



NATIONAL DISABLED MEMBERS
CONFERENCE 2016

RECORD OF DECISIONS AND BALLOT
RESULTS

**2016 National Disabled Members' Conference
Decisions**

BALLOT RESULTS

2017 SERVICE GROUP CONFERENCE	NAMES
Community	David Mills and Jean Sowley (sub Philip O'Shea)
Energy	Irene Humphreys (one general vacancy)
Health Care	Jeanette Foster and Nigel Pierce
Higher Education	Eric Atkinson and Anne Chukwurah
Local Government	Angela Hamilton and Kathleen Kennedy
Police and Justice	Audrey Dunnall and Chris Long
Water, Environment and Transport	Chris Haywood (1 vacancy for a woman)

2017 Standing Orders Committee:

Kathleen Kennedy
Paul Shields
Philip O'Shea
Jessamy Wyke-Robinson

Labour Link Forum/Labour Party Conference: Lisa Dempster and Neelo
Farr

National Delegate Conference: Angela Hamilton and Kathleen Kennedy

National Delegate Conference Newssheet: Jean Sowley

National Delegate Conference motions:

Motion 19 Invisible Disabilities
Motion 25 Mental Health Champions

Trade Union Congress 2017: Angela Hamilton

Caucus Elections:

Black Members

Sharon Dixon (NDMC) Manjula Kumari and Paulette White (SOC)

Deaf (BSL)

Iain Scott Burdon (NDMC)

LGBT

Carl Phillips and Sam Sharp (NDMC), Alex De Winter and Pauline Cole
(SOC)

**2016 National Disabled Members' Conference
Decisions**

Record of Decisions

- M1** Revised National Disabled Members Committee (NDMC)
Constitution and Standing Orders for National Disabled
Members Conference
- M2** SUPPORTING BLACK MEMBERS WITH DYSLEXIA AND
DYSPRAXIA
- M3** SUPPORTING BLACK MEMBERS WITH SICKLE CELL,
THALASSEMIA AND LUPUS
- M4** TRADE UNION ACT AND DISABLED WOMEN ACTIVISTS
- M5** ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL
- M6** PROMOTE SELF ORGANISED GROUPS (SOGs) AND THE
YOUNG MEMBERS AND RETIRED MEMBERS ORGANISATIONS
- M7** COMBATING BULLYING AND HARASSMENT IN THE
WORKPLACE
- M8** PHASED RETURN TO WORK
- M9** REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND SICKNESS ABSENCE
POLICIES
- M10** YOUNG WORKERS AND MENTAL HEALTH
- M11** REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS
- M12** REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS V INCAPABILITY
PROCEDURES
- M13** I'LL ONLY BE A MINUTE.....
- COMPOSITE A** DRIVER ONLY OPERATED TRAINS
- M16** ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT
- M17** END CUTS TO DISABILITY COLLEGES AND DISABLED
STUDENTS FUNDING
- M18** FORCED ACADEMISATION AND DISABLED PEOPLE
- M19** INVISIBLE DISABILITIES
- M20** ACCESS TO HOUSING FOR YOUNG DISABLED LGBT PEOPLE

- M21** HOMEWORKING
- M22** ACCESS TO WORK
- M23** EQUALITY ACT AND DISABLED PEOPLE
- M24** TAKING OUR RIGHTS FORWARD
- M25** MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPIONS
- M26** MITOCHONDRIAL REPLACEMENT - FRIEND OR FOE?
- M27** IMPACT OF MENOPAUSE ON DISABLED WOMEN
- M28** END THE EXTRA FINANCIAL BURDEN PLACED ON THE
VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSON
- M29** WITNESSES TO THE HOLOCAUST

**2016 National Disabled Members' Conference
Decisions**

Motions

- 1. Revised National Disabled Members Committee (NDMC) Constitution and Standing Orders for National Disabled Members Conference**

Lost

- 2. SUPPORTING BLACK MEMBERS WITH DYSLEXIA AND DYSPRAXIA**

Carried

Conference notes that Dyslexia/Dyspraxia are the most common causes of reading, spelling and writing difficulties. 1 in 10 people are estimated to experience these problems. Research shows that Black people are disproportionately affected. Dyslexia goes beyond reading/writing difficulties.

The issues faced by Black Members are often misdiagnosed as performance related. Managers are quick to initiate disciplinary & capability procedures.

Conference is aware that institutional racism as well as unconscious bias can result in the failure for organisations to offer appropriate support. Our Black Disabled members then find it difficult to implement coping strategies in order to carry out their daily tasks.

We call on the National Disabled Members Committee to:

1. work with the National Black Members Committee and other Self Organised Group committees to create a briefing paper about dyslexia/dyspraxia to be distributed to Branches, which includes the particular impacts likely to be experienced by Black members.
2. promote the existing Learning and Organising Service (LAOS) training on dyslexia

- 3. SUPPORTING BLACK MEMBERS WITH SICKLE CELL, THALASSEMIA AND LUPUS**

Carried

Conference notes that Sickle Cell, Thalassaemia and Lupus disproportionately affect Black people, who may have increased bouts sickness, hospitalisation, infection and associated illness. These absences often trigger disciplinary & capability procedures.

We call on the National Disabled Members Committee to:

1. review existing literature and add references to Sickle Cell, Thalassaemia and Lupus where not already existing,
2. work with the National Black Members Committee and other parts of the union to create a briefing paper about Sickle Cell, Thalassaemia and Lupus to be distributed to Branches, which includes the particular impacts likely to be experienced by Black Members.

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

4. TRADE UNION ACT AND DISABLED WOMEN ACTIVISTS

Carried

Conference welcomes the successful campaigning by UNISON which has led to the Trade Union Act not being as draconian as was originally intended, however, its implementation will still have a massive impact on UNISON's ability to organise in the work place, facilities time and our equalities work.

Being activists in our union without dedicated facility time impacts negatively on our disabled women, who are already under increased pressure in the workplace. The lack of facility time shows the lack of value placed on the work disabled women activists do and creates further barriers to them partaking in campaigning and awareness raising to improve disabled women's wellbeing. This work provides value for the wider workplace reducing sickness absences.

Conference, we call upon the National Disabled Members committee to:

1. campaign for dedicated facility time and provide good practice guides for branches.
2. conduct a survey to establish if disabled women activists are getting facility time so we can have a greater understanding and provide support to branches
3. promote activism within Disabled and women members networks and profile women disabled activists in UNISON communications

5. ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

Carried

Conference recognises that many disabled women are not aware if a disability leave policy exists in their workplace or how to make use of it if one should exist.

Currently sick leave due to disability being inappropriately classified as sickness absence can lead to disabled women facing disciplinary or capability action. Although disabled women may be entitled to disability leave, it can still trigger the employer to use the sickness absence policy against them or discriminate against them.

'Presenteeism' is a management issue that needs to be resolved. We have seen a shift in our workplace cultures due to harsh absence policies. An already vulnerable group, disabled women lack support and understanding and are often now working when they are not fit to do so through fear of disciplinary action and ultimately the threat of dismissal.

Conference, this is frightening that such draconian cultures are finding the way into the workplace. This needs to be addressed.

Conference also recognises that occupational health services vary, with some being supportive to disabled women whilst others favour the employer.

Conference calls upon the National Disabled Members Committee to:

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

1. work with service groups and sector committees to promote consistency across employers plus encourage the adoption of disability leave policies
2. investigate the benefits of employers adopting a more person-centred approach to sickness absence
3. work with regional Disabled Members Self Organised Groups or branch Disabled Members Self Organised Groups to share examples of policies which are person-centred.

6. PROMOTE SELF ORGANISED GROUPS (SOGs) AND THE YOUNG MEMBERS AND RETIRED MEMBERS ORGANISATIONS

**Carried as Amended: 6.1, 6.3
Withdrawn: 6.2**

Self Organised Groups (SOGs) and the young members and retired members organisations are the equality life blood of UNISON. A key part to achieving equality is the organisation of groups of members who face prejudice and discrimination.

Disabled members issues are trade union issues. We welcome UNISON's continued commitment to equality and to tackling discrimination, enshrined in the union's rules.

Disabled members find it hard enough to hold their own within the workplace, standing up for their rights against employers. From experience, disabled people are significantly more likely to experience unfair treatment at work than non-disabled people, e.g. in 2012 19% of disabled people experienced unfair treatment at work compared to 13% of non-disabled people.

All SOGs appreciate the support they receive from their branches and committees. SOGs, young members and retired members organisations can play a vital role in the life of our branches and committees by supporting and ensuring the voice of the minorities is heard. The ethos of these groups is self organisation but we are not too proud to ask for help.

This motion calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to:

1. ensure that members are aware of the SOGs and young members and retired members groups, where these exist, and to consider what they can do to support and encourage the creation of such groups, and the further development of those which do exist within their branches and regions
2. encourage groups to work and campaign together on overlapping issues, e.g. health and safety issues, or discrimination issues
3. promote regional events and national conferences to members of SOGs, young members and retired members organisations as appropriate
4. Liaise and work with the NEC and other appropriate committees to promote and strengthen SOGs within all structures of UNISON

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

7. COMBATING BULLYING AND HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

Carried as Amended: 7.2

Lost: 7.1

This Conference notes with great concern the high number of disabled workers experiencing bullying and harassment at work, with research by CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development) highlighting that 37% of disabled workers have experienced bullying and harassment, compared to 18% of non-disabled workers. Further research from Cardiff University highlighted that the type of disability an individual has can significantly affect their likelihood of experiencing this treatment at work, for example 21% of those with learning disabilities experienced violence at work compared to 10% of disabled workers overall and 5% of those without a disability.

UNISON's Scottish Young Members Committee recently undertook a survey, as part of their anti bullying project - "Gonnae No Dae That" – about bullying and harassment amongst young workers, which included responses from disabled people. One of the major findings was that 50% of respondents with a disability had impacts on their health and wellbeing due to bullying and harassment, compared to 39% of those without a disability. The health impacts for all groups were exceptionally wide ranging from members suffering from anxiety and depression to attempts at suicide.

'Conference notes that the "Gonnae No Dae That" campaign was recognised at National Delegate Conference this year and all branches were called on to work with their regional young members forums to run a workplace event in Young Workers Month (November 2016) around the issue of bullying and harassment. The aim being to make young workers – members and non-members – aware of the issues and how they can be tackled through collective organisation and the union's support, and also as a means of recruiting new members.'

We call on the National Disabled Members Committee to :-

1. produce information, in accessible formats, for disabled members on bullying and harassment within the workplace, on what they can do and what support is available to them.
2. develop a campaign to highlight mental health impacts of bullying and harassment on disabled workers and how they are more vulnerable to its effects, for use by branches.
3. Encourage branch disabled members groups and members to get involved with any activity taking place at branch level around this issue during Young Workers Month this November.

8. PHASED RETURN TO WORK

Carried

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

A phased return to work may be the best way of helping a person to re-adjust to full attendance at the workplace. This is particularly the case after a prolonged period of absence or the absence is disability related, when returning to full time work immediately could have a detrimental impact on the person's health or performance. GPs and Occupational Health professionals recognise that this can be beneficial to both the worker and employee and often include it as a recommendation in the Fit Note or Occupational Health report.

A phased return to work offers workers the opportunity to return to work at an earlier stage of recovery from illness by allowing them to do reduced hours with modified duties based on a structured return to work plan.

Conference, for a disabled worker the benefit of the phased return to work can be to allow them to return to work much sooner with reduced pressure and a greater level of support. This has been shown to improve overall wellbeing.

How a return to work program is developed will depend on the reason for the person's absence, as recuperation rates vary greatly. Those who return to work too soon after illness may not be able to work to their full capacity even though they may appear sufficiently medically fit to return to their jobs. It would be easy for managers to misconstrue issues such as difficulty concentrating, remembering things or making decisions as poor performance, so it's important for employers to find out about a person's condition and their expected rehabilitation rates.

Conference, we are growingly concerned how employers are implementing return to work processes, particularly in relation to pay, and the impact this has on workers and in particular disabled workers. A number of employers have policies which mean when the working hours are reduced to accommodate a phased return, the employee is only paid for the hours worked but can make up their pay with accrued annual leave.

Conference, we believe that members should not suffer financial hardship as a result of a phased return and that whilst a large number of employers which UNISON have recognition with will have a sickness absence policies, it is important branches consider what their policy states in relation to pay during a return to work period and where possible negotiate that full pay is received during the phased return to work for all employees.

Conference calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to;

1. Work with service groups and bargaining support group to ensure that any guidance on sickness absence policies includes advice on return to work and the interface with disability leave policies
2. Raise awareness of pay within the return to work period and to urge branches to review their local policies and where possible, seek to negotiate to include full pay for all employees on a phased return, regardless of hours worked
3. Raise awareness of the benefits that phased returns to work have for both workers and employers and the need for employers to get appropriate medical advice before agreeing individual return to work plans.

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

4. Urge branches to remind employers that those who are struggling in work with a health condition, or have been off work for four weeks or more due to sickness, may need slightly longer than the first agreed time scale allotted for phased return, depending on the person.

9. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICIES

Carried as Amended: 9.1

Conference is concerned that the failure of some employers to make reasonable adjustments to sickness absence procedures is preventing an increasing number of Disabled Members from being able to access essential medical treatment.

The usual process of informal and formal sickness hearings often culminating in a formal warning that includes the threat of dismissal is causing Disabled Members to postpone and cancel operations needed to alleviate the impacts of their disability.

Conference all employers have a duty of care to their employees including for their health and wellbeing but some do not understand that this includes making changes to their policies for disabled employees.

We recognise that a disabled person can be dismissed due to sickness absence but if the sickness is disability related this should only be done after all reasonable adjustments have been considered. If a disabled employee's sickness absence is related to their disability disregarding some or all of this is widely recognised as a reasonable adjustment.

But for some employers this does not seem to be the case once a formal sickness warning has been issued to a disabled worker. Some employers have even refused to make changes to a warning when they know the disabled worker has a planned medical procedure scheduled that will reduce sickness absence in the future.

This is not about sick leave. It is not about disability leave. It is not about special treatment. It is about reasonable adjustment. Even if a formal warning has been issued reasonable adjustments should be considered. A disabled worker should be allowed the time off work for the planned medical procedure and any recuperation without the threat of dismissal or the worry of additional sickness management hearings.

Conference believes that these sorts of absences should be dealt within a Disability Leave Policy. However, we note that a lot of employers don't have disability leave policies and in those cases they must work within the sickness absence procedures

By refusing to make reasonable adjustments employers are not only risking the health of their disabled employee but risking claims of disability discrimination and reputational damage.

Conference calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to:

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

1. Work with Branches and Regions to identify cases where sickness absence procedures have led to Disabled Members cancelling, delaying or refusing medical treatment;
2. Identify examples of good practice where employers have made changes to their sickness absence policies in relation to planned medical procedures; and
3. Develop guidance for Branches and Regions to use to negotiate reasonable adjustments to sickness absence policies including amendments to formal sickness warnings.
4. Continue to promote the UNISON model disability leave policy to branches and encourage them to negotiate the introduction of a disability leave policy in their employers

10. YOUNG WORKERS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Carried

This Conference believes it is clear that young members are amongst those groups where stress and mental health issues are of growing prevalence and concern.

This Conference welcomes the work undertaken by our young members organisation to raise this issue through their work in Young Workers Month (November 2015). Workplace meetings and events were organised to help raise awareness, notably through the use of the TUC's toolkit "Mental health at work: a young workers guide" – a toolkit which was produced with the active support and contribution of our young members.

This Conference believes that one way of supporting young members with mental health issues in particular, and other members more widely, would be to encourage branches to have volunteer "mental health first aiders".

This Conference calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to:

- (i) provide regional disabled members groups with access to a copy of the TUC toolkit;
- (ii) encourage them to make use of the toolkit in raising awareness of the issues for young workers and to hold at least one activity around the issue in Young Workers Month (November) this year.
- (iii) call for these activities to show the importance of UNISON to support individual cases, and how the union can secure agreements to address poor or non-existent employer policies and practices, while recognising the need to build membership and organisation to give the union the strength it needs to undertake this work;
- (iv) investigate the Mental Health First Aid concept and bring to disabled members conference 2017 a presentation on how such a scheme might be introduced in the workplaces where UNISON organises.

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

11. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Carried as Amended: 11.1

At Conference it is noted with concern that some members are still having problems getting reasonable adjustments implemented in their workplace. For the fortunate ones that do manage to get them they are not followed through or monitored and kept up to date as their needs change. Some employers are also still too quick to take our members down the capability route rather than implement reasonable adjustments even when they are just simple ones to put in place, such as a change in monitors or a change of shift or days.

The majority of employers have no concurrent or specific training that they impart to relevant line managers, supervisors or team leaders. Or they simply choose to take no notice of what their, usually more understanding Union Equality or Unison Officers are asking them to implement.

Most employers think that a quick read of a policy is all that is needed, which although gives a basic knowledge in some issues it is not a whole spectrum of what they may encounter from various disabilities or understand and recognise non-apparent disabilities. Pressure needs to be applied on employers to adopt and apply specific disability policies for their employees and strive to keep them in employment, through making reasonable adjustments.

This needs to be addressed urgently.

Conference; we call upon the National Disabled Members Committee to liaise with the service groups and sector committees and campaign to:

- 1.promote appropriate training on reasonable adjustments for relevant staff in employers.
2. produce guidance which includes the positive benefits of reasonable adjustments to inform employers of the legal requirements of reasonable adjustments to get the best out of their staff.
3. ask that all policies that relate to members of staff be reviewed and updated to include good practice for reasonable adjustments and also for regular updates.
- 4.develop with employers good and effective use of these policies.

12. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS V INCAPABILITY PROCEDURES

**Carried
Lost: 12.1**

Conference notes that many employers have introduced Capability Procedures which are designed to make it easier to terminate contracts on the grounds of either ill-health or performance. We believe these procedures are disproportionately targeted against disabled workers.

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

Conference notes, with concern, that reasonable adjustments are never exhausted and in some cases are not considered at all.

Conference is concerned that these procedures are or will be used to remove disabled workers from employment instead of making them redundant through cuts and therefore incurring the costs of redundancy. At a time of cuts in public service budgets, such misuse of these procedures without due consideration of reasonable adjustments must be guarded against and resisted.

We need to ensure that before any disabled member is dismissed on the grounds of capability that all appropriate considerations are given to the needs of the worker. These would include reasonable adjustments in the workplace; providing supports that can help a worker return to work, such as physiotherapy and counselling; additional training or re-training, to help a worker re-adjust after ill health or due to disability, or to address performance concerns.

Conference calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to work with Service Group Executives to : -

1. conducts research into the use of capability procedures to try and identify if the numbers of terminations through capability are increasing year on year;
2. produce guidance for branches on how to monitor the use of these procedures, with special regard to reasonable adjustments, and how to ensure that they are not abused;
3. produce guidance on best practice on supporting branches, and disabled workers, to remain in the workforce with or when performance issues arise.

13. I'LL ONLY BE A MINUTE.....

Carried

This Conference recognises this phrase - 'I'll only be a minute' as the most common reason abled bodied motorists give for parking in 'disabled' designated parking bays.

For those motorists, or their passengers, who have mobility issues and who rely on these spaces to be able to access work, services and shopping etc. the lack of consideration by other motorists can be an overwhelming issue when an individual has no other option than an accessible suitably sized and located bay.

Conference believes that the 'I'll only be a minute....' motorists need educational assistance to understand why their attitude is unacceptable and harmful to the access needs of those with mobility issues.

Conference calls upon the National Disabled Members Committee to seek ways in which attitudes can be changed in this country. We would ask that the Committee:-

- 1) work with the NEC and Service Groups where workers have a role in 'policing' parking such as 'Local Government' and also 'Police and Justice' to seek ways of educating the public on the issues and also investigating such initiatives:-

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

- a) the 'brown badge' schemes to see if they assist or detract from improvement
 - b) more effective 'policing' of bays
2. seek ways of raising the issue with the TUC and other organisations with similar mutual interest such as organisations working with those with mobility issues.
 3. raise the issue through the APF to draw attention to the concerns with sympathetic MPs and members of devolved governments.
 4. seek to encourage a wider discussion on the issues of the issue by education and publicity, particularly in UNISON publications, e.g. You magazine.
 5. encourage branches to challenge local authorities and businesses such as supermarkets to ensure that they support the proper provision and use of 'disabled' designated parking bays.

COMPOSITE A DRIVER ONLY OPERATED TRAINS **(Motions 14 and 15, Amendment 14.1)** **Carried**

Conference picture this, a wheelchair user gets on a train at a station and has assistance to enter the train. Platform staff get the ramps and the disabled customer is helped onto the train.

The train has only a driver and no conductor. Then when getting to the station to get off the train, due to everything now being automated, ticket machine and no staff, who is there to help the wheelchair user off the train?

The answer no one.

So the choice is to have a couple of steps down off the train to launch yourself and your wheelchair down to get off the train by yourself,

Or

Don't travel. This may mean that employment is not possible as you can't travel to and from a place of work.

Public transport is really important to everyone and accessibility is vital. This scenario also applies to tube travel as well as trains. A possible solution may be to have a conductor on every train or tube to ensure safety and access to the carriage is possible.

It may also mean that a staffed ticket office is needed so that those with a visual impairment and those with other disabilities who are not able to manage to use a ticket machine will not be excluded from public travel.

Conference we need to make our voice heard and work to curb the cuts to accessibility on trains, tubes and other forms of public transport.

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

Many stations are STILL disabled unfriendly, having no lifts or staff to assist you – you have few choices, be stranded on a platform you cannot get off. Stay on the train and be fined excess fares for travelling beyond your station. Yet still have to find your way back to where you needed to get to in the first place.

In addition, the duties of train guards and station staff include ensuring that passengers are kept safe. When stations are left unstaffed, disabled women are placed in a more vulnerable situation as attacks on women and disability hate crime are increasing.

Conference calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to work with the TUC disabled workers committee, STUC Women's Committee, STUC Disabled Workers Committee and National Women's Committee and other relevant bodies to raise these issues and campaign to secure accessible and safe train and tube transport.

16. ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

**Carried as Amended: 16.2,
Withdrawn: 16.1**

That this Conference notes with great concern the cuts that have been made across the different regions in the UK to socially necessary bus services by local authorities and the impact that this has on disabled people and their ability to access vital public services. We also note the move towards more unstaffed stations, thus depriving disabled people of help, advice and assistance to safely and confidently use public transport.

Whilst conference notes the steps taken by operators to meet their obligations under the Equalities Act, as recent high profile cases such as the issue of wheelchair access on buses, taxi operators and bus drivers refusing to allow people to travel with their assistance dogs on their vehicles and automated ticket machines at unstaffed stations which do not offer the full range of ticketing options show, there is much that still needs to be done to ensure that public transport is fully accessible to all.

Whilst conference recognises that transport is a devolved matter for each of the different governments of the regions to tackle, the issues faced by disabled people are similar across the UK.

We therefore call on the National Disabled Members Committee to:-

1. develop a national campaign which can be used by all regions highlighting the issues faced by disabled people in accessing public transport.
2. liaise with the NEC and other relevant bodies, including the Office of Road & Rail Regulators, to ensure the impact that cuts in staffing and such things as ticketless travel have on disabled people is raised and taken account of.

**2016 National Disabled Members' Conference
Decisions**

**17. END CUTS TO DISABILITY COLLEGES AND DISABLED STUDENTS
FUNDING**

Carried as Amended: 17.1

Conference agrees that access to further and higher education benefits not only the student, but society as whole.

We especially note that for disabled people whether at sixth form level or already in work, further and higher education for a disabled person helps to level the playing field and expands disabled access to levels it has not yet attained.

It is therefore essential that UNISON disabled members participate in a campaign to halt and then reverse actual or proposed cuts that make it more difficult for disabled people to access education including cuts to Disability support in mainstream colleges, Disability Employment Support Colleges and the funding of Disabled Students in Further and Higher Education.

Conservative Government plans to cut this funding will make it more difficult for disabled students to access the specialised support they need to gain the NVQ level 1, 2 and 3 qualifications currently provided by Disability Employment Support Colleges

Conference recognises and appreciated the previous Government support for disabled students in both mainstream and specialised education.

Conference welcomes UNISON's long term policy of integrating disabled people into mainstream education but recognise that this cannot be achieved overnight. Disability Employment Support Colleges should only be closed if, and when, there is high quality, fully funded, properly supported alternatives are available.

Now the government wants to cut the Amount Disabled Students Allowance and Students Grant for Disabled Students in Further Education and Higher Education. This will affect Students on the Coursework, Books and Accommodation and Living Allowances.

Conference instructs the National Disabled Members Committee to call on the present Government to put more resources into colleges that cater for disabled people as well as fully funding training and achieved full employment for disabled people. Work with other appropriate UNISON committees, including Labour Link, to lobby the Government to put more resources into colleges that provide for disabled people, as well as fully funding training to achieve increased employment for disabled people.

We further call on the NDMC to raise awareness of this issue and to gain the support of regions and branches to fight these detrimental cuts and support disabled people, and report back to the NDMC 2017 on the progress made.

We also call on the NDMC to work with the NEC and Higher Education Service Group to campaign for the Government to hold a full, disabled people led, review the provision of and support for support disabled people in higher and further education.

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

18. FORCED ACADEMISATION AND DISABLED PEOPLE

Carried as Amended: 18.1

Conference is concerned that although the government has officially “revised its intentions” to force all schools to become academies this is still their intention.

The government says “all schools will be made to convert where the local authority can no longer viably support them where a critical mass of academy schools exists.” Underperforming schools and schools in underperforming local authority area will also be forced to become convert yet there is no definition of underperforming. A school whose results are not better than in the previous year could potentially be defined as underperforming even if the results are outstanding.

Analysis of government policy by think tank CentreForum found that “Given the combination of voluntary conversion, academisation under the Education and Adoption Act and direction at local authority it is possible that full academisation could be achieved without forcing schools one at a time”

And Education Secretary Nicky Morgan’s statement after the official change in policy that “having listened to the feedback we will change the path to reaching the goal of all schools becoming academies” confirms the government’s true intentions.

Conference we are concerned about the impact this will have on Disabled Members who work in schools as well as disabled children who may receive less support.

Local authorities will be responsible for “identifying, assessing and making provision for children with special educational needs and disability” but will not be able to enforce the level of support, commission the support or control admissions criteria. Disabled children will be left with little choice of school and insufficient support to meet their needs.

Conference, we are already seeing the impact on Disabled Members employed in academies. Disabled Teaching Assistants are being made redundant because the child they have been allocated to support moves schools even though they could support other children in the school. Deaf Teaching Assistants have been told they can’t have a BSL interpreter in the classroom because other children “don’t need to be taught BSL.”

Conference calls on NDMC to work with the Local Government Service Group to:

1. ensure that disability issues are at the centre of the campaign against forced academisation
2. raise awareness of the issues disabled employees and disabled children are facing in schools that have already been academised
3. provide guidance to Branches and Regions on working with disabled people’s groups to fight forced academisation

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

4. work with Branches to ensure that employment and redundancy selection processes implemented by academies do not discriminate against disabled staff
5. whilst recruiting and organising in academies ensure the benefits of joining UNISON that are specifically supportive to people with disabilities, are highlighted.

19. INVISIBLE DISABILITIES

Carried as Amended: 19.1

This Conference believes that young disabled people in particular are being subjected to ignorance and discrimination because of disabilities that are not immediately apparent. The impact of such disabilities can lead to people being wrongly labelled as “lazy”, or worse, and feeding the stereotype of those with invisible/non-apparent disabilities.

This Conference also believes that young people (disabled or not) are more likely to have less resources than their older counterparts in terms of knowledge, experience and strategies in challenging attitudes to invisible disabilities.

This Conference further believes that UNISON has a role to play in challenging this situation in the workplace, as collective action and support is better than going it alone.

This Conference calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to:

1. seek to work with UNISON’s Bargaining Unit to come up with an information and negotiating fact sheet about invisible/non-apparent disabilities for branches to raise the issue with their employers;
2. produce a leaflet around the subject to raise awareness with members of this issue.

20. ACCESS TO HOUSING FOR YOUNG DISABLED LGBT PEOPLE

Carried as Amended: 20.1

This conference believes that many Disabled LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender) people are unaware of their rights with regards to accessing suitable housing.

This conference notes that the current governments attack on Housing Benefit for young people disproportionately affects young disabled LGBT people, forcing them into unsuitable accommodation.

The Albert Kennedy Trust reported in 2015 that 84% of LGBT organisations stated experience of young LGBT service users disclosing that risk of homelessness or living in a hostile environment as major concern.

Not being able to disclose their sexuality or gender identity can impact on the mental health of a group already affected by disproportionate levels of suicide.

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

Conference calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to:

1. promote information to raise awareness on the issues faced by Disabled LGBT people with regard to housing and homelessness
2. publicise guidance on housing rights for Disabled LGBT people
3. signpost members to agencies working in this field.
4. work with regional disabled committees and the national LGBT committee to identify examples of good practice and areas where there are service gaps to assist in evidence gathering for campaigning opportunities
5. campaign to repeal the Right to Buy legislation in England and Wales as has already been achieved in Scotland.
6. report back to 2017 conference

21. HOMEWORKING

Carried as Amended: 21.1, 21.2

Conference notes the increased drive, in both the public and private sectors, to close workplaces and centralise operations. Frequently this leads to increasingly length, both in time and distance, and difficult commutes to work. This impacts disproportionately negatively on disabled workers.

At the same time, continuing and rapid advances in information and communications technology have created a revolution in the ability of employees to work from home or at other remote locations.

The ability to work from home or at any location more convenient than a distant workplace is of great benefit to many disabled workers. Many more disabled people would gain and maintain employment if they were able to work from home, subject to, their agreement and a proper Health and Safety protection, including a risk assessment of their home working environment where appropriate and reasonable adjustments being made available and provided by the employer.

Conference believes that it is essential that the union, and in particular disabled members representatives, make sure that home working is not used by employers to avoid having to make reasonable adjustments

Conference calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to campaign to increase access to, and availability of where appropriate, home and remote working which will have a particular benefit for disabled workers. Provide guidance to branches on home or remote working, which provides information on the protection for workers who do not wish to work from home/remotely.

22. ACCESS TO WORK

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

Carried

The Access to Work (AtW) programme is designed to provide disabled people with practical support to stay in employment. However, there have been significant problems with the scheme's operation.

Conference notes that the Work and Pensions Select Committee has concluded that the scheme helps "only a minority of the people it could benefit" and that the Department of Work and Pensions' (DWP) "attempts to increase the number of people helped by the programme, within an only marginally increased budget, risk bearing down on the awards of people who happen to have relatively high cost needs".

With the increasing use of "Zero Hours" contracts in the private sector workers have experienced specific problems, including lack of understanding of their employment status, inconsistency and delays in decision-making and requiring workers to claim back expenses after they have completed a job.

Conference welcomes the recommendations of the DWP Select Committee and calls upon the National Disabled Members Committee to campaign for better guidance to be issued that can take greater account of the realities of working on a Zero or variable hours contract.

Conference also calls upon the National Disabled Members Committee to carry on campaigning for improved funding for AtW and other measures which seek to bring about a level playing field for disabled workers.

23. EQUALITY ACT AND DISABLED PEOPLE

Carried

Conference following a suggestion by Baroness Thomas of Winchester, herself disabled, the House of Lords appointed a post-legislative scrutiny committee to look at the impact of the Equality Act 2010 on disabled people. The Committee's remit was to consider:

- Why change was needed;
- If the Act has been successful;
- If the Government helps or hinders the Act;
- Could things done by the Act be done better without it; and
- Issues raised by witnesses

On 24 March 2016 the Committee published their report and although the results were not surprising they were shocking. Amongst other things the Committee found that:

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

- There is a lack of understanding of reasonable adjustments
- Public transport is still not inaccessible
- The Public Sector Equality Duty is ineffective
- Communication and consultation needs to be improved
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission is under-resourced
- Disabled people are an afterthought for Government and public authorities
- Disabled people's rights are unenforceable
- The Equality Act is not a good Act for disabled people

The report concluded that disabled people were better off with their own Disability Discrimination Act and Disability Rights Commission.

Conference the Committee said it is too late to turn back the clock. The government are supposed to respond to the report within two months but at the time of writing, in July, no response has been received. This is unacceptable and confirms the Committee's findings that disabled people are an afterthought.

UNISON has a proud history of leading the campaign for disabled people's rights. The recent decision to leave the European Union means it is vital that we build on this good work not to turn back the clock but to make disabled people's rights move forward. Conference calls on the NDMC to work with the NEC to:

1. Campaign for additional legislation to be introduced to protect and improve disabled people's rights
2. Lobby for the Equality and Human Rights Commission to be given dedicated resources to support disabled people to enforce their rights
3. Call for a strengthening of the Public Sector Equality Duty to at least the same level as the previous Disability Equality Duty
4. Write to the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition requesting that the Minister for Disabled People is moved from the DWP to either the Cabinet Office or the Department for Communities and Local Government

24. TAKING OUR RIGHTS FORWARD

Carried as Amended: 24.1

Conference, many of you will have woken up in dismay at the outcome of the European Referendum. While the outcome of the vote was clear what happens next is not. There is no timetable or exit strategy in place for the UK to leave the EU.

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

Disabled Members are concerned that we will not only lose workers' rights that are underpinned by EU legislation but that the anti-discrimination legislation we rely on will be repealed.

The Human Rights Act is not EU law but the proposal to replace it with a UK Bill of Rights will be much easier to implement once we leave the EU. We are signatories to the European Convention of Human Rights, but relying on this to enforce our rights is expensive, time consuming and beyond the reach of many disabled people.

At its best the campaign enabled genuine debate and discussion in our homes, workplaces and communities about the future of the economy and the kind of country we want to live in. At its worst, the campaign was typified by hatred, vitriol and misinformation that have done a huge disservice to our democracy and the values we hold so dear.

It will be some time before we fully understand what impact the vote to leave will have on disabled people but the increase in discrimination and prejudice in the days after the referendum shows us that we cannot be complacent. We can't simply wait and see what the outcome will be.

Conference, we welcome UNISON's quick response to the referendum. We applaud the commitment to holding the leave campaigners to the promises they made – that there will be more money for the NHS, and that our rights at work will remain intact. But we know we will need to work hard to make this happen.

Disabled Members are living in uncertain times and all political leaders must think about how to address the issues that we face. Issues such as falling incomes, insecure jobs, unaffordable housing, an under-resourced NHS, increasing discrimination and other huge challenges facing disabled people after more than half a decade of cuts.

All of the evidence shows that the women have borne the brunt of the effects of austerity cuts since the election of the coalition government in 2010. Disabled women have therefore been doubly affected as women and as disabled people.

Conference, members are appalled to find that since the EU referendum there has been an increase in hate crimes, and whether these be gender-related, LGBT, Black or disability hate crime there is no place in society for this.

Conference, branches must do what they can to support disabled workers in the workplace. And, nationally, UNISON must do all it can to protect the rights that disabled people have fought so hard to secure. Conference calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to work with the NEC, Labour Link, and other Self Organised Groups to:

1. seek to ensure trade unions and disabled people are included in exit negotiations
2. campaign for disabled people's rights to be protected in the exit strategy
3. consider calling for a referendum on any final deal to be held prior to UK leaving the EU

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

4. issue advice and guidance to branches on hate crime and how to support disabled members who are victims both in and outside the workplace.

25. MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPIONS

Carried

This Conference recognises that good mental health support for members in UNISON is of vital importance and congratulates Cymru/Wales Region on their initiatives and development of Mental Health Champions.

UNISON Cymru/Wales has been active on mental health for some time. Last year, with the help of Mind Cymru and Time to Change Wales, Cymru/Wales Disabled Self Organised Group (SOG) launched their mental health awareness and have developed a mental health champions training programme for members and the first champions graduated in April. Participants completed a two day training course designed by the SOG and it was run with the assistance of a mental health practitioner. The training gave members the confidence and skills needed to undertake this new role as they help colleagues with mental health problems by directing them to the best available help and support. The feedback has been fantastic and our champions are very enthusiastic to put their new skills into practice.

Mental health problems are much more widespread than people think. One in four people will experience them at some stage in their life, so it is extremely likely that a family member or close colleague at work has been affected. Yet unfortunately, mental health is still surrounded by prejudice, ignorance and fear. The stigma can lead to isolation and exclusion, making it more difficult to recover. This is no way to deal with something that is so common and the truth is that mental well-being is not taken as seriously as physical well-being.

Mental health related problems are frequently caused by difficult situations in the workplace. We know that UK Conservative Government austerity cuts directly lead to very high levels of anxiety for those who lose their jobs and for those remaining, the pressures of being forced to do a lot more work with fewer resources.

This Conference calls upon the National Disabled Members Committee:-

1. encourage other regions within UNISON to consider taking forward this initiative and developing similar schemes in their regions.
2. seek to encourage an interest in good mental health by education and publicity, particularly in UNISON publications, e.g. 'You' and 'Focus' magazines.
3. request supportive information to be made available on UNISON's website.
4. raise the issue through the APF to draw attention to MPs and members of devolved governments the need to fund good mental health services.

26. MITOCHONDRIAL REPLACEMENT - FRIEND OR FOE?

Lost

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

27. IMPACT OF MENOPAUSE ON DISABLED WOMEN

Carried

Conference the menopause affects women in many different ways; and just like periods, it is something rarely discussed. We know that the menopause effects different ages and last for different periods of time. The symptoms can be very different from one woman to the next. There are at least 34 recognised different symptoms for example:

- Panic attacks, anxiety and depression
- Insomnia, fatigue and sleep disorders
- Reduced levels of concentration and memory
- Joint aches and pains needing physiotherapy
- Osteoporosis

Medications that are commonly prescribed for the menopause can conflict with other medication or may have an adverse impact on other medical conditions leaving meaning disabled women will have to deal with severe difficulties that non-disabled women will not have to face. In some cases the individual will need to choose between taking the medical treatment they need for their disability or the medication to alleviate the distressing and debilitating symptoms of the menopause.

With the increased retirement age and women working longer more and more disabled women are going through the menopause while still at work. It is therefore essential that employers recognise the menopause as a medical condition like any other and consider the additional impact it may have on disabled women.

The lack of understanding and support for disabled women going through the menopause makes them more at risk of disciplinary proceedings for capability and increasingly likely to be subjected to sickness absence procedures.

Conference calls on the National Disabled Members committee to work with the National Women's Committee to:

1. gather evidence, and if appropriate consider carrying out research, on the impact of the menopause on disabled women
2. issue up to date information and guidance to Branches so they can provide better support to disabled women members going through menopause.
3. consider issuing guidance on if, and when, the menopause could be classed as a disability as defined by the Equality Act c
4. campaign to break down barriers to enable and empower disabled women going through the menopause to be taken seriously

**2016 National Disabled Members' Conference
Decisions**

**28. END THE EXTRA FINANCIAL BURDEN PLACED ON THE VISUALLY
IMPAIRED PERSON**

Carried

This conference instructs the NDMC and calls upon the NEC (National Executive Council) to use any means at the disposal to ensure that the unfavourable situation that exists against blind and partially sighted people who use a tablet or similar device to access "text to speech" is ended.

The market has spotted a gap in service and publishers of popular authors are blocking this facility unless customers are willing to pay an extra £4 per book for the use of this service.

It is impossible for people with sight loss to enjoy a book without "text to speech" facility unless they are fortunate to have; a person to read to them, they are trained in the use of braille, or have access to talking books, all of which depend on the service of others.

Conference therefore seeks representation to be made to the disabilities minister and all other relevant bodies to ensure that this situation, which adds an extra financial burden on the visually impaired is ended.

29. WITNESSES TO THE HOLOCAUST

Carried as Amended: 29.1

Conference will recall the horrific events of the Holocaust and the millions of lives that perished as the Nazis pursued mass genocide. This included people with disability that were put to death because of their disability. Their story should never be forgotten. The Holocaust began as early as July 1933, when the Nazis passed a law that allowed forced sterilisation of 350,000 men and women, who were deemed likely to produce 'inferior' children.

Conference further notes that between 1939 and 1941 a programme of euthanasia (so called 'mercy killing'), ordered by the state, led to the murder, by doctors and medical staff, of at least 70,000 people. This policy continued in one way or another through to 1945. The experience gained by the Nazis, as a result of the euthanasia programme, was also put to use from 1941 onwards when the Nazis sought to murder the Jews of Europe.

Conference acknowledges that the Tory Government have officially recognised Holocaust Memorial Day however have stopped short of including Holocaust studies on the curriculum of schools. Conference will note that education is key to making sure that these atrocities don't happen again.

Conference will further note the exemplary work undertaken by Sefton Branch in Holocaust education with annual study trips to Auschwitz and commemorative services while there.

2016 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

Conference calls upon the National Disabled Members Committee working with the NEC and Regional Disabled Members Groups to

1. Raise awareness of the fact that disabled people were targeted during the Holocaust
2. Consider how Holocaust Memorial day can be commemorated in our union and include commemoration of the lives of people with disabilities who perished.
3. Encourage support of the Sefton Branch Holocaust study trip and other regions doing their own study trip.
4. Support the work of Hope Not Hate in combating the Far Right.
5. Campaign for the inclusion of Holocaust Studies on the national curriculum.