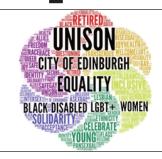


EQUALITY
Women's Organisation

Black Members
LGBT+Members
Disabled Members
Young Members

Equalities Update



Welcome to the UNISON City of Edinburgh Branch July Equalities Newsletter. Following our first edition we received feedback from members about what they would like to see included in future editions. We will continue to give an overview of equalities-related issues, information about upcoming dates and any opportunities within our branch for you to get more involved.

Following recent announcements by the Scottish Government, we're in Phase 2 of the route-map with Phase 3 looking likely to be introduced shortly. This means that there is light at the end of the tunnel and we're already seeing signs of life returning to a version of normal.



Last month, I wrote about the increased risk of Covid-19 faced by our Black members and the work our branch is doing to ensure their concerns are raised. This work is ongoing and I'm pleased to report that Sarah Boyack MSP raised the

issue in the Scottish Parliament on behalf of our branch. Thanks to Ian Mullen, branch Health & Safety officer, for his efforts with this. We understand the Scottish Government has set up a new expert group to "provide a clearer picture of the impact on minority ethnic communities of Covid-19" so we await their findings.

Our branch stands in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter human rights movement and will continue to fight racism, and all forms of discrimination, within the workplace and wider society.



Black Lives Matter solidarity message during recent branch officer meeting



I think it's safe to say that June this year was one of the quietest Pride months many of us will have experienced. Lots of online events took place including panel discussions, quizzes and film screenings. We couldn't be together in person as a community so I hope your Pride month was filled with extra love and joy.

Last week we were informed that UNISON's National LGBT+ Conference due to be held in November has been cancelled. Whilst disappointing for our LGBT+ members, we recognise that this is of course the right decision given the situation with Covid-19. On a personal level. I was sad to learn that there would be no LGBT+ conference this year as I've attended for the last 2 years and find the whole weekend extremely useful. I learn about amazing work being done across the UK to support our LGBT+ members to feel safe, included and welcome in their workplaces. I always return to the branch energised and with new ideas about how to engage with employers to ensure the voices of our LGBT+ members are heard. I look forward to the LGBT+ conference in 2021 which will feature a packed schedule as we review 2 years' worth of fantastic work whilst setting the agenda and focus for the year ahead.

Edinburgh Pride was also cancelled so although there was no physical march, a virtual pride breakfast was arranged by LGBT Health & Wellbeing. It gave our community a chance to get together, learn about the amazing work of various LGBT+ groups and to enjoy live music and poetry. An Edinburgh Pride Virtual March video was also shared during the breakfast and featured contributions from members of the LGBT+ community. (I make a brief appearance at 1.39 whilst deciding what to wear)







In the last week we learned that the UNISON National Disabled Members' Conference scheduled to take place in October has been cancelled due to the Covid-19 situation. Having chatted with a couple of Disabled members from our branch, I know the news is disappointing but understandable. UNISON has produced a 3-page guidance document for Disabled Members and those with underlying health conditions specifically looking at the impact of Covid-19. The guide is available to download within the resources section on the following link:

https://www.unison.org.uk/about/wh at-we-do/fairness-equality/disabledmembers/ and covers your rights with regards to PPE, Risk Assessments, Vulnerable workers and workers who are shielding.



In June's Equalities Newsletter, I talked about how our branch was expecting to appoint Jacqui Bain to the role of Women's Officer. We need someone in that role ensuring the voices of our Women members are heard and their stories shared. Along with the rest of the branch committee, I am absolutely committed to making this happen. We need to ensure that the full branch committee can participate effectively in that process so we are

awaiting guidance from the Scottish region on how a nomination and vote can take place virtually.



I think it's important to recognise that this pandemic is having an impact on our mental health. Most of the calls and emails to our branch are from members who are anxious, worried or scared about returning to unsafe workplaces. Some people have experienced the loss of a family member and/or have been shielding for 3 months. Our Black members are rightfully concerned about the increased risks they face. This is in addition to the things we've all had to get used to during the pandemic. I talked previously about not being able to share special moments with our families and how most aspects of our lives have been transformed. If you are feeling down or need to talk, please do reach out to someone. I've included details of the support available to Council employees along with some external organisations.

Support available to Council employees:

PAM Assist, The Council's Employee Assistance Provider, can be contacted 24/7 on 0800 882 4102 or via their website: www.pamassist.co.uk (Username: CEC Password: CEC1) Chaplaincy support is provided by Hilda Warwick who previously worked as an NHS mental health nurse on an adult acute psychiatric ward.

Support available to everyone: SAMH provide an information service and will have a chat about mental health on 0344 800 0550

Monday-Friday from 9am to 6pm.

Breathing Space advisors come from a range of backgrounds including mental health, counselling and social work. They can be contacted on 0800 83 85 87

- Weekdays: Monday Thursday,
 6pm through until 2am
- Weekend: Friday 6pm through to Monday 6am
- Support in Mind Scotland offer an online chat service Monday-Friday, 9am – 5pm
 Samaritans can be contacted on 116 123, 24hrs a day. They also operate email and letter services.

FAQ Equality Act 2010

In June, I gave an overview of the Equality Act 2010 so this month we'll look at one of the main types of discrimination that can occur.

Direct discrimination

This is when someone is treated differently (less favourably) because of a protected characteristic compared to those who do not have the protected characteristic.

For example, a man is promoted because the hiring manager doesn't think a woman can do the job.

A black employee is dismissed for verbally threatening a manager whilst a white employee is given a final written warning for the same offence.

Roles available

Our branch is currently looking for members interested in taking on the following UNISON roles:

- Young members' officer
- Black members' officer
- LGBT+ members' officer
- · Disabled members' officer
- Equalities reps

Dates to note in July

- July 12th Disability Awareness Day
- July 12th Non-binary People's Day
- July 28th World Hepatitis Day