

Welcome to the UNISON City of Edinburgh Branch September Equalities Newsletter. In the last few weeks our branch has dealt with the re-opening of schools, held our 1st virtual Branch Committee, organised a Health & Safety webinar for reps, supported the Friends of Debora campaign, analysed the results of the Flexi-Time survey and coordinated a hustings session for nominees standing for the role of UNISON General Secretary when Dave Prentis steps down at the end of this year.

This is of course in addition to giving advice to and representing members in disciplinary procedures, attending regular meetings with the council's senior management and fighting to protect terms & conditions. Over the next couple of months, we'll be at the forefront of discussions around the re-opening of workplaces and the return to work for some members. The financial implications of Covid-19 are not yet fully understood but we expect the council will have to make difficult decisions over the coming month. These decisions will unfortunately see the most disadvantaged groups suffer. As your branch equalities officer, I will continue to fight alongside members who are facing greater inequality.

My name is Bobby Nwanze and I am just a young black man committed to fighting for a better diverse future from top to bottom. I have been the victim of racism and discrimination and I never want anyone of any ethnic race go through what I have went through mentally, physically and emotionally.

I have worked for the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) since August 2012 and recently set up the BAME Colleague Network. I aim to challenge and, where necessary, change the way things are done within the CEC. I want to harness the power of UNISON to make sure that our black members' voices are heard, and their stories are shared. I am proof that my community can make it in the CEC and I'm keen to hear from people who want to make a difference.



Bobby Nwanze Black Members Officer

Join us in UNISON 0131 558 7488 or www.unison-edinburgh.org.uk



In August, I mentioned that UNISON had recently submitted a response, on behalf of disabled members. to the UK Parliament's Women & Equalities Select Committee. The submission was made in response to a follow-up inquiry looking at the impact of Covid-19 on people with disabilities. UNISON's response highlighted the gaps in Government guidance which leaves many disabled workers at risk. Part of UNISON's response revolved around the Access to Work scheme which we are calling for significant investment in.

Access to Work is a government funded programme delivered by Jobcentre Plus which aims to help disabled people start or stay in work. The programme offers advice and guidance and provides grants towards the cost of funding workplace adjustments for disabled workers to remove or reduce the barriers they face at work. Note that employers have a legal duty to provide reasonable adjustments. Your UNISON steward can help explain this to your manager if they refuse a reasonable request.

For more information about the Access to Work scheme, please visit www.gov.uk/access-to-work

Our branch is keen to ensure the voices of our disabled members are heard so we are currently looking for someone to take on the role of Disabled Members' Officer. If you are interested, please get in touch with the branch.



I wrote to councillors recently asking them to review Edinburgh's partnership with Krakow in response to the ongoing anti-LGBT sentiment within both central and some local governments in Poland. I am pleased to see that this will be reviewed and can confirm that I chaired a meeting Thursday 20th August with activists in Poland. A follow-up meeting is due to take place within the next 2 weeks to help shape both our branch and the City of Edinburgh Council's response to the ongoing situation with LGBT+ rights in Poland. I'll provide an update again next month.



Bisexual Pride Flag

September 23rd is Bisexual Visibility Day and to mark this important day for the Bi+ community, UNISON have released poster which an updated can be downloaded from the UNISON UK website. Bisexual describes anyone who experiences attraction to more than one gender. Attraction encompasses a broad range of experiences, which are not always the same as someone's romantic or sexual experiences.



At our Branch Committee meeting in August, Jacqui Bain was successfully nominated to the role of women's officer. Jacqui has worked for the council for over 20 years as a Community Education Worker and has experience in girls, women's and family work. The women's officer role had been vacant for about 10 vears, so the branch has a lot of catching up to do. Jacqui explains why she was interested in the role. 70% of the council's workforce are women vet senior management are mostly men, although it's an all too familiar story we need to examine why it's still happening. In recent years there has been high profile cases highlighting the continued gender pay gap. We all know that women are still a long way away from equality in the workplace and the wider community. As women's officer, I will network with UNISON colleagues and members to address the current issues facing women in the workplace and how we can address them. It's been a while since the branch has had a women's officer so I'm keen to hear from any members who have been affected by discrimination in work or who are interested in becoming more involved in women's issues.



Jacqui Bain Women's Officer

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Support for Council colleagues PAM Assist 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 worked as an NHS mental health nurse on an adult acute psychiatric ward.

Support for everyone

SAMH provide an information service and can have a chat about mental health on 0344 800 0550 Monday-Friday, 9-6. 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:

• Mon – Thurs, 6pm through until 2am

 Friday 6pm through to Monday 6am
Support in Mind Scotland offer an online chat service Monday-Friday, 9am – 5pm

Samaritans can be contacted 24/7 on 116 123.

Dates to note in September

- September 10th Suicide Prevention Day
- September 21st Alzheimer's Day (Theme for 2020: Breaking the stigma)
- September 23rd Bisexual Visibility Day & UN International Day of Sign Languages

Join us in UNISON 0131 558 7488 or www.unison-edinburgh.org.uk P&P by UNISON City of Edinburgh Branch, Douglas House, 60 Belford Road, Edinburgh EH4 3UQ ~ 0131 558 7488