritage	0.5
Chinese	0
Irish	3
White UK	75
White other	5

**What is your age group?**

16 to 26	2
27 to 39	10
40 to 49	29
50 plus	54

**What subscription band are you in?**

A Up to 2,000	1
B 2,001 - 5,000	1
C 5,001 - 8,000	3
D 8,001 - 11,000	4
E 11,001 - 14,000	5.5
F 14,001 - 17,000	12
G 17,001 - 20,000	14
H 20,001 - 25,000	23
I 25,001 - 30,000	14
J 30,001 - 35,000	8
K over 35,000	4
Member in education/apprenticeship	0.5

**How many hours per week do you work?**

35 or more	64
30-34	12
16-29	12.5
Less than 16	3



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