

SCOTLAND'S DISABLED WORKERS

DEMANDING

BETTER

**DISABLED WORKERS TOGETHER: FUTURE PROOFING
ACCESSIBILITY AND SUPPORT**

AGENDA

**20TH ANNUAL STUC DISABLED WORKERS' CONFERENCE
SATURDAY 2ND AND SUNDAY 3RD DECEMBER 2023
CHAIRPERSON: TONY SLAVEN (UNISON)**

stuc



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Disabled Workers'
Conference.**

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CONFERENCE SESSIONS

SATURDAY

2ND DECEMBER

10:00am - 12:30pm

1:30pm - 4:30pm

SUNDAY

3RD DECEMBER

10:00am - 1:00pm

CONFERENCE AGENDA

- i) Secretary's Welcome
- ii) Address by Chairperson
- iii) Announcements
- iv) Consideration of Reports and Motions
- v) Speakers
- vi) Election of Committee 2023/24
- vii) Vote of Thanks and Close of Conference

Secretariat to the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee:

Linda Somerville, STUC Deputy General Secretary

Eireann McAuley, STUC Equalities Policy Officer

Daniel Schirn, STUC Committees and Admin Officer



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CONFERENCE GREETINGS

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CONFERENCE GUIDE

WHO ATTENDS THE DISABLED WORKERS' CONFERENCE?

- Trade Unions with membership of up to 10,000 - 6 delegates
- Trade Unions with membership over 10,000 - 6 delegates plus one for every 10,000 members or part thereof
- Trades Union Councils - up to 6 delegates

Observers / Visitors sit together in a separate section of the Conference Room and are not allowed to vote. Also in attendance are STUC staff and exhibitors.

HOW LONG DOES THE CONFERENCE LAST?

The Conference lasts two days. It normally opens at 10:00am on the first day (with registration from 09:30 am), closing at approximately 4:30 pm. It assembles at 10.00 am on the second day until approximately 1.30 pm.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CONFERENCE ARRANGEMENTS?

The Disabled Workers' Committee is responsible for Conference arrangements, in conjunction with STUC Staff.

WHO CHAIR'S THE CONFERENCE?

The Chair of the Committee will also be the Conference Chair, this year's Chair is Tony Slaven of UNISON Scotland.

WHAT ROLE DOES THE DISABLED WORKERS' COMMITTEE PLAY AT CONFERENCE?

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee sit on the platform, together with a member of STUC staff – usually the Secretary to the Committee.

HOW IS THE DISABLED WORKERS' COMMITTEE ELECTED?

The Disabled Workers' Committee comprises 10 members in the Trades Union Section and 1 member in the Trades Union Council Section, and are nominated on the following basis:

Trades Unions and Trades Union Councils can nominate 1 member to the general seat and / or to one of the women's seats on the Committee.

Nominees must be part of the nominating affiliates' delegation to Conference.

If there are more than 5 members nominated to the Trades Union General Seats; 5 members nominated to the Trades Union Women's Seats and / or more than 1 member nominated in the Trades Union Council Section, then an election at Conference will be necessary.

Each delegation leader will receive a ballot paper and can vote up to 10 candidates from the Trades Union Section (5 from the General seats and 5 from the Women's seats); and 1 from the Trades Union Council Section. Delegations are requested to deposit completed ballot papers in the ballot box by 5.00 pm on the first day of Conference, when votes are counted by 2 scrutineers who are appointed at the start of Conference. The results are then announced on the Sunday morning of Conference. Successful candidates hold office from close of Conference for one year.

WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE DISCUSS?

Each Trades Union and Trades Union Council can submit up to 2 motions, on topics which must relate specifically to the working lives of disabled people in Scotland. Each motion can be no more than 300 words. Motions are published in a Preliminary Agenda and Trades Unions/Trades Union Councils are then invited to submit up to 2 amendments which can be no more than 50 words for each amendment.

Certain motions on the Preliminary Agenda, together with amendments, may be grouped into a composite motion, with the agreement of the Trades Unions/Trades Union Councils concerned.

The Motions and amendments are included within the Conference Agenda which is given to all delegates and visitors.

Support: In order to allow more time for delegates, the Committee usually (but not always) waives the right to speak in a debate on a motion or amendment they support.

Support with Statement: If necessary, a Committee member will explain to Conference any particular points they wish to emphasise or reservations the Committee may have on a motion or amendment they otherwise support.

Remit: The Committee may seek remission of a motion before Conference. If the union will not agree to remit the motion, a Committee member will speak in opposition to it.

Oppose: A Committee member will speak on any motion or amendment opposed by the Committee.

A Committee member may also speak on points of explanation on a motion or amendment.

A member of the Committee will also introduce any special report on behalf of the Committee.

HOW ARE DEBATES CONDUCTED?

- i. **Moving and Seconding Motion:** The mover of a motion may speak for up to 8 minutes and the seconder is allowed up to 4 minutes. It is important that these times are adhered to. If business over-runs allocated time, it may be necessary during the course of the Conference for the Committee to reduce speaking times.
- ii. **Debate and the right of reply:** Subsequent speakers on the motion are allowed up to 4 minutes. A delegate is not normally allowed to speak more than once in any debate, unless permission is given by the Chair, to make a point of order or explanation. Whether or not a motion has been opposed, the mover may be allowed 4 minutes to reply to the discussion on the motion, but no new issues may be introduced.
- iii. **Moving an amendment:** The proposer of an amendment is called to speak immediately after the seconder of the motion. Amendments also have to be seconded or they fail. Further amendments are called in their order on the agenda. Delegates moving amendments have no right of reply.
- iv. **Group Debate:** Some motions cover similar topics for discussion and may be grouped together for debate and voted on separately once moved. There are no Group Debates this year.
- v. **Voting:** Delegates must remain in their seats during a vote. Voting is by show of hands and all delegates are entitled to one vote. It is the Chair's responsibility to call the result of the vote. However, 2-4 tellers are appointed prior to Conference to count the votes in the event of a close vote.
- vi. **Point of Order:** Delegates can raise points of order on the conduct or procedure of the debates.
- vii. **Chair's Ruling:** The Chair's ruling is final.

WHAT ARE EMERGENCY MOTIONS?

An emergency motion must deal with issues that have arisen since the closing date for ordinary motions.

Emergency motions can be no longer than 300 words and must be signed by the Delegation Leader of the organisation submitting the emergency motion. Emergency motions must be submitted to the Chair or Secretary of the Disabled Workers' Committee no later than 12.00pm on the first day of Conference. Emergency motions must be a genuine emergency otherwise they will not be approved for inclusion on the Agenda by the Disabled Workers' Committee. If deemed competent they will be circulated to delegates prior to being discussed.

REPORT OF THE STUC DISABLED WORKERS' COMMITTEE

As well as discussing motions, the Conference receives the Report of the Disabled Workers' Committee to Conference, which reports on work of the Committee over the past year. Delegates are entitled to question the Committee on issues contained in the Report. Any questions should be put in writing.

WHAT HAPPENS TO MOTIONS AFTER CONFERENCE?

Motions which are carried (now termed 'resolutions') or remitted will form the Committee's Work Plan for the following year. Resolutions are also referred to the STUC General Council itself and/or relevant STUC departments as part of the overall work of the STUC.



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at the 2023
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MOTIONS & AMENDMENTS

STUC DISABLED WORKERS

CONFERENCE

SECTION 1: TRAVEL AND ACCESSIBILITY

1. SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY ON SCOTLAND'S RAILWAYS

“This Conference is concerned with the increase in anti-social behaviour and violence seen on Scotrail services particularly in the Strathclyde area with issues on the Balloch section making headlines.

“This increase in anti-social behaviour since the pandemic has created a hostile atmosphere affecting both passengers and staff. It has led to unsafe working conditions for staff on these trains and for those working at the stations which are staffed.

“Conference is concerned that the increase in anti-social behaviour further deters disabled passengers from using rail services in Scotland. Currently more than half of railway stations in Scotland do not have full step-free access, this now coupled with the increases in anti-social behaviour is compounding the barriers for disabled passengers and those with access needs from using Scotrail services.

“Conference is concerned that if left unchecked the unsafe environment created by anti-social behaviour coupled with the lack of access to the railways will deter disabled passengers from considering rail.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee to:

- Write to Scotrail and the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Just Transition and Transport to highlight how the lack of access coupled with the increase in anti-social behaviour deters disabled passengers from using the railways;
- Lobby Transport for Scotland and Scotrail to speed up their work to deliver fully step-free stations and a truly accessible railway; and

- Write to Scotrail, the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Just Transition and Transport, the Transport Minister and the British Transport Police raising concerns around the increases in anti-social behaviour on Scotrail services and how this impacts on disabled passengers.”

Mover: ASLEF

2. TRAIN ACCESSIBILITY AND SAFETY IN SCOTLAND

“This Conference was disappointed when many of Scotrail's trains in operation on Scotland's railways missed the January 2020 deadline to meet the UK government's rail fleet accessibility standards.

“Conference is further concerned that the use of exemption and dispensation orders by the then privately run Scotrail to enable non-fully compliant trains to continue to operate beyond the accessibility deadline is enabling Scotrail to stall on introducing rolling stock that meets the full accessibility standards expected on the railways in Scotland. This is unfortunately only the case for Scotrail services that run in Scotland as the other operators' trains met the compliance deadlines.

“Coupled with the exemption and dispensations is the fact that these trains are often ageing and do not have the highest safety ratings. This can also be seen with Scotrail's use of HSTs for which ASLEF raised safety concerns before the Carmont crash. Had there been a serious push to modernise rolling stock to meet and keep up with accessibility and safety standards, lives could have been saved.

“Conference welcomed ASLEF's 'Invest in Rail' and 'Better Cabs' campaigns which both look to address the issues of accessibility and safety of the rolling stock in operation across Great Britain and will continue to support these campaigns, believing that as Scotrail is now under the control of the Government via Scottish Rail Holdings, it is the right time for the Scottish Government to deliver accessible and safe trains for the people of Scotland.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee to:

- Write to Scotrail to raise concerns with the use of rolling stock that requires exemptions and dispensation to meet rail fleet accessibility standards.
- Lobby Scotrail to modernise rolling stock in consultation with the relevant unions to ensure that they are fully accessible and safe for both passengers and staff.

Mover: ASLEF

Amendment:

Last bullet point after “staff“ add “with no extension of Driver Only Operation (DOO) and a guarantee of a second safety critical member of staff on board all trains.”

Mover: National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers

3. CYCLE LANES IN THE CITY

“This Congress notes that recent changes to the layout of Glasgow city centre, with the emphasis on ‘cycle lanes’ has had a negative impact on disabled people of the city. Roadway changes, particularly around cycle lanes, have made the city dangerous for blind and disabled people who have to navigate daily through these thoughtless designs.

“This Congress notes that whilst the concept of ‘shared spaces’ is a positive approach to bringing footfall back into the cities, these new ideas cannot be to the detriment of blind and disabled people, who are some of the most vulnerable citizens of these cities. These new layouts encourage roadways and public spaces to be shared between pedestrians and road users, however this has meant removing kerbs, pedestrian crossings and textured surfaces in order to make way for more, or wider, cycle lanes.

“That Congress notes the particular issue of removing or re-locating pedestrian crossings which mean pedestrians have to walk across a cycle lane before they can access the pedestrian crossing. This approach relies on the pedestrian hearing the cyclist approach, or that the cyclist sees the pedestrian in time. These new layouts also rely on cyclists adhering to the rules of the road and the Highway Code which unfortunately many of them do not, and there is little enforcement from the police or the council on this issue.

“We call upon the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to:

- Campaign for an urgent review of the layout of cycle lanes in Glasgow City Centre, the impact they have on the disabled community in Glasgow, and their ability to travel safely across their own city.
- Join Community’s campaign to change and enforce legislation for cyclists who don’t follow the rules of the road, and who present a considerable danger to blind and disabled people in Glasgow.”

Mover: Community

Amendment:

After paragraph 3, insert new paragraph, “Congress notes that there are a number of disabled cyclists. For some of them cycling is the only possible option due to accessibility, cost and other barriers to public transport and driving.”

Insert third bullet point - “Campaign for more contraflow lanes to reduce cycling on pavements.”

Mover: UCU Scotland

4. DISABLED AIDED TRAVEL

“This Conference instructs the incoming STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to work with affiliates, disability groups, and interested parties to lobby Scottish Government to support calls for the industry to end this unfair and discriminatory practice with air travel to ensure personal care assistants (PA) are given subsidised air travel when accompanying a person with mobility issues.

“A recent study into 30 carriers found passengers with mobility problems must purchase a full-price ticket for a personal care assistant.

“This is despite Civil Aviation guidance on EU law, maintained by the UK post-Brexit urging airlines to subsidise the cost.

“This situation is discriminatory and the extra cost makes flying impossibly expensive for people with a disability and their carers.”

Mover: Communication Workers’ Union

Amendment:

After third paragraph, insert new paragraph - “Conference also believes disabled air passengers are discriminated against due to consistently being allocated window seats. The reason being, if an incident, able bodied passengers can disembark, not being held up by disabled passengers.”

Insert final bullet point - “Raise issue of allocation of window seats to disabled passengers with Scottish Government to ensure all passengers are treated equally.”

Mover: Clydebank TUC

5. ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

“This Conference reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that Scotland’s public transport networks are fully accessible for disabled, deaf and older people. Conference notes with concern that in Scotland disabled people are half as likely as non-disabled people to use the rail network.

“Conference believes that the presence of staff is vital for ensuring that public transport networks are accessible to all and understands that currently around two-thirds of ScotRail stations are unstaffed.

“Conference notes with concern that the Scottish Government has still not ruled out cuts to ScotRail ticket office hours that were consulted on in early 2022, which equate to a reduction in ticket office hours of one-third.

“Conference believes that staffed ticket offices play an important role in making the railway accessible and that the arrangements governing ticket office hours are the only statutory regulation of station staffing on the railway.

“Conference notes that an RMT survey of ScotRail ticket office members found that 99% thought the plans to cut ticket office hours at ScotRail stations would worsen passenger accessibility and a survey of Disability Equality Scotland members found that 95% were opposed to these cuts.

“Conference believes that the proposed cuts must be ruled out permanently by the Scottish Government who should instead commit to increasing staffing across the ScotRail network.

“Conference is also concerned that the train companies managed by the UK Government have been consulting on plans to close nearly 1000 ticket offices, including the ticket office managed by Avanti West Coast at Glasgow Central, and cut around 2300 station staff jobs.

“Conference notes the unprecedented public opposition to the proposed closures, and that disabled people were at the forefront of this campaign.

“Conference calls on the STUC to support affiliates in campaigning for properly staffed public transport networks and for the protection of ticket offices.”

Mover: National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers

SECTION 2: EQUITY AT WORK

6. DISABILITY PAY GAP IN SCOTLAND

“Conference welcomes the growing number of campaigns that are highlighting pay inequality amongst the different equality strands. More and more data is becoming available on disability pay gaps and worryingly the gap in Scotland is the highest in the UK. According to the ONS, disabled employees’ median pay in Scotland at £11.54 per hour in 2021 was 18.5% less than non-disabled employees (£14.16 per hour).

“This compares to a 14.1% gap for those living in England, 12.3% in Northern Ireland, and 11.6% in Wales.

“The trajectory for the disability pay gap is getting worse, as when it was last recorded in 2019 the median hourly earnings for disabled workers was 15.6%. So the latest

figures by ONS is a real concern.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers Committee to:

- Mount a campaign that calls on all Scottish employers, with over 250 employees to complete a full Disability Pay Audit;
- The audit will cover median hourly rate comparisons and a grade breakdown where workers with disabilities are in the organisation; and
- The campaign will also encourage staff surveys to help employers get a temperature check on employees with disabilities and their experiences in relation to promotion, recruitment and other areas known to impact negatively on the Disability Pay Audit.

“A formal approach shall be made by the Committee to the Scottish Government and this should involve affiliates to lobby Parliament to enact legislation to help activate the change needed in this area.

“A report shall be made to the 2024 STUC Disabled Workers Conference on progress.”

Mover: Communication Workers Union

7. EQUITABLE ACCESS TO CAREER PROGRESSION AND PROMOTION

“Conference notes that there are persisting and significant barriers to disabled workers’ access to Fair Work, including equitable access to career progression and promotion.

“Conference believes that inequitable access is compounded by intersectionality for disabled women, disabled Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic workers, and disabled workers who are LGBT, for example.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to:

- Investigate and report on ways to support more diversity in promoted posts;
- As part of this investigation, gather information about the use of temporary and precarious contracts for disabled workers, versus non-disabled workers;
- Develop guidance for negotiating improvements to retention practices that can benefit disabled workers;
- Offer to work alongside the STUC LGBT Committee and Black Workers Committee to develop this work.”

Mover: Educational Institute of Scotland

8. TOWARDS A POSITIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE FOR DISABLED WORKERS

“This Conference notes the sad reality that there remains widespread lack of awareness and understanding of disabilities, including hidden disabilities, and that many disabled workers feel unable to disclose their disability at work. Furthermore, that many disabled workers have had negative experiences requesting reasonable adjustments, with their professionalism or ability to do the job questioned as a result.

“Conference believes that disabled people are invaluable to society and to the workforce, this should be acknowledged and they should be treated with respect and dignity. Conference emphasises the importance of all employers understanding their responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010), and also the importance of fostering a positive workplace culture for disabled workers.

“Conference therefore calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to:

- Consider communication and campaigning strategies that contribute to a positive workplace culture for disabled workers;
- Provide guidance for trade union Representatives on best practice in proactively advocating for disability equality at work, which includes advice on creating positive environments and processes for disclosing disability at work.”

Mover: Educational Institute of Scotland

9. SICK PAY AND DISABLED WORKERS

“This Conference notes:

- the Resolution Foundation’s Low Paid Britain Report, which criticises the UK’s lack of decent sick pay;
- the UK’s statutory sick pay is low by international standards: OECD analysis at the start of the pandemic found it to be the lowest in any OECD country.

“Conference believes the pandemic shone a light on the inadequacy of statutory and contractual sick pay provisions: as a result of Long Covid, many more employees are unfit for work for over 12 months, compounded by increased waiting times for diagnosis and treatment.

“Conference notes that teachers need 18 weeks’ continuous qualifying service to be entitled to contractual sickness allowance and that this resets with a break of two weeks or more in employment.

“Conference commends the Proposed Scottish Employment Injuries Advisory Council Bill which would recognise Covid-19 is an industrial disease but believes more must be done.

“Conference is concerned that with workers experiencing multiple COVID infections, increasing numbers of workers will be off work with long-term health conditions and calls on the STUC to work collaboratively with the TUC to campaign to:

- make statutory and contractual sick pay available from day one;
- increase statutory sick pay to £330 a week, the equivalent of a week’s pay at the real living wage;
- provide additional funds to ensure employers can afford to pay sick pay.

“Conference further mandates the STUC to promote the benefits of negotiating improved contractual sick pay schemes, through trade union local bargaining machinery, for workforce wellbeing, health and safety and staff recruitment and retention.”

Mover: NASUWT

10. CLEAN AIR

“This Conference notes that the United Nations General Assembly has passed a historic resolution declaring that everyone on the planet has a right to a healthy environment, including clean air, water, and a stable climate.

“Conference agrees that air pollution is damaging our health and increasing our risk of dying early.

“Conference notes that:

- children, older people, and people with chronic health problems are among the most susceptible to air pollution;
- gestation, infancy, and early childhood are vulnerable times as the body is growing and has immature immune systems;
- children spend a higher proportion of their time outdoors; and
- our poorest children and adults live in areas of highest pollution thus exacerbating pre-existing health inequalities.

“Conference notes that research on air pollution points towards effects on growth, intelligence, development of the brain and coordination.

“Conference agrees that air quality remains an ongoing concern for workers both outside and within their workplaces.

“While ventilation has been acknowledged as a key mitigation against transmission of Covid-19 and similar respiratory viruses, Conference mandates the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to call for action to secure

air filters in every classroom, office and common area in all schools, acknowledging that:

- the benefits extend beyond Covid-19, for example, decreasing CO2 levels and air pollution have a positive impact on the ability of pupils to learn;
- increasing ventilation, combined with the use of air filters and enhanced cleaning routines, reduces levels of general sickness absence, again improving educational outcomes and reducing costs.

“Conference therefore calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to support the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh recommendation that air quality monitors be placed at all Scottish city primary schools for a period of at least one year and then rolled out to all city secondary schools.”

Mover: NASUWT

11. USING THE DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT CHARTER TO INFLUENCE THE BARGAINING AGENDA

“Conference notes disabled people are still less likely to be in employment than non-disabled people, and those with certain disabilities are even less likely to be in employment. Disabled people are also more likely to be employed in lower paid jobs, are more likely to be employed into roles below their qualifications, skills and experience, and are less likely to gain promotions compared their non-disabled colleagues.

“Urgent action to support Disabled people in the workplace is not only necessary but is well overdue.

“Conference welcomes the Disability Employment Charter, influenced by unions, which describes a series of actions aimed at government and employers to address disability employment issues to improve disabled people’s participation in the employment market and lower the persisting disability pay and employment gaps.

“Conference calls upon the STUC Disabled Members Committee:

- To lobby the Scottish Government to incorporate the Disability Employment Charter actions within the Fair Work Agenda.
- To encourage unions to incorporate relevant actions of the Charter into their bargaining priorities.
- To work with the founding members of the Disability Employment Charter to determine if a specific Scottish Charter would be beneficial to Disabled people in Scotland.”

Mover: Unison Scotland

SECTION 3: SOCIAL SECURITY

12. STREAMLINE BENEFITS

“Conference notes that many disabled workers are in receipt of benefits.

“However, the inaccessibility of application processes and a lack of clear information mean many applications are delayed or never completed. Services providing advocacy do exist, but these are not easily accessible and only offer support after encountering initial problems.

“Citizens Advice reports that more than a third of Universal Credit applicants they helped had trouble completing applications.

- 48% found it difficult to provide evidence of health conditions.
- 40% found it difficult to provide evidence for housing.
- 35% found it difficult to provide evidence for childcare.

“Thus, a new set of challenges arise for disabled workers trying to balance work and benefits.

“Whilst the DWP perpetuate negative narratives of disabled people as scroungers, the current system penalises disabled musicians by limiting the amount of paid work they can do before their benefits are reduced or stopped. This prevents career progression and ultimately limits disabled musicians’ chances of paid employment.

“In addition, some disabled workers are required to fill out income returns monthly - more inaccessible paperwork - whilst others are allowed to declare income annually. We need a streamlined, accessible benefits system.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to:

- Lobby the UK Government to streamline the benefits application process;
- Make the Scottish social security system more transparent;
- Ensure advocacy services are visible and accessible;
- Review the role of benefits in relation to self-employment in consultation with disabled people and relevant labour market experts.”

Mover: Musicians’ Union

13. THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS

“This Conference deplores the continuing cost of living crisis and its particular impact on disabled people.

“Conference notes that:

- On average life costs £583 per month more for disabled people and an extra £1000 per month for families with disabled children;
- Many unions, including those in Higher Education, are taking action on pay and equality issues, in response to or with increased urgency as a result of the cost of living crisis.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to work with affiliates, their equality committees and the STUC General Council to put pressure on the Scottish Government to:

- Increase disability benefits to fully cover the increased living costs of being disabled;
- Make it much easier to claim disability benefits to ensure that all disabled people are able to claim them.”

And to encourage affiliates to:

- Provide support to their disabled members to engage in industrial action or support other unions in doing this.”

Mover: UCU Scotland

14. BUILDING A MOVEMENT OF PROTEST

“This Conference notes the number of disabled people living in poverty in Scotland has increased in recent years with more than half (51%) of all people in poverty living in a household with at least one disabled member.

“Conference rejects any suggestion that this is inevitable and asserts that poverty and the failure to tackle inequality are political decisions.

“Conference notes that tens of thousands of disabled people are in paid work and where they are not this is in large part a result of structural discrimination, a widespread resistance amongst employers to implement reasonable adjustments and a failure to embed the social model of disability into decision and policy making procedures. The disability employment gap in Scotland remains high – in 2022 with 82.5% of non-disabled in employment compared to 50.7% of disabled people.

“As well as taking additional political action to offset the immediate impacts of the cost-of-living crisis on disabled people and their families, the Scottish and Westminster Governments must also act to address the underlying historical inequalities experienced by disabled people including the disproportionate impact of austerity policies.

“Conference welcomes the important role the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee plays in setting the record straight and asks the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to:

- Support the efforts of unions and Disabled People’s Organisations to tackle disability discrimination and change the way disabled people are viewed, valued, and included in Scottish and wider UK society;
- Campaign for improvements to social security so that as well as protecting disabled workers from poverty, it also prevents poverty; takes into account the significant and additional costs of being disabled; and fully supports independent living;
- Continue to build a movement of protest against the current cost-of-living crisis that highlights the specific impact of the current crisis on disabled people and puts their voices centre stage.”

Mover: USDAW

SECTION 4: ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION

15. BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE (BSL)

“This Conference welcomes the fact that BSL is now an officially recognised language in the UK.

“Conference calls on affiliates to:

- Explore the possibility of providing training in BSL (British Sign Language) for any members that wish to learn it;
- Support their branches to put pressure on their employers to cover the costs of BSL training at all levels and time off to study it.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to work with affiliates, their equality committees, and the STUC General Council to put pressure on the Scottish Government to:

- Provide financial and other support and free education and training for native Signers to qualify as Sign Language teachers;
- Financial support for Sign Language courses to reduce their costs.”

Mover: UCU Scotland

16. BSL EDUCATION

“Conference notes the development of the GCSE in British Sign Language (BSL) that will be rolled out in schools across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland from the 2025-26 academic year. Yet, no such qualification is offered as part of the portfolio available in Scotland’s schools, despite Scotland being the only one of the four nations of the UK to have legal recognition of BSL in law since 2015.

“Conference is well aware of the inequalities faced by deaf people in employment and accessing public services, with Scotland currently having less than 100 BSL interpreters available across the whole country.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers Committee to:

- Lobby the Scottish Government, the Scottish Qualifications Authority and successor, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, and the Deaf Community to roll out BSL education across Scotland’s schools, leading to a qualification that is at least of the equivalent level as the GCSE offered in the rest of the UK.”

Mover: Unison Scotland

Amendment:

Delete sentence 2 beginning “Yet...” and insert, ‘Conference notes the SCQF Level 6 award in BSL.’”

In bullet point after “successor” insert “and”; delete all after “and the Deaf Community to roll...” and insert “to continue to develop awards in BSL in Scotland and provide resources to ensure meaningful access for learners.”

Mover: Educational Institute of Scotland

SECTION 5: INCLUSIVE POLICIES

17. FINANCIAL SERVICES SUPPORTING THE E-DISADVANTAGED

“This Conference notes since 2015 over 5000 big name banks have disappeared from our high streets. As this trend continues, millions of vulnerable customers are left with little or no access to their cash. Despite the drive to digital not everyone has access to online banking and the loss of face-to-face services throughout the country adversely impacts the e-disadvantaged.

“As financial providers continue to prioritise profit over customers’ needs it is now almost impossible to operate financial affairs without technology and those with no or limited access to it are in an increasingly vulnerable position.

“Parking a car, using a public phone or accessing a secure internet is increasingly difficult without online access to a bank account.

“The e-disadvantaged people are more likely to become victims of financial crime due to their technological inexperience. If they have outdated software or hardware due to lack of ability, funds, or access to sufficient services they are not protected by the industry or the 10 government who have shifted the responsibility for security to the user without ensuring that industry advances have been inclusive and considered.

“Therefore, Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers Committee to campaign for a level of secure service for the e-disadvantaged, to give protections that place the onus of access and security on service providers and government, not consumers.

“This includes the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee working with affiliate unions to campaign for:

- A legal right to pay for goods and services in person using cash;
- A statutory obligation on banks and ATM outlets to provide an appropriate network of free-to-use cash deposit and withdrawal services for public access across the UK.”

Mover: GMB Scotland

18. ENSURE ALL NHS ELECTRONIC PLATFORMS ARE NEURODIVERSE FRIENDLY

“This Conference notes research shows that around 1 in 10 people in Scotland are neurodivergent. NHS Scotland employs 181,723 people which equates to around 18,723 neurodivergent employees. Although the term ‘neurodiversity’ refers to the diversity of all people, it frequently refers to those with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other neurological or developmental disorders like ADHD or learning impairments.

“The RCM has experienced an increase in feedback and requests from members looking for support for neurodivergent challenges. In particular, the increased use and reliance on computers, software and systems has led to questioning and loss of confidence in skills causing significant barriers. This has increased work stress, capability issues and absences.

“The last decade has seen a significant increase in the use of electronic IT systems with a massive shift from paper-based documentation to a strong reliance on the use of technology including email, accessing patient information, and recording care. However, computer screens, software, and font sizes have not been designed to consider or accommodate neurodivergent employees.

“These barriers can be addressed if IT systems across NHS Scotland were reviewed and amended to eliminate the barriers currently faced by staff. Having equal opportunity

to work to their best ability is something everyone deserves, without the need for individual assessments and adjustments that emphasise differences or disabilities.

It is imperative that our workforce is inclusive for all, to ensure the future of NHS Scotland as a key employer and leader in the provision and innovation of healthcare; by supporting all employees to reach their potential and have positive experiences in the workplace.”

“The RCM calls on Conference and the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to:

- Lobby NHS Scotland employers and Scottish Government to implement neurodiverse-friendly electronic platforms for NHS staff and service users.
- Raise awareness and understanding of neurodiversity and neurodiverse workplace policies.

Mover: The Royal College of Midwives

Amendment:

Paragraph 3, after “recording care” insert “They’re also pervasive in higher education.”; between “software” and “font sizes” insert “colour use, graphics use, animations”; add final sentence, “The format of meeting invitation emails is another potential barrier”.

Paragraph 5, after “healthcare;” insert “and Scottish higher education given its role in educating healthcare personnel”.

In bullet point 1, after “NHS” insert “and higher education”; after “users”, insert “in consultation with disabled staff, service users, and students”.

Mover: UCU Scotland

19. DISABLED WOMEN AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

“This Conference welcomes the work done by the STUC and affiliates to support survivors of domestic abuse in work and to negotiate workplace policies that give women the time and support they need to recover and rebuild their lives.

“Studies show that disabled women are disproportionately likely to experience gender-based violence but are often a hidden population. Conference is concerned that we do not know nearly enough about the experiences of disabled women facing domestic violence in Scotland.

“Abuse experienced by disabled women is often pervasive, leading to a normalisation of abuse.

“Disabled women are twice as likely to experience gender-based violence but far less likely to report it. Societies and employer attitudes to disability which focus on women’s vulnerability rather than seeing disabled women as victim

survivors places barriers in the way of disabled women accessing support.

“Reps have a vital role to play in supporting women workers to recognise and recover from abuse, but this is particularly the case for disabled women who are often less able to access appropriate support and to have their voices heard.

“Changes to domestic violence legislation to include coercive control are important in understanding how specific abuse against disabled women may manifest itself in a variety of ways for example where the abuser controls someone through their impairment or support needs.

“Conference commends the work union reps are doing to support disabled survivors of domestic abuse and calls for greater recognition of the challenges disabled women face in escaping abuse by employers.

“Conference calls upon the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to:

- Support affiliates to negotiate domestic abuse policies with employers that recognise the specific needs of disabled women workers;
- Involve disabled women in developing the STUC and the labour movement’s work on gender-based violence.”

Mover: USDAW



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- Email LetsBeHeard@covid19inquiry.scot



NOMINATIONS

A) STUC DISABLED WORKERS' COMMITTEE 2023/24

GENERAL SEATS (5 SEATS - 3 NOMINEES) - NO CONTEST

Steven McGurk, Community
Tony Slaven, UNISON Scotland
Tony Sneddon, CWU

WOMEN'S SEATS (5 SEATS - 5 NOMINEES) - NO CONTEST

Margaret Boyd, GMB Scotland
Julie Ferguson, EIS
Margaret Gilmurray, UNISON Scotland
Gwen McNeil, RMT
Carol Wood, NASUWT

TRADES UNION COUNCIL SEAT (1 SEAT - 0 NOMINEES) - NO CONTEST

B) DISABLED WORKERS' SEATS ON THE STUC GENERAL COUNCIL 2024/25

GENERAL SEAT (1 SEAT - 1 NOMINEE) - NO CONTEST

Tony Slaven, UNISON Scotland

WOMAN'S SEAT (1 SEAT - 2 NOMINEES) - CONTEST

Margaret Gilmurray, UNISON Scotland
Gwen McNeil, RMT

C) DISABLED WORKERS' CONFERENCE DELEGATION TO THE STUC ANNUAL CONGRESS 2024

(plus 2 reserved places for the nominated STUC Disabled Workers' General Council Reps - 6 places in total)

GENERAL PLACES (2 PLACES - 2 NOMINEES) - NO CONTEST

Tony Slaven, UNISON Scotland
Tony Sneddon, CWU

WOMEN'S PLACES (2 PLACES - 3 NOMINEES) - NO CONTEST*

Margaret Boyd, GMB Scotland
Margaret Gilmurray, UNISON Scotland
Gwen McNeil, RMT

*There are 6 seats available in total for the delegation to STUC Annual Congress (2x General, 2x Women's, and 2x for nominees to the STUC General Council 2024/25).

As Margaret Gilmurray, UNISON Scotland, and Gwen McNeil, RMT, are standing for election to the Disabled Workers' Seat reserved for a woman on the General Council 2024/25, one of them automatically takes one of the seats on the Disabled Workers' Conference delegation to STUC Annual Congress reserved for STUC General Council Disabled Workers nominees.

Therefore, the remaining two seats reserved for women on the delegation to STUC Annual Congress 2024 can be taken up by Margaret Boyd, GMB, and whoever between Margaret Gilmurray, UNISON Scotland, and Gwen McNeil, RMT, is not elected to the Disabled Workers' Seat reserved for a woman on the General Council 2024/25.

LIST OF DELEGATES

TRADE UNIONS & TRADES UNION COUNCILS

ASLEF

Ross Bland

*John McCue

CLYDEBANK TUC

*Janet Cassidy

COMMUNITY

*Steven McGurk

Audrey McJimpsey

Ronald Regan

Terry Robinson

COMMUNICATION WORKERS' UNION

*Scott Hartles

Tony Sneddon

Joyce Stevenson

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SCOTLAND

Selma Augestad

Jamie Bolland

*Julie Ferguson

Caroline Gorman

Clare Greig

Jennifer Harvey

Sean Murray

Michael Sinclair

Elise Stirling

Erin Wilkie

Gerard Wilkie

GMB SCOTLAND

Margaret Boyd

*Annette Drylie

Mary Finn

Lorraine Kerr

Jillian McFarlane

Sam Mullin

Teresa Will

MUSICIANS' UNION

*Neil Patterson

NASUWT

Linda Gibson

Rachael Gillis

Afifa Khanam

Ruth Lamont

Kirstie Raeburn

*Carol Wood

NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS

Ann Coltart

*Jim Symons

PHARMACIST'S DEFENCE ASSOCIATION

*Maurice Hickey

Susan MacKinnon

PROSPECT

*Kathryn Sosville

ROYAL COLLEGE OF MIDWIVES

*Meggan Reid

RMT

*Gwen McNeil

Davie O'Donnell

SCOTTISH ARTISTS' UNION

*Gael Hillyard

UCU SCOTLAND

*Marion Hersh

UNISON

Jim Boyes

Frank Cairns

Margaret Callander

Andy Crosbie

*Margaret Gilmurray

Bryan Millan

Katrina Murray

Tony Slaven

Angela Thompson

Kevin Mark Todd


UNITE



Laura Bilton
Heather Gillfillan
*Lorna Glen
Shirley Johnston
Clare Sweeney

USDAW

Elaine Dennis
Moira McGurk
*Lisa Willis

*DENOTES DELEGATION LEADER



Disabled workers

Prospect and Bectu send our best to all delegates at the 2023 STUC Disabled Workers' Conference

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REPORT TO

DISABLED WORKERS' CONFERENCE

STUC DISABLED WORKERS' CONFERENCE 2022

The 19th Annual STUC Disabled Workers' Conference was held at the Golden Jubilee Conference Hotel on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th November 2022.

The theme of Conference was 'Our Voices; Our Unions: Celebrating the Year of the Disabled Worker, Now and Forever' and was Chaired by Tony Slaven, UNISON. 55 delegates, representing 18 Trade Unions attended Conference.

The Conference appointed Shirley Johnston, Unite the Union, and Sam Mullin, GMB Scotland as Tellers and Andrew Crosbie, UNISON, and Gerry Mooney, PCS were appointed as Scrutineers.

19 motions were debated at Conference. They focused on the celebrating disabled workers, fair work, the cost-of-living crisis and disabled workers, additional support needs, and accessible transport. The Disabled Workers' Committee submitted two motions: 'Celebrating Disability' and 'What Price, the Cost of Life?'

Several motions submitted were composited. Composite A, 'Disabled People, Benefits, and the Cost-of-Living Crisis' was formed of motions 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6; Composite B, 'Accessible Rail Travel for Disabled People', was formed of motions 16, 18, and amended motion 17.

Two emergency motions were submitted but not tabled as neither were deemed as an emergency by the Disabled Workers' Committee.

On Saturday 19th November, Roz Foyer, STUC General Secretary, opened and welcomed all delegates to Conference.

Throughout the day Conference heard and debated motions on sections celebrating disability, the cost-of-living crisis and disabled workers, and fair work. Conference also held a morning workshop on the cost-of-living impact on disabled workers, facilitated by committee members Julie Ferguson, EIS and Linda Ford, Prospect, along with Linda Somerville and Eireann McAuley, STUC. In the afternoon Conference welcomed a keynote address from Kris Hendry, Chair of the STUC LGBT+ Workers Committee before holding a panel session on Long Covid with representatives from Long Covid Scotland, Sheena AlAlami and Jane Ormerod, along with committee member John Keenan, Unite the Union, and Chaired by Linda Somerville, STUC Deputy General Secretary.

On Sunday 20th November, a workshop session was held in the morning, on celebrating disability and building an effective network. This session was facilitated by Conference and committee Chair Tony Slaven, UNISON, Linda Ford, Prospect and Eireann McAuley and Sean McLaughlin, STUC. In the afternoon remaining motions on additional support needs and Composite B were debated before guest speaker, Mark Griffin MSP, spoke to Conference about the Scottish Employment Injuries Advisory Council Bill.

All 19 motions at Conference were carried, with Motion 13, 'Learning Disability and Health Inequalities - Gender-Based Violence' being supported with statement by the Disabled Workers' Committee.

The Conference was supported and promoted throughout with tweets, photos, and voxpop videos on social media, using the hashtag #STUCDWC22

Conference elected the following to serve as members of the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee for the year 2022/2023:

- Margaret Anslow, Falkirk Trades Union Council
- Pat Duffy, GMB Scotland
- Julie Ferguson, Educational Institute of Scotland
- Linda Ford, Prospect
- Margaret Gilmurray, UNISON
- John Keenan, Unite the Union
- Tony Slaven, UNISON
- Tony Sneddon, Communication Workers' Union
- Clare Sweeney, Unite the Union

Margaret Gilmurray and Tony Slaven, both UNISON, were nominated to contest the election at the 2023 Annual Congress for the General Council seats reserved for Disabled Workers.

Pat Duffy, GMB Scotland, Margaret Gilmurray and Tony Slaven, both UNISON, and Tony Sneddon, CWU were elected as the Disabled Workers' Conference delegation to the STUC Annual Congress 2023.

The General Council appointed Ewing Hope, Unite, and Richard Hardy, Prospect, as its representatives on the Disabled Workers' Committee.

STUC DISABLED WORKERS' COMMITTEE 2022/23

Following the Disabled Workers' Conference, the Disabled Workers' Committee developed a Work Plan which was presented to, and endorsed by, the STUC General Council.

Tony Slaven, UNISON Scotland, was elected to serve as Chair of the Committee, and Linda Ford was elected to serve as the Vice-Chair. During the course of the Committee term, Linda Ford resigned from the Committee and the Committee thanked Linda for her work while on the Committee in recent years. Throughout the term two co-options were held with Sonia Allori, Musicians' Union, Margaret Boyd, GMB Scotland, and Gwen McNeil, RMT, joining the committee. Sonia subsequently resigned from the Committee thanked Sonia for her contributions while on Committee.

The workplan incorporated a number of priority areas, campaign, and themes including:

- Long Covid
- Covid-19 Public Inquiry
- Disability Pay Gap and Fair Work
- Reasonable Adjustments
- Accessible and Inclusive Transport
- Cost of Living Crisis
- Scottish Employment Injuries Advisory Council Bill (SEIAC Bill)

Long Covid and the Covid-19 Public Inquiry

During the committee term it was agreed the committee's work on Long Covid and the Covid-19 Public Inquiry would concentrate on supporting ongoing STUC campaigning and direct involvement in the Inquiry.

Scottish Employment Injuries Advisory Council Bill (SEIAC Bill)

The committee hosted the launch of the Bill at the STUC Office on 12th June with Tony Slaven, UNISON Scotland, as the Committee Chair hosting the event. The committee has provided ongoing support of the SEIAC Bill led by Mark Griffin MSP including hosting a webinar event on 27th November 2023.

Tony Slaven, UNISON Scotland, represented the committee at a TUC Education event called 'Long Covid in Scotland the Long Wave of the Pandemic' on 16th March. Tony also met Collette Stevenson MSP, Chair of the Social Justice and Social Security Committee, on 14th August.

Disability Pay Gap and Fair Work

In March 2023 the committee invited Maddy Kirkman, Parliamentary and Policy Officer at Inclusion Scotland, to give a presentation to the committee on the work of Inclusion Scotland in engaging membership on the Adult Disability Payment.

On 20th October a wider equalities session was facilitated online by the Committee and STUC in which Helen Martin, Head of the Fair Work Convention Secretariat, made a presentation on the work of the Fair Work Convention.

Reasonable Adjustments

A subgroup of the Committee was set up and developed a survey for union reps which was shared with STUC affiliates and relevant networks to build a reasonable adjustments toolkit which will be shared. The survey is ongoing and will be a focus of a workshop at this year's Conference.

EVENTS

Equalities Congress Fringe – 18 April 2023

As part of the STUC Congress in April 2023 the STUC Equality Committees held a joint fringe event titled 'What is 'woke'? Are unions 'woke'?' which was supported and attended by members of the Disabled Workers' Committee at STUC Congress.

The STUC Equalities Fringe explored concepts of 'wokeness' and what trade unionists can do to build solidarity and combat discrimination. The discussion considered hate crime, misogyny, the rise of the far right, and why those standing up against injustice and inequities are often labelled 'woke'.

One Size Fits All? Covid and Equalities in Scotland – 2nd September 2023

Tony Slaven, Tony Sneddon, and Ewing Hope represented the committee at an event at the STUC Margaret Irwin Centre with Thompson's Solicitors and the Let's Be Heard Project. Thompson's gave a presentation on the background of the Covid-19 public inquiries before Let's Be Heard gave a presentation and subsequent workshop on the project gathering experiences of people in Scotland during the pandemic.

STUC Women's Conference 2023

Clare Sweeney, Unite, spoke on behalf of the Committee at the STUC Women's Conference in October 2023, and Julie Ferguson, EIS, from the Committee contributed to the Women's Conference Herstory project.

John Keenan

During the Committee term the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee sadly lost one of its longstanding members and disability activists with the passing of John Keenan in September. John was a former STUC President, a lifelong trade unionist, and an inspirational figure in our movement.

John was best known for his role on the Rolls-Royce Works Committee and his refusal to overhaul any materials for Pinochet's Chile. On behalf of the Rolls-Royce workers who supported the boycott he received the highest civilian honour awarded to non-Chilean citizens by the Chilean Government, the medal of the Order of Bernardo O'Higgins, for his efforts to preserve human rights in Chile.

John was Chair of East Kilbride and South Lanarkshire Trades Union Council for over forty years. He also served on the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee, where his knowledge of benefits and pensions was invaluable. He continued working with the Citizens Advice Bureau where he was a valued adviser, dealing with benefit appeals and winning thousands of pounds for disabled people.



Scottish Union Learning sends solidarity greetings to delegates attending the 20th Annual STUC Disabled Workers' Conference

Scottish Union Learning supports trade unions to develop and deliver workplace learning and improve equality.

As part of the Fair Work: Leadership and Equality programme, we support the development of work around promoting leadership and equalities, including the provision of a national Equality Rep Network.

Visit our exhibition stand to find out more about:

- The Fair Work: Leadership and Equality programme
- The Equality Rep Network
- How we can continue to develop learning programmes that support disabled workers across Scotland



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PEACE EDUCATION SCOTLAND

REPORT OF THE DISABLED WORKERS'

REPRESENTATIVES ON THE

STUC GENERAL COUNCIL 2022/23

Disabled Workers' Conference Representatives on the STUC General Council

Tony Slaven (UNISON Scotland) and Margaret Gilmurray (UNISON Scotland) continue to be the Disabled Workers' Conference representatives on the General Council.

At all meetings of the STUC General Council, the Disabled Workers' reps endeavoured to ensure that, within the themes outlined, the interests of disabled people were fully integrated into STUC strategy. Given the challenging and changing impact of the cost of living crisis the Disabled Workers' reps were supportive of collaborative working where issues of intersectionality arose.

General Council Meetings

Among the issues discussed at General Council meetings, the Disabled Workers' reps highlighted the following issues:

- Long COVID – to continue to campaign for long COVID to be treated as a disability; to increase awareness and understanding of long COVID and its impact on workers; to strengthen relations with organisations such as long-COVID Scotland; and work with unions to support trade unionists battling with long-COVID and how reps can support disabled workers with this.
- COVID-19 Public Inquiry – to support the STUC with its submission to the UK and Scottish Public COVID-19 Inquiries.
- Disability Pay Gap – to increase campaigning and lobbying capacity on actions to reduce the disability pay gap in Scotland.
- Reasonable Adjustments Campaign – to highlight and work towards developing a range of tools for requesting and respecting reasonable adjustments at work which seeks to educate, empower, and encourage workers and unions to better understand their rights to a reasonable adjustment as disabled workers, and for employers to respect and fulfil these requests.

- Accessible and inclusive transport – continue to build on existing work of lobbying the Scottish Government for accessible, affordable, safe, and inclusive public transport for all disabled people in Scotland.
- Continue to support the STUC Peoples Plan for Action and raise concern on the unique impact the COL is having on the lives of disabled people; and focus on lobbying the Scottish Government to maximise the use of their new social security powers.

The Committee will also:

- Scottish Employment Injuries Bill – continue to support and work with Mark Griffin MSP to feed in the views of disabled workers on the development of a Scottish Employment Injuries Advisory Council in Scotland.
- Disabled Women's Experiences of the Labour Market during COVID Research – the Committee will work with Close the Gap and STUC Equality Policy Officer on research into disabled women in Scotland's experience. A representative from the Committee is on the main advisory group.
- Cross-Equalities – continue to build relations and support joint-equalities work where applicable throughout the year.

THE ABILITY TO BRING A FRESH PERSPECTIVE TO THE WORKPLACE



SOLIDARITY TO ALL AT THE
20TH ANNUAL STUC DISABLED
WORKERS' CONFERENCE

REPORT OF THE DISABLED WORKERS'

CONFERENCE DELEGATION TO

STUC CONGRESS 2023

126TH ANNUAL STUC CONGRESS

MONDAY 17 – WEDNESDAY 19 APRIL 2023

STUC Disabled Workers' Conference Delegation:

- John Keenan, Unite
- Tony Slaven, UNISON Scotland
- Tony Sneddon, CWU

The 126th STUC Annual Congress took place in the Caird Hall, Dundee over the period Monday 17 to Wednesday 19 April 2023.

The theme of Congress for 2023 was 'Scotland's Workers Demanding Better' and was chaired by President of the STUC for the year 2022/2023, Pauline Rourke from the Communication Workers' Union. The Civic welcome was given by Councillor Bill Campbell, Lord Provost of Dundee City Council; and Stuart Fairweather, of Dundee Trades Union Council, provided the Trades welcome.

Just over 300 delegates representing Trade Unions, Trades Union Councils and the Disabled Workers, Black Workers', LGBT+ Workers', and Youth Conferences all had representatives at Congress.

The General Council issued Statements on Ukraine, Scotland's Constitution, Upping the 'Ante' on the NHS, Illegal Council Budgets and an emergency motion calling for support for Richard Leonard MSP. A copy of the Statements can be obtained from the STUC.

STUC Congress Speakers

Several guest speakers contributed to Congress over the three days, providing fraternal greetings and keynote addresses.

These included:

- Joyce Stevenson, CWU, who provided the Vote of Thanks to the President
- Humza Yousaf, First Minister of Scotland

- Angela Rayner, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party
- Anas Sarwar, Leader of the Scottish Labour Party
- Owen Reidy, General Secretary of the ICTU
- Paul Nowak, General Secretary of the TUC
- Elaine Dougall, Unite, on behalf of the STUC Women's Committee

An International session took place on the Tuesday afternoon with Congress hearing contributions from international guest speakers including representatives from Sri Lanka.

STUC Congress Equalities Fringe Event

On Tuesday 18 April, a joint STUC Equality Committee's fringe meeting was held, the theme of which was 'What is Woke? Are Unions Woke? The session explored how trade unions can build solidarity to fight discrimination and counter divisive attempts at pitting communities against each other.

MOTIONS AND DEBATES

The Disabled Workers' Committee put forward three motions to STUC Congress 2023. The motions submitted were:

Motion 1: Tackling Disability Employment and Pay Gap

"That this Congress is alarmed that the Disability Employment Gap (DEP) in Scotland remains at a shocking 31.2% and that Scotland has the widest Disability Pay Gap (DPG) at 18.5% across the UK four nations.

"Congress notes that the 2022 UK wide Disability Pay Gap Day exposed that the average disabled worker in the UK was working 54 days without pay.

"Congress further notes that disabled people disproportionately experience chronic poverty and endemic barriers to accessing and sustaining employment.

“The Scottish Government have set a target to half the DEP by 2035. Congress believes that bolder measures and commitments should be taken to accelerate closing the gap not simply half it.

“Furthermore, that disabling attitudes, stigma, workplace policies and practice, and a lack of access to decent, well paid and sustainable employment continues to be significant factors placing barriers for disabled people to access, retain and progress at work.

“The combined impacts of COVID and the Cost-of-Living crisis has had devastating impacts on the lives and livelihoods of disabled people, and consequently, the widening of the disability pay and employment gap.

“Congress calls on the STUC General Council to:

- Support mandatory disability pay gap reporting for workplaces, with more than 50 employees.
- Support the STUC Disabled Workers Committee to launch a campaign to close the disability employment and pay gap.
- Increase campaigning for a day one right to flexible working; and for all
- Employers and all affiliates to adopt the Disability Employment Charter Co-developed by the Labour Party, UNISON and Unite.
- Lobby for a stronger legal framework for reasonable adjustments and campaign for EHRC to enforce Disabled workers’ rights and substantial penalty for employers who fail to comply.
- Lobby the Fair Work Commission to tackle the DPG and DEG.”

Motion 2: Long-COVID in the Workplace

“That this Congress deplores the stark statistics that 6 in 10 people who lost their lives to Covid were disabled people.

“Congress notes that the Office of National Statistics estimate 2.1 million people in the UK are living with Long-Covid equating to around 187,000 people in Scotland.

“Congress welcomes the development of a cross-party group on Long Covid in Scotland, and further welcomes the opportunity for the STUC to play a significant role in the Covid-19 Public Inquiry as a core participant.

“Congress is concerned that a recent TUC survey on Long-Covid highlighted that over 50% of workers living with Long-Covid had experienced some form of poor treatment, disadvantage, and discrimination at work; and is alarmed at reports of absence management cases being triggered and those battling Long-Covid facing questions from their employer and faced with disbelief and suspicion.

“Congress recognises that understanding and diagnosis of Long-Covid is developing. However, Congress believes that Long-Covid at work must be taken as a serious health and safety, and equality issue by employers and workplace policy and provisions must be in place to both understand Long-Covid at work and support workers living with it.

“Congress therefore calls on the STUC General Council to:

- increase lobbying demands for Long-Covid to be treated as a disability and included in eligibility for industrial injury and disablement benefits;
- encourage all trade unions in Scotland to educate and equip all reps on Long-Covid and how union reps can support and negotiate policies for workers with Long-Covid;
- increase campaigning on sick pay;
- push employers to put in place mechanisms to highlight Long-Covid at work and negotiate to embed policies that support those working with Long-Covid and support the principle that no one should suffer a detriment, financial or otherwise, through experiencing Covid or Long Covid;
- work with the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee and Long-Covid Scotland to raise awareness of Long-Covid in the workplace and effects on workers.”

Motion 3: Fair Work and Disability

“That this Congress welcomes the ambition for Scotland to be a leading ‘Fair Work Nation’ by 2025.

“Congress notes that the Scottish Government published a refreshed Fair Work action plan in December 2022 which encompassed a strategy to tackle the gender, disability, and ethnicity pay gap.

“Congress is concerned that Fair Work will not be achievable or realistic for disabled workers by 2025 unless urgent and bolder mechanisms from employers are taken.

“Congress agrees with the concept of Fair Work but is alarmed that for some disabled people their basic human and workplace rights are not being realised or fulfilled, and that access to ‘Fair Work’ employment opportunities for disabled people is regrettably low.

“Congress further notes that for some employers, equality impacts assessments and building accessible, inclusive, disability friendly workplace environments and embedding equality policies are seen as an additionality.

“Congress, believes that in order to achieve Fair Work for all, more equality representation should be considered, and those most deeply affected by workplace inequity should have a stronger voice on the Fair Work Convention and within Fair Work policy agenda.

“We therefore call on the STUC General Council to:

- Work with the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee to ensure that a disabled worker has a seat on the Fair Work Convention.
- To ask that the Fair Work Convention consult more often with disabled workers' in Scotland."

Motion 3 was composited into Composite L, 'Fair Work and the Economy' along with 3 other motions, from Communication Workers' Union; Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union; and Musicians' Union.

Composite L:

"That this Congress recognises the recent economic crisis has accelerated industrial disputes with workers throughout both the public and private sector, including those in Creative Industries who have been dealt significant blows to their livelihoods in recent years.

"The response from employers has been a disgrace, with a series of excuses, union-busting tactics and targeting of trade unions and their members including implementing intolerable practices such as fire and rehire, union derecognition, bullying and intimidation, sexual harassment, along with recruitment of agency workers in an attempt to break strikes.

"Musicians' Union campaigns Work Not Play, Fix Streaming and the Safe Space scheme have sought to raise the profile of some of these issues. Fair pay is important - but how we are treated at work is equally important.

"Congress is further concerned that Fair Work will not be achievable or realistic for disabled workers by 2025 unless urgent and bolder mechanisms from employers are taken.

"Congress agrees with the concept of Fair Work but is alarmed that for some disabled people their basic human and workplace rights are not being realised or fulfilled, and that access to 'Fair Work' employment opportunities for disabled people is regrettably low.

"Congress also notes that for some employers, equality impacts assessments and building accessible, inclusive, disability friendly workplace environments and embedding equality policies are seen as an additionality.

"Congress agrees that workers on zero hours contracts need some form of guaranteed income in terms of their working hours, a 30 hour per week guarantee would give many in this situation the opportunity to plan their living on a regular basis, rather than spiking one week, to next to nothing the following week.

"Congress believes that in order to achieve Fair Work for all, more equality representation should be considered, and those most deeply affected by workplace inequity should have a stronger voice on the Fair Work Convention and within Fair Work policy agenda.

"Congress calls on the STUC General Council to:

- escalate significant breaches of Fair Work to the Scottish Government;
- utilise relevant Scottish Parliament processes to ensure employers must appear before the relevant committee to be accountable for their actions in the timeliest manner;
- work with the creative unions to develop a Fair Work Charter for the Creative Industries;
- lobby the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland to put into place the appropriate measures and systems whereby organisations and individuals who engage cultural workers, do so under strict Fair Work conditionality, that appropriate support is in place for organisations to achieve this, and sanctions in place accordingly where they do not;
- work with the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee to ensure that the Fair Work Convention consult more often with disabled workers in Scotland"

Congress Reflections

In summary, the delegation felt that at STUC Congress 2023 the range and quality of the contributions made by the delegation enabled it to bring key issues for disabled workers to the debate. Through valuable participation on the wide range of debates, the elected delegates represented the collective aims and priorities of disabled workers as mandated by their election at the Disabled Workers' Conference.

STUC Congress Awards

The STUC Union Rep Awards were presented by Humza Yousaf, First Minister of Scotland, on Monday 17 April to Fadza Mwakutuya, Scottish Artists Union (Learner of the Year Award), Soh Xi Ken, Pharmacists' Defence Association (STUC Equality Award), William Reynolds, NASUWT (STUC Frank Maguire Award for Health and Safety), and Sue Sierra, UCU Scotland (STUC Organising Award). Following presentation of the awards, the First Minister addressed Congress.

General Council Nominees for 2023

The new General Council for 2023 was elected at Annual Congress and, as per the nomination at Disabled Workers' Conference 2022, Margaret Gilmurray and Tony Slaven, both UNISON Scotland, were elected to serve as the Disabled Workers' representatives on the General Council until STUC Congress 2024.



LIST OF EXHIBITORS

LET'S BE HEARD

The Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry's listening project, Let's Be Heard, was launched in Spring 2023. Let's Be Heard allows people in Scotland to participate in the Inquiry by sharing their own experiences of the pandemic. We will outline how you, and the people you work with, can get involved.

Web: <https://lbh.covid19inquiry.scot/>

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LinkedIn: /covidinquirysco

ROYAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BLIND PEOPLE (RNIB) SCOTLAND

The Royal National Institute of Blind People Scotland supports blind and partially sighted people of all ages to live as fully and independently as possible. It provides advice, support, training, equipment and transcribes books and other materials. RNIB Scotland also campaigns to improve the lives of people with sight loss.

Contact us on social media: @RNIBScotland

PEACE EDUCATION SCOTLAND

Peace Education Scotland are a Scottish charity who aim to advance knowledge of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The charity was set up by the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament who they share the stall at the Disabled Workers' Conference with.

Twitter/X: @PeaceEdu.Scot

Twitter/X: @ScottishCND

SCOTTISH UNION LEARNING

Scottish Union Learning supports trade unions in developing, organising, and delivering work-related learning and skills programmes for their members that contribute to collective prosperity, fairness, and equality for workers across Scotland. Scottish Union Learning is part of the STUC.

Facebook: /scottishunionlearning

Twitter/X: @unionlearning

THOMPSONS SOLICITORS

Thompsons Scotland are a trade union law firm. We stand up against injustice, mistreatment, and injury in the workplace. We are at the forefront of cases involving discrimination, unfair dismissal, industrial disease and health and safety breaches. Unlike other lawyers we do not see the courts as the only means of achieving a goal for our clients. If the courts cannot assist we campaign for change and we are proud to have secured many important legal reforms over the years.

Facebook: /Thompsons.Solicitors.Scotland

Twitter/X: @Thompsons_Sols

UNIONS INTO SCHOOLS

STUC Unions into Schools was originally launched as part of the Enterprise in Education, Determined to Succeed Agenda in 2005/6.

The programme of school visits from 2005 to 2023 has been coordinated and managed by the STUC with support from Scottish Union Learning. Unions into Schools is supported by a learning programme delivered by the STUC, with varied options available depending on representative's experience and confidence. With the assistance of trade union representatives, Unions into Schools has delivered over 2,000 classroom and virtual online sessions to school pupils throughout Scotland.

Contact: schools@stuc.org.uk

Twitter/X: @ScottishTUC

CONSTITUTION OF THE STUC

DISABLED WORKERS' CONFERENCE

1. TITLE OF CONFERENCE

The Annual Conference of Disabled Workers' representatives of Trades Unions and Trades Union Councils shall be known as the "Scottish TUC Disabled Workers' Conference".

2. DATE OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Conference shall meet annually, normally in the month of November or December, over two days.

3. BASIS OF REPRESENTATION

Each organisation affiliated to the Scottish TUC shall be invited to appoint delegates who must be disabled. In addition, each affiliate may send officials to accompany its delegation. The basis of representation shall be as follows:

Trade Unions with membership of up to 10,000:

- 6 delegates

Trade Unions with membership over 10,000:

- 6 delegates plus one for 10,000 members or part thereof

Trades Union Councils:

- up to 6 delegates

4. DISABLED WORKERS' COMMITTEE

There shall be a Disabled Workers' Committee composed as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| • Trades Unions | 10 places |
| • Trades Union Councils | 1 place |
| • General Council | 2 places |

The General Council members elected to the Disabled Workers' Seats on the STUC General Council and nominees from the Disabled Workers' Conference to the STUC General Council – if they have not been elected to the Committee in any of the above categories – shall be additional members of the Committee, with rights equal to all other members.

a) The Trades Union and Trades Union Council places shall be elected by ballot of all delegations to the Conference. Ballot papers will be issued to delegation leaders.

b) In the Trade Union Section, the ten candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected, with the proviso that at least five women must be elected in the Section. In the event that there are fewer than five women nominees for election, the Committee shall fill the vacant places by co-option. In the event of a tied vote in the ballot, the tied candidates shall be put to a re-ballot. In the event of a further tie, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote(s).

c) Each Trade Union shall be entitled to nominate up to two candidates (one male and one female) for election to the Trades Union Section of the Committee. Candidates must be members of the Union's delegation to the Conference.

d) In the Trades Union Council Section, the candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected. In the event of a tied vote in the ballot, the tied candidates shall be put to a re-ballot. In the event of a further tie, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.

e) Each Trades Union Council shall be entitled to nominate one candidate for election to the Trades Union Council Section of the Committee. The candidate must be a member of the Council's delegation.

f) The General Council shall appoint one male and one female representative as observers to the Disabled Workers' Committee.

g) The Disabled Workers' Committee shall elect from among its own number a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson: the members nominated by the General Council shall not be eligible for election to these positions. The gender of the Chair shall alternate at least every 2 years.

h) On the death or resignation of a member of the Disabled Workers' Committee, or should that year's Committee have vacant places, the Committee shall fill the vacancy by co-opting the highest unsuccessful eligible candidate. In the event that there is no such candidate, the position shall be filled by co-option.

Conduct of Elected Disabled Workers' Committee Members

If at any time there appears to the General Council to be

justification for an investigation into the conduct of an elected member of the Committee on the grounds that the activities of that member may be contrary to the objects of the STUC, or to Trade Union principles, or to the declared policy of the STUC, or on the grounds that the member has contravened or failed to obey any requirement of these rules, or on the grounds of the member's standing with his or her affiliated organisation, the STUC President may appoint a Sub-Committee consisting of three other members from the General Council to carry out such an investigation.

In the event that the member, whose conduct is the subject of this Rule is the President, the Vice President may appoint the Sub-Committee. The Committee shall thereafter investigate the alleged conduct. If, after such investigation, the Sub-Committee considers that there is a case to answer in respect of said conduct, it shall give notification to the President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, and to the member concerned of the conduct complained of and of the ground or grounds of complaint.

Upon receiving such notification from the Sub-Committee, the President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, shall, within a reasonable period, summon the member concerned to a hearing. At the hearing, the President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, shall hear, in the presence of the member concerned, any evidence, information, or explanation presented by the Sub-Committee in respect of the alleged conduct.

Thereafter, the President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, shall give the member concerned an opportunity of presenting such evidence, information and explanation, if any, as it wishes to present. Upon conclusion of the hearing, the President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, shall have the power to decide whether the member has been guilty of the alleged conduct. In the event of the member having been found guilty of the said conduct, the President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, shall afford to the member an opportunity to present such further evidence, information and explanation as he or she wishes in relation to imposition of penalty, and shall thereafter have power to reprimand, and/or suspend the member or to recommend the removal of the member from the Committee. The President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, shall notify the member concerned of his or her decision including the penalty to be imposed. The member, if dissatisfied with the decision of the President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, or the penalty imposed, shall have the right of appeal to the General Council. The member's intention to appeal shall be communicated in writing to the General Secretary within seven days of the initial decision. The General Council shall hold a meeting to hear an appeal within one month of the notification to appeal having been received. The President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, shall submit a report to the General

Council setting out the reasons for the decision taken. The report shall also be made available to the member at the same time. The member shall have the right to be heard by the General Council. The General Council may decide to affirm or revoke or otherwise amend the decision of the President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, or to affirm or revoke the penalty and may, if a recommendation to that effect has been made, remove the member from the Committee.

The decision of the General Council shall be final and conclusive. Members of the Sub-Committee appointed to investigate any case against the member and the President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, shall not be entitled to be present at any stage during, or to vote, or take any other part in the deliberation of the General Council as to its findings in respect of the alleged conduct, or in respect of penalty.

Duties of the Disabled Workers' Committee

It shall be the duty of the Committee to implement the policies agreed by the Conference, in line with the requirements of these rules. At all times, in undertaking this duty, the Committee shall recognise the sovereignty of the policies determined by the Annual Congress.

The Committee shall prepare a Report of its work for submission to the Conference and shall include in it a record of attendance of members at Committee meetings.

5. DELEGATION TO ANNUAL CONGRESS

The Disabled Workers' Conference shall elect a delegation of not more than four representatives, two male and two female, to attend the Annual Congress of the Scottish TUC. Two additional delegation places will be automatically reserved for the Disabled Workers' Conference nominees for the Disabled Workers' Seats on the General Council, making a total delegation of six. Each affiliated Trades Union and Trades Union Council shall be invited to nominate one member for the General place and one woman for the place reserved for Disabled Women Workers. Nominees shall be delegates to the Annual Disabled Workers' Conference.

On the death or resignation of a member of the Disabled Workers' Delegation to Annual Congress, or should a vacancy arise following the Conference elections, the Committee shall fill the vacancy by co-opting the highest unsuccessful eligible candidate. In the event that there is no such candidate, the position shall be filled by co-option.

6. NOMINEES FOR DISABLED WORKERS' SEATS ON THE STUC GENERAL COUNCIL

The Disabled Workers' Conference shall elect nominees to stand for election at the Annual Congress for the Disabled Workers' Seats on the General Council.

Each affiliated Trades Union and Trades Union Council shall be eligible to nominate one member for the General

Seat and one for the Seat reserved for Disabled Women Workers. Successfully elected nominees must be delegates to the Disabled Workers' Conference and will automatically be given a place on the Disabled Workers' Delegation to Annual Congress.

Ballot papers shall be issued to delegation leaders. In the event of a tied vote in the ballot, the tied candidates shall be put to a re-ballot. In the event of a further tie, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.

On the death or resignation of a member of an elected nominee for the Disabled Workers' Seat on the STUC General Council, the Committee shall fill the vacancy by co-opting the highest unsuccessful eligible candidate. In the event that there is no such candidate, the position shall be filled by direct election and nomination to the STUC Congress.

7. VOTING

Each delegation shall be entitled to vote according to the number of delegates registered.

The election of the Disabled Workers' Committee, the Disabled Workers' Delegation to Annual Congress and the nominees for the Disabled Workers' Seats on the STUC General Council shall be by card vote. All other voting shall be by show of hands, except where a card vote is called.

8. MOTIONS

a) Motions for the Annual Conference Agenda (not exceeding two from each affiliated body) must be signed by the Secretary of the organisation submitting them and must reach the Scottish TUC at least ten weeks before the date of the Annual Conference.

b) Such motions shall be sent to each affiliated Trades Union and Trades Union Council entitled to be represented at the Conference as soon as possible after the closing date for their submission. The order in which subjects shall be discussed will be decided by the Disabled Workers' Committee.

c) All amendments to the motions submitted by affiliated organisations (not exceeding two from each body) must reach the Scottish TUC by a date to be decided by the Disabled Workers' Committee. Such amendments must be signed by the Secretary of the organisation submitting them.

d) Notwithstanding the aforementioned provisions, the Disabled Workers' Committee or any affiliated organisations shall be permitted to submit emergency motions for consideration by the delegates to the Annual Conference. Any emergency motions submitted for the Conference will require to be signed by an appropriate official (Secretary, Chairperson or Delegation Leader) of the originating organisation, prior to, or immediately following the opening of the Conference.

9. CHILDCARE FACILITIES

Appropriate childcare facilities for the children of delegates shall be available, if requested. Any such request shall be made in writing at least three weeks in advance of the opening of Conference.

10. STANDING ORDERS

Hours of Meeting:

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| ● First Day | 10.00 am – 1.00 pm |
| | 2.00 pm – 5.15 pm |
| ● Second Day | 10.00 am – 1.30 pm |

Conference Chairperson

The Conference will be presided over by the Chairperson of the Disabled Workers' Committee.

Appointment of Tellers and Scrutineers

The appointment of three Scrutineers and four Tellers shall be made by delegates at the start of the Annual Conference.

Limitation of Speakers

No more than eight minutes shall be allowed for the mover of a motion and no more than four minutes for each subsequent speaker.

A delegate shall not speak more than once on any question, unless permission to do so on a point of order or explanation is given by the Chairperson.

Suspension of Standing Orders

Standing Orders may be suspended only if agreed to by at least two-thirds of delegates to the Annual Conference who are present and voting.

Chairperson's Ruling

The Chairperson's ruling may only be overturned by a vote of at least two-thirds of delegates to the Annual Conference who are present and voting.



- A Higher Minimum Wage
- Right to 'Normal Hours' Contract
- Ban Exploitative Zero Hours Contracts
- Protection from Violence and Abuse
- Proper Enforcement of Employment Rights
- Fair Treatment and Equality for All
- Stronger Union Rights
- Better Sick Pay
- Job Security

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To join Usdaw visit: www.usdaw.org.uk/join or call 0800 030 80 30

General Secretary: Paddy Lillis President: Jane Jones
Regional Secretary: Tracy Gilbert
Usdaw: Muirfield, 342 Albert Drive, Glasgow G41 5PG



eis

Scotland's largest
education trade union

**Greetings from
the EIS to all
delegates and
visitors attending
the 20th STUC
Disabled
Workers'
Conference**



Working to Deliver Equality for All

The EIS is Scotland's largest teaching union, representing 80% of teachers across all sectors and all career grades. The EIS maintains its longstanding commitment to disability equality in education, including for those affected by 'hidden' or unseen disabilities. We value disabled teachers and learners and are proud to support this important Conference.

www.eis.org.uk/Equality/Disability-Equality

