

**UNISON LGBT+**  
**2023 Annual Report**



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## Introduction from the co-chairs

It's been a year of change in the national committee with two new chairs who have brought a new way of approaching our work plan and national campaigns.

Our trans equality campaign is into its second year and so far over 1500 members have undertaken the trans ally training. Over 35 trans, non-binary or gender diverse members also having completed the UNISON training to be a trainer. And 20 employers have adopted our model Trans inclusion policy. We now have over 400 activists in the trans, non-binary and gender diverse network. This is extremely positive progress within the union, and we will be striving to raise those numbers even higher in the coming months. Our goal is for 3000 people to undertake the training so that we can continue to educate our members, challenge the myths and break down the barriers.

Our other major campaign this year has been around young LGBT+ workers, and our young members campaign is also proving to be a hit with 150 young LGBT+ activists now signed up to our network and 6 of those being mentored by more experienced activists. The feedback we are getting from the young members is that the campaign is welcomed and attracting more young LGBT+ activists. We of course have also promoted our intersectional approach and encouraged cross SOG working.

2023 has been the Year of the Black Worker, which was fully embraced by our Black Members Caucus, it was wonderful to see so many of you at UK Black

Pride in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford Pride in August with our banners flying high. The Black Member's Caucus also devised a presentation and quiz for LGBT History Month which has proved really popular and is still available to download from our pages on the UNISON website.

On the international front, UNISON continues to be an influence with our international partners ILGA and PSI. Our Penny Smith is currently in the middle of a campaign for re-election onto the ILGA Europe Board and we have delegations going to the next ILGA Europe and Public Services International meetings.

We have some huge challenges ahead for next year. Politically, we must try and find a way forward with the Labour Party, that marries our priorities with theirs, which is no small challenge!

Last year was an amazing conference in Edinburgh, it was vibrant and energetic, and we got through the agenda! This year we are in Liverpool, another famous city with a strong history of the labour movement. We are really pleased to see that the agenda has grown and that there is a great variety of motions that we will be discussing, we are sure we can bring just as much energy as we did last year.

As a SOG we continue to grow, we owe it to ourselves to make our voices heard in our union and influence the way we develop so that our community and the other SOGs put equalities at the heart of everything we do.

We are excited to work with everyone to make 2024 – the year of LGBT+ workers a success!

## Recruiting and organising

Looking at ways we can recruit and organise members is always a priority for our self-organised group, and in 2023 has been no different. Organising is key to what we do as it helps us build a strong, effective union that delivers for LGBT+ members.

And we have seen results this year! We have seen a massive increase over the year on the number of members who have identified themselves as LGBT+ via their myUNISON account. Every time a new LGBT+ e-bulletin is sent, we have over 1000 extra members as part of our mailing list!

One of the main priorities of the organising and development sub-committee has been our young LGBT+ members' campaign. When we established this campaign in 2022, we had 3 main objectives, and we are happy to report that we have surpassed our expectations in how popular this campaign has been. Below are our initial objectives and how we have tracked.

### 1. Increase engagement with young workers by establishing an LGBT+ young worker network with at least 5 active members by the end of Autumn 2022.

We are happy to report that there are over 150 young LGBT+ members that are part of the network. These members have been meeting regularly over the last 12 months, with 3 online meetings with well over 30 members attending each of them. As part of this work, we are encouraging young LGBT+ members to become

active in their regional SOGs and are putting them in touch with the relevant people to make that happen. It's great that many of these activists have started to join regional meetings and a couple have even stepped up and will be joining the national LGBT+ committee in 2024!

### 2. By the end of 2023 creation a mentor/mentee or 'buddying' system, whereby interested members of the NC mentor at least 3 young LGBT+ people around getting involved in the UNISON LGBT+ structures.

There are now six young members and members of the national LGBT+ committee that are part of this programme. The mentors and mentees have been introduced and are now looking at what they want to get out of the programme together. We look forward to updating you in 2024 on some of the achievements. We currently have more national LGBT+ committee members that are trained to be mentors, so if you know of any young LGBT+ member that might be interested, get them to contact the national officers via [out@unison.co.uk](mailto:out@unison.co.uk).

### 3. Make a concerted effort of attracting young LGBT+ workers to attend network days in 2022 and 2023 by targeting of NYMF and regional groups. To attract at least 2 young LGBT+ workers to each of the network days.

We are pleased to say that there was a noticeable increase in the number of young members at LGBT+ conference in 2022 and to our various network days in 2023. We hit the goal of having 2 young members to each of the network days bar one.





## Bargaining

We have continued to update our bargaining guidance and factsheets for LGBT+ workers throughout 2023. We are pleased that as part of the trans equality campaign, many of UNISON covered workplaces now have trans equality policies that have been adopted using our trans equality model policy. To recognise these employers, the national LGBT+ committee has started to give awards to employers that match our model guidance on trans equality as incentive. We continue to work with our service groups to raise the profile of our bargaining advice.

The LGBT+ self-organised group was well represented at all SOG and service group conferences this year, with many of the LGBT+ motions carried.

Jackie and Maz represented the LGBT+ committee at National Delegates Conference, where they moved one of our submitted motions – making 2024 the year of LGBT+ workers, which we are proud to say was carried and makes 2024 our year to celebrate our UNISON LGBT+ members.

At the Community conference, our delegates Clive and Judy moved an important motion around the pay and the survival of LGBT+ services. Anu and Jackie were the delegates to the Local Government conference where our trans equality in local government was carried. Our motion on the future of adult social care was also carried.

Harry was our delegate to Health conference, and we were disappointed that the Health standing orders committee ruled out both of our motions to conference. The Energy conference delegates were Maz and Andy, where they moved both the LGBT+ workers in field-based roles motion and the hybrid and remote working for LGBT+ workers in Energy. Stephen was our delegate to the Water, Environment and Transport conference and moved the same motions there.

At the Higher Education conference, Robin and Dez moved our motion on conversion therapy and the need to end the practice immediately in the UK. Lucy and David were our delegates to Police and Justice in 2022 and moved a motion on trans equality.

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

## Campaigning

Our major campaigning efforts through 2023 has been focussed on building trans equality. The support for our trans equality is UNISON business campaign has been phenomenal!

When we established this campaign, we came up with four main objectives. They are listed below with our achievements so far. It's fair to say, we have surpassed all our initial expectations!



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

We are so proud that over 1,500 UNISON members have now undertaken the trans ally training. What is even more impressive is the amount of work these trans allies have done in their workplaces since doing the training, with many negotiating the UNISON trans equality model policy in their workplaces.

### 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.

Since July of last year, there have been over 20 workplaces that have reported negotiating trans equality policies using our materials. And these are only what's been reported to UNISON Centre – we know there are more workplaces out there. So, if you have negotiated trans equality policies in your workplace, please let us know via [out@unison.co.uk](mailto:out@unison.co.uk).

**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 gone from just over 100 trans, non-binary and gender diverse members on our national list to over 400! In addition to this, over 35 trans, non-binary and gender diverse activists have been trained on how to be a trans ally trainer and are helping to roll out the training in their regions. We are also seeing a big increase in the attendance of our activists at network meetings.

**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.**

Despite a disappointing U-turn on self-ID by the Labour Party this year, UNISON is committed to continue to push our trans equality stance on the party and we are continuing to work with our allies within the Labour Party.

On other campaign work, we have also been pushing for a complete conversion therapy ban for the UK. We have written to Labour MPs to support such a ban and met with the Shadow Equalities minister to discuss this, along with ensuring that any conversion therapy ban includes trans, non-binary and gender diverse people. We will continue to push this politically to ensure this horrendous practice is finally banned.

From the 2022 National Delegate Conference, the national LGBT+ committee's motion on removing support for the Nordic model for sex work, the NEC have now set up a working group with NEC members, national LGBT+ committee members and members of other self-organised groups, to explore the different models of legislation for sex work and to agree a way forward on what UNISON's position could be.



## International

It has been another busy year for the international subcommittee.

Like every year, we have worked closely with ILGA Europe and ILGA World. All of UNISON's Regions are members. Penny Smith, Disabled Caucus Rep on the National LGBT+ Committee, has completed her second year on the Board of ILGA Europe. It has been a busy year as ILGA Europe's strategy framework was up for review. Penny and Darienne Flemington attended a weekend in June to inform the process especially around social acceptance and social inclusion for the LGBTI movement. Penny was also part of ILGA Europe's selection committee for appointing a new Executive Director following Evelyne Paradis' resignation. For 18 years, Evelyne has guided ILGA Europe through some difficult times and we thank her for all of her amazing work and send best wishes for the future. A new Executive Director has been appointed, Chaber, who previously held the Finance Director role at ILGA Europe. This is a positive appointment for the movement in Europe and beyond.

At the 2022 ILGA Europe conference, UNISON was well represented with Darienne and Penny attending as a board member. Being the first conference in-person for a number of years, it was great to engage with other activists from all around Europe and build new connections.

We have working closely with our global trade union – Public Services International (PSI) and the LGBT+ project they have hosted since 2019. In December 2022, Darienne attended a workshop led by PSI for all Global Unions to discuss the future of the LGBT+ work and to establish priorities for Global Unions to on advocating for LGBT+ workers' rights. We have also participated in the PSI LGBT+ network and are hoping to embed this work further in 2024. Darienne Flemington & Jackie Lewis were chosen as our delegates to the PSI Congress in October as there is a pre-meeting for LGBT+ activists.

Our European trade union, EPSU, has now made steps to create an LGBT+ network of its own. This is something that the international sub-committee has been advocating for years. We have submitted an amendment to the EPSU programme of action to ensure this work continues in 2024 so LGBT+ workers have a voice and formal structure within EPSU.

The ETUC adopted most of our comments on first draft of ETUC position paper on the Commission's proposals for an EU strategy on LGBTIQ equality 2020 – 2025. Final version adopted by ETUC Executive. EU strategy

includes implementation of existing directives, approval of horizontal directive (goods and services), collective bargaining, awareness raising and effective access to courts, among other demands.

A new presentation created by the international sub-committee is on the UNISON LGBT+ website, which explains why we work internationally as a National LGBT+ Committee. This was launched in April 2023. It highlights our work with other trade unions such as EPSU & PSI as well as our work with ILGA World & ILGA Europe and with the Rainbow Map that ILGA produces each May, which LGBT+ members can use as part of their 2024 – Year of LGBT+ workers initiatives.

Finally, a few members of the national LGBT+ committee participated in the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation's Organising to Win training, which pull together union activists from all around the world to learn about new organising techniques and to share information with each other.

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

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## From the networks

### Bi+ members

#### Introduction

Following on from a busy and successful 2022 we had another positive start to 2023 as we begin our caucus work. We continue to build on our visibility, and especially amplifying the '+' and continuing to see our caucus number increase. As with last year, it is both encouraging and empowering to see Bi+ caucus members successfully elected to the three sub-committees on the National LGBT+ Committee. A strong and visible voice for Bi+ members is important as we work to maximise membership and ensure all UNISON member under the Bi+ umbrella have a voice however they identify.

#### Bi Pride (Bi+ Pride)

This year Bi Pride was held on the 2nd September and despite the train strikes that were taking place at the time the event was extremely well attended. Unfortunately, only Lucy Power was able to attend on behalf of the Bi+ caucus, huge thanks to Lucy for being our representative. Our stall was very well attended, and Lucy was able to extol the virtues of unions, in general, and UNISON specifically. There were lots of UNISON members at the Bi Pride event who were very pleased to see us, and many spoke about how happy they were with the representation that UNISON has provided them.

#### Bi+ Caucus Co Chair Election

Congratulations this year to Sophie for her re-election to the post for the next two years. She has continued to work incredibly hard for our Bi+ members across the union. We had several members standing in the election, and we want to thank you all for your hard work, it's great that we have members keen to step forward to be active in the caucus and we urge to continue, it's vital that we build on the great work of the Bi+ caucus and we value your contribution.

#### Bi+ Caucus Network Day

This year's meeting was a hybrid meeting with a great turnout both in person and online, we did experience some challenges with the acoustics in the meeting, especially for members who joined virtually, and we have taken your feedback and comments to UNISON staff and will ensure we use a different room in 2024. Despite those technical issues the meeting was very engaged, and we used the time to discuss motions to conference

in November, workplace issues and ongoing UNISON campaigns as well as our commitment to ensuring we continue to give the “+” real meaning and substance. As a result of the network meeting and the great work of caucus members we have motions to conference on the preliminary agenda and we look forward to hearing from Bi+ members in these debates.

## Black LGBT+ members

### National LGBT+ committee

Jennie Antonio, Bev Miller, Anu Prashar, Judy Richards and Manish Maisuria were elected as the Black LGBT+ caucus representatives to the national LGBT+ committee. Bev and Anu were elected as the Black LGBT+ caucus co-convenors.

The Black LGBT+ caucus has continued to contribute to the work of the National Committee, by working on motions and attending various conferences to promote Black LGBT+ visibility and participation.

### Work with the National Black members committee (NBMC)

Bev Miller and Jennie Antonio were elected as the representatives to the NBMC from the National LGBT+ committee.

The UNISON Year of Black Workers (YOBW) has been a busy one for the National Black Members Committee and for our representatives on the committee who are co-chairing the YOBW working group.

The year began with the successful launch of YOBW at National Black Members Conference in January with a busy stall. Black LGBT+ caucus produced a film of Black LGBT+ activists which was launched at the network meeting. This was followed by development of a Black LGBT+ quiz for LGBT+ History Month in February. This has been added to the UNISON resources for activists.

At the forthcoming Nation Black Members conference, we will be working towards the transition from YOBW 2023 to the Year of LGBT+ Workers 2024, promoting the importance of celebrating diversity and building intersectional solidarity to strengthen UNISON. We have submitted two motions to the conference, one on climate change, and how it affects LGBT+ and Black people around the world, the other motion on the importance of intersectionality as we move into the year of LGBT+ workers.

## TUC LGBT+ Committee

We are delighted that Manish was one of the LGBT+ members elected to this committee.

## UK Black Pride

UK Black Pride took place on Sunday 20 August 2023, at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Manish, Jennie and Bev participated in a panel discussion that talked about the importance of trade union membership, being a trans ally and recognising the importance of intersectionality on an international level. This session was well attended. UNISON also had a recruitment stall that was busy throughout the day. PHOTO 4

To highlight the point that identifying as Black LGBT+ also has other identities intrinsically linked to that, and celebrating all identities should be part of the ethos of Black Pride. This also includes the plight of our international LGBT+ communities, some of whom are still facing huge atrocities even in this day and age.

## Black LGBT+ Network Day

We held elections to the National LGBT+ committee for a two-year term of office. Those successfully elected were: Dettie Gould, Anu Prashar, Manish Maisuria, Jennie Antonio and Bev Miller

Paul Amann and Davena Rankin were again, elected unopposed to the 2024 LGBT+ conference standing orders committee.

We had new delegates attending and included discussions on which motions to submit to the LGBT+ conference and the Black Members conference.





## Disabled LGBT+ members

Disabled LGBT+ members have been actively involved in the work of the national committee, with representation on campaigns and policy development and organising and development sub-committees. We have several members who are actively involved in UNISON's International work, sit on the International sub-committee and are involved in the work of ILGA-Europe. Our disabled LGBT+ members have also been conference delegates including to TUC LGBT+ Workers and TUC Disabled Workers. Our priority pieces of work last year focused on motions passed at 2022 conference with a particular focus on learning from the Year of Disabled Workers to inform preparations for the Year of LGBT+ workers in 2024, our campaign to protect human rights and accessible organising. We were pleased to see that Community have now produced an easy read guide to UNISON which includes information about the structure of UNISON and becoming a steward. We have also continued to raise awareness around the social model of disability and working conditions for disabled members.

We held a hybrid network meeting in September and there was a good turnout both in person and on-line and for some attendees this was their first time joining a national network meeting. An update on the work caucus representatives have carried out, our work with the national disabled members committee, as well as rich discussions on motions, amendments and ideas for the Year of LGBT+ Workers were held. We also held elections for seats on the National LGBT+ Committee, Standing Orders Committee and TUC LGBT+ Conference.

Our motions to National LGBT+ Conference, include Disability Pay Gap and Disability Employment Charter, Neurodiversity and LGBT+ and HIV. The caucus have been supporting and attending several events including Year of the Black Worker, disability and ethnicity pay gaps, reasonable adjustments and access to work.

The National LGBT+ committee has two co-opted members on the Disabled Members Committee, and we have been active raising matters relating to LGBT+ disabled members. We held Trans Ally training for members of the Disabled Members Committee, which was well received, we have participated in working groups including one set up by the National Executive Council to discuss decriminalisation of sex work and ending of the Nordic model and another in respect fair representation of our Black members.

Our priorities for the forthcoming year will include raising awareness on the definition of disability, the social model of disability, reasonable adjustments, neurodiversity and the disability employment charter.

We look forward to seeing you in November in Liverpool.

## Trans, non-binary and gender diverse members

What a year we have had, so many positives but a few negatives to cope with as well.

First though the positives.

We left last year's conference with an organising award in our bag as a reflection of the progress the network had made since July with the Trans Equality Campaign, we are really pleased to be able to say that we have continued to make progress since then.

We now have over 1500 UNISON members trained as trans allies. This is a truly phenomenal number and one that continues to rise. We haven't got it totally cracked yet as there are still some areas that haven't fully embraced the campaign, but we are working on that. Members of our National Executive Committee and some Service Group Execs have been trained and we have now trained all of our Regional Secretaries! We have a new target of 3000 to hit by the end of the campaign.

The other positive thing about the training is the number of network members who are now able to deliver it. It very quickly became apparent that demand was outstripping our capacity to deliver so we put a call out to the network and now have over 35 additional trainers.

Another key element of the campaign is the adoption of our model trans equality policy by employers along with the use of our non-binary and pro-noun guides and fact sheets. Over 30 organisations have implemented the policy and received a nice bright certificate as evidence that they are a trans inclusive workplace.

Since changing the network name our membership has gone through the roof. There are now over 410 members registered with the network, this has been reflected in our meetings where we are seeing almost 40 attending a network day. This is a massive jump from the 8 to 10 people we used to attract!

Another thing we left conference with last year was a clear mandate to speak to the Labour Party regarding their approach to trans equality issues. Working with Labour Link we met with Anneliese Dodds (Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities) to discuss Gender Recognition Act Reform and the Labour Parties public stance on trans equality. On reflection, the meetings have proved to be a waste of time, with Labour's recent announcement highlighting that they will no longer be supporting self-ID as evidence of this.

Our challenge this year will be to keep our union focussed on the trans equality campaign and putting

the Labour Party under pressure to rethink their current position on LGBT+ matters!

Lastly big thanks go to Emma Proctor who is stepping down as network co-chair after this conference. Her hard work and campaigning over many years have helped us get to where we are now. Thank you so much Emma!

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## In the regions

### Eastern

In the pursuit of increasing the strength and scope of our regional LGBT+ group, our dedicated LGBT+ members have been actively engaged in recruitment activities to ensure the momentum of our movement in the Eastern Region.

LGBT+ members enthusiastically participated in Pride events across the region, hosted information stalls, distributing our LGBT+ factsheets and model policies and engaging with potential new members. Several new members joined during these Pride events, highlighting the success of this of our ongoing outreach at pride events. We have continued to ensure a social media presence to raise awareness about UNISON's commitment to LGBT+ inclusion.

Our members have established connections with local LGBT+ organisations, fostering partnerships and collaborations in the Eastern Region. These relationships are vital to our work, leading to joint events and shared resources, which contribute to increased visibility and recruitment of LGBT+ members.

Members have organised workshops and seminars on workplace inclusivity, with a focus on trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse issues. These events have attracted individuals from various backgrounds who were interested in joining our inclusive community as members or allies. The region has contributed to the ongoing rollout of the trans ally training, and we will continue to make this a focus in 2024, Year of LGBT+ Workers.

Members have collaborated with employers to establish Staff Network Groups within workplaces where these were not previously in place. Staff Network Groups are an entry point for employees interested in joining the union, creating a seamless transition from workplace advocacy to broader involvement in UNISON.

We have continued to promote the importance of joining our self-organised group to members who identify as LGBT+. We continue our focus on young members, which has a much wider scope of success since the implementation of the age increase at NDC. We will continue to ensure that the Young LGBT+ Members group is promoted widely and that our branches are aware of it, including the National LGBT+ Committee mentoring program.

The dedication and passion of our LGBT+ members in the Eastern Region have significantly contributed to our recruitment efforts. Their activities have not only increased the number of LGBT+ members but have also made our trade union a more inclusive and welcoming community for all. We remain committed to building on these successes, continually striving for greater diversity and inclusivity within those involved in our union. We endeavour to offer guidance, resources, and a sense of belonging to newcomers, encouraging them to remain actively involved in the group.

## East Midlands

Pride! Pride is back in the swing of things and this year we saw several in-person events that lasted throughout the day.

We focussed on attending as many of the major prides this year and managed to do it with the help of our activists and branches. Our aim was to get the UNISON message out and hopefully gain more members from the community.

We have 2 new Co-Chairs who are encouraging the Grassroots of Pride back into our Self-Organised Group and introducing some new concepts into our business for the next two years. One of these is the mass reduction of single use plastics in our materials and launching a pilot common platform for our members to engage in activism with ease.

Attendance at our regional meetings have been steady and quorate enough to carry our business, however we are looking at the root cause for many being unable to attend and look to bring everyone into the fold for our next 2 years of rejuvenation. We have recruited into our usual delegate position – and highly welcome our new Black Members Delegate and our Young Members Delegate to diversify our perspective.

The current Government still stands – people change, roles move – but the Tory agenda still stands; The East Midlands fight the good fight against marginalisation of our LGBT+ family and will not back down.

We are looking forward to this year's conference and invite any attendees attending alone to join the East Midlands Socials – let it never be said that the East Midlands does not have heart! One Conference, One Community and One Family.

## Greater London

Over the year, there have been five committee meetings and two meetings open to all in the regional group, including retired members.

In February, we held a networking reception for LGBT+ History Month at Queer Britain, the UK's first dedicated LGBT+ museum. The event was well attended and, along with Regional Secretary, Jo Galloway, we had two additional guest speakers, London Assembly member, Sem Moema and Terrence Higgins Trust CEO, Richard Angell. Before the guests took a tour of the museum, they grouped together to take a picture to celebrate Heart Unions Week, the week that showcases the work all trade unions do and why they are vital for everyone at work.

At our Policy Day in February, we thoroughly reviewed the Work Plan, updating it for 2023 and including items on UNISON's "Year of the Black Worker", local Pride events and making better use of social media to attract more members from marginalised groups.

We had originally planned to hold our regional LGBT+ Training and Organising Day in May, but due to circumstances beyond our control, it had to be postponed. We are now planning to hold it in February 2024.

We were delighted that one of our newer committee members, Ant Babaje, was awarded Change Maker of the Year in the 2023 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index. On receiving this recognition, Ant said "It is really overwhelming to have been recognised by Stonewall for my LGBT+ and HIV activism and advocacy". Ant is now the LGBT+ officer for his branch.

We launched a new regional LGBT+ newsletter in June, which we plan to publish quarterly. This is being sent to all Branch Secretaries and LGBT+/Equality officers in the region as well as our mailing list. Newsletters will include information on how to join the group along with details of our various social media channels.

Group members attended the Pride in London march, the London Trans Pride march, and UK Black Pride. We also had a stall at the first Middlesex Pride in August.

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

As the year ends, we have started to plan for 2024 Year of LGBT+ workers.

Our group AGM is scheduled for 14 October.

## Northern

It was extremely encouraging to start the year, seeing many new delegates from our region at our National LGBT+ Conference back in November 2022, our regional motion 'Make 2024 the year of LGBT+ Workers' was passed and it was great to see that National Committee put forward a similar motion and that motion going forward to our National Delegate Conference in June 23 where unanimously it was agreed that 2024 will be the Year of LGBT+ Workers!

We continue to promote our group to branches and members throughout the region and it has been encouraging to see our regional group membership grow over the year with many new members representing staff across a range of service groups and employers. We continue the work of growing the membership of our group by identifying where we have LGBT+ Officers in Branch and identify who is already involved in the group or not and then trying to encourage those members not already involved to join us and get active.

In February, we celebrated LGBT+ History Month and the Regional Office was lit up in rainbow colours for the whole of the month. The office is in a prominent position as you come off the Tyne Bridge into Newcastle, so we hope it made an impact to all those who passed by. Branches were also promoting the month with activities in branch and holding stalls to encourage new members to join up.

In April, we held our policy day, and it was great to welcome Mitch Coe the National LGBT+ Officer along to join us, with Penny Smith also giving a presentation on the work of ILGA. We also held a motion writing workshop to encourage members to actively participate in conference, out of which 4 motions were submitted for consideration for the agenda at this year's conference.

We also had a great day at Durham Pride this year in May and Northern Pride in July where we joined the Marches through the cities and also had stalls where we signed up a couple of new members but also had some great discussions with existing members about what is happening in the Region and signing them up to our mailing list.

The trans ally training continues to be rolled out across the region and I know that several of our trans colleagues have now been trained to deliver the training, so it remains our priority to continue to get as many activists across the region trained as we can.

It's been a great year and ends with the largest delegation signed up to attend LGBT+ Conference in November so we look forward to a great conference and driving forward the work of Year of LGBT+ Workers in 2024!



## North West

The North West have continued to campaign and maintain our presence at a number of Pride and community events across the region, where we highlighted that pride is still a protest and that LGBT+ people are better off in a union. Sadly, it appears that we will need to continue to campaign even after the next general election, and we are reminded that LGBT+ rights cannot be taken for granted. We have rolled out UNISON's trans ally training, running two well attended sessions over the year in partnership with our colleagues at the Manchester Village Spartans RUFC. LGBT+ Conference in 2022 in Edinburgh was well attended by North West delegates and we made our presence known on the conference floor, through our speeches, motions and winning both the Recruiting and Organising Award and the Photography Award.

### Organising and Recruiting

We 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. At our February meeting we welcomed Joanne Moorcroft, our Regional Convenor, who attended to talk and listen to our committee talk about our priorities and how we can tie them in with the region's priorities. We also heard from Paddy Clasby in our Case Unit who discussed discrimination statistics and why we see so few LGBT+ discrimination cases coming through UNISON.



## Campaigning

We have continued to run the trans ally training in the regions with 2 training sessions already held and others in the pipeline. 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 and carried our placards in their entry at Manchester Pride. We have been particularly proud of Liverpool Pride Bolton Pride Wigan Pride 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. The club sees this as an on-going issue and is working with other inclusive rugby clubs to challenge this decision. We held an online event for LGBT+ History Month exploring UNISON's Proud LGBT+ History, as well as holding a short virtual quiz developed by UNISON's LGBT+ Black Members Group exploring specifically the history of a number of Black LGBT+ activists.

We have had some success in recruiting 3 new young members to our committee and look forward to working with them, learning from them, and developing links with other young activists in our region.

With the year of the LGBT+ worker just round the corner we in the North West are hoping to start the year with our wonderful social at this year's LGBT+ conference which we look forward to seeing you at as we host this year's conference in the wonder city of Liverpool.



## Northern Ireland

The LGBT+ Group met 6 times since the last Regional Council to discuss current issues. The mailing list of the membership is reaching over 150 LGBT+ members and we continue to welcome new active members.

**Increasing Participation:** This is a key priority for the group. Participation of the group continues to be on the rise.

Recruitment continues to grow with attendance at many events within workplaces and promoting UNISON to LGBT+ members and potential members. In addition, we are exploring working collaboratively with the young members forum and we will explore options for working more closely with other SOG's.

Danielle Roberts was elected to the role of Convenor. Andrew Linton and Catherine Connell-Tierney are the representatives for the National LGBT+ Committee.

The group have purchased new T-shirts, pop ups and a new banner all including the plus sign following the UNISON rule change.

**2023 Pride events:** The SOG continue to attend Northern Ireland Pride Parades representing, campaigning, and promoting UNISON. Some have also received small donations.

We have attended several Pride festivals and Protests including Inishowen, Omagh, Belfast, Causeway, Mid Ulster, Bangor, Foyle, Trans and Larne Pride.

Causeway Pride was history in the making as this was the first ever Pride in this area. UNISON played a pivotal role in the first Causeway Pride by hosting a health and wellbeing event for LGBT+ people and this showed that there was support in the local areas for a Pride event. It wasn't without issues from protestors, but we stood louder and prouder as a community. 100's of people joined the many groups at this rally celebrating diversity in the hometown of the late LGBT+ activist Mark Ashton.

**Trans Awareness campaign:** The group continue to take forward the 'Trans Equality is UNISON business' campaign and it has been at the forefront of all the activity contained in this report.

This year's UNISON College NI programme included Trans Ally training for the first time. This training was also delivered to the LGBT+ group and work is ongoing to increase participation in this important training course for UNISON activists and members.

Over the last year 'Our Journeys' film has been shown to more 200 UNISON members in Derry, Belfast and

Portrush, and in workplaces including the Mater Hospital. Additionally, the film has over 1,000 views online.

**LGBT+ History month:** In February the group hosted the Belfast launch of 'Our Journeys' at the Regional Office which included a panel discussion with more than 50 people attending.

**UNISON LGBT+ Conference:** Eight members of the LGBT+ group attended LGBT+ conference in November. The LGBT+ group were delighted to win the Recruitment and Organising award at Conference recognising the great work of the group in 2022. Conference was also the premiere of the group's new film "Our Journeys" focussing on the journey of transgender and non-binary people.

Delegates have been registered for National LGBT+ conference 2023 in Liverpool in November and have submitted a motion on Assisted Conception Leave.

**Other Awards:** The work of the group has been recognised in a number of ways over the year. Including being nominated in 'Friendly Facilitator' category for the GNI Magazine awards and winning the 'Pride Ally' award at the launch of Belfast Pride.

Martin McConnellogue is an active member of the group and was presented an award by the outgoing Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council in recognition of his commitment for LGBT+ Rights and Trade Union Activism.

## Scotland

In 2022-2023, Scotland experienced a year of exciting progress and engagement in various LGBT+ events and initiatives. This report highlights our activities, achievements, and ongoing commitments to advancing LGBT+ rights and equality.

It was great to have our National LGBT+ Conference in Edinburgh last year, a significant highlight for our committee. It was our pleasure to have arranged the civic reception at Edinburgh City Chambers, and the ceilidh for the social.

The year marked a return to in-person gatherings, providing an opportunity to strengthen connections with our existing and potential members. We continue to support the ever-growing number of Pride events across Scotland, whether it be our committee having a stall or supporting local branches to engage with existing and potential new members locally.

Early in 2023, the committee held its policy forum,

featuring a comprehensive agenda. Christina McKelvie, Scottish Minister for Equalities and Older People. Discussions covered topics such as non-binary recognition, conversion therapy practice bans, and improvements in LGBT+ Mental Health services and gender Identity clinics. We also heard from LGBT UNITY, an organisation supporting LGBT+ refugees and asylum-seekers. Their stories highlighted the importance of providing support and safety to our LGBT+ colleagues and wider community.

We continued to campaign for the progression of the Gender Recognition Reform Bill. We actively engaged with MSPs, encouraging members to join us in ensuring that the voices of our trans members and colleagues were heard. The passing of the bill with a majority was a significant step forward for trans equality. But we have seen the bill blocked by Westminster use of a Section 35 order. We stand firmly against unjustified actions by the Westminster government and continue advocating for GRA reform.

This year also saw us rollout the national trans ally training and the feedback from the participants has been excellent. We now have more members trained to deliver the course and we can now plan to roll out even more sessions all more of the union.

We attended the STUC LGBT+ Workers Conference, this enabled us to work with other trade unions to campaign and fight for fairer society for LGBT+ workers. Our delegates were fully involved in all aspects of the conference, including our two motions being passed; "Make 2024 the year of the LGBT+ worker" and "Supporting LGBT+ refugees and asylum seekers". We also facilitated a workshop on political education and participated in a panel discussion highlighting the International LGBT+ work that UNISON undertakes. Two of our committee members were elected to the STUC LGBT+ Workers committee.

We have remained active in international engagements, sending delegates to the ILGA Europe conference in Sofia, Bulgaria. After two years of virtual events, the return to an in-person conference was a significant milestone.

We have worked hard to improve communication with our members which has included the publication of newsletters and enhanced social media exposure. We actively promoted LGBT History Month with engaging content. Collaboration with the Regional Comms team led to the creation of modern designs for banners and flags, which we proudly displayed at Pride events throughout Scotland.

By the time you read this, we will have held our AGM and

have elected our new Scottish LGBT+ Committee, and our AGM will focus on the Year of the Black Worker. We look forward to engaging with more of our members over the next year and hope to see you all at our AGM and at our National LGBT+ Conference.

## South East

The South East Regional Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender plus (LGBT+) group has had an exceptionally productive year. Our co-chairs are Pól O’Ceallaigh and Karen Fenn, and our national rep remains Lucy Power. Lucy has also been elected to be the LGBT+ National Committee’s representative on the National Women’s Committee along with Jackie Lewis.

There has been a great deal of change in regional officers and support staff. The South East Region would like to extend our thanks to Dominic Rothwell and Michael Etheridge who were briefly our successive regional officers. Their assistance with Pride events, and organising meetings was very much appreciated. We would like to welcome Clare Boorman as our new regional officer, and we look forward to her support over the coming year.

The South East Region was only able to have two meetings this year, with our AGM appropriately timed for just before conference. It is hoped that a second regional rep will volunteer to work with Lucy on the National Committee.

In her role on the National LGBT+ Committee, Lucy works on the Organising and Development (OD) Sub Committee. They ensure that any work required as a result of motions on organising and development passed at conference are taken forward, and that LGBT+ issues are mainstreamed within UNISON’s organisation.

The South East Region was proud to sponsor six prides this year – Canterbury Pride, Trans Pride in Brighton, Dover Pride, New Forest Pride, and Hastings Pride, and many branches supported their local prides all across the South East. There were a couple of blips with Canterbury Pride omitting all reference to UNISON, and the cancellation of the stalls at Brighton Trans Pride due to high winds. We had lots of interest, and sign ups. We had a number of people who were surprised and grateful to see union representation at Prides. Support from local branches on stalls, and marches was much improved on recent years. We would also like to thank all those who supported us. We look forward to an even busier Pride season in 2024 in UNISON’s year of LGBT+ workers, and to seeing all our South East Region LGBT+ members at our meetings.

We are looking forward to seeing out LGBT+ members at regional meetings. Although we have managed some virtual meetings, we are hopeful that hybrid and in person meetings going forward will increase engagement. We usually 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.

## South West

The South West LGBT+ group meets in person and virtually to ensure that members who do not participate outside the conference are able to take part. We have a growing WhatsApp group that helps members keep in touch which is important where rural isolation is an issue. Our work programme followed the national committee's with a particular focus on the Trans equality campaign and increasing the involvement of young members.

All meetings have an element of training. This year included motion writing and HIV awareness using the example of ACT UP. We have a good relationship with the Regional Education Officer working together to develop training that suits our needs. We welcomed Mitch Coe and Jenny Black to our AGM and training weekend in September. They helped us start our planning for 2024 Year of the LGBT+ Workers, as well as delivering the Train the Trainer session so we can deliver the Trans Ally workshop to people in the South West.

We encouraged members to take part in the South West Get Active weekend. This event promotes good practice, welcomes members to activism, provides training workshops to inspire, and includes a dinner

and awards ceremony followed the next afternoon by Regional Council. Members of our group delivered the How to be a good Trans Ally workshop which was very well received.

We staff the UNISON stall at Exeter Respect festival which is a good opportunity to recruit new members as well as raising the visibility of UNISON's equalities work. This year we promoted 2023 Year of Black Workers. We were able to support the good work of the festival through an application to the campaign fund. This is the biggest event promoting equality in the South West and UNISON has been there since the beginning over 25 years ago.

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

We promote UNISON and TUC Equalities learning to all our members and to the committee. We regularly send information to branches 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 has good representation on the regional committees and is focusing on ensuring that we maximise our impact and remain visible. Several LGBT+ activists hold Branch Officer posts.





The South West remains affiliated to ILGA and we are pleased to send delegates to the ILGA Europe Conference in Slovenia. This ensures we maintain our focus on our international work alongside our domestic campaigns.

We elected a new committee at our AGM and are delighted to have two young members as our regional convenors. We are especially proud in 2023 to have a Black member as one of our convenors. We hope that this will feed into the message of 2023 and establish a legacy to generate change.

## Cymru/ Wales

It's been a busy year for the Cymru Wales LGBT+ SOG. We have held three meetings, two online and one in person. In March we held our AGM followed by our development weekend. During the weekend we all took part in the Trans ally and inclusive language training run by Emma Procter and Mitch Coe. The sessions were interactive with everyone taking part.

We also worked on Pride boxes which are to be sent to all branches in Wales. These will contain samples of LGBT+ incentives, posters, newsletters, items on LGBT+ History and contact details for the SOG. These boxes are planned for launch in early 2024 and will encourage branches to support the Year of LGBT+ Workers.

We took a decision at the AGM that we would not support Pride Cymru. In 2022, the TUC requested that all unions withdraw from Pride Cymru due to concerns over commercialisation and lack of support for our community. The SOG decided to continue this for 2023 as no real change has been seen. Instead, we supported some of the smaller Prides springing up all over Wales. We provided funding for a number of community Pride events including Pembrokeshire, Barry and Merthyr. We also provided LGBT+ SOG incentives and information. These donations will enable us to become involved in the early planning stages for events next year.

We also ran stalls at Usk Pride, a first time event, and Newport Pride in the Port who were holding their second yearly event. Both events were very successful and we spent the day talking to members about the SOG, what we do and how we can provide support. We also spoke to many potential members about the benefits of joining UNISON and becoming involved in the SOG when they do.

Next year we are hoping to attend more Prides across Wales and to facilitate this have formed a Pride committee from SOG members. We have provided two sessions of trans ally training within Cymru/ Wales. One held online and one in person in Cardiff. We are planning

to hold further sessions in North Wales so more people can attend and benefit from this marvelous training. During our Cymru/ Wales Regional Policy weekend we also held a trans ally training session which was attended by all delegates.

Our plans for the Year of the LGBT+ Worker are developing quickly. We have been in discussion with ministers at the Welsh Assembly and are hoping to have a display in the Senydd in 2024. This display will show the links between the LGBT+ community and Trade Unionism in Wales. The display will be replicated in North Wales we are hoping to have a mobile version for use at Pride events.

We are also designing a Cymru/ Wales SOG banner for use at marches and other events across Wales. We are discussing decorating the main Unison office in Cardiff for LGBT+ history month and providing information for all Branches to use for this.

For the Cymru/ Wales launch of the Year of LGBT+ Workers, we are looking at LGBT+ venues as we believe that we should be supporting our community businesses. We are also hoping to hold future meetings in a venue run for, and by, the LGBT+ community in Cardiff. Cymru/ Wales co-chairs have attended all National Committee meetings and ensured that the voice of Wales is heard in every discussion.

We are involved in many different aspects of UNISON within Cymru/ Wales including the Equalities forum, BISOF Committee, Regional Council and Regional Committee. The voice of the Cymru/ Wales LGBT+ SOG is heard loud and proud throughout our union.

For the Equality Forum development day, we gave a presentation on the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on LGBT+ members. We focused this on the importance of LGBT+ spaces within our communities and the detrimental impact of the crisis on members ability to access these. We included Polari both spoken and written, which intrigued the other attendees and caused a lot of discussion.

Co-chair, Pat Jones has been nominated from Regional Committee to attend the TUC conference in Liverpool in September 2023. Ensuring that the voices of Cymru/ Wales and all UNISON LGBT+ SOG members are heard and considered.

We would like to thank all our members, activists and staff for the support provided throughout the past year and are looking forward to an even better 2024.

## West Midlands

### Organisation

The AGM re-elected Andy Chaffer as Co-convenor with a vacancy for the female seat. The female seat was filled in July by Jackie Brooks-Price. The AGM also elected people to the Regional Council, the Regional Committee and to the Education and Training Committee and a member for the Finance and General Purpose Committee. We also elected a member to the Regional Retired Members Committee.

The LGBT+ SOG continues to be active in the democratic structure of the Region.

The group also elected a delegate to the Midlands TUC Midlands Inclusion Committee.

### Campaigns

The group welcomed Mitch Coe to talk to us about the lead campaigns of the LGBT+ National Committee.

The group submitted a motion to the Regional Council calling for Trans Ally Training to be implemented for the Regional Committee. This was passed unanimously but is yet to happen. The group is pleased that one of its members is one of the latest people to be trained to lead the Trans Ally training.

The group has not had any members who are Young Members, but this may have changed since the rule change at National Conference. This work will be looked at.

### Prides

2023 has seen some Prides not happening due to groups having problems with key personnel post COVID.

**Birmingham Pride** – some members of the group joined the NEU bus at the Birmingham Pride Procession. This was large and celebratory but very corporate. We have not had a stall inside the ticketed event for some years.

**Stoke Pride** – This growing free event was a welcoming as ever and the SOGs stall was mainly staffed by activists from local branches. New contacts for the group were made and some members recruited as well as contact with many existing members.

**Walsall Pride** – This stall at this Pride was organised and staffed by the Walsall Local Government branch. The event went well.

**Chase Pride** – This stall was organised by the Staffordshire Police Branch. Due to a rail strike it was difficult for other members to get there to assist.

### Meetings

The group has held hybrid meetings since the AGM which has assisted participation. The meetings receive regular reports from people it has delegated to other UNISON bodies. The group has submitted motions and amendments and appeals to items ruled out of order for the LGBT+ conference.

## Yorkshire and Humberside

Our regional priorities have continued in line with national priorities, responding to the threat to public services with a continued focus on recruiting to the union and to the SOG.

We've carried on our great work with the branches in our region from last year. We've been able to attend many pride events over the summer and again raised a small amount of money for the UNISON welfare fund.

Over the last year, we've been invited to regional branches to attend their recruitment days. On these days we've been able to talk to their LGBT+ members and encourage them to attend regional meetings.

In the wake of the COVID 19 lockdowns we've increased the number of members engaging with the SOG, helped along by meetings being held virtually. Our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/unisonYHLGBT](https://www.facebook.com/unisonYHLGBT)) and twitter page @YHLGBT have been invaluable tools for engagement, with several new members making contact through these channels.

One of the priorities of our region is currently encouraging more women to be involved in our Regional Group. Anyone interested in being more involved, please contact us via one of the above methods.

We'll continue to participate on all regional committees and reports are received back from the delegates at each meeting of the SOG.

Looking forward towards 2024 after NDC voted to make 2024 'the year of the LGBT+ worker', we're intending to be more visible within the region and at branch level to capitalise and work towards instilling a legacy.



