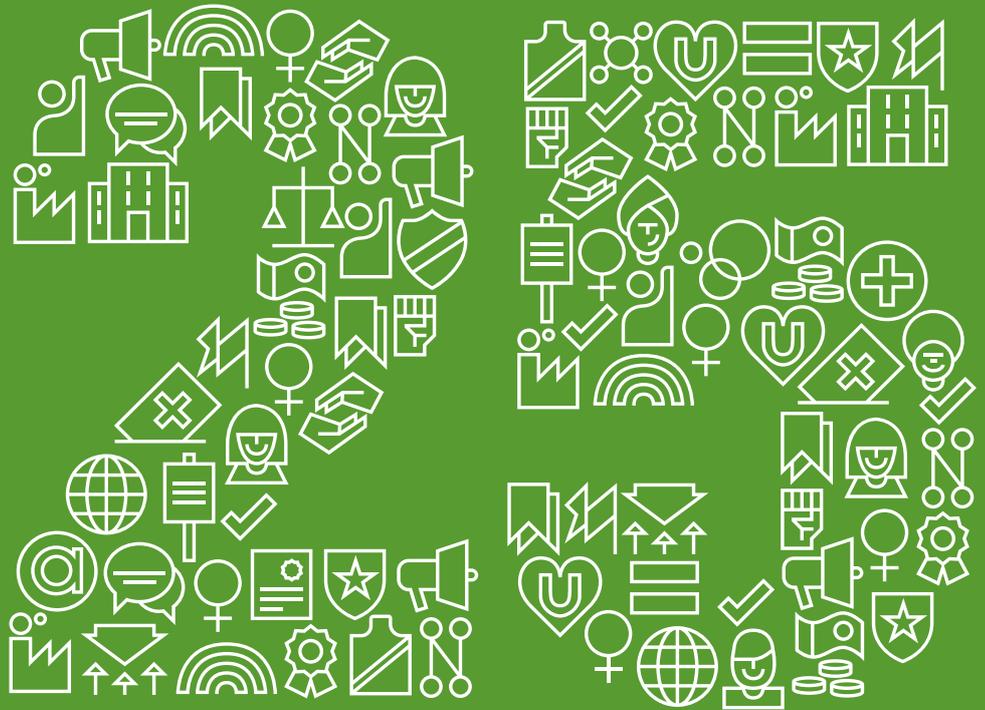


Stronger together



Celebrating 25 years in UNISON

**UNISON national lesbian,
gay, bisexual and
transgender committee**

Annual Report 2018

#ULGBT18

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This report of UNISON's national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members committee covers our work from November 2017, following the last annual conference, to the end of September 2018.

Actions on last year's conference decisions and monitoring information are included in a separate document. Please email out@unison.co.uk for a copy, or write to Susan Mawhood, UNISON LGBT equality, 130 Euston Road, London NW1 2AY.

UNISON is the UK's largest public service trade union. We have a proud history of working for equality for all. For more information on our work for LGBT equality, visit unison.org.uk/out.

Introduction from the co-chairs

With the Tory party having lost credibility over Brexit negotiations, its majority partnership with the dubious DUP causing disquiet, and the constant infighting, we need to step up our engagement with LGBT Labour and Labour Link to keep LGBT equality on the agenda. We must not lose hope, or sight of our ability to influence policy.

This Government's damaging programme of austerity and their attacks on the rights of working people and their unions is unprecedented. The continued agenda of savage cuts, attacks on our jobs, pay, terms and conditions, culling the services we provide and the services we use is a disgrace.

We need to remain in a constant state of readiness for the next elections. Despite the constant negative messages, we believe that a new generation of people will become active in UNISON to ensure that we continue to win rights for LGBT+ members.

Who knows what lies ahead on the campaign trail? We do know that together we will challenge the erosion of equality, we will fight for all our rights, and we will tackle discrimination in all its forms. Here or abroad, our continuing internationalist perspectives give us insight to the globalisation of employment and LGBT human rights activism

We are proud of the diversity of our group and are pleased that our bisexual, transgender, Black and disabled network days continue to grow in strength.

The agenda shows that we still have a lot to do. Enjoy networking, enjoy the interesting debates and enjoy conference!

Darienne Flemington and Dave Merchant



Recruiting and organising

We've said it before, and we'll say it again - Organising is the beginning, middle and end of our work as UNISON LGBT group. Without it, we are just another set of good ideas and aspirations. Fortunately, it's something we do well.

Our regional groups and national networks of bi, trans, Black and disabled LGBT members are the backbone of this. Of course, groups have their ups and downs, but what they achieve together over the course of the year is very impressive. You can read about what they've been up to in their reports below.

Nationally, we continue to support all this organising activity by providing regular information and up to date resources - via our webpages, Out in UNISON, the monthly LGBT e-bulletin, social media, the LGBT forum on the UNISON organising space, and advice on hand by email, on the phone or in person. We also bring activists together in twice yearly regional convenors meetings, network meetings, caucus meetings at other UNISON conferences, and a host of other initiatives.

The number of branch LGBT officers continues to grow steadily. We now have a hundred and sixty nationally trained, with the next training scheduled for Spring 2019. We are working with UNISON's learning and organising service to develop an e-note (online training module). We are delighted to see more and more involvement of branches at local pride events. This involvement that has reaped rewards already. Special mentions are always tricky but we would like to wave the rainbow flag for Isle of Wight Pride, their second ever pride, which was also UK Pride... an amazing achievement by the UNISON branch.

We also want to record our immense gratitude to Bromsgrove samba band Someone at the Door, who played through a marathon Pride in London march. It may not have been 26 miles, but it certainly felt like it! They kept our spirits high and gave UNISON a great profile on the march. Thanks too to the general political fund for supporting our attendance at key national events. In 2018, this was national UK Pride, Black Pride, Pride in London, Trans Pride in Brighton, Sparkle and BiCon.

Our presence at rallies, prides, community initiatives and other events raises the union's profile and lets our members know that we care deeply about what is happening to our public services, the communities we serve and our workplaces, and that we are there to support them through these difficult times. It is that visual impact that encourages members to recommend us to their family, friends and co-workers.

We continue to organise via calendar events, as well as geographical ones. There are a host of opportunities throughout the year to promote our values, resources and the benefits of union membership and activism. For LGBT History Month in February this year, we promoted an updated presentation of our proud history, which included information on the 30th anniversary of the infamous Section 28. This again had detailed notes pages so it can be – and indeed was – delivered by anyone.

We have marked Trans Day of Visibility, IDAHO BiT, Bi Visibility Day, world mental health day and national hate crime awareness week. We are preparing to mark Intersex Awareness Day, Trans Day of Remembrance and World AIDS Day. We hope to have a photo opportunity at this year's conference for World AIDS day.

Tackling under-representation is, as always, high on our organising programme. We are determined that our LGBT group and activities reflect the full diversity of LGBT members.

We ran a workshop at the National Black Members conference along with the Strategic Organising Unit on the impact of Brexit on Black LGBT people. This was really well received and the conversations and networking did not end at the end of the workshop.

We continue to publicise the importance of retaining LGBT members in activism when they retire. They are an invaluable organising resource. This is working well in some pockets; the challenge is to spread the good practice. We have supported retired LGBT activists in building their network, via LGBT and retired members' organisation. We are launching our retired members' fact sheet at conference.

We have produced guidance on being a good trans ally and continue to encourage all non-trans members to become allies for trans equality. We have been visible throughout the year supporting the trans community at events both here and abroad. We encourage branches and regions to include training on anti-LGBT harassment in training on tackling bullying and harassment as well as asking stewards to undertake equality training.

A continuing, major piece of organising work this year has been building non-binary inclusion. Work this year has included continued promotion of our factsheet 'Gender identity: non-binary inclusion'. We have produced a non-binary presentation, which has in depth notes, allowing anyone to deliver it. This presentation has been given at numerous events and training sessions. We continue to check UNISON's myriad systems and procedures and correct them where necessary. Following the young members' motion to the 2017 LGBT conference, we have consulted widely on becoming a more inclusive group by adding a plus (+) to our name. The overwhelming view of members was that we should add the plus. We have submitted a rule change as one of motions to 2019 National Delegate Conference. Our second motion is a policy motion on the same issue, explaining why we want to add the plus. We are under no illusions; we will have to work hard to get this passed at National Delegate Conference. We are going to have to win hearts and minds throughout UNISON, and we are going to need your help to do this.

We have packed out the programme for this year's conference, with a host of side events and drop-in sessions. Something for everyone!

Bargaining

It's been a busy year on the bargaining front. Our main role is supporting and informing the negotiation of decent workplace policy and practice. We do this by providing advice and guides for reps, which we update at least annually. Our core advice includes bargaining guides on LGB, trans and bi equality. Our ongoing challenge is getting this into the hands, hearts and brains of negotiators. We continue to do this by working with our service groups, training, awareness raising, and publicity. The more reps we have that are LGBT, the easier this task.

Following the launch at the 2017 LGBT conference of the trans equality guide and model policy, we know of a number of employers that have used the model as a basis for their own workplace policy. We are also aware that there are still a large number of employers that either don't have a trans policy or have one that isn't fit for purpose. We continue to work with service groups to promote the model policy and encourage employers to adopt it.

We have worked collaboratively with the other self organised groups, raising issues around the impact of discrimination on mental health wellbeing. We have also worked with them closely on hate crime.

Non-binary inclusion has continued to be a major area of work this year. We continue to work with all parts of the union calling for national and local agreements to be reviewed for unnecessary gendering, seeking inclusive language that raises awareness of non-binary identities, and negotiating inclusive policies, practices and procedures. We produced a presentation on non-binary inclusion, which has been shared widely. The presentation has been given to each of the national self organised groups and given at regional trainings. We have also circulated a model motion on non-binary inclusion that we encourage members to submit to their regional councils.



The LGBT group continues to promote UNISON's work on intersex equality, publicising the bargaining factsheet which had its first outing at LGBT conference last year. There is a

determination that LGBT members will be good intersex equality allies. Activists attending the Transgender Europe conference helped run a workshop on intersex equality. .

As ever, our group was ably represented by all the delegates elected to service group conferences. Our thanks to them.

Dave kicked off the year, calling for action on LGBT equality, and for branches to encourage members to complete staff monitoring data at higher education conference. Darryl moved our motions on organising for LGBT equality and on UNISON's Pay Up Now campaign at the community sector conference. Andy and Hannah spoke at health conference on negotiating good trans policies and called for effective equality and diversity in the Health sector.

Maz at energy conference and Cat at water, environment and transport conference took forward our motions on stress in call and operational centres. This followed on from 2017 motion UNISON's Call Centre Charter and called for a survey of branches with call and operation centre staff to find out if their employer had signed up to the Call Centre Charter. Our second motion was inclusive work places, introducing non-binary issues and calling for inclusive language, flexibility in gendered dress codes and the option of non-gendered changing and toilet facilities.

Anu and Bev moved our motions at local government conference on the impact of cuts on LGBT workers and equality, and on inclusive work places calling for (amongst other things) inclusive practices and procedures across our local government workplaces. They also moved LGBT amendments on workforce mental health and apprenticeships.

Shortly before LGBT conference, Lucy and Katrina will have represented us at police and justice conference. Our motion there is formalising the link between UNISON and the LGBT Police Association. We have submitted amendments on raising the profile of equalities in the police service and Mental Health policies in police and justice workplaces. The latter has been ruled out of order, so Lucy and Katrina will be visiting the standing orders committee to try and get them to change their mind!

We continue to work closely with the service groups. This work takes place in the context of the devastating and multilayered impact of cuts on LGBT workers and our fight against austerity and to smash the public sector pay cap. LGBT members are at the heart of that fight.

Campaigning

The work of the national LGBT committee reflects UNISON's priorities, and this year has been no different.

We have continued to publicise UNISON's Pay up now, Social care and Save the NHS campaigns. We continue to make UNISON's Public Service Champions campaign our own, and have highlighted the work of LGBT Public Service Champions in editions of Out in UNISON and also used Public Service Champions selfie frames whilst out and about at Prides this year.

2018 has also brought us some surprises on the campaigning front, as well as a few challenges.

At the end of April, we welcomed a Government briefing paper, "Pensions: civil partnerships and same sex marriages", produced in response to the outcome in Walker v Innospec [2017] UKSC 47. This followed on from HM Treasury confirmation in March that there would be equalisation of the benefits for same-sex couples in public service pension schemes. The briefing paper outlined the government's intention to introduce regulatory changes that will provide survivors of same-sex marriages and civil partnerships the same pension provision as widows of opposite sex marriages. This means service from 1 April 1972, or 6 April 1978 if the marriage was after the last day pensionable service, will now be counted. Whilst this addresses some long fought for equality in pension provision, the proposals in the briefing paper specifically exclude the same provision for widowers of opposite sex marriages, so inequality remains for some, including some of our trans members. However, at the time of writing, no draft legislation has been proposed and we wait to see how this will develop.

We also welcomed the Supreme Court ruling in the case brought by Rebecca Steinfeld and Charles Keidan, that restricting civil partnerships to same-sex couples was discriminatory. Although this was not about equalling LGBT rights, our fight was never to have something the heterosexual population could not. It was always about being treated equally. Opening Civil Partnership to opposite sex couples addresses that inequality.



We continued to challenge inequality in marriage also, with our on-going support for the Northern Ireland (NI) equal marriage campaign. Joining colleagues from Labour Party Irish Society in Westminster to support Conor McGinn private members Bill for same sex marriage in Northern Ireland.

Trans equality was a major area of work for us in 2018. We took part in a joint union briefing for Labour MPs and Peers at Westminster in March, which saw our own James Anthony

(and chair of UNISON's NEC Policy, Development, Campaign Committee) as one of the keynote speakers along with Angela Eagle MP, Maria Exell, chair of the TUC LGBT+ committee and James Morton from Scottish Transgender Alliance.

At this year's National Delegate Conference we held a very successful fringe meeting on trans equality, using the briefing that we produced for the Westminster event, and our new trans ally leaflet. We also ran a successful workshop at UK Black Pride, again on trans equality.

At the beginning of July, we welcomed the start of the Government's consultation on reforming the Gender Recognition Act (GRA) 2004 which, at the time of writing, is in full swing. This followed the Scottish Government's consultation between November 2017 and March 2018. UNISON responded to both consultations and we have taken every opportunity to dispel myths around the GRA and highlight the reforms needed.

Unfortunately, the prospect of reform of the GRA has surfaced negative and transphobic elements in society and, regrettably, within the trade union and labour movements; the very places you would expect tolerance and equality to prevail. The backlash from the announcement of the review has resulted in the right-wing media, and anti-trans groups claiming to speak for feminists, helping to spread disinformation, fear, and hurtful lies such as claims that reform will make it easier for abusers to enter women's spaces. This was evident during this year's Pride in London, with anti-trans activists pushing to the front with their message of hate. This was seen as an affront to all that Pride stands for and rightly condemned. We continue to challenge anti-trans views and work to address the hateful myths these people try to purvey.

Blood donation rules in Northern Ireland remain unequal to the rest of the UK. Through our continued work to address this, UNISON held a conference in September in Belfast to look at the factual information around the ban on men who have sex with men donating blood. We worked with the Chief Medical Officer and other health care professionals to address the issue and to request parity with the rest of the UK.

We have continued to raise awareness of mental health, publicising UNISON's mental health matters campaign and bargaining guidance. We continued to promote the NatCen findings which raise the impact on LGBT people and services that austerity and the cuts agenda continue to have and we raised awareness of the needs of older LGBT people.

Our work to tackle hate crime and the far right continues. This year's joint equality fringe at National Delegate Conference highlighted the need for hate crime legislation to be reviewed and how current legislation provides differing levels of protection, depending on the protected characteristics it aims to support. Simply "levelling-up" legislation is increasingly seen as inadequate, with the University of Sussex recommending a completely new approach. We also continued to raise awareness of the effects of hate crime in the workplace, welcoming and publicising UNISON's national negotiating guidance which includes information on help and support branches can provide for members, as well as guidance on negotiating workplace hate crime and hate incident policies.

International

One of our long standing objectives is to place LGBT rights firmly on the agenda of international union bodies and there have been some solid steps forward this year. Our global union federations, Public Services International and Education International, have long co-operated on their LGBT programmes and UNISON has been involved from the beginning. 2017 LGBT conference asked us to work with PSI and EI to encourage other global union federations to develop their work on LGBTI equality. We were also asked to work towards securing LGBT rights on the agenda of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the UN body which is the only international organisation empowered to set standards for workers rights, and to seek to develop a campaign towards the ILO to explicitly confirm that ILO Convention 111 on discrimination covers LGBTI workers

The 4th joint PSI/EI LGBTI forum was held in October 2017 in Geneva, immediately prior to the PSI Congress. UNISON gave a well-received presentation setting out our history of LGBT organising.

Sharon Burrows, General Secretary of the International Confederation of Trade Unions, was a speaker at the Forum. Sharon referred to the recent decision by the Council of Global Unions to set up a joint working group on LGBTI issues, and gave a commitment, as Secretary of the Council, to get the group up and running as soon as possible. This is a big step forward, and UNISON has been invited to the first meeting of the working group which takes place in Geneva this October.

There was also a presentation on “The ILO’s work on LGBTQI policies” from Shauna Olney, Chief of the Gender, Equality and Diversity branch at the ILO. Shauna said that LGBT issues were ‘under the radar’ at the ILO until a few years ago, but things were changing. For example, in the current discussions on an international treaty on ‘violence and harassment against women and men’, the trade unions were pushing for LGBTI issues to be explicitly included and that ‘it might happen’, which would, she said, ‘have been unimaginable 10 years ago’.

The Programme of Action 2018 – 2022 agreed by PSI Congress incorporated amendments submitted by UNISON to make specific references to discrimination against intersex workers and a commitment for PSI to work for the explicit confirmation that ILO Convention 111 covers LGBTI workers.

One of the motions selected by Conference for 2018 National Delegate Conference was ‘Our Place on the global stage post Brexit’, which noted that opportunities to take our campaigns forward included the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) being hosted by the UK in April. Following the invitation to Lord Collins of Highbury, Ray Collins - a founding member of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Global LGBT Rights - to address our 2017 conference, we worked with him and the TUC to give a voice to LGBT activists from Commonwealth countries and to provide an opportunity for dialogue between them and the Commonwealth trade union group.

We are grateful to the NEC international committee for facilitating UNISON hosting a networking meeting during the CHOGM, which was attended by around 80 people including Commonwealth trade unionists, Labour party Commonwealth guests, representatives of The Commonwealth Equality Network (the only LGBT group with Commonwealth accredited status), UNISON activists, TUC representatives and other invited guests. Paul

Glover spoke on behalf of UNISON and chaired the event, with other speeches from Ray Collins, Gabi Calleja and Steve Letsike of TCEN and Joel Odigie from ITUC-Africa.

Our CHOGM meeting aimed to highlight the role of unions in working for LGBT equality. A briefing prepared for the meeting showed how progress that has been made over the years and how, increasingly, it is on the agenda of our various global union bodies. None of the progress has happened by chance and UNISON has been key to much of it. We continue to work with sister unions and were invited by the Swedish civil service union to speak at a seminar on trade unions and LGBT rights during Europride 2018 in Stockholm.

ILGA, the international LGBTI association – continues to be a focus for our international work. ILGA is a democratic organisation with over 1,200 global member organisations. Of that, 500 member organisations are in 45 countries of the European and Central Asian region alone. Last year, for the first time, we led the collection of regional group affiliation fees and submitted them all to ILGA in one go. This has been a great success and this year, for the first time, we have a full set of paid up regional LGBT affiliations, as well as the national LGBT affiliation.

We are pleased to report that UNISON's Darienne Flemington was re-elected to the ILGA-Europe Board at last year's ILGA Europe conference with the highest number of votes of any candidate, in a very competitive field. This is all credit to her, but also to UNISON's reputation in ILGA. UNISON hosted an ILGA-Europe supporters' reception this spring, demonstrating the fact that we are a pivotal UK member.

The next ILGA world conference takes place in March 2019 in New Zealand. We are in discussion with colleagues in sister unions involved in ILGA (from Europe, North and South America) about a pre-conference on workplace equality and the role of unions.

Although most of the furore over trans equality this year has been in the UK, it is not taking place in isolation and we are keen to share our learning and learn from others. We sent a delegation of 2 to this year's Transgender Europe Council – a large conference of trans people and allies - in Antwerp at the end of June.

We continue to focus our LGBT work on UNISON's international priorities. As well as international trade deals and solidarity with sister unions, these include Palestine solidarity, justice for Colombia, Turkey, and modern slavery.

We continue our work to raise LGBT awareness of the reality of the Israeli occupation, the importance of supporting the boycott, sanctions and divestment campaign, and why LGBT people should not go on holiday to Israel. We are now looking to re-double our efforts in the light of Israel winning Eurovision 2018, in support of the call from Palestinian organisations for a boycott of Eurovision 2019 if it is held in Israel.

Many of you will be familiar with ILGA's annual world maps of LGB laws and Transgender Europe's map of trans laws. One thing about these maps is that they need regularly updating as progress is made in different parts of the world, and this year is no exception. But no change in law will affect more people than the ruling by India's highest court in September that the country's colonial-era law banning sex "against the order of nature" was unconstitutional. The ruling has wide and far-reaching implications, not just for India, but also for other countries in the Commonwealth that still enshrine the British morality of the Victorian era in their laws.

We have submitted motions to this year's LGBT conference on solidarity initiatives to support LGBT people in Turkey and Colombia, and on promoting ethical trading with LGBT organisations we work with, including Pride committees.

From the caucuses

Bisexual members

We have had a continued presence in Out In UNISON magazine over the year, from photos and articles about the Bi network day and Bi Pride to photos taken of us at various events.

We had our network day on Thursday 19th July; more people attended than in previous years with a mix of regular faces and new ones. This is positive as the Bi caucus is continuing to grow in numbers.

Our network day kicked off with a presentation from the chair of Bi Pride, as we felt it would be good to get a sense of why Bi Pride has come about and what its aims are for the future. They have recently become a registered charity, and they have worked hard to have a presence at many prides across the country, maintain an ever growing on line presence and plan for the first annual Bi Pride.

We spent a good deal of time discussing motions for conference at network day and the consensus was that we need to continue to have something on the agenda around racism in bi community spaces.



We successfully delivered a workshop at Bi Con in Salford this year. This year's workshop was on being out and Bi on the workplace. This was a good event with many attendees, and lots of audience participation; we had some lovely feedback on how people found speaking with others about reasons for being out in the workplace and why being Bi is a trade union issue. We also had a stall all weekend at Bi Con, which led to lots of people dropping by for materials and just for a chat about UNISON.

We will be working closely with Bi Pride over the next few months, as we will have a presence at the first Bi Pride which takes place March 2019.

We planned for Bi Visibility day ensuring that our Facebook page (UNISON Bi Caucus) was updated with relevant information regarding events. We would also encourage Bi members to log in periodically to help reduce isolation.

Black members

Throughout 2018 the Black LGBT caucus, convened by Anu Prashar and Bev Miller has worked with the national LGBT committee.

Our representatives on the National Black Members Committee (NBMC) were Bev Miller and Davis Mac-Iyalla. Bev was elected communications officer for the NBMC and has

discussed with UNISON's strategic organising unit ways to raise the profile of Black activism in UNISON.

Bev spoke strongly on non-binary issues at NBMC meetings, and for the National Women's Committee rule change for general seats. Unfortunately she was in the minority on the NBMC who voted to oppose the rule change.

At National Delegate Conference, Bev represented the national LGBT conference and spoke in favour of the rule change, highlighting that a Black non-binary member could not stand for a Black Members' seat.

The LGBT caucus of the NBMC has not met again in 2018. Work needs to be done to increase the participation of Black LGBT members in regional and branch Black members' groups. Encouragement and training is needed to give Black LGBT members the confidence to stand for positions within Black self organisation.

Bev has written articles for Black Action and motions to the National Black Members' Conference. She will also be representing the NBMC at the 2019 National Women's Conference.

Dettie Gould stood down as a member of the TUC LGBT+ committee after representing UNISON for a number of years. Dettie chaired part of the TUC LGBT+ conference contributing to the smooth running of the conference. The UNISON delegation had the largest number of Black members at the conference, a point which Bev highlighted in her speech. Anu remains one of UNISON's representatives on the TUC LGBT+ committee.

Members of the Black LGBT caucus volunteered to help at UK Black Pride on the UNISON stall. We spent time engaging with people attending, telling them the benefits of being a member and encouraging them to join.

Black LGBT members ran a workshop on trans inclusivity at UK Black Pride. This was well attended, with a lively question and answer session. A number of people came to the stall after the workshop for more information and to praise UNISON for the work that they do on trans issues.



The Black LGBT network meeting, held in September, was well attended, enjoyable, and informative. We had a thought provoking presentation from Leila Zadeh from UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group on the findings included in their 'still falling short' report. This report highlights the difficulties faced by LGBT asylum seekers.

Anu reported back from the Black Members Conference 2018 and Bev reported on the work of the National

Black members committee. Caucus members at the meeting discussed motions and amendments to the LGBT conference and motions to the National Black Members' Conference 2019. We also made nominations to the 2019 LGBT conference standing

orders committee, TUC LGBT+ conference, National Delegate Conference and service group conferences.

We have enjoyed representing the caucus this year, and look forward to supporting the name change of the LGBT group and the inclusion of non-binary members in UNISON's structures

Disabled members

LGBT disabled caucus members have worked with the national LGBT committee in many areas, throughout 2018, including those brought by 2017's LGBT conference decisions and other work which arose during the year.

Bev Miller and Louise Ashworth were elected as the National LGBT Committee representatives on the National Disabled Members' Committee (NDMC), putting the Disabled LGBT members' perspective on many issues. Louise gave a presentation on non-binary inclusion at one of the NDMC meetings which was followed by a debate on general and reserved seats.

Issues throughout the year that we worked on included: Input into Bargaining Unit's Mental Health guidance, Reasonable Adjustments guidance, Accessibility Passports and raising awareness of intersex Equality.

The non-binary inclusion presentation was also given at the NDMC LGBT network meeting in August, resulting in a motion to Disabled Members' Conference on Including Disabled Non-Binary People in Our Self Organised Groups. There was also a discussion on the proposal to be re-named LGBT+.

At this year's Disabled Members Conference, Bev will be one of the Chairs as well as the DJ for the social!

As always, LGBT disabled members play an active role in the work of the national LGBT sub-committees. Although we have reserved seats on the Campaigns and Policy Development (CPD) and the Organising and Development (OD) sub-Committees, we did not elect to our seat on the OD sub-committee this year. However, members of this sub-committee are also members of the disabled caucus, which ensures our voice is heard. Our work focus here was resolution 2, "Building a bedrock of LGBT voices against intolerance", Resolution 15, "Mental health and LGBT communities" and Resolution 16 "Mental health services for the Trans community".

Lucy Power and Neil Adams were on the CPD sub-committee, with Neil in the reserved caucus seat. Work here with a disability focus included Resolution 27, "Mental Health Matters"; and Resolution 34, "Care of older lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people".

Disabled members are also active on the LGBT committee's International sub-committee.

Members of our caucus also represent the National LGBT Committee on other bodies, ensuring we have an influence. For example, Dettie Gould sat on the TUC LGBT+ committee. Many of our members were even more active at various community events and prides throughout the UK this year.

It is with sadness that we said goodbye to Gerard McGrath, one of our co-convenors, who stepped down just before our network day, and we wish him all the best in his future endeavours. As such, our network day was run by our remaining co-convenor, Lucy. Having only recently taken over, Lucy provided a brief update on the work of the caucus

throughout the year. We were fortunate enough to be joined by Quinn Roache, policy officer in the TUC's equalities and strategy department, focusing on LGBT+ and disabled workers. He had requested some time with our disabled caucus to understand the issues faced by disabled LGBT members, and disabled Black LGBT members in health and social care settings. Quinn is feeding his findings into the Women and Equalities Select Committee. Those attending the network day were able to provide some excellent examples from the personal experiences both in service delivery, and as service users.

Louise led an excellent discussion regarding the social model of disability, and how other models of disability that undermine our independence and autonomy are still prevalent in the health and social care system - not to mention the impact these less helpful models continue to have when trying to access financial support. There was a lively discussion, and feedback indicated that awareness of how these models influence people daily are not as well understood as they could be.

There was a discussion on a point raised by one of our members regarding the separate recording of disability leave. UNISON is in the process of updating their model disability leave agreement, for use in the workplace, and we encourage branches to engage with their employers around its use. We also discussed and debated motions and amendments for this year's conference, as well as electing Francis Fenton as our new caucus representative, following Gerard stepping down.



Transgender members

The trans caucus has been very busy during 2018. We have run workshops and panel discussions at various events, including workshops on "Transition at Work" at Sparkle, and on "Trans Rights at Work" at an event held by Gendered Intelligence.

We gave input about the wording for the sexual orientation / gender identity question for the annual UNISON equality survey, and on the Higher Education Statistics Agency's proposed changes to their recording of sex and gender.

Throughout the year, we have continued to receive trans equality policies for comment from various UNISON activists and employers. These vary in quality, but we continue to provide constructive feedback. The UNISON logo was also added to the national police guidance on trans inclusion. Our Model Trans Equality Policy is now available on the website, following its launch at last year's National LGBT Conference, and we are pleased that it has been taken up by a number of employers, with one implementing a policy heavily based on it, and others working on policies using ours as a guide.

A large amount of our work this year focussed on preparing for the Gender Recognition Act (GRA) consultation. This included a briefing at the House of Lords for representatives of the

Parliamentary Labour Party, which was attended by Labour MPs and peers, and equality leaders from the TUC and other unions. UNISON was one of the main organisers of the event, and as part of this we participated in a number of phone conferences and spoke at the event, outlining the work that we have been undertaking. Once the consultation opened, we prepared our response and encouraged others – branches, regions and individuals – to respond also.

We also prepared a model motion and briefing paper for branches, which can easily be adapted for use elsewhere such as Constituency Labour Party meetings (CLP's), both of which proved to be very popular.

We also held a panel event for our fringe meeting at National Delegates Conference covering both the GRA consultation and general questions about trans related issues. We were very pleased that James Morton from the Scottish Trans Alliance was able to join us



in Brighton for this. We repeated this format again when we were offered the chance to hold a workshop at UK Black Pride, and once again, this drew a good-sized audience.

This year we sent two UNISON delegates to the Transgender Europe (TGEU) conference in Antwerp. TGEU began in 2005, and is the only pan-European trans organisation.

Both delegates involved themselves in organising at the conference, by running workshops and by setting up a caucus meeting for disabled attendees.

We met with the providers of the “Female Cancer Care” service promoted by UNISON. They listened to our concerns about the product on offer, and the fact that the gendering of it meant that it excluded the majority of trans people. They are currently looking to find a suitable new product, and have agreed to liaise with us to ensure that the one chosen is inclusive.

Finally, there have been motions and amendments on trans equality, particularly around the consultation on the Gender Recognition Act and non-binary inclusion, sent to many different conferences – including Labour Link, National Delegates Conference, TUC LGBT+ Conference and service group conferences – and we have contributed to the discussion around these motions. These ensure that UNISON, and the wider Trade Union and Labour movements, have robust trans inclusive policies in place. We look forward to strengthening these and fighting for trans equality in the workplace and beyond over the coming year.

In the regions

Eastern

2018 has seen its ups and downs for the Eastern Region LGBT Committee. 2017 National LGBT conference saw more delegates from Eastern Region than ever before. We hoped to build on that, but our numbers remain low. We added to our committee briefly, on the back of our successful and well attended AGM and Policy weekend, but with members' jobs at risk and austerity measures meaning facility time being cut, this slowly declined again.

LGBT History Month saw several employers in the Eastern Region fly rainbow flags from their buildings and some branches ran stalls in their workplaces, which was wonderful to see.

This spring we said goodbye to our Regional LGBT Lead, Linda Durrant - we wish her well for the future. We welcome Alex as our new lead, who brings with him committee and LGBT experience. We look forward to working with him going forward and to continue to grow and develop further to face new challenges head-on.



Successful funding bids meant we could attend a number of Pride events, including; Essex in Chelmsford, Norwich, Ely, Kings Lynn, Colchester and Herts in Hemel Hempstead. 2018 was Kings Lynn and Ely first event with Colchester in its second year. Southend-on-Sea held a week-long event but we were unable to attend this year. Unfortunately there was no Suffolk Pride but a coalition of LGBT groups in Suffolk hope to put on a Pride event next summer. We raffled off LGBT Rainbow Bears, at each event, to raise money for

UNISON's "There for You" charity; they were a great hit with both our young and our more mature visitors!

After submitting a successful funding bid to hold a One Day Conference in 2018, this has been deferred to 2019. Our aim is to enlighten, raise awareness and educate branches and activists on LGBT issues and help grow our pool of LGBT Officers in branches, sparking interest in the work we carry out as a region. On a positive note, Suffolk has a growing joint Branch SOG, with 6 branches being invited to join with ours to create a viable SOG within the region. We have planned a meeting with our local MP, Sandy Martin, and are inviting councillors and the head of Suffolk County Council to future meetings. We are using this platform to lobby for finance and support for Suffolk Pride 2019. We are also posing questions on hate crimes and cuts to services that disproportionately affect the LGBT community, and raising awareness of other LGBT issues.

A new piece of literature that we at Eastern Region are very proud of is the development of a Transgender Guide for Employers. This will be made available to branches and we hope it will be a useful tool to promote and make use of.

Moving onwards we aim to put into action long awaited plans to re-jig our meeting schedule. We hope this will help our recruitment plans align to National LGBT Conference and work alongside the National LGBT Workplan. Additionally, we aim to develop a regional LGBT Newsletter to use as a recruitment tool.

With equalities being at the bottom of the pile in organisations where funding is concerned, we need to stand together to ensure it does not disappear off the agenda altogether. Lip service on addressing Hate Crime within our communities needs to see some action.

Here's to some strong and positive work in the coming year ahead.

East Midlands

The East Midlands Regional LGBT group has been particularly energised this year. Much of the credit for this must go to our co-chair Scott Linnett, who is supported at present by Emma Procter. Regional office restructuring has caused some disruption to our administrative support, but this is being addressed as a priority. Our representation within UNISON regional structures, by several committed activists, remains robust. We meet four times a year, and try to vary the location of these meetings throughout the region. The regional drive to reduce costs and encourage collaboration between the self organised groups by having 'Equalities' meetings instead of separate meetings of LGBT, Disabled, Women's and Black members has had some success. The logistics of this, and the need for confidentiality of our group in particular, have presented a challenge however. Sean Bowler and Donna Rebose continue as our National Committee representatives.

One of our priorities this past year has been to focus on the experiences of, 'older LGBT people in residential care facilities', and this work will continue. We will be liaising with stakeholders, including Age UK, Dementia UK, our fellow Unions and the providers themselves. While Local Authority staff are generally receiving some training in LGBT awareness, the provision in the private sector appears somewhat patchy and we are keen to campaign and offer support in this area. In line with the priority of the wider union, we will be focussing on recruiting and supporting young members in 2018-19. Our recent budget bid reflected our continuing commitment to international issues through an ILGA affiliation.

While the East Midlands LGBT group remains vibrant, hard working and enthusiastic, we have had some difficulty in attracting women members who are able to make the commitment required to undertake the role of co-chair. Our recruitment initiatives in the future will reflect this. In Nottingham City, UNISON will be the first trade union to have a stall at the Nottingham Women's Centre in Autumn 2018. We hope to expand on this through liaisons with other women's groups in the future.

Recruitment initiatives elsewhere have included our ongoing representation at Prides across the region, Prides which are growing in number and size. We have also continued to make our presence felt on Idaho Day, Bi Visibility Day and Trans Day of Remembrance. In 2017 we produced a range of postcards in support of these events, together with two-person banners and pop-up exhibition displays. This year we have produced a range of one-person flags for greater flexibility and increased visibility. In addition we are in the process of updating our constitution.

This year, UNISON East Midlands LGBT has benefitted from the work of a group of committed activists who have reviewed the group's structure and activities, have made changes, and clarified our direction for the future in our Action Plan.

While the future looks bright, we have sadly, however, lost one of our most committed activists, who passed away earlier this year: Phil Smith, Notts County UNISON LGBT Officer. Goodbye Phil, you were awesome, you will be missed.

Cymru/Wales

It has been a busy year again for LGBT UNISON in Cymru/ Wales. As a group we have met a number of times with good representation from all over the region from all service groups and seen the group grow in numbers and strength, knowledge, and skills. We aim to be visible throughout the regions structures with members of the group active from branch level to service group level, regionally and nationally, and actively liaising with the other self organised groups in the region.

We participate in as many of the regional recruitment campaigns and events as we can encouraging participation from LGBT members in Cymru/ Wales. This included the brilliant Merthyr Rising music and arts festival which celebrates the symbolic event of unrest in a large working class population of Merthyr Tydfil where it is said that the red flag was flown for the first time in 1831.

We have supported our region's Pride events with the main one being Pride Cymru which saw us march through the streets of Cardiff with some new banners and flags for the first time in a few years, which went down well with existing members and new members recruited at the event. Young people attending were interested to hear what a Trade Union does and all that UNISON has achieved for its members over the last 25 years nationally and in Cymru/ Wales.

Each year the group holds a residential development weekend which is always well attended. This year the theme was Conference and Motions and it built on the group's skills in motion writing, speaking on motions and the general understanding of how conference business works to change and influence the direction the union takes on policy, and how important our voice is; especially important for newer members and people who find themselves for the first time at conference.

Another crucial role the LGBT group in Cymru/ Wales fulfils is providing peer support to its members who continue to remain as active as much as they can in their workplaces, branches, regionally, and nationally despite the continued disproportionate pressures of austerity and attacks on terms and conditions that we are all experiencing.

The group continue to affiliate to ILGA and support the region with Hope Not Hate and Show Racism the Red Card campaigns.

Greater London

We've had a full year in the London region doing as much recruitment, campaigning and organising as we could. The new committee secretary and admin officer, Mel Russell and Cally Thompson, now have their feet firmly under the table, and the committee was ably steered through the year by our chairs, Anu Prashar and Darryl Strawson. We now have more meetings open to all in the regional group, and more meetings at the weekend rather than in the week.

At our policy day in February we reviewed last year's conference decisions and factored them into a rolling workplan. The day included planning sessions on being a trans ally, and on mobilising our members for the London local elections in May.

We continue to be involved in the work of the region, and to send representatives to regional committees, including the Diversity Forum and the Europe and International Committee.

We submitted a motion on non-binary issues to the Regional Council AGM in February, which was a 'regionalised' version of the LGBT conference motion to 2018 National Delegate Conference. The motion was passed overwhelmingly, and work to implement the actions called for in the motion is underway. The non-binary presentation has been given at a briefing for branches and to a regional organisers' training. Work has also begun on reviewing the various registration/attendance forms in use in the region.

The speakers at our Organising and Training Day in March were Tom Copley (out LGBT member of the Greater London Authority), Honor Cohen from LGBT Labour, Maggi Ferncombe (Regional Secretary), Deirdre Costigan (UNISON National Disability Officer) and Carola Towle. Tom spoke about London's housing crisis, and Hannah about LGBT Labour campaigning in the run up to the London council elections in May. Deirdre gave a presentation on the new UNISON collective bargaining guidance on mental health, and Carola gave a presentation on gender equality and non-binary inclusion. There were also workshops on setting up and sustaining branch LGBT groups and on practical skills for supporting LGBT members in the workplace, and an International quiz.

We attended Pride in London and group members also assisted with the national stall. The stall was in Soho Square for the first time, and was the only stand alone trade union stall present in the square. There was a steady stream of interest during the earlier part of the day, when the square was fairly quiet. As the square became more and more packed during the afternoon, people were largely focussed on getting into the central square (toilets, somewhere to sit down.) rather than going round the stalls. The general feeling was that the location was preferable to Trafalgar Square, but that it might be helpful for this location to look at 'touring the square' (and particularly the queues to get in it) with materials to let people know we were there.

Members of the regional group also assisted with the stall at UK Black Pride, which took place the day after Pride in London. As usual this was an excellent event, and there was a steady stream of interest and some good recruitment conversations.

We continue to be involved in the SERTUC regional LGBT network

We also continue our active involvement in the region's international work, and will be sending a delegate to the ILGA-Europe conference in October.

Northern

February saw branches across the region hold a range of events for LGBT History Month which were coupled with the anniversary of the first introduction of votes for women. It is often ignored or forgotten that many of those involved in the campaigning 100 years ago, including prominent leaders within the Suffragette Movement were bisexual or lesbian highlighting the importance of connective campaigning.

In March, on International Women's Day, Stockton Local Government branch and Hartlepool Local Government branch held a joint event which was attended by over 300 women. We had a variety of speakers. The Chief Executive of Hartlepool, an out lesbian, opened the event and Jennifer Black gave a presentation on the Gender Recognition Act which was very well received.

May 17th saw many branches around the region hold events and stalls for International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT). North Tyneside local government branch delivered a series of LGBT awareness sessions during the day, and many council buildings, local land marks and historical buildings in the region were lit up in rainbow colours for the day. They also worked with Barnardo's on delivering a North Tyneside LGBT History Project in the borough.

Newcastle Hospitals held a variety of events throughout the week leading up to IDAHOBIT as part of the Hospitals' Equality and Diversity week. This saw the rainbow flag raised at the two main hospitals in the city with market stalls. The Branch also sponsored a Show Racism the Red Card LGBT Hate Crime Awareness session open to all staff. The branch also produced an IDAHOBIT Newsletter on this year's theme 'Alliances for Solidarity', talking about UNISON's International LGBT work including work with ILGA.



The group had a very busy Pride season and marched with our flags and banners at all of them. It kicked off with Durham Pride in May with over 15,000 people in the parade. Northumberland's first ever Pride was in June where we had a stall at the market place. July was Northern Pride which was held in Newcastle and had over 20,000 people marching in the parade.

The regional group also attended the 134th Durham Miners gala on 14th July 2018. The parade included Lesbian and Gays Support the Miners. We also had a strong presence at the Northern TUC Equalities Conference. There was a talk on the changes the LGBT community has faced over the years, a showing of the film *Pride* and the role of trade unions and grass roots activism. There was also a Trans Awareness workshop.

Digital Communication has developed this year, our page on the regional website has been updated with information and resources for everyone to use. We now have an active Facebook page which has lots of members and is a great sharing point for information.

We hope that the year ahead will provide even more opportunities for LGBT members to be active and our membership to keep growing.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland has had a really busy year with lots of work taking place and several campaigns taking up a lot of time and resources, but great fun at the same time and some positive results. This year has been a major year for us in Northern Ireland with the 100th Anniversary of the Suffragette Movement, 70 years of the National Health Service, the 50th Anniversary of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland and our very own 25th Anniversaries of UNISON and Foyle Pride. UNISON was also involved with Repeal the 8th in Southern Ireland and had close links with the LGBT movement in the North.

By the time you read this we will have had our first conference looking at the blood donation deferral to hopefully campaign to be in line with Great Britain. We had three main speakers at this which will be Dr Gary Benson, Consultant Haematologist Belfast City Hospital, Seamus Camplisson, Head of Health Protection, DoH (Department of Health) Dr Gillian Armstrong, Medical Advisor, Health protection DoH – also Northern Ireland rep on SaBTO (Advisory Committee on safety of blood, tissues and organs). We were all very excited about this coming purely from a medical approach and not a religious or political point of view which happens a lot in Northern Ireland.

UNISON LGBT has continued to play its part in the Love Equality and our right here for Equal Marriage and currently showcasing in the Foyle Pride History Event with all the images of our members showing support.

Pride and LGBT Awareness Weeks have been a great time to highlight UNISON LGBT and the many campaigns we are supporting. UNISON has launched Foyle LGBT Awareness Week and had events in Derry and Belfast. Topics included T in the LGBT, a trans comedy night, how to run an active campaign and creative writing. We have just completed two workshops discussing the B in LGBT in partnership with the Rainbow Project.

Belfast also played host to the National LGBT Committee this year and we carried out some workshops highlighting the issues we still face here and how we still continue to campaign for equal marriage like our neighbours in the mainland and our neighbours in Southern Ireland. We were happy that both our President, Margaret McKee and Regional Secretary Patricia McKeown were invited to speak to national committee.



Northern Ireland also continues to send out a newsletter via email to inform all our members of events, educational courses, and updates of LGBT issues in Northern Ireland. This remains to be vital to many people as there are little or no venues that are safe spaces outside Belfast and Derry for the LGBT community. The newsletter is a gateway and lets our members know we are available and will support them in any issues they may have such as employment issues etc.

We continue to work closely with our local health trusts and have our notice boards up around all our hospitals and have held stalls with information and asking our Healthcare staff to wear UNISON rainbow lanyards to let people know it is a safe space for LGBT people.

North West

The North West continues to expand, improve and campaign in more areas in the region, engaging wider audiences at Pride, community and education events. We have attended pride events in Blackpool, Liverpool, Manchester, Preston, Chester, Bolton, Bury,

Stockport, Macclesfield, Lancaster, Salford and Wigan, holding stalls and marching where organised.



We were delighted to win an award for our parade entry at Manchester Pride and we were thrilled with the number of branches that turned out at our largest ever turnout for Liverpool Pride.

This year, we opened up our annual training event to all activists in the North West, which resulted in some positive engagement from branch

activists who were keen to expand their knowledge of LGBT issues within UNISON and how they can better support LGBT members in the workplace. We delivered workshops and presentations on non-binary inclusion, recruiting and organising at pride and in international LGBT rights, all of which were well received.

Our AGM resulted in a larger committee, with two new co-convenors, Ceri and Adam stepping up to take over from Michelle and Kevin, who continue on as active members of the committee. The number of members attending our meetings continues to grow and become more diverse.

Our international work has taken a prime role in our activities this year, with our victory party for Aderonke Apata attracting over 300 people to Manchester. In addition, we worked with Many Hands, One Heart, an LGBT asylum and refugee support group in Merseyside to deliver a day of performances to mark the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia. There were 14 powerful performances including song, dance, poetry, a monologue and personal stories of lived experiences of being LGBT in a country where you are not recognised, protected or supported.

We have continued to support Pride at the Pictures in Liverpool, utilising screen time to show UNISON adverts and stalls to engage with cinema goers before and after films.

We hit the 500 mark for followers of our Facebook group and have over 350 followers on Twitter, with our best post engaging over 1000 people. If you're not one of them, like UNISON North West LGBT Group on Facebook and follow us @unisonnwlgbt on Twitter.

Scotland

It has been a very busy and productive 2018 for the Scotland Region LGBT Committee. We held a very successful AGM in December 2017 and the new committee was elected. All our reserved seats were full again this year and we have young members expressing interest and actively participating in the group.

At our policy weekend held in February 2018 we developed our work plan for the year, based on the National LGBT conference decisions. We also drafted UNISON Scotland

response to the Scottish Government’s public consultation as part of its review of the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

The regional LGBT committee delegates attended the 7th Annual STUC LGBT+ workers conference in Clydebank over the weekend of 9-10th June 2018 to work with other unions to discuss issues facing our community and LGBT+ members both in and out of the workplace and agree motions for the committee to take forward.

Topics ranged from discrimination, education, marriage equality, Brexit, culture and sport, mental health awareness, gender recognition, health, to creating inclusion, with motions on a variety subjects. Our committee motions on non-binary inclusion and dementia care for LGBT people in an ageing population, carried unanimously.



We are currently updating and streamlining our communications and have our new Facebook, Instagram and twitter accounts to increase visibility and engage with members. This year we have produced 4 newsletters for the region to reach more members than ever before. We will update our email addresses for SOG contacts to ensure all members are obtaining current information.

This year has seen the number of Pride events grow rapidly in Scotland compared to a few years ago when we only had Glasgow and Edinburgh Prides. Pride season kicked off May with Grampian Pride in Aberdeen. This

was Aberdeen’s first Pride with UNISON being one of the main sponsors. The regional committee working with local branches helped achieve great visibility and participation by members and the wider community. This set the scene for us to criss-cross Scotland and have a presence at over nine Pride events in 2018. We continue to work closely with local branches to ensure that we have as wide as possible participation of our members.

South East

We were proud to be the main sponsor for the Isle of Wight Pride, once again!

It was an extremely successful event, with planning already starting for next year. On the day a host of acts played the main stage including Danny Beard, Solent Gay Men’s Chorus, Allan Jay, and the headline act Conchita!

Southampton District branch was in attendance at Southampton Pride,



including having a very well-furnished stand for attracting members. Woking will have its first pride event next year on 10th August, which also means it will be Surrey's first pride event too. The organiser has promised that it will be the most inclusive event yet, and is working with a number of organisations to manage accessibility.

Waverley Local Government Branch ran a visibility event for pride season, where they handed out rainbow erasers, pencils, pens and lanyards. These are always popular and vanish rather quickly! It was pleasing to see high profile officers (Heads of Service) wearing the rainbow lanyards as this sends a visible message in the workplace of acceptance. They also printed out A4 posters for door holders showing the meaning of the rainbow colours, and wrote an article for the staff Backstage (Waverley Borough Council intranet) about pride season and acceptance. The aim of this was to demonstrate to staff that LGBT is acknowledged and accepted as the norm at Waverley Borough Council.

What has been evident is how local prides are now becoming much more popular, both in terms of attendance, acceptance, and support from local councils and residents. Whilst there will always be negative groups of people, the response has, in general, been amazing. UNISON LGBT SE is already planning our funding bids to support local prides next year.

As far as the big events went, our members attended Brighton Pride – of course! Always a logistical nightmare getting home if you don't live in Brighton. While Brighton Pride is still very much a celebration of our community, there is a lack of information, which detracts from the origin of prides being a movement to inform, or protest.

The regional group is looking forward to the LGBT conference, which is being held in Harrogate this year - a nice break for the region.

In other parts of the region, Waverley Local Government branch are working with smaller local branches to establish one specialist rep to work with 11 branches to keep all branches informed and prevent isolation. Kent Police and Justice branch will be running a non-binary inclusion presentation for all members, and for our Senior Leadership team to better inform policy, and decision making in regards to inclusivity. This is a small snapshot of all the good work across the region.

Our group meets 3 times a year in London and is an open forum for all LGBT members across the region. We usually have a speaker, and in the past have had presentations from ILGA Europe, the Albert Kennedy Trust, and The Terence Higgins Trust.

South West

The year started with the committee discussing non-binary inclusion and the potential name change to LGBT+ and what that means. We filled out the short survey indicating that the SW was in favour. We also filled out UNISON's equality survey that will dictate the direction of travel in support of self-organisation.

Our key areas of work have been around non-binary identities linked to motions 6, 12, 13 and 14; mental health linked to motions 15, 16 and 27; and trans equality linked to motions 29, 30 and EM1. Our international work has revolved around solidarity with the PCS No to Pinkwashing campaign, and ILGA Europe's initiatives.

There have been several key changes in the region this year with experienced lay activists and staff moving to new pastures. This has resulted in a period of regrouping, and we are now in the process of planning for 2019 with renewed energy.

We promoted our system of support to aid volunteers on the various stalls that includes instructions on how to set up the stall, explanations of what some of the materials mean and how to use them. We also included guidelines for engaging with prospective members which has resulted in new members joining the SW LGBT network.

We successfully rely on allies in branches and other regional self-organised groups to set up and run stalls at the various Pride events. As in previous years, we supplied the stalls with material resources and donations for some events. We were delighted that branches staffed and organised at 10 pride events around the region. This is a wonderful affirmation on just how far we have come in mainstreaming support for LGBT equality.

A big success this year was working collaboratively with the regional Black members' group and the Exeter Trades Council at the 2-day Exeter Respect festival.

To all who helped make each of these events the joyous success that they were, our heartfelt thank you!

These events are a platform to highlight UNISON campaigns, to recruit from underrepresented groups, and to raise awareness around LGBT inequality globally, including 'No Pride in Israeli Apartheid'.

A regular component of our stalls is donations for lanyards, chats and ILGA maps. This is a vital part of our work raising awareness of other LGBT groups and gives financial support for ILGA Europe's scholarship programme and diversity fund. To date we have collected over £1000 in donations.

We send LGBT publicity materials to all branches including reminders for our members who identify in the LGBT caucus' groups of the national network days. The bi and trans leaflets have been visible and are well received. We engage with SOG groups, UNISON Young members, LGBT Labour and local CLPs.

SW LGBT activists participate on regional committees, hold branch officer posts and are represented from all service groups except WET.

With recruitment a priority, an essential part of the SW Committee's work is being Out and Proud in all six counties of our region, and this year has been no exception.

West Midlands

The Group has had some problems this year with the availability of some of its activists to attend the regional meetings but it has maintained its work and attendance at meetings is picking up again.

The group has submitted motions and amendments to the conference agenda and is trying to encourage branches to send delegates. Representatives from the West Midlands have been at most meetings of the committee and fully participate in the meetings.

Our rep, Andy Chaffer, has attended every meeting of the Regional Council and actively promoted the activities of the group including attendance at prides and the LGBT History Month Gallery Tour. The group successfully moved regional affiliation to ILGA at regional council this year

Bob Deacon is the delegate from the SOG and is the chair of the West Midlands retired members' group. The group participated in a very successful Midlands wide "Celebrate the Bus! Help keep the Bus Pass" campaign which toured the Midlands TUC region by bus,

campaigning at various points along the way with Local MPs, councillors and trade unionists.

The Midlands Inclusion Committee is a sub group of the Regional TUC and is a merger of the Black, disabled and LGBT groups. It is in its second year and is still finding its feet. The group had a stall at the Women Chainmakers Festival on 7 July on Cradley High Street. UNISON provided our material on trans policies and issues. The stall was well received.

The group organised a guided tour of the “Coming Out” Exhibition at the Gas Hall Birmingham on Saturday 17 February. This event was attended by a variety of UNISON members and was a very instructive and enjoyable event. Hannah Mungovan, our regional staff support, attended the LGBT History Month event organised at Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Trust (Andy Chaffer’s employer). This was an event particularly looking at trans issues and was well attended.

UNISON SOG members braved the rain on the morning of Saturday 26 May and led the Birmingham Trade Union block at the Birmingham Pride march. It was a fabulous day, with the sun coming out towards the end of the March to celebrate Pride with us. Thanks to all our LGBT members who came from branches all over the West Midlands plus a few from London to celebrate such a wonderful occasion.

UNISON were at Coventry Pride on Sunday 10 June where Andy Chaffer and Bob Deacon staffed a stall and spoke with old and new members of UNISON, gave out lots of UNISON material on LGBT issues as well as general UNISON material including recruitment forms and gained new contacts for the regional LGBT contact list. A nice and friendly Pride that had lots of young people in attendance.

Two local branches held stalls at Stoke Pride.

The second Warwickshire Pride was a successful event and we were busy all day meeting members from a number of branches and trying to recruit new members. Young people showed a lot of interest and the “What is a Trade Union?” leaflet was very useful.

Another busy Saturday as our stall at Walsall Pride received a lot of visitors and new names were taken for the regional LGBT list and we were visited by Gill Ogilvie, the newly selected Labour PPC for Walsall North. We met members from a number of branches locally plus a sister from the Bournemouth Branch.

A stall is booked at this Worcestershire Pride as is participation in the Pride procession. This will be a joint event with local UNISON activists from Local Government and Health.

Unfortunately Herefordshire Pride has been cancelled but one of our local activists is already volunteering to help make it happen in 2019.

Yorkshire and Humberside

Last year’s conference marked a fantastic start to this year. Our group received the recruitment and organising award for best region for the second year running and we saw our highest number of delegates in many years, with a very well attended regional meal on the Saturday night. Another exciting year has followed as we continue to increase engagement and activity.



Our regional priorities have remained in line with the national priorities of responding to the threats to public services and a continued focus on recruiting, to the union and to the SOG.

We have increased our visibility, we were asked to go back to Leeds Beckett Students' event, where we held a

stall and engaged with the youth and our future activists.

We've submitted a further two motions to this year's national LGBT conference: on conversion therapy and sex attraction disorder. I'm pleased to confirm, after some tweaking, our motion on transphobic "feminism" which unfortunately wasn't submitted to last year's agenda has been admitted this year.

We have increased the number of members engaged with the SOG starting with an informal social in December and communicating directly with branches at multiple points throughout the year. Our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/unisonYHLGBT) and our new twitter page @YHLGBT has been an invaluable tool for engagement, with a number of new members making contact.

Our attendance at prides has been a key focus. Recognising that we are limited in resources and availability of members, we have developed partnerships with branches for their local pride events. With the help of branches we've been able to attend the following prides this year: Doncaster Pride, Sheffield Pride, Happy Valley Pride, Barnsley Pride, Wakefield Pride, York Pride, Leeds Pride.

At all of the 7 prides we attended this year we worked closely with local branches. York Local Government branch enjoyed the day so much they are wanting to be involved in next year's march. The Yorkshire Gas branch walked alongside regional members in Leeds pride and are looking at going even bigger and better at next year's Leeds Ppride. All the events were successful and we spread the message and signed new members up in their droves. The general feedback received from the branches was that "we didn't realise how valuable attending these prides could be for boosting member numbers". We have already been in touch with most of the branches and will be working with them again to stand shoulder to shoulder with our comrades in 2019.

We continue to participate on all regional committees and reports are received back from the delegates at each meeting of the SOG.

We remain affiliated to ILGA.

