

Report of the TUC LGBT+ Committee 2022- 2023

TUC LGBT+ Conference 2023

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1. The TUC LGBT+ Committee

Members elected to serve on the committee at the 2022 Conference were:

Section A

Phil Jones, Unite
Jeff Sutton, GMB
Kacey De Groot, NEU
Neil Smale, USDAW
Stephen F J Dyer, NASUWT
Sarah Pitt, CWU
Saorsa-Amatheia Tweedale, PCS
Claire Mullaly, Prospect
Martin Chivers, UCU
Darran Brown, ASLEF
Patrick Carberry, FBU
Sue Dunne, RMT
Tigger Blaize, Equity

Section B

Taranjit Chana, GMB

Section C

Eileen Best, Unison
David Hope, GMB

Section D

Julia Georgiou, NHBCSA
Susan Greenwell, ASLEF

Section E

Dean Ismay, GMB

Section F

Denise Rayner, Unite

The following new committee members were also welcomed through the co-option process:

Sukey Fisher, WGGB (Section A)
N. Khan, NASUWT (Section B)
Manish Maisuria, Unison (Section B)
Rohit Dasgupta, UCU (Section B)
EM Williams, Equity (Section F)

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

Brian Linn, Aegis
Maria Exall, CWU
Michelle Codrington-Rogers, NASUWT

At the first meeting of the new committee Maria Exall was re-elected

as Chair of the committee. Maria also became President of the TUC this year at Congress, becoming the TUC's first ever out LGBT+ President.

2. Congress 2022

The LGBT+ Conference motion to Congress was: [Supporting Trans and Non-Binary Workers](#). The motion was carried. Taking forward this motion, the TUC has launched our new *trade unions for trans rights* network.

3. TUC equality campaign plan 2022 – 2023

The TUC has produced an equality campaign plan for the year. The plan includes the TUC's policy asks for government and employers, to improve the working lives of LGBT+, women, Black and disabled workers. In this document we also set out our concerns about our positive vision for an independent and well supported equalities regulator.

4. Equality audit

the 2022 equality audit on non-collective bargaining activities (e.g. Representation, structures and monitoring) was launched at congress 2022.

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

41 unions complete the audit survey, which is 85 per cent of TUC affiliates and covers 99 per cent of all TUC affiliates union members.

The results of the audit showed that 59 per cent of unions collect data on LGBT+ identity of their membership, which has increased from 39 per cent in 2018. However, a lower percentage of unions collect this data for their reps – 44 per cent of unions keep statistics on the LGBT+ identity of stewards/workplace reps, 37 per cent had this for learning reps, 41 per cent for health and safety reps, 39 per cent for branch officials and 34 per cent for equality reps.

The audit found that 38 per cent of unions have formal bodies or committees for LGBT+ members and 43 per cent have informal networks. These have both increased since 2018. There has also been an increase in the proportion of unions with reserved national executive seats for LGBT+ members from five per cent in 2018 to 20 per cent in 2022.

The full results can be found in the [equality audit report](#).

5. Committee working groups

The committee formed the following working groups: pride is a protest, anti-racism, trans rights, LGBT+ poverty and the cost of living crisis, global LGBT+ solidarity and the fight for LGBT+ asylum and protection, tuc LGBT+ conference, far right and the LGBT+ leadership programme.

6. Engagement with the UK government

The office has continued to highlight the shocking rise in transphobia in the UK and the hostile climate for all LGBT+ people. We continue to call for progressive reform of the Gender Recognition Act, based on self-identification. We published [a statement](#) on the Westminster government's intervention in the Scottish GRR, working closely with the Scottish TUC.

We have written [a letter](#) to the government and to the EHRC calling on them not to make amendments to the equality act on the current definition of sex, following on from advice requested by the government. We have raised that there is no evidence that any change is needed, and that the advice as sought by the government,

if enacted, would set back our hard-won equality gains.

We have continued to highlight our deep concerns about the deal between the UK government and Rwanda that will see asylum seekers in the UK transported to Rwanda, and the specific risks for LGBT+ asylum seekers. We have also raised concerns about the rights of the LGBT+ community and international travellers in Qatar, which continues to worsen.

The office has also continued to call for a complete ban on LGBT+ conversion therapy, with no loopholes for 'consent' and no part of our community left out of the ban.

We have raised the impact of conservative cuts on the LGBT+ community, which affects the most marginalised parts of our community the most.

We have also engaged positively with the Labour Party and with LGBT+ Labour, and have fed in our policy recommendations around the above matters.

7. Joint steering group on tackling transphobia and misogyny

Members of the TUC LGBT+ and Women's committees continued to meet as a joint working group on tackling transphobia and misogyny. The working group is made up of members of both committees, with an agreed terms of reference. The working group will meet twice in year. The working group met to discuss the launch of the trade unions for trans rights network, co-ordinating a response to the EHRC's advice on the equality act as requested by the government, a motion passed at the women's conference which noted that transmisogyny is a form of misogyny, sexual harassment, family formation, and the rise of the far right.

8. TUC LGBT+ workers leadership programme

The TUC held an LGBT+ leadership programme between February 8 and March 22 2023.

The programme brought together a cohort of 20 Union reps and activists, including three members of the TUC LGBT+ Committee.

The programme aimed to provide the group with the opportunity to:

- Explore their own approach to leadership and what authentic LGBT+ leadership could look like
- Develop a deeper understanding of the trade union movement including employment law, structures, and organisational and industrial challenges
- Develop a network of supportive LGBT+ leaders in the trade union movement which enables further leadership development

The modules of the programme were as follows:

- module 1: welcome to the programme
- module 2: the power of lgbt+ leadership
- module 3: understanding unions part one
- module 4: centring wellbeing in leadership practice
- module 5: understanding unions part two
- module 6: nurturing your leadership development

The following guest speakers also spoke to the programme: Olivia Blake MP (in place of Nadia Whittome MP, who needed to send apologies on the day), Angela Eagle MP, Paul Fleming, general secretary of Equity, Maria Exall, TUC president and Nancy Kelly, chief executive of Stonewall.

9. Trade unions for trans rights network

the TUC launched a new network, *trade unions for trans rights*, at an event on 29th April 2023. This work arises from the motion from the TUC LGBT+ Conference 2022 which went to TUC Congress 2022.

The network is a space for trade unions to organise together for trans rights at work and in wider society. We will work closely with LGBTQ+ charities and community organisations, to create and share resources and research, and co-ordinate campaigns.

In her speech at the launch of the network, Maria Exall, TUC president and chair of the TUC LGBT+ committee, said:

“Today we pledge ourselves to resist the hate and prejudice that is out there and campaign for a freer, fairer and more equal society for trans and non-binary people.

These are the principles of our movement - standing in solidarity to improve the world of work, and campaigning for progressive social values.

As a cis woman, a lesbian and a feminist, I am a proud trans ally. What upsets me as a woman trade unionist is to see the way that my trans and non-binary siblings are being treated.

As trade unionists we work for workplaces that are free from prejudice where people are free to be themselves.

In our movement we believe that an injury to one is an injury to all. The launch of this network today is about putting that principle into reality. We stand in allyship and in solidarity.”

In the lead-up to the launch we held two stakeholder engagement roundtables, with LGBTQ+ charities and community organisations. We heard from these organisations that there is great appetite for trade unions to take action to call for trans rights and inclusion in the workplace and beyond. Some key industries that were noted where trade unions could have a key role in furthering trans inclusion were: health, education and media.

10. Research into LGBT+ experiences in the workplace

The TUC is conducting new research into LGBT+ experiences in the workplace. The research consists of:

- a survey to explore how LGBT+ workers are experiencing the cost of living crisis in relation to pay and household income, as well as discrimination, bullying and harassment at work, the ability to be 'out' at work, and workplace organising.
- a survey to identify what percentage of employers have relevant policies, training, and monitoring activities in place, in order to protect and support LGBT+ people at work.
- interviews with LGBT+ trade union members and reps, to gain a deeper qualitative understanding and to source quotes and case studies for the final report.

11. Fighting back against the far right

On 29 November 2022 the TUC held [a roundtable](#) on fighting back against the far right's use of hatred of women and LGBT+ people. The event was Chaired by TUC LGBT+ committee member, and NASUWT honorary treasurer, Michelle Codrington-Rogers. Delegates heard from a panel of international speakers who shared how they are fighting back against the far right in their contexts.

The TUC is also developing a far right political education course, and the LGBT+ policy officer has provided information and suggested content about LGBT+ issues. The course will train experienced activists to deliver the course to lay members, giving both trainers and members foundational knowledge about the political, economic and historical conditions under which the far right has grown internationally in our communities, governments and workplaces over the last thirty years.

12. LGBT+ awareness events and communications

The TUC shared blogs for [Lesbian Visibility Week](#) and [Bi Visibility Day](#) highlighting the lack of support in the workplace for LGBT+ workers, and workplace issues such as sexual harassment.

We also marked trans awareness week and trans day of visibility, highlighting our resources on trans allyship and how reps can tackle transphobia. The TUC also sent solidarity and support to everyone who knew trans schoolgirl Brianna Ghey.

The LGBT+ policy officer also wrote [a blog](#) for the CSP union about how the cost of living crisis is impacting LGBT+ workers.

13. LGBT+ community engagement

Maria Exall, the chair of the TUC LGBT+ committee, wrote a letter to Pride in London, asking them to recognise striking workers at Pride in London 2023 by having a group of strikers lead the march. We held a positive meeting about this and engagement is ongoing.

Maria also delivered a keynote speech at the annual Stonewall Workplace Conference.

14. CIPD trans and non-binary inclusion at work guidance

The TUC were a core partner in commissioning and creating new guidance on trans and non-binary inclusion in the workplace, as part of a project led by CIPD to produce evidence-led employer guidance in this area. Julia Georgiou, a member of the LGBT+ committee member, and general secretary of NHBC SA, joined the LGBT+ policy officer as a member of the group drafting the guidance.

The policy officer also spoke at the CIPD inclusion and diversity conference in November 2022.