

# Northern News

## National Delegate Conference



Friday 17 June 2022

#UNDC22

# CEDAW

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

## Motions 80 – 82: CEDAW Essential for Women's Rights

By Pat Heron

CEDAW is the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. It is one of the core international human rights treaties of the UN and it requires countries that have ratified it to undertake legal obligations to respect, protect and fulfil women's human rights. Countries that have ratified CEDAW, including the UK which ratified it in 1986, are expected to work towards implementation of its provisions and must submit a report, usually every four years, to the CEDAW Committee, the UN Committee which monitors the implementation of CEDAW, giving a report of their progress.

The Committee examines the measures implemented by the country to comply with its obligations under the Convention and then releases a report with its findings, called 'concluding observations', and recommendations for concrete steps to enable the realisation of women's rights.

The Committee has repeatedly recommended for the UK Government to incorporate CEDAW into domestic law throughout all territories under its jurisdiction. This would strengthen existing legal rights protection for women. The Committee will next review the UK in 2023.

### Regional Re-Prioritisation Results

- EMC1 - Angela Rayner and National Delegates Conference
- EM 2 - Ukraine
- Motion 121 - Speak Up and Speak Out
- Motion 78 - Palestine
- Motion 24 - Young Workers, Burnout and the Right to Disconnect
- Motion 13 - Be the Reason Campaign

### Thank you!

Just a quick word of thanks to everyone for your articles.

We hope you enjoyed reading the new look newsheets.

Please send any feedback to Paul Riley, who produced the newsheets to [p.riley@unison.co.uk](mailto:p.riley@unison.co.uk).



# Emergency Motion 3: Invasion of Ukraine

By Linda Hobson

Today marks 114 days of Putin’s invasion of Ukraine and we have all seen the harrowing reports of unimaginable hardship in cities such as Mariupol.

UNISON has rightly, and unreservedly, condemned this act of aggression and stood in full solidarity with the millions of victims of the attack, together with calling for an immediate cease-fire and a withdrawal of all Russian forces from Ukraine.

There is an urgent need for world leaders to make definitive steps to initiate dialogue and find a peaceful solution to this crisis in line with the Charter of the United Nations. Sanctions also form part of this approach, which focus particularly on oligarchs and the entourage of President Putin, but governments must also provide safe havens for all refugees fleeing the conflict.

The situation continues to escalate dangerously, with each new day bringing heightened tension across the world as the global repercussions are felt. Humanitarian funds are desperately needed, and UNISON has already donated £10,000 to an appeal established by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) to support the Ukrainian trade union movement. Recently the Northern Region also donated £3,000 following a unanimous agreement at Regional Council, and other branches in our region have also made additional donations.

Our message is clear that workers – in Ukraine, in Russia and throughout the world where people’s freedom, living standards and jobs will be affected – should not bear the brunt of war. This tragedy for the Ukrainian people must end.

# UNISON Disability Award Announced at Year of Disabled Workers Fringe

By Angela Hamilton

Delegates attending the Year of Disabled Workers rally were amongst the first people to hear all about a new UNISON award that will be part of the legacy of the Year of Disabled Workers.



Announcing the award, Northern Region’s Angela Hamilton who represents Disabled Members on the NEC, said “This award will recognise the invaluable contribution that our Disabled Members play in improving the rights of disabled people in the workplace and in wider society.”

Branches and Regions will be able to nominate Disabled Members who they think have gone above and beyond to make a difference. The winner of the first award, which is yet to be named, will be announced at National Disabled Members Conference in October.

Speakers including Gloria Mills, National Secretary for Equalities, talked about the fantastic work that has been done to celebrate the Year of Disabled Workers and about the new Disability Employment Charter.

UNISON is the only union to be a founder member of the Charter which, amongst other things, is asking for a two-week time limit for employers to respond to reasonable adjustment requests and disability employment and pay gap reporting.

Unlike the Government's disability strategy, which the courts found to be unlawful after a consultation that asked non-disabled people if they would be prepared to have a relationship with a disabled person, the Disability Equality Charter has been developed with disabled people at its heart.

Look out for Year of Disabled Workers events in the Northern Region soon.

## Reflection: Solidarity with Turkish Trade Unionists

By Estwar Sanichar

This session of Conference began with a photoshoot and an inspiring speech.

The photoshoot was in support of Gonul Erden and her colleagues, who are currently in the pre-trial prison. One of the reasons is for attending a UNISON conference. Our General Secretary, Christina McAnea will be in Turkey for their next court hearing to observe and to send a clear and strong message that UNISON stands in solidarity with them.

A powerful speech was then given by Mehmet Bozgeyik. Mehmet is co-president of KESK – the Turkish Public Service Trade Union Federation.



Mehmet was supported by Osman Isu – the International Officer for KESK and the Health Union SES. He is also a leading human rights defender in Turkey.

Both Mehmet and Osman are amongst some 87 leading trade unionists who have spent a year in prison because of their campaign for freedom and equality. Some ten years later after their imprisonment their trial continues. For six years they were banned from overseas travel.

Mehmet's speech was moving and inspiring. He thanked UNISON for the invitation to NDC and to address conference. He paid tribute to all workers who lost their lives to COVID-19. He also acknowledged and thanked UNISON for being a part of the international effort that was responsible for his release and some of his colleagues from prison.

Trade unions in Turkey that do not support the Government are victimised, including imprisonment. This includes their opposition to outsourcing of public services and campaigns against oppressive policies and practices such as racism, sexism and other discriminatory practices.

Mehmet stated that in addition to imprisonment, many workers have been dismissed from their public service employment. "Poverty is being used to punish those who do not agree with the government – they are victimised", he explained.

There is hope of building a better society in Turkey for everyone. There are several reasons to be hopeful, including;

- Turkey has a strong Women's Group and when they win, everyone wins.
- The trade unions in Turkey are campaigning against capitalism and authoritarian policies. They are strengthened by knowing they are not alone in their struggle and will seek greater collaboration with trade unions in the UK.

Mehmet acknowledged the struggles in other countries and will continue to support UNISON in its solidarity with all of those countries.

Long Live KESK, Long Live UNISON, Long Live Solidarity.



## Fringe Reflection: Show Racism the Red Card

By Neville Hancock

The Northern Region has a proud history of supporting SRtRC so I was pleased to attend a fringe meeting with SRtRC and to see that Clare Williams was chairing it. Nicky Ramanandi was on the panel with Liz Cameron, Glen Williams and Paul Hill (Educational Organiser for SRtRC). Nicky shared the work programme of the region and the success of our ambassador programme. She spoke of how integral the partnership working with SRtRC is in supporting our members and challenging racism and discrimination within our workplaces. Nicky also spoke about our regional shop steward training and how SRtRC is now an integral element of the training.

Liz Cameron spoke passionately about her own experiences and the importance of allies. She highlighted that it should not always be up to our Black colleagues to call out racism, we all have a responsibility to challenge racist and discriminatory behaviour and the SRtRC training allows our activists to do this safely and effectively.

There were some excellent questions from the floor and the fringe ended with a photo call to support "Wear Red Day" on Friday 21 October 2022. Make sure you mark the date in your diary!

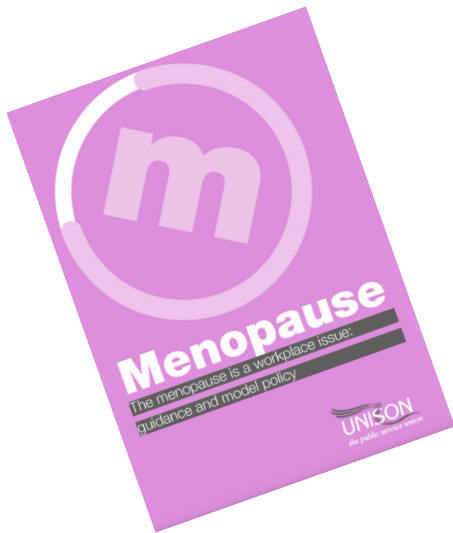
## Reflection: First Time Delegate - Glynis

By Glynis Dobson

I work in Sterile Services within South Tees Hospital and as the branch lead for recruitment, I was really looking forward to attending my first National Delegate Conference. Although I have previously attended both Women's and Health Conferences, I'd never attended NDC. I was interested in what I could take back to our branch that could support us in our work programme and our recruitment and organising work. I was particularly interested in the debates on pay and the cost-of-living crisis as these are key issues for members in our branch.

When I entered the hall on Tuesday, I couldn't believe just how many people were there as we took our seats ready for the debate. It's now Thursday afternoon and the Conference has flown by.

I have been so impressed by the level of debate and the contributions from delegates from our region – I felt proud of the region. The debate on Wednesday on pay and Christina's speech were very inspiring. I've thoroughly enjoyed the conference and looking forward to getting back to my branch to share my experience with our members.



## Fringe Reflection: Challenging Pregnancy, Maternity and Menopause Discrimination in the Workplace

By Carrie Pearson-Loughlin

Myself, Mike Blackburn and our retired member Theresa Marley attended the fringe event 'Challenging Pregnancy, Maternity and Menopause Discrimination in the Workplace'.

Josie Irwin, UNISON's National Women's Officer, talked about how our women members face discrimination in their life cycle. We face discrimination during pregnancy, maternity and menopause.

Josie talked about the many ways our women members face discrimination, be it low pay, flexible working requests being denied, childcare, sexual harassment, pregnancy and discrimination on the grounds of menopause. She talked about some of the work our union is doing right now on behalf of our women members. We are looking at pressing for real rights for flexible working and extending the time to lodge an Employment Tribunal claim from three to six months.

Emma Pitfield from UNISON's Legal Services hosted a quiz on maternity rights and potential discrimination claims. There were quite a few wrong answers, so we still have a lot to learn.

Sarah Hayes from UNISON's Learning and Organising Services talked about the resources available from UNISON, particularly the Menopause

Negotiating Guide which is an excellent tool for our activists.

Shantha David, Head of UNISON Legal Services, talked about the kind of claims we can make and what makes a competent claim. She reported that since 2005 discrimination claims on the grounds of pregnancy have increased dramatically. She talked about our successes as a union in terms of the victories of term-time workers, Glasgow's equal pay claims and the scrapping of Employment Tribunal fees. We also took ten claims to Tribunal in 2021 due to discrimination on the grounds of menopause.

We have come a long way in terms of successes, but there is still a long way to go.

## Reflection: First Time Delegate - Sophie

By Sophie Toulson

This is my first Conference experience and I just wish to say I am absolutely delighted to be here representing my branch and our Young Members.

I had very limited knowledge and/or understanding of what to expect over the past week. I would like to express my most sincere thanks to my branch delegate colleagues for their support and guidance, making me feel relaxed and comfortable.

A big shout out to our regional colleagues also for their kindness, support, encouragement and free drink! As a first timer I have found this a very interesting and motivating experience. I feel totally enlightened about our union and its activities. I really had no idea! I have been inspired by many speakers, listening to their stories and experiences, again I am inspired and moved by these members and activists.

Thank you for this brilliant experience, an experience that will stick with me forever.

Finally I would like to sincerely thank Dave Glew our Assistant Branch Secretary, not only for guiding me as a mentor but for his ongoing support that has assisted me in my own personal and professional development. #togetherwerise



# Reflection: Trans Equality! Louder and Prouder

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By Ellen Mellor

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On Tuesday, the LGBT+ committee put forward a motion entitled 'Trans Equality – Louder and Prouder' that called for exploring ways to increase the strength and visibility of UNISON's work in promoting trans equality, inside and outside the union, and to promote trans ally training. This motion was passed.

Several people put themselves forward to speak on the motion, including a number of trans people. However, after no more than half a dozen people had spoken the question was asked to be put, which was carried and the motion was overwhelmingly accepted. This meant that there were several people, including myself, that missed out on being able to speak in this important debate. This left me feeling disappointed that I did not get the chance to tell my story, express the importance of the motion and have my say.

While this undoubtedly happened because of a desire to move onwards and get to the next motion, I feel we should have had a longer opportunity to talk about the issues facing trans people today.

With the motion being carried, it will mean that UNISON will strengthen its trans equality work by promoting existing resources and developing further resources – a key one being materials to counter the gender critical narrative.

# Thank you and Farewell

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By Nicky Ramanandi, Linda Hobson and Paul Foy

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Well after a two-year hiatus we came together in Brighton for our National Conference, it's been great to see everyone in person. Once again the Northern Region has delivered. The level of participation and the cohesiveness of speakers articulating our regional strategies and priorities has been outstanding and we have received numerous compliments on speeches that have been delivered. It shows the work we do throughout the year has an impact and that we are well prepared for the battle ahead.

Clearly attacks on terms and conditions, public service pay, privatisation and recruitment and organising are still the priority in the coming months and our region is well placed to support branches and to deliver for our members.

The cost-of-living crisis has been a key feature of conference alongside equalities and fighting discrimination and we will continue to meet to plan activities and work across service groups so we are able to build the union and make key alliances with other trade unions and our communities. The cost-of-living is the critical issue for most of our members and we hope to see as many of you as possible on the TUC march and rally in London on Saturday to "demand better".

Our participation at Conference has been phenomenal. Thanks to all who contributed to the daily bulletin and special thanks to Paul Riley for all his hard work in pulling it together, as always the bulletins have been the high quality you would expect. Let's keep the good work going and continue to take our policies forward.

Finally, we look forward to seeing you at the Durham Miners' Gala on 9th July. Safe journey home everyone.






Nicky, Linda and Paul



# UNISON Northern NDC Word Search

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

Find the following words in the puzzle.

Words are hidden     and .

How many can you find?

ASHINGTON

BERWICK

BIRTLEY

BISHOP AUCKLAND

CRASTER

CROOK

DARLINGTON

DURHAM

EASINGTON

FERRYHILL

GATESHEAD

GUISBOROUGH

HARTLEPOOL

KILLINGWORTH

MIDDLESBROUGH

NEWCASTLE

NORTH TYNESIDE

NORTHUMBERLAND

REDCAR

SEAHAM

SHOTLEY BRIDGE

SOUTH TYNESIDE

SPENNYMOOR

STANLEY

STOCKTON

SUNDERLAND

THORNABY

WASHINGTON

WHITLEY BAY

WOOLSINGTON



# **MARCHING FOR A BETTER FUTURE**

**TOGETHER  
WE RISE**

Tomorrow is the #DemandBetter demo in London. We hope to see you there!