



Scottish Disabled Members' Committee Newsletter

Summer Edition 2019

2019 SDMC Events



We have received regional funding to hold events in the autumn for activists on the Scottish Committee and Branch Disability Officers, Equalities Officers, and Branch Secretaries in UNISON West Campbell St, Glasgow. We'll also be inviting a representative from each of the regional committees.

If you're in one of these branch roles you can register for one of three dates:

16th September 2019

21st October 2019

31st October 2019

This will be listed as a UNISON Scotland training event. Topics covered include the ageing workforce, menopause, and terminal illness (with a particular focus on cancer). Information will be circulated to branches and the region during the summer but **until you hear from us formally please save one of these dates!!!** Branches meet the cost of attending for those branch officers attending.

Did you know?

- 27% of cancer patients receive no return-to-work support after diagnosis.
- 23% of those returning don't feel well enough to be there.
- 10% feel the need to cover up their symptoms at work.

[Scottish Cancer Patient Experience Survey, 2018]

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT CROSS PARTY WORKING GROUP FOR DISABILITY

At a recent STUC Disabled Workers Committee meeting I was asked if I would like to be part of a delegation to the Scottish Parliament to represent the interests of the Committee and disabled workers on a cross party working group. I jumped at the chance. So I headed off to Edinburgh on 5th June for my first meeting.

This work links to the Scottish Government's Fairer Scotland Action Plan which contains fifty actions to help tackle poverty, reduce inequality and build a fairer and inclusive Scotland.

For more information: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-action-plan/>



The Working Group's main aims are:

- 1 •To be a communication channel between the Scottish Parliament, disabled people, and organisations working for or supporting disabled people
- 2 •To provide opportunities for MSPs to learn about the needs of disabled people and the barriers they face excluding them from performing an active role in our society
- 3 •To increase awareness and raise the profile of rights for disabled people
- 4 •To put disability on the agenda of the Scottish Parliament

Jeremy Balfour MSP who chairs the meeting is disabled himself. He prepared the group to have either agenda items or questions ready for the Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People Shirley Anne Somerville MSP when she addressed the group.

After some discussion on Personal Independence Payments [PIP] and the new benefits that are being devolved from the UK government in 2020 she opened the meeting up for our prepared questions.



I discussed the disability employment gap with the Minister and asked how many of this year's intake of modern apprentices have declared as disabled? She said that she didn't have the figures to hand but promised to write to the STUC and make them available.

The Minister recognised that the STUC has been concerned about the employment gap for some time and had heard that it was a major talking point at the recent Joint Trade Union Congress in April this year.



“IN THE SPOTLIGHT” – GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, RELATIONSHIPS AND LEARNING DISABILITY CONFERENCE, 19th March 2019

In 2008 the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland reported on a case, “Ms A”, an older woman with a learning disability who had been subjected to sexual abuse over many years and that concluded that she was denied justice. That case pointed to failures by a range of public services and justice services to support and protect Ms A. The report concluded that Ms A was not an isolated case.



The Scottish Government’s 10-year strategy “The Keys to Life” was published in 2013 to improve the quality of life for people with learning disabilities focusing on health, sexual health, and sexual abuse. (<https://keystolife.info/>)

NHS Scotland is leading on the development of guidance on Gender-Based Violence within the learning disability community and on the development of professional guidance to increase the knowledge of those working within this community.

Women with learning disabilities are at greater risk of domestic abuse, sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence. The NHS Health Scotland is working with the Scottish Government, COSLA, public services and the Third Sector involved in health and social care to tackle gender-based violence towards women with learning disabilities.

Workshops included:

- The role of local government, local authorities and Violence against Women Partnerships in driving the local area response to gender-based violence and learning disability.
- The rights of parents with learning disabilities.
- Understanding capacity, consent and protection from abuse.
- Relationship, sexual health and parenthood information.
- Supporting women with learning disabilities who have experienced domestic abuse.
- Supporting women with learning disabilities in sexual health services.



Presentations from the conference can be found via the following link, <http://www.healthscotland.scot/publications/gender-based-violence-relationships-and-learning-disability-presentations>



“We are all in this together: exploring our personal and collective power around mental health”, STUC Mental Health Event

Andy Crosbie, Equality Officer from the Scottish Qualifications Authority Branch recently attended and spoke at the STUC’s recent Mental Health Day School. Workplace topics covered included access to occupational health, mental health first aid, HR policy and various therapies that were available to staff to support their mental health.

Andy highlighted the impact of bullying and harassment on members’ mental health including those with disabilities and health conditions.

Mental Health at Work, STUC Survey

The STUC recently undertook a survey on Mental Health at work. Findings from this include:

- Over 11% of respondents said their work has caused them to have suicidal feelings or attempts.
- Over 35% of respondents noted that poor management, ineffective management, or management expectations were either the cause of mental ill health or exacerbated mental ill health.
- 79% said talking more would help alleviate symptoms of mental ill health.
- 68% identified work as causing low mood or depression.
- Almost 60% said work made them feel anxious

Across Unison a considerable amount of work is ongoing to address mental health in our workplaces.

This has included our young members colleagues launching their new “How’s Yer Heid” campaign on social media and the publication of a Mood Manual packed with various activities.



For more information:

- **UNISON Young Members #Howsyerheid”,**
<https://www.facebook.com/ScottishYM/?ref=bookmarks>
- **UNISON Negotiating Mental Health Policies Guide,**
<https://www.unison.org.uk/25005/>

Disability Assistance in Scotland

We contributed to UNISON’s response to the consultation on Disability Assistance in Scotland.

The Scotland Act 2016 devolves responsibility for social security to Scotland.

Scotland will be responsible for providing Disability Assistance by 2019 (and for Severe Disablement Allowance and also Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit by April 2020).

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/social-security/benefits-disabled-people-ill-health/>

Menopause

UNISON Guide – The Menopause and Work,
<https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2013/06/On-line-Catalogue204723.pdf>

Reasonable Adjustment Passports, by Jackie Anderson

What's a Reasonable Adjustment Passport?

It's a form listing all reasonable adjustments that have been agreed between an employee and the line manager and implemented under the Equality Act 2010.

What's the benefit of this to me?

It's a written record that is passed on whenever the employee's job changes or is relocated, or where there's a change of manager. It should contain all adjustments agreed over time by all past and present line managers even if they're not presently 'needed'.

The main benefit is that it saves you the need to continually explain or renegotiate your current arrangement anytime you change your job or manager or work location (unless of course it's a review of the reasonable adjustments to make sure they're still fit for purpose).

What if I don't want to complete one?

It should never be compulsory to complete the Passport and it must be signed by both you and your line manager.

I don't want my medical information on the Passport

What if my manager's not sure what to do?

No medical information should ever be recorded on the Passport, only the information detailing the agreed reasonable adjustments

Your manager can seek advice from Personnel, Health & Safety, Occupational Health, or Access to Work.



How do I go about completing a Passport?

Your line manager is responsible for completing the Passport with you and also for making sure it's reviewed each year. You're responsible for letting your manager know when changes may be needed to make sure the reasonable adjustments you have are still needed and effective.

If you move into a new post with your employer or to a new location the Passport will be looked at in advance of that move to make sure that any support you need is in place *before* you move.

Any new manager may need to discuss if there are any new adjustments needed that aren't already in place.

National Delegate Conference, June 2019



HOORAY! UNISON South Lanarkshire Local Government branch's motion "Make 2021 the year of Disabled Workers" was carried at conference.

- Celebrating the successes and contributions of disabled people in the workplace
- Challenging the societal and environmental barriers to employing disabled people
- Showcasing success stories and visible role models

The National Executive Council and National Disabled Members' Committee are now tasked to make this happen!

The National Disabled Members Committee also had two key motions carried at conference:

1. Negotiating and Bargaining for Disabled Workers Rights
2. Fighting for an Accessible Welfare System



For further information on these motions and other motions carried at conference see UNISON Motions Database, <https://www.unison.org.uk/policy-motions/>

The Blue Badge Scheme and Invisible Disabilities

The Scheme supports disabled people's independence and health by enabling them to park near to their destination.

Historically this has been to support people with physical disabilities and those registered blind; however, it was extended in Scotland to include invisible disabilities where a person may pose a traffic risk to themselves or others through a diagnosed mental health condition. For information:

- **Scottish Government:** <https://www.mygov.scot/apply-blue-badge/>
- **Disability Scotland:** <http://www.disabilityscot.org.uk/info-guides/blue-badges-and-car-parking/eligibility/>

CONFERENCES

National Disabled Members' Conference, 2nd – 4th November 2019

If you're interested in attending this year's conference please let your branch secretary know as soon as possible.

There are introductory workshops for new delegates to help lead you through what to expect from conference, and we're also on hand.

Conference details including registration are available on the National Site.

<https://www.unison.org.uk/events/2019-disabled-members-conference/>

STUC Disabled Workers' Conference, 16th – 17th November 2019

UNISON opens up some of its allocation to branch delegates. Numbers are VERY limited. If you are interested watch out for the notification which will be sent to your branch this month.

USEFUL UNISON RESOURCES:

- UNISON Disability Leave Bargaining Guide and Model Policy, <https://www.unison.org.uk/disability-leave-bargaining-guide-and-model-policy/>
- UNISON Proving Disability and Reasonable Adjustments, <https://southwest.unison.org.uk/towebproving-disability-and-reasonable-adjustments-ed5-oct-142/>

KEY DIARY DATES, 2019

- National Disabled Members' Conference 2019 – 2nd to 4th November 2019
- STUC Disabled Workers' Conference – 16th – 17th November 2019
- Scottish Disabled Members' Annual Meeting – 23rd November 2019

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>