

EQUALITIES

DIVERSITY IN THE UNION

Conference fully supports our Union's agenda of working for race equality in the workplace. We also continue to strive to ensure full representation of BAEM members at all levels of Unite.

However, the National BAEM Committee believes that it is important for our union to be strongly committed to taking the lead, as an employer, to increasing diversity at Officer level. We must take action on under-representation of BAEM workers at senior levels and show other employers, our members and all workers, that this matter is a priority in our Union.

We call on the Union, in conjunction with the National BAEM Committee to:

1. Urgently conduct an equality audit within the union, covering all Officers and staff and showing numbers and percentages of those applying for and getting appointed, particularly at senior level and the diversity of employees at all grades.
2. Develop a strategy and action plan to increase the representation of BAEM Officers, including the use of positive action and practical support for BAEM reps such as encouraging BAEM stand down officers; mentoring/shadowing and targeted training. Each region should take responsibility to implement the action plan.
3. Regular monitoring and review of the strategy to ensure success, along with publication of the audit results and a full report to the Executive Council.

BAEM National Committee

BAEM MEMBERS AT THE HEART OF THE UNITE COMMUNITY SECTION

Conference believes that the Regional BAEM Committee should work within their communities to help encourage and build membership within the Unite community membership scheme.

This would allow us to become more pro-active in issues affecting the community.

We call on Conference and Unite to:

- Ensure that the Regional BAEM Committees are an integral part of the community membership scheme
- Visible and supported in their work in the community
- Be involved in the issues around the riots in London/UK and the finding
- It is well publicised that unemployment is worst in areas with large ethnic minority groups and young people, if we are serious about supporting or bringing about change, the way forward, post riots is for Unite to be visible in the community, organising people, bringing them together and promoting equality, dignity and respect
- Work with other community groups and unions that are campaigning against deaths in police custody.

This list is not exhaustive but a guide as to some of the areas we believe we need to be addressed.

BAEM WORKERS VOICE NEEDS TO BE HEARD NOW

This coalition government seems to be picking up where Margaret Thatcher left off as they exhibit their keenness to diminish the strength and the rights of ordinary working people. They are also taking steps to destroy the trade union movement once again. We must not let them win.

We must join with our trade union brothers and sisters to ensure that this does not happen. All workers will suffer the consequences of any such destruction, but BAEM ethnic workers will suffer more, as they have done in the past.

BAEM workers have no one to turn to but trade unions when they experience difficulties in the workplace and in this present climate, where cuts are being made left, right and centre, there is evidence to show that when restructuring and redundancies are being considered in organizations, BAEM workers are being disproportionately affected.

Trade unions and Workplace Reps make a vital contribution to the collective empowerment of all workers. We need to collect data on the experiences of BAEM workers, particularly information on how the present climate has affected them and how they are dealing with problems they face in the workplace today.

To truly eradicate social exclusion, it requires that all members in our communities have equality of access to work, rights and political participation. In the context of all three, this still remains an aspiration for many of our BAEM brothers and sisters.

We as a Trade Union Movement need to explore the thinking of real solidarity, accountability and representation and acknowledge that we may not be meeting the needs of our BAEM membership.

We need to stop talking about Equality or writing policies and strategies and start bringing Equality to life so it is effective in the lives of those who are suffering obvious disadvantage in society and in the workplace.

Regional BAEM Cttee – West Midlands

DISABILITY HATE CRIME

Unite is very concerned at the recent increase in much of the Press and media, of their portrayal of Disabled People labelling them as "scroungers" and "workshy".

The language surrounding disability used within mainstream media is often negative. This is especially true regarding hidden impairments, possibly due to a lack of understanding. When dealing with mental and learning disabilities, the media often uses very strong negative language.

This has been highlighted further by the recent comments made by Philip Davies MP for Shipley in a House of Commons debate, stating that "disabled people should work for below the minimum wage".

These types of comments are particularly unhelpful in the current economic climate where disabled people are bearing the brunt of the CONDEM Cuts agenda.

Unite believes disability hate crime must have a much higher priority and must work to end the discrimination faced by disabled people.

Unite believes that any new proposals for reform must not cause disabled people worry, hardship and stress

Unite opposes any under-funding which has a serious impact on the service provided to disabled people.

Unite calls and must campaign for:

- Challenge the right wing media attacks against disabled people at all levels in our society.
- Campaign for more protection for disabled people in relation to their portrayal in the media
- Highlight the positive benefits of employing disabled workers
- A properly funded hate crime programme, retained and provided by the public sector
- Adequate disability training of all such staff, carrying out the tasks
- The Government to honour its hate crime commitment and not force disabled people to face unsafe circumstances
- Improve funding and publicity
- The power of ensuring discrimination is prevented
- The Government to work in partnership with all providers to increase awareness of all disability issues
- A statutory right to treat everyone fairly who has extra needs

Disabled Members National Committee

DISABLED RIGHTS

This Conference notes that the rights of disabled people are under sustained attack by the Coalition Government. Conference notes that disabled people are also frequently disproportionately affected by redundancies and other attacks in the workplace.

Conference reaffirms its belief that all disabled people have an right to a life free from discrimination and with all necessary support to maximise their ability to play a full and equal role in society.

Conference recognises that the defence of disabled people is inextricably linked with our defence of working class rights as a whole.

Conference therefore calls on:

1. Branches and Area Activist Committees to support activities and campaigns defending disabled people both locally and nationally;
2. Workplace reps to ensure all agreements with employers include any necessary provisions to defend the rights of disabled workers and ensure compliance with, and extension of, their legal rights;
3. The Executive Council to ensure campaigning material and resource is available as necessary and that all officials of the union recognise that defending the disabled people is a priority for our union.

Disabled Members Committee – London & Eastern

DISABILITY LEAVE

This region notes that the Equality Act provides for workers with a disability to negotiate the option of disability leave, where appropriate, as a “reasonable adjustment”.

This disability leave option we believe prevents disabled workers from being penalised under the absence management procedure or suffering any financial detriment due to their disability.

Unite members within a number of employers have access to paid disability leave which we believe is a progressive measure to assist members who are disabled.

The West Midlands Regional Disability Committee calls upon this conference to pursue at the earliest opportunity a suitable paid disability leave policy as a matter of urgency. For all employees that are disabled across the UK.

Regional Disability Cttee – West Midlands

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS & DISABLED MEMBERS

Conference notes the union’s policy to support a disabled member’s reasonable adjustment for a personal facilitator to support them to participate in training and the democratic processes is not fit for purpose and may lead to members being unable to be active across the union.

The policy is not fit for purpose and is written for childcare or the members existing caring responsibilities

- Disabled people do not need carers; they may wish support of a personal assistant
- Disabled members should not have to justify this requirement or how their disability effects travelling, accommodation, eating arrangements etc
- Implying the term carers is not inline with the social model of disability and insulting
- There is a legal responsibility to provide reasonable adjustments

Conference we call on you to

- Review this policy and create a separate policy to support reasonable adjustments and the use of personal assistants for disabled members
- Ensure that personal assistants will not be out of pocket when supporting the disabled member and be given the same daily subsistence allowances

- Raise and inform all branches and industry committees of reasonable adjustments for disabled members and their importance to improve participation

WM/Coventry Building Society 0260 Branch

EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED WORKERS

This Conference demands our Union lobbies our government is becoming pro-active in helping to transform the lives of disabled people and those experiencing complex barriers to work. This is providing where possible sustainable employment opportunities through positive discrimination by the reintroduction of an employment quota system.

We cannot stay silent, when we can see imminent cuts to our vital government factories such as Remploy and other support services, this c/o The Liz Sayce Report. This report will result in minority groups becoming casualties. The Union needs to show support within our communities, and push for employment opportunities for disabled people which for many is seen as a key element to an independent, fulfilling life and assists others to understand that everyone has a skill to offer. We must not neglect a major pool of valuable talent who could find themselves pushed to the back of the unemployment queue.

The reintroduction of a quota scheme would be paramount in breaking down barriers to equal opportunities for all.

Aerospace & Shipbuilding RISC – South West

ADHERENCE TO ARTICLE 19

This conference believes that Article 19 of the European Union Procurement Directive is a vitally important measure that helps support disabled workers in the workplace.

Conference does welcome the heightened awareness that the various Government Departments at UK and also Devolved Administrations have tried to give to support Article 19. However Conference believes fine words and aspirations are not enough and in fact at times Article 19 is not being adhered to.

Conference believes that we require to redouble our efforts both internally within Unite but also by our engagement externally to ensure that greater adherence is achieved.

Conference therefore calls on Unite through all its Constitutional Groups/Committees to engage in a planned awareness programme which will enable these Groups/Committees to more ensure that Article 19 is raised at all levels of the workplace where we organise and can have some influence over the various employers as well as through our political structures and relationship with the Labour Party.

Conference also calls upon Unite to engage at the highest level with the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations to call upon them to increase adherence to Article 19 through further legislation if necessary.

Health RISC - Scotland

EQUALITY MONITORING OF APPOINTMENTS

The NEYH Women's Committee expressed concerns relating to the lack of progress of women within the lay member and officer compliment of the union, especially in relation to stand down officers and RIO's.

The Committee asks that a monitoring review be conducted by the EC on an annual basis and published annually in order to monitor all appointments within the union, especially in relation to the numbers of women and equality applicants for positions, proportion of women and equality applicants shortlisted and the percentage of successful female and equality appointments.

The Committee also asks that a clear equality proofed criteria be established and published to determine stand down officers within the regions, as it is perceived that stand down positions are normally given to male activists.

Regional Women's Committee – NEY&H

GETTING INVOLVED

Conference acknowledges the work that has already been done by the Executive Council to ensure that constitutional committees include women, black, Asian & Ethnic minorities, disabled, LGB&T, Young & Retired members, but we recognise more needs to be done to tackle under-representation, remove barriers to participation and encourage all members to get involved.

We therefore ask that the initiative taken by the West Midlands Women's Committee in organising a week end educational summer school, initially for women members of the Union in the region to attend, be rolled out to all the regions of the Union with the aim of giving women an understanding of the Unite structures therefore gaining the knowledge and confidence to stand as shop stewards in the future. This will both benefit our members and the union.

Regional Women's Committee – West Midlands

LGBT EDUCATION AND ZERO TOLERANCE TO DISCRIMINATION

This conference recognises that education is the key to preventing and dealing with discrimination and prejudice in the first instance. That understanding of peoples' issues and lives can help prevent accidental offence or prejudice caused through ignorance.

However, this union is aware that there are examples across the union of officers, reps, and members who either do not understand lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans issues because they have not been afforded the opportunity to be educated or have chosen to ignore the training and remain prejudiced.

Therefore, this conference calls on the Unite Executive Council to

1. Stringently and actively review all its education and training courses to ensure LGBT issues are mainstreamed throughout, with a report back to the Executive Council.
2. Train all officers and reps on LGBT equality.
3. To ensure there is involvement between the regional LGBT committees, Regional Women's & Equalities Organisers, and the regional education tutors, ie. sight of course materials and meetings taking place with tutors.
4. Monitor and compile all workplace/branch/regional and national complaints that are LGBT related for review by the regional and national LGBT committees.

5. Produce a zero tolerance policy to homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia within the union that is acted upon.
6. To ensure that all cases related to discrimination and prejudice within this union are dealt with seriously and effectively, and those responsible, both in terms of the perpetrator and those dealing with the complaint are held accountable at all times.

LGBT National Committee

ORGANISING AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Conference notes with concern the decline in trade union membership, not only in our union but also across all trade unions. This trend look set to continue as the current coalition government persists with its attacks on working people.

Conference is concerned that as the age profile of our membership increases, the decline in our membership will become apparent and visible. It is clear that to increase our membership we need to focus on organising and recruitment of young people, whether they be in employment or not. Our Community Membership is ideal for those not currently in employment.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to take action on this pressing issue in the following ways:

- Strategically map where and when schools could be potential targets for trade union educational programs and contributions.
- Ensure that dedicated trained UNITE personnel are able to approach schools in order to gain and maximize access.
- Roll out the use of the 'Schools Packs' developed by our own young members and education department. These packs have been available for more than a year and yet their use has not been implemented. These packs will educate young people at school on what a trade union actually is, the history of trade unionism, and the benefits of membership, and will encourage young people to join the union once they leave school. They could also be used in colleges and university with slight adaptation; these young people could join our Community Membership immediately;
- Work with the education department to deliver more young members' courses, one course a year is simply not sufficient. The courses will encourage activism within our existing members, who will then go back to their workplaces, organise and recruit more members;
- Take advantage of the skills and expertise within the Community, Youth Workers and Not for Profit sector to develop training and campaigns that could be delivered to the young people they work with, who access the services they provide, and who may or may not be in employment;
- Title of Motion: Work with the organising department to identify workplaces with younger age profiles and deliver 100% campaigns in those workplaces. These campaigns must be targeted specifically to those workplaces and the work they undertake, and be delivered with young people as the focus - a one-size fits all campaign will not work in these circumstances.

YOUNG WORKERS - UNDERPAID OR UNPAID

This Conference believes that young people are worst hit when unemployment runs rampant. Vacant jobs remain concentrated in low skilled, low paying sectors and unpaid internships are becoming the single point of entry into many professions as competition for decent apprenticeships and university places intensifies with supply lagging well behind demand.

Conference agrees that the Government's sparse package of support for young workers is of insufficient scale to make a significant impact on endemic youth unemployment.

Conference worries that the Government's enthusiasm for internships and work experience as a potential solution will irreparably damage young workers rights. Without guarantees of decent minimum standards, low- and unpaid work will remain open to exploitation or the reserve of those from wealthy backgrounds.

Conference believes that to combat this injustice, we must make our union attractive and inclusive for young people and develop future activists. It's therefore essential that Unite develops our younger members and empower them with a voice within their own union. We must be champions for young people in the workplace in order to prove that becoming a trade union member is not some relic of a bygone industrial age, but the best way to guarantee decency and dignity in work.

Conference calls for:

1. An immediate campaign of Government lobbying to demand:
 - job creation targeted specifically at school, college and university leavers with the aim to provide sustainable pathways into employment,
 - fully paid internship and work experience initiatives that are rewarding and effective,
 - high quality apprenticeships paid at the National Minimum Wage be made available to all young people.
2. A commitment from Unite to developing cohorts of union reps equipped to mentor and support young apprentices, work experience placements and other new entrants.

A back-to-basics, top-down organisation and recruitment campaign targeting vulnerable young workers.

Young Members National Committee

JOB EQUALITY

This Conference condemns this government's handling of the economy and the threat to jobs in all sectors, Particularly Women, and would ask that this National Executive Council, lobby this current government and Labour party Members of parliament to ensure that employers adhere to the Equalities Act 2010 when deciding any job losses in the next three years.

Manchester Central Branch 0604

ASYLUM SEEKERS

This conference is appalled at successive governments' treatment of those seeking asylum in the UK. They, along with much of the media, have tried to make it something to be ashamed of, instead of recognising the rights of people from any country to flee persecution and seek a safe haven.

We call on our union at all levels to work with organisations such as Asylum Aid, Women Asylum Seekers Together, National Coalition of Anti Deportation Campaigns, to educate members and the wider population on why people seek asylum here and elsewhere and turn the atmosphere to one of welcome not suspicion or hostility.

We call on the union to support asylum seekers who are Unite members by virtue of being volunteer workers at these and other organisations.

We also call on the executive and officers to work with these organisations to:

1. Oppose the 'culture of disbelief' that pervades the UKBA and especially case workers and decision makers and to ensure asylum seekers get a fair hearing.
2. Oppose tactics used by UKBA to harass asylum claimants, such as detaining them and attempting to deport them before they can appeal against decisions made by UKBA (sometimes even before informing them of the decision), imposing draconian reporting requirements (sometimes even every day) or evicting them from their accommodation, which impede their attempts to get a fair hearing for their case
3. Demand the government reverse cuts in legal aid, which mean even when asylum seekers can find a solicitor, their representative is not given enough time to prepare the case properly
4. End detention – asylum seekers are not criminals but seeking sanctuary and exercising their international rights under the Geneva Convention and Human Rights legislation.
5. End destitution –those who can work should be allowed to and those not able to given decent support whilst waiting for their claim to be heard –as used to be the case pre 2000. Destitution makes women particularly vulnerable to further abuse and violence, especially as women asylum seekers who are experiencing violence and abuse are often fearful of using statutory agencies to protect themselves, due to perceived and often realistic fear of support/public service agencies asking immigration questions before addressing their safety needs.
6. Recognise the positive contribution asylum seekers and their descendents have made to our society, as volunteers, positive members of our communities, and when given status as citizens, some of whom currently serve as elected MPs.

NW/389 Branch

GYPSY AND TRAVELLER LAW REFORM

"This Conference notes that the brutal eviction of the Dale Farm Community, carried out by a Government funded police operation on 19th October 2011, has left the Dale Farm site a wasteland, with 83 families homeless and living in inhumane conditions.

The establishment (and demolition) of unauthorised encampments such as Dale Farm stems ultimately from the failure of local council planning committees to provide a sufficient number of authorised sites. Conference therefore resolves (i) to campaign for the introduction of an amendment to the Housing Act 2004 which would reinstate the duty to ensure adequate pitch provision, along the lines of the Caravan Sites Act 1968, (ii) to seek the support of the United Parliamentary Group in the pursuance of this objective."

Birmingham South 0803M