

Report of the TUC Disabled Workers Committee 2021 - 2022

TUC Disabled Workers Conference 2022

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This report covers the period from March 2021 – March 2022.

1) TUC Disabled Workers' Committee

The General Council was represented on the Committee by:

Dave Allan	UNITE
Farzana Jumma	GMB
Sarah Woolley	BFAWU

Members elected to serve on the Disabled Workers' Committee at the 2021 conference were:

Section A (14 places) – General section

Dave Allan	UNITE THE UNION
Mark Bastiani	CWU
Amy Bishop	PROSPECT
Janine Booth	RMT
Lynda Carter	USDAW
Chloë Clarke	EQUITY
Ann Galpin	NUJ
Austin Harney	PCS
Colleen Johnson	NEU
Benn Lunn	MU
Steven McGurk	COMMUNITY
Themesa Neckles	UCU
Sian Stockham	UNISON
Joe Smith	GMB

Section B (one place) - Black members

Julian Allam	UNITE THE UNION
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Section C (one place) – LGBT+ members

Izzy Pochin*	GMB
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Section D (one place) – Women members

Lara Morris	NASUWT
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Section E (one place) – Young members

Unfilled

At the first meeting, Dave Allan (General Council and Unite) and Ann Galpin (NUJ) were elected as co-Chairs of the Committee.

*Left the Committee November 2021

2) TUC Disabled Workers Conference Motion to Congress 2021

Motion 08, 'The economic impact of Covid-19: defending disabled workers' rights in current and post-Covid-19 periods' at Congress was the motion from the 2021 Disabled Workers' Conference.

The motion was carried.

3) Congress 2021 General Council statements

The General Council made two statements at Congress 2021 which identified key areas of focus for the TUC for the next 12 months. They were:

1. After the pandemic, a trade union action plan for a just, resilient future

Lesson 1: when unions are in the room, better decisions are made

Lesson 2: governments can step in to protect their citizens in times of crisis – if they choose to

Lesson 3: think about equality from the outset and throughout

Lesson 4: bake resilience and justice into our economic model

2. Taking forward the work of the TUC's Anti-Racism Taskforce

Across the year the TUC Disabled Workers' Committee considered how the resolutions adopted by the Disabled Workers' Conference, alongside the Committee's own initiatives. They also considered how to highlight issues of Disabled workers' equality in the context of the TUC ongoing campaigning.

4) Motion 8, 'The economic impact of Covid-19: defending disabled workers' rights in current and post-Covid-19 periods'

The 2021 Disabled Workers Conference motion that was elected to go to Congress, and subsequently carried at Congress, was entitled, 'The economic impact of Covid-19: defending disabled workers' rights in current and post-Covid-19 periods.' It was a composite motion consisting of motions and amendments from five affiliated unions.

The motion called on the TUC and the TUC Disabled Workers' Committee to continue to campaign for rights for disabled people at work including:

- a legal duty for employers to consider all disabled workers suitability for working from home, including ensuring that employers must rewrite jobs descriptions so that jobs can be performed from home
- reforming the Access to Work fund to make it easier for disabled workers to work from home
- giving disabled workers a new status of employment protection
- an extension of the furlough scheme, or a creation of a scheme for shielding people who cannot work from home
- improving the EHRC Employment Statutory Code of Practice
- a campaign to have long covid recognised as a disability under the Equality Act 2010
- raising awareness of the effects of long covid accompanied by a guide for reps supporting members
- providing guidance for employers to review HR policies protecting disabled workers in the event of another pandemic
- commissioned research on the specific economic and social plight of disabled self-employed workers and utilising this research to devise a targeted campaign to support the interests of this group of workers: this research should, in particular, focus on how the various government schemes introduced as a result of Covid-19 discriminated against disabled self-employed workers
- ensuring this campaign involves leading campaigning organisations, e.g., Inclusion London, Disability Solutions West Midlands etc
- encouraging employers to review reasonable adjustments for disabled employees
- encouraging trade unions to highlight with employers and within their own memberships the disproportionate effect Covid-19 has had on disabled people
- encouraging employers to develop robust strategies to support disabled people to help them stay in work in more flexible workplaces
- developing a series of posters/adverts with positive images of disabled workers, working in the workplace, and at home.

The progress made on this motion is included in the activities outlined in this report.

Sian Stockham, Disabled Workers' Committee member was also awarded the Women's Gold Badge award at Congress 2021.

5) TUC Equality Campaign Plan 2021 -2022

For the first time the TUC presented an Equality Campaign plan to Congress 2021. Produced in consultation with the equalities committees, the Campaign Plan supports and enhances the specific priorities and campaigns of our member unions in their industrial sectors.

The TUC has the following intersectional priorities:

- Reducing the impact of the pandemic on protected groups
- Ending sexual harassment at work
- Ending pay gaps
- Tackling institutionalised racism and discrimination through the work of the Anti-Racism Task Force
- Winning flexible working for all
- Beating the far right internationally

The primary purpose of the campaign plan is to view the main TUC campaigning priorities through the lens of equality. The plan also highlights the key themes as prioritised by the TUC equalities conferences in agreement with the TUC equalities committees. The aim of this document is to guide and support the work of the general council and to provide vital equalities information as needed. The Chairs of all Equality Committees have met together with Frances O'Grady to discuss intersectional work and provide updates.

6) Disabled Workers' experiences during the pandemic¹

The TUC demonstrated its commitment to addressing the unequal impact of the pandemic on disabled workers by prioritising original research to produce three major reports on disabled workers experience of the pandemic, on Long Covid and on flexible working as a reasonable adjustment. The TUC also produced new research on disabled women's experience of workplace sexual harassment.

In June 2021 the TUC released research into disabled workers experiences during the pandemic.

¹ <https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-06/Outline%20Report%20-%20Covid-19%20and%20Disabled%20Workers.pdf>

It found that the pandemic, and the huge changes it has caused to our everyday lives, has exacerbated the barriers disabled people face. Not only have disabled people been disproportionately impacted in terms of loss of life, with six in 10 Covid-19 related deaths being disabled people, but pre-existing workplace barriers had been accentuated by the pandemic.

The research found that one in eight disabled workers did not tell their employer about their disability, health condition or impairment, with many believing that telling their employer would lead to negative consequences.

Almost one in four of these (24 per cent) said that they did not tell their employer they were disabled because they thought that, as a direct consequence, they would be treated unfairly. And over a third (38 per cent) did not tell their employer because they were worried that if their employer knew they were a disabled worker they would think that they could not do their job.

These findings speak to negative workplace cultures where discriminatory attitudes towards disabled workers influence how safe workers feel about being open about being a disabled person.

These fears of being treated poorly are well founded. Our findings show that the prevalence of unfair treatment is alarmingly high. Around one third of disabled workers responding to our survey reported being treated unfairly at work because of their disability, health condition or impairment.

The research found that around one in eight disabled workers (13 per cent) were concerned their disability, health condition or impairment had affected how their performance would be assessed by their manager. A similar proportion (12 per cent) were concerned their disability, health condition or impairment had affected their chances of a promotion in the future.

And 7 per cent had their commitment to their job questioned. And one in 12 disabled workers (8 per cent) told us they had been subjected to bullying and/or harassment, for example being ignored or excluded, singled out for criticism or excessive monitoring at work.

To address the findings the TUC recommended:

The Government:

- i. move away from the medical approach to disability as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and adopt the social model of disability. Suggesting one way of bringing the social model of disability into the heart of UK law would be to make the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons (UNCRPD) enforceable within UK law.

- ii. introduce mandatory disability pay gap reporting for all employers with more than 50 employees.
- iii. receive additional ring-fenced resources to conduct targeted enforcement of workers' right to reasonable adjustments.
- iv. develop practical guidance for, and with, employers to increase their understanding and confidence in using the positive action provisions permitted in the Equality Act to address under-representation of disabled people

the Equality and Human Rights Commission:

- v. update their statutory Code of Practice on employment, so it includes more examples of what timely implementation of reasonable adjustments looks like.

Additional recommendations were made to employers and trade unions.

The TUC and the TUC Disabled Workers Committee have used the report and recommendations to lobby the government and employers for positive changes for disabled workers.

7) Workers experiences of Long Covid²

Report

In June 2021 the TUC launched its report 'Workers' experiences of Long Covid' which explored the experiences workers with Long Covid had before and during their return to work.

It found almost three in 10 respondents (29 per cent) had been experiencing Long Covid symptoms for 12 months or more. This length of time is significant because in order to be protected under the disability provisions of the Equality Act 2010, a person has to have a condition that has a substantial and long-term impact on their ability to do normal day-to-day activities.

Workers reported experiencing a range of symptoms. On average each respondent reported having nine of the 21 Long Covid symptoms we asked about and described the severity of their cumulative impact. Nine out of ten respondents experienced fatigue, with other common symptoms centred around problems with brain fog (72 per cent), shortness of breath (70 per cent), difficulty concentrating (62 per cent) and memory problems (54 per cent). Over

² <https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-06/Formatted%20version%20of%20Long%20Covid%20report%20-%20v1.3.pdf>

four in five respondents (83 per cent) reported experiencing at least one of a range of pain-related symptoms with around one third (32 per cent) experiencing depression.

Respondents also described the poor treatment that they experienced at work because they had Long Covid. Over half (52 per cent) had experienced some form of discrimination or disadvantage. Workers were faced with disbelief and suspicion, with around one fifth (19 per cent) having their employer question the impact of their symptoms and one in eight (13 per cent) facing questions from their employer about whether they had long Covid at all. Respondents were also concerned about what the future might hold for them at work given the amount of sick leave they had been forced to take due to their Long Covid symptoms. For around one in six respondents (18 per cent), the amount of sick leave they had taken had triggered absence management or HR processes and one in 11 respondents (9 per cent) had used up all of their sick leave and had been told there would be negative consequences if they took more. One in 20 respondents (5 per cent) had been forced out of their jobs because they had Long Covid.

To address this we recommended Government should, among other things:

- ensure that disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on different groups of workers - including those with Long Covid symptoms - is included within an independent public inquiry
- strengthen the Equality Act 2010 by specifying that Long Covid is a disability
- adopt the social model of disability
- to support these calls the TUC launched a Megaphone petition.³

Webinars

The TUC has subsequently run a number of webinars discussing the impact of Long Covid on workers. The first was held on 30 June and run-in conjunction with the TUC Disabled Workers Committee. It discussed the results of the TUC survey on Long Covid, current policy relating to the condition, and what unions can do to support members experiencing symptoms.

Panellists were:

- Kudsia Batool (chair) - Head of TUC Equalities and Strategy

³ https://www.megaphone.org.uk/petitions/treat-long-covid-as-a-disability?source=twitter-share-button&utm_source=twitter&share=26246026-32a1-4295-9253-5fd31af52fde

- Frances O'Grady - TUC General Secretary
- Dave Allan – Co-chair of the TUC Disabled Workers' Committee and TUC General Council member
- Catherine Hale - Director, Chronic Illness Inclusion
- Lesley Macniven - Chair of the Long Covid Support Employment group
- Doug Russell – USDAW and worker representative on the Industrial Injuries Advisory
- Quinn Roache - TUC Policy Officer
- Ann Galpin, Co-chair of the TUC Disabled Workers' Committee

The webinar was well attended with over 300 activists taking part.

Learning module

The TUC also produced a short online learning module for reps on Long Covid⁴.

This guide gives union reps the tools to support members who have had Long Covid and unsure about their rights or are facing issues with their employer.

It explains what Long Covid is, describes how it affects working people and details how reps can support members and review employer policies.

It takes approximately 25 minutes to complete.

8) Extension of the furlough scheme

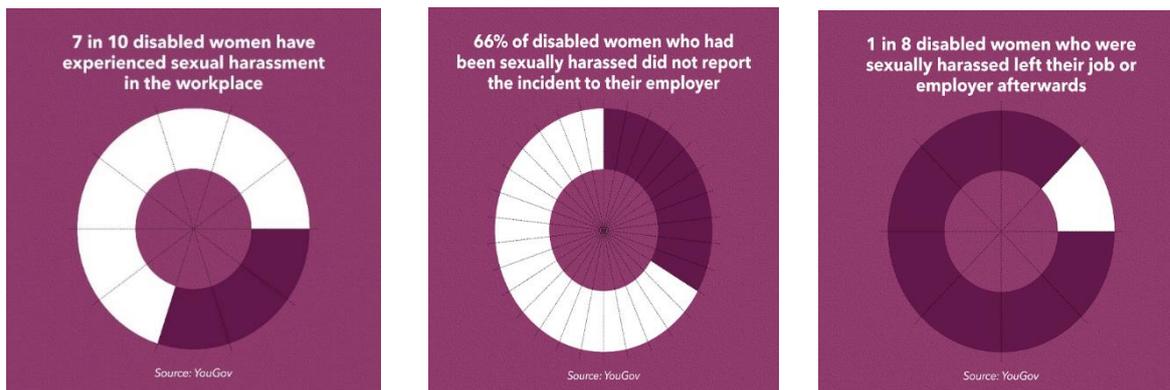
The TUC continually campaigned for the extension of the furlough scheme to protect jobs and livelihoods⁵. The TUC also produced a report in August 2021 calling for the daughter of furlough – a permanent short time working scheme to protect jobs in times of economic crisis and change, for example the transition to net zero, future pandemics and technological change.⁶

⁴ <https://author.tuceducation.org.uk/long-covid/index.html#/menu/61c1bd0cbbcc9605bc08df01>

⁵ <https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/tuc-calls-extension-furlough-and-urgent-targeted-support-hospitality-and-arts-sectors>

⁶ <https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-08/PermanentFurloughReport.pdf>

9) Sexual harassment of disabled women in the workplace⁷



The image shows three donut charts of the following statistics: 7 in 10 disabled women have experience sexual harassment in the workplace, 66% of disabled women who had been sexually harassed did not report the incident to their employer and 1 in 8 disabled women who were sexually harassed left their job or employer afterwards.

In July 2021 the TUC released its report looking at disabled women's experiences of sexual harassment at work as we know that to effectively address sexual harassment, we must hear from all workers who encounter it and ensure their specific experiences are taken into account when designing policies to tackle it.

We found shocking levels of sexual harassment, with around 7 in 10 (68 per cent) disabled women workers telling us they have been sexually harassed at work. This compares to 52 per cent of women in general. Our research revealed that disabled women experience higher levels of every type of sexually harassing behaviour reflecting the imbalance of power disabled women encounter at work and in wider society.

It found two thirds (66 per cent) of disabled women who were sexually harassed at work did not report it to their employer or supervisor. When we asked why, the most common reason for not reporting was that women did not believe they would be taken seriously. Almost 2 in 5 respondents (39 per cent) gave this reason, with around a third (31 per cent) stating that the barrier to reporting was that they thought it would have a negative impact on their career or work relationships.

To address the findings the TUC, in consultation with disabled women members of TUC Disabled Workers Committee, have recommended that the government:

- introduce a new legal duty to prevent harassment.

⁷ <https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-07/DisabledWomenSexual%20harassmentReport.pdf>

- strengthen legislation to tackle third-party harassment.
- appropriately resource the Equality and Human Rights Commission so it can enforce the new preventative duty
- introduce a statutory code of practice on sexual harassment and harassment at work.
- reinstate employment tribunals' power to make wider recommendations.

In response to this report, the TUC's multiple other reports looking at sexual harassment at work, and the concerted campaigning efforts by the TUC, affiliated unions and other interested groups the government announced in July that they would bring forward legislation to create a "preventative duty" for employers as soon as parliamentary time allowed and strengthen legislation to address third-part harassment. The report was referred to the Executive Working Group on sexual harassment. This is a working group of trade union leaders to help support and facilitate the movement in tackling sexual harassment, which was launched at Women's Conference March 2021.

10) Disabled Workers' access to flexible working as a reasonable adjustment⁸

In October 2021 the TUC released its report, 'Disabled Workers' access to flexible working as a reasonable adjustment' which looked at disabled workers experiences of flexible working during the pandemic and hopes for the future.

Our polling found that the disabled workers were more likely than others to spend most of their time working from home, both before (13 per cent) and during the pandemic (53 per cent). This compares to ONS analysis based on the Annual Population Survey which shows that 36 per cent of those in employment did some work at home in 2020 increase from just five per cent before the pandemic.

Disabled workers' experiences of working from home were mixed. Around two in three disabled workers (63 per cent) said that it had given them greater control of their working hours, such as the ability to take breaks when needed and almost half (47 per cent) had been able to change their work routines. Home working had reduced the fatigue and two in five respondents (40 per cent).

⁸ <https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-10/DisabledWorkersFlexibleworking2.pdf>

However, too often disabled workers reported lacking the basic equipment to allow them to do their jobs at home. Over a third (34 per cent) lacked proper office equipment such as a desk, chair or computer. A prominent feature of remote working, both during the period of enforced home working and currently, is reliance on video conferencing platforms such as Zoom to communicate and collaborate. One in 11 disabled workers (9 per cent) who worked from home experienced difficulties in taking part in online meetings because of their disability, impairment, or health condition. One in 14 respondents (7 per cent) told us they lacked the specialist software such as speech to text or computer programmes they needed to do their job.

However, despite the challenges that some workers experienced during the pandemic, nearly all disabled workers (90 per cent) who had worked from home during the pandemic wanted to continue doing so in some form, either completely remotely or a hybrid working arrangement after the pandemic. Across all disabled workers who can work from home, including those who had not done so during the pandemic, this figure is 75 per cent.

To ensure disabled workers continued to access changes to the time and location of their work the TUC recommended, among other recommendations that:

The Government:

- act to ensure that disabled workers who worked from home during the pandemic can continue to do so.
- ensure disabled workers are not penalised for accessing flexible working as a reasonable adjustment, by making flexible working the default.

The report received media coverage including an article in the i featuring Amy Bishop from the Committee.⁹

In addition to this report, the TUC has produced additional research reports on flexible working¹⁰ which call for increased access to flexible working for everyone. Making flexible working the norm will reduce the stigma for those who need to work flexibly and reduce the discrimination and disadvantage disabled workers face. The TUC also submitted a response to the BEIS consultation on making flexible working the default, calling for greater action to

⁹ <https://inews.co.uk/news/working-from-home-disabled-workers-want-work-remotely-when-covid-pandemic-eases-survey-1256481/amp>

¹⁰ <https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/denied-and-discriminated-against> and <https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/future-flexible-work>

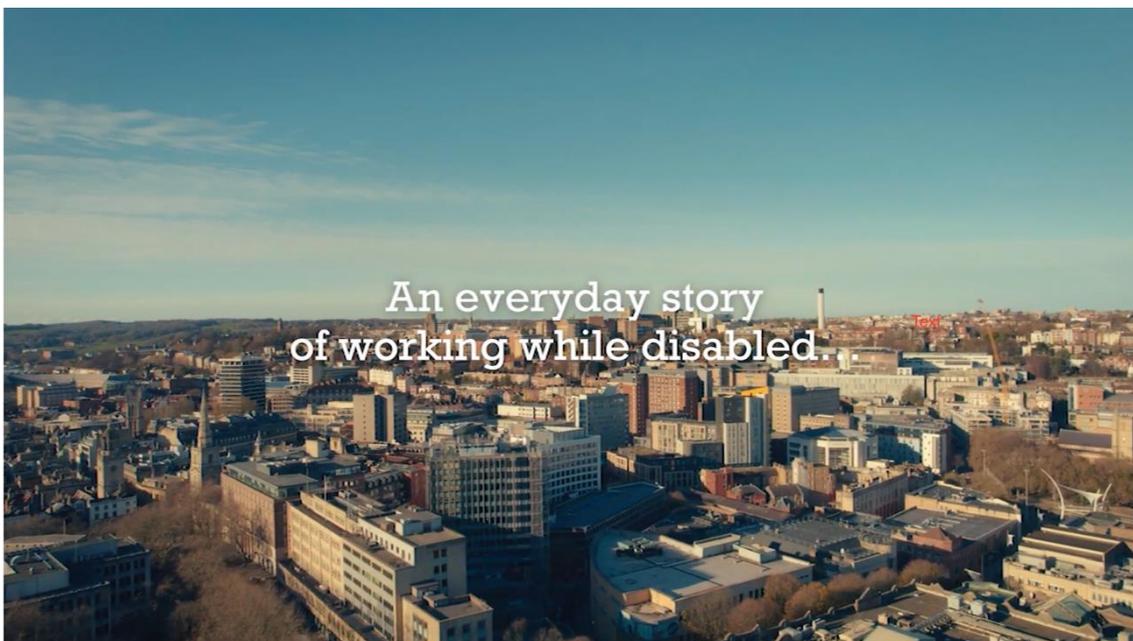
ensure all workplaces are flexible and ran a campaign to ask members of the public to send their own consultation response. Almost 6,000 members of the public sent their views to BEIS, including disabled workers.

11) Reasonable Adjustments webpage¹¹

Based on the needs identified in TUC's new research look at disabled workers experiences during the pandemic, the need for disabled workers to access to flexible working as a reasonable adjustment and the ongoing issues raised by members around reasonable adjustments, a new webpage pulling together TUC advice, materials and research on the topic has been created.

It contains links to:

- the reports listed above
- the TUC Reasonable adjustments disability passports
- TUC Covid-19 and reasonable adjustments guidance for reps
- TUC's new Reasonable Adjustments film¹²



The image is a screen shot of the opening sequence of the TUC Reasonable Adjustments film. An aerial shot of a view across buildings in London with the text 'An everyday story of working while disabled....'

¹¹ <https://www.tuc.org.uk/ReasonableAdjustments>

¹² <https://youtu.be/uhJ54RUfebM>

12) Disability Employment and Pay Gaps

The TUC continued to campaign for mandatory disability pay gap reporting. To support this work, we analysed the Labour Force Survey (LFS) to better understand how the employment rates and pay levels of disabled workers had changed over the past 12 months and launched a campaign on Disability Pay Gap day – 9 November 2021.¹³

Our analysis found that the disability employment gap has not narrowed, remaining at 28.7 percentage points. And while the disability pay gap has narrowed, it is still much too high. Disabled workers, on average, earn £1.90 per hour less than non-disabled workers.

Disabled workers are also almost twice as likely to be unemployed than non-disabled workers (8 per cent compared to 4.3 per cent), and more likely than non-disabled workers to be employed on a zero-hours contract.

We also look at new findings from a Britain Thinks survey, conducted on behalf of the TUC, on household finances and job security. The survey found that during the pandemic, disabled workers have been more likely than non-disabled workers to have cut back on spending and faced an increase in debt. Disabled workers have also been twice as likely as non-disabled workers to use a food bank and are more likely to be concerned about job losses.

Support for the campaign

This year our campaign calling for the introduction of mandatory disability pay gap reporting was supported by affiliated unions, a number of disabled people's organisations including Inclusion London and ROFA and Labour Party shadow team members including Vicky Foxcroft.



The image is of four social media graphics. The first an image of a supermarket belt with food on and states 9/11/21 is Disability Pay Gap Day. The second an image of a

¹³ <https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/jobs-and-recovery-monitor-disabled-workers>

woman looking to the side with text 'Why should I work 52 days a year for nothing?'. The third the image of a pie with text 'The Disability pay Gap is now 16.5%'. The last image is on a supermarket belt with text 'Disabled workers earn £3,500 less than their non-disabled colleagues.'

13) TUC response to the DWP Health and Disability Green Paper consultation

In October 2021 the TUC responded to the DWP Health and Disability Green Paper consultation. We set out the TUC's vision for a future where all workplaces are accessible, inclusive and without barriers that prevent the equal participation of disabled people.

Our response broadly supported the Disability Benefits Consortium submission¹⁴ pointing out that actioning its recommendations would help to address many of the issues disabled people face accessing the welfare system allowing them to live independently and, for disabled people who want to work are able to do so, move into work.

In addition to the points raised within the DBC submission, our submission highlighted TUC policy and evidence indicates that changes need to be made in the following areas:

- The Social Model of Disability: To achieve true equality of access, opportunity and experience the government should directly incorporate UNCRPD into domestic law so all laws have the social model of disability at their heart.
- Access to Work: The Government must:
 - Ensure all employers are made aware of Access to Work so that all disabled workers (and employers) are benefit from it
 - Increase efficiency of Access to Work, including a default acceptance of electronic claims
 - Fund Access to Work appropriately so all eligible people can access their full entitlement
 - Engage with Disabled People's Organisations to learn the lessons from the Covid-19 crisis and ensure disabled workers have a quicker and more efficient service

¹⁴ <https://disabilitybenefitsconsortium.files.wordpress.com/2021/10/dbc-2021.10-shaping-future-support-green-paper-submission-final.pdf>

- Reform Access to Work to make it is easier for disabled workers to work from home
 - Disability Employment and Pay Gaps: The government must introduce mandatory disability pay gap reporting for all employers with more than 50 employees.
 - The legislation must be accompanied by a duty on employers to produce targeted action plans identifying the steps they will take to address any gaps identified, including ensuring disabled workers feel confident in completing workplace equality monitoring.
 - These action plans must be produced and delivered in consultation with recognised trade unions and when completing them.
 - Reasonable Adjustments: The Government should ensure employers are aware they have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to proactively make reasonable adjustments to remove, reduce or prevent any disadvantages that disabled workers face. And that the law recognises that to secure equality for disabled people work may need to be structured differently, support given, and barriers removed.
 - A practical and timely way of improving employer practice in this area, and thereby ensuring workers' reasonable adjustments are implemented more quickly, is by providing more detailed practical examples of timely implementation within the Equality and Human Rights Commission's statutory Code of Practice on employment.
 - Long Covid: the government should strengthen the Equality Act 2010 by specifying that Long Covid is a disability This could be achieved by using secondary legislation. This would give them protections under the Equality Act 2010 and access to benefits and support programmes for disabled people and disabled workers.
 - Universal Credit: The government must stop and scrap Universal Credit. Alongside this a more suitable system to replace Universal Credit should be designed with disabled people's organisations and claimants.
 - National Independent Living Support Service: The government must create a National Independent Living Support Service that gives new universal right to independent living, is enshrined in law and delivered through a new national independent living service co-created between government and disabled people, is funded through general

taxation and managed by central government, is free at the point of need and is led by disabled people and delivered locally in co-production with disabled people.

14) Disabled Workers' Committee-led activity

Disability History Month

To celebrate disability history month this year the Disabled Workers' Committee ran a series of webinars focused on Disabled Workers Equality as a collective Trade Union issue.

They looked at the key workplace issues affecting disabled workers including the impact of sexual harassment on disabled women at work, using the social model of disability to build better and great representation at work and in society and the impact of Long Covid and making it deemed a disability in law.

Disabled Women and Sexual Harassment at Work

Wednesday 24 November 2021

Chaired by Ann Galpin, Disabled Workers' Committee Co-Chair

Panellists:

- Alice Moss - Author of the TUC's report entitled 'Sexual harassment of disabled women in the workplace'
- Marsha de Cordova - MP for Battersea and former Shadow Secretary of State for Women and Equalities (unfortunately a last-minute issue prevented Marsha from taking part in the webinar. She sent a solidarity statement which the Chair read out).
- Emily Brothers - disabled rights activist and LGBT+ Labour
- Natasha Hirst - Vice President NUJ, chair NUJ Equality and NUJ Photography Councils

The Social Model of Disability - Building Representation and Pride

Thursday 02 December 2021

Chaired by Colleen Johnson, Disabled Workers' Committee Member

Panellists:

- Amy Bishop - TUC Disabled Workers' Committee member, Prospect
- Rachel O'Brien - Inclusion London, steering group member for Sisters of Frida

- Kacey DeGroot - NEU National Executive Member for LGBT+ members
- Julian Allam - TUC Disabled Workers' Committee member, Unite

Long Covid - An invisible Impairment

Thursday 09 December 2021

Chaired by Dave Allan Disabled Workers Committee Co-Chair

Panellists:

- Quinn Roache - Disabled Workers Policy Officer TUC
- Vicky Foxcroft - MP for Lewisham Deptford & Shadow Minister for Disabled People
- Catherine Hale - Founder/Director: Chronic Illness Inclusion
- Polina Sparks, Long Covid Employment Support Group

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons

The TUC and Disabled Workers' Committee reinforced their support and long term commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons (UNCRPD), and the focus on making it directly enforceable within UK law. We supported and engaged actively with the disabled people's organisations commissioned to undertake consultation and submission processes and co-produce the forthcoming civil society shadow report on the UK government's progress in implementing the UNCRPD since 2017. The report will be about the experiences of disabled people in England since 2017, and the UK's government's progress in addressing the substantive issues identified by the 2016 Special Investigation and 2017 Concluding Observations.¹⁵

Co-chair Ann Galpin, in consultation with the TUC, coordinated information gathering and submission of TUC evidence for this civil society shadow report in December.

The report is embargoed till its APPG on Disability launch on 22 March.

New Independent Living Service (NILS) Trade Unionist subgroup

Committee co-chairs Dave Allan and Ann Galpin co-chaired two meetings in 2021, with Rachel O'Brien (Reclaim Our Futures Alliance/ROFA) as servicing officer. There was good attendance by a wide range of lay trade union members from a range of affiliate unions; front line care workers including from CASWO;

¹⁵ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7367/>

national and regional officers from GMB, UNISON and Unite; Labour For a Green New Deal and Unite Community.

Irish Congress of Trade Unions 4 May 2021

The Disabled Workers' Committee held an inaugural solidarity meeting with ICTU policy officers (Belfast and Dublin) and the chairs of their disabled members committees. Quinn Roache (TUC Policy officer), Dave Allan, Ann Galpin and Austin Harney represented the Committee. The meeting explored possibilities for mutual support. Disability employment and pay gaps, flexible working and UNCRD reporting were identified as key issues.

Working Groups

The Disabled Workers' Committee also set up the following working groups.

Education	Accessible Transport	Anti-Trade Union Laws	International	Working Together
Austin Harney	Mark Anthony Bastiani	Janine Booth	Julian Allam	Dave Allan
Colleen Johnson	Janine Booth	Sarah Woolley	Ann Galpin	Mark Anthony Bastiani
Lara Morris	Lynda Carter		Austin Harney	Amy Bishop
				Colleen Johnson

Disabled Workers' Committee members also contributed to a number of ongoing events in relation to key issues for disabled workers, including DPO meetings with Vicky Foxcroft, the Shadow Minister for Disabled People and meeting with disabled peoples' organisations such as Reclaim our Futures Alliance.