

# EQUALITY MATTERS



**SELF ORGANISED GROUPS**

**Issue 5**

**July 2016**

So much has happened since the last issue, including the Trade Union Bill being passed as Act and the EU Referendum taking place.

See inside for how these changes could affect us, as well as other information.

Thanks for your articles and comments.

Sonia Stewart  
Branch Equality Officer

## **Trade Union Act 2016**

The Trade Union Bill became Act in May 2016

### Briefings

UNISON briefings on the Trade Union Act will be held during September and October 2016 throughout the North West

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## **Special points of interest in Issue 5:**

**Branch News**

**EU Referendum**

**Trade Union Act**

**National Conference**

## Message from the UNISON General Secretary

### The Tories are divided, but at this crucial time, Labour should not be

Last summer, our union nominated Jeremy Corbyn for Labour leader, and a great number of our members voted for him in the Labour leadership contest.

Support for Jeremy remains the position of this union as determined by our members through our democratic structures. Our Labour party members conference next week will have an open and honest debate about the future of the party, and how Labour wins the coming election.

It is not the PLP or trade unions who now elect the leader of the Labour Party – it is party members and affiliate supporters, and that mandate should be respected.

It is essential that the Labour Party is united in dealing with the huge threats to our economy, society and public services as our country faces a period of huge uncertainty.

The Tories are divided, but at this crucial time, Labour should not be.

As we appear to be moving towards an early general election, our members need strong and united leadership from the Labour Party.

If MPs choose not to serve in the Shadow Cabinet, the Labour leader has a right to seek to form a shadow cabinet and lead our

party as long as he has the support of party members.

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## Manchester Branch Learning Lunch and Teatime Training

The theme of this training was 'Breaking through barriers to organising and everyday recruitment opportunities'.

Following a survey of stewards, Manchester Branch held short training sessions in June 2016 for Branch representatives.

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## Other News

### EU Referendum

#### What now for equality?

- Since the result of the EU Referendum was announced, hate crime has, reportedly, increased by 57%
- Three men were arrested days after the EU Referendum for racist taunts towards a passenger on a Manchester tram
- An African Caribbean Care Group day centre in Manchester had to be evacuated following threats

**57% rise in  
hate crime**

## Sex Discrimination

A woman who is a zero-hours contract worker, won £3,500 in a sex discrimination case she took to an Employment Tribunal, after her employer told her how to look and what to wear to work, so she could look "easy on the eye".

## Survey

A Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) article refers to a recent survey where 87% of women in the UK were found to have experienced sexism at work.

Examples include work being unfairly allocated, sexual harassment and lack of promotional opportunities.

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## Trade Union Act 2016

The Trade Union Bill became Act on 4 May 2016. UNISON briefings on the Act will be held throughout the North West in September and October. Some of the main changes are:

### Industrial Action - Ballots

- Industrial action will be unlawful if fewer than 50% of members take part in a ballot

### Concessions:

- The notice period that unions must give employers prior to taking action will be 14 days, or 7 days by agreement

- The Act requires the Government to hold an independent review of electronic balloting

- The Bill originally did not have any provision for a shorter notice period by agreement prior to action.

### Industrial Action – Picketing

- Picket supervisors must make themselves known to police and employers and carry a letter of authorisation

### Concession:

- Original proposals to require everyone on a picket line to show their personal data to the police, employers or anyone else who asks to see it have been dropped

### Political campaigning

- New members will be required to 'opt in' to the union's political fund

### Concession:

- The demand that members opt in rather than opt out will be delayed for 12 months and will only apply to new members rather than all members as originally proposed

### Facility time and check-off

- The Government could in future intervene to cap the amount of facility time granted by an individual employer

### Concession:

- Lobbying led to the Lords removing the proposal to cap facility time but the Government has reinstated it. The cap will not be introduced before research has been undertaken

Source: UNISON information

**Sex discrimination case won**

**87% of women in the UK have experienced sexism at work**

**Pregnancy Rights**

An updated UNISON guide entitled ‘Pregnancy: Your Rights at Work’ is now available. This gives an explanation of the statutory rights for working pregnant women.

The guide includes health and safety at work, rate of statutory maternity/paternity pay, qualifying conditions, shared parental leave, as well as keeping in touch days.

For more information go to:

<https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2016/05/23815.pdf>

**Home Working**

A TUC study has found that although men are in the majority when it comes to working from home, the biggest growth has been women working from home. The growth has seen a 35% increase between 2005 and 2015.

However, research by the Government has found that there are still millions of people in the UK who are not being given the opportunity by employers, to work from home.

**Maternity Action**

UNISON NW Regional Women’s Committee donated £50 to Maternity Action, to help in the provision of specialist advice to women across the country experiencing pregnancy discrimination.

The donation will also assist with the organisation’s campaign for an

end to maternity-related discrimination.

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**Black Members**

**Definition of Black**

In UNISON, ‘**Black**’ – with a capital B - is used to indicate people with a shared history.

‘Black’ is used in a broad political and inclusive sense to describe people in the UK who have suffered from colonialism and enslavement in the past and continue to experience racism and diminished opportunities in today’s society.

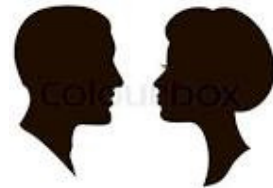
The terms ‘minority ethnic’ and ‘ethnic minority’ are in widespread official use. But these terms have negative connotations of being marginal or less important. In many neighbourhoods, towns and cities in the UK it is statistically inaccurate or misleading to describe Black groups as a minority.

Since the ‘70s, the term ‘Black’ has been used in anti-racist campaigning in recognition of the common struggle against racism and under-representation.

Language changes and evolves but terminology is always important in terms of intention and direction. Using ‘Black’ is about creating unity in the fight against deep-rooted racism that sees Black people disadvantaged in housing, education, employment and the criminal justice and health systems.’

Source: UNISON ‘Defining Black’ publication

**35% increase in women working from home since 2005**



## Disabled Members

## Disabled Members

### A view of the Social Model of Disability – by UNISON Disabled Members' SOG

The newly formed UNISON Disabled SOG in Manchester Branch voted to adopt and promote the social model of disability at our last meeting. In his own words, a member of the Group describes why the social model way of thinking is so important to him personally and to disabled people. He also contrasts it with the "medical model of disability" which has done so much to keep disabled people excluded from fully participating in society.

"I think it's essential that the Disabled UNISON SOG adopts **"the Social Model of Disability.** By this, I mean that society as a whole places barriers in the way of disabled people such as the lack of access (and here I do not just mean access for wheelchair users, but I am also talking about facilities that would assist partially sighted and blind employees such as the use of CD's and other recorded materials.

Hard of Hearing employees might find it easier to communicate if they read people's lips but this could only happen if people sat close enough. Deaf people could also benefit from the provision of Induction Loops in rooms. However some deaf people may find difficulties communicating with other people if there is too much loud music in a pub or if there is generally too much background noise.

Disability may still also be very much be seen as a "medical"

issue and this is still very commonly seen on assessment forms for benefits such as the Disability Living Allowance or P.I.P.S. Payments.

In the "medical model" of disability, disabled people tend to be told to find their own individual solutions to issues that affect them and little account tends to be given to the prevailing difficulties that disabled people in society as a whole. This may be something of a generalisation, but in the medical model disabled people may be told what to do while the Social Model places more emphasis on our self determination and puts us in control to say what kind of lives disabled people want to live themselves instead of being "told" what to do by doctors and other "professional" people and organisations.

If I can relate this to the situation within my work, I feel that it is very important for union stewards, managers and senior managers at Manchester City Council to realise that disabled people should be given the same opportunities both in training and internal employment opportunities as everyone else. I say this because I feel that there may be a tendency for disabled people to be concentrated on the lower pay scales in "routine" jobs which may not suit either their abilities or take account of the specific effects of people's impairments"

The Social Model of Disability was developed by a group of pioneering disabled people in the 1980's as a way of empowering disabled people by redefining disability as a social construct. The social model has been the driving influence behind

**"I think it's essential that the Disabled UNISON SOG adopts "the Social Model of Disability..."**

transformative public policy such as Equality Act, Independent Living, personalisation and the Care Act.

Lorna Young, Chair

## **Skills for Strength 2016**

This year's UNISON Skills for Strength Convention was held on Saturday, 12 March at the Mechanics Institute in Manchester and attracted over 170 attendees.

Skills for Strength brings together activists and trade unionists from across the North West, to share ideas, best practice and skills to help build the union, strengthen our position in the workplace and improve the lives of our members.

The event ran several workshops including Direct Debit and Switch, Social Media, as well as Equalities.

Areas covered at the Equalities workshop included: Discrimination employment claims 2013/16; the ability to tackle institutional discrimination; discussion of equality in the workplace and pressure on management to address the issues.

Some questions debated at the convention were:

- How can problems experienced on equality in the workplace be collectivised?
- What needs to happen to ensure that equality issues are

- on the unions organising and collective bargaining agendas?
- How can SOGs groups be instrumental in making this change?

Skills for Strength 2016 resources and videos can be found at:

[www.unisonnw.org/skillsforstrength](http://www.unisonnw.org/skillsforstrength)

## **National Conference**

### **Local Government Service Group (LGSG) Conference 19-20 June 2016, Brighton**

Below are some decisions, in relation to the equalities agenda:

#### **Single Status and Equality Legislation**

In local government, women are still being paid less than they should be, compared to men. Local authorities have a duty to comply with equal pay legislation and women shouldn't be denied an equal wage because of a failure to properly monitor and assess pay.

Action to be carried out by the Service Group Executive includes:

- Continuing to provide and update training and technical advice that equips local and regional negotiators to spot and counter discrimination and inequality and promote equal pay and equality proofed pay structures
- Working with the National Executive Council, all of the UK

**Women are still being paid less**



TUC's campaign for policies to strengthen compliance with equal pay legislation

### **The fight for fair sickness absence procedures and 'Disability Leave'**

The LGSG has been called on to work with the National Disabled Members' Committee to:

- Campaign for the protection and improvement of rights for disabled members
- Provide guidance for branches on how to defend sick pay and ensure that disabled members aren't targeted under sickness absence procedures
- Encourage local authorities to use UNISON guidance to introduce Disability Leave policies

### **Impact of Low Pay on Black Workers in Local Government**

LGSG is to consider the impact of low pay on Black workers in local government, the ethnic pay gap in all future negotiations and seek to encourage all local authority employers to:

- Collect and publish pay analysis across protected characteristics including race
- Use pay audits and the collection of other relevant data to further investigate the extent of the ethnic pay gap in local government employment

Source: UNISON Information

## **July**

**8-10**

### **LGBT: Sparkle and Buff**

Manchester

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**9-10**

### **Manchester Eid Festival**

10am-6pm, British Muslim Heritage Centre, College Road, Whalley Range, M16 8PB

For further information go to:

<http://www.bmhc.org.uk/eid-festival-2016/>

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### **From Shadows of War and Empire Exhibition: Perspectives of colonised people on World War One**

This exhibition runs until 17 July and examines the involvement of British colonies in World War One (West Indies, India, East Africa and Nigeria)

It also looks at the impact of the war on those countries, subsequently leading to independence movements.

The organisers would also like to engage with schools, as well as youth and community groups

For further information contact:

Kirit Patel, Project Co-ordinator

kirit@southernvoicesuk.org.uk or  
07543 691 632

**Local Authorities to be encouraged to use UNISON guidance for Disability Leave policies**

**Call for pay analysis across protected characteristics including race, to be published**

**Events 2016****Events 2016****July****23****North West Regional Women's Conference**

9.30/10am to 4.00pm, UNISON Regional Office, Arena Point, 1 Hunt's Bank, M3 1UN

Theme: 'Women & Immigration: Recognising the Contribution of Public Sector Nurses'

Contact Suzanne-Moores Gould, Regional Women's Officer, telephone 0161 661 6778

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**30-31****Manchester Mega Mela**

Platt Fields Park

Fallowfield

Manchester, M14 5LL

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**August****26-29**

LGBT: Manchester Pride

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**September****Organising, campaigning and recruitment**

Another UNISON recruitment fortnight is to be held in September.

Regional planning is underway.

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**October**

Diwali Festival

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**November****8 and 9**

Confidence Skills for Young Women Members, UNISON Centre, London

To register interest in attending email [learningandorganising@unison.co.uk](mailto:learningandorganising@unison.co.uk) or telephone 0207 121 5116

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## One Britain One Nation (OBON)

### 'Pledge to the Nation Campaign' Greater Manchester Launch

OBON is non-profit making and aims to bring people together regardless of background, to celebrate shared values, instead of focusing on differences.

OBON first launched its Pledge in January 2016, in Bradford.

This was followed by a well-supported Greater Manchester 'Pledge to the Nation Campaign' launch in April, at the British Muslim Centre in Whalley Range, Manchester.



Guest speakers at the Manchester launch in April included: The Lord Mayor of Manchester, Councillor Paul Murphy OBE; Kash Singh, Founder and CEO of OBON and the Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, Warren Smith.

The event was attended by Councillor Naeem, Ul Hassan JP, former Lord Mayor of Manchester and OBON Coordinator for Greater Manchester.

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## Reclaim Project

“Discarding intolerance makes a great society, embracing our differences makes our Manchester Greater”

The above is part of the Reclaim Project’s manifesto.

This Greater Manchester based project works with young people, to create social change campaigns.

Reclaim has distributed postcards within Greater Manchester asking for people who find them to return a postcard with a message of why they think Greater Manchester is great.

For further information go to:

[www.reclaimproject.org.uk/campaigns/gr eatmanc/](http://www.reclaimproject.org.uk/campaigns/gr eatmanc/)

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**“Discarding intolerance makes a great society, embracing our differences makes our Manchester Greater”**

## Who Are You?

## Paul Mittler



### What is your day role?

I am an Administrative Officer within the Directorate of Children and Families.

One of my main duties is to research Freedom of Information Requests and I am currently comparing the answers that four neighbouring Local Authorities give to these requests.

### What's your ideal job and why?

I have always been interested in social policies and my ideal job would be some kind of Policy Officer.

Although I have not been involved in UNISON to any great extent, I have been an active member of the Disabled Staff Group within the Council. In December 2014, the group organised a couple of exhibitions to coincide with the centenary of the First World War.

As a physically disabled employee myself, I was particularly interested to note that the history of "war pensions" that sick or injured soldiers were entitled to, actually dates back to 1916 - only

eight years after Old Age Pensions were established.

This was very much a surprise to me, as I had always assumed that the history of modern disability benefits began only with the introduction of the Mobility Allowance and the Attendance Allowance in the 1970's.

I am interested in looking at historical trends and think that the analysis of these might be an important way of "learning from the past" and avoiding "mistakes" that might have been made in years gone by.

### How long have you been a UNISON member?

Since first being employed by the Council in 1977. In 1977 the Trade Union was called N.A.L.G.O, which stood for the National Association of Local Government Officers.

### What does UNISON mean to you?

Apart from attempting to improve the pay and working conditions for members, I believe that UNISON can promote the cause of disabled people and other disadvantaged groups. I know that the Trade Union has done this in the past.

From 1986 to 2008, I was a Further Education Governor representing the "interests of the whole community" at what was then Manchester College of Arts and Technology.

I found that I was one of the few disabled Further Education Governors in the country and in 2006 I was asked to speak at a national Further Education Conference in London, about the role of disabled staff in Further and Higher Education.

**"...UNISON**

**can promote  
the cause of  
disabled  
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**disadvantaged  
groups."**

## Who Are You?

## Christine Amica

More recently, as a member of Global Justice Now, I have been involved in the TTIP campaign and have noted that this was one of the issues to be debated at UNISON's National Conference.

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

I have not played a role within the Trade Union.

### What are your interests away from work?

My interests away from work are theatre and music, as well as listening to the radio.

I also wrote my autobiography entitled 'Disability Memories-The early years', that was used for a 2015 Disability History Month event.

### Who is your role model and why?

Linda Carroll, who was one of the early Equal Opportunity Officers in the Equal Opportunities Unit when the Unit was established in 1985, continues to be an important role model. She was a great believer in promoting partnerships with voluntary organisations.

Indeed, I still remember the two of us going to the very first AGM of the only national organisation that was controlled by disabled people, the British Council of Disabled People, and the difficulties we had in trying to find their offices in North London.

Linda was very "People Centred" and we shared many of the same values and beliefs.



### What is your day role?

I am a Quality and Review Officer in the Quality, Performance and Compliance Service, Children and Families Directorate.

In a nutshell, the review role involves reviewing our commissioned services to inform future commissioning intentions ie how the service is working, whether it meets the needs of our citizens, do we need to change anything? Does it fit with the Council's strategic priorities? What difference does the service make?

The quality role involves assessing the quality of our commissioned services against quality frameworks, to ensure our citizens are receiving good quality services.

I really enjoy my role, especially visiting services, meeting staff, people who use the services and partner agencies, as well as making recommendations.

### What's your ideal job and why?

My ideal job is anything that makes a positive difference to the world we live in and the people/living creatures that live in it.

**“UNISON means working collectively and in solidarity with other like minded people...”**

## Who Are You?

In addition, anything that promotes peace, justice, fairness, happiness, unity while respecting difference.

### How long have you been a UNISON member?

I can't remember, a long time.

### What does UNISON mean to you?

Working collectively and in solidarity with other like minded people (locally, nationally and internationally), to create the change I want to see in the world, to make values such as social justice, equality, fairness live and active in the world we live in.

Promoting health and safety, ensuring workers' rights, access to conferences and education, for example, TUC courses and campaigning.

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

I used to up until the recent past. Roles I held were: Workplace steward; secretary to UNISON Manchester Women's Self Organised Group; Branch representative to North West Regional Women's Group (NWRWG); representative from NWRWG to Women's National Conference (2 years).

I am currently a member of the Branch's Black Members' Self Organised Group and Women's Self Organised Group. However, due to personal circumstances I had to step back, but I'm hoping to become more actively involved again in the near future.

## Christine Amica

### If yes, what do you like about your role?

I like motivating members, acting on behalf of members to support them, making a positive difference to the workplace for individuals and for members generally.

Working with others to make a difference, the members of the NWRWG were very motivating and inspirational as they were a very dynamic group. They were inspirational women.

### What are your interests away from work?

Being with loved ones.

I like eating, touring the UK and other countries as pillion rider on my friend's motorbike.

I also like cooking, photography, food and community activism.

Did I mention I like food....?

### Who is your role model and why?

My parents (RIP) - I was privileged to have them as my parents. I get my values from them.

Anyone who takes action to stand up against injustice and make the world a fairer, safer, better place for all living creatures of the world.

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**EQUALITY MATTERS is also at**  
[www.unisonmanchester.org](http://www.unisonmanchester.org)

**Deadline for comments and articles to be submitted for Issue 6 of this Newsletter is Friday, 16 September 2016. Comments and articles to be emailed to:**

[s.stewart1@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:s.stewart1@manchester.gov.uk)