

# Stronger together

UNISON national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus committee

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Annual Report 2019

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#ULGBT19

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## Contents

Introduction from the co-chairs	4
Recruiting and organising	5
Bargaining	7
Campaigning	9
International	11
From the caucuses	14
In the regions	18

This report of UNISON's national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus members committee covers our work from November 2018, following the last annual conference, to the end of September 2019.

Actions on last year's conference decisions and monitoring information are included in a separate document. Please email [out@unison.co.uk](mailto: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](http://unison.org.uk/out).

# Introduction from the co-chairs

You couldn't make it up, whilst we are celebrating our very successful 'support the plus' campaign to become an inclusive self-organised group, the Tory party have dramatically surpassed the bar for infighting and stupidity. Having lost credibility over Brexit negotiations, its majority in the house of commons, it is now purporting to support workers with an injection of much needed cash into the vital services that we deliver. Do not be fooled, this party is the very same one who plunged us into austerity along with the banks and the only way we will get a fair and just deal is to support the labour movement.

To keep LGBT+ equality on the agenda, we need to step up our engagement with LGBT+ Labour and Labour link and we must not lose hope, or sight, of our ability to influence policy.

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 inclusivity and diversity of our LGBT+ 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 work to do and we will, with pride! Enjoy the interesting debates and have an inspiring conference.

Darienne Flemington and Dave Merchant



# Recruiting and organising

UNISON LGBT+ Group has had relentless focus on recruitment and organising, playing our part in UNISON officially becoming the UK's largest union in our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.

Our regional groups and national networks of Bi, Trans, Black and Disabled LGBT+ Members are the backbone of our recruitment and organising work. Over the last year we have seen significant growth in the level of activism within many of these groups, with more events than ever attended across the country, where our focus has been squarely on recruiting new members. You can read about their incredible work this year in their reports below.

Nationally, we support all this organising activity by providing regular information and up to date resources, via our webpages, Out in UNISON, 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.

This year also saw our hugely successful national campaign to become a more inclusive self-organised group, adding the plus to our name which required a rule change at National Delegate

Conference (NDC). Whilst for some this might seem a minor change, this was a hugely important step to recognise that a growing number of people who identify their sexual orientation and gender identity in different ways and beyond the binary definition, know their self-organised group and indeed our union is fully inclusive.



We also want to record our immense gratitude to the many activists who have delivered our 'Support the Plus' PowerPoint presentation, submitted and moved motions at branch and regional levels, spoken to members, flyered at conference and the many donations received from branches and regions to produce campaign materials. It was truly incredible to speak to so many delegates at the Service Group Conference immediately before and at NDC, who repeatedly said they had discussed, debated and fully supported our campaign and rule change. This was ultimately demonstrated with a unanimous vote in favour to add the 'plus', therefore future proofing our union and our group as language and the way people define themselves are constantly evolving and for growing our young membership, particularly pertinent in the year of our young member.

Again, we ran our LGBT+ Branch Officer, this year in Manchester, further growing the number of activists in our union. We now have a hundred and seventy five members who have accessed this training nationally, with our next sessions scheduled for Spring 2020.

We are delighted to see the continuing trend of more and more branches involved in the ever increasing number of local pride events. The added value this brings is immense, it helps with retention, allowing members to speak to local branch activists about workplace

issues; provides us an opportunity to raise awareness of UNISON's equality agenda; shows how we care deeply about what is happening to our public services and the communities we serve; and of course to recruit new members. This year there are too many examples to mention, but the regional reports speak for themselves.

You can find out more about this work at the LGBT+ Conference in our "Engaging Branches in Recruiting and Organising" workshop at this years conference.

As ever we continue to organise around annual calendar events, as well as geographical ones, which we use as opportunities to promote our values, resources and the benefits of union membership and activism throughout the year.

We would also like to record our thanks to the general political fund for supporting our attendance at key national LGBT+ events. In 2019, this included national Black Pride, Pride in London, the first ever Bi Pride, Trans Pride in Brighton, Sparkle and BiCon, helping to spread the word on our campaigns and to recruit new members into UNISON.

We have marked Trans Day of Visibility, IDAHoBiT, Bi Visibility Day, LGBT History Month, and Lesbian Visibility Day. We are preparing to mark Intersex Awareness Day, Trans Day of Remembrance and World AIDS Day. Once again We hope to have a photo opportunity at this year's conference for World AIDS Day.

We have continued to publicise the importance of retaining LGBT+ members in activism when they retire, they are an invaluable organising resource that we can't afford to lose. In some regions this is working well, and we have shared this practice through our Regional LGBT+ Convenors Meetings. We also delivered a workshop at National Retired Members Conference, explaining the work of Self-Organised Groups and explored how retired members can become more involved in our work including taking part in Pride events, which was well attended and well received. We will continue working with them to pursue best practice.

Our work on Non-Binary inclusion has continued. In addition to promoting our factsheet 'Gender identity: non-binary inclusion', sharing our non-binary inclusion presentation at training sessions and events; we have also seen our activists move our Model Non-Binary Inclusion motion at a number of Regional Councils, raising awareness if this important work and seeking changes to local forms, resources and procedures. Further more, we are grateful to have received confirmation that the NEC have agreed to review unnecessary gender references in the rule book.

We have packed out the programme for this year's conference, with a host of workshops and drop-in sessions.

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# Bargaining

We have had another busy year on the bargaining front. We are proud of our main role of supporting and informing the negotiation of decent workplace policy and practice. Each year we review our bargaining factsheets and update them. This year this we have included information to help bargaining in areas with more than one employer and more than one UNISON branch.



Our core advice includes bargaining guides on LGB, trans and bi equality and our ongoing challenge is getting these into the hands of negotiators. We continue to work with our service groups to raise the profile of our bargaining advice and were delighted to be invited to attend the UNISON health conference to talk about our model trans policy. We spoke to numerous members and handed out copies of the policy. We were delighted that after conference a number of branches contacted us asking us to check and comment on their workplace policy, which we happily did.

We were also pleased the bi-caucus developed a bi version of the “How to be a good ally” leaflet, that was originally produced by the trans caucus to support trans members. After all, a good idea is often worth developing. We hope branches and members will find the bi-ally leaflet useful.

We continue to work collaboratively with the other self organised groups, working closely with them around hate crime and mental health. We were delighted that each of the other self organised groups, and our young and retired members, supported us in our bid to become an LGBT+ group and thank them for inviting us into their meetings to discuss why this was so important to us.

We continue our work with all parts of the union on non-binary inclusion. Our non-binary presentation continues to be shared, and the model motion on non-binary inclusion has already been submitted to a number of regional councils.

We also continue to promote UNISON’s work on intersex equality, it essential to us that LGBT+ members continue to be good intersex equality allies.

Our delegates to each of the service group conferences did us proud, and we would like to record our thanks to them.

Ria and Craig started the year off at the higher education conference calling on Higher Education establishments to be more inclusive, to review unnecessary gendered language and allow flexibility in dress codes. Darryl and Louise also called for inclusive workplace policies at the Community Conference, but added to this a request that branches support

the LGBT rule change. Hannah and Frances spoke on motions on the menopause and mental health during the health conference.

Maz and Michael moved motions on making the LGBT group more inclusive by adding the plus and LGBT mental health initiatives at the Energy conference, both motions were carried. Cat and Carl move the same ones at the Water, Environment and Transport conference the following day, again both motions were carried.

Anu and Christine moved our motions at Local Government conference, one on making the LGBT group more inclusive by adding the plus, the other on councils being at breaking point. Amendments were moved to motions on zero hour contracts and the youth work profession.

Lucy moved our motions at the police and justice conference, one around police and justice branches attending local prides and supporting LGBT+ members working in police and justice. Both were unanimously carried.

We continue to work closely with the service groups. This work takes place in the context of continued austerity and the multi layered impacts of cuts on all public services. LGBT+ members continue to be at the heart of UNISON campaigns to reverse these cuts.



# Campaigning

Following the Government's National LGBT survey, an LGBT Action plan to improve the lives of LGBT people was published in July 2018. In the first annual progress report, 2018 to 2019, published in July, the ministerial foreword from Rt. Hon. Penny Mordaunt MP highlights the worrying increase in physical attacks on people because of their sexuality and the ongoing protests in Birmingham against inclusive relationship education.

The progress report goes on to acknowledge that work on the action plan is vital. However, in reality, we have seen a worrying lack of progress since the publication of the plan 12 months earlier and an increase in horrific attacks on LGBT+ people, such as the assault carried out on a London bus by group of young males on a Lesbian couple. Reported incidents are up from 5,807 in 2014-15, to 13,530 in 2018-19, but the number of prosecutions fell from 1,157 to 1,058, from 20% of all reports to just 8% (as reported by the BBC in September) and the number of transgender hate crimes recorded have risen by 81% (reported by the BBC in June), making any continued delay and glacial progress unacceptable.

In October 2018, the Government's consultation on reforming the Gender Recognition Act (GRA) 2004 closed. We reported last year that UNISON had responded to both this and the Scottish Government's consultation, and that we were looking forward to the consultation reports. However, the LGBT Action plan annual progress report states "We will respond to this consultation shortly". This has led to the committee operating, and continuing at the time of writing, a "watching brief" as we're unable to make notable headway with our work until things start progressing again. This is worrying given the vitriolic backdrop of protest from anti-trans campaigners as any delay in progression only provides fuel for those groups who wish to see trans and non-binary people further ostracised and isolated.

The progress report also documents future work. This includes a plan to bring forward proposals to end 'conversion therapy' and states the Government has started to engage with stakeholders, with a view to bringing forward formal consultation. Whilst this is welcome, and we will take part, we were expecting this far sooner and are concerned that the slow progress so far means more LGBT+ people will be subjected to this practice.

We were caught out by the Scottish Government's decision to hold a second consultation, this time on the draft bill containing its proposed reforms. The bill will sadly not provide legal recognition for non-binary people, despite this being supported by a majority of Scottish people. Again, this delay could give further ground to anti-trans groups. UNISON will respond to this consultation.

We continue to fight the far-right and their hate filled political agenda, but we sometimes need to remember how they start to gain public traction. During the year we developed and delivered a workshop for the committee aimed at getting to "know your enemy". This highlighted the tactics used, how easily their agendas start to become mainstream and, if left unchecked, where it can lead. We discussed what we can do to counter their arguments and challenge the right wing agenda. This was also delivered to the LGBT+ Disabled Members Network Day and was well received.



One way the LGBT+ community has challenged negative attitudes towards it, including from the far-right, has been through protest. This year saw the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stonewall riots and they were rightly commemorated in all parts of the UK. We were delighted that the #LwiththeT group of trans-inclusive lesbians were invited to lead Pride in London in response to last year's invasion by anti-trans factions.



We continue to remember that Pride is a protest and remains so with many of us attending the marches this year carrying UNISON protest placards to remember what we are there for. It's not just a party and we still have a long way to go for full equality. However, the news that pride attendees in Surrey were removed for being "too political" is concerning.

In July we welcomed a move by Westminster MP's to amend to the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Bill, providing legalisation of same-sex marriage, and liberalisation of abortion law in Northern Ireland. MPs backed the same-sex marriage amendment by 383 votes to 73 and the abortion amendment by 332 to 99. Whilst the backdrop of this a stalemate situation in Stormont, if the Stormont assembly has not been restored by 21<sup>st</sup> October, the UK Government must bring regulations to Parliament to amend the law in Northern Ireland on same-sex marriage. In early September, the campaign group Love Equality, which is made up of unions, including UNISON, and LGBT+ organisations, announced that they had confirmed with the UK Government that legalisation of same-sex marriages in Northern Ireland is due to come into effect on January 13th 2020. As couples must wait 28 days after they submit their notice of intention to marry, this means the first same-sex weddings are expected to be celebrated on Valentine's Day. A fitting day to celebrate the end of the long campaign for marriage equality.

# International

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. There was a major step forward in 2017 when the Council of Global Unions (CGU) decided to set up a joint working group on LGBTI issues. The CGU is made up of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the nine Global Union Federations and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The first meeting of the working group was held at the PSI office in France, in October 2018 and UNISON was invited to participate. Representatives of the ITUC and five of the Global Unions (EI, IndustriALL, International Transport Workers' Federation, International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Association, PSI and UNI Global Union) attended this meeting, which can accurately be described as 'historic'. The meeting took the form of a strategic planning workshop and developed detailed recommendations to the CGU for a programme of work.

Since then, PSI has been successful in securing funding for an LGBT+ campaigns officer to help drive an LGBT+ campaign among PSI affiliates and the other Global Union Federations and the campaigns officer, Mitchell Coe, started work in the summer. Mitchell will be helping to create a global PSI LGBT+ network, which will enable the sharing of best practice and successful campaigning around LGBT+ equalities across PSI affiliates.

Our expertise and contacts on global LGBT+ organising owe much to our active membership of ILGA, the global LGBTI association. 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. We have again led the collection of regional group affiliation fees and submitted them all to ILGA in one go, and, for the second time, we have a full set of paid up regional LGBT+ affiliations, as well as the national LGBT+ affiliation

The 2018 ILGA Europe conference was held in October in Brussels. The 2016 conference had agreed proposals for a review of the constitution and standing orders leading up to the 2018 conference. The committee, through International Sub, contributed to the two consultations, submitted proposals for changes to the constitution and standing orders, and submitted amendments to proposals from the ILGA Europe Board and LGBT Denmark.

Our main concerns related to proposals from the Board which would have removed the requirement that at least 4 Board members must be people who identify as women and that at least one of the Co-Chairs and one of the Co-Secretaries must identify as a woman, along with a Board proposal to set up a process, including an 'Advisory Council', for reviewing and amending the composition of the Board every two years which we considered to be seriously unworkable. Most of our proposals and amendments were around these issues, but we also submitted proposals on member organisations voting entitlement and for tidying up a section of the standing orders.

In ILGA conferences, all formal proposals are first discussed in designated workshops, which are expected to make recommendations to the conference plenary. In the constitutional workshops, the main debates were on the Board and UNISON proposals and amendments on the composition of the Board. At times, the debates were constructive; at

other times not so much. On the one hand, there was strong support for our proposals to change the four seats reserved for people who identify as men into general seats while keeping the four reserved for people who identify as women, and on the other hand, there was strong support for the Board's proposal to change all 10 seats into general seats. After lengthy discussions, it was decided that all of these proposals would be considered in the plenary.

The Board's proposal to change all 10 seats into general seats, and our amendment to that proposal to keep the four reserved for people who identify as women, was heard first. The debate reflected that in the workshop. Our amendment was lost, but then the Board's proposal was also lost as it did not get the required 75% majority.

We then moved on to the debate on our original proposal to change the four seats reserved for people who identify as men into general seats. We urged those who had voted for the unsuccessful Board proposal to support our proposal as that would at least be a move in the direction of what they wanted, and pointed out that if our proposal wasn't carried, then the Board's composition would stay the same for at least another year. Our proposal was then passed, easily meeting the 75% required. The Board's composition, therefore, is now 10 people of whom at least 4 must be members who identify as women,

We were also successful in achieving the retention of the requirement for at least one of the Co-Chairs and one of the Co-Secretaries to identify as a woman, and our proposal for a Nominations Advisory Committee, an arrangement similar to that used in some other organisations, was carried.

Darienne Flemington continues to represent UNISON on the ILGA-Europe Board. At the end of the 2018 ILGA Europe conference, Darienne was elected as one of the co-chairs of the ILGA-Europe Board. We have nominated her to stand for election at this year's conference.

The ILGA world conference took place in March 2019 in Wellington, New Zealand, the first time it has been held in Oceania. Last year we reported that we had been in discussion with colleagues in sister unions involved in ILGA about a pre-conference on workplace equality and the role of unions. After many months of conference calling and collaboration with PSA New Zealand (Public Service Association) we collectively agreed an agenda and the conference took place just prior to the ILGA conference. Despite the sombre atmosphere and lock down across New Zealand due to the atrocities at the Mosques in Christchurch, the conference was well attended and a number of actions agreed upon – amongst them setting up a working group to formalise the involvement of the global trade union movement as a part of the ILGA pre-conferences, as well as a commitment to involve the International Labour Organisation more in the promotion of LGBTI workplace equality.

The world conference had almost 500 participants, from 93 countries and territories, with dozens of workshops. It agreed a number of changes to the constitution and standing orders, including changing the name from ILGA to ILGA World, and elected the chairs of the new steering committees that the 2016 conference agreed should be established to replace the secretariats. It also adopted a new strategic plan, which will guide the work of the organisation until 2023, and a detailed resolution committing ILGA World to publicly support the decriminalisation of sex work and develop a strategy to improve the lives of LGBTI sex workers. The next world conference will be in Los Angeles in 2021.

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

We continue our work to raise LGBT+ awareness of the reality of the Israeli occupation and the importance of supporting the boycott, sanctions and divestment campaign. We produced a presentation / quiz for 2018 conference which has been used at regional LGBT+ training events during the year.

We backed calls from Palestinian LGBT+ groups for the 2019 Eurovision song contest in Tel Aviv to be boycotted. The summer issue of Out in UNISON featured an article 'Derry's alternative Eurovision' on the highly successful event organised by the Northern Ireland regional group.

We submitted a motion on Palestine to the 2019 TUC LGBT+ conference, which called on the TUC and affiliates to support the campaign for Birmingham Pride to drop HSBC as a sponsor until it ends its complicity with Israel's arms trade, and held a fringe meeting. The motion was carried without opposition and the fringe meeting was well attended.

The 'Pride in Procurement' motion carried at last year's conference highlighted the increase in the number of companies selling 'Pride' related merchandise, either in partnership with LGBT+ organisations or on the premise that a percentage of the profits were donated to LGBT+ organisations, and called for the promotion of ethical trading with LGBT+ organisations we work with, including Pride committees. We have worked during the year on raise awareness among LGBT+ members about ethical procurement, and are developing a presentation that can be used by regional groups. UNISON has developed a four year programme on ethical procurement to tackle exploitation and modern slavery in public service goods global supply chains including training branch activists to take up these issues with public service employers. We are working with the International Section to raise awareness of the programme and encourage LGBT+ members to take part. We have submitted a motion on this to this year's conference and will be holding a workshop.

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# From the caucuses

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## Bisexual members

Following on from our success at previous conferences, we continue to have good attendance at the caucus meetings. We continue to build on our membership and activity, and have a visible presence on social media.

Three motions from our 2018 network day were carried at the 2018 LGBT Conference, How to be a good ally to Bi People at Work, Racism within the Bi Community and Raising Bi Visibility and Supporting Bi Pride

Work on our Bi Ally leaflet is at an advanced stage and will hopefully be ready by the end of August.



Our plan to do a workshop at BiCon on racism within the bi community was unfortunately not possible, however we hope to work with BiCon and run this workshop in 2020.

We have been in continued contact with Bi Pride and this is due to take place on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2019. Full details of our involvement and who will attend on behalf of our caucus have not been finalised at the time of writing this report, however we will be submitting a report following the event.

We had our Bi Caucus Network day on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July, which was again well attended with 18 people present.

This was Sophie's first time at chairing a Bi Caucus meeting as Jade Su was unable to attend. We had a guest speaker from Stonewall, Phillipa Scrafton, who updated us on what Stonewall is currently doing to tackle biphobia and bi erasure. We had group sessions to prepare motions for LGBT+ conference and this resulted in all 3 of our motions making it to the recently published preliminary agenda. We also discussed a strategy for raising our profile on Bi Visibility Day and several attendees committed to a number of activities.

An election was held for one of our reserved seats at National LGBT+ Committee. We were sad to hear that Jade Su was not going to stand for this seat again and in her absence we thanked her for all she has done for our caucus. Phillipa Scrafton was elected into this role unopposed and we welcome her back to National LGBT+ Committee.

We also had an election for TUC LGBT+ Conference 2020. Sab Jones was elected and Lucy Power is substitute.

Jade Su and Sophie attended BiCon 1-4<sup>th</sup> August and a report for this has been submitted to National LGBT+ Committee.

We are looking forward to National LGBT+ Conference 2019 in November and look forward to seeing all bi members attending at our caucus meeting.

## Black members

Bev Miller and Anu Prashar were elected as the co-convenors of the Black LGBT+ caucus with Bev Miller and Jennie Antonio elected to attend the National Black Members Committee (NBMC) meetings on behalf of the National NLGBT+ Committee.

Both Bev and Anu were elected to represent the LGBT members at the 2019 National Delegate Conference. The Thursday of NDC was a pivotal moment in UNISON history. Anu moved the motion on becoming LGBT+ which was passed unanimously. Then Bev moved the rule change that required a two thirds majority. Bev gave a strong response to the debate being cut short with a motion to move to next business that was carried after only two speakers. Nevertheless, conference voted unanimously for the rule change to become LGBT+.

Anu continues to represent us on the TUC LGBT+ committee, and we were well represented on UNISON's delegation to the TUC LGBT+ conference.

Members of the Black Caucus attended London Pride, some of us helped on the very busy UNISON stall in Soho Square, where we span the wheel of equality fortune, others of us marched behind the UNISON banner.

UNISON had a stall at UKBlack Pride the day after London Pride, members of the caucus helped with the Stall and also run a panel debate on self organisation and how UNISON organises LGBT+ members.



Our first Black LGBT+ network day was held in September, we took this opportunity to write motions for this year's LGBT+ conference and motions to the national Black members conference in 2020. We also held elections for the reserved Black Members seats on the national LGBT+ committee, for 2020/21.

Bev and Jennie have fully participated in the work of the NBMC, working with the committee to take forward the work on motions carried at conference. This included giving a presentation to the NBMC on making the LGBT group more inclusive by adding the plus. The NBMC, like the other SOG's agreed to prioritise the motion and included an article in the summer edition of Black action promoting the reasons why the plus was so important to Black members. There will also be an article in the winter edition of Black Action on the Stonewall riots.

Being Black and LGBT+ within the UNISON structure of self organisation is empowering and provides the opportunity to contribute to UNISON's overall work programme and raise awareness on issues specific to Black LGBT+ members.

It has been a wonderful year full of many highs and work that has been successful due to collaborations with the other self organised groups and the young members forum



## Disabled members

LGBT+ disabled caucus has worked with the national committee throughout 2019 on issues brought by 2018's LGBT conference decisions and other work which arose during the year.

As expected, the main committee focus this year was achieving the rule change to become an LGBT+ committee which, unless you've been in a hut in the middle of nowhere for 6 months, you'll know was unanimously carried at the national delegate conference (NDC) in June. Both our motion and rule change sailed through without any of the expected issues, with members of the caucus lining up for the debate. Thanks to everyone for their hard work and dedication!

To start the year we looked through the 2018 record of conference decisions considering where a disability aspect featured, including in our own motions; 30, "Making our union non-binary and disability inclusive", and 31, "Implement the United Nations recommendations Now". The caucus monitored and contributed to 15 motions in total.

We've kept Motion 30, "Making our union non-binary and disability inclusive" on the NEC's agenda. It's been highlighted at various service group conferences, at our co-convenors' days and the equality liaison committee. It's also in this year's disabled members' conference agenda. Work for full inclusivity in UNISON is ongoing.

Motion 31, "Implement the United Nations recommendations Now" feeds into the current work of the committee and UNISON. We continued to highlight the need for an inclusive human rights approach to public service delivery and campaigned for increased funding and investment for adult social care and health. We produced a model letter for members to send to MP's and parliamentary candidates during the imminent general election, which will be released when a date is announced.

Other work included: Cross branch working; 25 years of self-organisation; National SOG conferences; Raising Bi Visibility and supporting Bi Pride; County lines; Gender Recognition Act reform; Government LGBT action plan; Transphobic 'Feminism' and the fight for trans rights. Many focused on the intersectionality of identity/disability, and the impact of mental and physical health, both in work and at home. Other disability related concerns included Prides; both in procurement and accessibility.

We held a very successful Network meeting in September, with an interesting, and frightening, presentation by Neil on the rise of the far right. This focused specifically on the 'othering' of groups enabling and facilitating exclusion and discrimination. It's clear that the lessons from history cannot be ignored without serious consequences. It's a sad indictment when language used in the dark days of the Second World War is now used in newspaper headlines.

On a more positive note, we elected our disabled caucus representatives to the national LGBT+ committee, the LGBT+ standing orders committee, as well as the reserved disabled LGBT+ members' seat on the UNISON delegation to 2020 TUC LGBT+ conference. A nomination was made for a general seat which is elected at LGBT+ conference.

We agreed to submit four motions to conference and one amendment. The Caucus thanks Louise for her hard work in preparing these motions.

Louise and Bev continue to be the national LGBT+ representatives to the National Disabled Members committee, making sure that LGBT+ equality has a high profile within the disabled members work programme.



## Transgender members

2019 has been another busy year for the trans caucus. We have been involved in many activities that affect our trans members during the year, from local and regional events to national events both within UNISON and externally. We were, of course, heavily involved in the successful campaign to change our name to LGBT+, including delivering a presentation to the National Women's Committee (NWC) Policy Meeting, asking them to support the rule change, which resulted in the NWC unanimously supporting the proposal.

We were very pleased to run a workshop at Sparkle on "Transition at Work" as part of the LGBT Foundation's programme of workshops, and also to deliver training on supporting trans equality in the workplace to the Yorkshire and Humber TUC Equalities Forum. This was a very successful session with around 20 people in attendance, from a variety of unions, including a few from UNISON branches. We also attended Trans Pride in Brighton, where we had a presence in both the march and a stall at the event. UNISON also sponsored both the accessible toilets at Trans Pride, and the accessible viewing platform at Sparkle.

The Local Government Service Group's guidance on Improving Trans Equality in Local Government Workplaces, which we helped to shape, has now been published and circulated.



We were also invited to take part in the Activity Zone at this year's UNISON Health Conference, which was held at the beginning of April, where we spoke to a large number of people who were keen to find out what they could do to ensure they were meeting the needs of trans members. We also attended the LGBT branch officer training course earlier this year, and delivered the section on trans equality, and were asked to deliver trans equality training to members of the staff union for UNISON employees (the Society of Union Employees, 'SUE').

The "Trans?" leaflet has been updated this year, with the final design agreed at our Network Meeting in July – this is now available to order.

As we write, we are in the process of updating our "It's Just Good Care – a guide for health staff caring for people who are trans" leaflet, which should be ready in time for conference...

We were asked to contribute to a study on trans policies in UK workplaces by a senior lecturer at Queen Mary University, London, and took part in a very long interview to give our experiences of the widely varying policies in our workplaces.

As usual, 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 and point people in the direction of our model trans policy, which is available on our website.

# In the regions

## Eastern

It has been a busy year for the Eastern Region. We have attended numerous pride events throughout the Eastern Region and sponsored 6 of them. As part of the sponsorship deal we secured full page ads in the pride programme and a designated speaking slot on stage amongst other things. This enabled us to actively promote UNISON at these events.

As part of our work plan for 2019 we have also organised a one day workshop for branch activists and employers on becoming an LGBT+ Ally. The event focussed on what it means to be an LGBT+ Ally in the workplace. This took place on 5<sup>th</sup> October and was a great success. In arranging this event it has led to a motion submitted to LGBT+ conference for this idea to be proposed as a National training opportunity.



In order to try to encourage more members to attend the regional committee meetings we have also opened these up to anyone in the region who identifies as LGBT+.

## East Midlands

The East Midlands Regional LGBT group has spent the year rebuilding and looking at how it operates, our Co Chairs remain Scott Linnett and Emma Procter. We have a new regional support officer in Louisa who has come with renewed energy for the group. 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. Sean and Donna remain our National Reps.

One of our priorities this past year has been to analyse, and improve the experiences of, 'older LGBT people in residential care facilities'. We are continuing to explore this sector in the coming year, liaising with stakeholders, including Age UK, Dementia UK, our fellow Unions and the providers themselves. In line with the priority of the wider union, we will be focussing on recruiting and supporting young members in the coming year. We remain affiliated to ILGA.

Louisa has introduced a newsletter, which brings views and ideas together as well as serving as sharing information across our region for those who are unable to attend meetings. We continue with our work programme and our quest to champion equality throughout our region and union. Along with the rest of our SOG's we were very active in our branches, in sharing information regarding our changing to a plus group and were very pleased to see the outcome at NDC.

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 Remembrance Day. Our flags and banners have been visible across the whole of our region. In addition we are in the process of updating our constitution and looking at how we interact more effectively with our membership.

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. This bodes well for the recruitment and campaigning outlined in our Action Plan.

## 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 regions Pride events with the main one being Pride Cymru which saw us march through the streets of Cardiff. 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. We face challenges in the more rural areas of Wales and we still need to work in these areas to empower our members and encourage them to be themselves in safety.

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. It is also a place for sharing good practice and LGBT+ policies across Wales as we can.

The Action Plan of the group details the targets and plan regionally to recruit and organise and encourage activism through campaigning at Pride events throughout the year and continuing affiliations and seeking new community organisations with which to potentially campaign with.

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

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## Greater London

We've had another full year in the London region doing as much recruitment, campaigning and organising as we could. There have been 5 committee meetings and 3 meetings open to all in the regional group, including retired members.

At our Policy Day in February we agreed our work programme for the year, and elected committee members as our representatives to various UNISON committees and forums and external groups. The day included planning sessions on building support for the LGBT+ rule change, 2019 Year of the Young Worker, and this year's Training and Organising Day.

We continue to be involved in the work of the region, and to send representatives to other regional committees.

Our motion to the Regional Council AGM in February asking the region to support LGBT+ and urging all Greater London branches to support it too was passed overwhelmingly. We also had a good discussion at the open group meeting in March about getting branches to support and prioritise the LGBT+ motions. The LGBT+ motion came 3<sup>rd</sup> (that is, top after the 2 regional motions) in the branch prioritisation ballot, and the rule change was 1st on the regional rule priorities.

Our annual Organising and Training Day in April was very successful, with about 40 people attending and much positive feedback. The speakers were Maggi Ferncombe, Regional Secretary, and Shane Enright from Amnesty International. The day included a presentation on LGBT+ and workshops on how to engage and retain young members, Brexit and the impact on migrant LGBT workers, setting up and sustaining a branch LGBT group, and Israel and Palestine – What's it all about?

Members of the regional group were out in some force for London Pride, starting with the Pre-Pride breakfast in Regents Park, and then participating in the march with regional and national banners and our fabulous balloon. Group members also assisted with the national stall, which was again the only stand alone trade union stall in Soho Square.

Members of the regional group also assisted with the stall at UK Black Pride, which took place the day after Pride London, and attended Croydon Pride on 13 July.

We continue to be involved with the TUC LESE LGBT+ Network (formerly SERTUC) and some of us attended their usual LGBT History month event in February

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.

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## Northern

November was our LGBT conference, our region had one motion successfully gaining entry to the final agenda, but that didn't stop the region from being vocal. 20<sup>th</sup> November marked Transgender Day of Remembrance the group attended an event that aimed to raise issues faced by the Trans community in the workplace. There was also a UNISON lead remembrance service at a hospital branch, with service users and members of staff from the Northern Region Gender Dysphoria Service attending. On the evening the group

attended a candle lit vigil memorialising the reported 369 Trans people killed simply for being their selves.

December the 1st marked World Aids day and the group were able to negotiate the Gateshead Millennium bridge being illuminated Red to mark the event. Some branches also had stalls to mark the day.

February 9<sup>th</sup> was our AGM, numbers were down on previous years and both guest speakers were unable to attend but nonetheless a constructive meeting was held. Reps were appointed to the various regional service groups and the Co-chairs were re-elected into position.

During LGBT History Month the region utilised social media to post snippets around LGBT history and culture, appreciating the importance of the history and the role the trade union movement played within the fight for LGBT equality. In the region many branches held events with stalls, rainbow layered cakes, a display of the LGBT history timeline and the much loved LGBT history quiz, local land marks were lit up in rainbow colours for the whole of February. Four LGBT Awareness and Two Trans Awareness sessions were held, the total attendance for these sessions was 108 staff.

In March a number of our Branches raise Trans Awareness by promoting Trans Day of Visibility. North Tyneside branches participated in a Trans Awareness workshop and delivered a workshop in an event organised by Tyne and Wear Fire Brigade on trans visibility.

May 17<sup>th</sup> marked IDAHOBIT where various local landmarks were lit up in LGBT Rainbow colours. Many branches held stalls to mark the day and raise the issue within their membership. 18<sup>th</sup> May was our policy day where we worked on Motions for our up and coming National LGBT Conference.

Durham Pride was 26<sup>th</sup> May where the group participated in the march and then to the focal point where there was a recruitment stall. 1<sup>st</sup> June saw Northumberland's 2<sup>nd</sup> Pride event where the group marched through Alnwick and down to the Rugby club.

Northern pride took place on the second last weekend in July. The group marched in the parade from Newcastle Civic Centre to Nuns Moor park where we had a stall engaging with members of the public discussing the work UNISON do nationally but also regionally on issues pertinent to the LGBT Community, this was well received by all who came to talk to us and we had a fantastic time discussing the true meaning of Pride and its history.



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## Northern Ireland

2019 has been another very busy year for UNISON LGBT+ Northern Ireland. We have completed a lot of work including adding the +. We have worked on several campaigns the one most out there would be our continuing Love Equality campaign. This campaign has come to the fore with great support from our friends in Westminster and we may have equal



marriage by the time you read this. This year has been a major year for us in the LGBT+ community with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Stonewall.



Campaigning has always been a major part of our work and we continue to highlight issues facing our LGBT+ community. Prides and LGBT Awareness Week have been a great opportunity and time to Highlight UNISON LGBT+ work and ongoing campaigns. UNISON has again launched Foyle LGBT Awareness Week 2019 and had events in Derry and Belfast. Topics this year included journeys with members of our community telling a selected audience their own LGBT+ stories experiences.

The highlight this year for us was organising Derry's Alternative Eurovision to end Awareness Week with us working in partnership with local UNISON branches and Derry Branch Solidarity with Gaza. We raised nearly £6000 with £2500 donated to a youth club in Gaza and the remaining money going to MAP (Medical aid for Palestine)

Foyle Pride also had the pleasure this year of hosting our very own co-chair Dave Merchant who led our parade and took part in several workshops with LGBT+ people in the city. These included a debate with Dave and invited guest from London, Dublin and Netherlands, discussing had Prides become to corporate and leading a workshops with young people in our Trans groups.

UNISON also played an active role in Belfast and Larne Prides marching with our banners and distributing UNISON LGBT+ material. Newry this year was also hosting UK and Ireland Pride. UNISON also took part in this parade and held a fundraiser for SAIL an organisation supporting the Trans community here.

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 so 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 has had an eventful year, with us attending 15 different Pride and other LGBT+ community functions all across the region. At Liverpool Pride, we were joined by a number of local branches and the regional Young Members Forum on the march. At the

first ever Crewe Pride, where we were joined by the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, following a high profile incident where the chair of their Police and Crime Panel criticised their Deputy Chief Constable for wearing a rainbow lanyard. We ran another successful event to mark the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia in conjunction with Many Hands, One Heart, an LGBT asylum seeker and refugee support group in Liverpool. We also continued our support for Film With Pride, including a special screening of A Deal With the Universe to mark Trans Day of Visibility.



We have held three well attended meetings over the year at which we agreed our work plan, heard from our Regional Convenor, promoted the national network days, discussed a regional challenging discrimination campaign, elected a new committee of 19 people and agreed to alter our involvement with Manchester Pride to one that better aligned with UNISON's values.

Alongside our meetings, we ran two LGBT+ training days, open to any UNISON activist in the North West. Sessions run at these events were on hate crime, becoming an LGBT+ group, trans rights at work, Boycott Eurovision 2019, motion writing, non-binary inclusion, challenging discrimination and ILGA. We also held our first committee development day, as we acknowledged the importance of investing in those who generously give their time to keep our group growing.

We took motions to our Regional Council on reviewing the region's forms, communication and processes to ensure they are inclusive of non-binary members and also in support of us becoming an LGBT+ Group. The North West was also out in force at National Delegates Conference to ensure that conference supported the plus.

Our social media channels have been regularly utilised across the year to promote our events, to mark events of note, such as bi visibility day, and as an effective part of our campaigning activities. Our presence has continued to grow, with over 600 people following us on Facebook, over 400 on Twitter and over 100 people on our mailing list.

## Scotland

2019 has proved to be another very busy and productive year for the Scottish Regional LGBT+ Committee. We held another successful AGM in October 2018 and the new committee was elected. As a committee there is an ongoing commitment to working in partnership with branches across the region and this has been reflected in the membership of the committee, with a larger number of regional areas such as Glasgow, Edinburgh, Borders being represented, as well as wider range of service groups, allowing us to fill all of our seats at a regional level. Three new committee members took up positions this year.

Our AGM focus this year was the 'year of the young person'. We heard an excellent presentation by Jordan Day from TIE - Time for Inclusive Education Campaign who discussed TIE and his own reflection and thanking UNISON for continued support of the campaign. The committee acknowledges UNISON members and branches who have



supported fundraising to replace lost funds, which enabled 63 teachers to be trained in providing LGBT inclusive education in our schools.

February 2019 policy weekend where we developed our work plan for the year drawn from the National LGBT+ conference decisions. We held discussions with the Scottish Minister for Mental Health, Clare Haughey MSP, who prior to being elected, in 2016, was a mental health nurse and UNISON activist and member. We discussed a number of issues related to her ministerial portfolio.

We undertook activities to raise awareness of adding the plus to our name, including a motion to Scottish council which passed unanimously, and presentations at branches.



In May we sent a full delegation to the 8th Annual STUC LGBT+ Workers Conference. Over the two days we heard from a number of speakers including, Mary Senior, STUC Vice President, Christina McKelvie MSP, Minister for Older People and Equalities. Motions moved by our committee on LGBT+ hate in social media and on the importance of intersectionality sensitive services were passed. Two of our committee members were elected to the STUC LGBT+ Workers Committee.

UNISON flags have been flying all over Scotland, with our attendance at the Saltire Pride in East Lothian in early May quickly followed in quick succession by Oban, Aberdeen (Grampian), Ayrshire and Stornoway (Hebridean). For those of you unfamiliar with the geography of Scotland, it takes a five hour drive from Glasgow followed by a two and half hour ferry journey to reach Stornoway. By the end of Pride season we will have had a UNISON presence at 16 Pride events. This is only achievable with our partnership approach and support from local branches both in terms of financial and human support. This joint working with is seeing that our LGBT+ members are being supported and recognised at a local branch level and continues to encourage and develop new activists. This has also led to the establishment of a new east coast SOG which includes members from branches across the services.

## South East

The South East (SE) Region has been celebrating the addition of the plus (+) to our self organised group (SOG) name by supporting as many Prides as possible in the region. This has the advantage of having UNISON at the forefront of Pride celebrations, while also allowing us to evangelise about the work the UNISON does in supporting workers' rights. Some of the most moving encounters at the various Prides were with young people just entering the world of work who were shocked at their lack of workers rights, and low pay. They all admitted it was encouraging to see a union championing LGBT+ rights as part of a greater equalities and workers' rights agenda.

There is also the risk that, with the big Prides dominating, sometimes the smaller Prides lose out on sponsorship. This has the consequence that those who identify as LGBT+ in

some more conservative areas of the country can feel marginalized and unsupported. The South East Region has taken this as an opportunity to be one of the main sponsors for those smaller Prides. In this way we have been able to ensure that the UNISON brand is at the forefront of small developing Prides.

One such Pride which turned into a major event is the Isle of Wight (IoW) Pride, of which UNISON has been a major sponsor, and of which our member Yve White was the principal organiser and driving force. So popular was the first, in 2017, that the following year it was named as UK Pride and Yve White was awarded the British Empire Medal in the Queen's

Contrast this with Surrey Pride, Woking, which had the notable distinction of being the first Pride in the county of Surrey. Despite the 'newness' the local radio stations, and Woking Town Council had really gone to town, with banners on lampposts, and great publicity. However, nothing is ever simple. For all the good news stories, there are always bumps in the road.



One of the issues that comes up time and again in our support for Pride is the loss of the political message. This issue is being raised at Conference this year in Motion 22 - PUTTING POLITICS BACK IN PRIDE AND WIDER LGBT+ COMMUNITY.

Surrey Pride saw fit to accept sponsorship from BAE, well known for providing arms to some of the most repressive regimes in the world. Political banners at Surrey Pride making comment on this issue were confiscated.

There is also the issue of the corporate control over some Prides, where entertainment is charged, access controlled, and political dissent discouraged. Some Prides also experienced incursions by individuals intent on anti-LGBT+ action such as promoting Conversion Therapy. As a community we still have a great deal of work to do.

Work in the South East Region LGBT+ committee has also been focused on supporting the Regional Strategy through work with local LGBT+ community groups, and fighting against Homophobia, the rise of the far right, government cuts. One area that the region is particularly interested in is a commitment to encourage and develop SOG-relevant branch officer positions (i.e. LGBT+ Officer, Black Members Officer etc.) alongside stewards. We will be suggesting that the region could survey what percentage of branches of these roles are filled. While it is important to understand SOG representation in relation to LGBT+, equality representation matters across the board. In this vein, it is helpful that both Lucy Power, and Andy Armsby are part of the Campaigns and Policy Development (CPD) subcommittee on the National LGBT+ Committee, and will continue working to provide guidance for SOGs, as well as good practice to be shared with branches.

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. Our AGM is held

in October, and we welcome everyone from the SOG, whether you're out in your branch or not.

## South West

The committee has met irregularly in 2019, however we have had a couple of successful conference calls and a successful agm/policy training weekend.

In addition to pride events across the region, we participated in LGBT History month delivering a workshop for the Schools Out initiative, and jointly participated at the Exeter Respect festival with the Black members SOG. These events are growing year on year and provides us with an eclectic audience to showcase our activism in the trade union movement.

Although regional LGBT+ members were able to attend most prides, we needed more support for organising and staffing on the day. A call out resulted in branches staffing and organising at 8 pride events around the region. We supplied the stall and material resources, and the branches the staff. We would like to extend our heartfelt thankyou's to all of those who helped to make each of these events the happy success that they were.

Building on previous years, we have designed a system to support volunteers on the 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 included guidelines for engaging with prospective members which has resulted in new members joining the SW LGBT+ network

As always, we use pride and equality events as a platform to highlight whole UNISON campaigns, to recruit from underrepresented groups, and to raise awareness around LGBT+ inequality around the world, including highlighting 'No Pride in Israeli Apartheid' around Eurovision.

The very popular rainbow photo frame encouraged an array of colourful happy people to pose for LGBT+ equality. These also encouraged the conversation about the Plus. Photos were uploaded onto various social media sites including twitter, Facebook and instagram.

The SW region remains affiliated to ILGA World. As we are in the European region, we engage with ILGA Europe. At our pride stalls we ask for donations in exchange for lanyards and ILGA maps. These donations support ILGA's scholarship programme and Diversity fund. This is a vital part of our work around solidarity with other LGBT+ groups. To date we have collected over £1000 and we extend many thanks to all the members who helped with the collections.

We regularly send information to branches in the South West using existing updated publicity materials. This included reminders for our members who identify in the LGBT+ caucus' groups of the national network days. The new Bi and Trans leaflets have been visible and well received at our events.

We continue working with UNISON Young members, LGBT Labour and where possible Local Labour constituency parties. As indicated, we have had good support from members of the other SOG groups as well as several branches volunteering with us.

The SW LGBT+ website has information regarding contact details and relevant links to the national website, including our Facebook page which goes from strength to strength. Several LGBT+ activists hold Branch Officer posts and participate on Regional committees.

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## West Midlands

The number of people attending the regional meetings has increased slightly. We always welcome more and next year we are planning to have at least one in Stoke on Trent.

This year we were delighted to initiate some work with ALBA a group of women LBT+ asylum seekers based in the West Midlands conurbation. They joined the Regional group at both Birmingham and Coventry Prides where they energy and dancing, even in the pouring rain in Coventry, made the day brighter.

We also had a speaker from LGBT against Islamophobia on the pickets of Parkfield School. This was an enlightening talk. The issue of inclusive Equality education in primary schools is still current and important.

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 all meetings of the Committee and fully participate in the meetings. Jennie Antonio is also one of the LGBT+ committee reps to the National Black Members Committee.

The Group has regularly attended and participated in the Regional Council. Our rep, Andy Chaffer, has attended every meeting of the Regional Committee and actively promoted the activities of the Group.

Bob Deacon is the delegate from the SOG and he is the Secretary of the group. Information and newsletters is regularly available at LGBT+ meetings.

This is a sub group of the Midlands Regional TUC and is a merger of the Black, Disabled and LGBT+ group. The group is now starting to receive regular attendees from all 3 strands and has now decided that in 2020 it will aim to have a speaker on Disability issues in each History month that has a meeting e.g. LGBT+ History Month.

The group attended Pride events in Birmingham, Coventry, Warwickshire, Walsall and Worcestershire this year. Stalls were held and marches joined. Walsall and Worcestershire were good examples of joint working with local UNISON branches. We also had a new banner, which luckily was not expensive as now we have the plus in our name we need a new one. A few new Pride events appeared across the West Midlands and the group is looking at how to engage with them in 2020. We are trying to check that the values of UNISON are reflected in the values of the new events. We welcome information on these Prides and suggestions of how the SOG can be involved.



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## Yorkshire and Humberside

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 carried on our great work with the branches in our region from last year. We managed to attend 95% of the prides within our regions. Our attendance at prides has been a key focus. 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.

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 [facebook.com/unisonYHLGBT](https://facebook.com/unisonYHLGBT) and our new twitter page @YHLGBT has been an invaluable tool for engagement, with a number of new members making contact.

At all of the 7 prides we attended this year we worked closely with local branches. Most of the branches we worked with the previous year was straight in contact with us asking if they could support us again this year. York Local government branch and Sheffield teaching hospitals had already booked there stall at their retrospective prides.

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 2020.

One of the main big aims of our region is to encourage more women to be involved in our Regional Group. If anyone is interested in being more involved, then please contact us via the above methods above. We continue to participate on all regional committees and reports are received back from the delegates at each meeting of the SOG.

