



Scottish Women's Committee Annual Report 2016

WE ♥ UNIONS
ESPECIALLY UNISON

Dear Delegate,

I would like to start by thanking you for taking the time to attend this year's AGM and conference. As has become the recurring theme of my introductory comments since 2010, we are still facing an ideological attack on public services and our welfare system. The Conservative led coalition in Westminster have truly taken the expression "women and children first" with both groups paying a disproportionate price in the name of austerity.

It has been a challenging year; the EU referendum and the Trade Union Act have meant that our activists have been busy. We won some victories in relation to the TU Act but overall it's still an attack on our right to withdraw labour and we must continue to agitate and work to have the Act revoked. In terms of Brexit - who knows what the future holds, however, we must be vigilant to make sure all our gains in terms of workers rights and equalities legislation aren't peeled back. However you voted in the referendum, it's important that we have a Brexit that works for workers and not bankers.

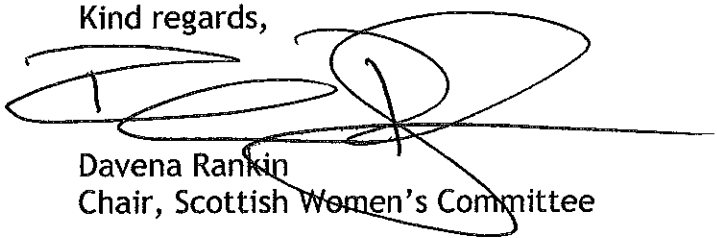
The Committee have been busy and I know how hard it has been for some of the committee members to be active in the group as their case load and work load has increased as jobs are reduced in the public sector. Despite that, the committee have had representatives on most of the standing committees of Scottish Council and members have attended the STUC and TUC Women's Conferences as well as other events. Reports of these events and committees can be found further on in this report.

On a personal note, I would like to thank the committee for all their effort and in future when I say, "almost finished" I would love to say I will mean it (but we know that's just not going to happen). I would like to thank Eileen Dinning, Margaret Cusack, Delia Atherton and Rosaleen Rodgers for all their support this year.

I would also like to thank Pat Law who has supported the work of the committee in the role of our Secretary. Pat suffered a period of illness this year before retiring and I will miss the contributions she has made over the many years. I fondly remember when she got up in a STUC debate to oppose an EIS motion. She approached the rostrum smiling sweetly and it took the EIS forever and a day to realise they had just been savaged by a smiling assassin. Pat worked tirelessly on the committee and I'm hoping she remains active in the retired members section so she can carry on contributing to UNISON.

I hope you enjoy our AGM and become inspired to get more active - just remember women make up almost 80% of UNISON - without there is no union!

Kind regards,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Davena Rankin', written over a horizontal line.

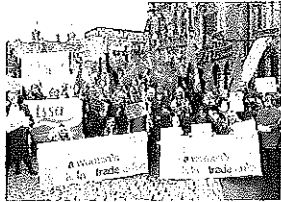
Davena Rankin
Chair, Scottish Women's Committee

Conference Reports:

STUC Women's' Conference - Dundee

Report by Davena Rankin

The 88th Annual STUC Women's Conference was held in Dundee on 2nd & 3rd November. UNISON Scotland submitted motions on Women voting rights - encouraging women to vote and Women's representation in Scottish Public Life.



As the Conference clashed with the planned lobby of Westminster, the STUC women's Committee arranged an alternative protest in Dundee. The Protest was well attended and in fact some local school children came along to find out what was happening and all left disgusted with what they thought was a very unfair attack on trade unions.

On the afternoon of the first day of business, there was a Scottish Parliament Hustings that was chaired by Davena Rankin, Co-vice Chair STUC Women's Committee. The Panellists were: Nicola Ross (Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party), Sarah Beattie-Smith (Scottish Green Party), Jenny Marra MSP (Scottish Labour Party), Mike Rumbles (Scottish Liberal Democrats) and Shona Robison MSP (Scottish National Party). Questions were taken from the floor and included questions on Higher Education, Abortion rights, access to safe public transport and the impact of the austerity budgets.

Katrina Murray was elected to the Standing Orders of the STUC Women's Conference; Eileen Dinning and Davena Rankin were re-elected to the STUC Women's Committee and Davena Rankin was elected as Chair of the Committee.

National Women's Conference - Brighton

Report by Carol Cullen

I attended this conference, proud to have been selected as one of the two regional delegates, elected from Scottish Women's Committee in October 2015. Unfortunately, the other delegate was unable to attend the conference.

The specific role for me was to carry forward the three motions selected by Scottish Women's Committee in the preceding year.

Unfortunately, all three were ruled out of order by the Standing Orders Committee. This meant that my job was to re-approach the Standing Orders Committee to appeal their decisions on these issues. I would like to thank Eileen Dinning & Davina Rankin for their support in preparation for making this appeal & my three subsequent addresses to conference, all of which terrified me at the time, but were ultimately quite exhilarating.

Scottish motions were;

1. **Food banks** - ruled out of order because it was found 'not to be an exclusively women's issue.'
2. **Women's voting rights** - Encouraging Women to vote - ruled out of order as a result of 'lack of clarity of the motion'
3. **Conference Venues** - ruled out of order as a result of 'long term booking ahead'

The agenda for the conference was full, consisting of 38 motions in total. This was increased to 39 when Scottish Motion 3 above, was successfully appealed immediately prior to the conference.

In terms of a general overview of day one, Wendy Nicholls, UNISON President, opened. We went on to debate & discuss the full agenda, including; engaging women for the future of our union, encouraging women to become more active in UNISON, negotiating & bargaining, flexible working & the negative impact on women's hours & caring responsibilities, the impact of austerity on UNISON women, austerity, cuts & the impact on all sections of our communities. I spoke for the first time, speaking in support of Motion 7 'The cuts are killing us' discussing the Scottish budget implications, relaying the message that all those present were being asked to speak to family, colleagues & community contacts to oppose further budget cuts & call for no compulsory redundancies by seeking support of their elected members. Day one complete & all motions carried. Phew!

There were great speakers & passionate debate, indicating the severe impact of the current financial budgetary situation. All sectors of the community are suffering already, with more budgetary cuts to come & women, who make up 78% of UNISON membership, are carrying a huge part of this burden. The general mood of conference was quite solemn & serious, given on-going issues.

Day 2 was opened by Naz Shah MP, a labour MP, passionate about leadership, justice & equality for all. Fantastic speaker & really appears to be focussed on the true impact of human trafficking on women, challenging fellow politicians regarding organisational racism & discrimination etc. This was a very well received presentation.

There was a meeting of all the Scottish Delegates, chaired by Davena Rankin & at which Katrina Murray spoke, which was well attended. It was great to see so many Scottish Delegates there. Delegates were informed that the conference venue motion was back on the agenda & it was agreed to request a reference back re the food banks motion. Unfortunately, this all happened so quickly that I completely missed the opportunity to do this. Wee learning curve on process there, which will not be forgotten! Scottish delegates joined a photo call demonstrating why we love UNISON, with a gorgeous tartan heart logo.

The writer attended a seminar on Women's progression & leadership in UNISON over lunch. This was another excellent presentation, focussed on promotion of equality in representation at all levels in our union. UNISON has robust mechanisms that strive towards ensuring that our National Executive Committee, key decision making bodies, senior management & staffing structures reflect this. All three speakers were really inspirational & encouraging.

There were other seminars on during this time frame too; Women's Lives, Learning & organising services, Power to You, Influencing decision makers, ABC of Open University & The power of the UNISON Learning rep. Quite a diverse collection of workshops aimed at providing choice at lots of levels.

Following the lunch break we were addressed by Dave Prentis. He provided a great speech, reassuring everyone present of his continuing commitment to the female membership & reflecting on his historic attendance at Women's Conference, how

impressed he is to see our conference having developed to 800 strong & hoping this trend continues. Again, this presentation was very favourably received.

There followed an emotional presentation from Danielle Tiplady, a student nurse, who had been involved in supporting a walk out of health workers, in support of the current on-going issues with trainee doctors. Conference expressed their unanimous agreement of our solidarity with our colleagues in health & held up images of expressed support for a photo call.

Prior to the finish of the day, there was a hustings for National Delegates Conference, whereby two people were elected to represent the National Women's Conference delegates. There was also an LGBT members' caucus, a state pension information meeting which highlighted how much National Insurance we will be paying from April & also a meeting about the 50/50 Campaign about campaigning for solutions to achieve a better gender balance in parliament. Another busy day at Women's Conference!

Our last session on day 3 was spent debating the remaining motions & also welcoming a superb speaker Kwateng-Klvitse Adowa from Forward. This was a highly informative presentation about FGM (female genital mutilation), I was astonished to hear that 1,700 victims of this practice were referred to specialist clinics in the last two years in England & Wales. The prevalence of this practice in the UK was unknown to the writer & the speaker warned of young women continuing to be at high risk as a result of increasing cultural diversity & religious belief. This is viewed to be a growing issue for police & child-protective services, which requires training & awareness from professionals, but may also suffer as a result of budgetary cuts.

This conference was super. The opportunity to network, meeting women from branches all across the UK & sharing stories of activism from a woman's perspective was really interesting & fun. I also overcame nerves & anxieties to participate fully in the conference, taking the role of Scottish Regional Rep quite seriously. I would like to express many thanks to Scottish Women's Committee, for all of their support & camaraderie & for selecting me in the first instance.

If you are offered the opportunity to attend this conference then please take it sisters, you won't regret it!

TUC Women's Conference

09th - 11th March 2016, Congress House London

Report by Davena Rankin

Please find to follow a very brief report on the TUC Women's Conference:

This year's conference was chaired by Mary Bousted of ATL. There were 31 unions present and 292 delegates. The Royal College of Midwives were attending for the first time.

Speakers included Frances O'Grady, Kate Green (the Shadow Equalities minister), Liz Snape (Unison) TUC President and Philippa Clarke.

Both Frances and Kate used their speeches to highlight the importance of the EU and stressed that coming out of the EU might affect workers rights especially women. They both posed the question on whether a Tory Government would keep the worker's rights which had come in through the EU she asked e.g maternity rights.

Philippa Clarke gave an impassioned appeal for donations to the Sylvia Pankhurst fund to raise a statue to her at Clerkenwell Green.

On the Thursday 2 junior doctors received a standing ovation for their speech about their fight with Jeremy Hunt and their experience of taking strike action for the first time.

Jane McAlevey addressed conference on her experience as a Trade Union organiser in America and how she truly embraced community working as a recruitment tool for her union. They fought to save housing which had been earmarked for demolition as part of gentrification of a working class area. They were successful and the residents started to sign up to the TU. She also turned negotiation meetings on their head taking whole workplaces into a negotiation meeting instead of the one or two that normally go. She has written a book called "Raising expectations (and raising hell) my decade fight for the labor movement" if you want to find out more.

Elections:

Lucia McKeever was elected to the general seat and Eleanor Smith to a Black Women's seat on the TUC women's Conference

UNISON Motions

The UNISON motions on Women's access to justice and low pay in the care sector were both carried. The amendment to motion 1 - women organizing against the Trade Union Bill became part of Composite 1, which was subsequently chosen as the women's conference motion to congress.

As Chair of the STUC women's Conference I was allowed to address the conference. My speech can be found at the STUC Women's Committee Facebook page or can be sent out on request (for the insomniacs amongst you all).

Abortion Access in 2016: Preventing harassment and putting pressure where power lies

12th April 2016 - House of Commons, London

Report by Davena Rankin

Access to harassment-free abortion is not guaranteed in the UK. There has been a marked increase in reported anti-choice activity culminating in the forced closure of an abortion clinic in 2015. The event at parliament aimed to discuss ways in which the access to clinics and services could be made harassment free for both service users and providers.

Speakers Included:

- Cat Smith MP, Shadow Minister Women & equalities
- Laura Bates, Everyday Sexism Project
- Edem Barbara Ntummy, Christians for Choice
- Dr Pam Lowe, Aston University
- Genevieve Edwards, Marie Stopes UK
- Kerry Abel, Abortion Rights Chair

Speakers talked about the situation in Northern Ireland and the campaign to extend the 1967 legislation to cover all parts of the UK. There was also an international dimension

to the discussion around Trump (who had just suggested that women should be criminalised for accessing abortion services) and the way in which Black communities in the USA were particularly affected with fewer reproductive health service providers offering terminations in areas with a predominately Black population.

The meeting naturally focused on groups like Abort 67, Helpers for gods precious little infants and 40 days for life and their activities around clinics. 40 days for life originated in the US and operates on a “franchise-like” basis. It was reported that Helpers for gods precious little infants use salaried protestors and have been known to throw holy water at women and follow them from the clinic. It was reported that at one protest outside a Marie Stopes clinic, anti-choice protestors had stopped a fire engine responding to a fire alarm at the facility.

Dr Pam Lowe has written a report on the experiences of women seeking abortion in Bpas clinics and being forced to face anti-abortion activists. It can be accessed via <http://www.aston.ac.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allid=256682> and is called 'A Hard Enough Decision to Make': Anti--Abortion Activism outside Clinics in the Eyes of Clinic Users.

There was a lively discussion about how best to stop harassment at the services. It was outlined how the anti-abortion groups carry out detailed research to find out where they can and can't stand in and around the facilities making it harder to move them on. There was clear support for buffer zones and a ban on distributing leaflets on / near service providers' premises. There was also a call for pro-choice MPs to speak up and condemn the extreme anti-abortion groups and their protests.

STUC Annual Congress

18th - 20th April 2016, Dundee

No Report Received

Pat Law attended the STUC Annual Congress this year; unfortunately Pat became unwell shortly after congress and has not returned to work since then. For those who know Pat, you will know she always wrote very detailed reports and as always she played a full part in the UNISON delegation. The absence of report is because of circumstances beyond Pat's control. Information on Congress can be found at <http://www.unison-scotland.org/news/stuc-congress/>

Committee Reports

Scottish Welfare Committee

Report by Elizabeth Rankin

The Scottish Welfare committee meets four times per year. The remit of this committee

Promote Unison Welfare

The Scottish Welfare committee produce a newsletter this is distributed electronically to all branch welfare officers in Scotland that they have an e-mail address for.

In January an e-mail is sent out to the branch welfare officers about the winter fuel grant, and again in the summer an e-mail is sent about the school uniform grant.

At Scottish Council meeting Unison welfare have a stall with information on what is available for the members.

Support Branch Welfare Officers

All branch welfare officers should complete the training courses available to them. Members of the committee are happy to give advice to branch welfare officers if required.

The Scottish Committee hold a seminar event each year this year it is being held on the 5th and 6th November. The venue for this event is the Golden Jubilee Hotel Clydebank.

Fundraising for the charity

This year they had a trombola stall at the New Lanark fun day on the 28th August. Later on this year a raffle will be held with all branches being sent tickets to sell.

At each meeting a report is given on the number of successful grants that have been given.

Scotland as a region process one of the highest amount of grants each year.

National Women's Committee

Report by Norma Black, Davena Rankin, Viv Thomson (for the AGM) & Pat Rawland (since the AGM)

The NWC has meet twice since conference and the AGM was held in Edinburgh. Please find to follow a brief update on the work of the NWC and some details of the discussion at the meetings.

Proportionality and Fair Representation

Work is underway on a toolkit to assist branches and regions in building involvement of members from under-represented groups across our structures. As soon as this is finalised we will let the SWC know.

Fabian Women's Network

UNISON Labour Link sponsored the report, *Footprints in the sand: Five years of the Fabian Women's Network mentoring and political education programm*. The FWN mentoring programme is targeted at women from diverse backgrounds who wish to

become involved in political life. The launch of the new guide was held in December, attended by a number of senior women MPs who applauded UNISON's involvement and commitment to greater representation of women in public life. Information on the next scheme will be made available when received. Those wishing to apply must belong to FWN. <http://fabianwomen.org.uk/mentoring/>

Amnesty International My Body My Rights

In 2015 UNISON agreed to be a communications partner with Amnesty International to support their bid for DFID matched funding for their campaign to end FGM and early forced marriage in Sierra Leone and Burkina Faso. A campaigner from Burkina Faso spoke with international officers and the NWO, to share information on the work which was being done.

More information will be made available on how to support the campaign, via the international department, or from the Amnesty UK site here: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/issues/My-Body-My-Rights>

AGM

The AGM was held in Edinburgh for the first time and committee members were able to take a tour of the Scottish Parliament at the conclusion of the first day.

There was a presentation and discussion about the EU referendum and committee members were asked to complete the survey that UNISON was undertaking to decide on whether or not UNISON should take a position on the referendum. The majority of the committee decided that we should take a position and that should be to remain. The top concerns unsurprisingly were around equalities and workers rights.

The committee also reviewed the preliminary agenda for National Delegates Conference and selected two amendments and our prioritised motions. The committee did not take a position on the issue of reserved seats on the National Executive Council for disabled members as it was felt there had not been enough information provided prior to the meeting. A subsequent consultation of the committee did not provide a clear response either so the NWC has chosen not to adopt a position on the proposal.

The committee spent time on the workplan in their subcommittees.

Elections:

Norma Black was elected to attend the National Health Service Group Conference
Davena Rankin was elected as Chair of the NWC

Women in Local Government Commission

Heather Wakefield, UNISON head of local government, addressed the last meeting of the NWC on the topic of Women in Local Government Commission. The Fawcett Society in partnership with the Local Government Information Unit have launched a project during 2016 which will establish a Commission to consider the question - *Does local government work for women?* The Commission will be co-chaired by Dame Margaret Hodge, Labour MP for Barking and former leader of Islington Council and Gillian Keegan, Director of Women2Win and Conservative Councillor and Cabinet Member in Chichister. Heather Wakefield has been invited to join the commission.

The localism agenda has seen increasing and significant power handed to town halls, but so far little attention has been paid to the gender impact of this shift. Funded by

the Barrow Cadbury Trust, the Commission will address concerns that the devolution agenda currently fails to give voice to women. Women remain underrepresented in leadership and decision-making roles in local government yet decisions made here impact disproportionately on women. Local government is also an important pipeline for women into parliament.

At the first meeting it was agreed that future work is also going to look more broadly at the position of women in local government - with a focus on successes, as well as the overall, rather shocking picture of women's under-representation on councils and in senior local government officer positions. The aim is to establish a framework for positive change.

Scottish Health Committee

Rep: Helen Ann Moreland Hawkins

No report received

STUC Women's Committee

Report by Davena Rankin

In November 2015, the STUC Women's Conference debated and carried 28 motions, 1 composite motion and 4 emergency motions. Topics debated were diverse and as usual the motions and conference set high expectations of the committee.

This year, for the first time the committee carried out a prioritisation exercise and prioritised 8 motions that focused on:

- Tackling the gender pay gap and ending low pay
- Increasing women's membership in trade unions and our participation in public and political life at all levels
- Older women in the workplace
- Domestic violence and abuse
- Mental health

The prioritisation of 8 motions does not mean that the rest of the work plan was ignored. Instead it represents the tip of the iceberg of our workload.

What the committee class as business as usual includes the following activities:

- Campaigning against the TTIP and the TU Act and the committee will played a full part in the "Love your TU" week in February
- Abortion rights: especially in the run up to the powers being devolved to the Scottish parliament and campaigning to ensure equal access to services for all women in Scotland.
- Violence against women and children, in particular Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). We are currently working with Dignity Alert Research Forum (DARF) - a Scottish group campaigning to end FGM who need support and help to make a bigger impact.
- Transport: second meeting with the minister was held and we have contacted the Disabled members committee to look at how we can take this forward jointly.

- International focus to our work with the committee having agreed an all female delegation to Palestine as well as a one-day event to highlight the work the committee and others within the STUC have carried out across a range of countries.
- Social media strategy has been developed and will be implemented the aim of which is to maximise the impact and profile of our work and minimal cost.
- Cross STUC equality committees: the women's committee have agreed to the establishment of a Chairs group joint with all of the STUC equalities committees.
- Weekend schools - which are tutored and developed by committee members.
- Campaign for free statutory childcare for all
- Work on the dangerous women project being run by the University of Edinburgh's institute for advanced studies in the humanities.

Scottish Learning & Organising Committee

Report by Lyn Warmald

No report submitted

Scottish Committee

Report by Elizabeth Rankin

The Scottish Committee meets four times a year and holds a two day policy forum annually.

Convener - Lilian Macer

Depute Convener - Stephen Smellie

At each meeting the committee is updated on the following

- The Scottish parliamentary report
- The Scottish Bargaining Strategy report
- The Political Strategy
- UNISON's Organising Strategy
- Any Industrial Action that is taking place.

Scottish Parliamentary elections (2016) were discussed and a draft Unison manifesto tabled for comments.

EU referendum

At the meetings before this occurred a consolation paper was sent out to all branches and a paper was presented to the committee with the results. UNISON recommended that we should remain in the EU. At the meeting after the referendum a paper was tabled on the way forward.

Scottish Health & Safety Committee

Rep: Vacant

Scottish Communications & Campaigns

Rep: Vacant

Scottish International Committee

Rep: Vacant