

# Northern Focus

Issue 3, Thursday 20th June 2019

## **Towards a More Inclusive Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Self Organised Group and the Subsequent Rule Changes B and D**

The 21<sup>st</sup> motion on the order of business is one from the National LGBT Committee asking Conference to support the progressive work the group has done to date to make them truly representative of the wider LGBT community within our union.

This motion pre-empts the Rule Change submitted by the committee to change the name of the Self Organised Group from LGBT to LGBT+. This may seem like a small thing to most delegates here, however it is actually a big step to take and one that requires significant support from the conference floor.

So why is it needed?

When the group first became LGBT around 2006 it thought that it had made itself fully inclusive, however as times change so has how people express, identify and define themselves.

Pansexual, asexual, non-binary and gender queer are just a few of many ways people now choose to identify so you can see how the rigid LGBT definition doesn't work for everyone.

We need our union to continue to be the biggest and the best and one of the ways of doing that is to show everybody that there is a place within our structures for them, regardless of how they identify or define themselves. If we don't make this change they won't consider us to be their first choice trades union and will seek out a union with an LGBT group that has adopted the '+'.  
the '+'.

Our Regional Convener and Regional Secretary recognise how important this issue is, not only to the LGBT SOG but also to the future success of UNISON in cementing its status as the biggest and best public sector trade union

So when the 21<sup>st</sup> motion on the order of business comes up please support it, but more importantly please vote in support of the Rule Changes on Thursday. We need two thirds of the floor to vote in favour or they will fall.

If you have any questions about the motion or rule changes please don't hesitate to contact me.

Jennifer Black, North Tyneside LG



# NEC Statement

This is an NEC statement which we feel reflects the discussions we have had in the Northern Region.

## **EU Exit – Protecting our rights and public services in the face of a quick No Deal Tory exit**

The NEC notes the second round of voting on June 18th in the Conservative Party leadership contest has brought to the fore four candidates, Boris Johnson, Jeremy Hunt, Sajid Javid and Michael Gove all committed to leaving the EU on October 31<sup>st</sup> 2019 if negotiations with the EU cannot be re-opened this summer. A day earlier on June 12th the Labour Party in parliament failed by 11 votes to take control of the business so that MPs across parties could prevent a no deal exit being imposed by a new prime minister without potentially a parliamentary vote.

UNISON accepted the EU referendum result in June 2016 to leave the EU and conference believes that any future EU - UK deal must not leave working people in the UK worse off than they were before EU exit. Any new deal that replaces the current EU membership must match the benefits and rights that we have currently and protect Northern Ireland.

The NEC decision has created six tests based on previous National Delegate Conference decisions to help evaluate what we would like to see included in a future EU - UK deal to protect our members' rights and public services:

- protect existing health and safety and workers rights through a level playing field of regulations, with a non regression clause, an enforcement mechanism and accessible dispute mechanism that enforces the adherence and future upgrade on these rights;
- protect public services from a bad economic deal that will prevent growth of the UK economy, continue public service austerity instead of increased funding, lower living standards and offer less training and skills opportunities for workers;
- keep UK public services out of global trade deals, maintain only the existing beneficial social provisions in public procurement regulations, expand the right to public ownership and the positive use of State Aid;
- safeguard rights, standards and regulations (e.g. employment, environmental, consumer and climate change) and any new EU measures in the future so that they cannot be weakened in the UK through any future trade deals with non-EU countries like the USA;
- maintain existing equality and human rights, EU citizen rights, EU freedom of movement;
- prevent a hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland, uphold the Good Friday Agreement and respect the devolution legislation of the Governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Based on these tests, the union will campaign against the previously proposed Withdrawal Agreement. We take very seriously the threat of a Free Trade Arrangement (FTA) with the EU replacing the current EU deal. Trade unions could be the casualties of the actions of a new Tory leader and Prime Minister elected by a small group of individuals to deliver a No Deal EU exit. UNISON believes that the closest deal to our six tests so far includes continued participation in the single market and customs union – known as “common market 2.0/Norway Plus”.

UNISON will:

- campaign for UNISON's six tests to be at the core of any new deal, working with Labour Link, UK and EU politicians, trade union federations and civil society alliances;
- call for a General Election to break the deadlock in Parliament to get a deal based on the six tests, and further extension to article 50 as needed to then renegotiate a deal;
- campaign against leaving the EU without a deal on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019;
- ensure an overriding priority will remain the protection of our members in Northern Ireland and the Good Friday Agreement;
- if these options fail, and also to avoid the devastating consequences of a 'No Deal' EU Exit, in principle to support a confirmatory public vote on any deal that then emerges;
- campaign for all future trade deals to be scrutinised and meaningfully agreed by the UK Parliament;
- campaign with the ETUC, EPSU, TUC and Labour Link alongside our alliances to ensure that any future EU trade deal (and non EU trade deals) have a
  - Non regression clause, so that we secure and lock in our existing rights
  - Dynamic alignment clause, so that future alignment is achieved to prevent the UK from falling behind any gains made in the EU;
  - Enforcement mechanism clause, to allow workers and trade unions to have direct representation to proper courts and not rely on secret arbitration panels;
  - Direct effect clause, where UK laws will mirror EU laws and sit in any new treaty so that they have direct effect.

Clare Williams, Nicky Ramanandi & Linda Hobson

## Motion 82 - Colombia



International solidarity is a core component of our struggle against neoliberalism because globalising resistance is the only way to tackle multi-national organisations who seek to keep profit in the hands of the few.

For over ten years the Northern Region has forged strong links with trade unions and human rights organisations in Colombia – a country which suffered the longest-running armed conflict in Latin America, which caused over 7 million people to be displaced.

At least 30 social leaders have been murdered this year alone, with close to 500 killed since the peace agreement was signed in 2016. Most of these victims are from the same groups historically most impacted by conflict and state abandonment: indigenous, African-Colombian and rural community leaders, trade unionists, environmental defenders, LGBT and women's' rights activists.

The election of right-wing President Duque, who is opposed to the peace agreement, has caused further uncertainty. Duque has recently objected to the agreement's truth and justice chapter, which aims to investigate and punish human rights violations committed during the armed conflict and to compensate victims.

It is clear that attacks against social leaders is increasing and a peace which does not address Colombia's deeply set economic and political inequalities will not last. It's within this context that the work of organisations such as Justice for Colombia (JFC) is so important. In addition to affiliating to JFC, the Northern Region has continued to build on solidarity initiatives in Colombia through organisations such as NOMADESC and trade unions such as SINTRAUNICOL. Through this activity it is vitally important that pressure increases on the Colombian government to safeguard social movement leaders in the country.

Nicky Ramanandi & Linda Hobson, Regional Delegates

### First Time Delegate

It's my first time!

I have just become the Young Members Officer for Sunderland Local Government Branch. Therefore this is my first time at National Conference. I did not know at all what to expect and was very nervous at first. But I didn't need to worry at all. Everyone has been very welcoming and very helpful.

I really like the city of Liverpool.

The Conference has shown me how diverse UNISON is and everyone has a voice.

At Local Government Conference I really enjoyed the speech from Neville Southall and admire his values.

From National Conference, I enjoyed watching the card vote unfold and how the hall was buzzing.

The speeches from the Young Members were powerful and passionate, but also tuned in on what needs to happen in the future, which is a very good thing for us young people.

Melissa Reavley, Sunderland LG

**RULES****RULES****LGBT+**

Towards a more inclusive LGBT self-organised group. This We want these to be supported and for debate to take place with as many speakers as possible. Essentially this is about the importance of being an inclusive union and SOG. At Regional Council the Region agreed it was important to support this.

**Young Members Conference**

As a Region we have prioritised growing our Young Members numbers. Therefore we would ask you to support this rule change to establish a national conference.

**Removing the NEC Members from the SOC**

NEC are key stakeholders and bring experience of the whole union to the SOC.

Members have just elected an NEC and they should be allowed to play a part in shaping the key decision making body. NEC represent all parts of the union including Service Groups and SOGs.

Conference agenda belongs to conference, they decide via priorities and votes to confirm the agenda. They are 3 votes out of 15 and have been overruled. 12 regional reps could all be white able bodied men, the only current member of the SOC that is not white is from the NEC  
Gender balance does not reflect membership – if you are going to change it make it more representative not less.  
Please oppose this rule change

Nicky Ramanandi & Linda Hobson,  
Regional Delegates

**The Decarbonisation Debate**

On Friday we expect to hear motion 111 on climate change, just transition and jobs for a low carbon economy. This has been widely debated within the energy sector and in particular at the service group exec. Real debate has been ongoing with the Labour Party to set out a strategy to move to a decarbonised society. The energy sector welcomes a properly managed strategy to reach the UKs net zero emissions by 2050 and union is at the heart of these discussions.

While we support the main motion submitted by the NEC, we have real concerns around amendments 111.1 and 111.2. We have reached out to the 2 branches to discuss our concerns but have these attempts to talk about the strategy have been rejected.

To get to net zero a lot will need to change and must change, but the changes required will inconvenience people and decarbonisation will come with a price. If we do not find solutions that can work and that people are willing to support we will fall well short and those who deny climate change will go from the fringes of society into mainstream opinion. Already we have a US President willing to question the concept of global warming and the recent general election in Australia to warn us.

We cannot force people to decarbonise we need to persuade them, we need to win their hearts and minds and we need to address the challenges ahead in a pragmatic and practical way. We must do this or we will fail.

The work of the energy executive and energy members is critical to finding the opportunities to do this. As a union, make no mistake we are leading the way. The excellent new report out today gives a clear road map to decarbonise energy in the UK, this follows on work we have already done on domestic energy efficiency, supporting Hydrogen conversion and promoting Just Transition.

We are as committed as anyone to ensure net zero is achieved, we know how it can be done, as we work in a sector that contributes significantly to the challenges ahead.

This is why the energy service group executive and the energy sector request that branches follow the NEC decision to defer amendment 111.1 and oppose amendment 111.2, allowing the sector who have in-depth knowledge to set the strategy that will work for the whole of society and the environment.

Tracey Wainwright, EDF

## Motion 120 Higher Education as a Public Service

As a member of the Higher Education service Group I am pleased to see this very important motion debated at conference. Scotland sets a fine example of free tuition fees for it's students, one that should be followed by all nations. For the Northern Region this is extremely important when considering the heart breaking high levels of youth unemployment in the North East. One of the main routes out of poverty and hardship is education which should be free for all.



I am of an age when I can recall the benefits to my family of free higher education for all. Members of my family who went on to be teachers, social workers, doctors, nurses, and other roles in public services that contribute to the good of society.

If we want to talk as many of our management do in referring to our world class higher education system as a business then whatever my family's free education cost the nation it was more than paid back by their contribution to society. The same applies to many other graduates.

This seems to be a concept that this government fails to understand. When talking to a Tory MP at an event held at Westminster for HE's launch of the Foundation Living Wage he failed to choose to understand the value of the investment in the future by giving free access to higher education and could only talk of the monetary value to the individual in earning higher salaries.

This is typical of the Tory mentality, thankfully the Labour Party has a forward thinking leader in Jeremy Corbyn who supports free higher education for all as does our own union, UNISON.

Let's work to get Labour elected in our region, all regions, and nationally so Unison can work with them to ensure that our HE sector operates not as a private business but as an access to progression and contribution in society for all regardless of financial background.

This would also assist in returning our HE members to working as they should, one person for one role, not covering multiple posts due to financial restraints from competing and bench marking against other Universities.

This would also address the increasing numbers of work related stress we are seeing in our branches due to HEI's wanting more for less- despite the eye watering salaries of Vice Chancellors and senior management. These very people who are denying our members decent pay and forcing us to go out to consultation to ask our members to empower the SGE to consider industrial action.

Our consultation is on the pay offer which does little to address the loss of pay for our members due to numerous years of below inflation awards. The consultation is by e ballot for the first time in order to reach as many of our members as possible and closes on the 1st of July.

The National Higher Education Service Group Executive has worked with regions and branches to ensure that Unison's commitment to free higher education is carried through to employers.

Through our negotiations with employers we are working to eliminate the gender pay gap, casual contracts, and for all Universities to become accredited to the Foundation Living Wage.

Yet these are areas where the biggest arguments from our employers against enforcing is cost - down to competition between Universities.

Support staff are the backbone of HE. Without them the buildings wouldn't be clean, students wouldn't be safe, timetables wouldn't be met , finances would not be in order - the list goes on. They should not be treat as a business commodity- their value is too great for that.

Higher Education Institutions should be a place to promote social equality and mobility not to act as a business with a total disregard for what is best for society.

Denise Ward, Teesside University

## Social Care – A Way Forward

The crisis in social care was debated at the Local Government Conference earlier in the week and has been reference in debates at National Conference. A fringe event “What next for Social Care”, brought together a panel of speakers including: Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester and researchers from CHPI (Centre for Health and Public Interest), to address two key issues: the marketization of social care provision (especially in the residential care sector) and the need for a progressive workforce strategy.

The speakers from CHPI reported on the research commissioned by UNISON into businesses operating in the social care sector and to whether the value system of social care workers is being implemented within social care provision. The research findings echoed the experience of those of us who work in social care i.e. that the social care system has become divorced from these values as the reality is that with decades of privatisation, it has become a market with everything in it (including service users and care workers) commodified. The system is dominated by a funding model in which providers, such as Four Seasons rely on loans from overseas investors (such as hedge funds) to build and then are tied into unsustainable loan repayments. Through this process, public money paid to these care providers is in effect being siphoned off to pay dividends and profits to overseas investors for whom social care is only a commodity and the wellbeing of service users and staff is not a priority.

Social care desperately needs more funding, but the system needs major structural change to ensure that additional funding translates to improved standards of care and better working conditions and terms and conditions for care staff and does not end up as increased profits for providers and investors. Andy Burnham spoke on what has been achieved in the Great Manchester devolved authority where the mayor has control over the health and social care budgets and integrating the two systems has been a priority. Andy reported that this is bringing tangible benefits, referring to the adoption of UNISON's Ethical Care Charter, but stressed that devolution can only do so much in the face of inadequate funding and the legacy of privatisation and fragmentation.

He stressed the need for a National Care System and that through this Labour values can be put at the heart of our social care system. There was discussion on how this system would be funded – with the feeling of the meeting being that this should be funded via general taxation and free to use (in the same way as the NHS) – and of the need for the in-sourcing of private provision with UNISON being asked if any work was being done on making the economic case for this.

The other discussion was that of the need for a Workforce Strategy for social care staff, to make social care an alternative career choice with the status and terms and conditions it merits. To achieve this, it needs decent pay, a proper training framework, a career progression pathway and mechanisms for sectoral bargaining. UNISON is doing work to move towards this through organising staff in the private social care sector and through campaigning to improve terms and conditions via the Ethical Care Charter and pursuing decent payment for sleep-ins by taking the hostile Court of Appeal ruling to the Supreme Court. Andy Burnham reported on the work that has been done in Manchester to develop a Good Employment Charter and to link this to public procurement so that councils will only commission social care services from providers who meet the standards of the Charter.

This was a very constructive meeting, showing that the way forward for social care is not just proper funding but a radical restructure with a proper workforce strategy at the heart of it.

Mick Bowman, Northumberland LG

## First Time Delegate

Hi, I'm Sharon Backhouse, I have had the honour and privilege to be a first time delegate representing Durham Local Government Branch. I have been a UNISON member for over 10 years and have recently become a steward, I cannot express how pleased and overjoyed I was to be asked if I would be interested in attending both Local Government and National Conference ..... obviously I jumped at this opportunity to learn more about our union, more about current work related issues affecting all of us and our colleagues. My eyes have certainly been opened in the most incredible way, witnessing the strength and positive impact our united voice has when we stand together and support each other.

I have had the honour of meeting the most amazing, dedicated and determined people within all positions of UNISON, striving to improve aspects of working conditions, equality and so much more. I feel empowered and privileged to have the opportunity to vote on all motions and business with the understanding of the influence we have on what our union will follow through.

I can honestly say with hand on heart this has been one of the most incredible empowering and motivating experiences I have ever the honour to be part of and I truly hope to experience it again. Whilst also hopefully being more actively involved within our branch and the wider union. I have also thoroughly enjoyed the social aspect of conference, meeting and chatting to the most enthusiastic people.

It is clearly apparent we in UNISON are a family, we are a voice for all and we are united in moving forward. Thank you so much David Glew and all at Durham LG Branch for this opportunity and taking such good care of me. Thank you UNISON for making me so welcome.

Sharon Backhouse, Durham LG

## Comp B Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Employers should protect their employees from sexual harassment at work. However, the evidence collated by the TUC found that 52% of women had experienced unwanted behaviour at work including groping, sexual advances and inappropriate jokes. Among women aged 16-24, the proportion reporting sexual harassment rose to 63%. Too many people are being silenced and forced to either endure the harassment or give up employment due to toxic workplace cultures and very real fears of victimisation. Employers' responses are inconsistent and ineffective.

Recent high-profile testimonies such as the #MeToo movement and Everyday Sexism have shown how pervasive sexual harassment is. Hollywood and Westminster are workplaces too and as such have highlighted the real barriers that many people experience in reporting it sexual harassment. No workplace is immune to sexual harassment, and a lack of reported cases does not necessarily mean they have not occurred. Employers are responsible for ensuring that employees do not face harassment in their workplace. They should take reasonable steps to protect their employees and will be legally liable for harassment by their staff if they fail to do so. Within the Northern Region we are working with the Women's Network to encourage branches to negotiate stand alone sexual harassment policies within their workplaces.

The climate and culture within which the perpetrators are allowed to commit these offences needs to change rather than depending on the victims of their crimes to challenge the behaviour - this allows women to be blamed when they are unable to speak out. Simply not good enough!

UNISON reps are at the heart of ensuring we challenge the current situation where individuals risk their jobs and health to report and putting the onus on employers to effectively prevent and resolve harassment.

Linda Hobson  
Deputy Regional Convenor

## Barbara Tanyanyiwa, National Secretar, Women's Committee, Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions



A few days before the NBMC in January the president of Zimbabwe called a press conference which he announced fuel increases to make Zimbabwe ,a country with the most expensive fuel in the whole world. This resulted in Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union calling for a two day stay away to protest against this measure and the constant rise in inflation, which has never been matched with a salary increment for the majority of Zimbabwean workers. The Zimbabwe Congress Of Trade Union called for people to stay at home as a peaceful protest against the injustices.

In response the government decided to use brutal force by unleashing armed police and the militia on unarmed citizens.

As. Zimbabwean, I discussed and it was agreed that we could approach SOC for an emergency motion and it was agreed that the chair would read a written statement that we had put together.

Two of my nieces in their early Twenties were raided and arrested early on Sunday morning and were taken into custody and transferred to a maximum prison( secure) for a week without charge.

I made a personal appeal to the president of the union Gordon Mackay and also to the region to urge the union to offer solidarity to the ZCTU and to raise awareness on the plight of my relation and many other young people who were been held without charge and denied basic human rights

Barbara would like to highlight the plight of women in Zimbabwe and access to sanitary pads and is appealing for Unison To continue with our campaign for sanitary pads which are now unaffordable to many. A pack of 10 now costs 15 RTGS\$ (equivalent US\$1.50) and the average monthly wage is 150 RTGS \$ a month most women workers can not afford pads

Barbara Tanyanyiwa(ZCTU secretary women's committee) coming to NDC as a guest speaker makes me feel proud to be a member of this union as it show the long arm of the union and how it strives to make sure every member is listened to. I hope that Barbara is going to take her experiences at the NDC and going forward continue to work together in the many facets of trade Unison. As Jo Cox said 'we have more in common than what divides us.

Shinga mushandi shinga!!!!  
Qina Sisebenzi Qina!  
Solidarity forever (ZCTU slogan)

Leeya Adini, Durham LG



## Wordsearch

Many people know lots of the well known Beatles songs but try this wordsearch with some of their lesser known tunes.

Once solved the letters remaining spell the title of another Beatles song.

W	D	H	E	Y	B	U	L	L	D	O	G	E	T	B	A	C	K	A
A	R	E	T	T	E	B	G	N	I	T	T	E	G	S	H	E	P	S
I	E	Y	A	D	H	T	R	I	B	B	N	O	R	E	P	L	Y	K
T	C	D	A	R	W	O	P	O	L	Y	T	H	E	N	E	P	A	M
S	A	H	I	O	P	D	H	A	S	Y	N	O	P	A	G	I	D	E
E	E	T	O	R	N	R	C	D	R	U	L	I	S	N	F	T	H	W
X	G	F	I	E	O	K	U	C	A	A	N	E	R	E	I	O	U	H
Y	U	N	E	R	B	T	Y	D	D	R	P	K	Y	G	X	Y	R	Y
S	E	H	I	I	Y	B	T	Y	E	L	L	B	I	S	I	B	E	Y
A	T	F	R	H	A	L	N	E	E	N	D	I	E	N	N	G	P	H
D	H	D	I	E	T	A	E	A	K	O	C	U	N	L	G	I	P	W
I	H	E	Y	L	D	E	S	V	O	C	L	E	L	G	A	R	I	E
E	T	R	Y	O	Y	E	M	G	O	B	I	E	H	E	H	R	R	M
T	C	E	N	J	M	M	O	O	R	L	F	T	A	T	O	O	T	L
A	H	N	U	E	U	L	N	E	S	I	I	W	I	L	L	N	Y	L
X	A	L	R	O	L	D	Y	I	F	L	Y	I	N	G	E	A	A	E
N	I	C	H	E	L	L	E	I	P	Y	E	N	O	H	O	E	D	T
A	N	W	H	I	N	Y	A	D	R	E	T	S	E	Y	P	L	O	W
N	L	R	I	G	R	E	H	T	O	N	A	E	N	I	M	E	M	I

ANOTHER GIRL  
 ASK ME WHY  
 BIRTHDAY  
 BLACKBIRD  
 CRY BABY CRY  
 DAY TRIPPER  
 DEAR PRUDENCE  
 DIG A PONY  
 ELEANOR RIGBY  
 FIXING A HOLE  
 FLYING  
 GET BACK  
 GETTING BETTER  
 YESTERDAY

HELLO GOODBYE  
 HEY BULL DOG  
 HE JUDE  
 HONEY PIE  
 I ME MINE  
 I WILL  
 IF I FELL  
 IN MY LIFE  
 JULIE  
 LADY MADONNA  
 LOVELY RITA  
 MICHELLE  
 NO REPLY

O DARLING  
 PLEASE PLEASE ME  
 POLYTHENE PAM  
 SEXY SADIE  
 SOMETHING  
 SUN KING  
 TAXMAN  
 TELL ME WHY  
 THE END  
 TICKET TO RIDE  
 TWO OF US  
 WAIT  
 YER BLUES

## On The Fringe...

### Lunchtime: 12.45 pm

Tackling exploitation and modern slavery through ethical public services goods procurement  
Hall 2N

Low Pay and Sectoral bargaining  
Hall 2L

The Winter of Discontent 40 years on—lessons for today  
Hall 2F

Brexit What Brexit!  
Hall 2P

Trading away the NHS  
Hall 2P

Pensions—the birth of collective defined contribution  
Room 13

Tackling mental health inequality  
Hall 1C

## Calling all women members

Come along to this important fringe meeting taking place this evening at 5.15 in Hall 2F

'Call it out' - challenging sexual harassment in the workplace

Organised by the Women's Network linking in with Composite B

Jess Phillips MP is the key note speaker and we want to see as many delegates at this fringe as possible.

UNISON

Just to clarify for delegates the Regional Social is taking place at **REVOLUTION** Atlantic Pavilion, Albert Dock L3 4AE and **NOT** Revolution De Cuba

### Re-Prioritisation Process

This morning branches are asked to put forward their top 6 motions from the Remaining Order of Business not yet debated. As a Region we would suggest you consider the following:

#### Emergency Motion 1

- Excluding future Higher Education, Further Education and Sixth Form staff from the Local Government Pension Scheme

#### Motion 94

- Palestine

#### Motion 111

- Energy Climate Change a just transition and jobs for a low carbon economy

#### Motion 59

- Democracy

#### Emergency Motion 2

- Defend LGBT inclusive education

#### Motion 116

- The NHS long term plan

## 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 Liverpool? Let us know your thoughts, opinions and views through our Regional newsletter. See Allison in the Newsheet Room (Hall 2E) or e-mail her [a.jackson2@unison.co.uk](mailto:a.jackson2@unison.co.uk)

