



Scottish Disabled Members' Committee Newsletter

Winter Edition 2018

Welcome to the first edition of the Scottish Disabled Members' Committee newsletter! We want to let you know about the work of the Committee and to keep you updated on news relevant to disabled members in Scotland Region. We hope you'll contact us if you have any issues you want to see highlighted or news, events or stories you would like covered.

Tony Slaven, Chair



[Picture: Tony Slaven Speaking at National Disabled Members' Conference on behalf of South Lanarkshire UNISON]

Scottish Disabled Members' Group

The UNISON Scottish Disabled Members' Group is a self-organised group of disabled members employed in Scotland Region. It meets annually to elect a committee and representatives from among its disabled membership and also to agree the main work programme for the following year.



Scottish Disabled Members' Committee

The members on the Scottish Disabled Members' Committee give their own time to represent the interests of the disabled lay membership in the Scotland Region and to carry out the agreed work programme.

Some of the Committee's work comes from motions carried at the Annual Meeting, and from motions carried at Scottish Council and the National Disabled Members' Conference.

Each year the outgoing Committee reports back on the work it's carried out through the year.

STUC 'Unions into Schools' Programme

For over a year trained trade union activists have visited secondary schools across Scotland to improve the knowledge among pupils of their rights and responsibilities at work, and how trade unions work both in the workplace and wider campaigning that unions undertake.



Sessions delivered through the programme cover a wide range of topics and can include equalities, what unions do, health and safety in the workplace, contracts of employment and international issues.

The STUC is developing a new teaching unit for the schools' pack on a supportive workplace. This will cover various issues including disability equality in the workplace. One of our own committee members, Andy Crosbie, will be supporting the STUC with the development of this unit giving his school and workplace experiences and including the issues he encountered.

The STUC is looking for more activists to deliver sessions throughout Scotland. A training afternoon is being held at the STUC Centre in Glasgow on Saturday 19 January 2019 from 12 noon till 3pm, with lunch provided. **Any activist interested in being involved should contact Terry Anderson or Pauline Walker 0141 337 8100.**

For more information on Unions into Schools visit the STUC website, <http://www.stuc.org.uk/unions-into-schools>

What we did in 2018:

- We made a commitment to produce a newsletter bi-annually through the year.
- We revised the Group's constitution to incorporate changes made to the National Committee's constitution last year.
- We contributed to the work of the Scotland Region and its various regional committees.
- We have contributed to disabled members' policy development in UNISON and STUC by submitting motions and amendments on:
 - a national screening programme for scoliosis
 - a review and guidance to branches on support for an ageing workforce
 - securing reasonable adjustments for disabled young members
 - promoting good recruitment practices for people with neurodiverse conditions, and the STUC's Unions into Schools programme
 - tackling presenteeism
 - promoting the provision of public disabled toilets
 - Increasing autism awareness
 - supporting employees with cancer, and their carers
 - a campaign to highlight issues of disabled members and success stories



“IN THE SPOTLIGHT” Autism Awareness - by Andy Crosbie

I'm a member of the Scottish Qualifications Authority Branch and sit on the Scottish Disabled Members' Committee. The Committee and the SQA UNISON Branch have been jointly working on raising awareness of Autism and best practice in employment. This followed on from awareness raising activities the SQA's new Disability Network held consisting of information sessions to line managers, HR and general members of staff as part of World Autism Awareness Week earlier this year.

Autism is a condition affecting 700,000 people in the UK and is part of daily life for 2.8 million people. Only 32% of people with the condition are in employment and only half of these are in full time work.

In reality there are many small adaptations employers can make to their recruitment and selection processes to increase the rate of employment. For example, providing questions in advance of an interview, rewording questions, and putting more of an emphasis on practical tasks instead of competency-based interview questions.

At the STUC Disabled Workers conference in 2017, colleagues in the PCS union tabled a motion about the autistic spectrum and adapting the interview process. Following on from this, at our Committee policy weekend in February 2018 I delivered a presentation to the Committee on autism and my personal experiences of living with the condition. As part of the presentation I described some good practices in recruitment being used by Scottish employers.

By April 2018, my Branch submitted a motion on Autism Awareness to the Scottish Council's AGM; which was carried. The motion focused on the barriers people with Autism faced *gaining* employment in addition to the difficulties retaining employment. It asked branches in Scotland to encourage employers to make adaptations to their recruitment and selection processes to best support people on the autistic spectrum, and to provide guidance and encourage the sharing of good practice.

The Committee will be taking forward this work during 2019 through actions arising from motions carried at October's National Disabled Members' Conference relating to Neurodiverse Conditions (including Autism), and ADHD in the Workplace.

National Disabled Members' Conference 2018 – by Jackie Anderson

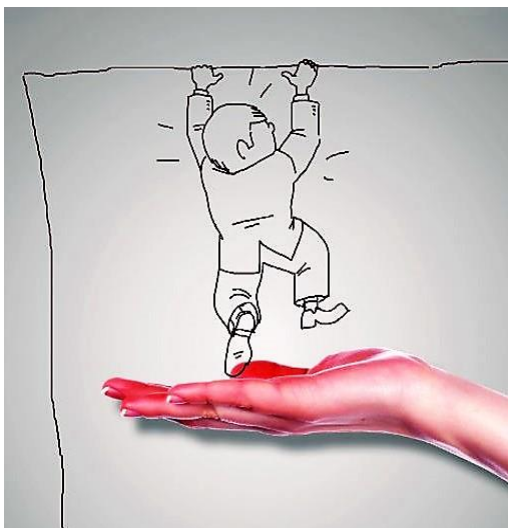
The National Disabled Members' Conference was held in Brighton on 27th to 29th October.

A major role of the National Disabled Members' Conference is to develop UK-wide disabled members' policy. It's also a forum to exchange information and knowledge, and to network and encourage disabled members throughout the UK.



Motions to Conference guides the work programme for disabled members across the UK, and some of the work will be tasked to our Committee at a regional level for 2019.

Securing Reasonable Adjustments for Young Disabled Members, by the National Young Members' Forum



South Lanarkshire UNISON submitted an amendment to the motion submitted by the National Young Members' Forum. Speaking for the branch, Tony Slaven highlighted the successful TUC Unions into Schools Programme that helps school pupils prepare for the world of work and introduces them to the role of trade unions. He

described to Conference the additional barriers disabled young people face securing and sustaining employment and asked Conference to publicise the TUC's programme to branches and to also highlight the important role of adjustments to the recruitment process to support disabled young people into work.

National Disabled Members' Committee

The National Disabled Members' Committee operates similarly to the Scottish Disabled Members' Committee but on a UK-wide basis. Each region has two reserved seats on the National Committee and there are also seats for caucus representatives.

Last year you elected John Nisbet and Kathleen Kennedy who have been working throughout the year to carry out the work.

[Photo: John Nisbet speaking at National Disabled Members' Conference.]

Work given high priority during 2018 included: Hidden/Non Apparent Disabilities, Mental Health, Welfare Reform, Reasonable Adjustments, Development of a Disabled Worker's Charter, and two organising motions relating to disabled women and to deaf (BSL) members.

We'll keep you posted on progress throughout 2019 on the National Committee's work.

Scottish Government's Disability Conference

A FAIRER SCOTLAND FOR DISABLED PEOPLE



Our Delivery Plan to 2021 for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



In April 2018 a number of Committee Members attended a conference on Disability and Employment with representation from employers, unions, and disabled people.

This conference was to launch the Scottish Government's consultation on employing disabled people as part of its commitment to halve the disability employment gap.

Research by the TUC in 2018 observed that 49.2% of disabled people of working age were in employment compared to 80.6% of non-disabled people equivalent to an employment gap of 31.4%. This varies considerably for different types of disabilities, and is as low as 14.8% for disabled people with learning difficulties. Many disabled people find it almost impossible to secure work. It also affects disabled women disproportionately.

A number of topics related to disabilities and employment were discussed. For example, the importance of celebrating the success of disabled people through visible role models. An audience question session and breakout sessions also took place covering a range of topics including inclusive recruitment procedures and the positive action measures employers can undertake to encourage applications from disabled people.

The day ended celebrating the success of disabled people by showcasing success stories of disabled people and how they got where they were now either by participating in Project Search, setting up their own businesses, coming through another supported employment service, or by undertaking standard recruitment processes.

STUC Disabled Workers' Conference, 2018

The STUC Disabled Workers' Conference is being held on 17th – 18th November 2018 in Clydebank, Glasgow.

Our submissions include:

Make 2020 the Year of Disabled Workers in which we ask for a year-long campaign to highlight the issues and success stories of disabled workers and wider community.

Tackling Presenteeism in the Workplace in which we ask for campaigning to encourage employers to tackle the issue and support workers too unwell to be at work but too fearful to stay off.

We've also submitted an amendment to an EIS motion ***Support for Members with Cancer***, asking Conference to extend this support to those caring for someone with cancer.

DISABLED MEMBERS' ANNUAL MEETING

10th November 2018 @ 10:30am

UNISON Scotland Regional Office

West Campbell Street

{Any disabled member wishing to attend needs to be registered as a delegate through their branch and with the costs of attendance being met by the branch.}

KEY COMMITTEE WORK DATES, 2019

- Scottish Disabled Members' Committee Policy Seminar – February 2019
- Scottish Council AGM: 6th April 2019
- National Disabled Members' Conference 2019 – 2nd to 4th November 2019
- Scottish Disabled Members' Annual Meeting – 9th November 2019
- STUC Disabled Workers' Conference – November 2019 (date tbc)

Please contact us if you wish to submit articles to our Newsletter or even to suggest possible topics.

We would also love to hear from any disabled member keen to become more involved!!!

You can contact us in the first instance through Eileen Dinning, UNISON Scotland's Equality Officer at West Campbell Street, Glasgow or you can **private message** us through our Facebook page with your contact information and we'll get back to you.



<https://www.facebook.com/UNISONScotlandDisabledMembers>