



Welcome to the April edition of my department's e-bulletin.

My department has again seen a busy period where we have now completed the cycle of the four

Equality Conferences. The Women's Conference in Manchester saw the attendance record broken with a very healthy 191 people attending representing 80 CWU branches, which also was the highest number of branches represented at any one given Equality Conference. Given there are over 150 CWU branches I think we can justifiably say more branches should be represented, though we recognise the difficulty some branches have, getting people to give up their week-ends to participate in these events.

We have seen excellent progress with our DEBUT project, which is aimed at supporting our equality representatives. The full draft of the toolkit is in the process of being vetted and hopefully later on this year we will see the launch of this ground-breaking commitment to equality.



**Linda Roy**  
Assistant Secretary Equal Opportunities

[lroy@cwu.org](mailto:lroy@cwu.org)  
**0208 971 7238**

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# TUC Women's Conference 2009 Report

The CWU took a strong delegation to the Scarborough Conference venue for the TUC Women's Conference. It was also a great opportunity for the CWU to gain support from the wider movement in relation to our excellent campaign against privatisation of the Royal Mail.

This year's theme for the conference in Scarborough Spa Complex, on March 11th-13th 2009 was Women & the Global Recession. Chair's opening remarks: Annette Mansell Green addressed the conference stating that this year was the 25th anniversary of the miner's strike, a historic struggle which saw incredible mobilisation of women by women; we pay tribute to mining community. She went on to speak about as the depression continues, it will affect more and more women across the business sectors, including the services industry, where a majority of women work in part time jobs. Women need trade unions to make the difference for women being exploited.

Annette went on to say that the Charter for women is not just a piece of paper, it's a living document, making the aspirations of the charter a living reality. The people's charter, a charter for change was also highlighted and launched to gain support for a fair economy, a fairer Britain, with more and better jobs, decent homes for all, protection and improvement of public services with no cuts, fairness and justice and to build and secure a sustainable future for all.

Conference opened and delegates debated motions on a range of issues of importance to women in the UK and across the world. The keynote issue of the conference was how the recession was impacting women in the workforce. However, the conference tackled a range of issues from equal pay to family friendly policies, women workers in third world countries to healthcare reform and child trafficking and sexual exploitation.



The liveliest debate by far was on prostitution. Should the sex industry be decriminalized and "sex workers" unionised like in any other sector or should we recognise that prostitution constitutes violence against women?

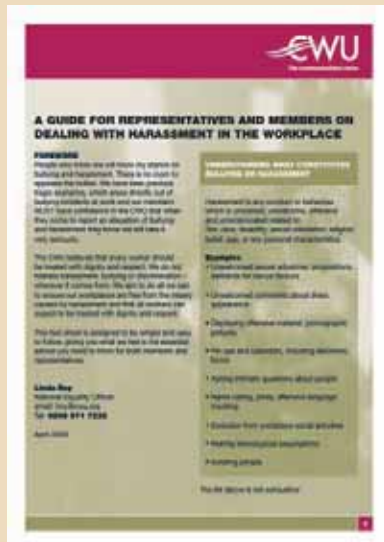
The debate which took place was confusing and resulted in a number of unions abstaining from voting on two opposing motions on how best to reform the prostitution laws. In the end, it was argued that decriminalisation would legitimise the abuse that is inherent in prostitution and turn pimps into respectable business men won the day. Trish Clarke from CWU argued for women's safety in the industry, working-class unity, unionization of women in the sex industry, enforcement of laws against rape and for immigration rights for trafficked women. While Mary Davis of University and College Union moved the motion 40 and in doing so, opposed our motion by stating the commodification of sex suppresses and degrades women in a society that is run by men. The sex industry and prostitution is an extension of a women's choice to choose, where sex workers bodies are a commodity and they sell their bodies, which legitimises the abuse of those who run the industry, She called for a campaign to condemn and not condone. It called for a form of criminalisation as in the Swedish model, to criminalise men's purchase of sex rather than its sale, which was opposed by the sex workers unions because it would drive the industry further underground and make it more unsafe. The decriminalisation motion fell while the commodification motion was passed with a clear majority. More work is clearly needed on this whole issue.

**Conference report by Jackie Gatward**

## Fact-Sheet Updates: Bullying & Harassment, updated Maternity Rights Fact-Sheet, amended Flexible Working Rights

These factsheets have recently been cascaded to the branches and we hope you find them of interest.

If there are any other subject matters you would like my department to prepare a fact-sheet on please contact me at [lroy@cwu.org](mailto:lroy@cwu.org)



## OVARIAN CANCER: THE 4<sup>TH</sup> BIGGEST KILLER OF WOMEN

Ovarian cancer is the fourth biggest cancer killer of women after breast, lung and bowel cancer. Most women do not know any of the symptoms of ovarian cancer. Every day in the UK 12 women will die of ovarian cancer – that's more than the number who die in road traffic accidents.

6600 women in the UK are diagnosed with ovarian cancer every year. 4400 women will die from the disease. When diagnosed early survival rates are 90%.

Yet the current UK survival rate remains low at 30%. This contrasts hugely with the successes seen in breast cancer, where survival is now 80%.

Lack of symptoms awareness means that women with ovarian cancer are often diagnosed once the cancer has spread, reaching a stage where treating the disease becomes extremely challenging. Prospects for women with ovarian cancer can and must be improved.

## LEGAL UPDATE: ACCESSIBILITY RULING FOR THE DISABLED

In the first ruling of its kind, a judge has ordered the Royal Bank of Scotland to install a lift so that a wheelchair user can have the same access as any customer.

Furthermore, in recognising the embarrassing treatment that David Allen, a 17 year old man from Sheffield, experienced at the bank, the Court awarded £6,500 compensation, the highest ever payout of this kind.

It is unlawful for businesses and public bodies to treat disabled people less favourably. However, since the Disability Discrimination Act came into force in 1995, a judge has never before ordered an injunction to force an organisation to make physical changes to its property so that disabled people can gain access.

### SYMPTOMS TO WATCH OUT FOR

**If you experience the following symptoms nearly every day, you should visit your GP.**

1. Persistent pelvic and abdominal pain.
2. Increased abdominal size, persistent bloating – not bloating that comes and goes.
3. Difficulty eating and feeling full quickly.

Please do not end up a statistic. If you are worried or concerned contact your GP. Do not leave it to chance.

## **CALLING ALL PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN:**

### **ARE YOU USING YOUR ENTITLEMENTS TO CHILDCARE VOUCHERS?**



Working parents could be missing out on the chance to significantly cut the cost of childcare by failing to take advantage of the Government-backed Childcare Vouchers scheme.

Childcare Vouchers are an employee benefit that at the time of going to print can save each family up to

£2,392 a year. Exempt from tax and National Insurance contributions, working parents simply exchange a part of their salary for the same amount of Childcare Vouchers. These can then be used to pay for any type of registered childcare, including childminder, au pairs, out-of-school clubs and holiday schemes.

According to figures recently released by the Daycare Trust, the average weekly cost of an after school club in England is £40 for 15 hours a week and £91.56 a week for a holiday play scheme.

Busy Bees the UK's largest provider of childcare vouchers says. "A majority of parents will need to use a form of paid-for childcare at some point and childcare vouchers are an effective way to help reduce the costs."

What many people may not be aware of is how flexible the vouchers are. They can be used for children up to the age of 16 and for a range of needs, including day nurseries, childminders, nannies, before and after school clubs, au pairs and even holiday clubs. Both parents are entitled to get the vouchers and all eligible parents can claim them, regardless of the tax band they fall in.

For an individual to use childcare vouchers, they need to be part of a company that operates the scheme. The good news is that the scheme is easy to set up and,

whether you have one parent or a hundred parents employed, the scheme is of considerable benefit to an employer.

Most managers will agree that retaining and recruiting good staff is crucial to the success of an organisation. The vouchers scheme is a very attractive benefit to offer and it is financially beneficial to an employer, as it means reduced national insurance payments. It is also the best way for an employer to become involved in assisting employees with childcare, without affecting their choice. Nothing else helps employees in this way.

## **Report of 2009 CWU Women's Conference**

*By Tricia Clarke 5th March 2009*

There were lots of firsts at the 2009 CWU Women's Conference in Manchester - it was the first time a quiz was held at the Friday night social. The Women's Advisory Committee's Conference Working Party planned the social; each table was labelled with the name of an inspiring woman.

Linda Roy, the CWU National Equality Officer, awarded a trophy to the winning table "Jeannie Drake". The working party also produced the first "Guide to Conference". It was the Chair of the WAC Pat Clouder's first time as Chair of Conference. She welcomed everyone to the 11th CWU Women's Conference. She announced the raffle raised £172.50 for the charity "Just a Drop" and thanked Simpson Millar for their generous donation for the Friday night social. CWU General Secretary Billy Hayes sent a statement saying that because industrial pressures are building up over the planned privatisation of Royal Mail by the Government he had to attend the Labour Party National Policy Forum instead. He sent best wishes for a successful conference. Pat thanked members of the WAC for their hard work over the year. She noted that joint WAC and Regional Women's Committee meetings were held during the year and that it was great to see the Northern Ireland Regional Women's Committee up and running.



Key themes of this year's Conference were the Recession, Women's Health, Domestic Violence and facility time for Branch Women's Officers. Linda Roy addressed Conference and welcomed delegates to Manchester. Linda joined the union 20 years ago and was the first post woman to be elected onto the National Executive. She said that it has been both an interesting and devastating time due to the "Credit Crunch" and our resolve has been strengthened to create a fair, just and equal society. Linda thanked Vicki Cornelius for her ongoing work on the Chain Makers Festival and the Women's Charter and Marion Brain for her work on Abortion Rights. She also thanked Annmarie McCall for editing the Women's Talk magazine. Overall, there were excellent debates throughout the day and the two motions chosen to go forward to the CWU Annual Conference were on menopause and facility time for Women's Officers.

## EQUALITY OFFICERS SEMINAR



The Equality Officers Seminar took place on Tuesday 24th March 2009, at CWU headquarters.

There was a full agenda which began with Linda Roy National Equality Officer welcoming everyone

to the seminar and explaining to the delegates that the day was about listening to the equality reps and giving them any updates the Equality Department thought would assist them in carrying out their roles.

She added that the Equality representatives role was a very important one in the workplace. It deals with so many issues on a daily basis and their work is valued. Linda believes that Equality should be recognised by the businesses at the same level as Health and Safety representative.

Linda went on to say that at every available opportunity the union was pushing for our Equality representative to be recognised. Nigel Cotgrove had managed to get an agreement with the Alliance and Leicester for one day a month off for Equality Officers and this has been recognised as a major achievement.

The advisory committee chairs were then introduced and given the opportunity to update delegates on what the advisory committees had been doing since they were elected at conference last year.

Elsbeth Bethany Vice Chair from the DSNAC explained the work being done on Dyslexia and OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder).

Colin Bell Chair from the RAC gave an update on the projects which the RAC have been working on during the year. This included enhancing Black representation within trade unions, water provisions project in Africa. Trade unions profile in schools and raising the profile of the RAC at external events.

Dave Daniels Chair from the LGBT gave an up date on the projects the LGBT committee have been working on over the last year they are tackling homophobia in sport, and IDAHO.

Lynn Hart who stood in for the Chair of the WAC gave an update on the project her working parting had been working on which was revising the format of the Women's Conference.

Charlotte Moriba gave a verbal update on the DEBUT Project. Charlotte is working on creating a tool kit for our Equality Officers which is match funded by BERR.

In the afternoon Billy Hayes addressed the Seminar. He spoke of the importance of the Equality Officers role. He spoke of a DVD which is being released to raise money for families of the Hillsborough disaster.

There was then a panel session and a DVD shown on the history of Show Racism which was a prelude to the main DVD on Islam phobia after which a discussion took place with guests Ged Grebby, Leroy Rosenior and Tony Kearns. The audience listened to people's experiences and told of their own.

Sally Brett from the TUC Equality Department gave an update of the Equalities Bill. She mentions that the judgement from the Malcolm case would be rectified in the duty.

In the last session Linda Roy gave a brief update on the important decisions affecting employment law which centred on the Coleman and Malcolm case. David Brown and Jane Latimer from Solicitors, Simpson Miller gave details about the cases and answered any questions.

Linda Roy then summed up the day. There had been a hiccup with the microphone but Linda said she thought the day had been very informative and she thanked delegates for their input and the speaker who had taken part in the day.

## CWU Black Workers Conference, Belfast

The CWU Black worker's conference was held at Belfast in February this year. Colin Bell, the Chair of the Race Advisory Committee chaired the conference and gave an opening address. Andy Kerr, Deputy General Secretary addressed conference and welcomed the election of Barack Obama as president of the United States. Andy spoke of black people being denied the right to vote and segregation in America. Andy warned of the threat of the BNP. Linda Roy our National Equality Officer urged Black Ethnic Minority members to become more involved and to take an active role in the structure of the union. She asked members to contact their branches stand for election stand for positions in the CWU.



Linda said we can't make you get involved we can only support you if you want to get involved.

Under representation was the theme throughout the conference. Motions included the RAC working with the NEC to produce a plan of action to address the under representation problem. Guest speaker Hratche Koundarjian, co-ordinator of the Strangers into Citizens campaign addressed Conference. He talked about the death of 223 cockle pickers on the beaches of Morecombe Bay. Pauline Buchanan, the Equality and Social Policy Officer at the Irish Congress of Trade Unions also addressed Conference and gave an insight into what life is like now in Northern Ireland after the years of unrest.

## UAF Keeps up Pressure on the BNP

Around 55 people attended the above conference in February on 'Stopping the BNP fascists in Europe'. There were discussions on how to prevent the BNP gaining a seat in the forthcoming European elections



Weyman Bennett, joint secretary of UAF, noted how the fascists have exploited the economic crisis of the 1930s and used it to grow. However he also suggested what happened in the 1930s was a political polarisation. So

there are two sides to the crisis – the BNP can grow, but there is also the potential for a mass movement against them. We need to go out and capture people's imagination and build the movement.

### Love Music Hate Racism

**Carnival** will take place on Saturday 30th May at Stoke-on-Trent five days before the Euro elections. Activists were urged to start booking coaches to bring people to the carnival. Don't be complacent. Use your vote in the forthcoming elections and stop the BNP.



## BBC Cookery Programme Seeks Gay families

The producers of a new BBC programme, Economy Gastronomy, are seeking a family headed by a gay or lesbian couple to appear on the show. The peak-time show will teach families how to stop wasting, learn to shop economically and eat better for less.

Chefs Paul Merrett and Allegra McEvedy will guide the families through the challenge of eating healthily on a budget. Allegra is a lesbian chef who has worked at the Groucho, at Robert de Niro's Tribeca in New York and co-founded the Leon chain of restaurants. Her mission is to "provide good food for everyone as a right, not a privilege".



Producers are hoping to find a gay or lesbian couple with a child or children of any age. The show will be broadcast on BBC Two later this year.

Anyone interested in taking part should email: [food@outlineproductions.co.uk](mailto:food@outlineproductions.co.uk) or call **020 7424 7629**.

## Up and Coming Events for your diary

### 24th April 2009

TUC Black Workers Conference

### 16th May 2009

Faith, Homophobia & Transphobia Conference

### 17th May 2009

CWU IDAHO Event,  
Indian High Commission at midday

### 20th – 21st May 2009

TUC Disability Conference

### 30th May 2009

Stoke on Trent – Love Music Hate Racism

### 6th – 11th June 2009

CWU General Conference

### 22nd June – 4th July 2009

Pride Events – London March

### 2nd – 3rd July 2009

TUC LGBT Conference

### Meet the Equality Team...

I am very keen to hear what you have to say and to offer as much help and support to everyone. You all do a brilliant job in the branches and it is up to us at CWU HQ to service your enquiries as professionally and as speedily as possible. Just so you know who you are likely to speak to when you phone our department, we thought we would offer you an insight into all of the team....



**Dionne Gittens-Noel** 020 8971 7356

Dionne has been in the department since 1998 and offers excellent support on a daily basis to the whole team. She is the events organising guru and is the person responsible for negotiating the excellent deals we get at our Equality conferences



**Julie Rodrigues** 020 8971 7309

Julie is the second of the two PAs and again offers very good support to both myself and Fevzi. She has been in the department previously working to Al Crisp and it will be either hers or Dionne's voice you hear when you call us.



**Fevzi Hussein** 020 8971 7388

Fevzi has been the Policy Assistant in the department for four years and his knowledge and support is vital to helping me deal with all aspects of work undertaken in the department.

I hope you have found the April edition of our e-bulletin as informative and useful as the previous ones.

My department is committed to ensuring that CWU branches are well briefed on any equality issues. We are here to help you and my team of Dionne, Fevzi and Julie will be on hand to do our best with helping you in any equality-related enquiry. I will be at Annual Conference in June and all being well we will also have an Equality stall, which you are all more than welcome to come and visit.



Get the date in your diary! The Equality disco is back with a bang this year. Last year we bowed to the General Secretary's 'Welcome to Liverpool' do, but this year the equality disco will return to its normal Saturday night slot. The venue for the disco is as follows:

**Equality Disco** returns to Annual Conference social timetable: **Saturday 6th June 2009** at **Marsham Court Hotel**, Russell-Cotes Road, East Cliff, Bournemouth, BH1 3AB.

There will be the usual music on the night and a pay bar. Raffle tickets will also be sold on the night and all the money collected will go towards the 'Water in Africa' appeal that we are coordinating jointly with the CWUHA.

The department would like to appeal to regions and branches to assist us with the provision of prizes and we are asking for the usual kind donations to be sent c/o Linda Roy at the Equality Department (or they can simply be brought to the disco on the night). The event **starts at 8pm** and will go on till late (not too late as conference starts following morning!). Tickets are available in advance or you can pay at the door.

Price just £5.

[www.cwu.org](http://www.cwu.org)

**Billy Hayes** General Secretary  
[www.billyhayes.co.uk](http://www.billyhayes.co.uk)

**CWU**  
The communications union