



NATIONAL DISABLED MEMBERS
CONFERENCE 2018

RECORD OF DECISIONS AND BALLOT
RESULTS

2018 National Disabled Members' Conference Decisions

National Disabled Members Conference 2018 – Ballot report

1. There were two nominations for 1 place as the newsheet member at National Delegate Conference 2018. Jane Carter was elected
2. There were 3 nominations for 2 places at National Delegate Conference 2018. Kathleen Kennedy and Cath McGuinness were elected.
3. There were 5 nominations for 4 places on the Standing Orders Committee for National Disabled Members Conference 2019. Sharon Carby-McLean, Pauline Cole, Alex DeWinter and Peter Sharma were elected
4. There were 6 nominations for 1 place at TUC 2019. Maggie Griffin is elected.
5. The two motions to National Delegate Conference chosen by ballot are
 - Motion 21 – Negotiating and bargaining for disabled workers rights
 - Motion 6 – Support for disabled people who find it difficult / impossible to fill in (online) forms
6. Service Group and Labour Link Election results are as follows:

Energy Conference	David Croll Claire Aylwin
Water, environment and Transport Conference	Heather Briggs Ian Pinches
Community	Suzanne Williams Gerry Harrison
Police & Justice	Chelsea Skervin Peter Burns
Local Government	Bev Miller Cath McGuinness
Higher Education	Joanna Vanderhoof Liza Aspell
Health	Susan Parkinson Callum Lamb
Labour Link / Labour Party Conference	Graeme Ellis Maggie Griffin

Susan Mawhood, Ballots Officer

**2018 National Disabled Members' Conference
Decisions**

- M4** Amendment to Standing Order SO15
- M5** Disability History Month
- M6** Support for disabled people who find it difficult/impossible to fill in (online) forms
- M7** Including Non Binary Disabled People in our Self Organised Group
- M8** Black Disabled Workers' Professional Development and Activism
- M9** Disabled women workers' pay gap and professional development
- M10** An Ageing Population and Workforce: Diminishing Health and Disability
- M12** Mental Health - Equipping the Rep
- M13** The Increasing Practice of Hot-Desking and the Impact on our Disabled Members
- M14** Securing reasonable adjustments for young disabled workers
- M15** Disability Leave
- M16** Neurodiversity
- M17** Breaking down barriers for Neurodiverse Women
- M18** ADHD in the Workplace
- M19** Tackling the disability employment gap: Recruiting and retaining Deaf workers
- M20** Black Disabled Workers and the Disciplinary Process
- M21** Negotiating and Bargaining for Disabled Workers Rights
- M22** Campaigning for Mental Health First-Aiders in the Workplace
- M23** Supporting disabled people to stand for election
- M24** Access to voting
- M25** Disability Hate Crime must be treated as Hate Crime
- M26** Mate Crime
- M28** Reasonable Adjustments - Reasonable for Whom?
- M29** Ensuring safe and qualified interpreting services for Deaf people accessing public services
- M30** Legal Recognition of British Sign Language
- M31** Tackling LGBT and disability discrimination in the workplace – an Intersectional approach
- M32** The Welfare State: A Hostile Environment for Black Disabled People
- M33** Improving Access to Sexual Health Information for Disabled LGBT People
- EM1** Implement the United Nations Recommendations

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Motions

4. Amendment to Standing Order SO15

Carried

In SO15.1.6 after 'Labour Party Conference' insert 'and are Labour Party Members, and'

5. Disability History Month

Carried

This conference believes that our National Disabled Members' Committee and UNISON should celebrate Disability History Month on an annual basis.

Disability history month was set up in 2010 to provide a platform to focus on the work that has been done to fight for equality for disabled people. Each year the month has a theme – for example, the 2017 disability history month ran from 22 November to 22 December and was themed around 'Disability and Art'.

Our local committees, branches and self-organised groups can organise activities for their members and non-members during the month to mark and celebrate achievement, to learn and to understand more about the issues facing disabled people.

These events can help educate and raise awareness about disability but can also be useful to highlight the work of Trade Unions to encourage membership, participation and activism.

This motion seeks to raise awareness of this annual event and encourage branches and committees to plan and promote events.

This motion calls on the National Disabled Members' Conference to:

1. Send annual reminders to regional Disabled Members Committees and branches to encourage them to set a budget, organise, promote and share information about events. This information should be available in all accessible formats, where necessary, including BSL (British Sign Language).
2. Encourage promotion of Disability History Month by highlighting events that have been held and sharing information about these at National Disabled Members' Conference
3. Give consideration to this motion being taken to the National Delegate Conference 2019 to seek the wider union support for Disability History Month.

6. Support for disabled people who find it difficult/impossible to fill in (online) forms

Carried as Amended: 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4

The application processes on which we rely are rapidly moving to online platforms. For example, applications for Council Tax support, housing benefit, access to work,

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and Universal Credit. Conversely, Personal Independence Payments (PIP) can only be applied for using a paper form, with no online option available.

Some disabled people use assistive technology, which is a term that describes tools used by people with disabilities to access and complete everyday tasks. They can include screen readers, text readers, speech input software, and alternatives to standard keyboards.

For many, the online process has simplified the task from filling in a paper application form, but for those who rely on assistive technology they can find that their local assistive software does not interact well with the online form, in short the systems are incompatible.

But even people who do not rely on assistive technology can find the forms daunting, and the questions intrusive.

Conference further notes that Black disabled people are often particularly impacted by digital exclusion. Low paid Black disabled workers and those on zero hours contracts or doing manual or shift work may not have the financial resources to invest in digital technology at home and may not have access at work either. With libraries facing cuts, often the only option is a costly internet cafe.

Although the government claims there is some assistance available to complete Universal Credit online applications through the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), in reality this amounts to little more than explaining to applicants that they need to complete an online form.

Conference calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to:

- 1) Compile and maintain a list of organisations including Black community organisations and their contact details, which can offer telephone or videophone and video relay services support to disabled people to complete online application forms.
- 2) Compile and maintain a list of organisations including Black community organisations and their contact details, which can give face to face advice and support to disabled people to complete online application forms.
- 3) Lobby the DWP to invest in genuine support for disabled people completing Universal Credit online applications.
- 4) Campaign for alternative methods to online applications as a reasonable adjustment and for the option of online PIP applications.
- 5) Campaign for public service agencies to provide the option of BSL translations of online and paper forms.
- 6) Work with all appropriate internal and external bodies to campaign for all benefit application forms to be accessible, whether online or as printed off/hard copy documents.

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7. Including Non Binary Disabled People in our Self Organised Group

Carried

Conference notes that not all UNISON disabled members define themselves as either male or female. A growing number of our members instead define themselves as non-binary.

For UNISON disabled members who identify as non-binary, the existing structures and practices within the union may not acknowledge their identity and may create a feeling of exclusion from the union, including from the disabled members self organised group.

Mis-gendering, where someone is assumed to have a gender identity they do not, is a particular problem. Some non binary people prefer to use pronouns other than “he” or “she”, such as “they”. The perpetuation of binary models of gender identity throughout our disabled members self organised group, including the continued use of “ladies and gentlemen” to cover all of our members, may add to the sense that there is no place for non binary people in our disabled members self organised group.

Non-binary people who are disabled face multiple challenges, one of which is having a gender identity that few people know about or understand (50% of non-binary people are not out at work (Scottish Trans Alliance research 2015)). This is exacerbated by disability discrimination.

Although gender monitoring remains important in UNISON’s work to achieve proportionality for women members, it is not always necessary to ask members to define their gender and doing away with unnecessary gender divisions is best practice and makes our disabled self organised group more inclusive for non-binary people. It can also benefit everyone.

Conference welcomes UNISON’s factsheet ‘Gender equality: non-binary inclusion’ and UNISON’s Powerpoint presentation on non-binary inclusion that can be delivered to branches and regions. Conference calls on the National Disabled Members Committee, working with the National LGBT Committee where appropriate, to:

1. Raise awareness within our disabled members self organised group, including branch and regional groups, of steps to build non-binary inclusion in our group and in the workplace, including publicising and promoting the UNISON factsheet and presentation on this subject
2. Undertake an audit of National Disabled Members committee and conference policies, procedures and practices to ensure gender is only being requested where it is required to achieve proportionality and achieve equality, and that where it is necessary to monitor gender, options for non binary disabled members are included and non-binary members are not excluded from our group
3. Consider holding a workshop on inclusion of non-binary disabled people at Disabled Members Conference 2019.

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8. Black Disabled Workers' Professional Development and Activism

Carried as Amended: 8.1

Conference notes that racism in the workplace persists and that Black workers are less likely to access professional development and training. They are also less likely to win promotion as a result, and consequently Black workers are often over-represented in lower paid grades, affecting workforce diversity patterns. Where a worker is also disabled this discrimination is exacerbated and access to the career ladder is often closed off completely. Despite some employers collecting data on Black career progression this is often just lip service with no robust action taken to tackle the issue.

Whilst combating racism and disablism is clearly the answer to these problems, creating pathways to professional development for Black disabled workers is one way of employers addressing the issue. Specific training events for Black disabled workers that focus on breaking through the barriers have been proven to have had success, as has the establishment of Black and disabled role model programmes. Branch negotiators and Equality Officers should be encouraged to include this as a bargaining objective with employers.

Within UNISON there is also an issue of Black disabled activism often going untapped. Conference notes the national disabled members contacts and officers training pilot run by Learning And Organising Services (LAOS) and planned for September and hopes this will encourage Black disabled activists to come forward. UNISON training must be fully inclusive of Black disabled activists if we are not to lose out on their talent when it comes to Branch Secretaries and other roles in the union.

For Black disabled women, sexism and misogyny in society and the workplace is a further barrier to career progression and to developing their activism within UNISON that needs to be addressed.

Conference therefore calls on the National Disabled Members committee to:

1. Work with the National Black Members Committee to consider how pathways to professional development and promotion and the creation of role models for Black disabled workers including Black disabled women workers can be encouraged in employers

2. Consider how Black disabled activists including Black disabled women activists can be further developed and encouraged in UNISON and through our self organised group including liaising with regions and branches on ways of achieving this

3. Work with LAOS to review existing training materials to ensure inclusivity of Black disabled members and activists.

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9. Disabled women workers' pay gap and professional development

Carried

Conference welcomes the recent gender pay investigation, which exposed the gender pay gaps of large companies across the UK. Conference notes that there is no equivalent disability pay investigation, however the Equality and Human Rights Commission noted in its 2017 report that the overall 'disability pay gap' is 13.6%. This would suggest that where women in general are often disadvantaged by a gender pay gap, disabled women are further disadvantaged by a disability pay gap, and that there is still a disparity between women's and disabled women's pay.

Furthermore, disabled women face significant barriers relating to career progression and professional development. Part of the problem stems from negative disablist and sexist stereotyping, combined with a lack of positive role models and examples of disabled women who have progressed in their careers.

Conference calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to:

- a) Work with the National Women's Committee to consider how pathways to professional development and promotion and the creation of role models for women disabled workers can be encouraged in employers
- b) Encourage branch Equality Officers and the new rule book Women's Officers to champion disabled women in the workplace and promote training and development opportunities to disabled women members
- c) Lobby government and work with Labour Link to commit the Labour Party to legislate for companies to report on their disability pay gap
- d) Highlight the contribution of our disabled women activists and seek inclusion in high profile UNISON campaigns such as Public Service Champions.

10. An Ageing Population and Workforce: Diminishing Health and Disability

Carried as Amended: 10.1, 10.2

Conference, as we know, the Equality Act 2010 protects people within specified protected characteristics groups, including disability, from direct and indirect discrimination as well as harassment or victimisation arising from a disability. Some health conditions have automatic recognition under the Act while others have a twelve month qualifying period having lasted or expected to last for twelve months or more. The Act additionally provides protection to people without disabilities from direct discrimination or harassment due to their association with a person with a disability or due to someone believing them to have a disability.

However, failing health for many is a gradual process and the provisions of the Act may not apply. In 2017, a report by the Office for National Statistics based on the 2011 Census noted that in England and Wales 5.6% of the population suffered bad or very bad health and people aged 48 years and over were most affected.

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The Department for Work & Pensions' 2016/17 Family Resources Survey reported that 22% of people in the UK had one or more long term health condition; an increase of 3% from 2013/14. 19% of the working age population and 45% of the pensionable aged population reported a disability.

Conference, the UK has an ageing population and workforce:

a) People are living longer. In 2017, the Office for National Statistics projected that the pensionable age population will increase from 18.9% in 2016 to 22.3% by 2041. The Family Resources Survey noted that a third (33%) of informal care currently provided across the UK is for elderly parents, and a fifth (19%) for a partner. 56% of men and 51% of women providing informal care are in employment. Increasingly, securing reasonable adjustments will be crucial to disabled members, while negotiating carers leave will be key to supporting members with caring responsibilities who may or may not themselves be disabled.

b) The workforce is ageing. A 2015 report by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development noted that the number of people aged over 65 in employment rose by 437,000. This is coupled by a reducing working age population. In 2017, the Office for National Statistics projected that the working age population will fall from 62.2% in 2016 to 60.3% by 2041. Net migration is projected to reduce by 30% to 165 million by 2041 and current government policy, including immigration and the EU referendum, is undoubtedly influencing this trend. With the health and care sectors reliant on migrant labour, this will also undoubtedly have an impact on the quality of care services our members can expect in the future.

Conference, as we know, people with disabilities are less likely to be in employment and more likely to be unemployed than people without disabilities. A 2018 House of Commons Briefing Paper noted that the employment rate for people with disabilities was 49.2% compared to 80.6% for those without disabilities. The unemployment rate for people with disabilities was 9% compared to 3.8% for those without disabilities.

A 2015 report by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development noted that ill health and caring responsibilities were significant factors behind people leaving the workforce from their early 50's.

Conference further notes that our ageing population, coupled with draconian government cuts to funding, has led to a crisis in adult social care and health. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) older disabled people face additional issues including care services that do not address their needs or respect their identities.

Conference calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to:

1. Increase awareness across the Union of the implications of an ageing population and ageing workforce within the workplace and its impact on the comprehensive range of personnel policies used to recruit and manage staff with failing health and disability.

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2. Undertake a review relating to the recruitment and management of disabled employees in the workplace and report back to Conference by 2020. This may include consideration of:

- a) How we best support our members with long-term health problems falling short of disability, or providing informal care for ageing relatives with failing health and disability.
- b) How we drive greater work flexibility that supports members with long-term health problems or disability remain in work and including greater imagination in what that flexibility looks like.
- c) How we positively influence employers to recruit and retain people with long-term health problems, with disability, or with caring responsibilities for someone with failing health or disability.
- d) How we positively influence employers to recruit and retain older workers including disabled LGBT, Black and women workers recognising that there is greater likelihood of failing health or disability.

3. Actively promote the sharing of best practice across regions and branches to generate more creative options of recruiting and retaining people with, or caring for someone with, long-term health problems or disabilities.

4. Encourage branches to pro-actively anticipate the effects of an ageing workforce when their personnel policies are being reviewed and use that opportunity to incorporate provisions that increasingly promote the recruitment and the retention of people with long-term health problems or disability.

5. Where appropriate promote the current government 'Disability Confident' Scheme to regions and branches enabling them to encourage greater employer take up and progression through the three levels of the Scheme bearing in mind that Disability Confident has been criticised by some disabled people as a tick box exercise - for example, levels one and two rely solely on an employer self-assessment which may not reflect the experience of discrimination felt by disabled people in the workplace.

6. Continue to support UNISON's campaign for increased government investment in adult social care and health and work with the national LGBT committee to call for a care system that respects the rights and identities of disabled LGBT people.

7. Publicise UNISON's Carers Leave guide

12. Mental Health - Equipping the Rep

Carried

Conference notes that mental health is an issue for lots of our members as employers fail to make reasonable adjustments to sickness absence policies or to disciplinary and performance management policies. Bullying and harassment of members with mental health problems also continues in our workplaces.

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As reps we often have to listen and be all things to a member, and sometimes we may need to sign post them to their GP or other organisations. UNISON's mental health awareness course touches on this but there is a need for more.

Conference notes the new UNISON guide "Bargaining for Mental Health Policies" which can be used by branches to negotiate policies in their workplace. Hillingdon branch has started to negotiate mental health passports with the local authority with a view to rolling this out to other employers where we have members.

Conference therefore calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to publicise the new Negotiating Mental Health Policies guide and to work with Learning And Organising Services (LAOS) to find ways of equipping stewards with the knowledge and skills they need to represent and support our members in the workplace who may be experiencing mental health problems.

13. The Increasing Practice of Hot-Desking and the Impact on our Disabled Members

Carried as Amended: 13.1, 13.2

Conference is concerned about the increasing use of hot-desking. Employer sell the practice as a way of saving money, at a time when they know saving jobs is at the top of our agenda, with little or no consideration of the impact on staff. However, there are obvious and significant issues with hot-desking that are manifesting on a daily basis in workplaces across the country.

It is clear that there is a significant risk to the health and wellbeing of Disabled Members who are adversely affected by hot-desking policies. The reasonable adjustments that we have fought to have put in place at our workstations do not fit neatly into the puzzle that is hot-desking.

Having to set up your desk every day in a way that alleviates pain while working is likely to have the opposite effect. Moving chairs, desks, adapted ICT equipment and footrests as well as having to adjust or find a desk every time you're come back to the office, even if only for an hour, wastes time and money as well as causing pain and fatigue. While coming back to find your specially adapted chair has been altered (or broken) by someone else whilst they've been using it or changing desks every day or several times a day could trigger stress, anxiety or other mental health issues.

Deaf workers who use British Sign Language interpreters need to sit next to their interpreter and hot desking may not allow this. Deaf workers may also need to have a fixed desk which is in sight of a visible fire alarm signal.

Although studies have shown that hot-desking can lead to unhealthy workplaces and impact on productivity there isn't enough information to understand the full impact on our members. We need to assess whether there is a link between increased hot-desking and the rise in work related stress, anxiety and mental health issues before deciding whether negotiating individual reasonable adjustments so Disabled Members are exempt from the practice is a long-term solution.

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For disabled women members experiencing the menopause, hotdesking may mean being forced to sit in a warmer part of the office. Where menopause is severe or exacerbates an existing disability, a fixed desk might be a reasonable adjustment.

Conference calls upon National Disabled Members Committee to work with the NEC, National and Regional SOGs and Branches to:

1. Consult on the impact of hot-desking on Disabled Members and the wider work environment;
2. Produce a report on the findings of the consultation with particular reference to the impact of hot-desking on workplace stress and sickness;
3. Identify mitigating actions to reduce the adverse impact of hot-desking on Disabled Members and in the workplace; and
4. Produce guidance including best practice case studies for Branches to use when negotiating for a good working environment.
5. Publicise UNISON's guide 'The Menopause and Work'.

14. Securing reasonable adjustments for young disabled workers

Carried as Amended: 14.1, 14.2, 14.3

Conference notes that securing reasonable adjustments in the workplace is a challenge faced by many disabled workers. However young disabled workers in particular all too often do not have the tools, experience or job security to request the reasonable adjustments they are legally entitled to at work.

This may be due to various factors, including:

- a) the fear of speaking up and not being taken seriously, or worse, losing their jobs
- b) a lack of confidence and understanding of what can be requested with regards to reasonable adjustments including the support of a Personal Assistant
- c) a lack of awareness of the Equality Act 2010 and the legal duty on the employer to provide reasonable adjustments
- d) a lack of awareness of the Access to Work scheme

These fears are often well founded. According to the TUC, young workers are more likely to be in precarious employment, including zero hour contracts. They are less likely to be union members than their older counterparts. Furthermore, young workers with hidden disabilities or as-yet-undiagnosed disabilities often face a lack of understanding from colleagues and managers in any workplace context, based on their age. They may be told 'you're too young to have a bad back!' for example.

Conference applauds the work of the TUC/STUC 'Unions into Schools Programme' that helps young people prepare for the world of work and introduces them to the role of trade unions at work. Disabled young people entering the workplace may face

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an additional barrier in securing employment and the provision of reasonable adjustments can be essential to support them in an interview process.

Where young disabled workers are also Black they may also face racism in the workplace that stops them asserting their right to reasonable adjustments for fear of 'causing trouble'

Conference notes the resources that exist for activists when negotiating reasonable adjustments with employers, including UNISON's comprehensive guide 'Proving Disability and Reasonable Adjustments' which lists potential reasonable adjustments. Short guides to Access to Work and reasonable adjustments for members are also available on the UNISON website. However young disabled members and activists are not always aware of the resources that are available.

The National Young Members Forum therefore calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to work with the Forum to:

1. Publicise UNISON's Proving Disability and Reasonable Adjustment guide that includes examples of reasonable adjustments so young disabled activists can have an understanding of the different types of adjustments that can be negotiated
2. Update and publicise the short guides to reasonable adjustments including the role and support of Personal Assistants and Access to Work for members and potential members that can also be used at recruitment events.
3. Consider developing a resource for activists that explains how to negotiate reasonable adjustments.
4. Publicise the work of the TUC/STUC's Unions into Schools Programme, including highlighting adjustments that may be made to the interview process.
5. Seek to ensure UNISON's resources, including social media presence, cover issues relevant to young disabled members, including young Black disabled members.

15. Disability Leave

Carried as Amended: 15.1

Disability leave is time off from work for a reason related to someone's disability.

Employees with a disability may require time off if their mobility, or their illness – relating to their disability, becomes more severe. Our disabled members in this situation are frequently treated unfavourably and this then becomes inequality, even though the Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against employees because of a disability.

If jointly negotiated workplace policies are in place, then this helps to alleviate this practice that can take place by employers. The procedures in the policy would give guidance to managers and staff.

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However, it is known that many employers do not have a disability leave policy and that is why conference should pursue this.

Therefore, conference calls upon the national disabled members committee to

1. Collect information from branches to identify how many negotiated policies on disability leave exist and which employers have an existing disability leave policy in the workplace, and share good practise.
2. Circulate to branches the UNISON disability leave factsheet and urge them to raise and negotiate disability leave policies with their employers, where one does not exist
3. Encourage branches to develop disability leave policies with employers.
4. Campaign for disability leave to be a statutory requirement written into legislation.

16. Neurodiversity

Carried

Neurodiversity is now becoming the recognised name for a group of conditions which affect the brain's cognitive abilities. The conditions under this umbrella term include Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Attention Deficit Disorder, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, and Dyscalculia, but this is still a developing area of discussion.

Some conditions are lifelong and some can be brought on later in life, from causes such as suffering a traumatic brain injury. Often an individual will be affected by more than one of the conditions and frequently our members will not have a formal diagnosis.

We call on the National Disabled Members' Committee to:

1. Gather information about neurodiversity and to publish a guide for Branches.
2. To increase awareness within and throughout UNISON.
3. To explore and develop training for activists on the neurodiverse conditions and how to support members in the workplace.

17. Breaking down barriers for Neurodiverse Women

Carried

Conference notes that "neurodiversity" is a relatively new term that refers to people who have dyslexia, autism, ADHD, dyspraxia or other related conditions that may also stem from a neurological impairment. People with these conditions have a wide range of characteristics but may also share some common features in terms of how they learn and process information compared to "neurotypical" people. These features can often be strengths as well as challenges, but bring many benefits for employers which the term neurodiversity acknowledges. Neurodiverse workforces can lead to more lateral thinking and can be a business benefit to employers.

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Conference further notes that neurodiverse women are often under-diagnosed because of tired old stereotypes about what boys and girls with these conditions should act like. This ignores the different ways that genders are socialised, which can also conceal neurodiversity in women workers. Therefore a neurodiverse woman is much less likely to be able to request the reasonable adjustments they may require to keep them in work or point to the sexism which plays a detrimental role in neurodiverse women's experience in the workplace.

Conference welcomes the fact that World Autism Awareness Day in 2018 had an emphasis on women and girls and calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to:

1. Consider developing guidance on neurodiversity in the workplace, which includes a specific reference to the challenges faced by women workers with neurodiverse conditions
2. Publicise and promote UNISON's 'Proving Disability and Reasonable Adjustments' guide
3. Work with Learning And Organising Services to consider developing training on neurodiversity, with specific reference to women and neurodiversity.

18. ADHD in the Workplace

Carried

Conference notes that Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurological disorder and in fact, one of the most well-researched neurological disorders. It also can be said to be one of the most misunderstood diagnosis. Having ADHD affects every aspect of the individual's life.

ADHD comes in three forms – Inattentive, Impulsive, Hyperactive (or a combination of all three) each individual with ADHD has a different set of challenges. Therefore, it is important to consider the unique picture, when designing strategies, and pursuing accommodations and modifications for the workplace.

A high percentage of people with ADHD are also like to have one of the following:

- A co-morbid learning disability such as dyslexia or autism;
- Develop a mental illness, such as bipolar or depression, depression being very common. With this said, those with ADHD are at a higher risk for committing suicide

A high percentage of people with ADHD are likely to experience.

- Relationship difficulties including divorce
- Difficulty at work including regular loss of employment

Conference notes that presently there is inadequate and uneven support across the public sector in meeting the support needs of those in the workforce with ADHD. Many adults with ADHD face not being understood at work , those who are newly

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diagnosed face the stigma around ADHD and the extra hurdle of having to prove their disability where they may have 'masked it' unknowingly their whole lives.

Many people with ADHD struggle to obtain the reasonable adjustments that they need to do well in their work role. In many cases they do not pursue reasonable adjustments at all thus struggle when expected to complete the same amount of work, in the same time, to the same standard as their peers who do not have ADHD or other impairments. Those people who do not receive support at work are not only disadvantaged at work, but this feeds into their ability to manage their ADHD outside of work.

There is a myth that people 'grow out of ADHD' when in fact this is not the case. Many have simply learned to manage their ADHD or to mask it when it comes to adulthood. In other areas of their lives and when they get older and head out into the workforce lack of specialist support remains an issue. Research has shown how this myth has led to inadequate support for those with ADHD.

Support for adults with ADHD is on the whole forsakenly poor. Apart from sleeping, the majority of an adult's life is at work, the difficulties and barriers that those with ADHD face at work is a trade union issue, which we need to take action on. Considering ADHD affects 5% of children and nearly 3% of adults, the affect of inadequate support for those with ADHD across society including health, education, criminal justice, work and benefits, homelessness and social care is vast and little understood or discussed, let alone addressed.

As the biggest trade union in the UK we can do a lot to create greater awareness about ADHD and push for greater support, so that those with ADHD can perform to the best of their abilities in their roles in the workforce.

Those with ADHD and who are working should be congratulated for their achievements in the light of the everyday barriers they face and the minimal support they receive.

Conference notes that ADHD Action is an organisation which was set up only last year and is having huge success in such a short space of time getting support from the ADHD Foundation, Adult ADHD NI, and ADHD Solutions CIC. This organisation is campaigning for an ADHD act which would:

“Place a duty on the Government to produce a broad strategy for ADHD adults and children which is kept under regular review, which includes access for all persons that require assessment and treatment for ADHD and place a duty to produce statutory guidance to ensure implementation of the strategy for the following bodies:

- Education
- Health (including mental, sexual and addiction support)
- Criminal justice (police, prisons, probation)
- Work, pensions and benefits
- Employment law

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- Local authorities (e.g. social services, homelessness)
- Media (for responsible reporting)”

Conference therefore calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to:

1. Consider Supporting ADHD Action’s campaign for an Act of Parliament for ADHD to commit the government to implementing a strategy for ADHD across many sectors which would support members, colleagues and the communities we serve.

2. To consider publishing up to date briefings and guidelines for distribution amongst branches which would aim to debunk myths around ADHD, and which includes the particular impacts likely to be experienced by workers and ways of addressing them through organising and representation.

19. Tackling the disability employment gap: Recruiting and retaining Deaf workers

Carried

Conference notes the recent House of Commons Library report on the Disability Employment gap which highlights that just 49% of disabled people between 16 and 64 years old are in employment, compared to over 80% for non disabled people. The disability employment gap therefore stands at over 31%.

For Deaf people in particular, finding and retaining employment can be a challenge due to a lack of understanding and awareness on the part of employers as to what Deaf people can achieve.

With anecdotal evidence of health and safety sometimes being used a reason not to employ a Deaf worker, there is a lack of confidence, and perceived lack of information, from many employers who are sometimes fearful of employing Deaf people, as they don’t understand their legal obligations or the support that is available.

While conference welcomes the recent increase in the cap, Access to Work remains the government’s ‘best-kept secret’ and many more Deaf workers could potentially benefit from the scheme if it was more widely publicised.

Deaf workers also face challenges while in employment, with communication barriers meaning Deaf employees are often the last to know what is happening and promotion often difficult to achieve due to employer attitudes and interview and assessment systems that do not take into account the needs of BSL users.

UNISON needs to be a first point of call for Deaf members and potential members. However many stewards and branches have no experience of Deaf members and need the appropriate skills and knowledge to offer support.

Conference therefore calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to:

1. Consider producing a guide to representing Deaf BSL users for branches and stewards to use in workplace representation

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2. Seek to ensure UNISON's resources on negotiating reasonable adjustments include the needs of Deaf BSL users
3. Continue to support calls to remove the cap on Access to Work which prevents some Deaf people with high-level needs from accessing appropriate support at work.

20. Black Disabled Workers and the Disciplinary Process

Carried

Conference notes that Black Disabled workers are disproportionately targeted when it comes to disciplinary processes, which is often linked to racism and discrimination as well as a lack of understanding and support for the barriers faced by disabled people, including those with non-visible/non-apparent disabilities.

Black disabled people are also over-represented when it comes to capability proceedings, again due to discrimination and a lack of reasonable adjustments.

Many Black disabled members are isolated from their branch and do not know they are entitled to reasonable adjustments such as disability leave or changes to performance targets.

Conference notes UNISON's comprehensive guide 'Proving Disability – A Guide to Reasonable Adjustments' which lists potential reasonable adjustments. Conference also notes UNISON's factsheet on Disability Leave. However not all of our stewards or Black disabled members are aware of these resources.

Conference therefore instructs the National Disabled Members Committee to:

1. Publicise and promote UNISON's guidance on reasonable adjustments and on disability leave, ensuring the barriers and adjustments related to impairments that affect Black disabled people in particular are included
2. Work with National Black Members Committee to consider ways of further supporting Black disabled members in the workplace
3. Work with Labour Link to seek a commitment to statutory disability leave from a future Labour government.

21. Negotiating and Bargaining for Disabled Workers Rights

Carried

Conference notes that the Equality Act 2010 gives disabled workers the right to reasonable adjustments and the right not to be discriminated against. However these rights are often only made real when UNISON disabled members and UNISON stewards raise these issues with employers through their local representation and bargaining.

For example, the Equality Act Code of Practice gives disability leave as an example of a reasonable adjustment and this has been backed up by the courts. However in many workplaces there is no disability leave policy and disabled workers are forced to take leave that relates to their disability as ordinary sick leave which is then counted towards triggers for instigating formal sickness procedures.

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Many employers do not take their duty to provide other reasonable adjustments seriously and as a result disabled workers either do not get the job in the first place or are forced out. Some employers also try to push disabled workers into taking ill health retirement rather than implementing the reasonable adjustments that could keep them in work.

Conference believes that besides compliance with equality legislation being the right thing to do, there are also significant business benefits in having a diverse public service workforce that reflects the communities we serve.

Conference therefore calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to:

- a) Raise awareness of existing UNISON resources including the Disability Leave factsheet and model policy and 'Proving Disability and reasonable Adjustments'.
- b) Consider producing a bargaining guide for UNISON branches and stewards negotiating on disability equality in the workplace.

22. Campaigning for Mental Health First-Aiders in the Workplace

Carried

Conference, since 1981, workplaces have been required to provide adequate and appropriate first aid equipment, facilities and people, to ensure that employees can be given immediate help if they are injured or taken ill at work. Yet in 2018, there is still no requirement for employers to provide mental health first aid assistance to employees.

A Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) study on the impact mental ill health can have on workers found that:

- 37% of people are more likely to get into conflict with colleagues
- 57% find it harder to juggle multiple tasks
- 62% take longer to do tasks
- 80% find it difficult to concentrate

Since 2007, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England has trained over 300,000 people in Mental Health First Aid and want to train 5 million. In a survey MHFA England found that 56% of people have experienced mental health issues and that 90% of respondents feel there is still a taboo around mental health.

Conference, MHFA England are campaigning to have mental health treated in the same way as physical health, with the same provision of mental health first aiders as physical health first aiders.

We know mental health first aiders are no substitute for professional support or adequate prevention of work-related stress but believe mental health first aid is a fundamental right that should form part of a wider strategy for addressing mental health in the workplace.

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Conference calls upon National Disabled Members Committee to work with the National Executive Committee (NEC) to:

1. Support the MHFA England campaign to require employers to provide mental health first aid as well as physical first aid;
2. Raise awareness of the work of MHFA England with Branches, Regions and Self Organised Groups
3. Provide opportunities for Branches to access MHFA training to officers and shop stewards

23. Supporting disabled people to stand for election

Carried as Amended: 23.1, 23.2

Conference is concerned that in the twenty-first century it is still almost impossible for disabled people to stand for elected office or pursue careers in the field of politics. For disabled women the barriers are exacerbated by societal sexism and misogyny.

Almost 30% of people old enough to vote are disabled yet less than 2% of the 650 MPs elected to represent us in Parliament openly identify as disabled. While 10% of Councillors are disabled, this is a significant reduction from 14% in 2010. Black disabled parliamentarians and councillors also significantly under-represented with racism an additional barrier faced.

Perhaps disabled people aren't interested, capable or the best person for the job – at least that's what the government would have us believe – but the reason disabled people don't stand is the cost of standing for and holding elected office are so much greater for disabled people than non-disabled people that they are prohibitive.

Sign-language interpreters, Braille, support workers, specialist ICT and other reasonable adjustments that disabled people need at work are needed during a campaign and once elected but there is no support available to help with the costs.

The Access to Elected Office Fund used to offer grants to disabled people standing for election in UK Parliament, English local government and other elections for disability related expenses during the campaign. In 2015 the fund was “frozen and put under review” by the Tory government but despite disabled people being unable to stand in a General Election, Police and Crime Commissioner elections, three lots of local elections and mayoral elections since it was “frozen” there has been no progress on the review.

Of course, some disabled people have stood for election expecting that they would get the reasonable adjustments they need once elected but there's no financial help then either. Access to Work helps employers pay for reasonable adjustments in the workplace but the same support isn't available for elected positions even though it can be as time consuming and difficult as a full-time job.

For disabled women who are more likely to be low paid and have caring responsibilities, there are added barriers to being able to access political office that need addressing

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Conference we are never going to achieve disability equality until there is a greater understanding of disability issues amongst those who hold elected positions. Our Disabled Members will never be properly represented until there are more disabled people in elected positions and we will never have more disabled people, including our Disabled Members able to stand for elected positions until the support is there to ensure a level playing field.

Conference calls on National Disabled Members Committee to work with the NEC to:

1. Join the campaign to restore the Access Elected Office Fund;
2. Write to all MPs asking them to support the campaign to restore the Access to Elected Office Fund;
3. Lobby for Access to Work funds to be made available to disabled people who hold elected office in local authorities, town and parish councils; and
4. Work with Labour Link to improve the support available to disabled people standing as Labour Party candidates.
5. Support appropriate campaigns to encourage Black disabled people to put themselves forward for election and to combat racism in standing for political office.
6. Support appropriate campaigns to address the specific barriers to political office faced by disabled women and to encourage them to stand for election.

24. Access to voting

Carried as Amended: 24.1, 24.2, 24.3

Conference is concerned that it is becoming increasingly difficult for disabled people to participate in the election process. While disabled people have always needed to overcome barriers to be able to vote the government seems determined to make it virtually impossible. The Conservative government's changes to the voter registration system, including individual voter registration, and the recently piloted photographic identification requirement at polling stations, have exacerbated these barriers.

Turnout at elections is often low. Some people aren't interested in politics while others say they're too busy or don't like any of the politicians but when disabled people are asked why they don't vote the answers are often very different. Reasons include:

- I don't know how to register to vote and no one comes to help anymore;
- The information on how to vote isn't accessible;
- The postal vote papers were confusing so I gave up;
- There's no ramp at the polling station;
- The temporary polling station is too small for my wheelchair;

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- I'm blind and the polling clerk shouted out who I was voting for last time;
- I don't have any photo ID and someone said I needed it

While some of the reasons may be based on inaccurate information (you don't need photo ID just yet but might in the future) and others may seem insignificant or easy to overcome they are preventing our Disabled Members from exercising their democratic right to vote.

The registration system is confusing and if there's no help in your area you may just give up. The information councils send out on voting is set in law but it isn't easy to understand especially for someone with a learning disability. Postal ballots can be confusing with people often not realising which paper goes in which envelope or where they need to sign. Polling stations should be accessible but many aren't and in some cases staff do need better training. And as for those photo ID's they may not be needed now but the government has already trialled them in some areas and there is significant evidence that shows disabled people are less likely to have passports or driving licenses.

Research shows that Black people in the UK are less likely to be registered to vote compared to the general population. This may be due to often well founded fear in the Black community about giving personal information to officialdom and also reflects that Black people are often in less stable accommodation. In addition Black people from Commonwealth countries may not be aware they are entitled to vote. The implementation of Individual Voter Registration has already seen a reduction in Black voters on the voter register and has particularly impacted Black women who may previously have been registered by their spouses but now go unregistered. Furthermore, the pilot of the planned new requirement for photo identification at polling stations will particularly impact Black disabled people who are less likely to have the correct forms of photo identification.

Evidence shows that when disabled people vote they are more likely to vote Labour. Around 20% of the population are disabled and their votes could make a massive difference in the next Election but only if they are able to vote.

Conference calls upon National Disabled Members Committee to work with National Executive Committee to:

1. Campaign for the introduction of an accessible system of voter registration;
2. Support Disabled Members to request reasonable adjustments at polling stations including British Sign Language interpreters;
3. Create guidance to help Disabled Members become more politically engaged; and
4. Lobby for a national standard of training for polling officers that includes disability and Deaf awareness training.
5. Support appropriate campaign against the roll out of the requirement for photographic identification at polling stations.

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25. Disability Hate Crime must be treated as Hate Crime

Carried as Amended: 25.1

Conference is rightly proud of UNISON's record of fighting Disability Hate Crime. We campaigned to raise awareness of Disability Hate Crime, for better reporting systems and fairer media coverage. We campaigned for disabled people to be treated as reliable witnesses and for more support for victims and witnesses.

The police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) define Disability Hate Crime as:

“Any crime which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's disability or perceived disability”

And while CPS guidance states that prosecutors should be aware of common features of Disability Hate Crime including:

- Befriending victims to create trust;
- Cruel, humiliating and degrading treatment;
- False accusations against the victim; and
- Incidents that increase in severity or frequency.

The definition is very subjective as there is no legal definition of hostility. What one person sees as a Disability Hate Crime may not be seen as such by another. There has been progress but more needs to be done as the latest reports published in late 2017 show:

- Abuse of disabled people jumped to 3,079 from 1,531 in the previous year;
- Hate crimes against disabled children rose by 148% from 181 to 450;
- Prosecutions of disability hate crime were at a record level of 1,009;
- Conviction rates are increasing; and
- Worryingly there is still significant underreporting of disability hate crime

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 allows for an increased sentence for those found guilty of Disability Hate Crime but while prosecutions and convictions are up there are still a disturbing number of crimes against disabled people not being flagged as Disability Hate Crime.

Even when a case is flagged a judge can still decide not to treat it as a hate crime as seen in a recent murder case which the police and CPS treated as a Disability Hate Crime but where the judge decided that the victim was targeted because he was vulnerable and not because he was disabled even though it was the disability that made the victim vulnerable.

Some people think it doesn't matter if a crime is treated as a Disability Hate Crime as long as the perpetrator is found guilty but it does matter because It leads to lesser

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sentences, the victim or their family feeling justice hasn't been served and more disabled people failing to report Disability Hate Crimes because they feel they won't be taken seriously.

Defining Disability Hate Crime by simply adding disability to the existing definition of hate crime has proved to be inadequate. Some disabled people may be more physically or mentally vulnerable than non-disabled people. Some disabled people can be more trusting and less able to interpret behaviours than non-disabled people. And sometimes disabled people don't realise when they are being used or taken advantage of.

Disability Hate Crime is different to other types of hate crime because disabled people face barriers that non-disabled people don't. It is not better or worse but it is different. It is time to recognise that Disability Hate Crime is different and that to deal with it effectively means dealing with it differently.

Conference calls on National Disabled Members Committee to work with the NEC to:

1. Raise awareness of how Disability Hate Crime is different to other types of hate crime;
2. Campaign for a legal definition of Disability Hate Crime that includes crimes committed due to some disabled people's perceived vulnerabilities or the barriers faced; and
3. Work with Labour Link to lobby the government for the introduction of legislation that sets out the criteria under which a recommendation to treat an offense as a Disability Hate Crime can be overruled.
4. Publicise UNISON's guide 'Tackling Hate Crime and Hate Incidents: A Workplace Issue'

26. Mate Crime

Carried as Amended: 26.1

Conference we have heard about hate crimes, however mate crime is not as widely publicised or known about. Mate crimes are usually committed against another for the purpose of some individual gain. Usually financial gain. It is well known that most people with disabilities have a greater level of vulnerability and where they are also women, Black or lesbian, gay bisexual or transgender (LGBT) they may be further targeted. Perpetrators will attach themselves under the guise of befriending them in order to exploit them.

Their properties are used to throw parties, grow illegal drugs, have parcels delivered to their address.

Perpetrators visit these people on paydays in order to elicit monies from them, then not visit again until the next pay day.

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Where disabled people are also LGBT they may be less likely to report mate crime as their abusers may threaten to 'out' them to friends, family, work colleagues or support agencies.

Ask National Disabled Members Committee to:

1. Highlight mate crime as an issue for our members, their friends and families.
2. Write a leaflet for distribution on mate crime, including instructions on how to report mate crime to the police in accessible ways and details of support agencies.
3. Encourage Regions and branches to deliver workshops/lunch and learn events on mate crime.
4. Work with other SOGS to raise awareness, distribute literature and provide training for regions, branches and stewards.
5. Campaign for the roll out of police link officers for Deaf people to encourage reporting.

28. Reasonable Adjustments - Reasonable for Whom?

Carried as Amended: 28.1

The two legal frameworks that are supposed to ensure reasonable access to employment, shops, business, services and public buildings, for those with disabilities, are-

- The Equality ACT 2010
- The Building Regulations (2004 edition, incorporating 2010 and 2013 amendments) Approved Document M

This Conference is aware that this legislation is not allowing us the access we should be able to have.

This Conference passed a motion in 2008 drawing attention to the unsatisfactory nature of the then legislation, describing the situation as 'inadequate'. Despite some minor legal changes, we know that the current legislation is still inadequate.

Members have 'day to day' experience of being unable to access some buildings, shops, workplaces and public buildings and additionally are unable to access feature within those buildings such as lifts, sanitary facilities, eating/ drinking areas to name but a few -facilities we should be able to access.

Conference notes that the interim report of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety carried out in the wake of the Grenfell fire found that the whole building regulation system is not fit for purpose."

"The tragedy of Grenfell, where there were reports of a lack of evacuation routes for disabled tenants, has highlighted how important this issue is. Disabled people not

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only need to be able to access buildings, but they also have the legal right to be able to exit them safely, such as in a fire.

This Conference calls upon the National Disabled Members Committee to:-

1. Investigate this issue and bring a report to a 2019 Conference, suggesting ways in which this matter can be addressed.
2. Support appropriate campaigns seeking to improve fire safety for disabled people and to strengthen oversight and enforcement of Building Regulations and the Equality Act
3. Raise this issue with the TUC's Disabled Members Committee to seek additional support.
4. Seek support within Labour Link to raise this issue.
5. Seek examples from members by raising the issue within UNISON publications.

29. Ensuring safe and qualified interpreting services for Deaf people accessing public services

Carried

Conference notes that British Sign Language interpreters are regulated by the National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind people (NRCPD). They hold registers of interpreters for deafblind people, lipspeakers, notetakers, sign language interpreters, sign language translators and speech to text reporters.

Conference supports a registration system as a way of ensuring interpreters are fully qualified to support Deaf BSL users who may be accessing services including education, health and social care, housing, social security etc. Although increasing numbers of people are now learning BSL, this is not the same as being a trained interpreter which is a skill in its own right. Interpreters who are not qualified may be a danger to our Deaf members, with potential safeguarding issues as a result.

However conference notes with concern that people who sign up to an interpreting course can immediately apply for NRCPD registration as a trainee sign language interpreter (TSLI). Although the NRCPD states that TSLIs may not work in the criminal justice system or mental health settings and must "exercise caution" when accepting work in a social care setting, this still allows them to interpret in certain circumstances. With public services financially stretched there may be a temptation to employ trainees who are not yet properly trained. Conference is concerned that people who may not yet have taken any classes in how to interpret could potentially be called on to offer interpreting services in some settings that could put Deaf service users at risk.

Conference believes that NRCPD trainee status should only be given after the student has passed their interpreting course. Full registration could then be awarded after a year of successful practice, similar to a provisional driving license.

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Conference therefore calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to:

1. Raise awareness of this problem and identify any examples
2. Work with service groups and regions to encourage UNISON stewards representing Deaf members to ask for proof of full registration from interpreters provided by employers in workplace meetings and procedures
3. Identify and assess the benefits for UNISON of backing any relevant and suitable campaigns on this issue.

30. Legal Recognition of British Sign Language

Carried

Conference notes that although the UK government formally recognised British Sign Language (BSL) as a language in its own right in 2003, this did not give full legal status to BSL. Scotland is the only country in the UK to give BSL full legal status and to agree to promote its use. BSL still does not have full legal status in England and Wales and the same is true of BSL and Irish Sign Language (ISL) in Northern Ireland. BSL users are therefore being discriminated against and disadvantaged in three of the four constituent nations of the UK.

Conference recognises that Deaf native BSL users are a distinctive linguistic group whose rights should be protected. Achieving legal status means that BSL would be protected and promoted in a similar way to Welsh and Gaelic languages. Service providers would be required to produce information and support where appropriate in BSL, giving equal access to services for sign language users and removing many of the everyday barriers that they currently face, and which result in widespread discrimination.

Conference notes that a number of organisations are campaigning for a BSL Act for England, Wales and Northern Ireland that would achieve full legal recognition.

Conference therefore calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to raise awareness of this issue, to support the campaign for a BSL Act and to consider ways UNISON can further contribute to this campaign.

31. Tackling LGBT and disability discrimination in the workplace – an Intersectional approach

Carried as Amended: 31.1

Conference notes that disabled people face many challenges in the workplace but this is compounded when disabled workers are also lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT).

The recent Stonewall publication 'LGBT in Britain - Work Report' found:

- Disabled LGBT workers are one and a half times more likely to face harassment and discrimination in the workplace compared to LGBT staff in general

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- Almost two in ten disabled LGBT employees (19%) say they didn't get a promotion they were up for at work in the past year because they are LGBT
- 43% of disabled LGBT people have hidden or disguised that they are LGBT at work in the last year because they were afraid of discrimination
- 9% of disabled LGBT people say they have lost a job in the last year because of being LGBT
- One in five (20%) of disabled LGBT workers say that they were encouraged to hide or disguise that they are LGBT by a work colleague compared to 9% of non-disabled LGBT workers
- One in four disabled LGBT workers (26%, higher than the 18% of LGBT workers in general) have been the target of negative comments or conduct from work colleagues in the last year because they are LGBT.
- 24% of disabled LGBT staff were excluded from social events by colleagues in the last year for being LGBT
- One in five disabled LGBT people (21%) say they don't feel able to be themselves at work.

On every measure disabled LGBT staff experience significantly more discrimination in the workplace than LGBT people in general, where discrimination is already high. Where workers are Black and/or trans the discrimination is further compounded. There are also additional challenges for young disabled LGBT workers and for disabled women workers who are LGBT.

Conference believes that there are a number of measures that could help improve workplaces for disabled LGBT people but it is essential to take an intersectional approach to workplace equality, recognising that many disabled workers also experience additional discrimination based on their race, sexual orientation, gender identity and other factors.

Conference therefore calls on the National Disabled Members Committee, working with the National LGBT Committee, other self organised groups and National Young Members Forum where appropriate, to:

1. Raise awareness of the specific challenges faced by disabled LGBT workers and consider developing resources to assist branches in negotiating on behalf of these members
2. Work with UNISON's service groups to include mandatory, cross-organisation and intersectionally aware anti-discrimination training on their bargaining agendas
3. Continue to work towards developing a model reasonable adjustment 'passport' and update and publicise UNISON's Disability Leave factsheet and model policy, ensuring issues of intersectionality are highlighted where appropriate.

32. The Welfare State: A Hostile Environment for Black Disabled People

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Carried

Conference notes this government's official policy of creating a 'hostile environment' for non-EU migrants who are predominantly Black. This attempt to make life unbearable for undocumented migrants manifests itself in a growing network of immigration controls across society, including immigration checks to access public services, welfare benefits, healthcare and housing. The Windrush scandal has demonstrated that the hostile environment extends to Black people who are entitled to live in the UK and to access public services. Black disabled people who are disproportionately reliant on the welfare state are particularly badly hit.

The welfare benefits system is already inaccessible for many Black disabled people. The Universal Credit (UC) application system is only available online and in English. Language barriers and higher levels of digital exclusion mean that a disproportionate number of Black disabled claimants find it harder to apply for UC and are more likely to be sanctioned for failure to meet claimant commitments. There are no adjustments in place for visually impaired people or for those with native languages that do not read from left to right.

Research by the Runnymede Trust and the Women's Budget group has found that Black women are disproportionately affected by UC. Black families are also larger on average, and so are disproportionately impacted by restrictions to the Local Housing Allowance, the Benefits Cap, the two child limit and the freeze that has been applied to child benefit.

The roll-out of Personal Independence Payments (PIP) has seen many Black disabled people turned down for benefits that help them to live independently. Assessors are not always aware of the barriers faced by those with impairments that disproportionately affect Black disabled people, such as lupus, sickle cell disease and thalassaemia and the fluctuating nature of these conditions. In addition assessors do not always understand how people from Black communities express themselves, for example mental health problems may be downplayed due to community stigma.

Unnecessary residency checks are also being imposed on Black disabled claimants, leading to benefits being unfairly stopped.

Cuts to local government funding and to legal aid have significantly reduced the advice and advocacy services that are available. This, coupled with the hostile environment that engenders a fear of officialdom in Black disabled people, results in many either being unable to access advice and advocacy or feeling unable to approach advice and advocacy organisations for support and as a consequence they are less likely to succeed through mandatory reconsideration or the tribunal process.

Added to this, Black disabled people also face intimidatory questions when accessing other aspects of the welfare state, including the NHS and public housing.

Conference therefore calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to:

1. Campaign against the government's hostile environment policy and its link to the provision of public services and the welfare state

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2. Continue to campaign to stop the roll-out of UC and PIP and call for a fairly funded system that can be made to work for Black disabled people
3. Work with Labour Link and the Labour Party to seek a commitment to fair access to the welfare state under a future Labour government and an end to the hostile environment
4. Work with There for You to consider how UNISON can support members applying for PIP and UC and how we can signpost members to advocacy organisations where appropriate

33. Improving Access to Sexual Health Information for Disabled LGBT People Carried as Amended: 33.1

Conference notes that Deaf and disabled Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) people may experience barriers in accessing essential sexual health services due to lack of appropriate communication and understanding from service providers. Problems include lack of BSL interpreters and electronic notetakers and test results not being communicated in ways that can be understood. Some service providers also continue to stereotype disabled people as sexually inactive. Disabled LGBT people also find their sexual orientation and gender identity is often wrongly assumed or ignored, with significant implications for the sexual health advice and care they receive. Disabled LGBT women face assumptions about their sexuality and heterosexist myths about sex between women. This can lead to disabled LGBT women not receiving advice on sexually transmitted diseases and not being offered regular Chlamydia testing or cervical screening

The lack of clear, appropriate communication can lead to confusion and misunderstanding and can potentially put disabled LGBT people at risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) due to information, explanations and test results remaining unavailable in appropriate accessible formats such as BSL. This may also prevent new medical advances, such as pre-exposure prophylaxis (commonly known as PrEP), a medication in pill form that protects against HIV infection, becoming widely available to disabled LGBT people.

Removing barriers to access and breaking down stereotypes can lead to improved health outcomes for LGBT disabled people and reduce costs for the NHS.

Conference therefore calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to work with the National LGBT Committee to:

1. Raise awareness that disabled LGBT people need to access sexual health services and may need support to access information on conditions and treatments.
2. Work with Health and Local Government service groups to lobby local authorities and the NHS where appropriate for improved staff training and more accessible information around sexual health, for example BSL and various alternative and accessible formats including DVD's and You Tube and written information supported with pictograms (Makaton)
3. Signpost disabled LGBT members to accessible information on sexual health.

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EM1. Implement the United Nations Recommendations

Carried

Conference notes that on 6 September Sarah Newton, Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work, finally responded to the damning 2017 United Nations Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) report. The report condemned the UK Tory Government's failure to uphold disabled people's rights, branding the impact of government policy "a human catastrophe" for disabled people.

A full year later the Minister's response on 6 September outlined just three areas she intends to focus on. This contrasts with the 60 areas of concern raised in the UN report, the vast majority of which the government has not responded to at all.

On 8 October the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Northern Irish, Scottish and Welsh equivalent bodies published a report on steps taken by the government to implement the UN recommendations. This update report criticised the government's lack of response to the UN findings, stating that "only limited steps" have been taken. The report condemned the lack of a comprehensive UK-wide strategy demonstrating how the UK will implement the UN recommendations and the continued reluctance from the UK Government to accept the impact of their policies, for example welfare reform and austerity measures, on the rights of disabled people. The report found that there has been a continued regression in disabled people's rights and that one in five disabled Briton's rights are being violated.

The actions the government highlighted in September include making funding available for social care, providing support through Access to Work including through the new Tech Fund and through their expenditure on benefits to support disabled people. This pays lip service to findings of the UN report which raises over 60 areas of concern from education to employment, from housing to health and from transport to social security. Disabled people are also rightly cynical about whether any of the promises made by the Minister will materialise, given this government's history when it comes to disabled people.

Conference therefore calls on the National Disabled Members Committee to:

1. Continue to campaign for the use of human rights based approaches to delivering public services throughout the UK
2. Continue to support UNISON's campaign for increased government investment in adult social care and health and campaign for a health and social care system that promotes disabled people's independence
3. Working with Labour Link, lobby for the implementation of the UN's recommendations in respect of the Government's failings under the UNCRDP.