

## Working globally for LGBT rights



The majority of the countries of the Commonwealth of Nations, formerly known as the British Commonwealth, still criminalise sexual acts between consenting adults of the same sex and other forms of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. This has been described as being the result of "the major historical influence" or legacy of the British Empire. In most cases, it was former colonial administrators that established anti-gay legislation or sodomy acts during the 19th century and even earlier. The majority of countries have retained these laws following independence.

The penalties for private, consensual sexual conduct between same sex adults remain harsh in a number of Commonwealth countries. They include 10 years imprisonment and hard labour in Jamaica, 14 years in Kenya, 20 years plus flogging in Malaysia, and 25 years in Trinidad and Tobago. Bangladesh, Barbados, Guyana, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Uganda have a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, while in the 12 northern states of Nigeria the maximum penalty for male homosexuality is death. In some countries such as Cameroon, arrests and imprisonment for acts that indicate homosexuality are frequently reported. In Uganda and Nigeria recent legislative proposals would significantly increase the penalties for homosexuality.

A report produced in November 2015 by the Human Dignity Trust in association with the Commonwealth Lawyers' Association claims that countries that continue to criminalise same-sex relationships were worsening the impacts of the HIV/AIDS crisis. The report estimates that some 2.9 billion people live in Commonwealth countries where consensual homosexuality is punishable, and approximately 174 million living there may identify as LGBT. It found that: There is a direct link between criminalising laws and increased rates of HIV, and the Commonwealth undeniably demonstrates this link. The Commonwealth accounts for approximately 30% of the world's population but over 60% of HIV cases worldwide. This situation has gotten progressively worse.

Homosexual activity remains a criminal offence in 36 of the 52 Commonwealth states!

UNISON has an excellent record of international work and the LGBT committee has incorporated international work into the heart of their work programme. Progress has been made on the rights of LGBT people around the commonwealth and LGBT human rights have received a higher profile with the commonwealth heads of government with LGBT issues finally making it onto the agenda. Baroness Scotland pledged to promote a dialogue on LGBT issues during her tenure of office. However, there has been recognition that there needs to be a coherent cross departmental government strategy that promotes LGBT equality around the world . Motion 61 acknowledges the hard work that has been done and the progress that has been made. However more work still needs to be done. The motion asks that LGBT rights should be an integral part of business of the commonwealth and not an add on or an afterthought. It asks that there are LGBT representation in stakeholder groups and also that the promised governmental strategy becomes a reality . Please support the motion.

Carrie Pearson Loughlin, Stockton Local Government

# ORGANISING IN HOMECARE

The Ethical Care Charter calls for local councils to promote good terms and conditions of work for care staff, good wages and working conditions, and improvements, which councils should incorporate, in the latest contracts to the care companies.



UNISON Northern uses the charter as a key component in UNISON's Save Care Now campaign, which was developed to create standards for safety, quality and dignity of care by ensuring good employment conditions and a stable workforce through sustainable pay, conditions and training.

In implementing the provisions of the Charter in its procurement strategy for Elderly Care, Councils will send out a clear message that quality services depend on quality pay and conditions for workers and on properly funded client focussed services.

We want all our councils to commit to improving standards in care and to ensuring that hard working staff get the investment they deserve.

This motion seeks to work with our local Labour Groups through Labour Link and create a strategy so those council without the ethical charter understand why it's important to both service users and staff alike, this in turn will put pressure on the Labour Party to adopt UNISON's Ethical Charter as one of their own policies.

Whilst the motion seeks to review subs bands, there is scope to reduce the subscription based on any members existing circumstance and thereby reducing subscription to the lowest banding in some cases.

If you have identified a recruitment opportunity in Homecare and you are unsure how you would be able to resource this in terms of the actual recruitment and the supporting service moving forward contact your Regional Organiser, as support is currently available to branches.

Please support this motion to continue the support for Homecare workers.

## First Timer

Tuesday saw another sunny day in Brighton and the beginning of National Delegate Conference!

As a first time delegate- it has been great to see so many active people all coming together to debate and vote on important issues to us all.

Northern Region delegates did us proud showing up on Tuesday in the 'Show Racism the Red Card' T-Shirts. Being at the front of the room means the campaign attracted attention that it deserves.

On Wednesday morning we discussed and debated motions about developing an organising Branch and organising and growing membership in the private sector.

I was pleased both motions were strongly supported by us all. It has never been so essential for us to grow our branches and inspire other to be active and organised.

I am very passionate about this and when I get back to Durham I have ideas about recruiting, promoting, organising and creating more activity in general within the branch.

I believe it's time for us to stand together and be the voice and the actions of the many. Together we are stronger.

Ashleigh Downey, Durham LG Branch

## Motion 36 – Affordable Housing

Basic care in a humane society consists of water food and shelter however this no longer happens Shelter, housing is no longer an affordable option for many young people unless they live with their parents or relatives.

The cuts to housing benefits combined with the lack of social housing and fair rents have exacerbated the problem for young people to move out and live independently. This can mean for some young people can living in households where there are in danger of being abused or they are unsafe.

In my role as a Early Help Family Worker. I work with young people and adults who because of the benefit restraints are often in a poverty trap living in substandard housing which is often uninhabitable. This can range from doors hanging from frames, heating systems that don't work, no hot water for washing/bathing, basic safety measures for children and babies that are non existent.

I often feel guilty that I return to the comfort of my own home when I see the conditions these families have to live in.

Decent affordable housing should accessible for all!

Kiera Bell Young Member and First time conference. Northumberland Branch

### **Just a quick message from Nicky, Linda and Clare.**

We've made it to Thursday and what a massive impact our Region have had on conference already. We're immensely proud of the interventions made from Northern Regional delegates from the floor, the level of debate has been fantastic. For a little Region we certainly make our presence felt. Your speeches have been full of the hard work and commitment of your branches and the Region, alongside some quite personal experiences. You highlight the value and importance of Trade Unions, the cross branch, cross sector and partnership working there is within the Region, and the positive impact you have on members within the workplace in such difficult times.

The support you have shown each other highlights the level of inclusivity there is within our Region and this is recognised and commented upon by others around conference. However, we do have to apologise as we seem to be the only Regional table without sweets but don't let that put you off from coming to see us.

We're looking forward to having a little bit of time out tomorrow night at the social and hope to see you all there. You all deserve a pat on the back and here's to watching more of you up at that rostrum tomorrow and Friday.

# Save Our South Tyneside Hospitals Campaign

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust are set to start public consultation on the future of some clinical services in South Tyneside. Consultation will start on the 5th July 2017 and will continue for 14 weeks.

The Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign are in the process of organising two events. The first being on the 1st of July taking part in the South Shields summer parade. The Parade starts at 1pm and goes from the South Shields Town Hall to Bents Park. We would ask as many to come along and support this important campaign.

The second event is another public meeting to bring together views of this process and comment on the proposals that will be put forward in this public consultation. The date for this will be advertised as soon as it is arranged.

Some of the major concerns being raised are the fact that Clinical staff have not had any input into the process.

Consultants called a meeting of as many staff from Children's A & E that could attend no management were invited, I requested to attend and went along to here first hand the concerns.

I was informed by Senior Consultants and Senior Clinicians that no minutes had been taken of these review meetings and ideas put forward by the Consultants and staff were not going to be considered.

This is something that I have raised with the Chief Executive and I am waiting to meet with him. I have asked him to have a meeting with the staff so the questions can be answered. Please support this campaign as this Alliance is being held up as the way forward for this sort of collaborating working. If this is collaborative working its all one sided and excluding South Tyneside in order to take control of the services that are cherished by the people of South Tyneside.

Our Children's services, A&E ,Maternity services , Gynaecology Stroke and Emergency Services are important to those who live in South Tyneside and we need support to fight the taking over of our services.

Marion Langley  
Branch Secretary  
South Tyneside Health Branch



## Motion 59 – Child marriage is child labour

The Regional Women's Network has taken this motion back to the Region following the National Women's Committee (NWC) and with the actions from NWC we are going to work with Regional Black Members Forum, the International Committee and branches. Why?

In the next year it is estimated that 15million girls will be forced in to "marriage" and what's more frightening is they will be under the age of 15. These 'child wives' are forced to work long hours cleaning and cooking and throughout the night they work shifts caring for the babies and other children, their husbands are older and control them through physical and psychological abuse and this isn't a relationship of love but of continual rape.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, one the most ratified human rights treaties in history, where our global community stands in agreement of these fundamental rights yet "Child Marriage " in any form violates every single one of their rights. We continually fight for the very rights of these children year on year and these girls by definition cannot consent to an illegal marriage so find themselves entwined in nothing other than slavery.

[www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org) have reported that many girls are trafficked as children under the pretext of marriage and then forced into prostitution or domestic exploitation worldwide and the U.K. is



not free from these practices. As parents - aunts - uncles - grandparents when you look at your daughters and granddaughters etc could you visualise her as a child bride /wife who has been denied her childhood and education?

We will be contacting branches with regards to affiliating to [www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org) and to work within the Region highlighting the fact that International Labour Organisation have enacted a huge injustice to these and future young girls by erasing them from their statistics. According to the ILO these girls cannot be classed as child labourers as they've become underage illegal 'wives'. The ILO state that child marriage may not be interpreting as constituting a worst form of child labour for girls, as they claim that the labour performed by girls in illegal child "marriages" does not qualify as "work". We will work as a Region through every means to get them to realise their grave error in omitting the worst form of child labour we ask them to prioritise this issue without delay as Article 3 of their own convention No 182 states ([www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org))

"Early marriages, even when they occur with seeming consent of the child, violate the basic rights of the child, since by legal definition a child cannot give "Consent"

Pat Heron, Chair Regional Women's Network

## Motion 61: Working globally for LGBT rights.

Back in April of this year, UNISON Northern Region responded to the atrocities being carried out in Chechnya against gay men.

Mainstream media coverage was very limited so many



people may not be aware of the extent of this crisis. Chechnyan officials were promoting the torture and sometimes murder of gay men simply for being who they are. State officials were encouraging families of gay men to hand them over to the police so that they could be taken to 'concentration camps' where these gay men were abused and violently mistreated. Officials within Chechnya denied this humanitarian crisis stating 'it can't be happening as there are no gay men in Chechnya!'

Newcastle Hospitals Branch LGBT & International Officer Hannah Stevenson was instrumental in organising a rally in Times Square, Newcastle, in order to publicly condemn these actions and show solidarity with our brothers in Chechnya.

The event had several speakers. These were Linda Hobson, Northern Region Deputy Convenor, Craig Smart UNISON Northern Region LGBT co-convenor, Mo Abuzahra, Northern Region International Committee Chair and Sophie Robinson, NTW Health Branch LGBT and International Officer.

The event was well attended and supported. A collection raised £130 and this total was matched by Newcastle Hospitals Branch. The money was donated to ILGA-Europe, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association.

Motion 61 highlights the key role UNISON must play in supporting LGBT rights globally. Our Regional LGBT Officers and reps are working hard to support LGBT communities both locally and internationally. Please support this motion!

Sophie Robinson, NTW Health Branch

## Composite F – EU Exit and Workers' Rights

The Conservative Government's chaotic plans for Brexit represent a significant risk for working people in the UK. The EU has played a key role in protecting workers from exploitation, inequality, hazards and discrimination, and in promoting good employment practices. Nevertheless, regardless of our position during the referendum, Brexit is a reality. The trade union movement must now ensure that the government does not use our divorce from the EU as an opportunity for a bonfire of established employment and equality rights.



It is clear that the Tories' vision for Brexit only extends as far as the UK playing the role of a low-tax, low-regulation haven for unscrupulous businesses. With no concrete plan on creating a stable economy, or how our public services will be decently funded, the need for stability and reassurance for working people has never been greater. Hard-working public sector workers from Europe who came to the UK to work for our NHS, schools and social care, must also be reassured they are welcome and can remain.

Employment rights must be protected in full and that any plan for Brexit must include a provision for investment in quality jobs and the protection of living standards. Furthermore, any trade deal with the EU and other major economics – particularly the USA - must include a fair deal for public services, rather than the threat of further privatisation represented in the now stalled Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations.

The North East is set to lose the most in terms of funding as a result of Brexit, having received £195.4 million in European Social Fund grants and £296.8 million in European Regional Development Fund grants. The combined total of these two figures is the equivalent of £189 per head over a seven-year period, which is the most money received by any region in the UK. Given that this region has already been on the receiving end of some of the deepest public sector cuts in the country (without the benefit of any so-called sweetheart deals enjoyed by some parts of the country) the stakes could not be higher.

We must demand the recognition of trade unions as key stakeholders in the Brexit negotiations and campaign to ensure that the UK government does not repeal any current rights guaranteed by the EU, or water down or dismantle trade union and worker rights. We need to ensure the rights of existing EU workers to remain in the UK and are protected, whilst ensuring the movement of workers in the EU is a key reciprocal right in any agreement that allows UK access to the single market. Any negotiations need to guarantee decent living standards and improved measures to support the unemployed, prevent homelessness, and lift people out of poverty.

In the Northern Region we are engaging with MPs, Councillors, citizens, employees, trade unions, employers, and community organisations on alternative economic strategies that benefit working people in the Region within the context of Brexit.

Clare Williams, Regional Secretary

## IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR DELEGATES AND VISITORS

**With Jeremy Corbyn attending Conference on Friday morning, security has been heightened. Therefore if at all possible we would prefer it if people did not bring bags into the Conference Hall. If you do so these will be subject to a manual search. The Conference Hall will be opening early on Friday morning at 8.00 am.**

**Thank you**

## Motion 40 – Public Service Champions Recruitment Campaign

The Public Service Champions campaign was established by UNISON in response to growing concerns about the impact of spending cuts on public services in the UK.

From the NHS to schools, from community policing to local council services, such as libraries, youth services and social care, practically every UNISON member has a story to tell about the growing difficulties they face to keep services going. Put simply, nearly a decade of cuts is taking its toll. Our public services are in crisis.



The Public Service Champions campaign seeks to highlight the impact of these challenges and win support for:

- Proper funding for all our public services so that they can meet rising demand and the diverse needs of all our communities.
- The right number of appropriately trained staff to keep our services safe and effective so that the quality of care and standards of service that the public deserve can be guaranteed.
- A voice for local communities about how their public services are provided – so that all services, including specialist services, are responsive to local needs.
- The economic benefits of public services are recognised – so that investment, jobs and decent pay can boost local economies and create opportunities.
- More openness – so that decisions about who provides local services – and how they do it – are clear and can be properly scrutinised.

In January this year our North East Ambulance Branch ran their own Public Service Champions campaign where they asked members of the public to nominate members of the branch whether it be a paramedic, or a call handler who has impacted positively on their lives. This Ambulance Trust is the most under-funded in the country and is faced with staff shortages but its employees, our members, continue to strive to make the service the best it can possible be. The campaign was a huge success with several winners all nominated by the public, and ended with an awards ceremony in April which was attended by a number of local MPs – Ian Mearns, Catherine McKinnell, Julie Elliott and Chi Onwurah .

NEAS Branch

# Motion 100—Abortion Rights

Why fighting for abortion rights matters now more than ever on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1967 Act. Every day, at least 10 women and girls travel from Ireland to England for an abortion. Around 4,000 make the journey to Britain or elsewhere in Europe every year, a further 1,000 come from Northern Ireland. These women are treated as criminals and face a 14 year prison sentence. Many more women simply cannot afford to travel and others cannot because of their circumstances and those who do face pain and ill health as the journey takes its toll – physically, financially and mentally.

Why? Because enshrined in the Irish Constitution in the shape of the Fifth Amendment 1983 the life of the unborn child is awarded equal status to the right of the woman. This effectively makes abortion illegal through a constitutional ban.

This is a disgrace! As Theresa May enters into an agreement with the DUP – its Leader Arlene Foster a woman who has vowed as recently as 2015 to retain a ban on all abortions except when a woman's life is in danger.

Those of you who recall the horrific preventable death of Savita Halappanavar in 2012 will know that agreement as to which constitutes a life in danger is no guarantee. Savita and her husband asked for help when she began miscarrying, she was refused and died later that day of septic shock.

7 in 10 people in Northern Ireland back changes to the abortion law (Amnesty International). A clear majority want to see changes – this is not about democracy and the views of ordinary people. We need to be afraid, very afraid that what we will see now is an erosion of a woman's right to choose as the UK Government grasps to hold onto power cosying up to the DUP.

The denial of a woman's right to make independent decisions regarding abortion violates and poses a threat to a wide range of human rights. Access to safe legal abortion is essential to a pre-requisite of women's rights to equality. Without access to contraception and abortion woman cannot participate equally and take up our place in our unions, our jobs and our society.

We need to campaign to ensure all have access to safe abortions

Lesley Storey, Newcastle City Branch

## Re-Prioritisation Process

Today we re-prioritise motions from the Remaining Order of Business (The Snake) to be heard on Friday afternoon.

Each Branch should complete the form on the back of this newsheet and hand to Nicky or Linda **by 11.00 am this morning**.

We think Branches may wish to consider choosing from the following suggestions as these are a good representation of areas that have been raised in the Region:

**Motion 5—Recruiting and organising Black members in the fragmented workforce**

**Motion 85—Standing together for LGBT equality**

**EM3—Terrorism and Public Services**

**Motion 16—Invisible or Non-Apparent Disabilities**

**Motion 93—Campaigning for real Devolution**

**Motion 68—Palestine time for a new debate**

## On The Fringe...

### Lunchtime:

Fighting for fair pensions for women

The Restaurant

Challenging racism in the workplace

Auditorium 2 First Floor

Equality in our time! The UNISON equality survey and what it told us?

Room 1A

Fighting job insecurity and the case for improved workers' rights

Syndicate 3 First Floor

Make votes matter, adopt PR for UK general elections

Syndicate 4 First Floor

Tackling the housing crisis

Syndicate 1 Ground Floor

Dying for a living, the plight of workers in global supply chains

Syndicate 2 Ground Floor

Engaging left behind communities

Room 1B

Learning in the workplace

Syndicate 1 Ground Floor

### Evening:

Police and Justice pay

Syndicate 3 First Floor



Jean Geldart  
Trade Union Organiser  
tradeunions@hopenothate.org.uk  
tel: 07967 639950

### FRINGE MEETING THURSDAY LUNCHTIME ENGAGING POST-INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITIES

HOPE not hate's *Fear and HOPE* report finds a direct correlation between post-industrial communities and fear and hate. The areas that have experienced the greatest upheaval – both economically and in terms of the identity of local communities – over the last 25 years are those where negative attitudes towards immigration and multiculturalism are at their highest.



We want to address the divisions that have increasingly arisen in these disaffected post-industrial ('left behind') communities. They are characterised by a loss of industry that has not been replaced; an accompanying loss of identity; and a feeling that the future is going to be worse than the past.

Increasingly in these areas a loss of hope has become a breeding ground for division and racism. We are piloting interventions in three communities – Dudley, Merthyr Tydfil and Rotherham – seeking to challenge racism by addressing the factors that give rise to the hopelessness upon which it breeds.

By bringing people together to identify, address and act upon the real causes of the challenges they face, they will begin to effect change. Through this process of developing their own agency (becoming 'players') the community will resolve issues, build alliances and lose the need to hold someone to blame. It is in this way that the process is designed to be transformational.

**THURSDAY 22 JUNE, 12.45-1.45, ROOM 1B**

**Speakers: Nick Lowles, HOPE not hate | Ravi Subramanian, W. Midlands Regional Secretary | Clare Williams, Northern Regional Secretary**

**LUNCH PROVIDED**



This year's Regional Social will be happening on:

**Thursday 22nd June**

**From 7.30 pm**

**At OHSO SOCIAL**

**Kings Road NE1 1NB**

It's an opportunity for Northern Delegates to get together informally for a drink and a bite to eat from the buffet. With a DJ playing some tunes it will be a relaxing and enjoyable evening and we hope you can join us.

## Your Newsheet Needs You!!

You're here at Conference! Is it your first time? Are you speaking in a debate? Got something to say about your time in Brighton? Let us know your thoughts, opinions and views through our Regional newsletter.

See Allison in the Newsheet Room (3rd Floor) or e-mail her  
[a.jackson2@unison.co.uk](mailto:a.jackson2@unison.co.uk)



**RE-PRIORITISATION FORM  
NATIONAL DELEGATE CONFERENCE 2017**

**Branch:** .....

<b>Priority (in ranked order)</b>	<b>Motion No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>SOC Use only</b>
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

**To be returned to Nicky or Linda by 11.00 a.m. on Thursday 22nd June 2017**