2022 National LGBT+ Conference

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**1. NEGOTIATING TRANS EQUALITY WITH EMPLOYERS**

Carried

Following the 2021 LGBT+ conference, the national LGBT+ committee launched a trans equality campaign to be louder and prouder about our support for trans and non-binary members’ rights. This campaign has many elements – from trans ally training and establishing a trans ally network to lobby the United Kingdom’s governments and the Labour Party to be more inclusive of trans and non-binary people.

Conference welcomes the agreement by the national executive council (NEC) at the 2022 national delegate conference (NDC) for all members of the NEC to undertake the Trans Ally training package before the 2023 NDC.

One of the main objectives of the campaign is to ensure the workplaces that we cover as a union have trans equality policies, to ensure they have the appropriate structures in place to support trans workers. It’s not enough for organisations to merely say they are supportive of trans rights – they need to ensure that there are policies and structures in place to back that up.

The national LGBT+ committee has updated the trans model policy that is ready to be adopted as is by employers. It covers a range of topics from ensuring support for trans workers through the transitioning process, to ensuring trans equality in recruitment and how trans equality will be monitored and promoted within the organisation. It also highlights what to do in situations where someone experiences or witnesses transphobic behaviour.

Of course, ensuring your employer has a trans inclusion policy is merely a first step towards creating an inclusive workplace for trans workers, but it’s an important one. We need to ensure that we all work together to affect real change in our workplaces and negotiate our model trans policy with our employers.

Conference therefore calls for the national LGBT+ committee to:

1. Work with UNISON’s NEC and service group executives to promote our trans equality model policy in branches;
2. Encourage branches and regions that use the trans equality model policy to report their successes back to the national LGBT+ committee.

**2. LGBT+ HATE CRIME**

Carried

This Conference is deeply concerned by the steep rise in LGBT+ hate crime in

Scotland since lockdown restrictions were eased at the beginning of last summer.

The rise in homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crimes is not restricted to

Scotland but has been replicated across the rest of the United Kingdom (UK). Hatred and abuse of

LGBT+ people is of urgent, global concern.

Conference notes that crimes related to sexual orientation and gender identity have

increased almost every year since at least 2015 according to Government data from

England, Wales and Scotland, and recognises that real hate crime figures are likely

to be much higher due to under-reporting. This is a stark reminder that LGBT+

equality is far from a lived reality for LGBT+ people and communities in Scotland

and across the UK. It illustrates that we are still at risk of abuse and attack for no

other reason than for being who we are.

Pre-pandemic bullying, misgendering, harassment and violence in the workplace is

a daily reality for far too many LGBT+ workers, leading to a significant minority

concealing their identity from people they work with.

The Coronavirus crisis has further entrenched inequality

– what once were safe spaces have become increasingly unsafe.

Conference welcomes the continued work of unison to promote LGBT+ equality,

defend and progress rights at work and raise awareness of what hate crime is and

how to report it.

Conference calls on the UNISON national LGBT+ committee to

engage with relevant parts of unison to support:

1. Raise awareness to activists to the possibility of homophobic, trans phobic and biphobic abuse and discrimination in their workplaces;
2. By working to ensure that guidance “tackling hate crime and hate incidents: a workplace issue” is up to date and promoted amongst activists;
3. Seek to ensure that UNISON's activist training includes information and tools to help activists to effectively challenge hate crime and abuse in the workplace;
4. Promote LGBT+ equality and tackle discrimination in their campaigning, bargaining, and training work.

**3. EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION SPEEDING TICKET SCHEME**

Carried

Conference notes that a workplace that actively encourages Equality Diversity and Inclusion is more successful, can help to keep employees happy and motivated, prevents serious or legal issues arising, such as bullying, harassment and discrimination and will attract and keep good staff.

Conference also notes that where LGBT+ members and their allies continue to fight against acts of discrimination, bullying and harassment we are seen as problem starters, and trouble makers to those not understanding of our rights and do not share our lived experiences of such prejudice.

Conference identifies that a person who chooses to discriminate against us may be one whose attitude cannot be changed no matter how hard we try but we can make a difference to those who want to do the right thing. Formal procedures such as grievances, and disciplinary meetings can take their toll on wellbeing, both mental and physical health of our members, it takes tremendous amount of courage and trust to even begin such proceedings.

Conference believes early resolution can be effective if done in the right way. For example, being caught speeding and offered a speed awareness course, this action requests further education related to the incident. When taking the example of microaggressions in the form of stereotypes towards someone’s sexual orientation or misgendering, which may not amount to misconduct or gross misconduct, someone can be requested to attend Allyship training or LGBT+ awareness training, with the victim’s wishes at the heart of the decision making process. Education in replacement of formal action gives the perpetrator chance to learn from the victim’s point of view and the training gives essential advice to help someone change their behaviour and reduce reoffending.

Conference calls on the national LGBT+ committee to:

1. Seek to identify examples of schemes that use early intervention, educational and diversionary activities and consider what best practice could look like
2. Widely share this best practice through all appropriate media channels;
3. Update the UNISON LGBT+ bargaining fact sheets to incorporate such a scheme.

**4. IN SUPPORT OF GENDER NEUTRAL TOILETS AND CHANGING FACILITIES**

Carried as Amended by: 4.1, 4.2

Conference recognises the need for inclusiveness for our LGBT+ members in the workplace. We commend the strong position taken by members at national delegate conference in passing the motion ‘Trans Equality – Louder and Prouder’ and recognise the commitment in UNISON’s recently updated Trans Equality Model Policy to the provision of gender neutral toilets. Many non-binary and transgender people feel unsupported by their employers when it comes to their gender identity and may also be in poorly organised workplaces with low union density making it hard to challenge an unsupportive employer. One issue faced by many non-binary and transgender people is employers not providing safe and accessible gender neutral toilets and changing facilities.

Unlike trans people who often identify within the gender binary, those who identity outside of the gender binary may prefer gender neutral toilets and changing facilities as they provide a safer space for those who may not outwardly conform to society’s gendered expectations, but also because gender neutral toilets and changing facilities affirm their gender identity. Those outside of the gender binary often experience gender dysphoria which can be impacted by having to misgender themselves by using gender-specific toilets and changing facilities which do not align with their identity. Gender-neutral facilities are necessary to ensure non-binary people’s experiences with toilet and changing facilities are one of comfort and dignity.

In addition, many trans and non-binary people face abuse and violence when accessing single sex spaces due to perceptions about their gender. Provision of gender neutral toilets and changing facilities can ensure trans and non-binary people have a safe provision to access. Recent updates to Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) guidance appears regressive in the protection of gender neutral spaces with single sex spaces compulsory and gender neutral spaces optional in the construction of new buildings.

Employers should therefore ensure the availability of gender neutral toilets and changing facilities to ensure the safety and comfort of their employees and our non-binary and trans colleagues. The provision of gender neutral toilets and changing facilities could be in addition to male and female toilets and changing facilities and not used as a false divisive argument between workers on resources.

Conference recognises that, in some cases, there are genuine difficulties with making changes to existing facilities due to their design and the requirements of health and safety legislation relating to the provision of toilet and changing facilities in workplaces. In some cases, however, it is possible to introduce safe and accessible gender-neutral facilities simply through changes to signage. This underlines the importance of raising awareness of the need for gender-neutral facilities to be provided and for improved design of facilities so that they are safe and accessible, and provide greater privacy (for example, individual lockable cubicles rather than open plan communal changing rooms).

Conference calls on the national LGBT+ committee to:

1. Encourage branches to bargain with employers about providing safe and accessible gender neutral toilets and changing facilities for employees;
2. Encourage the regional LGBT+ committees to support branches to bargain with their employers to provide sanitary disposal bins in all toilet spaces;
3. Liaise with Labour Link and LGBT+ Labour to lobby the Labour Party to apply pressure on the UK Government, devolved Governments and administrations to seek that the provision of gender neutral toilets and changing facilities is protected in legislation and guidance;
4. Seek that Labour Link and LGBT+ Labour lobby the Labour Party to challenge the transphobic position of some of the current members of parliament opposing gender neutral toilet and changing facilities provision in EHRC guidance.

**5. WE MUST STRIVE FOR REAL AND MEANINGFUL LGBT+ DATA**

Carried as Amended by: 5.1

Conference recognises that UNISON bargains with many employers for comprehensive anti-discrimination policies, learning programmes etc. Yet even here, evidence confirms that more is needed, to properly address the unacceptable discrimination, violence, bullying, harassment, suicide and mental health challenges many LGBT+ people experience.

Conference knows LGBT+ is an area with conflicting approaches and opinions – and people can rightly assert not to disclose. But we also recognise the need for every employer to aim to collect comprehensive and real data – if they really want safe and inclusive workplaces.

We can’t assess what we can’t measure - yet conference knows that many employers don’t collect or have significant gaps in their employee LGBT+ data. Hence they can’t objectively assess levels of discrimination or how well their workforces reflect local diversity.

This isn’t easy – research confirms many LGBT+ people fear being open, or expressing in any way, their true selves at work. Yet feeling safe to share their data would be a good indication – and would also support, real LGBT+ equality progress.

Conference calls on the national LGBT+ committee to work with the service groups to:

1. Work with other self organised groups and the wider union to develop guidance on comprehensive data gathering and monitoring by our employers on protected characteristics including LGBT+;
2. Develop plans towards comprehensive data gathering/monitoring across their workforces, on protected characteristics, including LGBT+;
3. Develop guidance on how activists can use this data to constantly inform equality and diversity plans/strategies;
4. Share best practice with regions and branches

**7. SUPPORTING YOUNG TRANS WORKERS IN UNISON**

Carried as Amended by: 7.1

Conference notes the excellent work done by the national LGBT+ committee in strongly campaigning for the rights of trans and non-binary workers. Conference believes UNISON has led the way across our movement in defending the rights of trans workers and celebrating the importance of trans and non-binary people in the trade union movement.

Nonetheless, conference deplores the worsening environment for trans people in the United Kingdom, including the continuing refusal by the Westminster government to outlaw so-called “trans conversion therapy” and a political and media environment in which the rights of trans people simply to exist are frequently being challenged and questioned.

Conference notes that trans people continue to face discrimination in the workplace. In May 2022, a survey of UNISON’s young members found that discrimination at work, including transphobic discrimination, was a factor impacting on young workers’ mental health. Young workers and new entrants to the workplace may lack confidence and may not be aware of their workplace rights and their rights under the Equality Act, making it even more difficult for them to come out as transgender in the workplace.

Conference believes everyone should have the right to express their true identity in the workplace without facing prejudice, discrimination or bullying, and that employers have a duty to ensure that workplaces are inclusive and welcoming to all regardless of gender identity.

Conference believes we should build on the work done by UNISON’s national LGBT+ committee with the aim of making every UNISON workplace a supportive and inclusive environment for young trans and non-binary workers.

Conference asks the national LGBT+ committee to:

1. Work with UNISON’s national young members' forum (NYMF) and regional young members' forums to promote the trans ally training to young members across the union, and to educate young workers on the employment rights and equality law which apply to trans and non-binary people in the workplace and the organising skills so workers can avail themselves of these rights. Unions win when they can collectivise an issue. Who else is suffering from the same issue? How do we get others to step forward when one member is targeted? Where we are organised and winning we attract people to join;
2. Work with the NYMF and the LGBT+ young members network to campaign for trans people’s rights inside and outside the union, and to promote UNISON’s work on trans rights to young workers;
3. Work with the NYMF to campaign for mentally healthy workplaces, and promote the model policy on trans-inclusive workplaces as a measure to improve inclusivity and mental health at work;
4. Promote UNISON’s LGBT+ organising structures to young trans and non-binary members and work with the NYMF to encourage younger members to get involved in LGBT+ organising across the union;
5. Work with Labour Link to encourage the Labour Party to develop strong trans-friendly policies ahead of the next general election.

**8. MAKING THE ‘+’ A POSITIVE – CONTINUING THE WORK OF INCLUSION**

Carried

Conference notes it has been 3 years since UNISON’s lesbian, gay, bisexual (Bi) and transgender (trans) (LGBT) self-organised group achieved a rule change to include the “+” to become the LGBT+ self-organised group. The purpose of the rule change was to ensure we are inclusive of all identities from within our community and to reflect the broader spectrum that is our membership. The rule change was widely well received and, for many in our community, not before time. The campaign to add the ‘+’ achieved a strong momentum and there was a passion within the membership to continue to drive this momentum forward in recruitment, retention, and campaigns especially in increasing the numbers in our caucuses.

Conference, sadly many of our members feel this momentum has waned, understandably possibly amidst the many challenges we face work in the workplace, but complacency has set in.

However, for those of us who identify as something other than simply lesbian, gay, bi or trans, our pansexual and omnisexual, our asexual and aromantic members for example, we are still trying to be heard and fighting for a seat at the table. We must ensure that adding the ‘+’ is not reduced to a simple vanity exercise but has real meaning for our community.

There are many members, real people living real lives, who identify under the ‘+’ in our name. The list is long and varied and all of us must ensure we amplify their voices, hear their stories and stand shoulder to shoulder with them.

Therefore, conference calls on the national LGBT+ committee to work with regions and branches to:

1. Work with the bi+ network to highlight the + at every opportunity;
2. Continue with the campaign to educate the wider membership of LGBT+ identities;
3. Seek out and actively engage with those members who identify as + and amplify their voices. Address the issues that directly affect them and seek to ensure there are no barriers, real or perceived to participation in our self-organised group;
4. Update where appropriate the bi+ allies factsheet and promote the resource to regions and branches as a recruitment tool to increase bi+ membership and visibility throughout the union.

**9. INCREASING BISEXUAL+ ENGAGEMENT IN OUR SELF-ORGANISED GROUP**

Carried as Amended: 9.1

Conference is concerned at the decreasing level of bisexual+ (bi+) engagement within UNISON structures at branch, regional and national level. At this year’s bi+ network meeting, attendance was significantly lower than previous years, especially from members with multiple identities.

It is crucial that we not only understand this decline in bi+ activism and engagement, but that we explore any barriers to participation that exist and work to remove them.

We know focussing recruitment and training can play a crucial role in increasing participation. Our bi+ members have a vital contribution in making UNISON truly diverse and inclusive, especially from those bi+ members who feel their voices are not heard within LGBT+ spaces.

For so many bi+ people the feeling of isolation, discrimination, and bi+ erasure is a daily experience in their workplaces. Stonewall’s most recent research highlights that whilst lesbian and gay visibility in the workplace exceeds 74% in some places, this is only 22% for bi+ employees.

Conference, not all members need to become stewards to be active in our union. There are many roles and campaigns that are open to bi+ members but they need to feel engaged and welcome.

We all have skills that can be utilised strategically, but we first need our members to feel engaged, valued and listened to. In addition, confidentiality is a key priority for our members to feel safe to participate, especially so for our bi+ members with multiple identities who may not be out to their communities.

Conference therefore calls on the national LGBT+ committee to work with the other

self-organised groups (sog) retired members’ organisation and national young members’ forum to:

1. Encourage participation of bi+ members with intersecting identities;
2. Consider confidentiality when accessing hybrid events;
3. Hold joint SOG, retired members and young members’ events whenever possible to engage with bi+ members with multiple identities;
4. Review our glossary of terms to ensure the language used is fully inclusive of all identities.

**10. WHY LGBT+ EMPLOYEES SHOULD JOIN UNISON**

Carried

LGBT+ people have been and are still experiencing verbal and physical bullying from colleagues, customers or service users because of their sexual orientation / identity and some still do not feel confident about reporting homo/bi and transphobic bullying in their workplace.

According to Stonewall more than a third of LGBT staff (35 per cent) have hidden that they are LGBT at work for fear of discrimination. Almost one in five LGBT staff (18 per cent) have been the target of negative comments or conduct from work colleagues because they’re LGBT.

Almost one in five LGBT people (18 per cent) who were looking for work said they were discriminated against because of their identity while trying to get a job and one in eight trans people (12 per cent) have been physically attacked by customers or colleagues in the last year.

Almost two in five bi people (38 per cent) aren’t out to anyone at work about their sexual orientation, compared to seven per cent of gay men and four per cent of lesbians. While one in four trans people (26 per cent) aren’t open with anyone at work about being trans.

Conference, UNISON has long been a supporter of the LGBT+ movement, and stand in solidarity with us today and equality in employment and employment rights are key UNISON issues. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) report the number of people employed in in the UK is 32.1 million and of this 5.67 million are employed within the public service sector, UNISONs membership equates to 22.9% of this. UNISON should be the trade union of choice not just for LGBT+ people but for all people.

Conferences requests the national LGBT+ committee to:

1. Continue to actively work with and proactively encourage branches and associated partners to promote UNISON membership for LGBT+ employees;
2. Support the research of members for their experience in seeking employment, as well as their experiences during interview
3. Support the use of the research to enable UNISON branches and LGBT+ groups to help continue to fight discrimination of LGBT+ workers on a national, regional and local level by lobbying Members of UK Parliament, Members of the Senedd, Members of the Scottish Parliament and Members of the Legislative Assembly in Northern Ireland; and,
4. Support branches (if required) to raise awareness of these issues with their employers to enable a better understanding and to stand against LGBT+ discrimination.

**11. EQUALITY IS UNISON BUSINESS**

Carried

Conference notes that one of UNISON’s main aims is ‘to seek to ensure equality of treatment and fair representation for all members and to work for the elimination of discrimination on grounds of race, gender, sexuality, gender identity, disability, age or creed’.

To achieve this, UNISON seeks for branches to have equality co-ordinators, whose role it is ‘to be the central liaison point for equality in the branch and to distribute information on equality issues’.

An audit in the North West this year identified that less than half of branches had an elected equality co-ordinator, and less than a third had a LGBT+ officer.

Conference believes that if branches cannot recruit to this core officer position, then it will be that much more challenging for self-organised groups to develop and flourish, and it will be less likely that those branches will consider the equality dimension to bargaining work, including bargaining for LGBT+ and trans+ policies with the employers they organise in.

Conference therefore calls on the national LGBT+ committee to:

1. Work with the national Black members' committee, the national women’s committee, the national disabled members' committee and the national young members' committee to develop and deliver a campaign about why equality is UNISON business, including highlighting the resources available to activists, celebrating where UNISON has successfully made work better for those with protected characteristics and demonstrating the opportunities available to members if they choose to get more involved with UNISON;
2. Consider how training and workshops that are delivered to LGBT+ members and officers can be shared with all UNISON activists, which could include running a national LGBT+ awareness session;
3. Produce a series of articles showcasing a diverse range of equality coordinators, exploring why they became activists, what they’ve achieved and what equality means to them.

**12. MAKE 2024 THE YEAR OF LGBT+ WORKERS**

Carried as Amended by: 12.1

Conference acknowledges that one of UNISON’s strengths lies in its recognition of the value and unique experiences LGBT+ people bring to the workplace and to our union and commends the work of UNISON’s LGBT+ committee to raise the profile of its LGBT+ membership across the United Kingdom (UK).

Conference notes that 2024 will see the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of NALGAY, the world’s first network of LGBT+ trade unionists, which was formed within one of UNISON’s former partner unions, to fight for our equality and liberation.

Despite the work that has been done and the work of organisations such as Stonewall in the UK, many LGBT+ people still do not feel able to disclose their sexual orientation and/or gender identity at work for fear of discrimination and still some are even encouraged to hide their identity at work.

Although the best employers recognise the value in taking proactive steps to create inclusive workplace environments, all too often, LGBT+ employees still face barriers including little confidence in bullying reporting procedures, a lack of visible senior LGBT+ role models and a lack of visible senior support for LGBT+ equality and inadequate policies.

Conference observes that there is no requirement for employers to report on the numbers of LGBT+ people they employ or the LGBT+ pay gap. We need an understanding of how many of our members are LGBT+, the barriers they face and how both austerity and the pandemic has impacted LGBT+ people in the workplace if we are to provide our activists relevant training to support our LGBT+ membership in the workplace.

Conference notes that 2024 will see the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of NALGAY, the world’s first network of LGBT+ trade unionists, which was formed within one of UNISON’s former partner unions, to fight for our equality and liberation. Conference calls on the national LGBT+ committee to seek support from the union to make 2024 the Year of LGBT+ Workers, in UNISON and to seek support from the TUC and other unions to support the initiative. As part of that Year conference calls on the national LGBT+ committee to work with UNISON:

1. To develop and deliver events and activities to mark the Year of LGBT+ Workers that:

 A. Celebrate the successes and contributions of LGBT+ people in the workplace;

B. Challenge societal and environmental barriers to employing LGBT+ people;

C. Showcase success stories and visible role models.

1. To undertake a survey of our membership to determine the number of members who self-declare as LGBT+ and the barriers they face, and to report on the findings;
2. To undertake an audit of LGBT+ related training available across UNISON and to map the density of activists trained across each of our Regions and to report on the findings;
3. To encourage branches to share experiences, both good and bad, to provide learning opportunities for our activists when supporting LGBT+ members at work and to encourage branches to press for meaningful work and progression opportunities for LGBT+ members.

**13. INCLUSIVE DATA COLLECTION REFORM FOR AN INCLUSIVE UNION**

Lost

**14. IMMEDIATE BAN ON ALL FORMS OF CONVERSION THERAPY**

Carried as Amended by: 14.1, 14.2

Conference notes with regret that although the United Kingdom (UK) Government has proposed a ban on conversion therapy for sexual orientation, it remains in place for gender identity and/or gender expression in adults ‘if they've consented and haven't been coerced.’

Conversion therapy is a pseudoscientific practice which attempts to repress or change the sexual orientation or gender identity of a person to align with heterosexual and/or cisgender ‘norms’. It is neither therapeutic or morally just and is often practiced by people who are not licenced mental health professionals.

Conference acknowledges the damage this practice has had on generations of LGBT+ young people and adults. It especially targets them when they are at their most vulnerable, with many experiencing trauma leading to self-harm, eating disorders, mental ill-health, attempted suicide and suicides as a result.

We acknowledge the Memorandum of Understanding that national health service (NHS) England and NHS Scotland co-signed along with many other organisations which states “..that the practice of conversion therapy, whether in relation to sexual orientation or gender identity, is unethical and potentially harmful.” In addition, the chair of the British Psychological Society's sexualities section, said: "Clinicians can still help people fully explore their gender identity where appropriate but it's time for this unacceptable and harmful practice to end."

This abusive practice must be brought to an end for all LGBT+ people. It is a significant public health and a human rights violation. We call for a total legal ban and the criminalisation of those who undertake any form of conversion therapy immediately. There is no place for conversion therapy in the UK. Such practices are discriminatory and harmful to LGBT+ people. Conference therefore welcomes the decision by 2022 national delegate conference to call on the national executive council to work with the national LGBT+ committee and other parts of the union as appropriate to continue to campaign for a ban on conversion therapy which covers all LGBT+ people.

We call on the UK Government, and the governments of the devolved nations, to fulfil their promises of banning all forms of conversion therapy.

Conference calls on the national LGBT+ committee to:

1. Continue to support campaigns calling for the end to all forms of conversion therapy;
2. Work with the national executive council (NEC), service groups, retired members’ organisation and branches to raise awareness of the damage that conversion therapy does and encourage them to support end conversion therapy campaigns through the national LGBT+ committee’s trans equality campaign;
3. Work with the NEC and other parts of the union as appropriate to lobby the UK government and devolved governments and administrations for a ban on conversion therapy which covers all LGBT+ people;
4. Continue to work within UNISON structures to seek that healthcare regulators and education providers ensure that LGBT+ healthcare needs are included in all accredited education/training programmes.

**15. BAN CONVERSION THERAPY NOW!**

Carried

Conference welcomes the partial ban on conversion therapy announced in the Queen’s Speech in May 2022 that targeted ‘abhorrent conversion therapy practices’. Not abhorrent enough to extend to our trans siblings over 18. Apparently, the rights of trans people are part of a ‘balancing act’ that needs ‘careful management’. Not empathy, not protection, but ‘careful management’.

Trans people are receiving escalating and sustained attacks on their rights. The toxic debate ignited by the United Kingdom (UK) government’s consultation on reforming the Gender Recognition Act has intensified, supported by high profile celebrities and government ministers.

Trans people are at a greater risk of experiencing the harmful & degrading practices involved in conversion therapy. Trans people don’t need careful management, they need protection.

1. Ban Conversion Therapy found 13% of transgender people have been through conversion therapy, while 7% of LGBT+ people as a whole have had similar experiences;
2. The UK government’s 2018 National LGBT Survey found that trans respondents and respondents from some ethnic minority backgrounds were twice as likely to have undergone conversion therapy as other respondents;
3. A 2018 study published in the American Journal of Public Health found that LGBTQ+ young people who had been exposed to conversion therapy were more than twice as likely to report attempting suicide following the experience;
4. The American Psychological Association has also linked conversion therapy to depression and suicidality in survivors.

Conference emphasises the fact that conversion therapy has no legal, medical, or professional standing. It is pseudoscience, based on hatred and malice towards LGBT+ people and it has no place in our society in any shape or form.

While the majority of people still get offered conversion therapy by a faith group or organisation, it is also offered by family members, community members and even medical professionals. The partial ban allows for ‘non-physical’ conversion therapy for trans people over 18 if they ‘consent’. An 18-year-old (or a LGBT+ person of any age for that matter) can still easily be made to feel obliged to undergo conversion therapy. They are incredibly vulnerable, and are often subjected to discrimination and abuse because of who they are. Why wouldn’t you consent to please your relatives, or to reconnect with your community? Survivors know that consent is a sham, and coercion and control contribute to internalised shame and fear.

Conversion therapy is a stain on our so-called civilised society and conference calls on the national LGBT+ committee:

1. To work with Labour Link to develop a lobbying strategy aimed at amending the legislation to include all forms of conversion therapy;
2. Produce and promote materials to highlight the issues surrounding conversion therapy;
3. Work with regional LGBT+ self-organised groups to explore ways to support members who have been exposed to conversion therapy.

**16. COMBATING ANTI-TRANS NARRATIVES IN THE MEDIA**

Carried

Conference notes that the trans community has seen an escalation in the volume and the toxicity of anti-trans articles across all media platforms in recent years, to a level now that is almost beyond comprehension.

While the initial increase was commonly attributed to the United Kingdom (UK) wide rise in negative sentiment shown to all minority groups during the Brexit campaign, for trans people, the impact of the decision of Theresa May’s government to hold a public consultation on reviewing the 2004 Gender Recognition Act (GRA) was clear.

This proposed GRA review saw several campaign groups established with the sole aim of opposing any reform. Over the last 7 years , these groups have secured funding to lobby MP’s and prominent public figures.

According to trans activist @mimmymum, over the last 7 years there has been an average of 154 articles on trans people published every month by the United Kingdom’s media (excluding LGBT+ media).

That means there has been 13,015 articles published in the UK news media on trans topics between 2015 and 2022 and just in May 2022 there were over 16 a day.

The Daily Mail alone published 163 trans related articles during May 2022. This is in respect to a community that makes up less than 1% of the population.

Conference notes that this staggering number of articles are primarily used to generate fear, disgust and mistrust of the trans community. This consistent negative press has resulted in a false air of legitimacy to the claims of the anti-trans campaign groups who have been working to remove the rights of trans people.

They have influenced several Government Ministers and other politicians from across all parties (and in both houses) to the extent that these Parliamentarians now openly support the idea that trans people should not be given access to single sex spaces. In fact, the rights of trans people has become such a talking point for certain sections of our society that every candidate in the latest Conservative Party leadership election campaign thought it necessary to take an anti-trans stance and include this in their list of priorities to address should they become Prime Minister

Conference believes that while UNISON is a proud and passionate supporter of trans rights, we still have work to do across the wider trade union movement to combat the anti-trans rhetoric and calls on the national LGBT+ committee to:

1. Work with the national executive committee and service group executives to encourage members to enrol in UNISON’s trans ally training, which highlights the media’s role in exasperating transphobia;
2. Add an objective to the national LGBT+ committee’s trans equality campaign to combat anti-trans narratives in the media and devise a factsheet with information about what members can practically do to help;
3. Seek to work with the trades union congress’ LGBT+ committee to counter anti-trans narratives in the media.

**17. SUPPORT FOR LGBT+ COMMUNITIES IN UKRAINE**

Carried

LGBT+ people in the context of the war in Ukraine, like everyone, have many reasons to stay in Ukraine or to leave the country. Like their fellow citizens, LGBT+ people are staying, supporting each other, providing mutual aid, and fighting against the Russian invasion. LGBT+ people, however, face additional barriers to fleeing the country, including structural homophobia and transphobia.

Under martial law, all Ukrainian citizens with a male gender marker on their identity documents, including men - cisgender (cis) and transgender (trans) - and some trans women and non-binary people, are not allowed to leave the Ukraine. While some trans people are serving in the armed forces, being professional soldiers or having taken up weapons to defend the country in the current war, others are not in a position to do so, either because of general (mental) health problems making them unfit to fight, or because the threat and/or experience of transphobia, discrimination and violence in the military.

With certain diagnoses, such as personality and emotional disorders, eating disorders, non-addictive substance disorder, confirmed by the Military Medical Commission, men over 27 can also receive a white ticket allowing them to leave the country. LGBT+ organisations in the Ukraine report that gay, bisexual, trans and intersex men are scared to seek such a diagnosis that would ensure them the white ticket to leave the country based on their mental health status, as they are afraid of discrimination and rejection based on homo- and transphobia from the Military Medical Commission.

Trans women face a unique obstacle in that, due to lack of access to legal gender recognition (LGR), they have legal documents not matching their gender identity and the male gender marker in their documents means they are falling under the martial law and refused to leave the country, in a clear display of discrimination on the grounds of gender identity. The fact that trans women are facing severe restrictions while cisgender women can cross the border without restrictions, is a discrimination against trans people. This provision indicates that Ukraine does not accept the right to self-determination and gender identity.

Pathways to access LGR for trans people have been largely non-functional since early 2020. Given that the only way for a trans woman to flee legally is to have had her legal gender change via LGR. They also need to obtain a diagnosis of “gender identity disorder” and all trans women with a male gender marker are also required to present to the Military Medical Commission who do an assessment without any expertise in trans healthcare.

Conference therefore asks the national LGBT+ committee, working with the national executive council and international department to:

1. Seek appropriate ways to show solidarity with LGBT+ Communities in Ukraine;
2. Lobby the Government to make explicit provision for LGBT+ Ukrainian government resettlement schemes;
3. Liaise with Transgender Europe (TGEU) with their work in Ukraine;
4. Work with Labour Link to raise these issues with the Labour Party.

**18. ACCESSIBLE ORGANISING FOR LGBT+ MEMBERS**

Carried

Conference notes that UNISON national LGBT+ committee has produced resources to support the recruitment of LGBT+ members and development of LGBT+ activists. These include ‘Putting politics back into Pride – a UNISON practical guide to recruiting and organising’, ‘Digital organising for LGBT+ equality guide’ and bargaining factsheets to support negotiations with employers for our LGBT+ members. There is also a plethora of resources for our disabled LGBT+ members covering issues such as reasonable adjustments, access to work, disability leave and accessibility passports.

These tools can be used by branches and regions to recruit new members to UNISON and to negotiate for improved working conditions for LGBT+ and disabled members.

The branch LGBT+ officer training is frequently over-subscribed and to supplement this, a series of online training modules as an introductory stepping-stone into more formal training has been developed.

A number of other tools are also used to recruit and organise LGBT+ members including UNISON visibility at pride events, social media and Out in UNISON. The way in which we use language in publications is important for disabled LGBT+ particularly those of us who are deaf or neurodiverse. If we are using photographs or images, we should be using alt text to describe the images.

For disabled LGBT+ members, consideration needs to be given to accessibility in respect of attendance at courses and training both physically and virtually, communications and messaging in order to enable disabled LGBT+ members can fully participate. Approximately 22% of the working age population are disabled which means that about 1 in 5 of our LGBT+ members will be disabled.

Conference therefore calls on the national LGBT+ committee to:

1. Consider accessibility of publications, training materials and methods of communicating with members;
2. Continue to promote and publicise guides and factsheets and share best practice in recruitment and organising LGBT+ members taking into account the needs of disabled LGBT+ members;
3. Promote the use of UNISON’s guide on accessible virtual meetings;
4. Work with our LGBT+ disabled members, distribute tips on making communications accessible;
5. Promote accessible use of social media as a means of keeping in touch with LGBT+ members.

**19. MAKE 2024 THE YEAR OF LGBT+ WORKERS**

Carried as Amended: 19.2

Conference believes that one of UNISON’s strengths lies in its recognition of the value and unique experiences LGBT+ people bring to the workplace and to our union and commends the work of UNISON’s LGBT+ committee to raise the profile of its LGBT+ membership across the United Kingdom (UK).

Conference notes that some LGBT+ people still do not feel able to disclose their sexual orientation and/or gender identity at work for fear of discrimination. It is concerning that some employers are afraid to visibly speak out in favour of LGBT+ workers due to myths and misconceptions perpetrated by anti-LGBT+ and trans groups.

Conferences notes the success of 2021 the Year of the Young Worker which raised awareness around the issues that young members face and 2022 the Year of Disabled Workers raising awareness of the disability pay gap, disability employment gap, reasonable adjustments, accessibility passports and the importance of disclosure. Events held in respect of these were well attended and received positive feedback.

Conference notes that 2024 will be 50 years since the lesbian and gay network ‘NALGAY’ was set up in our predecessor union the national and local government officers' association (NALGO). This was ground-breaking within the trade union movement and helped to lead to the first lesbian gay self-organised groups in a trade union. When UNISON was formed in 1993, the lesbian and gay self-organised group was integral to the union structure and right at the beginning the national committee had reserved seats for representatives of Black and disabled members.

Over the years, we have seen our self-organised group go from strength to strength becoming a LGBT group and then in 2019, becoming a LGBT+ group.

UNISON LGBT+ self-organised group has been key to many campaigns to improve the rights of LGBT+ people within the workplace and wider society and we have witnessed milestones including the repeal of section 28, equalisation of the age of consent, the introduction of civil partnerships and marriage for LGBT+ people. But there is still more to do.

Conference believes that 2024 should be the UNISON Year of LGBT+ workers to coincide with 50 years since the formation of NALGAY. Conference believes that this will provide the opportunity to raise awareness of LGBT+ rights throughout the union, deliver events, challenge discrimination, promote UNISON as the union for LGBT+ workers, and promote the LGBT+ self-organised group, grow LGBT+ activists and bargain on LGBT+ rights in the workplace.

Conference calls on the national LGBT+ committee to urge the wider union to make 2024 the Year of LGBT+ Workers in UNISON and to seek support from the Trades Union Congress and other unions to support the initiative.

Further, Conference welcomes the adoption by the 2022 Trades Union Congress (TUC) in October of the motion from TUC LGBT+ Conference ‘Supporting trans and non-binary workers’, which included a call for the TUC General Council to launch a TUC alliance for trans and non-binary rights. It calls on the National LGBT+ Committee to work with the National Executive Council to promote the establishment of such an alliance and to seek the support of other unions for the 2024 Year of LGBT+ workers initiative.

**20. DEFEND DISABLED AND LESBIAN GAY BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER PLUS (LGBT+) RIGHTS WON THROUGH THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

Carried

Conference welcomes the United Kingdom’s (UK) Conservative government's decision not to proceed with replacement of the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) with a Bill of Rights Bill. However, Conference is not fooled and is well aware of the Conservative’s intention either to repeal the HRA or even withdraw from the European Convention of Human Rights (the Convention)) which was incorporated into UK Law by the HRA.

Disabled people and LGBT+ people rely on the HRA and the Convention Articles to protect hard won rights. Many disabled people have only been able to enforce their rights to independent living, to accessible public services and to a private life by taking legal action using the HRA. If the HRA is repealed, or the UK withdraws from the Convention, this avenue will no longer be open to us.

Article 14 of the Convention states: “the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such a sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.” The courts have interpreted “other status” to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of disability, sexual orientation, transgender, and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) status as part of their remit to treat the Convention as a “living document.” This protection has been read and developed alongside Article 8 (Right to respect for private and family life), Article 10 (Freedom of expression) Article 11 (freedom of association) and Article 12 (Right to Marry).

Conference believes that the UK Government is poised for a right-wing ideological attack on human rights and the Convention that will disproportionately impact the most marginalised in society, including disabled and LGBT+ people. Claims that the Equality Act is alternative protection is flawed as this Act is underpinned by European Union (EU) law in the form of the Equal Treatment Directive. The UK Government intends to use Brexit to allow UK Parliament to amend primary legislation such as the Equality Act and other EU law to prevent the courts from using Convention rights to override parliamentary will. Hard won disability and LGBT+ rights will be dependent on the whim of the UK Government

The Conservative UK government seeks to use disingenuous arguments and weasel words to try to claim abolition of HRA and withdrawal from the Convention will restore the primacy of the UK Parliament when in fact, it will give the government more power to act with impunity, without protest, and without oversight.

Conference therefore calls on the national LGBT+ committee to:

1. Raise awareness of the threats posed to LGBT+ and disabled people’s rights through abolition of HRA and withdrawal from the Convention;
2. Work with Labour link to raise these issues in the UK Parliament and campaign with appropriate bodies to preserve Convention Rights.

**21. Solidarity with Ghana’s LGBT+ community**

Carried

Conference notes that for many years Ghana’s government has been extremely hostile to LGBT+ people.

Currently same-sex sexual activity is prohibited under the Criminal Code 1960, which criminalises acts of ‘unnatural carnal knowledge’. This provision carries a maximum penalty of three years’ imprisonment. Only men are criminalised under this law.

The law was inherited from the British during the colonial period, in which the English criminal law was imposed upon Ghana. Ghana retained the provision in its first Criminal Code upon independence, which remains in force, and continues to criminalise same-sex sexual activity today.

However, the situation has become even more dire in recent years. In July 2021, a group of eight Members of Parliament introduced a private member’s bill, the ‘Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill’, aimed at criminalising the ‘promotion of LGBT+ rights’, essentially criminalising any LGBT+ advocacy in Ghana.

In August 2021, the anti-LGBT+ Bill received its first reading. The Bill’s scope is extensive.

The law would criminalise, with up to five years in prison, identifying as a LGBT+ person, having a gay relationship or intercourse. Marrying or intending to marry someone who has had gender reassignment surgery would also be criminalised, with up to five years in prison.

The bill addresses “gross indecency in public”. Any public show of affection between people of the same sex, or where one or some of the people involved identify as a gender different to their sex, or have had sex reassignment, would also be criminalised.

It would also criminalise “cross-dressing”, enabling prosecution of anyone dressing in a way perceived as different from their biological sex.

A clause targets intersex people, and would allow the state to recommend “corrective therapy” or surgery. It is not clear whether this could be forced. A medical practitioner would judge what binary sex should be assigned.

Any LGBT+ “allies”, whether individuals or advocacy and support groups, could be prosecuted and face up to five years in prison. Anyone made aware of gay acts who fails to report them could also be criminalised.

Since the bill has been announced there has been a sharp rise in violence against LGBT+ people, which has included a big rise in ‘corrective rape’.

Conference notes that support for the National Coalition for Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values – an umbrella groups of religious and conservative groups in Ghana - is coming from right-wing conservative groups in the United States and Europe.

Conference therefore instructs the national LGBT+ committee, working with the national executive council, national Black members' committee and international department as appropriate, to:

1. Seek appropriate ways to show solidarity with Ghanaian LGBT+ organisations;
2. Work with Rainbow Migration and other appropriate organisations to lobby the Home Office to take urgent steps to improve the ways in which it deals with LGBT+ asylum seekers and refugees;
3. Work with Labour Link to raise these issues with the Labour Party.

**22. Rwanda and LGBT+ asylum**

Carried as Amended: 22.1, 22.2

Conference notes with alarm the United Kingdom’s (UK) Conservative Government’s policy to remove LGBT+ refugees to Rwanda while their claim is being processed, as part of a wider policy.

Conference acknowledges Rwanda has agreed the United Nations (UN) Declaration on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and the UN Report on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity LGBT Populations. The country is also a signatory to the 2011 UN statement condemning violence against LGBT people and has joined nine other African countries to support LGBT rights.

Within Rwanda, however, domestic policy on LGBT+ rights is a grey area. The law on marriage recognises marriage between biological male and female. This law amplifies ambiguity on Rwanda’s stance on the legality of LGBT+ people, resulting in a fragile social environment.

According to a survey by The African Population and Health Research Center in partnership with the Health Development Initiative, even though Rwanda is considered progressive on LGBT+ issues, negative attitudes undermine the lives of sexual and gender minorities.

74% of the public said sexual acts or gender expressions of LGBT people are ungodly while 49% felt LGBT individuals were unnatural. 50% believed that homosexuality, bisexuality, and transgenderism resulted from too much freedom and liberty.

A significant number of LGBT+ people reported experiencing hostility from families and the larger community, such as at work, home and when trying to access health services. Stigma and discrimination against the LGBT+ community is commonplace.

LGBT+ people are also subjected to conversion therapy – where they’re taken for prayers in the hope that they’ll be exorcised from their homosexual tendencies.

The Home Office has admitted that LGBT+ refugees could be persecuted if sent to Rwanda – but still plans to fly them 4,000 miles to Kigali.

The department’s own equality impact assessment states there are “concerns” over the treatment of some LGBTQI+ people in Rwanda, and that investigations point to “ill treatment” of this group being “more than one off”.

The government’s assessment of Rwanda’s human rights record states that there are “not substantial grounds” to substantiate a risk of treatment contrary to the European convention on human rights. But the Foreign Office travel advice for Rwanda states that “individuals can experience discrimination and abuse, including from local authorities. There are no specific anti-discrimination laws that protect LGBT individuals.”

Conference notes that the first plane to Rwanda carrying refugees was halted by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). However, we know the UK Government will look for ways to diminish the powers of the ECHR in the UK.

Conference also notes that an emergency motion, ‘Stop Deportations to Rwanda’, opposing the scheme as a whole, was admitted to the agenda of UNISON National Delegate Conference 2022 but not reached so referred the National Executive Council (NEC). Conference supports this approach and is glad to note that the NEC has adopted it as UNISON policy.

Conference welcomes the adoption by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) 2022 of the motion ‘Oppose the government’s unlawful immigration system’, which included condemnation of “the government’s inhumane plan to transport people seeking asylum in the UK to Rwanda to be housed in offshore detention camps”. It welcomed the legal action taken by the Public and Civil Service Unions (PCS) along with Detention Action, Care4Calais and refugees against the Rwanda asylum policy and instructed the TUC General Council to campaign against the policy, and support protests being organised against the policy

Conference also instructs the national LGBT+ committee, working with the national executive council, national Black members' committee and UNISON's international committee as appropriate, to:

1. support the campaign against the Rwanda asylum policy, and support appropriate protests organised against it
2. Work with Rainbow Migration and other appropriate organisations to lobby the Home Office to take urgent steps to prevent LGBT+ refugees and others being sent to Rwanda;
3. Work with Labour Link to raise these issues with the Labour Party.

**23. BLACK LGBT+ ACTIVISM**

Carried as Amended: 23.1

Conference is concerned at the low level of Black LGBT+ activism within UNISON structures at branch, regional and national level. Recruitment and training can play a crucial role in increasing Black LGBT+ participation. Black LGBT+ members have vital contributions to make to ensuring that UNISON remains truly diverse and inclusive in all aspects of trade unionism.

The more stewards who are Black LGBT+ will encourage more Black LGBT+ members to become stewards. It will allow us to better identify issues for Black LGBT+ members and how we can organise around them.

However, not all members need to become stewards to be active. There are many roles that are open to Black LGBT+ members where they can make a valuable contribution. We all have skills that can be utilised strategically to grow our union.

Black LGBT+ members need to be encouraged to participate in local self-organised groups (SOG) meetings at branch, regional and national levels. Information about when meetings are taking place and how to register need to be advertised as widely as possible to raise awareness that these meetings exist.

Conference therefore calls on the national LGBT+ committee to work with the other SOGs, retired members’ national committee and national young members' forum (NYMF) to:

1. Devise strategies to encourage Black LGBT+ participation at all levels of the union;
2. Encourage Black LGBT+ issues as an agenda item in SOG, retired members’ national committee and NYMF meetings;
3. Hold joint SOG, retired members and young members' events whenever possible to discuss and raise awareness of Black LGBT+ issues and the need to increase Black LGBT+ participation in all the SOG’s, the retired members organisation and young members' forum;
4. Encourage branches to advertise Black LGBT+ events and meetings on branch websites and in branch, regional and national newsletters;
5. Encourage Black LGBT+ members to become lay tutors;
6. Use recruitment events to encourage Black LGBT+ participation by using images that reflect UNISON’s diversity;
7. Invite Black LGBT+ speakers or hold workshops where appropriate on Black LGBT+ issues, at branch, regional and national level at SOG meetings;
8. Consider promoting Black LGBT+ activism on social media platforms.

**EM1. Trans rights and the Labour Party**

Carried

Conference notes that comments made by Keir Starmer on 28 October in a Mumsnet interview regarding trans youth healthcare have caused significant concern

In response to a question from a Mumsnet user about the interim report by Dr Hilary Cass on the provision of trans youth healthcare, Starmer focussed on the idea of consent, saying: “Children shouldn’t be making these very important decisions without consent to their parents, I say that as a matter of principle as a parent.”

“We all know what it’s like with teenage children. I feel very strongly about this. This argument [that] children [can] make decisions without the parents is one I just don’t agree with at all.”

This seems to go against the concept of Gillick competence, which dates back to a 1985 legal ruling, and is used to determine whether young people can consent to healthcare such as contraception.

Conference further notes that Rosie Duffield, the Labour MP for Canterbury, has reportedly said she would rather be arrested than call Eddie Izzard a woman. Eddie has launched a bid to be selected as the Labour candidate for Sheffield Central constituency at the next general election. She is one of six candidates who have put themselves to replace outgoing MP Paul Blomfield.

LGBT+ Labour, Labour Students and Young Labour have called on the party to withdraw the whip from Duffield. On 24 October, Labour Students published a statement on social media saying that “Duffield’s behaviour has gone beyond the pale and we echo LGBT+ Labour’s calls that she should lose the whip”, arguing that the MP has “consistently gone out of her way to damage the trans community”.

LGBT+ Labour first called for Duffield to have the Labour whip withdrawn in July 2021 as well as urging the party to suspend her, alleging a “pattern of LGBT-phobic behaviour” on the part of the MP. The group retweeted Labour Student’s statement, stating: “Our position on this has not changed.”

Conference therefore calls on the National LGBT+ Committee to raise these issues as a matter of urgency with Labour Link, with a view to urging the Labour Party leadership to speak out clearly and consistently in support of trans rights and responding to the issues raised by LGBT+ Labour relating to Rosie Duffield.

Motions to National Delegate Conference

**ND1. Motion to NDC - EQUALITY IS FOR RETIRED MEMBERS TOO**

Carried

Conference notes that, during 2022, UNISON’s lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBT+) self-organised group (SOG) succeeded in raising the issue of trans equality widely within the union by submitting substantially similar motions to several UNISON conferences.

Their opportunity to do so is based on UNISON rules D1.10.4, D3.4.10 and D5.7.5 which entitle each SOG to submit motions to this conference and to each service group conference and on caucus arrangements etc in each of the SOGs enabling the LGBT+ members of each, organised as such, to submit motions to respective conferences.

This is in line with ‘Organising for Equality : UNISON Guidelines on Self-Organisation’ which “recognises the valuable role of SOGs in ensuring that the union identifies and takes up equality issues (and) challenges discrimination”. However, existing arrangements extend to only seven-eighths of UNISON members and leave SOGs with no opportunity to take up the same issues with the remaining eighth – the Retired Members’ Organisation.

Conference is therefore glad to note that a similar motion , ‘Trans Equality in Retirement’, was submitted to Retired Members’ Conference 2022. However, this was as a result of no collective initiative but of an individual member raising it with their regional retired members’ committee.

Conference believes that SOGs should not have to rely on such ad hoc initiative and further believes that, in view of the provisions of Organising for Equality, they should each have the opportunity to raise equality issues not with seven-eighths of UNISON members but with us all.

Conference would like either each SOG, as such, or retired Black, disabled, LGBT+ and women members, each organised as such, to have opportunities to raise equality issues with the Retired Members’ Organisation which are equivalent to the arrangements existing elsewhere in UNISON.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to consult the SOGs, the Retired Members’ Organisation, the Young Members' Organisation and others as appropriate on how to resolve this issue and to report to National Delegate Conference 2024 with proposals.

**ND2. MAKE 2024 THE YEAR OF LGBT+ WORKERS**

Carried **(And selected to go to NDC 2023)**

Conference believes that one of UNISON’s strengths lies in its recognition of the value and unique experiences lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBT+) people bring to the workplace and to our union and commends the work of UNISON’s LGBT+ committee to raise the profile of our LGBT+ members across the United Kingdom (UK).

Conference notes that some LGBT+ people still do not feel able to disclose their sexual orientation and/or gender identity at work for fear of discrimination. It is concerning that some employers are afraid to visibly speak out in favour of LGBT+ workers due to myths and misconceptions perpetrated by anti-LGBT+ and anti-trans groups.

Conferences notes the success of 2021 the Year of the Young Worker which raised awareness around the issues that young members face and 2022 the Year of Disabled Workers raising awareness of the disability pay gap, disability employment gap, reasonable adjustments, accessibility passports and the importance of disclosure.

Conference notes that 2024 will be 50 years since the lesbian and gay network ‘NALGAY’ was set up in NALGO (national and local government officers' association), one of our predecessor unions. This was ground-breaking and helped to lead to the first lesbian gay self-organised groups in a trade union.

When UNISON was formed in 1993, the lesbian and gay self-organised group was integral to the union structure and from the start the national committee had reserved seats for representatives of Black and disabled members. Over the years, we have seen our self-organised group grow from strength to strength, becoming a LGBT group and then in 2019, an LGBT+ group.

The LGBT+ group has been key to many campaigns to improve the rights of LGBT+ people within the workplace and wider society and we have witnessed milestones including the repeal of section 28, equalisation of the age of consent, and the introduction of civil partnerships and marriage for LGBT+ people. But there is still much more to do.

Conference calls on the national executive council (NEC) to make 2024 the Year of LGBT+ Workers in UNISON to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the formation of NALGAY. Conference believes that this will provide the opportunity to promote UNISON as the union for LGBT+ workers, raise awareness of LGBT+ rights throughout the union, challenge discrimination, and recruit and grow LGBT+ activists.

Conference further calls on the NEC to work with the national LGBT+ committee and other parts of the union as appropriate to:

1. To develop and deliver a programme of events and activities to mark the Year that:
2. Raise awareness of LGBT+ rights and discrimination throughout the union;
3. Promote UNISON’s work on LGBT+ equality;
4. Showcase the successes and contributions of LGBT+ members in the workplace and in the union;
5. Encourage and support bargaining on LGBT+ rights and equality in the workplace.
6. Seek support from the Trades Union Congress and other unions for this initiative.

**ND3. Justice for Palestine**

Carried as Amended by ND3.1

Conference welcomes the comprehensive Amnesty International report, Israel’s Apartheid against Palestinians: Cruel System of Domination and Crime against Humanity, which sets out how massive seizures of Palestinian land and property, unlawful killings, forcible transfer, drastic movement restrictions, and the denial of nationality and citizenship to Palestinians are all components of a system which amounts to apartheid under international law.

This system is maintained by violations which Amnesty found to constitute apartheid as a crime against humanity, as defined in the Rome Statute and Apartheid Convention. The Amnesty report reinforces the previous findings of apartheid by the Israeli Human Rights organisation B’Tselem as well as Human Rights Watch and numerous Palestinian human rights organisations.

Conference is deeply concerned by the Conservative government’s plans to introduce new laws to restrict the ability of public bodies, including local government, to purchase, procure and invest ethically, in the interest of workers and the communities they represent.

Conference is alarmed that then prime minister, Liz Truss, announced during her brief tenure that the United Kingdom (UK) would consider moving its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Conference recalls that UNISON was one of the first trade unions to respond to the call from Palestinian civil society for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS).

It believes that UNISON must campaign strongly against any such proposed ‘anti-boycott’ laws, working with other organisations as appropriate, and seeking the widest possible support from UNISON members, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBT+) members.

Conference notes that LGBT+ people have long been a primary target of the Israeli government’s attempts to change Israel’s image from that of a country in a state of war to that of a ‘liberal and modern’ tourist destination and of a campaign specifically aimed at trying to undermine support in LGBT+ communities for the Palestinian people.

Conference further notes that the resolution “Palestine” adopted by 2016 LGBT conference endorsed UNISON policy in support of the Palestinian people and BDS, and in campaigning against laws seeking to silence those who campaign for Palestinian rights. It instructed the national LGBT committee (as it was then) to continue to work with the national executive council (NEC) in various ways, including campaigning to raise LGBT+ people’s awareness as to why they should not go on holiday to Israel, and be sitting on the beach in Tel Aviv or going to Tel Aviv Pride while, just an hour’s drive away, Palestinians are living under siege in Gaza. Subsequent conferences have echoed this support for justice for Palestine

Conference calls on the NEC to work with the national LGBT+ committee and other appropriate parts of the union to:

1. Encourage LGBT+ members to support the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) campaign against the ‘anti-boycott’ bill;
2. Promote awareness of the Amnesty report;
3. Promote UNISON’s guide ‘Palestine: Is your pension invested in the occupation’ and the guide for UNISON activists ‘Talking about Palestinian Rights’;
4. Continue to encourage LGBT+ members, branch and regional groups to take up actions in support of Palestinian rights.
5. Urge Labour Link to seek a commitment from the Labour Party that an incoming Labour government would act quickly to repeal any anti-boycott legislation and to cancel any plan to move the UK embassy.

**ND4. Equalities grow our union**

Carried as Amended by ND4.1 (**and selected to NDC 2023)**

Conference notes that UNISON members are under sustained and constant attack by the United Kingdom (UK) Government. From spiralling cost of living to services we rely on most disappearing, the UK Tory Government’s attacks on our members are leaving many to feel isolated and weary. There is only one way to combat these attacks – we must agitate, organise and campaign.

Conference believes that we have a real opportunity to work with our self-organised groups (SOG’s) to recruit more members who are underrepresented in our union and get them active. Conference recognises that many of our members who become active are not only active within self organisation, but in their regional, branch, retired members, young members and service group democratic structures.

And it works. Our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBT+) SOG members have been successful in recruiting at community events across the United Kingdom and have encouraged greater activism. The campaign on trans equality has encouraged over 200 members to be allies in the workplace. The LGBT+ national committee’s young LGBT+ worker campaign continues to grow with many in the network now getting involved in their branch and regional groups.

When national, regional and branch LGBT+ groups work together with Black members, disabled and women SOG’s, our recruiting potential is enhanced, encouraging the young members and retired members forums to lend their expertise and voices creating a unique mix of positive affirmation and excitement. We welcome the diversity of our equality organising, including migrant workers networks, and community campaigning brings. This produces a collective union identity to members in disaggregated, isolated and fragmented workplaces.

We also understand that there is no single form of communication to reach all non-members. While traditional engagement through one-to-one contact and mailings are effective, they should not be our only tools. We must expand our use of virtual platforms like social media to assist with recruiting and organising. Conference notes the increasing importance of community organising and also of the website, social media and my.unison, which can only be effective if members are signed up and using them. The LGBT+ national committee has recognised the importance of this and created a digital organising guide.

Conference believes that a key part of our response to the continuing attacks by the UK Government must be to redouble our recruiting and organising effort, bringing together the best of our tried and tested strategies, and our newer strategies. We must continue to emphasise the collective nature of our movement and our demands, but at the same time we must engage directly with individual members and potential members. Conference it is time for UNISON to launch a coordinated, sustained campaign to win back our rights.

Conference calls on the NEC to:

1. Continue to advertise and promote engagement with my.unison, encouraging members to update their personal information, including completing the new sexual orientation and gender history fields;
2. Further develop the use of web-based tools to assist with our recruiting and organising objectives, including UNISON's app and the online skills bank to engage new members and encourage existing members to become active;
3. Publicise and promote examples of good practice in equality and community organising which have led to recruitment, engagement and effective local campaigns;
4. Encourage branches, regions and service groups to involve self-organised, retired members and young members groups and migrant worker networks in developing and implementing recruitment and organising strategies;
5. 5. Publicise and promote the regional groups, caucuses and branch self organised groups who are establishing and building on relationships with LGBT+ community organisations and groups;
6. Work with the service groups executives and national self-organised committees to encourage branches, regions and service groups to involve self-organised groups in developing and implementing recruitment strategies;
7. Support self-organised groups’ priority bargaining initiatives such as promoting the trans equality model policy.

Emergency Motions

**EM1. Trans rights and the Labour Party**

Carried

Conference notes that comments made by Keir Starmer on 28 October in a Mumsnet interview regarding trans youth healthcare have caused significant concern

In response to a question from a Mumsnet user about the interim report by Dr Hilary Cass on the provision of trans youth healthcare, Starmer focussed on the idea of consent, saying: “Children shouldn’t be making these very important decisions without consent to their parents, I say that as a matter of principle as a parent.”

“We all know what it’s like with teenage children. I feel very strongly about this. This argument [that] children [can] make decisions without the parents is one I just don’t agree with at all.”

This seems to go against the concept of Gillick competence, which dates back to a 1985 legal ruling, and is used to determine whether young people can consent to healthcare such as contraception.

Conference further notes that Rosie Duffield, the Labour MP for Canterbury, has reportedly said she would rather be arrested than call Eddie Izzard a woman. Eddie has launched a bid to be selected as the Labour candidate for Sheffield Central constituency at the next general election. She is one of six candidates who have put themselves to replace outgoing MP Paul Blomfield.

LGBT+ Labour, Labour Students and Young Labour have called on the party to withdraw the whip from Duffield. On 24 October, Labour Students published a statement on social media saying that “Duffield’s behaviour has gone beyond the pale and we echo LGBT+ Labour’s calls that she should lose the whip”, arguing that the MP has “consistently gone out of her way to damage the trans community”.

LGBT+ Labour first called for Duffield to have the Labour whip withdrawn in July 2021 as well as urging the party to suspend her, alleging a “pattern of LGBT-phobic behaviour” on the part of the MP. The group retweeted Labour Student’s statement, stating: “Our position on this has not changed.”

Conference therefore calls on the National LGBT+ Committee to raise these issues as a matter of urgency with Labour Link, with a view to urging the Labour Party leadership to speak out clearly and consistently in support of trans rights and responding to the issues raised by LGBT+ Labour relating to Rosie Duffield.