



UNISON LGBT+ Loud and Proud

UNISON national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus committee

Annual Report 2022

#ULGBT22

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Introduction from the co-chairs

Another amazing year has passed and it feels like we are doomed to a Kafkaesque hell of Tory incompetence, while worldwide events impact our members both in the workplace, and our everyday lives.

There is so much to celebrate this year: The passing of both our LGBT+ motions at National Delegate Conference (NDC), the launch of our Trans Equality Campaign, a Young Members campaign, to name just a few. We recognise the hard work of our committee members in making these achievements possible, and extend our thanks to all for their dedication. We extend special thanks to Jackie Lewis, and all who were involved, for their dedication to achieving a change to UNISON policy in respect of abandoning support for the Nordic Model, after over a decade of a campaigning.

As much as there is to celebrate, the state of the country cannot be ignored. The cost of living crisis, derisory pay awards, and a government more inclined to tear itself apart than to govern competently, and who could have foreseen a war in Europe?

While we work towards re-engaging with 'normality', we cannot ignore that the government, and a vocal minority are not on our side, and in some cases are actively seeking to undermine rights so hard won. We are under attack in ways we never expected. We had thought that we were heading to a settled understanding of LGBT+ rights, and we now find ourselves in an environment where up is down. Basic common sense notions that conversion therapy should be banned entirely, and that a person's gender identity is an inalienable right have been thoroughly trashed by a hostile environment. The direct attack on UK fundamental rights by moving to replace the Human Rights Act with a Bill of Rights is a further example of the contempt the Tory government has for our rights and equality in general. Our drop in standing on ILGA's Country Standing is further testament to damage being caused. There can be no doubt that we are heading backwards, and that makes our role in the union, and in wider society more important than ever.

We could never have predicted a new Thatcherite era. As we head into a new 'Winter of Discontent' we need to stand up Louder and Prouder than ever before. Pride is now a protest more than ever before. We have seen what can be achieved by standing together, and by harnessing the power of our allies but these were battles in a wider war for fundamental rights – to exist, to be seen, and to be valued for who we are. The war is not yet won.

We must not lose hope, or sight, of our ability to influence policy. We recognise that you, our members, are on the front line every day. Our determination to support you, and continue the fight is undaunted. 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 thrilled at how we have continued to work with regions, branches, and members to challenge the toxic narrative that is anti-LGBT+.

This conference will be much closer to our traditional programme. There is work to do, and we do it together. Have an inspiring conference, and let's take up the challenge with Pride!

Lucy Power and Neil Adams
LGBT+ national committee co-chairs

Recruiting and Organising

We have been working through 2022 on carrying out the work of motions passed at last years' LGBT+ conference in Brighton. Organising is key to what we do as it helps us build a strong, effective union that delivers for LGBT+ members not just in the workplace but in all avenues of life.

Engaging our younger members is a key campaign and in 2022, as we look to the future of LGBT+ organising in UNISON. Under phase one of our plans, we have now launched our LGBT+ Young Members network and it's the place to be if you want to be more involved in the Unison's future LGBT+ work. The group currently has around 60 activists involved, with a WhatsApp group and plans to launch a slack channel to support each-other. Our aims in setting this up are to make sure that our young members are engaged, empowered, and have a safe network to be a force for good within the union. It's been amazing to get this off the ground this year and hopefully we can continue to grow this and do some amazing things in the years to come. The next phase of the campaign will be to encourage these network members to buddy up with members of the LGBT+ committee to grow their activism.

Another prioritisation for the sub-committee is that we continue to provide information to the wider union that is accurate, relevant, and consistent. We have reviewed the current library of Organising factsheets for 2022, which are as follows:

- Why Pronouns are important
- Advice for LGBT+ retired members
- Becoming a branch LGBT+ officer in UNISON
- Setting up a branch LGBT+ group
- How to get to UNISON LGBT+ conference
- 'LGBT+ members in UNISON – how to get involved'

As well as these, the sub-committee are currently developing two new factsheets for publication: Intersectionality and What's in the Plus(+)?

Every year, we look for nominations for the LGBT+ recruitment awards so although it might be too late this time around, keep this on your mind and submit an entry for next year where you think an award is deserved and make a colleague feel loved.

There's never been a better time to get active in unison so if I can encourage as many as possible to take the LGBT+ Branch Officers training, which will be running through 2023. If you'd like to get on the list, then send an email to out@unison.co.uk and get yourself started off on the right foot.

Campaigning

Trans equality is UNISON business. This has been our main campaign focus in light of the horrendous attacks on the trans community from sections of the media, politicians and transphobic groups.

The national LGBT+ committee has devised a campaign plan to build on our current trans equality work to make us louder and prouder in our support for trans rights. We launched our trans equality campaign in July at UNISON Centre in London which was well attended. We are now focused on growing our campaign to make all the workplaces UNISON covers trans inclusive.

We have four main objectives of this campaign. They are listed below with our achievements so far.

1. Build a network of trans allies in regions by running trans ally training in all regions by the end of 2023.

The trans ally training has been a huge success. The first training session took place in April and was oversubscribed by 100 members. To keep up with the demand, we had to add additional dates and put the training out to regional offices much earlier than expected. We are also delighted that the National Executive Committee has agreed to run specific NEC trans ally training sessions too.

We now have over 200 UNISON members that have taken our trans ally training and will be asked to join a network of trans allies. We also have a plethora of campaign materials for regional and branch LGBT+ groups to use, from badge designs to selfie frames. If you would like to have a copy, get in touch with the national LGBT+ officers.

2. Increase the visibility and use of UNISON trans and non-binary inclusion factsheets and policies, with at least 5 workplaces bargaining for trans inclusive policies with our material by end of 2023.

We have updated all our trans and non-binary factsheets including the trans model policy, which we are now encouraging branches to use in a systematic way. We are encouraged by branches that have said they have used our trans model policy to negotiate with trans inclusion policies with employers. The next phase of this campaign will be to track where we have the best trans inclusive clauses, where we are lacking and how we can encourage more branches to use our material in workplaces. We will showcase these stories in our LGBT+ e-bulletin and other publications, so if you have

used our trans model policy in your workplace, please let us know.

3. Increase the number of trans and non-binary activists, with at least 5 more active members on a national level trans caucus by the end of 2023.

We have already hit this target and have grown the national trans caucus by 20%. The national committee along with the trans caucus will now focus on how we can build activism among existing and new trans and non-binary members to get them involved at a branch and regional level. In order to facilitate this, there is more regular communication between the trans caucus convenors and caucus members through mail outs and virtual meetings. If you are a trans or non-binary member and are not part of the national caucus, please get in touch with the national LGBT+ team.

4. Utilise our influence to push the UNISON trans equality position on external organisations such as the Labour Party and to show solidarity with other civil society organisations such as Stonewall and Mermaids.

We still have a way to go on a political level. We have yet to see any tangible reform to the Gender Recognition Act and a conversion therapy ban that includes trans people seems unlikely given the current UK Government. But you can be assured that we will be continuing our political lobbying to ensure trans people are protected.

UNISON took a stand against the UK Government earlier this year when they announced that any conversion therapy ban would exclude trans people. UNISON, along with LGBT+ organisations such as Stonewall and Mermaids called for a boycott and eventually the UK Government had to shelve the plans for the conference.

We also campaigned within UNISON to end the support

for the Nordic model for sex work. We campaigned for the women's committee to adopt this stance and were successful. Our motion on this was debated at National Delegates conference and it is now UNISON policy to end the support for the Nordic Model. Thank you to everyone for their support.

Bargaining

To coincide with the national LGBT+ committee campaign on trans equality, we have worked hard to push for trans equality. We have updated our guidance and factsheets. The trans equality model policy has been refreshed and is ready to be negotiated by branches. We are delighted that more and more workplaces are adopting our model policy on trans equality. However, we know that more work needs to be done to make the workplaces UNISON covers to be more trans inclusive. We look forward to pushing this more in 2023.

Both the trans and non-binary workers' rights factsheets along with the importance of pronouns has also been updated. We continue to work with our service groups to raise the profile of our bargaining advice.

At most service group and self-organised group conferences over the last year, we submitted a version of our trans equality – louder and prouder motion, which was made relevant to the service group or SOG we were submitting to.

Jackie and Maz represented the LGBT+ committee at National Delegates Conference, where they moved two motions – one on trans equality louder and prouder and the other on ending support for the Nordic model for the safety of sex workers. We are pleased that both these motions were prioritised and carried by conference.



At the Community conference, our delegate Clive moved an important motion around the future of adult social care. Anu and Jackie were the delegates to the Local Government conference where in addition to the trans equality motion also moved a motion on the future of adult social care.

Laura was our delegate to Health conference. While we are disappointed that the health standing orders committee ruled our trans equality motion out of order, we have been working with health service groups and workplaces to negotiate trans equality clauses in workplaces. Laura also moved a motion on equality and diversity training for health staff.

The Energy conference delegates were Maz and Andy, where they moved both the trans equality motion and net zero and LGBT+ members. Neil was our delegate to the Water, Environment and Transport conference and moved the same motions there.

At the Higher Education conference, Terry moved our trans equality motion and a motion on freedom of speech in higher education. Lucy and Adam were our delegates to Police and Justice in 2021 and moved two important motions on non-binary uniforms and health and wellbeing.

A huge thank you to all our delegates who represented us brilliantly at these conferences!

International

The decision in 2019 by the Council of Global Unions to set up a joint working group on LGBTI issues has helped progress LGBTI issues within the global labour movement. This has developed into a global LGBT+ project hosted by Public Services International, UNISON's global union federation, to drive an LGBT+ campaign among PSI affiliates and the other Global Union Federations. The first LGBT+ campaign officer, Mitchell Coe, was appointed in the summer of 2019 and the second, James Cavalluzzo, was appointed in April 2022 after Mitch came to work for UNISON.

UNISON has played a key role in this work, both through our active participation in PSI LGBT+ meetings and through making financial contributions to the project. A fledgling LGBT+ network in PSI has been formed and begun to develop a work programme.

We also participate in the European Trade Union

Confederation's 'Non-discrimination working group' and were represented at the two meetings held during the last year.

In 2021, two members of the subcommittee were part of the first ever Global Union LGBT+ contingent to the annual UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) conference. The 2022 CSW conference was again held virtually. LGBT+ committee members joined the PSI contingent and Global Unions delegation. Unfortunately, the Conclusions from the conference, agreed by member states, amounted to little substantive progress. They have to be adopted by consensus, and regressive governments blocked or watered-down proposals from more progressive governments.

Our expertise and contacts on global LGBT+ organising continue to be enhanced by our active membership of ILGA, the global LGBTI association. The first ILGA World conference since 2019 took place in Los Angeles in May. There were around six hundred participants representing diverse LGBTQI+ identities and organisations, as well as allied groups, and donors gathered in solidarity to develop strategies to advance LGBTQI+ activism in their respective corners of the world.

Our delegation (Anu Prashar, Darienne Flemington and Mitchell Coe) was involved in organising, supporting and advising on the Trade Unions pre-conference "The world of work". This had around 50 participants, and Anu did us proud on a panel discussion on youth and self-organisation. The pre-conference adopted a statement, recommending to the Board that ILGA ensure the inclusion of a workers' pre-conference at all future World Conferences, designed and delivered in collaboration with ILGA trade union member organisations, and that it incorporates various specific references to the role of trade unions into the draft 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

Darienne was on the chairing pool for the conference – responsible for the smooth running of the conference and compliance with the governance agenda – and did a brilliant job. The next ILGA World conference will be in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2024. After that, the conference will take place every 3 years instead of 2.

ILGA Europe was again unable to hold a physical conference in 2021, but as in 2020, held a 'Gathering online' over a week in October 2021 with the AGM held over the weekend. Darienne Flemington was on the Board for six years and was co-secretary until 2018, when she became co-chair. Darienne stood down from the Board in October 2021 and was given appropriately warm and touching tributes at the conference for all her



work. At the AGM, UNISON's Penny Smith was elected to the Board. This year's ILGA Europe conference is taking place in October in Sofia, Bulgaria, but there is a maximum of two 'in-person' delegates from each member organisation. The AGM, however, will be predominantly online.

As reported last year, we worked with UNISON's International department and Labour Behind the Label to produce 'Pride in Procurement' materials in 2021 including a guide to procurement and a guide to developing an ethical procurement policy. We have continued to encourage regional groups and activists to use them to raise these issues with local Pride groups, and we also urge groups to utilise any UNISON sponsorship to encourage Prides to adopt Pride in Procurement policies and insist on accessible Prides.

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

We have continued our work to raise LGBT+ awareness of the reality of the Israeli occupation and the importance of supporting the boycott, sanctions and divestment campaign. This has included publicising the revised UNISON guide "Is your pension fund investing in the occupation?" and encouraging members – whether in the Local Government Pension Scheme or not – to contact their councillors to ask that they take action to end their pension funds complicity in Israel's violations of international law. The NEC International Committee has proposed holding a joint webinar on Palestine, and we are in the early stages of planning for this.

We also continue to monitor countries highlighted in previous conference motions, including Brazil, Cuba, Colombia, Poland and Turkey. We remain vigilant of the sustained attacks on LGBT+ people across Europe.

The annual Trans Rights Map, published by Transgender Europe (TGEU), illustrates the legal situation of 49 countries in Europe and 5 in Central Asia in matters of trans-specific legislation. The 2022 map shows some slow progress, after no significant advancements in 2021, but there has also been regression in six areas, with governments allowing policies on asylum, bias-motivated speech/violence, and equality to expire without being renewed.

We are concerned that some countries in the region still require a person to be sterilised in order to have their gender legally recognised. Alarming, one EU member, Hungary, has banned legal gender recognition.

In line with the 2021 LGBT+ conference decision calling on the national committee to consider UNISON affiliation to TGEU, the committee has asked the NEC to approve affiliation, and is the process of following up that request.

From the caucuses

Bi+ members

With a busy and positive start to the year as we begin our caucus work with the first meeting of the National Committee at an in-person Policy Weekend. As we build on our visibility it is empowering to see Bi+ caucus members successfully elected to all three sub committees on the National Committee.

Key to the start of the year is concentrating on what tasks lie ahead, including improving our social media presence throughout the year and importantly to maximise the attendance at our network day on July 15th. Planning for the day, even at this early stage of the year, and we knew one of the items we wanted to run was to have a short session on writing motions to our conference and invite a speaker from UNISON National office to talk about the requirements of SOC (Standing Orders Committee). But more about that later.

Other pieces of work this year have included redesigning our leaflets to reflect our 'Bi+' inclusivity and to really build on our participation within the caucus, especially when we consider membership through an intersectional lens, reaching our Bi+ members from other self-organised groups.

We held our annual network day, and it was great to see

new members attending for the first time. It was great to see those of you who joined us, and I would urge you to make the date in 2023 to really amplify our Bi+ voices.

We were joined by two guest speakers, including the amazing Hafsa from Stonewall who led a discussion on Bi+ engagement and intersectionality. Especially interesting was how to engage with potential members from within diverse communities. A truly insightful session and we look forward to building on it next year. Congratulations too go to our Co-Convenor Phillipa for her re-election to the post for the next two years. Thank you to everyone who voted and to the other candidates, we look forward to working closely with you in the coming year.

One of the most important issues that has come to light from the conversations both in and outside of the caucus this year has been around how we must ensure we give the '+' in Bi+ real meaning.

This is so very important if we want to retain our membership but also pivotal to recruiting new Bi+ UNISON members. We must ensure our members feel included, valued and engaged across the union, we need our Bi+ allies to understand why we have added the plus and what it means to us. It is clear to us that we have not yet achieved that, but with your support and engagement we will. With this in mind we would urge you to read the article in the summer edition of 'Out in UNISON' if you have not already, and if you are heading to conference in November, stop us and have a chat, come to our workshop and support our motions. But most of all hear our voices!

Disabled LGBT+ members

Disabled LGBT+ caucus members have been involved in the work of the national committee, sub-committees, delegations and two of the caucus members currently co-chair the national committee. Our work has included motions passed at 2021 conference with a particular focus on mental health, covid-19, raising awareness around the social model of disability and working conditions for disabled members.

We planned to hold our first face to face network meeting at UNISON Centre in September, but due to uncertainty around train travel and in solidarity with our colleagues working on the railways, the meeting moved virtually. There was a good turnout and for some attendees this was their first time joining a national network meeting. An update on the work the committee have been able to complete or are working on was given and discussions included reasonable adjustments, hybrid working and

definition of disability. We had a presentation from the Disability Officer Deidre Costigan, UNISON's national officer, who told us about the Year of the disabled worker and some of the issues that had been given prominence during 2022. One topic of discussion was around UNISON holding more hybrid meetings going forward as some disabled members are unable to travel to UNISON Centre.

We discussed motions to National LGBT+ Conference, including a suggestion to Make 2024 The Year of LGBT+ Workers, building on the success that National Disabled Committee and UNISON has had highlighting the barriers that Disabled members face day to day. We talked about accessible communications, human rights and disabled LGBT+ young members. Elections were held which resulted in all the disabled members seats on the LGBT+ committee and standing orders committee being filled.

The caucus have been supporting the Year of the Disabled worker events throughout the year. Including attending the Celebration event at National Delegate Conference. Carl was the editor of the Disability News Sheet this year.

Bev and Louise were our representatives to National Disabled Members Committee and Louise was part of the steering group for the year of the disabled worker.

We joined the national delegation to TUC Disabled worker Virtual Conference in which UNISON'S Motion promoting the Disability Charter & Year of the Disabled Worker was passed and chosen as the conference motion to go to National Congress.

We look forward to seeing you all at our meeting in Edinburgh in November.

Black LGBT+ members

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

The five members of the Network elected to serve as representatives LGBT+ Committee were: Jennie Antonio, Bev Miller, Anu Prashar, Judy Richards and Manish Maisuria.

The Black LGBT+ caucus has continued to contribute to the work of the National Committee. Judy attended the virtual Black Members conference in May where she moved the motion and amendment on behalf of

the Black LGBT+ caucus. The TUC LGBT+ conference in July had delegates from the Black caucus, this included: Sarah Shahid, Paul Amann and Manish Maisuria. Paul Amann has been elected to attend the TUC LGBT+ conference in 2023. Manish has been nominated to the vacant Black Members seat, on the TUC LGBT+ committee.

Anu Prashar was one of the delegates to the Local Government conference in June.

The sub committees have Black caucus representation. Anu and Jennie agreed to become mentors to younger members to support the campaign that the Young Members Forum initiated to improve representation and activism amongst young members.

Another event that was attended by Black LGBT+ caucus members was UK Black Pride that was held at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. This event drew the largest crowd of Black LGBT+ participants ever with an estimated 25,000 attendees. UNISON LGBT+ had a stall there and Jennie Antonio and Bev Miller volunteered to be there in order to encourage the recruitment of Black LGBT+ people and to inform of UNISON events for Black LGBT+ members. Photographs were taken that promoted trans equality and these were published on the UNISON LGBT+ twitter feed. We had a lot of good conversations and found more activists to be part of our caucus.

Bev and Jennie have represented on NBMC, contributed to work streams on the Committee and are working on the Working Group to organise the forthcoming physical NBM Conference. Bev and Jennie nominated Aderonke Apata as the potential recipient of the annual Nelson Mandela Award chosen by the NBMC.

In September, Bev and Jennie represented the Network on the NBMC 'Meet and Greet' panel webinar and contributed by answering questions on SOG involvement and their own personal journey in UNISON.

Anu and Jennie have written motions on Ghana and Rwanda in relation to Black LGBT+ asylum seekers essentially being deported to Rwanda for the LGBT+ conference in November.

On behalf of the Black LGBT+ caucus we would like to send our condolences to the Royal Family on the passing of Queen Elizabeth II on September 8th. No matter what our own personal views of the Royal family are the Queen's passing is a significant event and marks the end of the longest reigning monarch.

Transgender members

As we look forward (at the time of writing) to the 2022 LGBT+ Conference being held in Edinburgh, it's time to look back over the last 12 months and reflect on what we've achieved.

For the Trans Caucus, the main event was our annual network meeting, held at UNISON Central on the 15th July. An interesting meeting with contributions from all who attended.

The first order of business was the election of a new caucus Co-Chair. Two members submitted nominations and following an online vote Jennifer Black was elected. Normally the newly elected Co-Chair would take up position after the National LGBT+ Conference however it was agreed that the position should be taken up immediately to ensure that Emma had some immediate support, as she had been sole chair, following the other co-chair having stepped down due to commitments elsewhere. We had a number of healthy discussions, particularly around the name of the group and how this might be restricting peoples engagement with it. It was agreed that we would reach out to our membership and ask them for suggestions of a name that best reflected the make up of our members. In response to this at the beginning of August a short letter and survey was sent out asking for their input. We asked them for their thoughts on what the group should be called and also how they thought we could improve engagement and communication with them.

In the first week we had a small number of responses so a further push was made the following week to try and increase participation. A good response resulted, and the general consensus was that the name for the Trans Caucus should reflect the diversity of self-identities under the Trans umbrella, plus those who might choose to not consider themselves specifically Trans, but who may share many commonalities.

It is therefore proposed that the Caucus should be known as the Trans, Non-binary, and Gender Diverse Network, we will take this proposal to Conference and put it to those present at the Trans Members Group meeting.

While we always try to be an inclusive group, an interesting point was raised at the July event when we were asked what a caucus was? A term we use with abandon in our Self Organized Groups, without asking if everyone knows what it means? Caucus is simply a political group within a larger political party. Taking account of these queries, in the future, we are also proposing that we replace 'Caucus' with 'Network'.



The other key piece of business for the group was the subject of motions for the National LGBT+ Conference this year. We submitted 2 motions – one on the subject of the biased media attention received by the trans community, and a second motion calling on Local Councils to write to the Prime Minister calling for a complete trans inclusive ban on conversion therapy. At the time of writing the second motion had been ruled out of order by the Standing Orders Committee and we were waiting on hearing the outcome of our appeal.

As Co-chairs we recognise the need to communicate more frequently with the groups members as a meeting in July and November is not sufficient, especially given the current hostile climate for trans people. The co-convenors of the trans caucus intend to send out a trans specific newsletter to our members at least twice a year.

On the 15th July UNISON launched its Trans Equality Campaign. The Co-chairs presented the launch with the support of Mitch and Susan and contributions from Assistant General Secretary Jon Richards, Senior National Equality Officer Carola Towle and LGBT+ committee member for Northern Ireland, Martin

McConnellogue. UNISON President Andrea Egan also attended adding her support to the campaign.

The campaign promotes the new Trans Ally Training available to all regions and the new trans equality guidance available on the website along with the revised Model Trans Equality Policy for use to negotiate with employers. Trans caucus members have been involved in all national training sessions and continue to be available for anyone that wants assistance in running the trans ally training.

At National Delegate Conference in June 2022, the National Executive Council (NEC) agreed that every NEC member should have completed the Trans Ally Training. The training package is being well received and regions are booking up. A big thanks to learning and organising services staff and the trans network members from the National Committee who have developed and contributed to the delivery of this training.

We look forward to continuing our trans equality campaign next year!

From the regions

East Midlands

This year saw a welcome return to a full pride season and a return to meetings in person. This was helpful as many have suffered from being isolated due to the pandemic but with the introduction of hybrid meetings this also suits those members who would have to travel a long distance as our area covers a significantly large area.

We focussed setting up stalls at all the major prides this year and we managed to do it with the help of our activists and a special thanks to the co-chairs of our region who have worked to make this happen. We have had a new co-chair recently and it is nice to see one of our younger activists becoming more involved and we hope she will be with us for many years to come as her enthusiasm is most welcome.

We have had some good regional meetings which have had a significantly higher attendance than previously and our priorities for the coming year are to encourage young members and focus on encouraging more diversity within our group.

It is clear we need to support our transgender colleagues as there has been a significant growth in the 'Gender critical' movement and we have had one of our branches subject to scrutiny from one of these groups so we will continue to promote the message that we are a fully inclusive group.

We are also mindful that the new government appears to have a lot of members who have in the past held views which are not LGBT+ friendly so we will need to work collectively with other regions and our national committee to send a strong message that we will not accept any infringements on the rights we have fought many years for.

We will also be mindful that the Bisexual + community are often forgotten and go under the radar so we will encourage Bi+ members to be more visible and become activists.

We are looking forward to this year's conference and we are hoping for a good turnout from our region and using it to further encourage participation within the group.

Eastern

The Eastern Region has been very busy this year sponsoring and attending as many Pride events as possible, focusing on the smaller prides that undoubtedly need our support more. The Prides that we made it to included: Suffolk Pride, Beds River Festival, Norwich Pride, Ely Pride, Colchester Pride, Herts Pride, Kings Lynn Pride. We have had an amazing attendance at all Pride events and everyone in the region needs to be even prouder of themselves, not just for who they are, but for getting out and being seen at all corners of our Region.

Herts Pride

Herts Pride took place in August in Watford and being the 10th anniversary event of Herts Pride, it smashed all expectations! It was rammed with people and by the end of the day, we were sick of the sounds of our own voices. In time-honoured tradition, we found ourselves set-up in the Health and Wellbeing marquee, which people walk through when they arrive before going through to the festival. There were some amazing organisations there that do invaluable work for LGBT+ people, such as Terrence Higgins Trust, TSG Herts (Transgender Support Group) and MIND. Everyone who gave up their time on that day did a fabulous job of getting UNISON's name out there, answering questions people have about unions and why LGBT+ people need to be in one.

Suffolk Pride

'The UNISON stand was suitably colourful and manned, womanned and gender non-binariied all day with many folks coming to chat to us and more often than not wanting a photo with our resident drag queen. We also were paid a visit by the mayor and deputy mayor of Ipswich, the latter respectively wanting to thank us for all our hard work, the continued fight, and our support for her as a prospective parliamentary candidate for Ipswich. The weather whilst not the scorcher of Friday, remained warm but by 4pm the forecasted rains arrived. Without the luxury of a gazebo, it was time to pack up the stand and call it a day before the left-over merch became too soggy to be recycled for Norwich Pride!' – words by Lucy Dixon, Norfolk and Suffolk Police Branch LGBT+ Officer

Some other things

We continue to push our social media presence to promote what we do and reach out to Members and new people who will benefit from joining a union. We are also actively trying to organise a regional joint-SOG group. This is yet to be unconfirmed but if successful will allow

us to map and consider intersectional issues better into our workplan.

Peter and Jack are supporting the TUC LESE (London East and South-East) LGBT+ network as it attempts to reform. It has previously suffered issues with officers resigning from positions but now that these have been filled, we hope to grow this group and make the most of our connections in other unions.

We have encouraged as many people as possible to attend LGBT+ conference and have a good number of delegates who are excited to enjoy the experience together and connect with other regions in Edinburgh.

We're very much looking forward to seeing what 2023 has to bring, implementing the trans ally training produced by the National Committee as well as recruiting more LGBT+ activists in more workplaces.

Yorkshire and Humberside

In 2021/2022 the Yorkshire and Humberside regional priorities have remained in line with national priorities, which include responding to the ongoing threat to public services and a continued focus on recruiting members to UNISON and to the SOG.

During the last year we've continued our great work with the branches within our region and have had a notable presence attending many pride events over the summer, the first since the start of the pandemic and as a result raised money for the UNISON welfare fund through peoples generous donations.

We've increased the number of members engaged with the SOG due to meetings being held virtually, while remote access has been an invaluable tool during recent events, we're hoping to transition to some form of hybrid meeting platform over the next year with the first face to face meeting being our AGM in November.

Our SOG Facebook page www.facebook.com/unisonYHLGBT and our twitter feed @YHLGBT has all been invaluable tools for engaging with members through the pandemic and as a result of this we've had a number of new members showing interest in what we do and making contact for more information.

The group now has a new Regional Equality officer which has been an amazing step in the right direction. The new appointee has been in regular contact with our SOG and appears to have a genuine interest in the success of the group and our activities. This has been

further illustrated by the increased regular productive contact and assistance between the SOG and the officer.

As a group sadly we're fully aware of the lack of female representation at meetings and as a result, one of the aims as a region in 2022/2023 is to encourage women to be more involved in meetings and activities. If anyone's interested in attending or being more involved, please contact us via one of the above methods and we'll be happy to give you more information. We continue to hold seats on all regional committees and reports are received from the delegates at each meeting of the SOG.

Moving forward into 2023 with the pandemic now hopefully firmly behind us, we'll start to return to a bit of normality and be further present, out and about within the region attending events with branch's, furthering the groups agenda, offering support, help and advice where needed.

Scotland

This year has seen us start to move slowly out of COVID and allowed us to return this year to a resemblance of normality, although we have tried to keep the some of the more enabling digital tools that we have become very accustomed to. The ability to meet face to face as a regional committee and meet with our members has made a welcome return and it emphasised the benefits of in person gathering, not just for effective working but also for the social aspect.

We kicked off our year with our AGM, which was well attended, and we managed to fill all our committee seats. Scott Cuthbertson from the Equality Network discussed the planned publication of the LGBTI equality manifesto '21 - '26, which set out the concrete steps that the next Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament can take, over the next five years, to improve the lives of LGBTI people living in Scotland. This will include improving public services, delivering legal equality, tackling discrimination, promoting wellbeing, and building a more equal Scotland. This manifesto very much aligns with our own policy and campaigns at home and abroad.

After a very successful AGM, we started 2022, with our policy weekend. This allowed the committee to get together and discuss and develop out work plan for the year. One of our top priorities was to re-establish a strong UNISON presence at many of the Prides the were being planned across Scotland. We also wished to refocus on working with local branches and encourage them to support pride events in their local communities.

We have found that this is an excellent way to improve the involvement of our members, across the country and enable the regional committees limited financial and human resources to go much further.

We were pleased that we sent a full delegation to this year's STUC LGBT+ workers conference. Our delegates spoke on a wide range of motions and our own motion on the "promotion on the use of pronouns in the workplace" was passed with full support of all delegates. We were delighted that we were successful in taking up two seats on STUC LGBT+ Workers committee.

This year pride season started with attending one of our first new pride events on the Isle of Arran, or simply Arran is an island of the west coast of Scotland. It's the largest island on the Firth of Clyde and the seventh largest in Scotland. We quickly followed this by our attendance at Edinburgh Pride. This is has now become our main pride event of the year as we have decided to boycott both Glasgow Pride and MardiGla, which is also held in Glasgow. Along with other trade unions we have collectively decided to not have a presence at the two Glasgow events due to the over commercialisation and in the case of MardiGla insisting that we should pay to participate in the parade. It was good to see a very large UNISON presence at Edinburgh with several local branches' attendance and us being one of the few unions to be marching. As some of the local prides start to re-establish themselves, we have managed to attend the following: West Lothian; Dumfries and Galloway; Fife; and Orkney, our most northerly pride. Oban pride has been postponed until November due to the period of national mourning.

We will be sending two delegates to ILGA Europe conference which will be held in Sofia in October. As a region we have been an active participant in ILGA for a number of years and it good to see that we are having an in person conference again after two years of virtual events.

On a final note, it will be our pleasure to welcome our colleagues and friends to Edinburgh for this year's UNISON LGBT+ Conference and we hope you will join us for a very Scottish welcome at the social event on the Saturday evening.

Cymru/Wales

This year we have seen the first Pride celebrations being held since the covid pandemic closed the country down. Wales was subject to different restrictions to England so it has taken slightly longer for things to get up and running again.

The Regional Self Organised Group has reformed and currently has over sixty LGBT+ members registered. We are hoping to hold our development weekend soon and will be focusing on the Trans ally campaign recently launched by National.

Cardiff Pride is our main event but this year we took a decision not to support them and did not take part in the parade or have a stall.

The Welsh TUC asked unions to avoid Cardiff Pride over concerns around the over-commercialisation and high costs they were asking from both unions and LGBT+ organisations to be able to take part.

Instead we encouraged members to support local Pride events and held a stall at the first Powys Pride that was held this year.

Going forward Cymru/ Wales Regional SOG will continue to support local Prides and encourage the development of other events. We very much embrace the feeling of Pride is our Protest, not your party.

Northern

The past year has undoubtedly continued to present significant challenges for the Northern Region LGBT+ SOG. We've been unable to meet in person, have struggled to recruit a co-chair, and have lost our most experienced rep to the National Committee.

Yet, despite those challenges, we go on.

Group members have supported events across the region, from UK Pride, held this year in Newcastle, where we marched under a 'Pride is a Protest' banner, to smaller regional Prides in Durham and Middlesbrough. We joined the 'North-East Demands Better' rally in Newcastle, where Jenny Black put detailed questions to a panel including Angela Rayner and Christina McAnea, on trans inclusion and conversion therapy.

Following her appointment to the trans caucus chair, Jenny is no longer able to stand for the regional seat. The group sends its warmest thanks and regards for the tireless work and dedication Jenny has given as a trade unionist on behalf of our region, and we look forward to a continued working relationship with her.

Other notable campaigning from group members across the region this year has included:

- International Workers Memorial Day – attending and laying a wreath

- IDAHOBIT day 2022 – the group chair released a video message and events were held in branches
- Raising awareness of the petition to ensure trans people are protected under the conversion therapy ban
- Branch activities during Lesbian visibility week
- LGBT+ Young Members online network meeting in July – promoting this important new work that we are doing nationally.

Our group has met exclusively online this year, with plans for in-person meetings always scuppered at the last minute, for one reason or another. Thankfully, we have still been able to engage new members, and retain valued established members.

For the next year, one of our key priorities will be to activate equality reps in branches, to help further grow the group and its activism, and to re-establish our in-person group meetings and activities.

Northern Ireland

The summer had been a busy time for the LGBT+ SOG in Northern Ireland

As with most other LGBT+ SOGs we have had a great time out meeting our members and the public at the various Prides in Northern Ireland. We have attended Belfast, Foyle and Omagh Prides.

We have also met with members in our hospitals around Northern Ireland at Pride time. This is a great experience, and we were able to inform our members of the various campaigns we are working on.

On campaigning, it is very clear that the whole of Northern Ireland LGBT+ SOG is working and promoting UNISON's trans equality is UNISON business campaign! We have taken 100s of pictures with our photo frame at the various Prides and hospital visits.

We launched our trans equality campaign in the Guildhall with our Mayor and several regions of UNISON Northern Ireland being present and other agencies offering support and well-being initiatives for people. It was a great success and shows how partnership and collaboration work well.

We are already filming for our trans equality journeys. We have received such great support from branches throughout Northern Ireland and at the same time getting the national trans equality campaign out there to all our members regardless of if they are LGBT+ or not.

Martin McConnellogue has met with our Education team in Northern Ireland to make sure our Trans training is part of the programme and in our upcoming brochure.

It's been a really busy time in Northern Ireland and a really good strong team working together. With Martin now a retired member we have several people interested in the position on National committee which is amazing.

We have found it is a great time for us here in Northern Ireland. We have met via Zoom and got catching up with each other at Prides and events like UNISON LGBT+ Well Being Day. Our group is getting bigger and stronger with new people joining us and adding great ideas and enthusiasm.

West Midlands

Since the 2021 Conference in Brighton the group has held its AGM where it re-elected Andy Chaffer as Convenor and Delegate to the National Committee. Three meetings have been online and one face to face.

There are ongoing problems with attendance at both types of meetings and the West Midlands regional centre cannot yet host hybrid meetings. The group has held a survey of members and the majority wish to have hybrid meetings during the daytime on weekdays. We are still fully working out the results of the survey.

The meeting for motions was inquorate but hopefully the amendments meeting will be quorate.

Prides in the region all seem to have moved to the latter half of the summer and some have also moved site from indoors to outdoors, which can mean having to transport a gazebo etc.

Walsall Local Government branch hosted a stall at Walsall Pride on Saturday 27 August. This was held for the first time at the Walsall Arboretum.

Staffordshire Police Branch were joined by members of the SOG at Chase Pride held in Hednesford on Saturday 3 September. A good day was had by all and there was at least one new member recruited in the health sector.

Members of the SOG maintain their involvement in the structures of the Region.



North West

We were delighted to win the Digital Recruiting and Organising Award at LGBT+ Conference 2021, and it was fantastic to have our work featured at the top of the following week's UNISON Activist e-bulletin.

We have held two meetings in February and May, both of which were delivered virtually and maintained a steady number of attendees including people who are not on our committee. Our February meeting focussed on reviewing our annual action plan whilst our May meeting focussed on our organising working around Pride events.

We were delighted to host our Annual General Meeting in September in-person with a virtual option for people where this was preferable. We were thrilled to recruit to a range of committee positions, taking the committee to 19 members, supported by the wider group and to fill our Young Members Officer role with a new activist recruited via the national LGBT+ Young Members campaign.

2022 has marked a physical return to Pride, a welcome sight after two years of its absence. However, it also comes at a time when Pride feels more necessary, with trans and non-binary rights under attack by 'gender critical' campaigners, a UK government that has failed to implement a full ban on conversion therapy and the UK falling to 14th place in the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Europe 'Rainbow Europe' report.

We took a motion to Regional Council in February about encouraging branches to review how they engage with self-organisation at a branch, regional and national level and we will be carrying out a survey with branches before the end of the year to do some mapping about

how branches already engage.

The North West has responded with vigour, taking advantage of the returning Pride season to recruit new members and demonstrate why trade unions are essential to achieving LGBT+ equality. Local branches have also stepped up, running stalls at Bolton, Stockport, Chester, New Brighton and Salford Prides and assisting at other Prides, showing how achieving LGBT+ equality is definitely UNISON business. It was also great to be joined by UNISON's President at her local Pride in Bolton.

Whilst Sparkle, the national trans festival, which takes place in Manchester each July is a national priority, the North West organises a physical presence at the event. We took the opportunity to display our new pull up banners, which are in three designs, with a campaigning message on one, a bi+ inclusion message on another and a trans inclusion message on the final one.

We also launched our stall engagement boxes, asking attendees what their workplace priority is, with a clear focus on getting members of the public to talk to us about workplace issues including pay, leave, job security, a shorter working week and having a good boss. The response from attendees was fantastic, and the message from them (as it has been from every Pride event) was that their top priority is a fair pay rise.

For the first time, we took the plunge and committed to attending the Isle of Man Pride, returning for its second year, and this time with its first Pride march. We were blown away by the event and also by the commitment and dedication of the local branch secretary, who reminded us how a small event for us can have a massive impact for UNISON.

Our partnership with Manchester Village Spartans RUFC has continued, with growing visibility through the development of the team with three squads and a touch rugby side all in UNISON branded kit. The club continues to highlight UNISON on its social media platforms. We have been particularly proud of how the Spartans have challenged the decision of the RFU Council's decision to blanket ban all trans women from participating in Rugby Union at every level of the game.

Similarly, our work with the other North West self-organised groups has grown, with our Hate Crime Charter moving to consultation stage following our session at Skills for Strength.

Additionally, engaging with partner unions via the TUC North West LGBT+ Network has allowed us to pool training and campaign ideas and work towards having a united voice for LGBT+ rights. Through the North West TUC LGBT+ Network, we took a motion on Trans Equality to this year's North West TUC Conference which was passed overwhelmingly.

We have continued to build our social media presence, with over 510 followers on Twitter, 680 on Facebook and 93 on Instagram to promote our work; to celebrate national awareness days and highlight our campaigning activities and events including the National Network Days.

Our Regional Annual Report can be found at: <https://sway.office.com/KxupAQvpHv8kbe9n>

South West

The SWLGBT+ group have met both virtually and in person since February 2022. This has ensured that members who ordinarily do not participate in our group outside the conference have been able to contribute and take part. The 2022 work programme loosely followed the national committees' programme but focused more on building capacity for and of LGBT+ members in the South West. Our planning included raising awareness of non-binary identities and to champion trans equality as key priorities to support our members.

Members took part in the SW Get Active event – an event to promote good practice, welcome new members to activism, training workshops to inspire, a dinner and awards ceremony followed the next afternoon by a regional council. Our LGBT+ members contributed to the How to be a good Trans Ally workshop which was well received.

All in person meetings and some of the virtual meetings

have an element of training and as we have a good relationship with the regional education officer, we are able to work successfully together to develop training that suits our needs.

We continue our collaboration and work with the other SW SOG's (South West Self Organised Groups) branches and the SW regional convenors and committee members. Some of whom dropped by to share staffing a stall at Exeter Respect festival. We are hoping that the Region will pick up on the significance of this event in promoting good relations for all ethnicities and celebrating under the mantra of 'all different, all equal'. This is the biggest event promoting equality in the South West and UNISON was there at the beginning 25 years ago. It is with regret that we were not able to capitalise on this great achievement in a more visible and co-ordinated manner.

Members have attended a wide variety of prides mainly focusing on the smaller, newer prides. These have been successful in promoting the union, showcasing our campaigns and bargaining factsheets, and to encourage and support our members to be more active at branch level.

We continue to promote UNISON and TUC Equalities learning to all our members and to the committee. We regularly send information to branches in the South West using existing updated publicity materials. This includes reminders for our members who identify in the LGBT+ caucus' groups of the national network days

The committee continues to have good representation on many of the regional service group committees and is focusing on ensuring that we maximise our impact and remain visible. Several LGBT+ activists hold Branch Officer posts.

The SW region remains affiliated to ILGA World. As we are in the European region, we engage with ILGA Europe. 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.

South East

The South East Regional Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender plus (LGBT+) group has had an exceptionally productive year.

Our co-chairs remain Pól O'Ceallaigh and Liv Naylor, and Our national reps remain Lucy Power and Andy Armsby.



We would like to welcome our new regional officer, Dominic Rothwell, who has shown unremitting enthusiasm in his new role. We would like to extend our thanks to Patrick Young, our outgoing officer for his support.

In the 'back to normal' world, we have been very enthusiastic about supporting Prides. Our particular focus has been on small Prides, in some more conservative areas of the country where those in the LGBT+ community can feel marginalized and unsupported. We have also been clear that sponsorship is contingent on responsibility to be inclusive, and accessible, while also emphasising that UNISON will not stand alongside less socially responsible sponsors, such as those in the arms trade. The Committee, with help from Dom, developed QR codes to identify those Prides that provide the greatest opportunity for recruitment of new members and activists. These codes enable digital sign up, and identify those who want to be more active in the region.

The South East was proud to sponsor six prides this year – Canterbury Pride, Trans Pride in Brighton, Dover Pride, Crawley Pride, Reading Pride and Herne Bay Pride – their first ever. We had lots of interest, and sign ups, and were interviewed for a spoken history, and a local radio station. A great opportunity to get our message out. We also had a number of people who were surprised and grateful to see union representation at Prides. A big shout out to Surrey County Branch who sponsored Surrey Pride. We would also like to thank all those who supported us on the stalls. We look forward to an even busier Pride season in 2023, and to seeing all our South East Region LGBT+ members at our meetings.

In July, we hosted an audience with LGBT+ activist Mark Segal at UNISON Centre, where he talked about his involvement in the Stonewall Riots and over 50 years of activism and journalism. The South East LGBT+ Committee extends its thanks to Patrick Young for

organising the event, which had to be postponed several times due to Covid. UNISON South East has worked very closely with Medway Pride Radio in recent years, and would like to thank them for the opportunity to support Mark's tour.

In his role the National LGBT+ Committee, Andy is co-chair of the Campaigns and Policy Development (CPD) Sub Committee. They ensure that any work required as a result of motions on campaigning passed at conference are taken forward, and that LGBT+ issues are mainstreamed within all UNISON's campaigns. Lucy continues as co-chair of the National LGBT+ Committee, engaging with the National Equalities Liaison Committee, and continuing to work with the Presidential Team. Lucy also represented the National Committee at BiCon, and Bi-Pride – with presentations at both on being Bi+ in the workplace.

We are looking forward to seeing out LGBT+ members at regional meetings. Although we have managed some virtual meetings, we are hopeful that hybrid meetings will be approved for the South East to increase engagement. We meet four times a year, with the occasional committee meeting in between times. We usually have a speaker, and in the past have had presentations from Mermaids, the Albert Kennedy Trust, and The Terence Higgins Trust. Our AGM is usually held in October, and we welcome everyone from the SOG, whether you're out in your branch or not.

Greater London

Over the year, there have been 5 committee meetings and 2 meetings open to all in the regional group, including retired members

In February, we held a webinar on "A History of HIV/AIDS

Activism” for LGBT+ History Month

Our motion to the regional council AGM in May, asking for the region to support the ‘End support for the Nordic model’ motion to National Delegate Conference, was passed without any votes against.

We held our regional LGBT+ Training and Organising Day on 20 May at UNISON Centre. We had 32 delegates registered with 24 attending. Speakers included Josephine Grahl, UNISON National Young Members Officer, who ran an interactive session on organising young members. National LGBT+ Officer, Mitchell Coe, who talked about current national LGBT+ campaigns, and Robbie de Santos, Stonewall Director of Communications, talking about Stonewall’s international work. The day included two workshops, ‘organising for trans equality and ‘unconscious bias’. It was well received overall and generated new members signing up to the regional LGBT+ mailing list.

In June, members from the regional group attended the TUC ‘We Demand Better’ march and rally, and were pleased to support the many speeches, but especially that from UNISON General Secretary Christina McAnea.

The group also attended Pride in London and London Trans Pride, both in July, and group members attended the launch event for the UNISON Trans Equality campaign on 15 July.

Our group AGM is scheduled for 22 October. We continue to be involved in the work of the region, and to send representatives to other regional committees.

We also continue our active involvement in the region’s international work and ILGA-Europe. We will have a delegate to the (virtual) AGM in October 2022.

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