



Report of the TUC LGBT+ Committee 2012- 2022

TUC LGBT+ Conference 2022

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1. The TUC LGBT+ Committee

Members elected to serve on the Committee at the 2021 Conference were:

Section A

Darran Brown, ASLEF
Tigger Blaize, Equity
Patrick Carberry, FBU
Jennifer Black, UNISON
Sue Dunne, RMT
Julia Georgiou, NHBCSA
Phil Jones, Unite
Martin Chivers, UCU
Claire Mullaly, Prospect
Julia Neal, NEU
Neil Smale, USDAW
Saorsa-Amatheia Tweedale, PCS
Sarah Pitt, CWU

Section B

Taranjit Chana, GMB

Section C

Eileen Best, Unison
Megan Marsh, Community

Section D

Paula Defriez, GMB
Susan Greenwall, ASLEF

Section E

Alexander Bryant-Evans, GMB
Tom Sutherland, Unite

Section F

Denise Rayner, Unite
Nick Trier, NASUWT

The General Council has been represented on the LGBT+ Committee during the year by:

Brian Linn, Aegis
Maria Exall, CWU
Michelle Codrington-Rogers, NASUWT
Dave Allan, Unite
Simon Weller, ASLEF

At the first meeting of the new Committee Maria Exall was re-elected as Chair of the Committee.

Where motions to the LGBT+ Conference call on the TUC, we consider this to be call on the LGBT+ TUC Committee.

2. Congress 2021

The LGBT+ Conference motion to Congress was: *Fighting back against the international far right for LGBT+ equality*. The motion was carried.

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 LGBT+ Committee considered the resolutions adopted at Congress, alongside the Committee's own initiatives and the motions passed at TUC LGBT+ Conference. They also considered how to highlight issues facing LGBT+ workers in the context of the TUC's ongoing campaigning.

3. 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.

4. Equality Audit

The 2020 Equality Audit on collective bargaining activities was launched at Congress 2021.

The aims of the audit are to:

- Provide a yardstick to measure how affiliates are advancing equality both within their own structures and through all activities
- Inform the TUC's campaigning, guidance, and policy work and make it more effective
- Support affiliates planning processes and provide a benchmark for equality in the movement

The audit comprised of a survey of affiliates, and two surveys of reps about equality in the workplace (1,122 responses) and flexible working (1,172 responses).

The survey asked about support and guidance provided to negotiators and officials. The audit found that 50 per cent of Unions provide guidance on LGB+ workers and 44 per cent on Trans+ workers.

We also saw that 39 per cent of reps said they had received training relating to LGB+ workers and 30 per cent had received training relating to trans+ workers.

36 per cent of unions said they had achieved gains for LGB+ workers (up from 17 per cent in 2016), and 39 per cent had achieved gains for trans+ workers (up from 22 per cent in 2016).

5. Committee Working Groups

The Committee formed four Working Groups: The Oppression Legislative Working Group, The Pride Working Group, The Intersectionality Working Group, and The Mental Health and Long Covid Working Group.

6. Engagement with the UK Government

The office has continued to raise the shocking rise in transphobia and the hostile climate for LGBT+ workers in the UK with the UK Government and other political stakeholders. We have also continued to draw attention to the effect of Covid-19 on the LGBT+ community, particularly in relation to mental distress.

In July 2021 the TUC and the general secretaries of more than 39 trade unions wrote a [joint letter](#) to equalities minister Liz Truss to call for an urgent reset in the government's approach to LGBT+ rights.

The letter called for equality, respect and safety for LGBT+ Workers, expressed dismay at the Government abandoning the 2018 LGBT Action Plan and disbanding the LGBT Advisory Panel. The letter urged the Government to consult with unions on a strategy to make sure workplaces are safe for all LGBT+ people and introduce a new duty on employers to protect workers from harassment by customers and clients.

In June 2022 the LGBT+ Policy Officer took part in a Parliamentary inquiry session of the LGBT+ Commission on Employment, Employability and Skills. The Policy Officer raised the following question about the LGBT+ pay gap which was considered by the Commission:

"As research points to a 16% pay gap for LGBT+ people (who may also face higher costs of living for example due to fertility costs or transition-related healthcare, as well as barriers to work) - how can we make sure that this pay gap is monitored and closed?"

We also continued to campaign for a trans-inclusive Conversion Therapy Ban and for reform of the Gender Recognition Act.

We also engaged with Government ahead of the planned *Safe To Be Me* Conference. During this time we built a positive working relationship with Iain Anderson, former LGBT Business Champion, and look forward to continuing this.

The LGBT+ Committee set up a working party which advised on the TUC's participation in the planned Conference. The working party agreed to maintain dialogue with the arrangements for the conference and keep a watching brief. The TUC ultimately withdrew its engagement from the Conference, along with the LGBT+ charity sector.

7. Trans Awareness Week and Trans Day of Remembrance

The TUC ran a digital campaign during Trans Awareness Week 2021. We used the campaign as an opportunity to raise awareness among Trade Union members and reps, of the importance of allyship and solidarity with the trans community, and to signpost to our trans inclusion resources.

We shared a range of resources on our Trans Awareness Week [website hub](#) and through our social media channels, in order to empower trade union activists to mark the week in their Unions.

The campaign concluded on 20 November, Trans Day of Remembrance, when we remembered the trans people around the world whose lives have been lost through acts of anti-trans violence.

In our activities around the week we raised awareness of the discrimination that trans and non-binary people continue to face, inside and outside of work, and the worrying rise in transphobic hate crimes.

In our blog about the campaign TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady said:

"Today, we remember the trans people who've been murdered around the world for no other reason than who they are.

"Far too many trans people still face discrimination in work. A TUC study found that half of trans workers experience bullying and harassment while just trying to do their jobs.

"Unions reps can make a real difference to trans people's working lives. They stand up for workers facing discrimination, and make sure workplaces are safe and inclusive for everyone.

"I'd urge anyone worried about discrimination in their workplace to join a union, to make sure they are supported, represented and heard."

A short film which had been previously produced for our 2020 Trans Awareness Week activities, with support from the LGBT+ Committee, won the [2021 Outvertising Award](#) for best LGBTQ+ Inclusive Campaign. The campaign video, 'Liam' highlights the issues trans workers face and the role of Unions in building inclusive workplaces. The TUC produced a blog about the campaign and award [which can be found here.](#)

The TUC produced this film to show our unequivocal support for trans and non-binary workers' rights, as set out in TUC Congress policy.

8. Fighting Back Against the Far Right

A webinar was held on International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), focusing on how we as Trade Unions fight the homophobia, biphobia and transphobia of the international far right. The discussion was chaired by LGBT+ Committee member Claire Mullaly, with contributions from fellow Committee member Saorsa-Amatheia Tweedale, as well as Jo Grady, UCU General Secretary, Paul Fleming, Equity General Secretary, Dr S Chelvan, Head of Immigration and Public Law, 33 Bedford Row, and Mariela Kohon, Senior International Officer at the TUC. 70 people registered for the webinar, and feedback was very positive.

Next year, the Office is planning a series of international roundtables with Trade Unions and worker organisations, to explore the methods that the far right use to divide working people, and share best practice strategies in order to fight back. As current far-right strategies exploit misogyny, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia to build far right support, one of the roundtables will focus on LGBT+ hate and misogyny. The issues are grouped together because similar strategies are being employed by the far right in these areas.

After the roundtables the Office plans to produce a resource for Trade Unions sharing best practice on countering the international far right.

9. LGBT+ HR Manager Polling

The Office has commissioned some polling from YouGov, to seek to raise awareness of the need for workplaces to introduce LGBT+ inclusive policies.

The polling asks HR managers whether their workplaces have LGBT+ inclusion policies and processes in place, including:

- Policies protecting LGBT+ employees from discrimination and harassment.
- Inclusive family leave policies.
- LGBT+ pay gap monitoring.
- LGBT+ inclusion action plans.

The resulting data will be used in communications activities and supporting workplace negotiation, and to identify priorities to shape further LGBT+ research.

10. LGBT+ asylum seekers and the Rwanda plan

The TUC LGBT+ Committee have condemned the Government's shameful plans to send asylum seekers to Rwanda, and raised the specific risks for LGBT+ workers.

To support this campaign activity, the Committee published the following statement:

"The TUC LGBT+ committee condemns the government's shameful plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda. We are concerned that this will particularly put LGBT+ asylum seekers in danger. LGBT+ asylum seekers already face considerable barriers when seeking safety."

"The Home Office's own equality impact assessment states that LGBT+ refugees could be persecuted if sent to Rwanda. It notes that there are concerns over the treatment of LGBT+ people in Rwanda, with ill-treatment being 'more than one-off'.

"Trade unions view this policy as a source of shame to the UK and note that it has been strongly criticised by human rights, political and religious organisations. Ministers should reconsider their plans to send any asylum-seeker to Rwanda."

11) Sexual harassment

The office has continued to raise awareness of the staggering rates of sexual harassment affecting the LGBT+ community, through policy activity, blogs and social media campaigns. The LGBT+ Policy Officer also spoke at the LGBT+ in the Workplace Conference in June 2022, in order to raise awareness of the TUC's resources and research around prevention of LGBT+ sexual harassment in the workplace. The Chair of the LGBT+ committee is participating in the Executive Council Sexual Harassment working group.