

EQUALITY MATTERS



SELF ORGANISED GROUPS

Issue 4

April 2016

Welcome to your new look **EQUALITY MATTERS**, where you can catch up on activities of the Branch's Self Organised Groups, as well as other news.

Have your say, your articles and comments are welcome.

Sonia Stewart
Branch Equality Officer

**Branch
Consultation
Special General
Meeting:
EU Referendum**

**4 April 2016,
5.30pm,
Lord Mayor's
Parlour,
Manchester
Town Hall**

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**Special points
of interest in
Issue 4:**

**New State
Pension**

Trade Union Bill

**Under-
representation
in management**

New SOG

Pensions

New State Pension

6 April 2016 sees the end of the Basic State Pension and Second State Pension, being replaced by a combined new State Pension.

For an up to date state pension statement go to:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-for-a-state-pension-statement

TUC Sponsored Report

According to a new TUC sponsored report published in March entitled 'The Under-pensioned 2016', women have less pension savings than men.

The study, conducted by the Pensions Policy Institute, further found that reasons for pension disadvantages in relation to women, ethnic minority workers and the self employed were due to: workplace discrimination; job segregation and lack of flexible working. For further details go to:

www.tuc.org.uk

Trade Union Bill

Amendments to the Trade Union Bill, which included union subscriptions, were discussed in the House of Lords on 25 February 2016.

Further scrutiny of the Bill took place on 16 March 2016.

The discussion on 16 March covered clauses 3,4,7,8 and 10-13, relating to ballots, voting paper

Trade Union Bill

information, notice of industrial action, expiry of mandate for industrial action, opting in, annual return, publication requirements and reserve powers.

The date for a second day of discussions is to be scheduled.

EHRC Report

Is Britain Fairer?

'Is Britain Fairer' is a report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, in relation to the state of equality and human rights.

The report found that disadvantaged groups, including people with learning disabilities, were falling further behind and missing out on opportunities in areas such as employment, healthcare and education.

Business in the Community

Race and the Workplace

A survey conducted by Business in the Community found that 84% of Black employees and 63% of white employees said it's important to progress at work.

In addition, Black workers were less satisfied with their experiences of management and progression. This finding was reflected in underrepresentation of Black workers at every management level in workplaces in the UK.

Results of the survey also revealed that racial harassment and bullying within the workplace continues to be prevalent.

**New
combined
State Pension**

**Black workers
less satisfied**

UNISON National Women's Conference, 11-13 February 2016

The opening introduction by the President, Wendy Nichols, was sobering and significant. The attacks on trade unionists from Cameron and his Tory Party are very clear with the Trade Union Bill and the cuts to public services and attacks on welfare.

Wendy reminded the 800 delegates and observers that 78% of UNISON members are now women. She also referred to the fact that women in the workplace still face discrimination and sexism and quoted a recent review of UNISON members in the police sector where 2/3rds of women stated that they had experienced bullying at work.

Dave Prentis reinforced the impact of the Tories cuts by referring to the fact that there has been £26 billion worth of privatisation in the last year with half a million job losses. He also mentioned that changes in Tribunal funding have led to a 83% reduction in sex discrimination cases.

The impact of these cuts are ones we work and live with every day and our potential to unite and fight these cuts are still possible.

Many delegates did feel that there needed to be more of an emphasis of resisting the cuts and actions to unite and oppose the cuts by the Tories.

The conference all stood up and held 'I Support the Junior Doctors' placards and we had our photos taken to show our support for their fight against pay cuts and conditions.

For me, the motions which were most powerful and received resounding support were those opposing the treatment of refugees in Europe and opposition to racism. The conference supported the 'Stand Up to Racism' demonstration in London on 19 March.

In practical terms, I have forwarded power points from conference to members of the Women's group on pensions changes. In addition, I attended a workshop on 'Women's Lives' that included information accessing trade union studies programme with Ruskin College and promoting applications for their BA (Hons) programme in September 2016. Anyone interested can email Caroline Holmes on cholmes@ruskin.ac.uk or telephone 01865 759608.

I thoroughly enjoyed conference and the sense of unity of purpose with over 800 women was inspiring.

Marion Doherty, Manchester Branch Delegate

My First Time at UNISON Women's Conference

Going to conference for the first time can be fairly daunting. There are so many things that organisers and experienced delegates take for granted. I had no idea of what terms like standing orders were, and was unsure of most of the processes for getting up to speak, tabling motions



"...women in the workplace still face discrimination and sexism..."

or even voting. Over the course of the three days you do get an idea, but I was very pleased to be accompanied by Marion Doherty, who has been to conference before and helped to guide me through.

I was surprised how many other people who'd never been before got up to speak on certain motions, but I didn't quite have the confidence this time and hadn't prepared to speak, which I regret now. I'd encourage future delegates to consider speaking if they have strong feelings about any of the motions, even if this is simply to support what is being set out.

Those who did speak were given a lot of encouragement from all the other delegates and got a round of applause just for getting up. Some of the motions raised a great deal of good debate which gave pause for thought, but it was done in a comradely fashion, rather than being confrontational or aggressive and everyone was commenting on the quality of the debate raised.

There was a mobile app for the conference delegates to sign up to and be able to tweet to each other, which was fun and did make you feel more included and engaged. It was a shame that the only North West Regional session was fairly formal and didn't really lend itself to getting to know people from other areas who you didn't know – lets face it, I didn't know anyone! I think if I had any comment on future improvement I

would suggest maybe a regional evening social, as I realise how surprisingly packed the conference days are, with various sessions, talks and stalls to get round.

There were sessions on all sorts of subjects – How to be a Labour Councillor, 50:50 parliamentary reform, pension rights, how to be a Union Learning Rep, amongst many more. We had a wonderful speech from Bradford West MP Naz Shah, who faced poverty, racism and sexism for much of her life, but was elected to parliament last year to represent the city in which she grew up – inspirational and moving.

If you asked me to pick out a main highlight, I would definitely say that the guest speaker from the organisation FORWARD, Adwoa Kwateng-Klavitse, stands out. This impressive speaker gave a very powerful account of the challenges facing women and girls at risk from Female Genital Mutilation across the world, and urged delegates to be aware of their legal and moral duty to protect and to prosecute: "Do not be paralysed by labels like racism, imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, neo-imperialism and islamophobia. Failure to protect a little girl from FGM is racist".

Needless to say, she got a standing ovation from conference. You can read more about the work of Forward at www.forwarduk.org.uk.

I felt exhilarated and pretty exhausted at the end, and the gentle digs from colleagues back at work about 'the jolly' to conference rang pretty hollow after a very full on day.



“...I'd encourage future delegates to consider speaking...”

I would seriously urge any female member to consider putting themselves forward for future conferences, it's a fantastic experience.

Dawn Warriner, Manchester Branch Delegate

International Women's Day

WOMEN'S VOICES – CHANGING MANCHESTER



Manchester Central Library hosted an event to mark International Women's Day on Saturday, 5 March with the theme being 'Women's Voices – Changing Manchester', which was chosen to reflect the huge changes taking place in the city.

Manchester is changing, expanding, flourishing and becoming a serious player on the world stage and women play an enormous role in the success of the city.

Throughout the day we wanted to hear women's voices and to tell us if women are benefiting from the growth and increased opportunities in the city and what success for women will look like in the future.



The event was a great success with women listening to a range of interesting speakers, participating in a number of activities and the opportunity to network.

Suzan Gregory, HROD Equalities Team

Black Members

Reflection and Reassessment

The New Year has brought with it a period of reflection and reassessment for UNISON Manchester's Black members' Self Organised Group (SOG). The ongoing primary focus of the SOG has been to increase its engagement and interaction with those UNISON members who view themselves as being Black and new/fresh ways of achieving this are being investigated at present.

However, the current climate of austerity and people being asked to do more for less, with increasing workloads and static/depleted resources, has a definite impact on members' ability to engage effectively



Increase engagement and interaction with members

with the SOG that must be acknowledged and hopefully addressed in a constructive and positive manner.

As ever, an overriding priority of the SOG is, and will be, to continue gathering the views, opinions and experiences of Black members of UNISON and also networking with parties who have an interest in UNISON and/or Black issues. An outcome of this will hopefully be to bring a focus to these issues and highlight areas where things are working well and where they can be made even better.

Damian Daley, Chair

LGBT

LGBT Question Time, 7 February 2016

The event was held at the Town Hall, jointly hosted by Manchester City Council (MCC) and the LGBT Foundation and attended by almost 100 people from across Greater Manchester.

This is an increase on last year's attendance, showing the event is growing in popularity and provides an opportunity for Manchester's lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities to put their questions to elected Members, service providers and LGBT groups and organisations. Panellists included Bev Craig, Lead Member for LGBT Women's issues, Manchester City Council; Rob Cookson, Deputy CEO, LGBT Foundation; Stephen Whittle,

Professor of Equalities at Manchester Metropolitan University; Jo Harvey-Barringer, CEO, Broken Rainbow and Inspector Jacqui Prest, Greater Manchester Police.

Questions from the floor included the benefit of LGBT as an inclusive term. Most panellists felt that name and terms should be flexible to reflect changes in society, but the overriding principle should be inclusivity.

There were three questions regarding trans issues in religious minority communities. Jacqui Prest from Greater Manchester Policy replied that any incidents of hate crime or abuse should be reported to the police and new ways of doing so have been introduced to make this easier, such as website reporting and the use of apps on mobile 'phones.

Bev Craig said all school children in Manchester are taught about equality, but accepted there were issues around cultural visibility in some communities. She also stated that the Council was developing a pledge for public bodies to sign on trans equality. Stephen Whittle pointed out that we should be following the successes of anti-racism initiatives that have proved particularly useful in schools.

One questioner asked if the current high profile of trans issues in the media was a passing fad. Stephen Whittle said that he did not agree with this proposition because recent court victories on equality issues and major advances in medical treatment showed there was no going back on parity of treatment for trans communities.

**Report on
homophobic
hate crime
to be
published soon**

**Hidden
domestic
abuse in LGBT
communities**

Inspector Jacqui Prest highlighted that a report on homophobic hate crime would be published soon, showing that 4/5 trans people had suffered some form of domestic abuse. She also told the meeting that Greater Manchester Police are recruiting new officers and they welcome applications from LGBT communities.

A questioner praised the 'village angels' initiative funded by the Police & Crime Commissioner and this view was echoed by the panel for the work they do in keeping people safe.

The issue of employment and promotional opportunities was also raised, with Professor Whittle pointing out that 21% of the trans community have post-graduate qualifications compared with 6% of the general public, but this was not reflected in career profiles of these groups. There is still a concrete ceiling for trans communities and there is a lack of visible role models.

A further questioner raised the issue of hidden domestic abuse in LGBT communities. Coercive control is a particular problem and people don't want to raise it when full equality has not yet been achieved. Of particular concern were threats by one partner to out the other to their family and friends or employer. Greater Manchester Police said that our region was leading the way on reporting and dealing with these issues, but there was a way to go.



Bev Craig also pointed out that there was a lead Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) worker working at Manchester City Council, to deal with any reported incidents.

Cuts to NHS Mental Health services for LGBT communities, with particular focus on Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services, were raised.

The panel felt there was no quick fix on this issue, given the government we have, but there may be some scope for improvement when NHS budgets are devolved to local areas.

The final question of the session expressed concern about the number of deaths reported as a result of Chemsex parties. The panel agreed that the use of legal highs and the resultant deaths was likely to be under reported but stressed that Brighton and Manchester are top areas for use of such highs at parties.

Robert Brown UNISON

**Lead
Independent
Violence
Advocate
worker
at Manchester
City Council**

Disabled Members

Disabled Members SOG

The Disabled UNISON SOG had its first meeting on the 27th January 2016. People who attended welcomed this group being set up and discussed some preliminary ideas about what we'd like from the group's role and purpose:

-Adopting the Social Model of Disability as the standard for how the SOG operates and functions

-Promote peer support to disabled UNISON members through sharing our experiences and pooling our knowledge, especially on negotiating reasonable adjustments in the workplace

-Providing informal advice about disability and reasonable adjustment ideas to individual UNISON stewards when they would find it useful for their casework

-Supporting the Manchester Branch Office with their consultations on workplace policies, through giving advice and opinions from a disability perspective

-Be a source of "expertise by experience" on disability for the Manchester UNISON Branch and contribute to their efforts to raise awareness and understanding of the barriers for disabled employees, amongst employers and their stewards

-Represent the Disabled SOG at any relevant Branch meetings

-Where appropriate, collaborate and engage with other Disabled

Employee networks in the City to share best practice, ideas and undertake joint work e.g. Disability History Month

-Meet at least 4 times annually with a virtual network operating amongst members

-Make contact with the Regional Disability UNISON Group

-Nominate representative from the Manchester Disabled UNISON SOG to attend the annual UNISON Disability Conference.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, 18 May 2016, 12pm-2pm, Room 2011, Level 2, Town Hall .Facility time is allowed.

Lorna Young, Chair

Community

New Women's Centre Launched

A new women's centre called Safespots has been launched in Wythenshawe to support victims of domestic abuse.

The drop in centre has been set up by a group of Wythenshawe women who wanted to change the way domestic abuse is dealt with in their community.

The centre will be open Monday to Friday, 9.30am-2.30pm, services available include women's aid, independent choices, legal support, housing advice, counselling, self-defence classes, community gym and employment support. To contact the centre call 07873889637 or email

Wythenshawe.safespots@gmail.com

Next Disabled Members' SOG

SOG

18 May 2016

New women's centre

Community

Call for Monument Support

Operation Instigate - Support needed for a National Memorial Arboretum in recognition of the many thousands of people from the West Indies who have fought in British Wars and helped to protect British interests here and abroad.

Regional steering groups in England and Wales are to be created and meetings are to be held in March and April.

For further information contact Sharon Thomas, Community Engagement Leader.

Tel: 01706 674316

Email

Sharon.Thomas@riverside.org.uk

Events

31 March 2016

Transgender day of visibility

For information go to:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Transgender_Day_of_Visibility

4 April 2016

Branch Consultation

There will be a Special General Meeting on the EU Referendum, in the Lord Mayor's Parlour, at Manchester Town Hall.

Events

The meeting will commence at 5.30pm. Tea/coffee and light refreshments will be available from 5pm.

28 April 2016

International Workers' Memorial Day

12.00am – 11.30pm

Events to take place across the UK and internationally.

29 April 2016

Women in STEM & Non-STEM

Lecture to take place at Liverpool John Moore's University.

Speaker: Chi Unwurah MP, Shadow Minister for Culture & the Digital Economy.

If you would like to register go to:

<https://womeninstemlecturelmu.eventbrite.co.uk>

17 May 2016

This is an International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia.

If you would like further information go to:

<http://dayagainsthomophobia.org>

**What is your day role?**

I work in the Growth and Neighbourhoods Directorate as an engineer, to design and maintain the City Council's highway structures (bridges, retaining walls and other associated structures) in good and serviceable condition.

What's your ideal job and why?

My ideal job is working with motivated people to add value to other individuals and infrastructure around me.

How long have you been a UNISON member?

25 years.

What does UNISON mean to you?

It is an organisation that I can identify with because of the fair and pragmatic approach to issues affecting members.

Do you have a role within the union eg steward/convenor?

No.

What are your interests away from work?

I belong to the Manchester City Council Christian Fellowship that meets twice a month to encourage members to be pro-active in promoting fairness and ethics in the community.

The MCCCCF also helps to organize the Lunchtime Carol Service that takes place in the Great Hall every year in December.

Outside the City Council, I am a Sunday school teacher for teenagers in my church where I encourage them to realise and cherish their unique identity to make a positive difference wherever they are.

Last but not least, I became a granddad in November 2015 to my beautiful 'princess' Ziva, whom I love to baby-sit whenever the opportunity arises!

Who is your role model and why?

I have a few role models like Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy and others of similar character who embody courage, sacrifice and inclusiveness, even in the face of fierce opposition.

Congratulations on becoming a proud granddad Victor.

UNISON "...is an organisation that I can identify with because of the fair and pragmatic approach to issues affecting members"



What is your day role?

Graduate Scheme member placed in the HROD Strategic Workforce Planning Team, working on and supporting projects to gain greater understanding of work undertaken within the scope of HROD.

I am also being supported through my CIPD qualification and will ultimately move to another team within HROD, to further broaden my experience.

What's your ideal job and why?

Wolverhampton Wanderers right back. I would like to play for the club I love and be in a position where I might get away with the odd mistake!

How long have you been a UNISON member?

Only recently, as I joined the City Council in September 2015.

What does UNISON mean to you?

Being part of a union has, primarily from my perspective, been about ensuring you have

someone to support you if needs be.

UNISON offers valuable services to members, but for me it's something that provides protection and cover, obviously with the hope you will never need to call upon this.

UNISON serves to provide peace of mind, but also particularly in light of the culture being created around Unions, it's important to stand up and demonstrate support for it.

Do you have a role within the union eg steward/convenor? No.

What are your interests away from work?

Football is a big one. I try and play as often as I can and watch Wolves struggle to finish just outside the playoffs at the weekends.

I also enjoy the cinema, galleries and museums and love to go out and learn something new.

Manchester City Centre never ceases to offer new and exciting opportunities in this regard.

Who is your role model and why?

My Dad, who has always helped me out would be one I would pick, but I am constantly working with people who I can learn from and look up to, in order to continue my development.

Wolves? Shouldn't it start with Manchester.....?

EQUALITY MATTERS is also at www.unisonmanchester.org

Deadline for comments and articles to be submitted for Issue 5 of this Newsletter is Friday, 17 June 2016. Comments and articles to be emailed to: s.stewart1@manchester.gov.uk

“UNISON serves to provide peace of mind, but also particularly in light of the culture being created around unions, it's important to stand up and demonstrate support for it...”