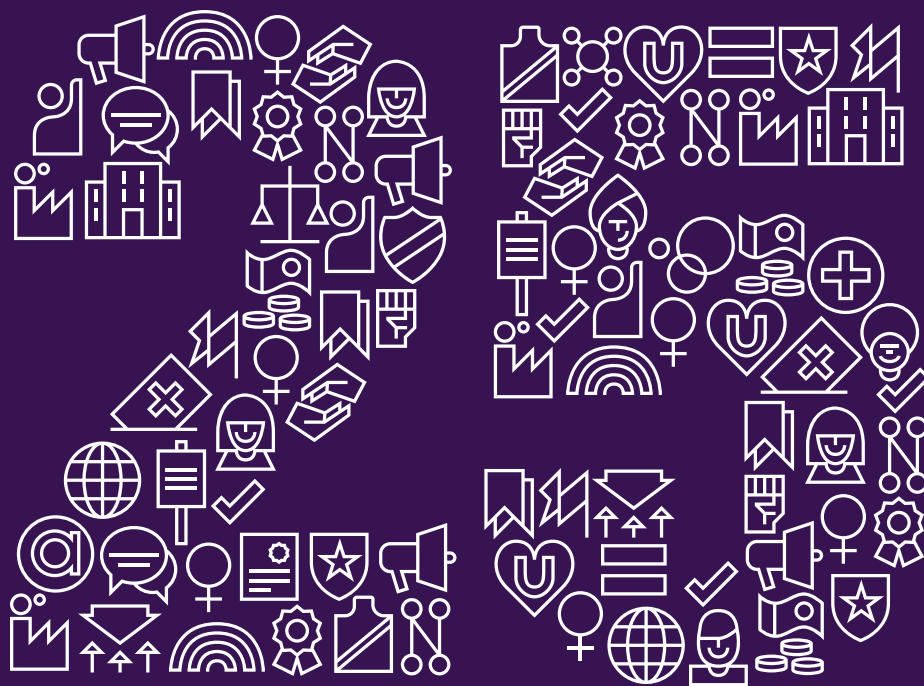


Fighting for a fairer future



Celebrating 25 years in UNISON

National Disabled Members'
Annual Report 2018

Disabled Members Annual Report 2018

Fighting for a Fairer Future

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1. Chairs' Introduction

This year saw UNISON celebrating its 25th year and there has been much to celebrate for our disabled members – but still much to fight for.

Despite the attack on trade unions by the Tory government and their pernicious Trade Union Act, in 2018 UNISON officially became the largest trade union in the UK. We achieved this through focusing on recruitment and offering a high quality service to members. With almost 1.4m members we have a national voice in negotiations with employers, which strengthens our hand in representing disabled members in the workplace.

Last year UNISON's legal team won the battle to end employment tribunal fees which the Tories had introduced in 2013. This landmark victory has meant our members, especially disabled members, can now access justice to fight discrimination, including disability discrimination. As a result of UNISON's win, there has been a growth in tribunal claims, proving that the government's purpose in introducing fees was to deny us the right to justice.



Disabled delegates at National Delegate Conference

However there are still significant challenges for the union and for our disabled members. The Tories' austerity agenda continues and we have seen public services slashed. Redundancies have disproportionately impacted disabled members whilst at the same time the public services

disabled people often rely on to live independent lives have been decimated.

UNISON's Public Service Champions campaign has sought to raise awareness of the important work public service workers do and to build public support for an end to the government's austerity agenda.

The government is still forging ahead with their "welfare reform" programme which is having a significant impact on our members. Despite the Tory narrative of "workshy" benefit claimants, in fact disabled members in UNISON rely on benefits such as tax credits and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) to allow them to stay in work. With claimants now being moved on to Universal Credit, the loss of disability premiums and changes to tax credits, along with the unfair PIP regime, have seen some of our members having to give up work or reduce their hours. We will continue to campaign until this unfair system is fixed and is properly funded so that disabled people who want to work can do so.

Worries about the impact of Brexit on disabled workers has been the backdrop to much of our work this year. UNISON has consistently raised concerns about the threat to employment rights and disability equality rights that exiting the EU is likely to bring. These concerns have been exacerbated by the government's recent acknowledgement of the potential for shortages of food and medical supplies in a "no deal" scenario. As the UK's largest union we are working closely with both the Labour Party and with civil society organisations to protect the rights, jobs and livelihoods of all our members.

Despite some of the challenges, UNISON's National Disabled Members Committee has remained positive, steadfast and active. We have campaigned on the issues that matter to our members, including welfare reform and Brexit, and have produced guidance to help with negotiating and bargaining for disabled workers rights and for representing disabled members in the workplace.

We have worked with other self-organised group on work relating to LGBT, Women and Black and young members.

UNISON's disabled members have been represented at a number of events, such as the National Disabled People's Summit, National Self Organised Group conferences, Service Group conferences, the TUC Disabled Workers Conference, TUC Congress as well as the Labour Link Forum, Disability Labour AGM and Labour Party conference.

Your chairs group has worked hard to represent you and to be a strong voice of disabled members both within the union and externally, representing you on the Equality Liaison Committee with the NEC and leading the work of the committee between meetings.

This year saw the first term of office for the newly created disabled members reserved seats on the NEC. This has proved fruitful as disabled members now have a formal voice in the union's highest lay committee. We were delighted that our third NDMC member on the NEC, Sian Stockham, was elected the union's new Vice President in June.

We would like to extend our thanks to all of those who have supported us during this past year, our BSL interpreters, our speech to text staff, our note takers and our audio visual support staff, without whom many disabled members would not be able to take part in events, meetings and conferences, so a very special thank you to you all. We would also like to thank UNISON's national officer and assistant national officer for their support and to wish Lucille Thirlby, who supported the committee previously, the best of luck as she moves on to pastures new.

Finally, on behalf of all disabled members we would like to remember one of our longest serving members of the National Disabled Members Committee, Irene Stacey who passed away earlier this year. Irene was a staunch trade unionist and one of the best recruiters and activist in the business! We will remember Irene for her tenacity and strength of character and for the support, guidance and encouragement that she gave many of us in this union. Even throughout her illness over the past few years, Irene gave her all to UNISON. Thank you Irene, you will be so terribly missed.

Now it just remains for us as the chairs group to wish all delegates and visitors a productive and enjoyable conference!

Chelsea Skervin and Maggie Griffin (Co-Chairs)

Cath McGuinness & John Nisbet (Deputy Chairs)

Fighting for a Fairer Future

In UNISON's 25th year, disabled members have taken the time to look again at how we organise and how we can prepare ourselves for the next 25 years and beyond so that we are in the best position to fight for a fairer future for our members.

We recognised that we need to do more to communicate with and organise disabled members and we therefore introduced a regular eBulletin to kick off this approach. The bulletin has helped us to directly connect with members in their workplaces and to disseminate information on some of our key campaigns. We want to build on this to further expand our communication channels with members using more accessible channels in the coming year.

We have also introduced a new national training course to develop our activists so that they can become disabled members officers and contacts in their branches. We aim to build up a network of such officers across the union so that our ability and capacity to negotiate and represent on behalf of disabled members is significantly increased.

We have developed our caucus groups by better publicising their network days, resulting in much improved attendance levels and a stronger focus on the intersectionality of disabled workers' experience.

We know that we need to keep recruiting to ensure we can continue to fight and have a strong voice in negotiating for disabled members. We were pleased to be the only union in attendance at this year's Liberty Festival in London which we supported with funding from the UNISON Campaign Fund. Our North West regional group also ran a successful recruitment stall at the hugely popular Disability Awareness Day in Warrington.

This year has also seen us develop further our relationship with the Labour Party. Under this current government there seems little hope of significant advancements in disability equality and indeed in many ways welfare reform and cuts to social care have created a hostile environment for our members. While we will continue to lobby the government and to campaign on specific issues, the fight for a fairer future for disabled members is the fight for a Labour government. UNISON is fully committed to achieving both of these aims.

2. National Disabled Members Committee Work Programme

The National Disabled Members Committee (NDMC) work programme is based on the motions agreed by members at our annual Disabled Members Conference. This year's work programme therefore grew out of the 25 motions passed at Disabled Members Conference 2017.

The first NDMC meeting of the year is the Policy Weekend which takes place in January. At this meeting the committee divided into two sub-groups. Each took responsibility for about half of the motions agreed. One group focused on motions relating to policy and campaigns whilst the other focused on motions related to tackling ignorance, prejudice and discrimination.

The sub-groups prioritised their motions based on high, medium and low priority and agreed relevant actions for each motion. The sub-groups were facilitated by the four members of the chairs' group and were supported by the National Officer and Assistant National Officer as much of the work takes place between meetings. Individual members took responsibility for specific actions and both groups met at the three subsequent meetings of NDMC to monitor progress and agree any further steps required.

Disability Policy and Campaigns

Motions 3, 8, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 (not reached), EM1 (not reached) and EM2 (not reached)

Welfare Reform

There were three motions related to welfare reform which NDMC grouped together. This was a key area of focus for the committee this year as the Conservative government's attempt to dismantle the welfare state continued to bite.

We carried out a survey of our members who had applied for PIP. Over 150 members responded and 90% of them were in employment. This clearly demonstrates that PIP is an issue for working people. Members reported that the PIP assessment and decision making process was unfair, often inaccessible, and did not take into account fluctuating conditions such as MS and mental health problems. There was a particularly strong feeling from members that they were turned down for PIP or saw their award reduced because they had a job. Many said that the DWP seem to think that if you are working you don't need PIP. As a result some of our members have had to give up work or go part time because they can no

longer afford they help the need to get up and ready for work in the morning or to pay for the specialist transport they need to get to work.

We have produced a report on the findings from the survey and are working closely with UNISON's policy department to raise the concerns of our members with ministers and with the Labour Party. We are also working with 'There for You', UNISON's welfare charity, to signpost members who need help to local organisations who specialise in applying for PIP or Universal Credit or appealing decisions.

Our motion on Universal Credit was carried at National Delegate Conference and there was a good debate from the floor with many delegates telling their personal stories or those of their members.

There will be a workshop on welfare reform, including PIP and Universal Credit, at this year's Disabled Members conference.



North West recruitment stall at Disability Awareness day in Warrington

Reasonable Adjustments

Bargaining and campaigning on reasonable adjustments is a 'bread and butter' issue for the committee. This year our comprehensive guide, 'Proving Disability and Reasonable Adjustments' has been updated and expanded and will be available at conference and on the UNISON website.

This important resource which every steward needs can be used by local reps to negotiate reasonable adjustments. The new version includes further guidance on negotiating with employers.

We fed into UNISON's response on the Women and Equalities Select Committee parliamentary inquiry into the enforcement of the Equality Act, highlighting issues around lack of statutory entitlement to disability leave and lack of statutory timeframes for the implementation of reasonable adjustments.

We updated our short guide to reasonable adjustments that can be used by branches. We also produced a template letter for stewards and members setting out how to approach the employer to request reasonable adjustments.

The importance of focusing on reasonable adjustments was also raised with the service groups. Our motions on bargaining for reasonable adjustments and representing disabled members in the workplace were passed at Energy, WET and Police and Justice conference. We submitted motions on disability leave and disability awareness training to Health conference and we also raised the issue of the impact of hot-desking on disabled members and reasonable adjustments through an amendment to a health conference motion. Successful sessions on bargaining for reasonable adjustments were delivered to Energy and WET reps and it is planned to extend this to other service groups.

Disabled Workers Charter

This motion called for a disabled workers charter to be used as the basis for bargaining, organising and campaigning. The Committee has previously developed charters, for example in advance of national elections, but this year was an opportune time to look again at our priorities and develop a "menu of asks" that can be used to re-focus our work. A draft charter has been produced which is being consulted on with regions. Once the final text has been produced this will act as a guide to both our disabled members self organised group and to UNISON as a whole as we ramp up our campaign for disability equality.

Disabled Women in Politics

UNISON responded to the Labour Party Democracy Review making clear the need to radically improve the party's approach to facilitating the participation of both women and of disabled members in local branch and constituency structures, as well as in the candidate selection process. We called for national funding for reasonable adjustments and for the reinstatement of the Access to Elected Office fund. We sent a

representative to the Democracy Review consultation event in Birmingham to reiterate our points on access and inclusion. We also renewed our links with Disability Labour by sending representatives to the Disability Labour AGM.

Our motion to Labour Link Forum in July was on accessibility in the Labour Party and this was passed. We also continued to support the reinstatement of the Access to Elected Office Fund campaign via social media.

Emma Lewell-Buck MP was profiled in the June issue of Activist magazine. Emma is a former social worker and current Shadow Minister for Children and Families. She is also disabled and she spoke about being the first woman MP for South Shields and how her message to UNISON members was “Don’t ever feel you’re not good enough.”

We were delighted that one of our NDMC members, Angela Hamilton, was elected as a Labour Councillor in the North East in the local elections in May, while another NDMC member, Kathy Bole, is a Labour Councillor in Suffolk.



Delegates at the South East Disabled Members training weekend

There will be a workshop on standing for office at conference and it is hoped, diaries permitting, that we will be addressed by a disabled woman politician.

Disabled workers rights to healthcare in Europe

The impact on disabled members that the withdrawal of the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) will have as a result of Brexit is a big

concern to the committee, with private travel insurance costing significantly more for those with pre-existing conditions. We raised this issue with our sister unions by submitting a motion on the subject to TUC Disabled Workers Conference in May. The motion was carried and the TUC Disabled Workers Committee will now include this campaign in their work programme.

We also submitted an amendment to National Delegate Conference on the EHIC card and Brexit which was similarly carried. We have continued to feed into the union-wide Exiting the EU group, raising this and related issues including fears that vital medical supplies could be affected.

We have also liaised with the NEC's Services to Members Committee to seek assurances that UNISON's partner providers will not discriminate against disabled travellers when the EHIC has been removed.

Institutionalisation is not social care

With 60% cuts to local authority funding under the Tories' regime of austerity, social care is in crisis. Reduced funding has led to many disabled people unnecessarily remaining in hospital because home care cannot be arranged. For some councils it may appear cheaper to institutionalise disabled people rather than invest in care that promotes independence. However this is a false economy as investing in disabled people's independence prevents more expensive care being required further down the line. The campaign to stop the cuts to care services is a key UNISON priority. Our 'Save Care Now' leaflets have been used on recruitment stalls and in branches and regions to highlight the issue with the public. An increasing number of local authorities have now signed up to our Ethical Care Charter which commits them to commissioning care based on client needs, paying contracted out staff a living wage, saying no to 15 minute visits, investing in staff training and paying for staff travel time. We have built on the success of the charter to launch our new Residential Care Charter which focuses on protecting and supporting residents in care homes. These resources have been highlighted to members and activists in our regular eBulletin.

Are cheaper medicines better?

This motion asked the committee to work with the Health service group to highlight the issue of some GPs prescribing cheaper medication than recommended by consultants. The committee liaised with the Health service group to investigate the issue and identify whether there were any existing campaigns UNISON could support. Although some campaigns exist, these are often run by big pharmaceutical companies who object to the NHS prescribing generic medications as it reduces their profits. Clearly

this not what the motion was calling for. The committee therefore put a call out to members through the eBulletin to try to investigate the extent of this issue further. Where relevant case studies can be identified we will liaise with the Health service group on next steps.



This year's National Disabled Members Committee

Hate crime against LGBT disabled people

NDMC worked with the other three self organised groups (women's, Black members and LGBT) to produce a new UNISON guide 'Tackling hate crime and hate incidents: a workplace issue'. This was circulated to members via our new eBulletin and branches were encouraged to raise the issue with their employers.

We submitted an amendment to the TUC Disabled Workers Conference which highlighted the differential sentencing for both disabled and LGBT hate crime and this was carried unanimously. This issue will now form part of the TUC's work programme.

We took part in a fringe meeting at National Delegate Conference, co-chaired by NDMC member Lisa Dempster, on hate crime. Attendees heard from Nick Antjoule of GALOP, the LGBT anti-hate crime charity, who suggested we need a new definition of hate crime as the current definition does not adequately cover the complexities of disability hate crime in particular.

Accessible Travel Options

This motion asked the committee to publicise the negative impact on disabled people of the government's plan to introduce ticketless train services. The government faced significant opposition to this proposal, not just from UNISON, and they later bowed to pressure from disabled people and partly backtracked on this. The new proposals allow for ticketed services to continue in parallel with ticketless services.

UNISON responded to the government's consultation on accessible transport, focusing on the need for legal requirements rather than "guidance" on accessible transport and the need for better enforcement of the Equality Act when it comes to disabled people's right to travel.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The 2017 report by the UN Committee for the Rights of People with Disabilities made sobering reading. It found that government cuts have created "a human catastrophe" for disabled people in the UK. However the government has refused to take any significant action on these findings. Disabled people's right to independence continues to be undermined by welfare "reform" in particular. In addition, Black disabled people with mental health problems are disproportionately subject to involuntary detention. Cuts to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) mean that disabled people's rights are not enforced. Our work on PIP and our campaign against the roll-out of Universal Credit has focused on reinstating disability premiums and tax credit cuts and making the PIP assessment process fit for purpose. We contributed to producing the new UNISON mental health bargaining guide which we also promoted through our eBulletin and we campaigned against cuts to social care as part of UNISON's 'Save Care Now' campaign. We also responded to the Women and Equalities select committee inquiry into the enforcement of the Equality Act, highlighting that adequate funding of the EHRC is vital to securing equality for disabled people.

Disabled members cost of living – urgent work is needed

Last year UNISON's Equality Survey of our members found that disabled members are particularly impacted by the increased cost of living. This year we have again undertaken the survey and results show that 50% of disabled respondents felt their standard of living was worse this year than last year. Only 10% thought it was better. 73% said they were paying more for food than a year ago, 60% said they were paying more for travel to work and 55% were paying more for medication and health. Pay is of course a primary contributor to our members' income and our service groups negotiated hard this year to get the best pay deals for our members. Deals in local government and health, for example, saw the government's 1% pay

cap smashed but there is still a long way to catch up on the years of austerity and pay freezes. Welfare “reform” has also affected disabled members’ income and campaigning against the roll-out of Universal Credit and unfair PIP assessments has been key to our work this year.

Tackling Ignorance, Prejudice and discrimination of disabled people

Motions 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 18, 20, 21, 27 (not reached) and 28 (not reached)

Individually tailored reasonable adjustment agreements

This motion asked NDMC to collate examples of reasonable adjustment agreements and to develop an up to date model agreement. Examples from across public and private sector have been analysed and a draft produced. This work has happened in parallel with developing an internal reasonable adjustment passport system for UNISON activists attending national committees and conferences which needs to be finalised by the NEC. Once the later has been agreed NDMC will distribute the version for employers.

Organising for Deaf (BSL) members

Three related motions highlighted some of the communication barriers faced by Deaf members, including in terms of organising and in accessing information on pensions and other issues. The Deaf caucus held two well attended network days this year where they discussed organising Deaf members. They met with the conference team in order to advise on how we can best facilitate our Deaf members in attending and participating in our national conferences and actions were agreed. In addition the Deaf caucus met with UNISON's communications team to consider further developing our BSL page on the UNISON website to add a BSL clip on the member benefits of joining a union. The caucus agreed a number of other ideas to take forward, including signposting to accessible government information on pensions, and will continue to work closely with the communications team on this.

Disabled are very much abled

Disabled people bring huge benefits to the workplace, not always appreciated by employers. We must also do more in our union to increase participation and activism from our disabled members. We work closely with the TUC who produced a report on the disability employment gap, launched at TUC Disabled Workers Conference, which made clear the continuing discrimination against disabled people. Publicising the Access to Work scheme is one way of convincing employers of how easy it is to facilitate disabled workers in achieving their full potential and we have therefore produced an easy to use branch guide on reasonable adjustments that can be used with employers.

We were delighted this year to hold our first disabled members branch officers national training day in September. This was a well attended event which saw our first cohort of fully trained branch disability officers 'graduate'

and we hope they will help raise the profile and activism of disabled members in UNISON.

Hidden/Non Apparent Disabilities

In updating our 'Proving disability and reasonable adjustments' guide we have included sections on mental health, autism, dyslexia and other non apparent disabilities. Rather than using the medical model, the guide focuses on the barriers faced by people with hidden disabilities and how these can be overcome through reasonable adjustments. The guide also includes new sections on conditions often disproportionately experienced by Black people, such as Lupus, sickle cell and Thalassaemia, outlining the barriers faced and possible reasonable adjustments to consider.

We responded to the government's consultation on the 'blue badge' parking scheme. We argued that the scheme should be extended to include people with non apparent disabilities to allow disabled people to more fully participate in society and in employment. We made additional points around the need for a fair and consistent assessment process and for financial help to local authorities in tackling blue badge theft. We were pleased when the government announced that it would go ahead with extending the scheme which will now be open to those with autism, mental health problems and other non apparent disabilities.

Our Disability Leave guide and model policy has been updated and includes consideration for members with non apparent disabilities. This is available for download on the UNISON website and has been circulated to activists through the eBulletin.

UNISON's Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) ran training for regional education officers on visual stress (Irlen syndrome) in order to assist them in facilitating members with this condition. LAOS continue to offer an eNote training resource on dyslexia which is available on the UNISON website. A new course on autism and neurodiversity is being piloted by LAOS with plans for regional roll out if successful. The national Disability Discrimination course is also available to be run by regions and we encourage all regions to consider this in their activist training plans.

Mental Health

Mental health has been a key concern for UNISON as a whole this year. NDMC were closely involved in working with our bargaining unit to produce the new 'Bargaining for mental health policies' guide. This was launched through a programme of publicity in eActivist and other publications and a fringe event at National Delegate Conference. Our National Officer ran a workshop introducing the guide at National Women's Conference and there

were further events highlighting how to use the guide in the regions. It was also distributed to disabled members and activists using our eBulletin.

The bargaining unit has also produced a one page signposting guide for members who may be in mental distress and need someone to talk to. This is now included on the conference app for all UNISON conferences.

NDMC has liaised with conference services and this year for the first time we will be providing a 'quiet room' at Disabled Members Conference. This will be a place where members who need time out or a safe place can go to get away from the hustle and bustle of conference.



The committee mark International Workers Memorial Day

Working with disabled workers

The motion called on NDMC to work with City University who were progressing a project around constructing a database of searchable reasonable adjustments. We have liaised with City University but unfortunately they do not have the funding they expected and the project is currently on hold. Nonetheless, we have fed in some of the ways this might work for our members if funding is found, in addition to some of the caveats, such as ensuring that there is no "one size fits all" when it comes to reasonable adjustments.

As outlined above, we have updated and published our comprehensive guide 'Proving disability and reasonable adjustments' and this is the key resource we are publicising to activists working with disabled members.

UNISON working for intersex equality

UNISON's National LGBT Committee has produced an excellent fact sheet 'Working for Intersex Equality' which includes advice for reps on supporting members experiencing discrimination at work due to being intersex. NDMC have welcomed this work and have publicised the fact sheet to activists through our regular eBulletin.

Hate incidents and 'mate crimes'

NDMC worked with the other self organised groups to produce our 'Tackling hate crimes and hate incidents; a workplace issue' guide. This has been circulated to members and activists using the eBulletin. We also jointly chaired the fringe meeting on hate crime at National Delegate Conference which was extremely well attended and where discussion included both disability hate crime and mate crime.

Autism in the workplace

Our updated 'Proving disability and reasonable adjustments' guide includes a section on autism which suggests some potential reasonable adjustments that might be negotiated with employers, based on the member's needs. As outlined above, we are also working with LAOS to pilot training on autism and neurodiversity.

Supporting Participation at UNISON Meetings and Conferences for Activists with Communication Difficulties (not reached)

NDMC looked into this issue of conference speaking times and confirmed that the chair of conference has discretion to allow extra time for speeches for delegates who need it as a reasonable adjustment. This will be made clear at the new delegate briefing at conference and has been included in the conference guide.

In terms of participation in UNISON meetings more broadly, the NDMC has produced and agreed a draft reasonable adjustments 'passport' for activists. This will allow activists to agree their reasonable adjustments with UNISON just once, without the need to continually request adjustments for different meetings and conferences. The draft will now go to the NEC's development and organising sub committee for agreement. It is hoped that this will increase disabled members inclusion in the democratic structures of our union.

Our representative on the TUC Disabled Members Committee, Sian Stockham, has also raised this issue with our sister unions and urged them to look at a similar system to increase disabled member's participation across the union movement.

UNISON national website (not reached)

A sub group of the NDMC reviewed the website and we liaised with UNISON's communications team to encourage the use of best practice in accessibility. As outlined above, the Deaf caucus is working on a BSL clip to explain the benefits of membership.

New and updated resources have been added to the website, such as our 'Proving Disability' guide, our disability leave fact sheet and model policy, a quick branch guide to reasonable adjustments, the new mental health bargaining guide and updated guides to sickness absence and carers leave.

3. Conference Reports

National Delegate Conference

How proud we were to have represented our UNISON National Disabled Members at this year's National Delegates Conference, it was a very humbling experience to think that you all had faith in us to be your voice, thank you for the opportunity, we hope that we have done you justice.

As always it was an interesting conference with lots of debate, some disagreements, and a couple of card votes including one that will forever follow Gordon McKay, especially during his next year as UNISON president.

We moved our motions, debated our positions, some we won, the Women's Committee rule change on men's seats on the NEC was lost, but the one thing that always comes through is the passion our members have which is to support the many and not the few.



Lisa Dempster and Cath McGuinness at NDC

Our caucus meetings were well attended with some new faces as well as returning members. Lisa was also part of a fringe meeting on hate crime which was very well attended with two fantastic speakers.

We met with many disabled members both inside and outside of conference and caucus meetings. We discussed how they can get more involved either as disability officers or through regional self-organised groups.

Once again access needs were raised, first time members at conference being unsure how OCS works, with branches needing awareness and training.

We both attended the presidents "do" by invite. It was a lovely evening and a new experience for Cath as she had never attended before in the role of SOG rep. We saw Margaret McKee receive a cheque for her charity, which was very moving.

It was lovely to be a part of conference together and we really got to know each other well during the week.

Lisa Dempster and Cath McGuinness

National Delegate Conference Newssheet

I attended NDC in Brighton as your newssheet representative this year. On the first day of conference there was a joint equalities newssheet prepared by officers in advance that covered all of the SOGs. I then produced a disabled members newssheet on each of the following three days.

The newssheet covered issues such as mental health, personal independence payments and universal credit, reasonable adjustments, disability leave and Brexit. The newssheet also profiled some of our disabled delegates attending, including first time delegates and more experienced delegates. We publicised the equalities fringe on hate crime and the two disabled members caucus meetings. We also used the newssheet to remind people to use the reprioritisation ballot to make sure the disabled members motions were heard.

A copy of the newssheet for each day was also available on the conference app and an accessible version was produced.

I really enjoyed being your newssheet representative and would like to thank all those delegates who posed for photos or agreed to be interviewed for the newssheet.

Jacqueline Jones

TUC Disabled Workers Conference

Bournemouth, 24 to 25 May 2018
“Nothing about us without us”

Delegation Meeting

The delegation met to discuss the guidance for conference as it is run a little differently than UNISON conferences. For new delegates it was useful information. Speakers and contributions to motions must be agreed in advance. No two persons from the same union speak on any motion. Unplanned speakers can be put forward only on the agreement of the delegation. We then went through the agenda looking at the guidance and constitution and the report to see if the delegation wanted to raise any questions. We then agreed UNISON’s policy position on each motion and agreed our speakers.



UNISON’s delegation to TUC Disabled Workers Conference

Conference

The morning started with an address by the Chair of the TUC Disabled Workers Committee and some housekeeping. The speakers were introduced, Sean McGovern from the committee, Paul Nowak Deputy General Secretary of the TUC and Marsha de Cordova Shadow Minister for Disabilities. Sean spoke about the role out of Universal Credit and how it affected disabled people and about victories at Tribunals against Department for Works and Pensions’ decisions. The ruling specifically required the DWP to reassess those claimants of Personal Independence Payments with mental health issues. And that disabled people must continue the fight against the governments continued cuts. Sean raised concerns for Disabled people’s rights after Brexit, given Theresa May’s claim that we should not worry about workers’ rights, she’ll take good care of us!

Paul confirmed that the TUC has listened to the disabled conference attendees about the inaccessibility of Congress House and the agreement to move the conference to a more suitable venue like Bournemouth. He praised the committee for the work that they have and are doing to raise awareness of disabilities such as Mental Health, not only in the workplace but into the public limelight. He talked about the governments failures in the Welfare System, the NHS and the social care melt down and how important a role Trade Unions plays an important part in the constant battle against employers and the government in reaching better employment rights and protection for disabled workers with better pay and prospects and using Access to Work to support disabled workers.



Kathleen Kennedy speaking at TUC Disabled Workers Conference

Marsha de Cordova a former Union representative and an attendee of many Disabled Workers conferences, spoke about the annihilation of disabled people's rights and how disabled people have been blamed for the failure in productivity and divert the real issues which are their failures. The DWP is in turmoil and the government are using this failure as an excuse to reduce the Access to Work fund and cut benefit entitlements for Disabled claimant's changing from Employment and Support Allowance to Universal Credit which is causing more poverty in this claimant group than any other and despite the EU commission for Human Rights' report the government continue to attack disabled people. Labour recognises the Social Model of disability and will bring policies in place to help remove these barriers, increase disabled people in employment and increase the Access to Work fund.

Maggie Griffin and Cath McGuinness

National Labour Link Forum

6th and 7th July 2018, Newcastle upon Tyne

The Forum was well attended, with only a few empty seats. There was a full agenda of motions, with guest speakers and a workshop. There were 20 motions on the agenda but on day one motion 19 was withdrawn. There were no emergency motions.

Gordon McKay UNISON's President chaired the Forum for this year.

General Secretary Dave Prentis spoke about the abhorrent treatment of the Windrush generation by this government, and how UNISON, now the biggest union in the country, had successfully won the biggest pay rise since 2010. He also spoke to how we need to take our own values into the Labour party. He highlighted that this year marked the 25th anniversary of UNISON and 70th birthday of the National Health Service, and that we still have a real fight on our hands as this government continues to try to dismantle the NHS by bringing it and social care to the brink. Finally, he congratulated Wendy Nichols, a former UNISON President, in her new role as the Labour Party Vice-Chair.

We then had some questions for the chairs and Dave Prentis. Lisa asked what Labour were going to do about the disgraceful treatment of disabled Labour Party members who attended the Labour Party Conference last year. David replied that it was all included in the Labour Party review and the National Disabled Members Committee had submitted their concerns.

The agenda started on Friday morning with a welcome speech by Jonathan Ashworth MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Health, followed by motions. Maggie Griffin moved the amendment 1.1 on motion 1 "The crisis in health and social care", which was carried.

Lisa Dempster spoke on Motion 17 "Promoting accessibility within the Labour Party" which was carried.

Lisa also spoke on Motion 11 "How safe is refuge provision?"

The workshop on Friday afternoon was around what people thought regarding getting the message across to new joiners to subscribe to Labour Link and the political fund. The four questions were:

1. What is your experience of face to face recruitment since 1 March when talking to potential members about the Political Fund question?
2. Give examples of Labour Link campaigns (National, Regional, Local, Service Group, Self-Organised) that could be highlighted on the online joining form?
3. Are there specific messages that you think could be used in the printed materials that aren't currently there? Should Labour Link have its own materials?
4. What do you believe are the prospects locally of renegotiating DOCAS agreements to include the Political Fund payment?

There were some very interesting responses and the chair Davina Rankin from the Labour Link Committee will feed back the various ideas.

In the evening, we were invited to the UNISON Labour Link Forum Political reception, which consisted of good food, great company and a World Cup football match! It was good to have the opportunity to speak to people we did not know. The delegates passed all of the motions, and the Labour Party review was at the forefront of most of our thoughts.

All in all it was a more relaxed forum and full of information and friendly banter! The best part of the Forum was hearing the news that the Wigan, Wrightington and Leigh Health Trust strike was over because the action was successful! Well done!

Maggie Griffin and Lisa Dempster

Report from Disabled members elected to the NEC

Summary of activities

It's been a busy first year representing Disabled Members on the National Executive Council (NEC) with both highs and lows along the way.

We came into post not long after the devastating fire at Grenfell and the attacks in Manchester, London Bridge, Borough Market and Finsbury Park and those who lost their lives or were injured have been in our thoughts throughout the year. But we are also proud of the role UNISON members played in responding to those tragic events and want to pay tribute to them here.

In July 2017 came what has been called the biggest trade union victory in decades when UNISON took on the government over tribunal fees and won. UNISON was the only union prepared to take this all the way to the Supreme Court. While it was a victory for all workers it was even more important for Disabled Members as discrimination claims were charged at the higher rate making it harder for disabled people to pursue claims and easier for employers to discriminate.

The campaign for more high quality social housing was the subject of one of our motions to Trade Union Congress in October last year and we made sure the motion called for housing to be accessible as well as affordable.

Other campaign priorities included smashing the pay cap, saving the NHS and ending austerity and we've worked hard to ensure Disabled Members issues are included in all of these and more.

In January 2018 we received the sad news that long-standing member of the NEC and National Disabled Members Committee Irene Stacey had passed away following a battle with cancer. Irene, who was awarded the TUC Gold Badge for her recruitment work, was famous for her dedication and passion and is a huge loss to our union and Disabled Members.

At the February meeting the NEC agreed their motions for National Delegate Conference several of which, following our recommendations, included disability issues.

Reversing cuts to in-work benefits is a priority for the NEC and the focus of the motion Cuts to Our Safety Net. This is an issue that can affect Disabled Members far more than those who aren't disabled so making sure our concerns were included in any campaign was essential which is why we pressed for changes to Personal Independence Payments to be included in the motion.

By April we were preparing for National Delegate Conference with meetings coming thick and fast to draft amendments, agree NEC policy and decide speakers.

Being on the platform at NDC is quite an eye opener as you see all the work that goes on behind the scenes to help conference run smoothly and it isn't as easy as you might think. The NEC also meet at 8.30 every morning during conference to

discuss emergency motions, changes to positions and a variety of other issues that can arise during conference so it's an extremely tiring week.

On the last morning we met to elect the new Presidential Team. The outcome of the election was President – Gordon McKay (Scotland but occupying a Health Seat), Senior Vice-President – Josie Bird (Northern) and the new Junior Vice-President was our very own Sian Stockholm (Wales), the third NEC Member who sits on National Disabled Members Committee (NDMC).

The NEC Committees that Disabled Members on NDMC sit on are:

Angela Hamilton – Policy, Development and Campaigns Committee

Pam Howard – Services to Members Committee

Sian Stockham – Services to Members Committee, Industrial Action Committee, Welfare Committee and Labour Link

Keeping in touch

Meetings are scheduled to take place throughout the year and we provide reports of the meetings we attend to National Disabled Members Committee throughout the year.

Disabled Members who want to speak to those elected to represent you on the NEC can contact Angela or Pam by email or telephone.

Angela Hamilton (General Seat)	a.hamilton@unison.co.uk	07890 527281
Pam Howard (Female Seat)	pHoward@warrington.gov.uk	07825844032

Service Group Conferences

Community Conference

The weather 'Beast from the East' caused difficulty in travelling anywhere in the country. Roads were closed with snow drifts and blizzards with strong winds. Trains and planes were cancelled. Many delegates and speakers alike were not able to attend the conference because of the disruptions. The President and Northern Ireland delegates were not able to attend due to cancelled flights.



Gerry Harrison and Jean Sewley at Community Conference

The Conference started at lunch time on the Friday with sector meetings for:

- Community and Voluntary Sector with Dave Johnson
- Housing Association Sector with Gavin Edwards
- Major Charities Sector with Deborah Clarke

The Housing Association sector meeting discussed terms and conditions for workers in the sector and pay negotiations. The chair of the Community Service Group Executive, Malcolm Gray welcomed everyone to conference and introduced Christina McAnea, Assistant General Secretary for Bargaining, Negotiating and Equalities. Then guest speaker Carol Iddon, Managing Director of Children's Services, Action for Children spoke on the situation within her services.

The seminars on the Friday afternoon had to be cancelled because speakers had not been able to attend. These would be rescheduled for Saturday morning but only two of the workshops were held as information sessions in the main hall.

These were:-

- 1. The Violence at Work Charter Campaign – Gavin Edwards
The Charter has a ten point plan.
 1. A written violence at work policy
 2. Responsibility with senior management
 3. Reduce isolation

4. Staff are encouraged to report
5. Collect and monitor data
6. Unison safety reps are able to access this data and consult
7. Thorough risk assessments
8. Support pathways for staff who are victims of violence
9. Training to ensure staff are aware of the appropriate way to deal with threatening situations
10. Independent counselling available.

Some of the companies who are already signed up to this are Mencap, Places For People, Wakefield and District Housing.

- Lay Democracy in UNISON how it works –

There are more than 70,000 community and voluntary sector members in UNISON. After the presentation each region identified work looking at how their region community sector works, and how it could improve. Most regions had the same problems which includes facility time and not being recognised on the agendas of the local government health branch that the members are attached to.

Lizanne Davenport from North West Region spoke on Social Care organising project.

On Saturday lunchtime Jean Sowley and Gerry Harrison chaired the disabled members caucus meeting in the Waterfront suite at the conference. We advertised everyone of the network meeting dates for each of the disabled SOG groups.

Motions talked about and adding a disabled member's perspective to were discussed and included Motion 4 'Mental health', 5 'Sickness management' and 16 'Digital Organising Framework'.

There was 1 motion on the agenda from the National Disabled Members Conference: Motion 14 'Fair Funding'. This motion talked about the difference between the costings put into projects that are up for tender or retender and the real terms of staffing these projects.

The motions were carried. Throughout the conference there was a call for proper funding for social care and commissioning of services looking that staff should be properly paid and vulnerable people properly cared for. Conference called for decent housing for housing association and voluntary sector staff, affordable on the rates of pay this sector pay.

One delegate from Barnsley told conference that he was paid £3.80 an hour for a sleep in shift. In court recently it was recorded that employers paying less than minimum wage rates were breaking the law.

There was a great deal of debate surrounding the violence and aggressive behaviour that staff have to tolerate in their day to day working environment. It was said that staff should have the right to expect a safe and secure workplace and not have to accept violent or aggressive behaviour as a normal part of their role.

All conference business was completed from the conference agenda. Although attendance at the conference was lower than expected because of the harsh weather conditions the conference was informative and engaging.

The message to take back to all branches with community and voluntary sector members was that each branch should send a delegate to this conference and make sure that they are a part of the regional structure so that the sector can be better represented.

Jean Sowley and Gerry Harrison

Health Conference

Day One

UNISON President, Margaret McKee gave the opening address for the conference, then Roz Norman, Chair of the Health Service Executive Group then give a speech. She talked about last year's general election and this year's pay offer. She also discussed the importance of protecting migrant workers who continue to prop up the NHS. The Health Service Group annual report was then moved successfully.

Dave Prentis, General Secretary then addressed conference. He talked about the fantastic achievement of the NHS reaching its 70th birthday despite constant attacks from Tory Governments and how it is our duty to ensure it lasts for another 70 years. He went on to mention how we must never forget the Windrush generation who are intertwined with the NHS first arriving on these shores just two weeks before the birth of the NHS. Dave has written to the Home Secretary Amber Rudd to demand Albert Thompson receives the treatment he needs to treat his cancer. (These comments were made before the Home Secretary's speech later that day).



Neil Ridley and Frances Fenton supporting our NHS

The first guest speaker was Aneira Thomas who was the first baby born in the NHS. Just before midnight on the 5th July 1948, doctors told Aneira's mother to hold on for just a few more minutes so she could be the first baby born in the NHS. She finally arrived at 00:01 5th July 1948. She was named after the creator of the NHS. Aneurin Bevan and has the nickname 'Nye' all her life just like her namesake. Her six older siblings were all born in the house, her parents having to pay the midwife 'one and sixpence'. Her Dad had a mining accident in 1930s Wales, pre NHS and had to have an operation without anaesthetic or pain killer on his kitchen table. The family subsequently had to sell furniture from their house to pay the doctor. Nye ended up working in the NHS herself as a mental health nurse and the NHS has saved her life on numerous occasions as she suffers from anaphylactic shock.

The second guest speaker was Patrick Vernon who is the director of Black Thrive. Patrick spoke about the Windrush generation saying the contribution from them is deeply entwined in the NHS. He has launched a petition on change.org <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/216539> against the Government calling the Windrush generation 'overstayers', denying them access to pensions, healthcare etc.

Over the lunch break myself and Marce chaired the disabled members caucus meeting. We talked about the upcoming Deaf (BSL users), Black, Women's and LGBT disabled network meetings that are taking place in June. We talked about the motions and amendments that Marce and I were moving and asked for their support and if anyone else could speak in support. We asked if everybody's needs had been met, which they had and encouraged everyone to attend the Disabled Members Conference back in Brighton in October. The rest of the day was taken up with motions. Motions 17 - 44 were debated and all were passed, including amendment 23.1 that National Disabled Members had submitted on 'Agile or Fragile? Impact of Hot-desking on NHS Staff.' This amendment was moved by Marce.

After the end of conference business for the day I attended the International fringe meeting. This was an informative discussion on PPP (PFI) and how the Government have discredited it in this country but are still encouraging developing countries around the world to take on PPP for their healthcare, using the UK as a model for doing so. The cost to the state is eight times as much with PPP than if the state had built the building themselves.

Day Two

Day two of conference started with a presentation from **Sara Gorton - Unison Head of Health** and **Helga Pile - Deputy Head of Health** on the NHS pay proposals.

The rest of the morning session was taken up with debating motions 1-16. All of them passed with Composite A on whether to accept the pay proposals very hotly debated with good arguments put by both sides. I changed my mind every time somebody spoke on stage!

Over the lunch time I attended the focus group on NHS Wholly Owned Subsidiaries. A lot of speakers spoke about their worries about their Trust's forthcoming to plans to adopt this model while other people (including myself) spoke about their experiences of their Trusts having already adopted the wholly owned subsidiary model.

The afternoon session on debates focused on motions 24-30. Again all were passed including the motion that I moved on behalf of the National Disabled Members Group motion 26 'Disability Awareness Training' and the motion 27 'Disability Leave' which was moved by Marce on behalf of National Disabled Members.

Day Three

The final conference session on the Wednesday morning concentrated on motions 45-57. Again all were passed. I spoke on Composite C on NHS wholly owned subsidiaries. The amendment from the National Disabled Members Group was

included in this composite and was passionately debated by all. All motions were debated and we began the long journey back up north at the close of business.

Mark Fowles

Higher Education Conference

I attended the Higher Education 2018 conference in Chester as the disabled members delegate and found the conference to be very informative and enjoyable.

The main focus from the conference floor was about the high pay awards vice chancellors and senior management have had and how they have said that there is no money to pay our members a decent pay award. Delegates at the union's higher education conference in Chester voted for a pay campaign to include:

- A pay rise of £1,500 a year or 7.5% – whichever is higher;
- For all employers to pay the real living wage in the sector;
- Remove the gender pay gap by 2020;
- And an end to zero-hour contracts.

The Conference called for the campaign to be backed by the possibility of escalating, lawful industrial action co-ordinated with other higher education unions.

There was a debate on a number of motions highlighting areas of concern and campaigning priorities on pay. A debate on the high pay of senior managers, including vice chancellors, was highlighted. Members from Bath University, for instance, stated that the pay ratio between the vice chancellor and the lowest paid staff members is 30 to one. So by the end of the first day in a month, the vice chancellor has earned more than the lowest paid worker.

A common theme was that universities say 'we are all in it together' while vice chancellors and other senior management seem to have found the government's 'magic money tree!'

A freedom of information request shows that the average university vice chancellor's pay is between £278,000 to £451,000 a year.

Service group chair Denise Ward declared "members deserve the same consideration," fair pay for the many and not the few. Over the last few years members have lost the equivalent of between £1,600 - £8,500 due to pay restraints. "The gloves are off," declared Ms Ward as we should do everything we can to deliver a strong campaign on pay this year.

A decision was made by the conference delegates to suspend the normal business of motions and speeches for a dedicated practical discussion on how to build the campaign for decent pay across the sector.

Eric Atkinson

Local Government Conference

It was a very busy weekend in a rather cloudy Brighton while the rest of the country was bathed in sunshine, which made it a little easier for us to get through business at Local Government conference. Both Cath and I were honoured to represent disabled members this year and we did ourselves and our members proud.

Day 1 and business started with the voting in of tellers. There were no emergency motions and 5 composite motions. The annual report was moved and then it was on to business.



Lisa Dempster speaking at Local Government Conference

Both of our motions were heard during conference; motion 30 'Disabled members at the sharp end of the housing crisis' was moved by myself and Cath moved motion 43 'Further education area reviews – protecting disabled workers jobs'. Cath also got up to speak on Motion 33 'Social care cuts', talking about the impact on disabled workers but sadly a point of order was called before she got the chance.

We got the chance to speak on other motions, bringing in the perspective of disabled members, including Composite A – 'Say "NO" to National Assessment and Accreditation System of Social Workers' and Motion 15 'Trans equality is everyone's concern.'

Cath and I chaired the disabled members caucus meeting on the Sunday lunchtime and for the first time ever there was lunch provided! It was a very well attended meeting and we checked with members that their access needs were being met. The main complaint we had was around the chairs again...maybe one day the chairs will be suitable for all!

Speakers at conference included Millicent Gaile and Mandy Buckley from the Birmingham Homecare workers and Bill Petrie a Glasgow janitor, speaking about their strike action. They all received a well-deserved standing ovation. There was a

presentation on the LG pension scheme, a speaker from the Fawcett society, Sam Smethers and a very inspiring talk from Vilani de Souza Oliveira from the Brazilian local government workers union and another well-deserved standing ovation.

All in all it was a busy and productive conference and it was lovely to work so closely with Cath on behalf of our disabled members.

Lisa Dempster

Police and Justice Conference

Composite A was moved by North West and supported by National Women Committee and National Disabled Members Committee.

North West spoke about police staff and police officers needing support after being called out to difficult or disturbing cases and the need to make wellbeing a priority for all police staff, not just police officers.

The National Women's Committee spoke about the support police staff who have large workloads and the growing complicity of cases they are dealing with.

Three speakers spoke in support of the composite, they gave personal accounts of PTSD following a call out to an incident and to remind the public that police staff are equal to police officers when it comes to work related stress and dealing with disturbing or difficult cases.

Motion 14 'Assistive Technology' was the disabled members motion. Conference was reminded that software that is identified as a reasonable adjustment does not talk to force software so this can be more of a hindrance than a help. One speaker spoke in support of educating the manufacturer of assistive technology of the potential barriers of use. The motion was passed.

In total there were 33 Motions, 11 amendments, 1 composite and 2 Emergency Motions. we heard all the motions by 4pm on the first day.

David Smith

Water, Environment, Transport Conference

First up and most importantly our two motions passed without a hitch as did the other 23 motions presented.

The keynote speaker this year was shadow transport secretary Andy McDonald, and as could be expected, he dealt mainly with the Rail Franchises– we were in the heartland of Southern and Network South East, just after the challenges of the new timetable, followed by the emergency timetables.

“The recent and ongoing chaos on the railways would be something of the past,” he said, “Labour plans would put an end to this nonsense... the railways should be dedicated to providing public service, not profits for shareholders. We want a fully integrated railway which will be developed and operate as a whole.”

Mr McDonald added: “Unlike the current government, we would take responsibility for getting people to their destination...there is currently no vision for public transport at a national level...while around 1.7 billion train journeys are made each year, there are about five billion journeys made by bus. More women, the socially excluded and isolated communities rely on buses to get around.”

The Tories have done their best to destroy bus services and push them into a spiral of decline through disastrous deregulation, the catastrophic loss of services and fare rises,” he opined.

Moving onto the Environment Agency, Mr McDonald stated that “this has been the worst period for environmental policies in three decades” and “whilst UNISON workers have been doing such a valuable job protecting natural resources from flooding, the Tories have shown utter disregard for environmental resources, which are being sold off or exploited.”

For the water industry, he pointed to the abject failure of the water companies to show sense and restraint, “water should be seen as a human right and not a source of profit”.

“Since privatisation, water bills have risen by 40%, while shareholders have been paid £18bn in dividends and customers are being held to ransom, bringing water back under public ownership is the only solution.”

Chris Haywood

Energy Conference

The motions submitted by the National Disabled Members Committee were Motion 1 'Recruiting and Representing Disabled Members in the Energy Sector', which was moved by Claire Lewis, and Motion 2 'Bargaining for Good Mental Health Policies in Energy Workplaces', which was moved by Sarah Saunders.

Jenny Middleton, Chair of the Energy Service Group Executive opened the conference. Jenny said members in the energy sector are facing job losses, attacks on their terms and conditions and uncertainty about the future in what is a turbulent time for the energy industry. Jenny also said that the energy sector needs a bigger voice in UNISON.

Guest speaker Christina McAnea, Assistant General Secretary, also acknowledged the turbulent times for the energy sector and how important it was for Unison to continue to recruit. She also stated there were couple of anniversaries this year, 100 years for women's right to vote and the 25th Anniversary of Unison.

All the below motions were carried without any against except motion 9, 'Rationalisation'. One member spoke against the motion but the motion was still carried.

- 1 Recruiting and Representing Disabled Members in the Energy Sector
- 2 Bargaining for Good Mental-Health Policies in Energy Workplaces
- 3 Inclusive Workplace Policies - submitted by LGBT committee
- 4 Flexible Working - submitted by Women's Committee
- 5 Npower and SSC Merger - submitted by Yorkshire and Humberside region
- 6 Flexible Working - submitted by Northwest Gas
- 7 Support Leeds H21 Project - Hydrocarbon - submitted by Yorkshire and Humberside region
- 8 Stress in Call Centres and Operational Centres - submitted by LGBT committee
- 9 Rationalisation - Submitted by Energy Service Group Executive
- 10 Municipal Energy Companies submitted by Energy Service Group Executive
- 11 Report Back on Combining Energy Conference and Energy Branch Seminar - submitted by energy Service Group Executive

Claire Lewis and Sarah Saunders

Self Organised Group Conferences

Black Members Conference

My main tasks at this conference were to:

1. speak to and promote our motion 15 “Hate Crimes and mate crimes”
2. promote network meetings to increase involvement of disabled members in our conference
3. work with colleagues to provide contact information for NDMC organising.
4. produce a report!

The conference was well attended and had support across the regions. It discussed a wide range of motions and amendments on hate crime, rights at work, austerity, school exclusions, access to higher education, bullying and unfair employment practices. We were unable to debate the final 4 motions because of time and one motion, 25, was withdrawn because the region did not know about it.

We were welcomed by the Mayor of Liverpool and were addressed by Dave Prentis, Margaret McKee & Eleanor Smith MP. I spoke to our motion 15 on Hate Crimes and Mate crimes (a mate crime is when someone pretends to be your friend and then uses you instead of being a good friend). I explained the Equality and Human Rights Commission report that disabled people with a visible impairment and especially those who are black or Asian are more likely to be targeted for hate crime. Our motion was supported by another speaker. Conference voted for our motion unanimously!

I spoke to many people regarding promoting network meetings and distributed the mini handouts advertising the June and August meetings.

I also attended

- The Disabled Caucus meeting – which was reasonably well attended and was a good opportunity to mention the network meeting dates again.
- SE Regional Meeting.
- Health Service meeting.

Fringe meetings

- Hate Crime, case studies with the Crown Prosecution Service with Grace Mornfonlu
- Workforce Race Equality Standards – NHS England. [www.england.nhs.uk/search \(WRES\)](http://www.england.nhs.uk/search/WRES)

I'd like to thank the NDMC Black caucus who elected me to this role and built my confidence to speak, and Haifa Rashed for all her support.

Abdul Rahman

Women's Conference

Women's Conference had the largest attendance ever this year of approximately 800 UNISON women, and the passion of our union showed in the delegations representing their regions branches and self-organized groups.

All motions went through with the exception of motion 34.

Our motions from National Disabled Members Committee were 21 and 27 and were both well received. Conference was asked to support Motions 7 'Getting the balance right on the NEC' and 37 'Branch women's officers a rule book post' as our two motions to NDC. Both of these motions were agreed to go to NDC.

The guest speakers were good especially Dr Helen Pankhurst great granddaughter of Emily and granddaughter of Sylvia Pankhurst, and was promoting her book 'Deeds not Words' which covers five sections - Relic, Money, Identity, Violence and Culture. A number of women from various regions were given the chance to ask questions, and Helen graciously took the time to answer all. It was an inspiring session.

Elections took place at conference for representatives to National Delegates conference and the successful candidates announced as Pat Heron and Manjula Kumari. The bucket collection was shared between 'There for You' and the President's charity 'Rosemont House'.

Dave Prentis spoke on his continued support for the women's movement within our union. He made reference to the Suffrage movement and the fact that we share their colours as a union.

Our President, Margaret McKee, spoke on the continued struggle women are having at the hands of this government. She spoke to the fact that equality was far from achieved and that we needed to continue to fight to get equal rights for all.

There two film clips shown 'Generation Change 2030' and 'Gender Inequality' and both were extremely powerful.

The final day saw speaking times being reduced to get through business but that did not stop some meaty debates taking place, especially on the Nordic model and non-binary Inclusion.

This is a fast paced conference and I would recommend that if you have not attended this conference in the past that you definitely give it a go, but one point to remember is that there is a lot to get through in a short space of time, there are no lunch breaks as in other conferences, you take time as and when you can. But all in all a good experience.

Viv Thomson and Cath McGuinness

LGBT Conference

The LGBT Conference was held in Brighton on 17 – 19 November 2017. Vice-president Gordon McKay opened the conference with a very well received speech. He spoke about the history of discrimination against LGBT people including the attitude of the DUP towards LGBT issues and people and the value of campaigning work. He spoke about continuing bullying and harassment of the LGBT community and the role the UK had and has in shaping legislation and protection of LGBT rights within the commonwealth.

Other speakers at the conference were Christina McAnea, the Assistant General Secretary, who spoke about UNISON's and unions successes and the importance of being a union member and the Pay Up Now Campaign; Aderonke Apata, a Nigerian LGBT rights activist who fought to win her Asylum claim in the UK after initially being accused of lying about her sexuality. She also described the horrific conditions in UK detention centres that was very disturbing to hear; and Lord Ray Collins (Opposition Spokesperson for DFID and Foreign Affairs) from the All Parliamentary Group on Global LGBT rights (APPG) who spoke about the role of trade unions in global LGBT equality and the role the UK had and has in shaping legislation and protection of LGBT rights within the commonwealth.



Pauline Cole, Bev Miller, Neil Adams and Carl Phillips

The main themes of the conference were: fighting against discrimination, LGBT rights and inclusion, The LGBT self-organised group becoming more inclusive, Trans inclusion, Tackling hate crime, mental health issues within the LGBT community, LGBT rights post Brexit, Support for LGBT asylum seekers and refugees, and solidarity for persecuted LGBT communities worldwide.

Motions which were of interest to disabled members were:

Motion15 - Mental health and LGBT communities

Motion 16 - Generic mental health services for the trans community

Motion 17 - Support services after hate crime

Motion 27 - Mental health matters

Motion 34 - Care of older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people

I attended the Horrible Histories workshop which explored the UK's role in colonial and commonwealth attitudes to LGBT issues (36 of the 52 Commonwealth member states still criminalise consensual same-sex relations and don't recognise the rights of Trans people). This workshop was very popular and promoted interesting discussions.

I really enjoyed the conference, there was a strong sense of solidarity as always, it was well organised, thought provoking and the workshop I attended was excellent.

Sam Sharp

4. Caucus reports

Deaf (native British Sign Language users) caucus

Iain Scott Burdon and Gillian Jeffery were elected as this year's caucus representatives.

A real issue for our Deaf members this year has been Personal Independence Payments (PIP). We have received lots of complaints from Deaf people who had been assessed for PIP but they felt the award was incorrect, too low or incorrectly scored when they knew they had given lots of information, not just about communication but other things, however the DWP scored those as zero!



The Deaf (BSL users) caucus celebrating 25 years of UNISON

There are slight improvements with the interpreting services within the NHS but we have still received lots of experiences and stories from deaf people saying that the NHS forget to book interpreters, or interpreters haven't turned up or are undertrained interpreters who didn't understand what Deaf patients had said. That affects their access to healthcare and we are concerned about it, so the caucus decided to submit a motion around interpreters to this year's disabled members conference.

We had two new Deaf members attend our Deaf Caucus Network Day in London on June 27th which was really good. We met with UNISON's Conference team and were able to ask questions and feed in our perspective as Deaf members attending conferences. At our August meeting we met with UNISON's Communications team, so the Deaf caucus was really able to put forward our views around improving UNISON's communication with its Deaf members. The members who attended were amazed at how much the Deaf caucus had done for the Deaf members over the years and they were glad to see our UNISON website becoming more accessible.

Iain Scott Burdon

Black caucus

Lincoln Paul Davis and Bev Miller were elected as this year's caucus liaison reps and led the two Black disabled members network days at UNISON Centre.

The caucus worked hard to promote the network days this year, and we had a good attendance at both the June and the August meetings.

9 People attended the June meeting, and they were divided into three groups to draft motions. The motions were:

- Black Disabled Workers Professional Development and Activism
- Black Disabled Workers and the Disciplinary Process
- Welfare State



Black caucus members marking 70 years of the NHS

At the August network meeting, Gauri Goyal from UNISON's Strategic Organising Unit gave an excellent presentation about migrant workers. We also decided to submit a number of amendments to the national disabled members conference agenda.

Lincoln Paul Davis

Women's caucus

Two great Disabled Women's Network Days.

Both days were different but very much hives of activity at both. Everyone participated. In June Kathleen and Pat co-chaired the event, after much discussion we separated into 3 groups to work on 3 motions.

The 3 motions were:

- Disabled Women workers pay gap and professional development
- Breaking down barriers for Neurodiverse Women
- Sling the mesh - campaign for disabled women

We were delighted to see they were all accepted by SOC (delighted and relieved!).



Our disabled women's caucus network meeting

In the August meeting myself and Bev Miller co-chaired the network day where we had slightly less women due to work and holiday commitments nevertheless we had a really productive meeting. Allison Roche, UNISON's Policy Officer lead on Brexit, spoke to us about how Brexit may impact on equality rights.

We then worked through the motions deciding whether there was a disabled woman's point of view we wanted to add as an amendment to the motion, and there was a lot of discussion and interaction and passion between us all, which made the day a great success.

Kathleen Kennedy

Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) caucus

The caucus meeting at 2017 disabled members' conference saw our biggest attendance for a long while. Sam Sharp and Carl Phillips were elected for the 2018 committee cycle; also Pauline Cole and Phillip O'Shea were elected to represent LGBT disabled members on standing orders for this year's conference.

This year the caucus grew due to new members joining the national committee and supporting the work of the group. The LGBT caucus has been heavily involved with the work of the National Committee work plan. We have participated in both the working groups of the committee.

Lisa Dempster & Carl were elected to attend the TUC Disabled Workers Conference and moved UNISON's motion on behalf of the delegation. This was great opportunity to promote to other unions how UNISON works with self-organisation.

A number of the caucus members from the committee attended both Local Government and National Delegate Conference in Brighton this year; we were able to network with other delegates, encouraging them to get more involved with Disabled LGBT self-organisation. Caucus members spoke on a wide number of issues including supporting Non- Binary Members and Trans Equality.

We held two well attended network meetings in June and August at UNISON Centre. Carl gave an update on the national committee work plan and the caucus involvement in the work plan at the June meeting.



LGBT caucus members at their network meeting in June

We discussed a number of issues looking at communication and information provision for Disabled LGBT people around our sexual health, finding the lack of information could be putting our health at risk

We also talked in depth around working for non-binary equality; there was a varying level of knowledge around the issues faced by non-binary members within the group. We then proposed our second motion on this matter to start a wider conversation

within UNISON and our partners. This discussion also raised issues around how we gender specific language to identify people. Instead of using “she/he, him/her” at meetings we could refer to “the member in the red top” or “next speaker” etc. This included using the National LGBT Committee’s presentation on Non-Binary Inclusion. If you have not seen this please request a copy from disabilityissues@unison.co.uk.

We have attended as many Pride and LGBT events as we were able to.

Carl represented UNISON at an informal act of remembrance for Michael Causer at Knowsley Cemetery in August; this year marks the 10th Anniversary of his death due to a homophobic assault.

Carl Phillips

5. National Disabled Members Committee 2018

Eastern

Kathy Bole
Suzanne Williams

East Midlands

Chelsea Skervin (NDMC Co-Chair)
David Smith

Greater London

Maggie Griffin (NDMC Co-Chair)
Kim Silver

Northern

Cath McGuinness (NDMC Deputy Co-Chair)
Paul Shields

Northern Ireland

Amanda Sweetlove

North West

Lisa Dempster
Graeme Ellis

Scotland

Kathleen Kennedy
John Nisbet (NDMC Deputy Co-Chair)

South Eastern

Sarah Barwick
Abdul Rahman

South West

Jane Carter
Gerry Harrison

Cymru/Wales

Neelo Farr
Peter Williams

West Midlands

Paul Davis
Hilary Mellor

Yorkshire and Humberside

Heather Briggs
David Mills

Black members Caucus

Shayma Haque
Jacqueline Jones

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Caucus

Carl Phillips

Deaf (native BSL users) Caucus

Gillian Jeffrey
Iain Scott-Burdon

National Black Members Committee

Kuldeep Bajwa
Sudeep Bone/Sharon McClean (job share)

National LGBT Committee

Louise Ashworth
Bev Miller

National Women's Committee

Pat Heron
Carol Sewell

NEC

Angela Hamilton
Pam Howard
Sian Stockham

