

Building a fairer future

Disabled Members'

Annual report 2020 and 2021

Disabled Members Annual Report 2020 and 2021 Building a Fairer Future

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1. Chairs' Introduction

It's been a strange time for our National Disabled Members Self Organised Group and we have been honoured and humbled to be your chairs during this cycle of the committee.

The Covid-19 pandemic put a strain on the committee and the union as a whole but we kept up the work to fight for our disabled members in very challenging times.



NDMC members in their UNISON Disability Equality t-shirts

Our achievements have included persuading the government to extend Access to Work to home working and ensuring government produced guidance for workers who were shielding. We also produced numerous guides to help our stewards support disabled members during the pandemic, from 'long Covid' to undertaking risk assessments.

The chairs team have also represented your interests within UNISON especially at the equality liaison committee which represents all the Self Organised Groups and allowed us to hold a dialogue directly with NEC members.

We supported more disabled members to become active in the union by working with our NEC to review how we ensure disabled activists get the reasonable adjustments they need to carry out union activities.

We've all had to adapt to online ways of working and although we were disappointed that Covid meant the cancellation of our 2020 disabled members conference, we were delighted that over 600 disabled members signed up to our very successful Disability Live! Event.

We have continued to work on our work plan and continued to be a strong voice both within the union and outside for our disabled members. We estimate there could be up to 200,000 disabled members in our union.

At the 2019 National Delegate Conference it was agreed that UNISON would make 2021 the Year of Disabled Workers. Due to the pandemic we had to take the decision to move this to 2022. But we look forward to making that a year we can all finally get to celebrate the huge contribution disabled workers make!

Our disabled members are a very diverse group of workers across all service groups. And despite the pandemic our caucus groups for Black, LGBT+, Deaf (BSL) and women disabled members have been going strong, even in the new online world.

As always we would like to take the opportunity to say a huge thank you to all involved in our self organised group and helped us navigate the huge challenges we faced, including our national committee members, NEC reps, speech to text team, our British Sign Language interpreters, our national officers and the technical teams and all the regional committees and branch disabled members officers across the country who have worked so hard to put policy into practice in their local areas.

We're looking forward to another great year to come as we continue to be the number one union for disabled workers!

Lastly, we would like to turn our thoughts to all UNISON members or their family members who lost their lives or health during the pandemic. Also our sincere thanks to all our frontline workers and those in the background who kept our essential services going.

Kathleen Kennedy and Iain Scott-Burdon (Co-Chairs)
Graeme Ellis (Deputy Co-Chair)

Building a Fairer Future

This 'annual' report covers two years because we were forced to cancel our 2020 National Disabled Members Conference. Although we produced an Interim report in 2020, we committed to a full report once the COVID situation allowed us to return to a national motion-based conference.

Covid-19 and disabled people

The last two years have of course been overshadowed by COVID-19 and much of the work of the NDMC has been around supporting our disabled members who have continued to go to the workplace to deliver public services or who have had to switch to homeworking.

We ensured the UNISON website was updated, often on a daily basis, with changes to government regulations and we produced advice and guidance for reps in addition to a host of webinars on health and safety related issues. The COVID-19 web pages were the first on the UNISON site to have accessibility settings.

However, it is important to pay tribute to the work of our local reps and regional staff who did the really hard graft of persuading, cajoling and sometimes forcing employers to do everything they could to protect disabled workers. This was our union at its very best.

A more detailed look at the work we did on COVID-19 is included in the sections below on the workplan.



Members from Scotland, Greater London and the South West speaking at our session on regional organising at Disability Live!

Disability Live!

Despite the cancellation of our 2020 Disabled Members Conference and the ongoing COVID crisis, disabled members put together an exciting programme of webinars as part of our week-long Disability Live! event in October. We were the first group in UNISON to put on an event of this type.

Over 600 disabled members registered to attend and we were amazed how well the technology worked for us. We had sessions on COVID and disabled workers, social care, homeworking and organising disabled workers in the regions. Speakers included Vicky Foxcroft MP, Marsha de Cordova MP and Liz Kendall MP, all from the Labour shadow ministerial team. A special thanks to members of NDMC who agreed to chair sessions – often their first time chairing a virtual meeting!



Karon Monaghan QC chairs our virtual roundtable *Influencing the Disability Strategy* with a total of eight guest speakers!

Government Disability Strategy

The government has been promising a National Disability Strategy since 2019. In November 2020 we organised a very successful virtual roundtable, in partnership with Disability Rights UK (DRUK), entitled '*Influencing the Disability Strategy: Post-Covid solutions to breaking down barriers for disabled workers*'. Chaired by Karon Monaghan QC, we had speakers from a range of organisations including DRUK, Inclusion London,

Disability Employment Forum, Disability Law Service, Leonard Cheshire and Citizens Advice. The event was attended by civil servants working on the Disability Strategy. After the event we wrote to civil servants and parliamentarians outlining our key asks for the disability strategy.

We wrote to the Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson, at the start of 2021 calling for more of a focus on employment and disability and consultation with trade unions. We also outlined the key issues we would like to see the government take action on as part of the disability strategy. However the Minister was not keen to meeting with us.

As a result of our *Influencing the Disability Strategy* event, we built up our partnership working with those involved as part of a new Disability and Employment coalition of organisations keen to see improvements in enforcement of the rights to reasonable adjustments, publication of disability pay gap data and investment in employment support for disabled people.

The government produced a survey for disabled people in early 2021. Although it was fundamentally flawed, we publicised it to all of our disabled members through our regular eBulletin, encouraging members to call for increased enforcement of reasonable adjustments.

The government published their strategy in July 2021 and, disappointingly, there are no firm commitments to introduce any of the key changes we have been calling for. We have been working with the Disability and Employment coalition to develop a charter, which focuses on those key asks, which we will use to campaign for a much more robust strategy that will make a real change to disabled people's working lives.

Year of Disabled Workers 2022

The Year of Disabled Workers was originally to have taken place in 2021 but at the outset of COVID we realised this was unlikely. We therefore agreed with UNISON's National Executive Committee (NEC) and the TUC to postpone it until 2022. A sub group has been established and is working on plans for a year which will celebrate the contribution of disabled people to the workplace.

Recruitment

A small sub group was set up to look at our recruitment materials and Disability History Month. As a result, a new range of branded merchandise for disabled members has been produced. This includes branded pens,

key rings, t-shirts and tote bags. All branches are encouraged to order merchandise in advance of Disability History Month (18 November-18 December). Order here - <https://shop.unison.site/product-category/disability-equality/>



Deaf caucus network meeting 2021

2. National Disabled Members Committee Work Programme

The motions agreed at UNISON's National Disabled Members Conference form the basis of the NDMC's annual work programme and our last conference was in 2019. The NDMC met in January 2020 and agreed the final work programme. However, in early March the pandemic hit. Work on the 2020 work programme was immediately paused as the NDMC re-focussed its efforts on dealing with the impact of the pandemic on our members. Nonetheless we were able to return to the workplan as the virus ebbed. Two sub groups were established, the Disability Campaigns and Policy sub group and the Representing and Organising members sub group. They met virtually and took forward the workplan, in addition to Covid related issues.

Representing and Organising Disabled Workers

Motions 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 22 and 9 (not reached) and COVID related workplace issues

Protecting disabled workers from COVID-19

At the outset of the pandemic UNISON repeatedly raised the inadequacy of public health guidance with government officials. The initial guidance for shielding people did not include any reference to them as workers - it was assumed they would not have a job. In addition to speaking to civil servants, we gave evidence to the Women and Equalities Committee calling for clear and unambiguous advice from Government that people who were shielding should work from home if it was possible to do so. UNISON successfully got this guidance updated on 29 May 2020 to include a new section on shielded workers. This referred to Equality Act duties on employers for the first time and was a significant victory which strengthened the hand of our negotiators in the workplace.

We worked with our Bargaining Unit to produce our own guidance to help reps to support members who were shielding. We ensured disabled workers' additional rights under the Equality Act were made clear. We consistently advised both shielded members and those in the vulnerable group to work from home - and if this was not possible to contact their UNISON rep.

UNISON raised further concerns about the shielding guidance which came into force on 1 August 2020. It was phrased in a way that may make it easier for employers to argue these workers should return to the

workplace. The guidance was again changed due to UNISON pressure. When COVID restrictions were lifted and workers started to return to the workplace in the summer and autumn of 2020, we produced guidance for disabled workers which focused on the risk assessment process. We pushed for individual risk assessments for all disabled workers. As the COVID regulations changed we updated this guidance so that it remained effective.



UNISON National Secretary Donna Rowe-Merriman and Legal Officer Bruce Robin join us at our session on disabled members and COVID-19 in the workplace at Disability Live!

We produced advice on rights at work during the epidemic in British Sign Language (BSL) on UNISON's BSL microsite.

We raised concerns with the NHS in relation to the government decision to require all NHS workers to wear masks as this has a particular impact on safe working for Deaf members. Regions assisted in resolving specific issues through local representation.

We also contributed to the new ACAS hybrid working guidance which we expect will become widely used as homeworking becomes a long-term result of COVID-19.

Long COVID and the workplace

As the pandemic progressed, 'long COVID' or post COVID-19 syndrome started to become an issue in the workplace. We again worked with UNISON's Bargaining Unit to develop new guidance for reps supporting members with Long COVID. This includes information on where the member may qualify as a disabled person under the Equality Act 2010. The guidance is on the UNISON website.

Equipping our stewards to support our disabled members

The Representing and Organising Disabled Members sub-group worked together to produce a new and comprehensive Stewards Guide to Representing Disabled Members. This is a resource that all branches and stewards can use to help them to represent disabled members who need help at work. It covers negotiating reasonable adjustments, supporting members through sickness absence procedures, grievances and disciplinaries and where to go for further resources. The guide is on the UNISON website for branches to download.



Some of those who attended our Disabled Members Branch Officers and Contacts training in 2019

Although our planned 2020 annual Disabled Members Officers and Contacts training day has to be cancelled due to COVID, we will be holding our 2021 event on 22 September.

We worked with UNISON Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) to develop a very successful three part Advanced Disability Law virtual training course delivered by Tamara Lewis. Feedback was very positive for this event.

Our Deaf caucus worked together to produce a new Stewards Guide to representing Deaf (BSL) members. The guide includes information on the barriers Deaf members face, how to organise a BSL interpreter and other useful information for branch stewards. The guide is now on the UNISON website.

Awareness of Access to Work

We undertook a survey of disabled members working from home in June 2020 and found that:

- 53% had not been given any reasonable adjustments to support them to work from home
- Only 5% had help from Access to Work, the government's flagship agency that funds adjustments for disabled workers
- 41% did not know about Access to Work and 23% did not think Access to Work could help with working from home

We gave evidence to the Women and Equalities Committee calling for a significant investment in Access to Work to support a revolution in home working for disabled people who want it.

Based on this feedback, our then Assistant General Secretary Christina McAnea wrote to the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, in July 2020 to demand an increase in funding for Access to Work. She also called for the scheme to be extended to help people with homeworking. We followed this up with a meeting with Treasury civil servants. We were delighted when in August 2020 the government gave in to our demands and announced an increase in funding for Access to Work and its extension to homeworking. This was a big win for our disabled members.

As a result of this, UNISON was asked to sit on the Department of Work and Pensions Access to Work stakeholder group where we have continued to push issues such as the need for online options and greater publicity. An online process is now being developed.

As part of our work on the Employment and Disability coalition we are calling for a further review of Access to Work to ensure application and renewal processes are efficient, personalised, and flexible.

We have updated our Quick Guide to Access to Work, which is on our website, and a more comprehensive guide is currently in development.

Celebrating our caucuses

Despite the pandemic we continued to celebrate the diversity of our disabled members and we held virtual network meetings for our Black, LGBT+, women and Deaf caucuses. We saw a higher turnout than usual for these events with virtual meetings helping us to reach out to more under-represented members. We will need to examine whether this is

something we continue with in the future.

We have updated our policies and publications to ensure we include the “plus” in LGBT+ and no longer use unnecessarily gendered language. Being inclusive of non-binary and gender fluid disabled members is now embedded into how we work.



Our Stewards Guide to representing Deaf members is on our website

Our Black caucus produced a blog for the UNISON website about Black Lives Matter where they publicised our Black disabled caucus and encouraged members to get involved.

Disability Passports in the Workplace

Our model Disability Passport policy is now on the UNISON website and can also be found in the online catalogue. We have publicised this to branches and there have been successful agreements reached with a number of employers.

Disabled women and sickness absence

We have worked more broadly on sickness absence but with an understanding that there are certain, often non-apparent, impairments that are specific to women. We have publicised our Disability Leave guide which branches can use to negotiate policies that help to ensure disabled workers aren't penalised for sickness absence that is related to their impairment.

This motion also asked us to campaign to re-introduce the dual discrimination provisions which were deleted from the Equality Act. We responded to a number of parliamentary inquiries and consultations making this point. One of our members also produced a blog for the UNISON website on the anniversary of the Equality Act which made the same point. It has recently been announced by government that they may look into this issue so we will continue to push.

Meaningful Annual Disability Employment Statistics

The motion asked for the NDMC to develop an understanding of the government's Disability Confident and through desk research we identified that it does not require employers to take on a single additional disabled staff member and it is too easy to move from level 2 to 3 without any evidence of making a difference for disabled people. Through our involvement with the Disability and Employment Coalition we have developed a set of "asks" around Disability Confident. In particular there needs to be a requirement that employers employ a minimum number of disabled people and that there are clear outcomes to achieve before moving up the levels. We have been using the charter as the basis of our campaigning on this issue.

As the motion requested, we have worked closely with the Labour Party and with the Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Vicky Foxcroft, on ensuring the party commit to disability pay gap monitoring as part of the manifesto process. We responded to the Labour Party national policy forum consultation in the summer of 2021 where we called for mandatory pay gap monitoring.

Tackling sexual harassment of disabled women in the workplace

We have worked closely with the National Women's Committee to ensure UNISON's work on this issue includes the experience of disabled women and our workplace guidance has been publicised to branches and is available on our website. We have responded to a number of government and parliamentary consultations where we have called for the re-introduction of third party harassment legislation (which was removed from the Equality Act by a previous Tory government). The government announced in July 2021 that they were committed to re-introducing this, which would outlaw harassment by customers, clients and members of the public. However, they have been very vague about when this might happen so we will continue to work with the National Women's Committee to push for early implementation.

Ageism and the experience of disability

UNISON responded to the Law Commission's consultation on Hate Crime in December 2020 where we called for age to be included in hate crime legislation. We drew attention to the fact that many older people are targeted due to their perceived vulnerability but this in itself is a stereotype. We also called for crimes against young people on the basis of their age and perceived vulnerability to be addressed.

We continued to be very much involved in UNISON's national social care campaign, including drafting a new recruitment leaflet for Personal Assistants.



Liz Kendal MP, Shadow Minister for Social Care, and General Secretary Christina McAnea, speak at our Social Care session at Disability Live!

Disability Policy and Campaigns

Motions 3, 4, 12, 15, 17, 20, 21, 23, 16 (not reached), 18 (not reached), 19 (not reached), 24 (not reached) and 25 (not reached) and COVID related campaigning issues

Campaigning to end the disability pay gap

In November 2019 we marked the first TUC Disability Pay Gap Day with special UNISON “Smash the Disability Pay Gap” placards. Many of our UNISON disabled members were featured on Channel 5 News explaining how the pay gap affected them. Later that month we held an event to launch the results of our survey into disabled workers’ experience of asking for reasonable adjustments. Speakers at the event included Lord Low and Michael Paul from Disability Rights UK. The event outlined our findings that 67% of UNISON members had been turned down for reasonable adjustments. Even where employers agreed to provide adjustments, 23% of our members waited more than a year to get them.



UNISON disabled members with Channel 5 in Brighton on the first TUC Disability Pay Gap Day

Our report, *Let's be Reasonable*, highlighted that lack of reasonable adjustments leads to increased sickness absence and lack of career progression, which in turn feeds the disability pay gap with disabled workers stuck on the lowest rungs of the pay ladder. We called on government to increase enforcement of reasonable adjustments as a key way to tackle the pay gap. The report was shared with government ministers, MPs, peers and civil servants.

At the NDMC policy meeting in January the NDMC agreed to set up a new disability pay gap project to include campaigning for a change in the law to require mandatory reporting along the lines of the gender pay gap.



Launching our *Let's be Reasonable* report with Lord Low

We responded to the Work and Pensions Committee Disability Employment Gap consultation in December 2020 where we gave detailed feedback on the drivers of the disability pay gap, including lack of access to reasonable adjustments, and called for a step change in enforcement of disabled workers rights and mandatory disability pay gap monitoring.

Our *Influencing the Disability Strategy* event in November 2020 focused on the need for mandatory disability pay gap monitoring. The government's new Disability Strategy makes some very woolly statements about looking into the issue later in the year. We will be using our charter to campaign for much more meat on the bone and a firm commitment to introducing mandatory monitoring as a matter of urgency.

Campaigning on the unequal impact of COVID-19

UNISON lobbied government about concerns on the introduction of the Coronavirus Act, including highlighting the impact of the suspension of the Care Act on disabled people, changes to the Mental Health Act and the use of Do Not Attempt Resuscitation orders.

From the outset of the crisis, government failed to recognise disabled people as a group with protected characteristics and rights under the Equality Act 2010. Many disabled workers were forced to go to work

because they did not belong to the “extremely clinically vulnerable” group. UNISON raised this in our detailed response to the Women and Equalities Committee inquiry into the impact of Covid-19 on disabled people.

We highlighted the gaps in government guidance which left many disabled workers at risk, having to go to work to pay their bills.

UNISON also raised concerns about lack of a safety net for shielded workers who could not work from home. We gave evidence to the two separate parliamentary enquiries on Covid-19 and we called for extension of the furlough scheme for disabled people (whether in the “extremely vulnerable” group or not) where it has not been reasonably possible to facilitate home working or redeployment to a suitably COVID-safe role.

We also raised concerns about workers with shielding family members. Our General Secretary Dave Prentis wrote to Matt Hancock, the Secretary of State for Health, setting out how many of these members were not being allowed paid leave, and have to make the agonising decision to go to work, putting their loved ones in danger.

COVID and Homeworking campaign

In June 2020 we carried out a survey of disabled members. 50% of them said they were now working from home all of the time. Findings included:

- 73% of disabled workers were more or as productive working from home
- Reasons for increased productivity included reduced impact on pain and fatigue due to less commuting and ability to work more flexibly with additional breaks or later start times
- A number of disabled workers reported taking less sickness absence as they were able to manage their condition better when working from home.
- For those who were less productive, reasons included lack of reasonable adjustments, IT equipment and the mental health impact of homeworking
- 54% felt that they would benefit from working from home in the future
- However, 37% believe their employer is unlikely to allow them to work from home in the future



Graeme Ellis tells Sky News about our Homeworking report

The full report is here:

<https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2020/07/C19-disability-and-homeworking-report-FINAL.docx>

Based on the report, UNISON called for a new right to work from home for those disabled workers who want it. We included this ask in our response to the parliamentary Women's and Equalities Committee consultation. We received significant coverage for the campaign, including on Sky News, the BBC and regional news outlets.

This campaign will continue to be a priority and has been included in UNISON's "No Back to Normal" campaign.

COVID and Sickness Absence

Prior to COVID-19 we responded to the government's *Health is Everyone's Business* consultation where we called for an increase in Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), to be paid from day one of sickness and extended to low paid workers. Sickness absence became a huge issue during the pandemic with many low paid workers having to choose between going to work or living on no sick pay or a paltry £97 a week.

We met with Treasury officials and particularly pointed out that Black disabled workers who were shielding were being forced to go to work due to issues with SSP. The government was forced make some changes to SSP to address this issue.

In our evidence to the parliamentary Women and Equalities Committee we

called for an increase to SSP and extension to more low paid workers to encourage those who have symptoms or live with someone with symptoms to stay off work

However when the government finally got round to reporting on the *Health is Everyone's Business* consultation in July 2021, they refused to agree to raise the rate of sick pay or to make it available to more low paid workers. This was a huge missed opportunity to learn from the pandemic - but we will continue to campaign on this issue.

In its response, the government did agree to ask the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to look at non-statutory guidance around reasonable adjustments. We have written to government to express our concern that this is too weak and statutory guidance is required. We have also written to the HSE to ask them to include UNISON in their discussions.

Welfare Benefits

We met with Treasury officials in 2020 to discuss the issues disabled workers face with PIP and Universal Credit. In July 2021 government came forward with a consultation, *Shaping future support*, which includes some of the issues we raised but is very light on detail or concrete proposals. We will be responding.

We responded to the Labour Party's policy review consultation in July 2021 where we called for a radical re-working of PIP, with better quality assessments that take account of mental health, non-apparent and fluctuating impairments, ending privatisation, more support for the appeal process and an end to penalising applicants who go to work. We also called for a replacement for Universal Credit that supports the multiple needs of those living with a disability, job loss, housing insecurity, illness, and the demands of parenting. We called for an end to sanctions, the five week wait and the two child limit, in addition to restoring the value of the work allowance.

We wrote to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to request data on the number of Black applicants who were refused PIP. We were told that the DWP do not collect data on ethnicity. We replied to them pointing out that if they do not have ethnicity data they would be unable to demonstrate that decisions are made fairly and without discrimination and they are unlikely to be able to comply with the public sector equality duty. We will continue to push on this issue.

We have continued to monitor policy developments in relation to Universal Basic Income, a flat rate payment to all instead of the existing benefits

system. The NDMC has discussed this issue and is concerned that most models fail to take into account the additional costs of being disabled and even those that do include additional payments simply end up replicating the issues within the current benefits system. The NDMC will continue to keep this matter under review but are more sympathetic to a Universal Basic Services model which would mean disabled people would get the services they need irrespective of cost.



Accessible Public Toilets

We responded to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's 2021 *Review to boost the provision of toilets for women and men*. We called for changes to building regulations in England requiring 'Changing Places' toilets in all new and refurbished public buildings to be extended to the devolved nations. We also called for the expansion of funding to increase provision of Changing Places toilets in existing public buildings, such as shopping centres and leisure facilities. We also highlighted the importance that signage for accessible toilets is inclusive of disabled people with non-apparent impairments to reduce abuse to disabled people using these facilities.

The motion also called on the NDMC to raise the issue of accessible toilets in local government buildings with the local government service group. We agreed and submitted a motion on the subject to the 2020 Local Government conference. Although this conference was cancelled due to COVID-19, we have followed up with the service group and they submitted an additional response to the above government enquiry which called for additional funding for local councils to provide public toilets in order to improve public health.

Campaigning for Deaf workers

Our Deaf members were particularly badly hit by Covid-19 with homeworking increasing isolation and impacting on mental health. But the biggest concern was lack of access to information, with government announcements in England continuing to take place in the absence of a live BSL interpreter. We have raised this with government officials and in response to parliamentary consultations. We have also supported campaigns by Deaf organisations on this issue which were partly successful in the courts, but there is still no progress on 'live' BSL interpreters.

We produced a UNISON video in BSL in order to explain the issues around COVID-19 to our Deaf members who were failed by government communications.

Accessible Domestic Abuse Services

We have worked with our Women's caucus and the National Women's Committee on this issue. UNISON gave evidence to the parliamentary Women and Equalities Select Committee on the impact of domestic abuse on our members during lockdown. UNISON also worked closely with Labour's Jess Phillips MP to achieve improvements to the Domestic Abuse Act so that it recognises the impact of domestic abuse on workers. UNISON was instrumental in ensuring protection orders will now extend to the victim's workplace.

We responded to the Treasury Select Committee consultation, *An Equal Recovery*, in 2021 where we called for additional, long-term sustainable resources for domestic abuse services, particularly focused on the needs of disabled, Black and LGBT+ women.

The motion also called for updated legislation that reflects the specific nature of disability hate crime. We included this point in our response to the Law Commission consultation on Hate Crime where we called for a new definition of disability hate crime to overcome the issue of some perpetrators getting off scot free because they claim they attacked a disabled person because of their "vulnerability" rather than because they were a disabled person. We await the final recommendations from the Law Commission but are hopeful this change will be included.



Marsha de Cordova MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Equalities, speaks at our session on Black Disabled Lives Matter at Disability Live!

Campaigning for Black and LGBT+ disabled people

We know Black people are disproportionately likely to be detained against their will under the Mental Health Act due to racist assumptions. We responded to the government's Mental Health Act white paper to support plans to tackle this issue with greater rights for people in mental health crisis. Our Black caucus reps made a public statement in support of the Black Lives Matter movement and we were delighted to run a successful event on 'Black Disabled Lives Matter' at our Disability Live! Event in October 2020.

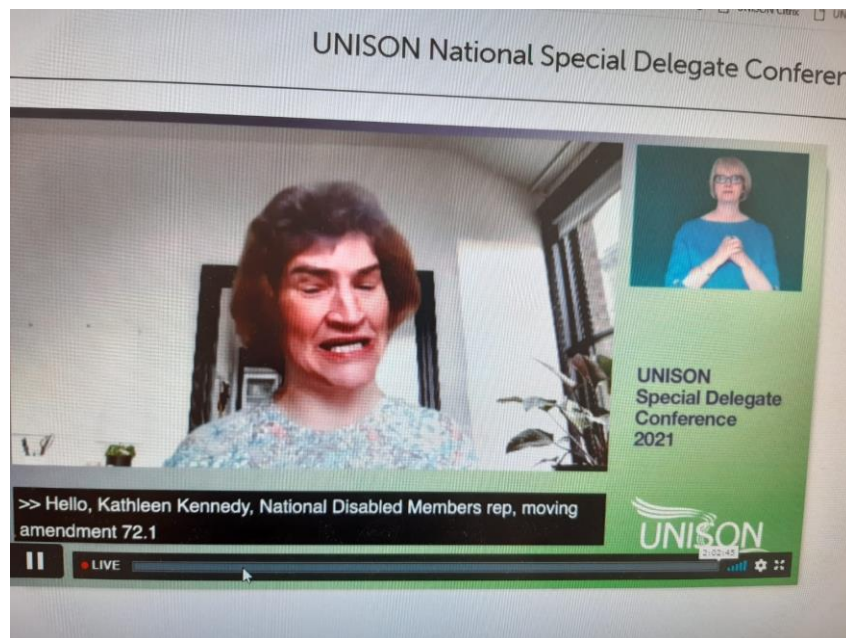
We continued to support our LGBT+ disabled members and we contributed to UNISON's response to the Law Commission consultation on hate crime where we called for LGBT+ hate crime to be made an aggravated offence.

3. Conference Reports

Virtual Special Delegate Conference 2021

(NOTE: There was no National Delegate Conference in 2020)

Elizabeth Cameron and Kathleen Kennedy were the National Disabled Members reps at the Special Delegate Conference this year. The conference was very different this year and if you stepped back from it slightly there were a lot of motions covering equalities and disability in particular. As you sat and listened to the motions you were almost waiting for the disability angle to come up. Which is very understandable given how much COVID has affected Disabled Members but given it was virtual we were only able to speak twice each and for us that was our motions and amendments.



Kathleen Kennedy moves disabled members' amendment to the Branch Resources Review motion at Special Delegate Conference

Motion 72 on Branch Resources Review was the motion we had all been anticipating for the conference in 2019. We had the only amendment that got on the agenda so we were second to speak. Thankfully no one spoke against it and very quickly the 'question was put' and it went through but the question was would Motion 72 as amended pass and it did. Our amendment to the Branch Resources Review to have one pool to finance reasonable adjustments was passed - this will assist many disabled members to take part in conferences.

We missed having a Disabled Members meeting as we usually do during conference to hear how you are, to talk about conference and any access needs.

Amendment 24.1 - Elizabeth moved amendment to the motion The Impact of Covid 19 on UNISON Members, Public Services and Working Life which added the

experience of Disabled Members and also asked for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) to be included in UK law and the devolved nations. This was also passed.

Motion 27 - Kathleen moved No going back to Normal which was our motion about Disabled Members being allowed to work at home after the pandemic with their reasonable adjustments. This is going to be fundamental to moving forward - 'yes it was passed' but now it is up to us all to work where possible to ensure this happens.

Motion 13 Post Covid 19 Syndrome and Disability Employment Protection - Elizabeth spoke in support of this and it was passed.

Obviously Conference was different this year as we all missed being together and sharing the experience. If I looked at it holistically a large part of it was related to disabilities and other equalities, even Christina McAnea spoke on how equalities have been majorly impacted by COVID.

Elizabeth Cameron and Kathleen Kennedy

TUC Disabled Workers Conference

2021

TUC Disabled Workers conference took place online 10-11 March. There was no formal UNISON delegation as this was a virtual event.

UNISON's motion on homeworking was agreed and our amendment to a CWU motion was also agreed.

A composite motion on COVID-19 was agreed to go to Congress.

The motions were actually agreed and voted on by the TUC Disabled Workers Committee. The conference itself comprised of four debates, each based around a committee statement. The statements ranged from homeworking to Covid-19 and related issues. The statements were all very strongly influenced by UNISON's two reports (*Lets be Reasonable* 2019 and *A Revolution in Homeworking* 2020) based on our surveys of disabled members.

UNISON had a speaker in each of the four debates and we had a very high profile at the event.

Sian Stockham was re-elected to the TUC Disabled Workers Committee.



Sian Stockham speaking at TUC Disabled Workers Conference 2021

2020

The 2020 TUC Disabled Workers Conference did not take place in its usual format due to COVID-19. Instead there was a virtual meeting of the members of the TUC Disabled Workers Committee to agree the motions that had been submitted before the virus struck.

UNISON had submitted a motion entitled 'Make 2021 the Year of Disabled Workers'.

Although the TUC Committee supported the motion, they felt that it might need to be delayed due to COVID-19 as there would be no time to prepare and there was no guarantee life would return to “normal” in 2021. They therefore agreed to remit the motion, which means that at a future meeting they will consider how it can be implemented.



Graeme Ellis speaking at TUC Congress 2020

UNISON also submitted an emergency motion on the impact of COVID-19 on disabled people. This motion was agreed by the TUC Committee. It was also chosen in the ballot as the motion to go to TUC Congress 2020.

UNISON also put forward two amendments to motions from other unions and these were accepted.

Our representative on the TUC Disabled Workers Committee, Sian Stockham, was re-elected for another term.

Labour Link Forum report

Labour Link Special Forum took place online on 3rd July 2021 and our delegates were Maggie Griffin and Graeme Ellis. Labour Link is the political fund in UNISON for members who choose to pay a levy to affiliate to the Labour Party. Conference was chaired by Gordon McKay.

The forum was made up of elected regional reps and delegates from UNISON self organised groups. Normally it is held face to face for two days but due to Covid it was a virtual meeting 9.30 to 3pm via zoom. Just under 100 delegates attended. As was the norm for virtual conferences you had to inform the organisers who was going to move the motions or amendments in advance.

There were 19 motions on the agenda and they were taken in numerical order. There was no prioritisation of motions. All 19 were heard.

As usual motions were divided into sections. The first section included motions on negotiating and bargaining and all four motions and amendments were related to pay and the pay freezes that the Tory government had announced. All these passed.

Campaigning came next, broken into several different sub-sections. The first of these was Public Services which included motions on the future of social care, Covid-19 and PPE, and automation. Maggie Griffin spoke on social care. All of these motions passed unanimously including our motion 6 on social care.

A motion on academisation asking for the Forum to work with the Labour Party to discourage schools considering academisation or trust status was also passed.

The equalities section contained our motion 18 about stronger links with labour link. This passed unopposed after being moved by Graeme Ellis. A similar motion was raised by LGBT+ which we supported and they also supported ours.

Graeme also spoke on a motion on the affects of Brexit from a disabled perspective. The LGBT+ committee spoke on the amendment to motion 17, 'Strengthening our Labour Link'. They highlighted that liaison reps' structures in our SOGs are a sometimes underused resource and that we are keen to be more involved and for the Labour Link to use our community links to advance the Labour cause. This motion and its amendments were passed unanimously.

Maggie Griffin and Graeme Ellis

Labour Women's Conference

This year's conference was held over two days as a virtual meeting. This had its own problems, but overall worked very well.

There was good accessibility which included signing interpreters and captions, which were sometimes difficult to follow but extremely helpful.

Pre-conference offered well being sessions around Yoga exercises from Tuesday to Saturday. This was valued due to the prolonged isolation of many women during the past year, with working from home, home schooling and lack of communication and connection with other women.

Today's debates would be on the following 5 Compositied Motions:

1. Women's Equality After the Coronavirus Pandemic
2. Women and the Economy
3. Women and Climate Justice
4. Social Care
5. Women and Palestine and the Middle East

There was also one emergency motion submitted but the WCAC (Women's Conference Arrangements Committee) felt the motion did not meet the criteria to be categorised as an emergency motion.

Day 1: The day started with speeches from Angela Rayner and Keir Starmer and Marsha De Cordova.

The first day concentrated around Women and the economy and equality in recovery after the past 18 months of Covid effects on work, income, opportunities.

The WCAC report 1 was debated, and UNISON were supporting the report.

There was a discussion around why the Abortion Rights had been left from the Composite Women's Health Care.

There were the ballots for the National Women's Committee. We then moved on to debate Motion1, 2 and 3. All were carried.

The afternoon was spent in the breakout session 1 Women's Rights, History and Intersectional Feminism. Then we had the Motion 4, Social Care debate.

There was then another main plenary this time on Women united will never be defeated; Ending violence against women and girls, chaired by Carol Sewell.

At 16:00 all the voting on the composite motions opened. In the early evening we moved on to Motion 5 Women and Palestine and the Middle East debate. Then later in the evening there was a breakout session on Re-building a fairer economy that works for women.

Day 2: Today opened with speeches from David Evans and Annaliese Dodds.

Today's debates would be on the following 4 Compositied Motions:

6. Early Years and Education – C1
7. Early Years and Education – C2
8. Working Parents' and Carers' Rights
9. Violence Against Women and Girls

Then we had the Women's Committee Results Announced by our own Linda Hobson, then the debate on the WCAC 2 Report followed by the vote which we supported.

The main part of the rest of the morning was debating the Early Years and Education motion 6 and 7. Then we moved onto Working Parents' and Carers' rights. In the afternoon we debated Violence Against Women and Girls.

At 14:00 voting opened for all motions.

The breakout session 3 was about Thinking Globally and acting locally; Women averting climate catastrophe. And later on breakout session 4 was on Training to be a Labour Party Councillor.

The main plenary session was Rebuilding a better world: Labour Women leading the way, chaired by Marsha De Cordova MP, which included speeches by Emily Thornberry MP, our new General Secretary Christina McAnea and Dawn Butler MP followed by voting for the Annual Conference motion.

It should be noted that there was very little discussion about Disabled Women and the Economy and recovery despite so disabled women suffering isolation, lack of access to treatments and care during Covid.

Maggie Griffin

Report from Disabled Members elected to the NEC

When we last gathered for a National Disabled Members Conference in 2019 none of us could have predicted how much all of our lives were about to change. No one had heard of coronavirus, we talked about the social model not social distancing and if anyone had said we would all soon be wearing face masks in shops and on public transport we would have laughed.

COVID-19 has changed everyone's lives but the impact was perhaps most dramatic for disabled people who from the very beginning of the pandemic struggled to get the support they needed. Many of our Disabled Members fell into the government's newly created categories of Critically Extremely Vulnerable or Extremely Vulnerable and it was UNISON they turned to for help.

It also meant representing Disabled Members on the National Executive Council (NEC) was more vital than ever but the way we did it had to change. With virtual meetings the norm and time more limited it wasn't always easy to ensure Disabled Members issues were a priority but by working hard we made sure they were.

We campaigned hard for Personal Independence Payments (PIP) and other disability benefits to be extended without the need for reviews and eventually the government agreed. We raised concerns about lack of PPE for Disabled Members who get their support through Direct Payments who weren't considered in the new national system and after pressure it was agreed local authorities would help.

While COVID may have dominated the last two years but the NEC has also been working on other issues and we've made sure Disabled Members views and issues are considered. Housing was a key area of work and we've made sure our campaign isn't just about more affordable housing but about more accessible, affordable housing. Pay, the NHS and the likelihood of further cuts to public services have also been high on the agenda while reasonable adjustments and disability hate crime are also a priority again.

Special Delegate Conference also brought to the conclusion the current phase of work of the branch resources review which was passed by the conference. This included the commitment to resourcing reasonable adjustments for disabled members and to utilise the digital technology that has allowed us to operate in a virtual environment as part of a hybrid approach to meetings.

The current NEC term has just begun and the committee cycle hasn't really started its work but between us and Sian Stockham, our representative on the TUC Disability Committee, we cover all of the NEC strategic committees, which we think is a first for Disabled members.

Next year we will finally see the delayed Year of the Disabled Worker and we're looking forward to working with you all to make it a great success because the one thing that hasn't changed is our commitment to representing you. Life may never be the same again but you can be sure that we will always be here for you.

Angela Hamilton and Katrina Murray

Service Group Conferences

Special Energy Virtual Conference 2021

(NOTE: There was no National Energy Conference in 2020)

UNISON held its first ever virtual conference and the first sector to hold the conference.

Unfortunately, it was disappointing to see the least amount of UNISON activists participating in the conference when you would think that as it's a virtual event, you would have many delegates attend. There were no guest speakers participating in this year's energy conference which was a shame. Many of us experienced quite a lot of buffering issues with the internet and it was difficult to understand some of the motions being put forward by some, as their internet connection was also very poor. There were also some teething issues with the virtual conference, which is expected as we were the first to go live on this virtual platform.

However, on a positive note all nine motions brought forward were accepted and carried forward.

There were discussions around driving changes and pushing for more organising within regions and the energy industry to help push towards achieving our zero net carbon goals.

There were also discussions around the gender pay gap, and it was interesting to learn that Centrica is the worst for gender pay inequalities out of the big 6 energy companies. It was quoted in the region of 42% approx. is the gender pay gap, which is shocking.

Tansaim moved Motion 5 Homeworking as a reasonable adjustment in post Covid energy workplace. Discussions took place to support disabled workers, especially during the pandemic and around home working. It was highlighted that companies need to do more to support disabled members working from home, and to ensure that home working continues after the pandemic for those who wish for it to remain.

Claire moved Motion 6 Accessing reasonable adjustment during Covid19. It was discussed that companies must do more to support those suffering with their mental health and ensure companies provide the necessary DSE equipment to those who need it. There needs to be more uptake with the government's Access to Work scheme and our reps and stewards to be supported with as much information and guidance as possible. We also need to remember that not all staff are happy working from home. Not every home is equipped and suitable for home working. Some of our members have been placed in a very difficult situation and we must ensure support is given to those who wish to return to the office environment.

Both motions from the National Disabled Members Committee passed unanimously.

There was another motion brought forward to encourage and support a push to

employ more Black workers in the energy industry and that more needs to be done to encourage companies to employ and train more women in the engineering sector also.

We certainly hope that next year we are able to go back to normal conferences, as even though virtual conference may be the way forward as part of reasonable adjustment for those who are unable to attend physically, but those who attend regularly find that with virtual conference it lacked the connection, the excitement of attending your own conference and of course not getting to meet and greet people and networking. It was disappointing that there weren't more guest speakers, unlike previous conferences and it was a shame that the National Officer, Matt Lay who attended the conference wasn't given an opportunity to speak as the conference focused on motions due to being virtual.

Also hoping to see more motions submitted by branches as each year you see the drop in motions submitted.

Tansaim Hussain-Gul and Claire Aylwin

Special Water, Environment and Transport (WET) Virtual Conference 2021

(NOTE: There was no WET Conference in 2020)

This year's conference was held virtually on Saturday 12 June. I'm Elaine White and am a member of Yorkshire Water Branch.

I spoke to move Motion 8 Homeworking as a reasonable adjustment in post-COVID WET workplaces which was then passed by conference. Unfortunately, the other motion from the National Disabled Members Committee, Accessing Reasonable Adjustments During COVID-19, fell as our other delegate was unable to attend and there were some technical difficulties.

I personally have a divided opinion regarding the virtual conference. Having the opportunity to speak was great because I wouldn't be able to speak publicly at a 'normal conference' due to anxiety and the stress it causes me.

However the use of technology combined with some difficulties I experienced did cause me to be quite frustrated. Whilst appreciating the requirements for a virtual conference I do prefer the opportunity to network and hold face to face discussions with delegates.

Elaine White

Special Local Government Virtual Conference 2021

(NOTE: There was no Local Government Conference in 2020)

Items discussed:

Motion 25 future of local Government

25.1

25.2

Motion 29 developing and expanding social partnership and fair work in Wales and across the UK

Motion 28 covid Legacy

Motion 36 Education Support staff and the need for Comprehensive State Education

36.1

Motion 24 Traveller Communities

Motion 26 Local Government and Climate Breakdown

Motion 26.1

Composite b local Government funding

Motion 22 the future of Youth services

Motion 33 Adult Education Needs investment

Motion 34 Reduce Agency working in Further Education colleges

Motion 10 Work Related stress in local Government

Motion 4 the future of the National joint Council for England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Motion 15 Standing up to Violence, harassment and Abuse of local government staff

Motion 1 Unity against Public Sector Pay freeze

Motion 12 Health and Safety and safety reps in local government after Covid an opportunity to recruit and organise Women workers

Composite a Pay strategy for organising and industrial action in local government

Motion 2 food standard Agency Pay terms and condition

Motion 11 covid 19 hasn't killed sexual harassment at work it just moved on line

Motion 20 home working as a reasonable adjustment in post COVID 19 local government work places

Motion 21 LGBT+ inclusive policies in Local Government

Motion 9 for fair Public sector funding and Against a Public Sector Pay Freeze

Motion 16 LGBT+ Workers health and wellbeing

Motion 19 Accessing reasonable adjustment During Covid 19

Motion 17 The Challenges and opportunities for an Ageing work force in Local Government

Guest speakers Christina McAnea, President Josie Bird

The conference was very good.

Lincoln Paul Davis

Community Conference

There was no Community conference in 2021.

2020

Conference started with different seminars. We had a welcome address from Malcom Gray who stressed the importance of active participation at conference and encouraged delegates and visitors to attend caucus meetings as an avenue to learn and network. His speech was followed by Christina McAnea, then assistant general secretary for bargaining, negotiating and equalities, she emphasised the impact of cuts to social care and how low wages for care workers affect disabled people.

I moved motion 6 'Community employers, accessibility passports and access to work', Peter moved motion 11 'National standards for social care- protecting disabled workers.' Both motions passed and were supported by other delegates.



Lola Oyewusi with Peter Daley at Community Conference

Other notable debates that were linked to disabled members are as follows:

- Health & Safety Representation Motion 3
- Racism in Community Workplaces Motion 4
- Making it Fair For Social Care Motion 8
- Supporting People Motion 10

Twelve delegates attended the disabled members caucus meeting. The highlights of the conference for me were the speech made by RT Hon Mark Drakeford AM (First Minister) who passionately spoke about what the Welsh government is doing to improve lives of the local people. I was so impressed about all the everyday necessities that are provided for free in Wales including prescriptions, education, free school meals, building more affordable homes which equates to affordable rent. I might move to Wales!

It was a very successful conference. Graeme Ellis was very helpful throughout the conference supporting and encouraging us all the way. Thank you Graeme.

Peter Daley

Higher Education Conference

There was no Higher Education conference in 2021.

2020

I was delighted to move motion 6 'Negotiating Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Workers in HE', this motion was unopposed and passed unanimously by conference. The motion raised how universities pride themselves on the support available for disabled students but often fall short in the support provided for disabled staff. The motion called for circulation of UNISON'S existing resources on reasonable adjustments e.g. the Reasonable Adjustment Bargaining Guide, and to seek and publicise examples of best practice and the inclusion of the issues mentioned within national bargaining.

Other motions of interest included motion 4 'Supporting peri and post-menopausal women in the workplace' as well as motion 5 'Positively promoting mental wellbeing in the workplace.' Motion 5 presented some interesting ideas and we welcomed that the motion placed the emphasis on employers providing mental health first aid training, not UNISON. The motion also discussed mental health days which is an interesting proposal and something I felt may be worth further discussion within National Disabled Members as this is not something we had previously discussed to my knowledge but certainly may have many benefits.

There was a very engaging and insightful talk from Jim Dickinson from WonkHE on what is going on in HE policy and why it matters.

Alice Smith

Police and Justice Conference

There was no Police and Justice conference in 2020. (The conference always takes place after the deadline for our Annual Report, therefore we report back a year late.)

2019

As a short notice delegate on behalf of the committee it was a bit of a battle first to arrange for me to drive to the conference, there being a not very suitable train service on the last leg to take my mobility scooter on. Secondly it proved nigh on impossible to locate a hotel with parking, which was within scooter distance of the conference and had a disabled friendly room. In the end we found a hotel that had at least two of the criteria namely a car park and half a mile away from the conference. However the room was not disabled friendly having no walk-in shower, being at the end of a long corridor and having to negotiate two set of steps thus not allowing me to take my scooter to my room.

The conference venue was at least disabled friendly. The staff were very helpful and aware of the needs of disabled customers. Although as typical with all venues, expensive for food and drinks.

I very quickly made contact with Paul O'Dyer (Pod) as until the conference we had only communicated via email, we decided between us how we best could carry out our duties.

Pod and I both took one motion each and prepared speeches for moving them. I took the Disability Passport Motion as I was able to speak on some authority as I have a Disability passport agreed with my employer.

Both motions were carried unopposed and if my memory serves, without amendments.

Pod and I did miss one of the guest speakers as we needed to plan for the Disabled Members Meeting which I'm pleased to say went very well although not attended by many members - but enough to make it worthwhile.

I really enjoyed the conference as have never attended my Service Group Conference before. It was an honour to represent the National disabled members and I believe that Pod and myself made a great team and accounted ourselves well for disabled members.

I have since been elected from Eastern Region to sit on the National disabled members committee, so I am looking forward to meeting you all at the next meeting.

Thanks you for giving me the opportunity to attend and represent you.

Michelle Edwards

Self Organised Group Conferences

Black Members Conference

There was no Black Members conference in 2021.



Neelo Farr from the Black caucus speaking at TUC Disabled Workers Conference 2021

2020

The following motions were passed at conference

1. Mind the Gap Addressing Racial Disparities in the public sector
- Composite A Motion 2, 3 the effects of Austerity on Black members
- 4 Challenging Racism and Disability Discrimination in the workplace
- 4.1 carried
- 4.2 carried
- 5 Black workers in NHS and Disciplinary Procedure
- 6 Gender pay gap Valuing Black Women
- 7 The Ethnicity Pay Gap
- 8 Recruitment and Retention a Targeted Plan for Black Workers
- 9 Access to immigration Advice and Representation
- 11 Black Women in leadership
- 12 united we stand divided we fall
- 13 Kashmir crisis
- 14 stop Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa
- 15 Jamaica Mining in Cockpit Country
- 16 Cry children Missing campaign
- 27 Palestine
- Composite B- Motion 17, 18 the treatment of Black women in maternity care
- Composite c motion 19, 20 unite against state Racism
- Motion 21, 22, 22, 1 composite D the Trade union response to rise of the far right and fascism no Pasaran
- 23 Brexit and Black Workers
- 24 Black Disabled people and wind rush scandal
- 25 Widen Wind rush Descendants and families belong too

26 Minority ethnic Employment gap in Scotland

The annual report was accepted.

The Guest speakers were:

Dave Prentis General Secretary

Fundi Ayana young Black Members Award winner

Josie Bird UNISON President

Katrina French CEO Stopwatch

Yvonne Green Mandela Award winner

Kye Gbangbola truth about Zane

I attended a workshop on non-apparent disabilities it was good – if you have a non-apparent disability tell your employer and your line manager. I attended show racism the red card workshop. I also attended the social it was very good. I did not get to attend the Disabled caucus because there was problem with the trains.

I moved motion 24 and Veronica Davies moved motion 4

Lincoln Paul Davis

Women's conference

There was no Women's conference in 2021.

2020

- Conference was commenced with housekeeping, Standing Orders Report and a warm welcome
- Angela Raynor, Labour MP and campaigner for Deputy Labour Leader, gave a heartfelt and inspirational speech surrounding women in the union, health service free at point of need, free education up to and including degree level education. "Vocational education has to be a corner stone of our economy and educational system". Higher education means higher salaries equating to higher taxes being contributed back into the economy. Human understanding becomes more valuable in a society where computers are taking over. Further and Adult Education has suffered the most in the last ten years of Tory rule. A vote for Labour is a vote for practical change for people within our communities. "Knowledge belongs to the many and not the few" in today's society knowledge is quite literally "power" and to have no education is to have no power. Labour aims for an education for all to ensure power for all. Angela also took questions from the floor in relation to the UN Convention for Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the next five years under Tory rule and the National crisis surrounding HRT.
- Emma Proctor moved the National Women's Annual Report
- Katrina started the ball rolling by moving motion 1.
- The first conference session was a very emotive series of governmental let-downs that see the very poorest and under-valued members of our communities facing lives of extreme pressure and austerity. Performing jobs that offer lack of training and unsafe staffing levels. It also covered topics that are unique to women or transgender males who were born identifying as a female such as the menopause. Smear campaign, early miscarriage, shared parental leave, black women and the menopause and menopause-a workplace issue.
- Motion 12 commenced with the speaker telling us she has been treated to racist abuse on the way into the conference centre and thanking the women in the room who stood up in support of her.
- Motion 12 was followed by a presentation from Dave Prentis who gave an uplifting speech on the importance of women within the union. He gave praise to Northern Ireland and the victory they have fought hard for in pay parity and forcing restoration of the NI Government. He also mentioned St Helens, Bradford, Blackpool hospital staff. Birmingham, Sirona members, Scotland marching in Glasgow striking for equal pay, to name a few. Each picket being run by women showing solidarity and support for each other. He paid tribute to all women and mentioned a few by name to acknowledge the amazing work undertaken by these women. He continued, giving examples of how the Tory government are still using the same tactics behind cheeky grins and ensuring that we do not forget behind the charm is the same lack of respect for our NHS,

Education and low-paid workers. Unison attracted 160,000 new members last year and the majority were women. He thanked the women in the room for all their support of himself during the 20 years he has been our General Secretary. He offered the assurance that he will never let the women of Unison down.

- Motion 13 followed Dave and the afternoon session recommenced.
- Some of the topics covered in Session 2 were Heart Attacks and the misdiagnosis which is more common for women, Hostility in the Workplace for Pregnant women and Breastfeeding mothers, Health and Safety in the workplace being performed with men in mind rather than women and their specific needs which can be extremely different than their male counterparts. The lack of women in Health and Safety positions was highlighted and the suggestion given that women should put themselves forward to be Health and Safety representatives so that these anomalies within Risk Assessments can be challenged and changed. Our NHS and the problems facing it due to Brexit ended Session 2.
- After house-keeping Conference kicked off with a hustings for all the nominated candidates for National Women's Delegate to NDC.
- Christina McAnea gave a heartfelt speech on equality related abuse, the effects of Brexit on the UK, the NHS and the poorest in our community and all the issues that bring us together as a union.
- The afternoon commenced with Motion 16. The motions debated during this session were issues surrounding the crisis on the NHS, Stalking, Sexual Harassment, women supporting women, the Gender Pay Gap, Domestic Abuse and supporting our representatives while assisting members through this traumatic and harrowing process.
- Tansaim Gul-Hussain and Eve White were elected to represent National Women at NDC. Elizabeth Cameron was nominated as the substitute. The chair advised due to time constraints and the amount of motions still to be heard, debates would be limited to 3 speakers. Women supporting women was the motion that drew the most attention during this session. Female leadership is vital to help all women learn and achieve. The Gender Pay Gap, the effect of this on Women, Equal Pay, Brexit and the effect of this on Women in Northern Ireland, Re-inspiring Women and Women in Leadership were the motions up for debate. A fabulous display of strong Women who are proud to help those around them and speak up for the rights of those around them.
- 35 people attended the disabled members caucus meeting. Kuldeep, Katrina and Amanda led the meeting. The caucus raised various issues and questions relating to reasonable adjustments at conference. These have all been sent to the conference team.
- The meeting was closed with details of upcoming meetings and conferences and leaflets given out to attendees for knowledge and learning.

Kuldeep Bajwa and Amanda Sweetlove

LGBT+ Conference

There was no LGBT+ conference in 2020. (The conference always takes place after the deadline for our Annual Report, therefore we report back a year late.)

2019

I was very proud to have been nominated to attend UNISON's LGBT+ Conference on behalf of the National Disabled Members' Committee LGBT+ Caucus this year. This was the first conference which included the '+' in LGBT following the unanimously carried rule change at National Delegates Conference back in June 2019, so the event felt particularly momentous!

On Friday afternoon, I attended the Disabled Members Caucus meeting. At the meeting we reviewed the annual report and the chairs sought nominations for a female representative to sit on SOC. We were also informed of motions which the Disabled Members Caucus had submitted and the chairs requested volunteers to speak on these.

A discussion also took place about access issues at conference for disabled people, namely the lack of breaks during conference sessions, which are often long in duration. A suggestion was made of a 'break out room' which disabled delegates could use, where their votes could also be counted as if they were on the conference hall floor. The meeting chairs took note of this suggestion for referral back to National LGBT+ Committee.

I also attended the Young Members meeting where a discussion took place on motions submitted by the Young Members Forum and other motions which were relevant to us as young people. I was very pleased to see my branch's motion recommended for support by my fellow young members: 'Motion 7 – Ensuring LGBT+ Representation in Apprenticeships'.

Following this I attended the Labour Link meeting where we received a verbal report on the work completed over the previous year. Another delegate also provided a report on her attendance at the Labour Party National Women's Conference.

The final meeting of the day was the Local Government Service Group meeting. We heard a speech from Matthew Egan who is the National Officer for Local Government. Matthew's speech highlighted the importance of nationalising the adult social care sector and putting people before profits, and a Q&A took place so that delegates could put questions to Matthew.

Saturday morning saw the start of conference, and motions 5, 2 and 1 were all carried unanimously. We then heard a speech from UNISON's Assistant General Secretary, Christina McAnea. Christina's speech highlighted the importance of standing up to injustice and the importance of promoting equality and inclusivity for all.

On Saturday afternoon we resumed conference business and also watched a video

message from Angela Rayner MP, who was unable to attend conference due to the imminent general election. Angela spoke about LGBT+ inclusive education at schools and how we must ensure we keep pushing so that our young people receive an education that is reflective of the society we live in.

Following Saturday afternoon's session, I attended a workshop:

'Engaging branches in LGBT+ Recruitment and Organising'

The workshop was very helpful for me as a new Equalities Officer. As a group we looked at all of the equalities based events, awareness and visibility days which take place over the course of a year. This highlighted the many opportunities I have within my branch to engage with members on very important events such as LGBT History Month in February 2020 and the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3rd December.

I attended the North West social event on Saturday evening at ASK Italian. It was a great opportunity to network with colleagues from across the region and find out the important work we are all part of on local, regional and national levels.

Conference resumed on Sunday morning and delegates and motions to National Delegate Conference 2020 were announced. We heard an impassioned speech from UNISON President Josie Bird and Josie also presented the LGBT+ organising awards. I was very pleased to see the North West win an award for their photo at Crewe pride which featured a placard stating that Pride is a Protest.

In conclusion, I felt LGBT+ Conference 2019 was very successful, with lots of passionate and inspiring debate from delegates. I believe the National LGBT+ Committee will have a packed agenda for the coming year with so many important motions passed!

Leigh Fredson

4. Caucus reports

Deaf (native British Sign Language users) caucus

The Deaf Caucus have continued working with the National Disabled Members Committees (NDMC) during the Covid-19 pandemic which, from March 2020 was a very difficult year. We have worked hard with the NDMC over the year 2021, and with other committees, to go through all the motions that had been passed from the 2019 National Disabled Members conference and we regularly met virtually, which we know is not easy but it is the best option to keep us working together.

Even though we didn't meet at the 2020 conference due to Covid-19 pandemic, we kept in touch with the deaf members to ensure that they knew they could get support from UNISON as we could see increased problems with their workplaces and within homes such as domestic abuse of all kinds. We know how the pandemic impacted people's lives and we remember those who lost their lives from that horrific virus.

We thank UNISON for providing a full BSL version video clip on the website to explain to deaf members about Covid-19 and the vaccines because we were shocked to see so many deaf people getting so confused with the information from all sides and lack of accessible information from government as there was no interpreter provided during the briefings on all TV channels, they were only available on BBC News channel which not all deaf people have access to. "Where is the interpreter?" was set up to campaign against the government and we are pleased that the deaf campaigners took the government to court over BSL access to Covid briefings and the court agreed that the government had broken the Equality Act!

One of our Deaf caucus motions for this year's National Disabled Members conference, is We Need a British Sign Language Act Now! to campaign for a BSL Act. BSL was recognised as a language in its own right by the UK government on 18 March 2003, but it has no legal protection. We have seen lots of negative impact on deaf communities and it is time after all these years, to see our BSL protected by a law, such as BSL (Scotland) Act which came into force in 2015. The Welsh Parliament has voted to support a motion proposing a British Sign Language (BSL) Bill for Wales, early this year, in a win for deaf campaigners. The Northern Ireland Assembly has also recently re-commenced preliminary legislative work on both British and Irish Sign Languages. Unfortunately, absolutely nothing coming from English parliament!

Iain had a great year being a Co-Chair for the NDMC and would like to thank all the committees who elected him and believed in him, because we both know that deaf members can do the job in whatever roles they are in within UNISON, such as branch officers, chairs of SOG or even NDMC.

We do hope that 2022 will bring you a healthy future and that we can all learn from we have gone through.

Iain Scott-Burdon and Gillian Jeffrey
Deaf Caucus Liaison Reps

Black disabled members caucus

Black members were particularly badly hit by Covid
In 2021 we held our caucus network meetings despite Covid
We switched to online and saw some new people get involved for the first time

Meeting held on micro soft Teams on 16th March 2021
Election was made for caucus Represented for the Black Caucus
Paul Davis was elected, Carol Sewell elected and Majula Kumari.
Motions discussed
Motion 19 what are they hiding missing pip data on experience of Black Disabled people not reached
Motion 20 Black Disabled people and the wind rush scandal

24th June 2021
Introduction and welcome
Feedback from Peter Daley caucus rep on NDMC
Margaret Greer, National Race Equality Officer, spoke regarding what National Black Members committee is doing and to work together with National Disabled Members Committee
Motions for conference
Covid and Black disabled workers learning lessons for recovery
Building on the race discrimination protocol
They are they still hiding Black disabled and PIP

11/8/2021
Discussed Motions and amendments for conference
Motions going to conference
16 what are they still hiding Black disabled and pip
24 Building on the race discrimination protocol
1 Covid 19 and Black disabled workers learning lessons for the recovery

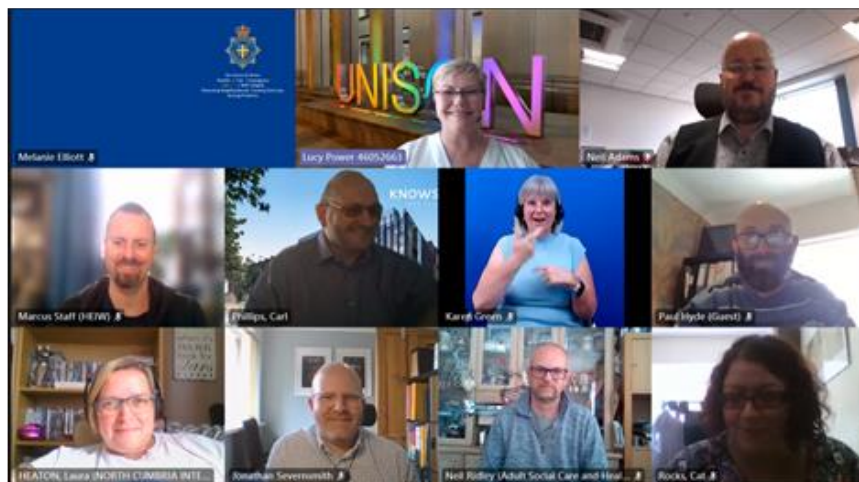
Lincoln Paul Davis
Black Caucus Liaison Rep

LGBT+ caucus

What a year! It feels such a long time since we all met at our last conference in 2019. The caucus met at the National Disabled Member's policy weekend in January 2020, where we welcomed some new members to the group.

Since then, we have continued to meet virtually along with rest of the committee. The early meetings in 2020 were mainly briefing sessions with national officers on UNISON's response to the pandemic, but also gave us the opportunity to input into the guidance to members which was regularly updated.

The caucus has been involved with the work of the committee subgroups, moving on work from conference 2019. Carl co-chaired the first Panel Session of LGBT+ Live! in November in place of our usual face to face conferences.



LGBT+ network meeting 2021

With all network days cancelled for 2020, we held our network meetings virtually this year, the first meeting in June was very well attended with 26 total attendees. For many attendees this was their first time joining a national caucus meeting. Carl gave an update on the work the committee have been able to complete or are working on due to current restrictions. One topic of discussion was around having more hybrid meetings going forward as for some members they are unable to travel to UNISON Centre to attend network events.

Members of the caucus have also attended (where possible) the virtual prides which have taken place this year.

Carl Phillips
LGBT+ Caucus Liaison rep

Women's caucus

The Women's Caucus initially met at the National Disabled Members Committee first meeting in January 2020 in Bristol, where we considered the motions that had been passed at the conference in November and planned work on those motions, not realising that we would not meet physically in the time since. Members of the National Committee who identified as Caucus members additionally met virtually in January 2021, picking up on the work that had been done and of course the additional impact of the pandemic on disabled women.

Naturally the main focus of the Caucus are the two network meetings that take place in June and August. Whilst participation in these meetings has been increasing over the last few years, the participation in the meetings this year via Microsoft Teams has been the best yet. Women obviously valued being able to participate in a meeting without having to take a whole day off work. Thankfully we managed to make a virtual meeting with participants with a range of access needs work and the caucus pulled together three motions and a number of amendments.

Regardless of what happens with COVID, there is obviously a desire for disabled women to network together and be part of a virtual group

Katrina Murray and Tania Earnshaw
Women's Caucus Liaison reps

National Disabled Members Committee 2020 and 2021

Eastern

Michelle Edwards
Joanna Vanderhoof

East Midlands

Chelsea Skervin (Job-share until April 2020)
David Mills

Greater London

Sarah Saunders and Maggie Griffin (Job-share)
Seamus Naghten

Northern

Stephen Powers
Sandie Robinson

Northern Ireland

Amanda Sweetlove
Mandy Rutherford

North West

Graeme Ellis (NDMC Deputy Chair)
Sharron Nicoll

Scotland

Kathleen Kennedy (NDMC Co-Chair)
Tony Slaven

South Eastern

Abdul Rahman
Susan Parkinson

South West

Gerry Harrison (until April 2020)
Tara Thomas (from June 2021)
Carole Hamilton

Cymru/Wales

Neelo Farr
Peter Williams

West Midlands

Paul Davis
Nicola Moran

Yorkshire and Humberside

Darren Jones (until Dec 2020)

Kuldeep Bajwa
Heather Briggs (from Dec 2020)

Black members Caucus

Peter Daley
Veronica Price-Job

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Plus Caucus

Leigh Fredson
Carl Phillips

Deaf (native BSL users) Caucus

Gillian Jeffrey
Iain Scott-Burdon (NDMC co-chair)

National Black Members Committee

Carol Sewell
Manjula Kumari (from March 2021)
Tansaim Hussain-Gul (until March 2021)

National LGBT+ Committee

Louise Ashworth
Bev Miller

National Women's Committee

Pat Heron (until March 2021)
Katrina Murray (until March 2021)
Elizabeth Cameron (from March 2021)
Tania Earnshaw (from March 2021)

NEC

Katrina Murray (from June 2021)
Paula Carlyle (until June 2021)
Sian Stockham
Angela Hamilton

