

SELF ORGANISATION AND UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Equality: central to our aims and objectives

UNISON is committed to achieving equality in our workplaces, in our union and across society.

Equality is a high priority in our negotiating and campaigning work.

People have the right to be treated with dignity and respect at work, to do their job to the best of their ability, free from discrimination and harassment.

UNISON has been at the forefront of campaigns for equal pay, rights at work for same sex partners, gender recognition and access to work for disabled workers. Tackling racism remains a key priority.

We want all our members to be involved in the union and have their voices heard.

UNISON is a membership organisation, a provider of services and an employer. In all these roles, it must comply with

Our four self organised groups

Language and terminology are important but evolving. Our four self-organised groups are open to all members who identify as:

Black members

In UNISON 'Black' is used to indicate people with a shared

If you would be interested in becoming involved in one of the self-organised groups please get in touch with the branch office

equality law and strives to be a best practice organisation. This applies at national, regional and branch level.

Part of UNISON's approach to achieving equality is the organisation of groups of members who may themselves face prejudice and discrimination.

UNISON has four self-organised groups - for women members, Black members, disabled members and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) members.

history. Black with a capital 'B' is used in its broad political and inclusive sense to describe people in Britain that have suffered colonialism and enslavement in the past and continue to experience racism and diminished opportunities in today's society.

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Conferences

Being part of a self-organised group could enable you to be elected to attend and represent the branch at Scottish and UK conferences and other events.

Below is a list of conferences that we would be keen to send members to.

- **Scottish Women's Conference/AGM, 29th September 2018, Glasgow** - closing date for nominations 3rd September
- **STUC Black Workers Conference, 6th/7th October, Clydebank** - (branches can nominate one delegate) - closing date for nominations 14th August
- **Scottish LGBT AGM, 20th October, Glasgow** - closing date for nominations 3rd September
- **National LGBT Conference, 16/18 November, Harrogate** - closing date for nominations 21st September
- **National Black Members' Conference, 18th/20th January 2019, Llandudno** - closing date for nominations 8th November
- **National Women's Conference 2019, 14th/16th February 2019, Bournemouth** - closing date for nominations 10th December

Our four self organised groups

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The terms 'minority ethnic' and 'ethnic minority' are in widespread official use today. However, these have clear disadvantages in terms of the connotations of marginal or less important.

Also, in many neighbourhoods, towns and cities in Britain it is statistically inaccurate or misleading to describe Black groups as a minority. Using Black is about creating unity in our fight against racism.

Disabled members

In UNISON, we adopt the social model of disability, which says that disability is caused by barriers in society.

These barriers generally fall into three categories:

- the environment - including inaccessible buildings and services
- people's attitudes - stereotyping, discrimination and prejudice
- organisations - inflexible policies, practices and procedures.

The medical model of disability suggests that by fixing their body, disabled people will be able to participate in society like everyone else.

This is an outdated model that is not supported by disabled people, disabled people's organisations or by UNISON.

Using the social model helps identify solutions to the barriers disabled people experience.

It encourages the removal of these barriers within society, or the reduction of their effects, rather than trying to fix an individual's impairment or health condition.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members

In UNISON, we recognise that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members face many similar issues at work and in



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society and have a history of organising together.

We believe LGBT people are stronger together. We also recognise the specific needs of lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people, in all their diversity.

Lesbians and gay men are those who are attracted to people of the same gender.

Bisexual people are those who feel attraction to more than one gender.

Transgender people are those whose gender identity differs from the gender they were labelled at birth.

Within our LGBT groups, we organise specific meetings for bi members and trans members.

We also hold meetings for Black, disabled and women LGBT members.

Women members

in UNISON, all members who identify as women are welcome in our women's group.

We recognise that women often experience multiple discrimination: they may also identify as LGBT, Black or disabled.

More than three quarters of our members are women, but they are still under-represented in UNISON's structures, as stewards and branch officers.

This is why UNISON's rules on proportionality still have an important part to play in our organisation.

Despite more than 40 years of equal pay legislation, women still earn less than men and most of our women members are low paid.

We have a particular focus on encouraging low paid and part-time women to become involved.

As Stated previously Self-organised groups work in partnership with other parts of the branch to identify and promote equality.

Want to get involved?

Do you fall into any of the four groups and would you be keen to become involved in one of our self-organised groups?

If you want to get involved please contact us at the branch office and we will add your name to the list and send out invites to meetings.

By being active you will help shape the policy of the branch and help to ensure that experiences are shared and authentic voices are heard.

Being part of a self-organised group could also enable you to attend and represent the branch at Scottish and UK conferences and other events.