

**2018 National Women's Conference
UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

**UNISON
WOMEN'S CONFERENCE 2018**

FINAL AGENDA

1-3 FEBRUARY 2018

BT CONVENTION CENTRE

LIVERPOOL

2018 National Women's Conference

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Organising and Recruitment

1. Organising amongst Low Paid Women members

More than half of UNISONs women members meet the criteria in terms of being classed as low paid however these women are not always represented throughout our union structures.

Women make up three quarters of the union's membership yet this figure does not translate when looking at senior positions - 49% of Branch Secretaries are held by men and 54 % of Chairs positions are held by men. The figure of how many positions held by women that are classed as low paid is unclear. There still are social, cultural and institutional barriers that we must overcome to ensure that low paid women feel able to fully participate in their union.

Fragmented workforces are often blamed as to why organising amongst this group of members is hard and with more women employed within care services, schools, catering and cleaning than any other occupation it is true to state that organising amongst this group is difficult however this should not stop branches or regions as seeing this as key area of work.

It is acknowledged that as a union it is enshrined within our rules that there must be proportionality in all our structures there are rightly reserved women seats and reserved low paid women seats, in our service groups, council and committees this proportionality is also required however low paid women members are not always represented. Often branches struggle to find a low paid women member to attend conferences or hold seats at regional meetings, why is this the case?

Organising amongst Low paid women members must be a priority as they represent 58% of the union's membership, the new guidance - Getting the balance right published by UNISON in 2017 is very useful toolkit for branches and regions to use.

Organising around an issue often makes it easier to engage with members and there have been successful campaigns throughout the union targeting low pay and highlighting the impact this has. Lifting those 58% of members out of low pay must be a key part of any organising model.

Conference calls upon the National Women's Committee to:

Encourage Branches to carry out a mapping exercise in relation to Low paid women members,

Produce material specifically targeted at Low paid Women that encourages them to become active within the union,

Encourage Regions and Branches to use the 'Getting the balance Right Toolkit to ensure proportionality is met.

Newcastle City

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2. Low Pay and Women in UNISON

UNISON's principles of proportionality and fair representation means that some seats on elected bodies, including the NEC, are reserved for women and low-paid members, so that the make-up fairly represents the wider union.

We have a variety of places where low paid seats exist, and low pay is included in branch delegations to national delegate conference.

The UNISON definition of "low paid" reflects the median gross weekly earnings for all jobs (full time or part time) and is revised each year.

The median gross weekly earnings figure for 2016/17 has been calculated at £438.60, a 3.2 % increase on last year.

This means the threshold for election to reserved (low pay) seats in the union is now £9.72 an hour.

£9.72 per hour x 37 hour week x 52 weeks equals a salary of up to £18,701.28.

The national living wage (set by government) is currently £7.50 per hour if you are over 25 years of age.

The living wage (set by the living wage foundation) is currently £8.45 per hour in the UK, (£9.75 in London).

Despite many years of attempting to fill all low paid seats in UNISON's democratic structures, many vacancies exist. Our membership system does not record our members hourly pay rates, and the application for membership asks no specific questions on whether the person is low paid within our definition (paid less than £9.72 per hour).

Questions remain on what more can be done to encourage our low paid members at branch; region and national level. For some of our members it may be that they don't know about low paid seats, an absence of training; isolation; awareness of rights to time off work for trade union duties; lack of support and encouragement. And they may not know that any expenses could be paid to them in advance so that they are never out of pocket.

This conference affirms its commitment to supporting and encouraging our low paid women members to take their rightful place in UNISON's democratic structures.

Conference calls upon the national women's committee to

- 1) Investigate what barriers to engagement exist for our low paid women members.
- 2) Report back to conference in 2019 on findings and recommendations for action

Eastern Region

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2.1

After 1) insert a new 2), 3) and 4)

- 2) Remind branches that low pay is an integral part of the Joint Branch Assessment process and should be included in all actions to recruit and organise women
- 3) Liaise with the relevant NEC Committee to -
 - Establish a whole union picture of UNISON's low paid women

and

- Consider how to re-profile and monitor low paid women's seats in branch structures

Current 2) then becomes 4)

South West Region

Negotiating and Bargaining

3. Mentoring and Developing Women

Unison is committed to proportionality for women but the reality is that in many branches this does not happen. By the time women have done their jobs, looked after the children and their homes, checked on their elderly parents and helped with homework, there is little time to sit and map out what they need to do to develop their careers in Unison.

Unison has a lot of training and education that is targeted specifically at women however there is no one-stop shop that takes women wishing to develop in the branch from confidence building to running the branch and developing a campaign for election to committees and national level. This is badly needed to ensure proportionality in branches and to provide wider choice in succession planning and competition for committees.

Providing a comprehensive mentoring and development plan for women will enable women to receive the appropriate education and advice to enable them to participate at all levels within branches, regions and nationally.

We ask National Women's Committee to

- 1) Work with LAOS to create women specific training and mentoring programmes as well as creating an easy access site for the programmes and training.
2. Work with regional women's networks to implement a plan of action to encourage more women members to become involved in the union at all levels.

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3. Work with other such Unison bodies as they deem necessary to provide a comprehensive and accessible mentoring and development scheme for women that will assist with proportionality and succession planning for our union.

Northumberland Tyne and Wear Health

4. Effective rights for part time and flexible workers.

Conference notes that there is now a legal right for any worker to request flexible working. However it is not clear that it has resulted in any significant improvement in access to flexible working for women, who represent the majority of people who request flexible working. This is set to increase as women have to work longer and continue to take on caring responsibilities at a later age when their own health is more likely to deteriorate.

This includes, but is not limited to reducing hours, term time only working, and ensuring rest days at regular intervals.

Conference deplores the lack of clear information being made available by employers and seeks to raise awareness and knowledge of people's right to a healthy work-life balance.

Conference calls upon:

- 1) The National Women's Committee to organise a piece of research to determine the true impact of the extended right to request flexible working on women workers
- 2) To organise campaign materials around those issues for use in workplaces
- 3) To publish any research findings.

Yorkshire - Humberside Region

5. Women and Automation

Conference notes that automation and digitisation of jobs is changing the nature, quality, and distribution of employment, not just within sectors such as manufacturing and distribution, but in the sphere of public services too.

This means that there is a mistaken view that Automation affects jobs that are predominantly done by men.

It is predicted that between 25% and 40% of current UK jobs could be lost to automation and digitisation; and that a specific study by the Reform think-tank predicts that 250,000 job losses will come from public service employers. The Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, predicts 15 million jobs (40% of the UK workforce) could be automated in a generation.

This provides a significant challenge for not only the world of work but also the ways in which trade unions organise within these workplaces.

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Technology has already made a significant impact to the jobs that women carry out. For example – the role of the secretary / personal assistant has become both deskilled / more highly skilled due to the ability of a manager to deal with their own emails. The challenge for trade unions is to ensure that technology works to enhance and enable the creation of higher skilled, better paid jobs and improve the lives and work of women.

Conference calls on the National Women's Committee to work with appropriate bodies within UNISON to seek to ensure that a women's perspective is integral to the trade union strategy on automation.

Scotland Region

6. Getting young women involved

This Conference welcomes annual UNISON's equality survey as a way of getting statistical information to support our equality bargaining agenda, and also organisational information.

This Conference notes that this year 248 young women members responded to the survey questionnaire, approximately 4% of all women members that participated. This proportion is in line with their representation in the union as a whole.

This Conference notes the statistic that 43% of young women said they would be more likely to get involved in UNISON than a year ago, more than double the figure for women overall (21%).

This Conference further notes that 36% of young women said one barrier to participation was not knowing what was involved, while just 17% of all women respondents cited that as a reason.

This Conference therefore believes it is important to make sure the work of women activists is promoted and celebrated more widely, along with a range of educational material about what kind of activity lay officers undertake.

This Conference calls on the National Women's Committee to:

- (i) seek to work with UNISON's Learning and Organising Services team to review educational material about the role of activists and consider whether these can be adapted, or develop appropriate new material, that explains and promotes the work of our women activists.
- (ii) seek to work with UNISON's Communications team to examine how best the work of women activists can be shown and promoted across the union to encourage more women, and young women in particular, to take up activist roles.

This Conference also calls on the National Women's Committee to invite a young woman activist to address conference 2019 about involving young women in UNISON's work.

National Young Members' Forum

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7. Getting the balance right on the NEC

Conference notes that in 2017 national women's conference carried a motion calling for the NWC to work with the NEC to address the issue of proportionality in our union. 1 million of UNISON's 1.3 million members are women – 77% of the total membership.

Conference further notes that UNISON's currently has 66 seats, comprised of the following:

11 general Seats

15 men's seats

27 women's seats

13 reserved (low paid women's) seats

However, the vast majority of the general seats are occupied by men – therefore the 2017/2019 NEC committee consists of 25 men and 41 women, (27 women's seats, 13 reserved seats and 1 general seat).

Overall, 62% of NEC seats are held by women, and 38% by men, in stark contrast to our membership of 77% women, 23% men.

Conference therefore believes that action must be taken to create a proper balance on the NEC, by re-designating all men's seats as general seats. Such action would not preclude men from standing for NEC positions, but would create the opportunity for more women to stand.

Further the creation of more 'general' seats, rather than reserved men's seats, would empower and encourage more women to stand for election.

Conference notes that national women's conference has the right to submit two motions or rule amendments to national delegate conference each year. Conference therefore agrees that, should this motion be carried, a rule change be submitted to national delegate conference 2018 to seek the re-designation of men's seats to general seats.

Conference further calls upon the national women's committee to:

- 1) Seek the support of the NEC in submitting a similar rule change, and/or supporting the women's conference rule change;
- 2) Lobby regions and branches to support the rule change;

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- 3) Promote the Getting The Balance Right proportionally toolkit to branches and regions and encourage its use in the Branch Assessment process.

National Women's Committee

7.1

Insert new paragraph after paragraph ending 'encourage more women to stand for election.':

Conference notes that 2017 UNISON LGBT conference welcomed the women's self-organised group discussions on seeking the re-designation of men's seats as general seats. LGBT conference endorsed the national women's committee's proposal to seek a rule change on this, in order to empower and encourage more women to stand for election. It welcomed the fact that this would also assist in removing barriers to the participation of members with a non-binary gender identity.

In action point 2), add 'and other self-organised groups' after 'regions and branches'.

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Committee

Campaigning

8. Removing Stigma of STEM subject study to increase female participation

According to statistics from Wise campaign research shows that at GCSE level engagement in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects has a broadly similar gender split. At this level female students are achieving higher or equal average A*-C grades compared to males.

In addition according to the Women's Education Society, at A Level this drops off with a higher amount of males taking up STEM subjects, for example only 20% of A Level physics students are female. Despite this, female students are outperforming males by gaining proportionally higher A*-C grades at A Level.

At undergraduate level there is an even starker difference with 86% of Engineering and Technology students and 83% of Computer Science students being male in 2014 as stated in statistics published by Wise.

The UK economy is losing female talent which could be nurtured and developed. Despite the early parity between the sexes, only 6% of registered engineers and technicians (i.e. CEng, IEng, EngTech) are women.)

As it has been demonstrated that diverse organisations outperform those with less diversity, encouraging females into fields where they have talent will help to stimulate growth in the STEM workplace and UK industry as a whole. Early intervention is a proven way to encourage participation in a subject, to retain those who show a talent.

Bursaries are also a proven way to encourage uptake of a subject. This is demonstrated by the 23% drop in applications to Nursing degrees, one of the few

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traditionally 'female' STEM subjects, following the government's withdrawal of NHS bursaries (

It is disappointing that in the current day, women are not at the fore front, or even on par with male counterparts in such important, essential roles. It is long overdue that women are supported and encouraged to participate in STEM subjects at any age.

The National Women's Conference calls upon the National Women's Committee to:

- 1) Work with branches and regions to create a campaign to remove stigma of females undertaking STEM subjects at any age.
- 2) Work with Labour Link to lobby the UK Government to address this matter in parliament.
- 3) Work with Labour Link to lobby the UK Government to provide a bursary for females wishing to undertake STEM A Levels to retain and develop talent.

University of Sunderland

9. Carers – The forgotten members

1 in 8 adults or 6.5 million people in the UK are carers according to carers UK with this figure set to rise to 9 million by 2037. Every day 6,000 people take on a caring role and 58% of the careers are women. In 2011, females were more likely to be unpaid carers than males. It has also been found that the general health of unpaid carers deteriorated incrementally with increasing levels of unpaid care provided up to the age of 65.

The Office of National Statistics analysis shows that the share of unpaid care provision fell most heavily on women aged 50 – 64. During 2011, 81,812 women in England were in full time employment while providing 50 hours or more unpaid care and in Wales the figures were 5,068 respectively. These figures are taken from the last census held by the Office of National Statistics.

Becoming a carer for family or friends can have a considerable effect on the lives of those who take on this role. While medical professionals and family members focus all their attention on the person who is ill, the carer can become the one in the shadows. Depending on the support needs of the cared for person, caring can be hard physical work, involving lifting, cleaning, personal care and disturbed sleep.

While there are some services out there to support women carers, Unison currently has no provision in place to help support our women members who are also caring for loved ones. Laws and legislation quite rightly protect the rights of citizens with disabilities and caring needs, but the laws in place do not go far enough to protect those women who are carers. Many women who both work and care for loved ones face issues regarding time off to attend hospital appointments or require emergency leave and if granted will usually be unpaid. This further impacts women on low pay as they struggle to make ends meet. Protecting the rights of carers is vital to both the carers themselves and the people they care for; they have a role to play in shaping legislation for carers and for people with disabilities as the carers are also impacted by the constraints.

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Conference calls on national women's committee to

- 1) Work with Labour Link to highlight the plight of women carers with local MPs and at national level to seek ways to improve their rights as carers.
- 2) Work with the national executive committee and the national disabled members committee to look at the possibility of setting up a carer's network both regionally and nationally or allow carers to become active in the disability network.

EDF Energy (Doxford)

9.1

In action point (2), delete all after "nationally".

National Women's Committee

10. Achieve Accessible, Affordable And Appropriate Childcare For All - Unison Northern Ireland

Conference notes that in Northern Ireland, women still bear the major role of unpaid primary carer for their children and that the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Executive has not developed a childcare strategy that delivers adequate, accessible and affordable childcare for all. Conference believes that access to affordable and appropriate childcare provision in Northern Ireland is too long outstanding and that Government in Northern Ireland must discharge their responsibilities under the UN Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Conference is concerned that childcare grows increasingly expensive, year on year, in Northern Ireland, often being higher than mortgage or rent payments and forcing families into debt; that the lack of affordable and accessible childcare forces women out of work and is a major factor in the gender pay gap; and that the lack of childcare provision can have negative effects on children's early years development and can deepen child poverty levels.

Conference notes the recently initiated campaign across civic society organisations in Northern Ireland, coordinated by WRDA and Employers For Childcare, demanding meaningful investment in childcare alongside implementation of an Executive Strategy for accessible and affordable childcare for all. Conference calls on the National Women's Committee to consider formally endorsing and supporting this campaign.

Within our own union, Conference believes that we must assess awareness of the extent of childcare provision that we have fought for, by surveying the knowledge of our members in relation to the availability of provision and support that is available to them through their branches. Conference calls for the National Women's Committee, in conjunction with Regional Committees and Women's Committees across the union, to organise such a survey and gather testimonies from our members of the impact that the lack of adequate, accessible and affordable childcare has on them. The results of this exercise should be used to inform the development of wider civic society campaigning.

UNISON Northern Ireland

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11. Recognising women's health in an ageing workforce

Conference recognises the increasing ageing workforce following changes to pension age. Whilst the ageing workforce does affect all genders, we must recognise the specific impact this has for women with female only health issues and the pressures that women face in the ageing workforce particularly in the public sector with the majority of the workforce female.

It is clear that employers do not have a plan in place for an ageing workforce who may no longer be able to fulfil the tasks of their original roles. With reduced opportunities for redeployment as workforces reduce due to austerity which has reduced staff beyond levels ever seen before and, as more public sector employers set up wholly owned subsidiaries and arms length companies these further reduce the opportunity to redeploy these staff even further.

In addition women are likely to have additional personal pressures as they age holding a number of caring roles from caring for grandchildren, to caring for an elderly relative often the role of the woman. According to a survey by the TUC 49% of women over the age of 50 are caring for a parent whilst 39% are caring for a child

Employers need to take positive steps to recognise the impact these factors will have on the woman and her ability to fulfil her substantive role and identify how they can proactively support these women in their later careers and not use capability or other process to remove the woman from this role.

Many UNISON women are in physically and mentally demanding roles such as teaching assistants, domestics, cooks, social workers, sure staff to name a few, although the level of physical activity and mental pressures can fluctuate there is always a need for physical and mental effort, as the woman ages naturally her ability to meet these demands can lessen.

The woman may have been in this role for most of her working life and have significantly developed skills and redeployment into other posts may not always be the best use of her skills and knowledge. Employers should use these women to develop and enhance their operational workforce.

A priority should be given to explore new support mechanisms as part of the health and wellbeing agenda.

We ask the national women's committee to:

- 1) Work with the NEC to develop a survey of unison women members aged 55 and over to identify the challenges they face as an ageing workforce including impact on personal health and ability to fulfil their role as they age;

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- 2) Encourage regions and branches to work with employers to develop local policies to support women in an ageing workforce and how they can take proactive steps to support her

Northern Region

12. The Impact on Women Regarding Family Homelessness

The number of homeless women and children has risen since 2010 by more than 60% and is likely to continue as it's been driven by government welfare reforms.

The lack of social housing and the cost of private sector rents which has gone up by three times as much as the wages and added to that is the new restrictions on family benefits and family credit it is becoming more difficult for women to pay their bills, their mortgage and rent and it only takes a delay in benefit payments or loss of a shift at work to push a woman into a situation in which they cannot afford the basic essentials – food, shelter, warmth.

The new Universal Credit is having a major impact and had been estimated to hitting over 42,000 single parents, the majority of which are women. For many this will be the first time they may have to endure homelessness and the fear of their children being taken away from them and taken into care will have potentially long term effects on their mental health, it is also impacting negatively on the underfunded stretched services of social care. Within the Northern region we are classed as one of the most deprived areas with many women facing extreme poverty and the threat to losing their home is a daily battle.

This is an attack on working women, many who are either low paid workers or working part time and don't have the spare cash to fall back on as every penny is accounted for. It is estimated that from now till 2020, 80,000 families will be homeless with a large portion being single parents, as the spending on houses has fallen by 21%. While homelessness has increased the Department for Communities and Local Government failed to monitor councils work to tackle the issue.

And while the new legislation puts more responsibility on the councils to prevent homelessness they have fewer options to help due to the fall in social housing, homelessness cost the taxpayers over £1 billion last year with £845 million going into temporary housing.

- 1) Conference we ask National Women's Committee to work with Labour Link to highlight the importance of keeping the family unit together and work with Labour Link to highlight the importance of the mental wellbeing of all affected.
- 2) We also ask National Women's Committee to work with Labour Link to look at the cost of private accommodation, the cost of children placed in social care and the impact this will have on the women and children.

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- 3) We ask National Women's Committee to work with Local Government Service Group to highlight the issues around the lack of social housing, cost of private housing and the impact Universal Credits have on the families affected.

Gateshead Health

13. Safe Travel for Women

Conference notes that women's conference 2017 carried motions 29 - Safe travel and Motion 30 - Driver only trains deny accessible support for disabled women.

The survey of women members that was subsequently undertaken showed that women-only carriages were very low priority for the women who replied and that improved safety on current provision including at bus and train stops was the priority, particularly for women travelling in the evening and late at night.

Women were particularly concerned at the lack of staff – platform staff, guards on trains and bus/tram conductors; and by the threatening and/or rowdy behaviour of other travellers. The high cost of public transport and unreliability of services were also major issues of concern.

Conference believes that segregated carriages/travel is not the answer. Women may be more vulnerable by identifying themselves as lone travellers and may still be subject to intimidation, assault and abuse if such a system was introduced. Conference believes that women have the right to travel freely and without fear, without accepting the retrograde step of segregation.

Conference therefore calls upon the national women's committee to work with all relevant bodies and partner organisations to:

- 1) oppose any further calls for segregated travel;
- 2) campaign for improved safety measures, including adequate lighting; CCTV; visible and adequate staffing; up-to-date travel information in advance as well as at point of use;
- 3) support other transport unions and passenger groups in their campaigns to improve the provision of guards and/or conductors on trains and buses;
- 4) lobby for improved access to travel for vulnerable passengers who may find themselves in circumstances where they do not have the financial means to travel ie young women who have lost their travel pass/money.

National Women's Committee

14. Women Travelling Safely

Conference is extremely concerned that women are feeling increasingly vulnerable when travelling in their daily lives, using public transport.

Recent British Transport Police figures show 1,448 offences against women were reported on public transport in 2016-17 – which is a significant increase from

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previous years. Many were sexual assaults. Also, many of these assaults occur during rush hour – dispelling the myth that the late night drinking culture is to blame, and that only those women who travel alone at night are at risk.

The End Violence Against Women Coalition has praised the efforts that British Transport Police has put into campaigns to encourage victims to report abuse, which Conference echo's.

It is also noted that there has been a recent surge in anti-Muslim hate crime, much of it directed against women, and there have been many reported incidents of women being abused in the street, on public transport, and while waiting at bus stops. Women have been spat at, grabbed around the throat, and had their Hijabs ripped off.

Conference is fearful that the safety of women will be further jeopardised by the planned introduction of driver-only trains – driven by government cost cutting. A recent survey of passengers, conducted by Transport Focus (which surveys thousands of passengers every year), found that around 1 in 10 women said they had had cause to worry about their personal security on the railway, with older women feeling especially vulnerable.

Concerns about the cuts to travel budgets, and services on public transport, and the corresponding impact this has on women's safety, were also raised by a number of respondents to the consultation for Everywoman Safe Everywhere – (Labour's Commission on Women's Safety). The closure of ticket offices, leaving stations completely unstaffed was raised as a particular concern.

A survey for End Violence against Women (2016) found that 55% of women did not feel safe on public transport in the evening, and took a taxi.

Disabled women too, feel particularly vulnerable on public transport, and will be significantly impacted by the introduction of Driver-only Trains, which for many will make travel by public transport impossible.

The condition of many public transport vehicles is also putting women (who frequently rely on public transport) and their families at risk. A mother from Liverpool, Frances Molloy, has launched a campaign TYRED, which aims to ban the use of tyres which are more than 10 years old on buses, coaches and minibuses. Frances's teenage son was tragically killed in a coach crash. An inquest into the crash, which also killed 23 year old Kerry Ogden, and the driver, found that it was caused by a tyre which was nearly 20 years old.

Conference is horrified to learn that, as highlighted by TYRED, there are no legal requirements on the age of tyres for public service vehicles (PSV's) and as mothers, sisters and aunts, we are deeply concerned to know that our child, or indeed ourselves, could be travelling on a bus with dangerously old tyres fitted.

Conference calls on the National Women Committee to liaise with relevant sections of the Union, and to work with other appropriate bodies in order to:-

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- 1) Support our Sister Unions such as ASLEF and RMT in their opposition to the introduction of Driver-only trains
- 2) Use relevant channels to call on MP's to oppose removing guards from trains
- 3) Issue updated guidance for members on Travelling Safely, including advice for black and disabled women who may feel particularly vulnerable
- 4) Highlight and support relevant Campaigns, such as BTP's 'Report it to Stop it'
- 5) Publicise and do everything possible to support the TYRED campaign – including encouraging members to write to their MP's, asking for a change in the law, and advising that members always ask coach operators what their policy is on the age of tyres they use on their vehicles.

East Lancashire Health

15. More and more cuts mean refuges can provide less and less!

Since the implementation of the Tory government's policy of austerity, significant cuts to services have been experienced across all sectors. The impact of this is not least felt by those services dedicated to providing support, safe spaces and sanctuary for women who have experienced domestic violence. Refuge services across the country have been decimated by these insidious public-sector cuts. Central government would have all believe that funds are still being made available to refuge services with them being enabled through devolved funding allocation from local authorities. However, local authorities have the power to decide of course by how much they determine these services to need. Research from Women's Resource Centre (WRC) found that 152 councils across England had cut spending on services for vulnerable women by an average of £44,914 per council*.

Furthermore, in the past funding was provided in a 'lump sum' to refuge services directly to enable them to fund, staff and maintain refuge services. Changes in funding allocation means that funding is now provided on a 'per-head' basis and paid in effect based on what a local authority has determined per capita it would cost a refuge to provide the services. This brings with it a major amount of inflexibility in relation to what the refuge can or can't do with the funding it receives, where previously the refuge themselves would be able to determine how the allocated funds were used to support their services. This inflexibility in service provision means that more and more refuge providing services can do less and less. At a time when access to these essential services is vitally necessary it is shameful that persistent austerity cuts continue to decimate ability for an ever-shrinking number of organisations to provide these services; data provided by 131 refuges in 2016 demonstrated that on one day 78 women along with their 78 children were turned away from refuges because they could not be accommodated*.

We call upon National Women's Committee to:

- 1) Work with National Executive Committee to develop a campaign which raises the profile of these issues.

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- 2) Work with labour link to highlight this as a continuing and escalating issue and ask them to take this issue to parliament and lobby for change in relation to the per capita funding of refuges by local authorities and a return of guaranteed lump sum funding for refuge services.

*Source: Women's Aid website.

North Tyneside Met.

16. Henry VIII's Cruellest Cut

Conference there was much debate during the Referendum Campaign about returning power to the Parliament in Westminster if we voted to leave the EU. Control over our laws, it was argued, would be returned to our Houses of Parliament and all our laws would be debated by our democratically elected Members of Parliament. There was no debate that our democratic rights would be undermined. On the contrary we were told loud and clear that they would be strengthened not weakened.

The proposed Great Repeal Bill, which will repeal The European Communities Act 1972, is intended to put EU law into UK statute. The reality is that the Act when carried will not actually repeal at all it will convert EU law into UK law at the point of formal separation from the EU.

The Great Repeal Bill has been widely condemned because the Tory Government has seen fit to take this opportunity to include a procedure which fundamentally undermines the right of Parliament to scrutinise legislation, using a provision which dates back to Henry VIII which he introduced in the Statute of Proclamations in 1539 known as the Henry VIII Clause. This was a King who believed in the Divine Right of Kings and not the right of Parliament to scrutinise his actions or laws.

The Henry VIII Clause allows the Government to appeal or amend an Act of Parliament by means of a secondary Act with limited or no further Parliamentary scrutiny. This has the potential to drastically undermine women's rights, and the gains we have made over decades and generations many of them originating from European legislation. In particular the following:

Equal treatment

Equal pay

Equal pension rights

Maternity rights

Carer's rights

Women's health and safety at work

Sexual harassment at work

Part time and agency workers' rights

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Violence against women

Childcare

National Women's Conference knows all too well the legal cases that UNISON has taken and won for our women members who have relied not only on UK law but also European Law. The UK's Equal Pay provisions were dramatically increased by the introduction of Equal Value and women's pension rights through Equal Treatment, both under European Law. The enhancement to maternity and parental rights and the recognition of work life balance all came from Europe. Anti-discrimination law has been hugely impacted by European law. For us proud UNISON trade union women the protection of EU law has been fundamental to our rights at work but also to organise and campaign as trade unionists.

It is incumbent on us to fight against the Government's grab for power in such a flagrant manner. This is a threat to our very democracy, from a party in government which has fought tooth and nail against equality and women's rights.

We ask National Women's Committee to:

- 1) Work with the Nation Executive Committee and any other bodies within Unison to campaign to protect the rights of our women members as a consequence of the Great Repeal Bill;
- 2) To work with UNISON's Labour Link to enshrine women's rights through our Parliamentary democratic rights;
- 3) Work with our representatives on the Women's TUC to protect women's rights as trade unionists under the Great Repeal Bill.

Northern Region

17. Support for Women suffering with Mental Health

UNISON recognises that the excessive pressure of an increasingly demanding work culture in the UK is one of the biggest challenges to the mental health of our members. If you look around your surroundings whether at home, at work or in your social life, how many women do you feel are suffering from a mental health issues. You might be surprised as many more women report unhappiness than men (42% of women compared with 29% of men). Both women and men can experience mental health problems, but some are more common among women such as anxiety disorders, depression, post-natal depression, work-related stress, dementia. Women will too often carry on suffering in silence as they try to hold everything together in their family, work and social lives, not wanting to feel that they are being a burden on others. More than 1 in 10 women within a year of giving birth will suffer with Postnatal Depression. It is not uncommon for postnatal depression to be persistent for many years after childbirth although it becomes classified, medically as depression.

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Women between the ages of 16 and 24 are almost three times as likely to experience a common mental health problem (i.e. anxiety and depression), even though there is an increase of people being able to access treatments, but around a third of people with mental health problems have sought no professional help at all. Many voluntary organisations are working within the financial constraints of the government's austerity measures and cuts to funding which has led to reduced services and huge waiting lists.

Evidence shows that generally women suffer in silence until they snap, sometimes over issues that, under different circumstances might be seen as trivial. If colleagues or friends ask if they are ok, the response is often "I am fine". Additionally, some people with mental health problems face barriers in their workplaces, often due to ignorance and prejudice as well as the barriers of employers not adhering to their own policies, not providing line managers with proper training and sometime just blatantly ignoring some of the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act, in particular around how sickness absences are recorded.

Accessing external help can be difficult with the main source of support provided by a General Practitioner. As a consequence of the cuts to public services which have been shown to disproportionately impact on women, It is not easy to access counselling services and generally only the first few sessions are free; for some people 'a few' sessions will only scratch the surface of dealing with the issues. Additionally, it is becoming commonplace that where waiting lists for counselling are so long, some women are forced to return to work before any counselling sessions have begun.

Conference recognises the work that UNISON has undertaken to raise awareness of these issues and for the excellent resources and information leaflets that have been produced over the years for women members. However, evidence from MIND and the Department of Health new body 'National Institute of Mental Health in England (MIMHE)' recognise how much of a problem still exists and furthermore recognised the problem associated with returning to work after a period of ill-health and how sadly it is not uncommon for staff to find a less than helpful approach from their employer, with managers ignoring the provisions of their own policies and offering little to no support to staff. In worst case scenario's this can lead to staff find that they are taken through capability processes.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England was launched under the Department of Health National Institute of Mental Health in England (MIMHE) as part of a national approach to improving public mental health. Their mission is to reduce the stigma associated with Mental Health through understanding and to work to break down barriers and offer support so that people can stay well, recover, or manage their symptoms. MHFA aims to give people the confidence to spot common signs and triggers of mental health issues and enables them to guide / signpost individuals to the appropriate support that they may require.

Conference calls on the National Women's Committee to work with the relevant internal and external committee, groups and organisations to:

- 1) Campaign for mandatory Mental Health First Aid training for all managers to help them recognise early warning signs of distress and how to support staff.

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- 2) Explore and develop a Mental Health First Aid training programme for all branch women's officers

South East Region

17.1

Add new paragraph.

The burden of austerity and cuts has fallen disproportionately on women, both as providers of public services and as recipients. This had led to increased stress and triggered further bouts of mental ill health amongst women. Then when women become unwell, the services they rely on face cuts, making it harder to recover. Mental health forms 27% of health need and yet only receives 13% of health funding. There has been a 44% decrease in mental health NHS beds since 2000. Many are now wait months for care and when admitted get sent to out of area beds, miles away from home, when acutely ill.

Add new point at end

- 3) campaign with users, carers, voluntary sector groups such as Mind and other trade unionists, for the extra money the NHS and Social Care need to provide proper mental health care.

Greater Manchester Mental Health Branch

18. Supporting members with fibromyalgia

Conference notes that Fibromyalgia is a much misunderstood condition that predominantly impacts on women, with some research suggesting 90% of those affected are women, aged between 20 to 50 years.

Conference further notes that this condition is difficult to diagnose and difficult to manage which brings huge challenges especially for those women who want and need to continue to work. The lack of knowledge by the medical profession, occupational health professionals' managers and trade union reps compounds this difficulty.

Conference, therefore, calls on the National Women's Committee to help raise awareness and understanding of this condition through our ongoing women's health campaigns

Newcastle Hospitals Unison Branch

19. Sexist expectations about young women workers

This Conference believes that sexism in the workplace is still prevalent, despite being challenged by women organising against it predominantly through collective action.

This Conference also believes that young women face double-discrimination through sexism and discrimination against them on grounds of age.

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This is manifested through bullying, harassment - and sexual harassment in particular. It is also manifested through young women not being recognised as making important contributions by virtue of the work they do, and by being viewed as 'junior' and/or fitting a sexist stereotype that accords them a status whereby they are unfairly allocated such activities as tea-making, etc.

This Conference agrees that it is vital that young women in the workplace are respected and valued as co-workers, and that campaigning on this issue must be stepped-up, and allies sought within and beyond the trade union movement to have the necessary impact.

This Conference calls on the National Women's Committee to:

- 1) survey young women members about their experience of this situation at work, to help get data to support campaigning on the issue and possibly elicit case studies;
- 2) seek to consult with the National Young Members Forum on developing a campaign that shows UNISON takes this issue seriously and will work to support young women members experiencing this treatment;
- 3) seek out positive policies and practices of employers in this area that can be shared and placed on negotiating agendas;
- 4) seek to raise the issue through our representatives on the TUC Women's Committee and through Labour Link.

National Young Members' Forum

20. Lack of participation of Black women in UNISON

Conference, women make up more than 70% of UNISON members. According to Rule D.1.4, UNISON is committed to fair representation and proportionality. However, in the public sector where many of our members are Black women, we see very few Black women represented at branch, regional and national level; despite statistics telling us that Black people are amongst those most likely to join a union.

Furthermore, according to the Rule Book aims of self-organisation, (Rules D 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3, and 5.1.4) and in line with the union's aims and objectives; we acknowledge that further specific work can assist and encourage the participation of members who may feel marginalised. A high percentage of Black women members are working in the health, social care and local government sector; and many are low paid members. At a time when far right organisations are promoting division in our communities, it is crucial that UNISON and the National Women committee continues to lead the way in its view that diversity and inclusion in our society adds value to us all.

The freedom of information requests commissioned by UNISON that were carried out regionally in Local Authorities revealed that Black women are more likely to be selected for redundancy than their white counterparts; even though they are poorly reflected in numbers within the workforce (5% rather than 12% statistical expectation).

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Work done regionally and in branches to promote the active involvement of women, especially Black women needs to be encouraged at a national level.

We therefore call upon the National Women's Committee to work with National Black Members' Committee to:

- 1) Work with the regions to encourage branches to do what they can to empower Black women and also Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Disabled and young women members from all cultures and all religious backgrounds, to become activists and to become involved with their SOGs, to consider becoming stewards and increasing their participation in their branch committees and to become active in their regions and the wider union as a whole;
2. Work with branches to actively encourage the inclusion of Black women (where visible) across the country and value their involvement and diversity.

National Black Members' Committee

21. Disabled women forced into marriage

Conference notes that 86% of cases referred to the government's forced marriage unit involve women, and that the abusive consequences for women with learning disabilities are likely to be severe.

Whilst it is possible that the family believe that their action in arranging a marriage without consent will protect their child, build strong family ties and preserve traditions, they are giving their disabled relative no choice in her future.

She may have no capacity to consent to marriage, sex or having children, and may, in common with non-disabled women in forced marriage be subject to many forms of abuse. These can include repeated rape, domestic violence from their husband or extended family, and forced labour in undertaking all household chores.

Disabled women who are isolated in a forced marriage may have additional barriers, including additional communication needs, and may not to be able to identify and seek support to escape.

Conference calls upon the national women's committee to work with the national disabled members' committee and appropriate partner organisations to:

- 1) raise awareness of the issue of forced marriage involving learning-disabled women;
- 2) lobby for greater support for women who may be vulnerable to forced marriage who lack the capacity to consent;
- 3) lobby for greater enforcement of the forced marriage section of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

National Disabled Members Committee

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22. Non-Binary Inclusion

Conference welcomes the work initiated by UNISON's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) group to begin to make UNISON's organisation, events, policies, systems and good practice advice inclusive of non-binary members.

Conference is concerned about scare-mongering media coverage of some organisations' moves towards non-binary inclusion. This coverage has suggested that non-binary inclusion represents an attempt to 'do away' with gender or that it undermines work to tackle sexism and build women's equality. Conference is mindful that much of this scaremongering has come from people with no track record in fighting for women's rights.

Non-binary people are people whose gender identity is not solely male or female. They may define themselves as both, neither or something different. While non-binary people are of all ages and as diverse as any other cross section of society, increasing numbers of young people in particular are identifying outside traditional binary gender norms.

Conference believes that rather than undermining women's rights, work for non-binary inclusion can help build women's equality and women's participation and vice versa.

For example, work on non-binary inclusion involves challenging gender stereotyping, which is a common component of sexism and which places limitations on girls' and women's hopes, ambitions, job choices and consequently pay.

Further, conference welcomes action by the national women's committee to assist UNISON in achieving its rule book commitment to proportionality, including work towards a rule change to create "general" seats rather than "male" seats on the national executive council (NEC) and throughout UNISON structures. Conference notes that this would also assist in removing barriers to non-binary participation, allowing people who do not identify as female or male to apply for general seats.

Conference therefore calls on the national women's committee to:

- 1) Raise awareness within the women's self-organised group, including branch and regional women's groups, of steps to build non-binary inclusion in UNISON, including promoting the UNISON factsheet on this subject 'Gender equality: non-binary inclusion';
- 2) Dispel any myths of a conflict between non-binary inclusion and women's equality;
- 3) Work with the national LGBT committee to co-ordinate work on tackling gender stereotyping;
- 4) Consider ways to support the national LGBT committee in furthering non-binary inclusion in UNISON and in the workplace.

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Committee

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23. Period Poverty

This Conference notes:

Over a woman's lifetime sanitary products cost more than £5000 with women spending around £13 every month. Many women face period poverty having to choose between food and sanitary products, particularly those relying on food banks.

This Conference welcomes that:

- a) Labour reduced VAT on sanitary products from 17.5 % to 5%. Zero VAT rating will be introduced in 2018
- b) In August 2017 Tesco became the first UK supermarket to effectively remove VAT by cutting the price of many women's sanitary products.
- c) A members' bill in the Scottish Parliament brought by MSP Monica Lennon could see a system of universal free access to sanitary products in Scotland.
- d) A pilot scheme in Aberdeen to provide free sanitary items for women and girls in low income households began in August 2017.
- e) Labour intends to end period poverty if it gets into power by handing out free sanitary products in schools, food banks and homeless shelters.

This Conference asks the National Women's Committee to:

- 1) Continue to campaign to end all poverty affecting women and girls, especially period poverty.
- 2) To publicise the work of organisations supporting women facing period poverty.
- 3) To encourage branches and women's groups to donate to charities collecting sanitary products for women facing period poverty.
- 4) Work with Labour Link to support campaigns in Scotland and the wider UK to end period poverty.

West Midlands Region

24. Free Sanitary Wear for school age upto 18 years

Conference, period poverty is a reality in the UK today. Many young women, including those menstruating for the first time are unable to access or afford sanitary products. This can have a major impact on women's and girls physical, mental wellbeing and confidence.

It is widely reported that girls and young women are missing their education thereby reducing their life chances as a result of this.

We believe this could all be avoided if sanitary products were freely available in all educational establishments, that can be available for free without fear of embarrassment.

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We ask National Women's Committee to work with any appropriate departments within UNISON and its partnership organisations, to campaign or lobby the government and to support the Scottish Labour Party's proposal put forward by Monica Lennon for free sanitary products for females in education and also to support similar campaigns throughout the UK, for example that promoted by Paula Sherriff, Shadow Minister for Women & Equalities.

Yorkshire - Humberside Region

24.1

At end of para 14 after sentence ending "... mental wellbeing and confidence." insert:

"Period poverty is a national shame in a wealthy country in the 21st century".

At end of para 15, after sentence ending "...life chances as a result of this." insert:

"We applaud the decision taken in North Ayrshire where all secondary schools in that local authority area have, from August 2017, access to free sanitary products."

UNISON Renfrewshire

25. Femicide - not an isolated incident

The killing of a woman, especially in a domestic setting, is often reported as an 'isolated incident with no further threat to the public'. Such descriptions dismiss the scale of the issue, and diminish the fact that gender-based violence is a society-wide issue.

This conference applauds the work of Karen Ingala-Smith (Chief Executive of Nia and author of Counting Dead Women blog site) and Women's Aid in publishing their census findings. This report is a harrowing read, and lists the names of all the women in England and Wales who have lost their life between 2009 and 2015 due to femicide.

Femicide has been identified globally as a leading cause of premature death for women. It is the most extreme manifestation of men's violence against women. Femicide is defined as "the misogynistic killing of women by men"

Some of the key findings within the report are that between January 1st 2009 and December 31st 2015:

- 1) It is known that 936 women were killed by men in England and Wales.
- 2) Most women who are killed are killed by a man known to them. 598 (64%) women were killed by men identified as current or former partners.
- 3) Women are at significant risk at the point of separation from an abusive partner. 152 (76%) of women killed by their ex-partner or ex-spouse were killed within the first year that followed their separation.
- 4) Women of any age can be victims of femicide. 149 women aged over 66 were killed in England and Wales. 50 of these women (34%) were killed by their partner or spouse. 34 of them (23%) were killed by their sons.

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- 5) The murder weapon most used in cases of femicide was a sharp instrument. A sharp instrument was used in 426 cases of femicide; 290 of those cases were domestic intimate-partner femicides.
- 6) 218 (23.3%) cases of femicide were committed by men not related to their victims e.g. by a friend, colleague, client, co-worker, neighbour, stranger.

It is clear that the abuse of women occurs across society, through all classes, in all communities, across each religion, race, ethnicity and culture, and at all ages. The tactical and systematic abuse of a partner is part of a pattern that makes these deaths both predictable and preventable. While the number of intimate partner femicides is of huge concern, the volume is not surprising. The Office for National Statistics research and the Femicide Census prove, without question, that women are far more likely than men to be killed by their partners. Despite this clear statistic, refuges and domestic abuse service providers often have to justify the concentration of their efforts on women and girls.

The killing of 936 women by men over the course of seven years highlights the fact that femicide is a serious, prevailing issue in the England and Wales. The incidents of femicide are not isolated; there are significant similarities and patterns in these killings. These killings are rooted in the inequality and discrimination that women face in their everyday lives, inequalities that both cause and reinforce violence against women.

Helpfully, the report makes recommendations for action for government; Police; the criminal justice system; statutory agencies (NHS and social services); and the media.

In particular the recommendations to media are that they should

Challenge the use of 'isolated incidents' if used by the police or others in relation to femicide, and report men's fatal violence against women within the broader context of Femicide.

In addition, the media are asked to not be overly sympathetic to perpetrators, privileging the perpetrator's story. Women should not be written out of reports nor should women be defined one-dimensionally by their relationship to men/family. No more descriptions of perpetrators as the "kind, honest, hardworking man who loved his family" reports that entirely omit any mention of the woman who has lost her life.

This conference categorically affirms its fundamental opposition to misogyny whenever and wherever it occurs.

This conference instructs the National Women's Committee to:

- a) Publicise this report across our UNISON membership to highlight the reality of femicide in England and Wales
- b) Actively encourage our women members to write to the media whenever they see descriptions of perpetrators that minimise his crime and glorify him in other ways.

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- c) Reinvigorate the UNISON campaign to have a comprehensive domestic abuse policy negotiated and implemented with all recognised employers
- d) Actively publicise the domestic abuse workshops and training courses UNISON delivers, to increase demand and participation numbers
- e) Encourage Regional Women's Groups and branch women's groups to build links with local women's refuges and develop template letters and advice on challenging media reports
- f) To write to Karen Ingala-Smith and Women's Aid to congratulate them on this piece of work

Eastern Region

26. Domestic Abuse in the Black Community

All women can experience violence from men they know, irrespective of their nationality, religion, ethnicity, culture, social class, age, sexuality or dis/ability. Evidence suggests that prevalence of male violence is similar across all socio-economic and cultural groups.

Domestic Abuse is still happening in Black communities and is on the increase due to job cuts, women's centres closing, support being cut and not enough emergency services available to respond quickly when called and all this leads to more abuse and Black women feel they have nowhere to turn.

The position of Black women in confronting violence is distinct. Domestic abuse may not be condoned by all family members but it is too infrequently questioned or challenged. For many Black women it is not possible to differentiate between violence experienced as a woman and violence experienced as a Black woman.

Most Black women suffering domestic abuse are not employed and have no separate disposable income, live in poor housing, and lack the education and opportunities to progress. Their isolation is made all the greater by language and cultural differences and they are ill equipped to escape abuse.

This could be for a number of factors including but not limited to Socio Economic, Immigration Status, lack of understanding of issues by agencies, lack of knowledge of the welfare benefits system.

The form the abuse takes may vary, in some communities, for example, domestic abuse may be perpetrated by extended family members, or it may include forced marriage, or female genital mutilation (FGM).

Black women are almost three times as likely to experience death as a result of domestic violence (DV) and intimate partner violence (IPV) as white women. And while Black women only make up 8% of the population, 22% of homicides that result from DV/IPV happen to Black women and 29% of all victimised women, making it one of the leading causes of death for Black women ages 15 to 35. Statistically, we experience sexual assault and DV/IPV at disproportionate rates and have the

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highest rates of intra-racial violence against us than any other group. We are also less likely to report or seek help when we are victimised.

The reasons Black women suffer disproportionately from abuse are complex. Racism and sexism are two of the biggest obstacles that Black women face. But because many Black women and men believe racism is a bigger issue than sexism, Black women tend to feel obligated to put racial issues ahead of sex-based issues. For Black women, a strong sense of cultural affinity and loyalty to community and race renders many of us silent, so our stories often go untold. One of the biggest related impediments is our hesitation in trusting the police or the justice system. As Black people, we don't always feel comfortable surrendering "our own" to the treatment of a racially biased police force and as women, we don't always feel safe calling police officers who may harm us instead of helping us. And when we do speak out or seek help, we too often experience backlash from members of our communities who believe we are airing our dirty laundry and making ourselves look bad in front of white people.

Conference therefore calls on the National Women's Committee (NWC) to work with the National Black Members Committee (NBMC) to:

- 1) Highlight the fact that there is no shame in reporting facts of what has happened;
- 2) Work with the other SOGs and young members to highlight the fact that this can happen at any age to anyone for any reason;
- 3) Draw up an action plan to highlight how the government might fund more refuges, homes, and centres for victims of DV/IPV and explore the feasibility of this as part of the joint work programme within the NWC and NBMC.

National Black Members' Committee

27. Women and Mate Crime

Conference welcomes the work that has previously been done by UNISON on hate crime. However, "mate crime" is less well recognised.

Whilst there is no statutory definition of a 'mate crime', according to the Welsh government it is the term given to 'the befriending of people, who are perceived by perpetrators to be vulnerable, for the purposes of taking advantage of, exploiting and/or abusing them. This can strongly be associated, but not exclusively associated, with people with a learning disability, learning difficulties or mental health conditions.'

Disabled women are particularly vulnerable to mate crimes involving sexual abuse, including enforced prostitution, rape and being coerced into sexual activity which they are not comfortable with.

There are many parallels with women experiencing domestic abuse, such as:

- 1) Vulnerable women being isolated from friends and family;
- 2) Fear of reporting, and of not being believed;

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- 3) Accusations of sexual misconduct – common in domestic abuse where women are accused of flirting, having affairs, or other sexual behaviour as an excuse for perpetrators to justify an escalation in violence;
- 4) Financial exploitation and loss of control.

Conference believes that all women have the right to live free from fear and exploitation.

We therefore call on the national women's committee (NWC) to work with the national disabled members' committee to produce guidance for branches on how to recognise "mate crime" and how to support members affected by this, including how to report incidents.

Conference further calls on the NWC to work with all appropriate bodies and partner organisations to lobby for recognition of mate crime as hate crime, and for appropriate action to be taken against the perpetrators.

National Disabled Members Committee

28. Recognising Misogyny as a hate crime

Conference notes that Nottinghamshire Police, supported by Nottingham Women's Centre made history in 2016 by becoming the first force in the country to recognise misogyny as a hate crime.

The additional category applies to a range of incidents reported to the police, from street harassment through to physical intrusions on women's space. This is defined as - Incidents against women that are motivated by an attitude of a man towards a woman and includes behaviour targeted towards a woman by men simply because they are a woman.

Recognising and recording incidents of misogyny in this way means: an increased awareness of the seriousness of these incidences, women and girls are encouraged to make reports of misogyny and more serious offences, better intelligence is gathered to disrupt activities and identify perpetrators, better risk management and support for women affected and a reduction in women's fear of crime in public spaces which is frequently informed by their fear of sexual assault and connected in large part to experiences of so called minor street harassment.

Verbal and physical harassment of women and girls in public spaces are not just a bit of harmless fun. Misogyny impacts on the ability of women and girls to go out and live their lives and profoundly undermines their wellbeing and self-esteem

Recognition of misogyny as a hate crime supports our strong commitment to tackle violence against women and girls.

A successful event was held in the Northern Region that looked at practical ways the regions Women Network could work with organisation in relation to working towards misogyny being recognised as a hate crime.

It is imperative that it is recognised that minor sexist incidents set up a power imbalance, leading to normalised attitudes and behaviour towards women that make

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some of the more serious abuses seem more socially acceptable, three quarters of UNISONs membership are women and therefore it is right that this becomes a campaigning issue for us.

Conference call on the National Women's committee to

- 1) Work with the relevant structures within UNISON to support the principle that misogyny is recognised as a hate crime.
- 2) Campaign to have misogyny recognised as a hate crime by all police forces across the country by encouraging Regions to work with MPs and Police and Crime Commissioners.
- 3) Encourage Regions and Branches to hold events to discuss what practical support can be given to the campaign.

Newcastle City

29. Misogyny is hate crime

Misogyny and hate crime is on the increase in society. In 2016 Nottinghamshire police were the first force to re-classify wolf whistling, cat calling and other misogynistic harassment as hate crime and handled 30 cases in 5 months.

Following on from that 15 other police forces are now looking at following Nottinghamshire Police's lead.

In the past, women have accepted such behaviour because it has been trivialised in society.

But the Equality Act 2010 defines bullying and harassment as behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated or offended – which is both the intention and the impact of incidents of misogynistic harassment.

Conference believes that the continued trivialisation of such behaviour is unacceptable and we therefore call upon the national women's committee to work with other appropriate bodies to:-

- 1) produce guidance on misogyny and hate crime, including working with UNISON Learning and Organising Services to produce training materials that can be used to educate activists and members;
- 2) work with appropriate bodies to produce a UNISON draft workplace policy on misogyny and hate crime, for use in branches in negotiating such a policy with employers;
- 3) raise awareness and understanding among our members of how to report misogyny and hate crimes in the workplace and society.

National Women's Committee

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29.1

In the fifth paragraph, delete 'unacceptable and we therefore' and insert:

'unacceptable. Conference reaffirms its recognition that all forms of hate crime are abhorrent. It is concerned, however, that hate crimes still often go unreported and unrecorded and there have historically been low levels of prosecution. This is made worse by cuts to hate crime advice and support services. Conference therefore welcomes the UNISON guidance 'Tackling hate crime and hate incidents: a workplace issue', published in National Hate Crime Awareness Week in October 2017. This guidance includes a model workplace policy and is accompanied by an activists training course which is being rolled out to regions. We therefore'

Add new action point at end:

- 4) promote the UNISON guidance on Tackling hate crime and hate incidents and the accompanying activists training.

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Committee

30. Twitter and Misogyny

This Conference welcomes that the Crown Prosecution Service is to take online hate crime seriously. New guidance from them includes guidance on racist, homophobic abuse, hate crime on grounds of religious belief, disability or gender; however the guidance does not include misogyny or hatred of women.

Social media contains lots of misogyny. This Conference notes with disgust the treatment of women on twitter, including Caroline Criado-Perez who received around 50 abusive tweets an hour, including rape and death threats, over a 12-hour period after she successfully campaigned for Jane Austen to feature on the new £10 note.

Recent research by Amnesty International shows that women MPs of all parties received 25,000 abusive messages in the last six months, with nearly half of them directed at the Shadow Home Secretary Diane Abbott.

This Conference is disappointed at the response of Twitter often taking hours and in some cases days, if not weeks, to respond to women's complaints and remove misogynistic posts. A recent survey by the Fawcett Society shows very few women bother to report online abuse and of those who do just 9% report that Twitter took any action.

This Conference believes that everyone should have access to social media and women should not be forced to stop using it.

This Conference asks the National Women's Committee to:

- 1) Campaign for safe spaces for women on social media by working with relevant organisations including Reclaim the Internet and The Fawcett Society.

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- 2) Encourage UNISON women members to lodge complaints with Twitter when they face misogynist abuse.
3. Work with Labour Link to campaign for changes to include misogyny in government definition's of online and other hate crime.

West Midlands Region

31. Online Abuse

Conference applauds Yvette Cooper for her stand against sexist online abuse suffered by her and other leading women MPs during the general election. In a speech to Labour Party conference she said “unless misogyny on the internet is challenged, more women’s voices will be silenced, and more women will be oppressed or feel prevented from speaking out – just as if we’d gone back to the Victorian age.”

She highlighted the scale of misogynistic abuse online, with women threatened and told they will be raped or killed for speaking out.

High profile cases include historian Mary Beard, who was attacked for her appearance; Kate Smurthwaite, a comedian who received 2,000 abusive tweets for objecting when a men’s rights activist called her “darling” in a TV debate; and Emily Grossman, a scientist who received so many hostile tweets when she talked about sexism in her profession that she took a break from social media. Women not in the public eye are also subjected to abuse, trolling and stalking on social media and dating sites.

Recent research for the Reclaim the Internet campaign revealed that:

- 1) 10,000 tweets were sent from UK accounts in three weeks aggressively attacking women as a "slut" or a "whore".
- 2) According to the largest teaching union in the UK NASUWT, over half of teachers report receiving online abuse from pupils and parents.
- 3) The Revenge Porn Helpline has received almost 4,000 calls in the last year, with cases as young as 11 years old.

Conference notes that despite there being a great deal of advice for school staff, parents and carers, from the government and other agencies including teaching unions, young girls are particularly prone to online abuse, bullying and grooming. 1 in 3 children have been the victim of online bullying via Facebook, Snapchat, Whatsapp and other social media, as well as by direct messaging.

Conference welcomes the Reclaim the Internet campaign, which aims to generate new ideas on the role of the police and prosecutors where online threats and harassment become crimes; the responsibility of social media and publishing platforms; the role of organisations and employers; support for victims including how to deal with internet trolls, and how to educate people around the effects of online abuse..

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Conference calls on the national women's committee to work with the NEC, regional women's groups and other appropriate bodies to:

- a) liaise with the Reclaim the Internet campaign;
- b) raise awareness among UNISON members of the campaign, and encourage branches and regions to support the campaign and its objectives;
- c) promote the LAOS training materials on online safety to branches and regions.

National Women's Committee

32. Oppose the Rape Clause

Conference deplors the decision of the UK government to limit child tax credit to the first two children, claiming that it wanted "people on benefits to make the same choices as those supporting themselves solely through work".

Conference believes that the restriction of the child tax credit to the first two children is fundamentally wrong, and penalises the children in larger families. It takes no account of the number of "blended" families, where partners may have children from previous relationships; of accidental pregnancy; of women left financially unsupported by their partner – or many other circumstances where women may have more than two children and need support.

Among the few exemptions to the changes is the so-called Rape Clause, for a child born as a result of "non-consensual conception".

It states that a woman can claim for a third or subsequent child if it was conceived "as a result of a sexual act which you didn't or couldn't consent to" or "at a time when you were in an abusive relationship, under ongoing control or coercion by the other parent of the child".

A woman cannot claim this exemption if she lives with the other parent of the child.

Many women will never disclose rape to anyone, for reasons including trauma, self-protection, shame, and fear for others - including their child. To force them to do so is cruel. In Northern Ireland, where the law requires that all rapes are reported to police, survivors are further forced to engage with the criminal justice system. The demand for a woman to have left the perpetrator in order to claim tax credits reveals a complete lack of understanding of the coercive and controlling behaviour that underpins this crime and the life-threatening risks facing women and children who leave.

Conference believes that the Rape Clause:

- 1) places a stigma on the child;
- 2) forces a woman to admit and prove she has been raped, and to deal with that trauma in a manner which she may not have chosen to do;

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- 3) apparently negates the law in that marital rape is a crime, punishable in law, but this benefit does not apply if the woman remains in a relationship with her rapist;
- 4) forces healthcare professional to act as gatekeepers for the benefit system;
- 5) is totally unworkable in practice.

Conference call on the national women's committee to work with all appropriate bodies and partner organisations, including Labour Link, to lobby the government to reverse the two-child tax credit limit and to withdraw the Rape Clause.

National Women's Committee

33. Stop Porn Culture

The pornography industry has pushed its way into our lives, distorting our conceptions of sex and sexuality. Pornography offers people a vision of sexuality rooted in men's domination of women and women's acceptance of their own degradation.

Pornography is not simply the sexist, naked Playboy photos from earlier times. Those pin-up-type centrefolds look tame when compared to the cruel, violent offerings in online porn today. Today's porn is indoctrinating viewers that women are no more than a collection of orifices to penetrate, today's porn teaches that a woman's sole purpose is to be used, abused and perpetrated upon for a man's pleasure. She is to be subjected to body-punishing sex, slapped, humiliated, called vile names, pounded upon and then ejaculated on.

Unfortunately, pornography has significant effects on attitudes and behaviour in the real world. Studies show that after viewing pornography, men are more likely to...

- 1) report decreased empathy for rape victims
- 2) report believing that a woman who dresses provocatively deserves to be raped
- 3) report anger at women who flirt but then refuse to have sex
- 4) report decreased sexual interest in their girlfriends or wives
- 5) report increased interest in coercing partners into unwanted sex acts

Many women are nagged or guilt-tripped by their male partners to act more like the women in porn—to shave their genitals, to strip, to have anal sex or threesomes, to be tied up or spanked, to be filmed having sex—in general, to act in ways that feel demeaning, inauthentic, and uncomfortable

Internet porn in the UK receives more traffic than social networks, shopping, news and media, email, finance, gaming and travel. It is freely available, just a click away online. Several recent studies have found that teenagers around the world report using porn to gain information about real life sex, leading them to believe that pornified sexual images are the reality of a sexual relationship. Pornography has

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become a primary source of information about sex and a significant factor influencing sexual behaviours, especially among children and adolescents.

Over thirty years ago, many brave women—and a few brave men—began the work of challenging the pornography industry. Today, it remains that there is much work to do to stop this pornified culture.

For the first time, at our National Women's Conference in 2013, one of our workshops focused on understanding and challenging porn culture. Almost 100 women attended to hear the realities of the porn industry.

This conference welcomes the change in the law that recognises revenge porn as a criminal offence. Revenge porn is defined as “photographs or films which show people engaged in sexual activity or depicted in a sexual way or with their genitals exposed, where what is shown would not usually be seen in public” and which are distributed without the person's permission and with intent to cause harm or distress. We hope that women who are subjected to revenge porn will report it and will receive justice.

Conference applauds the previous work of Object – (a voluntary sector campaign group responsible for coordinating work on challenging lap dance club licensing, the display of lad mags in shops and organising ‘feminist Fridays’). This conference is happy to hear that Object is now back functioning again, with new funding and campaigns planned.

This conference agrees that pornography is harmful to women and to society at large and undermines UNISON's efforts to campaign for the eradication of sexism and sex discrimination.

This conference instructs the National Women's Committee to

- a) work with other groups, as appropriate, to raise awareness of the harms of living in a pornified culture
- b) Seek discussions with LabourLink to explore options for legal changes and protections from the harms of pornography
- c) Actively promote our policy and opposition to pornography on the women's pages of our website, through social media and through UNISON's women's networks

Eastern Region

34. Nordic Model Now

This conference affirms its policy of supporting the Nordic model campaign.

Rather than full decriminalisation of the sex trade, the Nordic Model is the human rights-based and equality model. Also known as the Sex Buyer Law, it decriminalises all those who are prostituted, provides services to help them exit, and makes buying prostitution a criminal offence, while imposing tough penalties on pimps and traffickers. The aim is to change behaviour and reduce the demand that drives sex trafficking; thus setting new social norms.

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This conference welcomes the support of Unite, UCU, Prospect, NUT and TUC Women's Conference in our stance on prostitution. It is heartening to know that governments are acting in support of the Nordic Model and already Denmark, Finland, Northern Ireland, Ireland, France, Sweden, Norway, and Iceland have appropriate legislation in place. Canada is considering a version of the Nordic Model and following on from Mary Honeyball, MEP's work in the European parliament, all European countries should now be considering moving to a legislative framework that decriminalises the prostituted women, but criminalises the purchasers.

This conference applauds the work of Space International, an organisation made up of women survivors of prostitution, committed both to raising the public's consciousness of the harm of prostitution and to lobbying governments to do something about it.

UNISON recognises that prostitution is a deeply exploitative trade that has a massive adverse impact on gender equality. We have to change social attitudes, and to support that we have to change the law, to tackle demand, to support those who wish to exit prostitution.

This conference is disappointed at the Amnesty International policy stance, but is heartened that the BMA at their recent conference voted not to legitimise pimps and punters, rejecting a motion by Junior Doctors to 'fully decriminalise' the sex industry (which means decriminalising pimps, brothel keepers and punters as well as prostituted women).

This conference instructs the National Women's Committee to:

- 1) Continue its work with the Nordic Model Now campaign
2. Continue to lobby Amnesty International to change its policy position
3. Work with other trade unions and other like minded partner organisations to continue to resist the legitimisation of pimps and punters.
4. Work with Labour Link to campaign for a Labour Party policy that aligns with UNISON policy as set at National Delegates Conference in 2010

Eastern Region

35. Local Representation of women in the Labour party

It was reassuring to see in the 2017 general election that there was the highest proportion of female candidates ever contesting parliamentary seats which stood at 29%, with Labour leading the way at 40.4%.

We welcome the steps the Labour party have taken so far committing to having at least 45 per cent of candidates standing in local and national elections to be women by 2020. However, women still remain under-represented in politics at all levels and the future significant developments that are likely to happen within the political arena make it essential that this number continues to grow and this needs to happen a lot quicker than by 2020. To be truly reflective and representative of the population of the UK, which currently stands at 51% female, we need to take action now. In order

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to reach true proportionality it is essential we work with the Labour Party on a bottom up approach.

At a national level, Labour is increasing training and support for women through initiatives like the Jo Cox Women in Leadership Programme and by extending the use of all-women shortlists. At a local level, constituency Labour parties are working hard to engage female members.

As a union we can support the Labour Party to fulfil this goal by jointly hosting local engagement and education events throughout the country.

For example: Increasing participation of women in politics, was an event successfully held recently within the Northern Region which was aimed to encourage participation and engagement with over 150 grass roots women in attendance.

We would encourage this to be replicated across all regions with a view to developing a plan to support Unison women who want to participate in the Labour Party at all levels.

As a union we need to recognise the additional pressures that UNISON women face when holding positions such as Local Councillor and the conflict this can cause engaging in activity with the union particularly at a time of austerity which can often lead to disengagement from one forum or even both.

We are asking National Women's Committee to:

- 1) Encourage Regions to work with Local M.Ps to highlight these barriers.
- 2) Encourage Labour Link and Regions to work together to develop a plan which will support UNISON women in Labour Party activity.
- 3) Encourage Labour Link and Regions to hold similar events to that mentioned above which was held in the Northern Region.

Northern Region

Efficient and Effective Union

36. Branch women's officer as a rule book post

Conference notes that despite more than three quarters of UNISON's members being women, there is no rule book post of branch women's officer. While it is acknowledged that there is capacity to create a branch women's officer post this is optional, and it is apparent that many branches are choosing to opt out, rather than in.

Conference further notes that despite UNISON's rule book commitment to proportionality, women remain under-represented in the senior posts in our union, with only 51% of branch secretaries, 46% of branch chairs and 53% of stewards being women, compared to women's membership of 77%.

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Conference believes that the defined role of branch women's officer is critical to encourage greater participation of women at all levels of our union, and the absence of the role sends an unfortunate message to our women members.

Conference notes that national women's conference has the right to submit two motions or rule amendments to national delegate conference each year. Conference therefore agrees that, should this motion be carried, a rule change be submitted to national delegate conference 2018 seeking the amendment of Rule 4.1.1 to include the specific role of branch women's officer.

In this event, conference further urges regional women's committees, forums and networks to lobby branches and regions in support of the rule amendment prior to national delegate conference.

National Women's Committee

37. Branch Women's Officers

Conference notes with concern that in Rules G2.4.1 and Rule G4.1.1 Women's officer is not listed as a general branch officer, meaning that some branches will not include this post in the list of positions that they seek to fill.

Given that the majority of UNISON members are women, conference believes that the role of women's officer should be included in the rule book.

Conference requests that the National Women's Committee works with Regional Women's Committees to encourage regions and branches to submit and support the following rule changes to National Delegate conference 2019 to:-

- Amend rule G2.1.4 to insert Women's officer after equality officer(s) , before welfare officer.
- Amend rule G4.1.1 to insert Women's officer after equality co-ordinator(s), before health and safety officer.

South West Region

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