

Nominations

**TUC Disabled Workers'
Conference 2023**

Nominations

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Section A – General Seats

(14 places, 14 nominations)

Rachael Bellis Actor/Director

Equity

Rachael is a neurodivergent performer/creative and member of the D/deaf and Disabled Members Committee with Equity and has spoken about invisible disability and disability discrimination within her own industry. Rachael represents disabled members and takes this role seriously, advocating for members who reach out (she has helped several neurodivergent members by putting them in touch with the relevant body within Equity, and advocates for change on a larger scale). Rachael also is a member of the sustainable working group within Equity, providing a disabled voice within the fight against climate change to that group.

Jonathan Bellshaw BT Customer Service Advisor

Communication Workers Union

Hello I'm Jonathan Bellshaw. I work for BT as a customer service advisor.

I'm currently a national negotiating team member dealing with BT Consumer & Group billing functions as well as the Telecoms & Financial Services Disabled Workers Rep on the CWU National Executive Committee and previously vice chair of the disability advisory Committee. I have also attended numerous TUC disabled workers conferences over the years as well as Labour Party and TUC conferences. I currently sit as a member of the TUC Disability Committee.

Trade unions must ensure that people with disabilities are protected from discrimination, and we must hold companies, councils and Governments to account more where they discriminate. I will continue to work hard to ensure the committee does this.

Amy Bishop Scientist, AWE

Prospect

I am a scientist and been a member of Prospect for 20 years. I have worked on disability issues in the workplace for over 15 years and am a regular attendee at conference. As well as obvious physical impairments, I am neurodivergent and have experienced mental distress.

I have been a member of the Committee for over 5 years and would like to continue this work. I sit on the Prospect Equal Opportunities Advisory Committee and am an Equality Rep. I have chaired and spoken at various TUC events and have also spoken at events for other TU organisations including the NEU and Northern TUC.

I am an advocate of the social model and work with my employer to try and remove the barriers that exist in workplaces.

I am passionate about making sure disability issues are on the negotiating agenda and fight to make sure we are not forgotten.

Nigel Braithwaite Musician/Teacher

Musicians' Union

I have been a TU activist since 1986 when I became an RCN Steward, something I maintained until 2000 when I moved into industry. Music became my job again in 2016, I re-joined the MU and now serve on the ED&I and Executive Committees. As a delegate at the 2021 & 2022 Disabled Workers Conferences I realised how critical it is for disabled people to have a voice in all workplaces; I believe that my lived experience of multiple invisible disabilities adds value to my MU work, and I would welcome the opportunity to contribute at TUC level.

Val Cooke Checkout supervisor in a supermarket

Union of Shop, Distributive & Allied Workers (USDAW)

I am a checkout supervisor in a large supermarket. I am both a rep and a ULR for Usdaw and I sit on Usdaw's National Executive Council. Shopworkers are regularly exposed to customer abuse and harassment, poor/hostile management attitudes (exacerbated by widespread ignorance of the social model of disability), short notice changes to working hours and staff shortages that mean we are routinely expected to do twice as much for the same pay. Whilst these factors affect almost all shopworkers, they are amplified for disabled workers. Disabled workers are feeling more marginalised at work, less secure and less valued than ever.

I regularly campaign to raise deaf awareness and campaign on mental health emphasising the part the workplace plays in creating and contributing to mental distress. If elected I will do my very best to ensure the experiences of disabled workers in retail inform the work of the Committee.

Ann Galpin Freelance journalist and activist

National Union of Journalists

Neurodivergent journalist living with invisible impairments and mental distress. Survivor of trauma, workplace bullying and discrimination. My lived experience drives my activism.

Co-chair of TUC Disabled Workers' Committee for five years, an elected member for 13 years, and Chair of NUJ Disabled Members' Council for 15 years. I:

- Organise, chair and speak at TUC Disabled Workers' Conference and disability events, and evaluate the new TUC disabled workers leadership programme.

- Co-authored government consultation responses, social model guidance and submitted evidence to the UN convention on the rights of disabled people shadow report.
- Contribute to TUC and NUJ resources; fight for inclusion and equality for disabled media workers; and for fair and accurate reporting on disabled people's rights and issues.

A team worker, and strong representative for disabled workers and intersectional campaigns. I connect and develop disabled activists and allies across the labour movement, and work in co-production with disabled people's organisations.

Austin Harney Civil Servant

PCS

I am on the PCS NEC and the TUC DWC. I represent members, including the disabled, up to employment tribunal. I work in the Office of the Public Guardian, responsible for the money of mentally incapacitated clients. I am Autistic and promote all PCS disabled members' views especially during the cost-of-living crisis and COVID19 of which two thirds of all deaths were people with disabilities, in addition to Long Covid. I work with other unions for inclusive education, better transport, opposing the disability pay gap, against "Disability Hate Crime", against low employment, fighting cyber harassment, and preventing dangerous cures for Autism. I spoke for the TUC DWC at the COP26 demonstration in Cambridge against Climate Change and "Disabled People Against the Cuts" demonstration outside Downing Street against Universal Credit. I started liaison between Disabled Workers of British and Irish Trade Unions and intend to do the same, internationally.

Colleen Johnson Teacher

National Education Union

Originally from Middlesbrough. I've spent 34 years as a primary teacher in Birmingham and Worcester.

Part of the Multicultural Development Unit for nine years.

Active within the NUT as school rep for five years, I was an equality officer and part of Birmingham NEU Executive. I am currently an equality officer and Worcestershire NEU President.

Formerly a working party member and vice chair of the NUT advisory group on Disability Equality. I now chair the NEU Disabled Members' Organising Forum.

Delegate and speaker at TUC Disabled Workers' Conference on fourteen occasions between 2007 and 2022, I also part chaired last year's event.

Delegate and speaker at NUT Annual Conference on six occasions between 2013 and 2018 and NEU Annual Conference 2019-22.

Re- elected to the NEU National Executive as Disabled Members' Seat Holder- I speak regularly on disabled people's rights, visit districts and take my responsibility to disabled members seriously.

Steve McGurk Senior Stores Person

Community

I hold the Disabled Members Seat and am the current Vice President on Community's NEC.

I am also the Vice Chair of the NLBD National Committee, on which I have served for 11 years, and I have represented Community's disabled members for many years, as a delegate and speaker at TUC & STUC Disabled Workers Conferences.

I served on the on the TUC Committee from 2019-21, for personal reasons I could not stand last year.

I am passionate about Disabled Workers rights and continue to campaign locally and nationally on the many issues which affect us. The DW Committee has a long and proud tradition of fighting for Disabled workers and if elected, I will continue to challenge inequalities in work and in society, wherever I can.

Chris Mort Bus driver

Unite the Union

Chris Mort has been an active trade unionist for over 20 years, having been a long-standing representative as an Equality and Disabled representative at Cardiff Bus.

Chris is currently employed as a PCV bus driver and has represented his members as equality representative, following that he also became the disabled members representative for Unite at Cardiff Bus. He is also representing disabled members on the regional passenger committee.

As a trade union disability campaigner Chris sits on the Unite regional disabled members committee, is vice chair of the national disabled members committee and represents disabled workers.

Chris would now welcome the opportunity to develop further support for disabled people in, and seeking, work through the TUC Disabled Workers Committee.

Pat Roche Teacher

University and College Union (UCU)

I represent FE Disabled members on UCU's NEC, serve on the TUC Pensions Committee and represent UCU on a health working party.

I have campaigned for balance and inclusion protocols for hybrid meetings on the grounds 'nothing about us without us' and more recently, I have been involved in the joint Union response to Long Covid, seeking employers' agreement through collective bargaining,

whilst issues such as the Disability pay gap has widened through the on-going cost-of-living crisis. COVID has highlighted the increased inequalities faced by Disabled people in accessing healthcare, education and employment.

I am a firm believer of building an intersectional equalities agenda and I have developed toolkits concerning mental health and casualised Disabled members and industrial action.

I strongly believe in the power of unified and collective voices and that together we can plan a fairer and more equitable future for all Disabled workers regardless of sector.

Joe Smith GMB branch secretary - retired

GMB

I have just recently retired after 16 years working in public surveillance, firstly employed by Remploy then tupe over to the private sector.

Being retired will give me more scope to support disabled people and therefore I wish to stand again for a third term on the TUC disability Workers Committee.

The goal post is moving daily when it comes to support, accessibility, and social care for disabled people, the pandemic was challenging times, so now is the time to present myself visual and offer my experience in providing a service for disability.

Representing the GMB and being part of an elected body along with other disabled people, I can offer guidance to the committee and what is best for disabled people.

Respecting disabled people means much to me, being elected I can show my respect.

Sian Stockham

Support Worker

UNISON

I am UNISON's vice president having served on UNISON's National Executive Council since 2005, as a representative from Cymru / Wales. I sit on a number of regional and national committees, including UNISON's National Disabled Members Committee and chair of the Industrial Action Committee. I'm also active within the Cymru / Wales Labour Party.

I am in the unique position of being part of three sectors within UNISON, community, health and local government. Because of this, I am able to empathise with the attacks on members in each of these services, as well as members from other sectors.

I have been active member since joining UNISON and am committed to building a modern and mainstream union. UNISON is a member led union, we need to be relevant, inclusive and important to every member.

**Christine Willett
Line**

Customer Sales Advisor, MTR Elizabeth

RMT

I have been a member of the RMT for over 14 years. During this time, I have become increasingly involved in union activity, attending union education courses, and also the union's AGM. I have been a health and safety representative for 12 years and elected twice to Company Council since MTR took over the Metro area on Abellio on Greater Anglia in May 2015.

I am a long-standing member of the RMT National Disabled Members Advisory Committee. I have regularly attended the RMT National Disabled Members' and Women's Conferences and the TUC Conferences. I have previously been on the TUC Women's Committee and would like to bring this experience to the TUC Disabled Workers Committee.

Section B – Black Members

(One place, 3 nominations)

Julian Allam Area Health and Safety representative

Unite the Union

I have been a trade union activist for the last 38 years representing members both in the workplace and the wider trade union movement, holding key positions within the West Midlands representing at a national level.

- Senior Steward Royal Mail Coventry and Warwickshire.
- Branch Equalities Officer.
- Disabled National & Regional Committee Delegate.
- BAEM National & Regional Committee Delegate.
- Unite Delegate to the National TUC Disabled Committee.
- Unite Delegate to Regional TUC Disabled and BAEM Committees.
- Unite Executive Council Member representing BAEM

During my time on these committees, I have supported the regions initiatives and national events and I have been actively involved in many campaigns including.

- The Hardest Hit Campaign
- The Race Forward Campaign
- Save our NHS.
- Disabled Voices.
- Disabled history month.
- BAEM History month.

If I am fortunate enough to be nominated and elected, I will promote the advancement of Equalities in all industries via protests, resources and campaigns.

Muhammad Khan Teacher

NASUWT

I am committed to the NASUWT agenda of equality for all. As an active member of the NASUWT Black Teachers Advisory Committee, I have argued for diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

As a BME member, I have been putting forward policies for the promotion of all. I am also an active member of my local union committee.

I am a member of the NASUWT Yorkshire & Humberside Training Committee and work to ensure that training is accessible for all who wish to gain more skills and knowledge.

I believe in removing barriers in society so that any disability in society is not seen as a barrier.

I have been involved at many union conferences regarding the urgent need for meeting the needs of all people in a fair and equal society.

Winston Murray Civil Servant

PCS

I am the PCS Equalities Officer in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and a member on the FCDO PCS BEC. I have been in this role for over six years.

I am on the PCS Race and Disability Committees and the London and Southeast TUC sub committees for Race and Disabled Workers. I am a member of the L&SE TUC Disabled Members Committee and L&SE TUC Race Relations Committee.

I am a committed and passionate trade unionist. I support FCDO members with their personal cases and have attended a variety of rep training courses to support this work. I encourage civil servants to join PCS and urge new members to get involved in PCS campaigns.

I would welcome being part of the TUC Disabled Workers Committee. It would give me the opportunity to network, exchange ideas and campaign on issues affecting our disabled members across the union movement.

Section C – LGBT+ Members

(One place, 2 nominations)

Kathryn Downs **Teacher**

NASUWT

I am an active member of the NASUWT, an experienced school rep and caseworker and Vice-Chair of the Disabled Teachers Advisory Committee for the NASUWT. I have regularly attended NASUWT Conferences along with TUC Women's Conference and spoken on the issues disabled workers face, along with the issues SEND students face. I have regularly written and proposed motions on equalities issues within the NASUWT. As well as experiencing daily how equalities issues impact disabled workers in the workplace, I regularly campaign for greater awareness of the issues many face such as with PIP, Neurodiversity, intersectionality, the impact of cuts on disabled people, access to work and invisible disabilities. More recently, I have been campaigning to raise the awareness of ableism that members face daily and leading training in this area. I would be honoured to serve on the TUC Disabled Workers committee.

Dawn Lovatt **Senior Health Care Support Worker for a Mental Health trust**

GMB

I'm an intersectional female, black, LGBT and disabled person. Yet it is being disabled that over the last few years heightened by pandemic has changed me the most. I always battled with mental health; I had a breakdown in 1992 that put me in Lincoln city in care. I have been hit with cancer, TB, arthritis, pneumonias and only half of my left lung due to TB damage and COPD. The impact has altered my life to the point I really feel I need to fight for this side more and I want to be where the changes can be made. The TUC is one of those areas. It's an honour to be elected to this year and I've only just felt like we are starting work on events, teaching, classes etc, there is never enough time, and I haven't finished yet.

Section D – Women Members

(One place, 2 nominations)

Fiona Branson Actor/musician/writer/director

Musicians' Union

Fiona is a disabled women actor/musician/writer/director, who has Ehlers Danlos, a connective tissue disorder causing recurrent joint dislocations. She has served as an Equity Deputy for several theatre companies, been the Equity rep for Watford trades Council, and has been on Equity's Disabled Artistes Register since its inception. She has directed for Graeae Theatre Company and had her work directing diversely cast theatre described as a 'model of good practice' by the NFER. For the Musicians Union, she has served on the SE London Branch Committee, attended two Biennial Delegate Conferences, is currently elected to the EDI Committee, and recently attended the MU EDI conference. She has a micro-record label with tracks of her own music which have won support from BBC Music Introducing, and as a musician has worked delivering reminiscence sessions for the elderly, and performances with mental health survivor groups and outsider disabled artistes and Drake Music.

Angela Montgomery Assistant General Secretary

Unite the Union

A UNITE activist for over 15 years and a trade union activist all my working life having joined USDAW whilst working for Boots. I have supported trade unions in campaigning for equal rights for workers and held the following positions.

- Regional Chair and National Delegate for Community not For Profit in North East Yorkshire and Humber
- Regional and National Delegate for Disabled Members, Women's and BAEM Members Committees
- Regional Delegate for the Regional Committee

During my time on these committees, have been actively involved in regional and national events/campaigns.

If elected, I will promote the rights of disabled workers to be treated equitably in terms of recruitment, promotion and receiving equitable treatment with their non-disabled colleagues whether this is campaigning and organising, collective action and not to be forgotten, supporting individual members. I strongly support the young disabled people being given access to employment and trade unions actively supporting them.

Section E – Young Members

(One place, no nominations)