

Midlands TUC Update

August 2016

WORKING PEOPLE MUST NOT PAY THE PRICE OF BREXIT



After the vote to leave the European Union, the UK is in uncharted waters both politically and economically. The TUC did not seek this outcome, but accepts the decision of the British people.

Yet with so many still so scarred by the effects of the 2008 financial crisis, working people and their communities must not pay the price – again – of economic slowdown and uncertainty.



The TUC has published an action plan the government needs to take right now to protect our economy, our jobs, our living standards and our society.

www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/Workingpeoplemustnotpaytheprice2.pdf

Many vital rights at work in the UK are derived from EU law, guaranteeing things like paid leave entitlements, protections from being forced to work excessive hours, discrimination protections and rights for working mums to be.

Following the UK vote to leave the European Union, Parliament will decide what happens to these rights.



Prominent Leave campaigners have called for a halving of regulations derived from EU law, or flexibility in interpreting rights, claiming that British business would benefit from a reduction in "red tape".

What they call "red tape" is really rights and protections that are valued by millions of working people. Attempts to cut these rights, or to limit the range of workers they apply to (for example exempting staff of small businesses or temporary workers), would cause great harm to fairness at work and to working people's living standards.

Therefore, the TUC has launched a petition on the Going to Work site demanding that MPs "Commit publicly that you will not vote for any reduction in British workers' rights, or restrict their applicability, when interpreting EU law into post-Brexit UK law." Please sign and circulate it.

<https://campaign.goingtowork.org.uk/petitions/don-t-cut-a-single-workers-right-in-uk-law>

Midlands TUC Update

Dying to Work Update



The Dying to Work campaign has gone from strength to strength in recent months, with the Dying to Work Charter leading the way in extending protection to workers in the absence of legislative change.

The campaign is reliant on affiliates getting employers to support the *Dying to Work* voluntary charter. The TUC doesn't have direct negotiating recognition with firms and as a result affiliates are urged to take up the campaign with employers. A negotiators guide has been produced to support reps looking to support unions in their negotiations which can be found on the campaign website.

In April, the energy company, E.ON became the first major employer to adopt the TUC Voluntary Charter and support the campaign formally.



Other organisations that have now signed the Charter include:

- AB Produce
- Central College Nottingham
- Isle of Man Steam Packet Company
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.

At present there are ongoing negotiations with a number of large organisations and we expect that over the coming few months yet more organisations to be added as Charter signatories.

A Parliamentary reception was held in April with 40 MPs from the Conservatives, Labour and SNP expressing their support for the aims of the campaign. Pauline Latham, Conservative MP, asked a question at Prime Minister's Questions calling on support for the Campaign.



At a European level the Midlands TUC has met with, and secured the support of, a number of MEPs from across the political spectrum along with the President of the EU, Martin Schulz.

The campaign has secured additional support from a number of organisations which include the European Cancer Patients Coalition which represents 370 organisations in 46 EU and Non EU countries, and Community.

In the Autumn the campaign will have exhibition stalls at both the TUC Congress and Labour Party conferences and also a fringe at the TUC and reception at the Conservative Party Conference.

A full list of supporters as well as a range of campaign materials and information can be found on the campaign website:

www.dyingtowork.co.uk

Midlands TUC Update

Community Cohesion

Following the rise of racist incidents following the Brexit vote the Midlands TUC has become engaged in a couple of initiatives designed to help tackle anti-racism and build community cohesion.

1) Unity in the Community

Following the rise of racist incidents following the Brexit vote the Midlands TUC Executive have endorsed a proposal from the Musician's Union to organise two regional music events designed to pull together differing communities in a show of solidarity and anti-racism.

Plans are emerging at this moment in time but we hope to organise an event in both the West Midlands and the East Midlands before Christmas.

To get involved or find out more please contact Rob Johnston at rjohnston@tuc.org.uk

2) Hope not Hate: Organising in post-industrial communities



On 8 July HOPE not Hate convened an informal discussion on organising in 'post-industrial' communities with a number of trade union and community leaders.

Discussion focussed on what could be done about the rise of divisive and hate filled narratives in areas that are suffering as a consequence of long-term changes in the economy that have devastated their traditional industries.

The meeting agreed to pilot organising initiatives with one of the pilot areas being Dudley in the West Midlands.

If you are interested in supporting the Dudley pilot please contact Rob Johnston rjohnston@tuc.org.uk

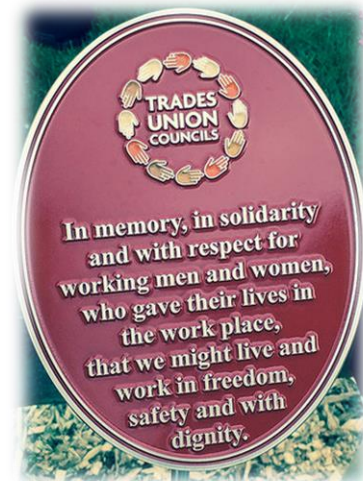
Workers' Memorial Day: 28 April



On 28th April campaigners gathered to pay their respects on International Memorial Day.

Recent figures released by the HSE show that there were 144 deaths across the UK during the year 2015/16. Regionally there were 24 deaths (12 in the East and West) across the Midlands. The five year average is 12 deaths per year in the East Midlands and 14 in the West Midlands. Combined with the tragic death of workers in the recycling plant in Birmingham, we are again reminded of the vital need for good health and safety in the workplace.

Events took place across the Midlands and a plaque was unveiled at the national Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire.



Furthermore, the Midlands TUC had a special IWMD video commissioned that tells the story of how IWMD was brought to the UK by Tommy Harte in the Midlands.

Please do watch the video and use it to help build for 2017 IWMD. You can watch the video here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=aE_Q6YDM-Pw

Midlands TUC Update

Women Chainmakers' Festival: July 2



The sun shone and hundreds of people gathered for a fantastic celebration of the famous 1910 dispute at the Women Chainmakers' Festival on Saturday July 2.

40 stalls were booked, a mixture of union and community traders, and a fun-fair was present on the High Street.

The street theatre re-enactment and Mary Macarthur 'call to arms' was as vibrant as ever, with the crowds following the production all the way up the High Street to the stage. The Children's area was packed out and the music kept festival-goers entertained all day.



This year the festival finished with a 'Workers Picnic' in the Mary Macarthur Gardens following a banner procession from the High Street.



Speeches were heard from Mary Turner, GMB President, Ruth Smeeth MP, Sylvia Heal ex-Deputy Speaker House of Commons and Halesowen & Rowley Regis MP and Kate Hudson, CWU Regional Secretary and vice-Chair Midlands TUC.

We would like to thank all the organisations who have contributed finances to the running of the festival. Without the ongoing generous support of affiliates the festival simply would not be possible.



Planning has already started for 2017, with **Saturday July 1** identified as the date for next year's festival. For more information about 2017 or if you have any comments or suggestions please do email Rob Johnston at rjohnston@tuc.org.uk



NEWS IN BRIEF

Junior Doctors BMA Dispute – 26th April

The Midlands TUC assisted the BMA with the organising of a 'solidarity rally' in Birmingham on 26th April which coincided with the first day of a 2-day all out strike.

Midlands TUC Trades Councils Conference – May 14

Trades councils came together for a conference on Saturday 14th May. Speakers included Kevin Courtney from the NUT, John Hillary from War on Want and Tom Mellish from the TUC.

Health and Safety Forum

The newly formed Health and Safety Forum met in July. The group have now elected Wayne Kidger from Nottingham City Homes as Chair.

Creative & Leisure Industries Committee

A regional 'Creative & Leisure Industries Committee' has been established following a proposal by the Writers Guild of Great Britain. The CLIC involves a number of unions from the Creative & Leisure sectors coming together to increase the influence they have.

An inaugural meeting was held on 20th June and the CLIC will be drawing up a Creative & Leisure manifesto over the next few months as well as informing the work of the Cultural Investment Enquiry that has been established by Birmingham City Council.

Regional Stakeholder Engagement

West Midlands Combined Authority

Devolution remains a key policy development with significant ramifications for the Midlands. Discussions are ongoing with the West Midlands Combined Authority to ensure trade unions have engagement with the Combined Authority as it becomes established.

The national TUC will also be holding a roundtable event in the West Midlands which brings Combined Authorities, trade unions and civil society together from across England, to discuss issues around public services, regional economies, regional productivity and the role trade unions can play.

Bank of England

The Midlands TUC have continued to host meetings between the Bank of England and affiliates. These meetings have enabled affiliates to feed in concerns about the economy and ensure that the voice of working people is fed into the policy making process of the Bank.

HS2

The Midlands TUC are sitting on the HS2 East Midlands Programme Board. This group pulls together key stakeholders in the region including local authorities, the local economic partnership, industry representatives, civil service as well as the TUC to oversee the development of HS2 in the East Midlands.

Building upon the [HS2-TUC framework agreement](#) the Midlands TUC, along with affiliate unions are feeding into the development of a skills and growth strategy that will underpin the programme that could potentially have transformational effects on skills and jobs levels in the region.

HS2-TUC framework agreement:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hs2-ltd-and-tuc-sign-framework-agreement>

LOOKING FORWARD

Midlands TUC Unionlearn Learning and Skills Event: 15 September

unionlearn
with the TUC

Unionlearn will be holding a Learning and Skills Conference in Birmingham this September, with the focus on apprenticeships, English and Maths.

The conference will be held at the BVSC (Birmingham Voluntary Service Council) building in Digbeth, just a stone's throw from New Street station, on Thursday 15th September and is part of a series of regional learning and skills events aimed at union representatives, employers and those interested in the latest learning and skills developments.

As well as looking at apprenticeships, English and Maths it will look at the regional skills challenges facing the workforce, and will include presentations, updates and practical workshops.

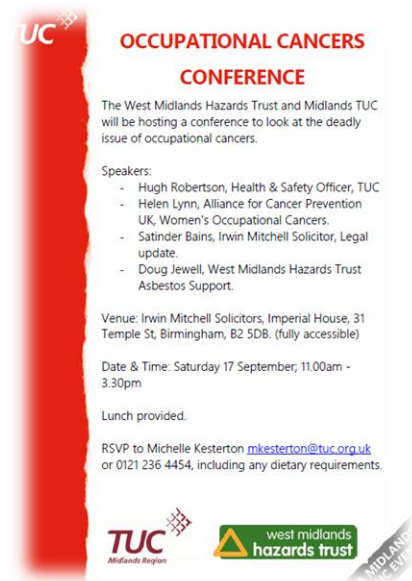
The Birmingham event, aimed at participants across the Midlands, will explore the introduction of the new apprenticeship levy, and will be an opportunity for union reps and employers to find out more about how the levy will work, what the implications will be for the workforce and how unions and employers can work in partnership to develop high quality schemes and devise strategies that will best support apprentices.

The conference will also promote a range of new materials that will help union representatives and employers not only develop and improve their apprenticeship programmes but also support English and Maths provision at work.

Guest speakers from unions, organisations and employers across the Midlands will be giving examples of high quality apprentice schemes and look at how unions have engaged staff on English and Maths.

To find out more details and to book a place please visit www.unionlearn.org.uk/events

Occupational Cancers Conference – September 17



UC

OCCUPATIONAL CANCERS CONFERENCE

The West Midlands Hazards Trust and Midlands TUC will be hosting a conference to look at the deadly issue of occupational cancers.

Speakers:

- Hugh Robertson, Health & Safety Officer, TUC
- Helen Lynn, Alliance for Cancer Prevention UK, Women's Occupational Cancers.
- Satinder Bains, Irwin Mitchell Solicitor, Legal update.
- Doug Jewell, West Midlands Hazards Trust Asbestos Support.

Venue: Irwin Mitchell Solicitors, Imperial House, 31 Temple St, Birmingham, B2 5DB. (fully accessible)

Date & Time: Saturday 17 September, 11.00am - 3.30pm

Lunch provided.

RSVP to Michelle Kesterton mkesterton@tuc.org.uk or 0121 236 4454, including any dietary requirements.

TUC Midlands Region

west midlands hazards trust

MIDLANDS LEARNING

West Midlands Hazards Trust and Midlands TUC are teaming up to host a conference on Saturday September 17th to examine the issue of occupational cancers.

Speakers include Hugh Robertson, Health & Safety officer at the TUC, Helen Lynn - Alliance for Cancer Prevention UK, Satinder Bains - Irwin Mitchell Solicitors and Doug Jewell - West Midlands Hazards Trust.

The event will take place between 11.00am and 3.30pm at Irwin Mitchell Solicitors in Birmingham.

Midlands TUC Update

Conservative Party march and rally: October 2nd



The Midlands TUC are organising a march and rally at the Conservative Party Conference on Sunday October 2nd.

The event will have two key aims.

- 1) To call for all employment rights to be protected in light of Brexit.
- 2) To stand up against hate crimes and the rise in racist incidents following Brexit.

Plans are still being developed but Victoria Square has initially been booked as an assembly point at 11.00am.

Do check the Midlands TUC website for further information in the coming weeks.

Playfair Qatar – October 15



A day of action will be held on October 15 to promote the issue of workers' rights in Qatar which will bring together union campaigners, the Football Supporters Federation and Human Rights Watch, who will be bringing out a new report into the deaths of workers in Qatar in October.

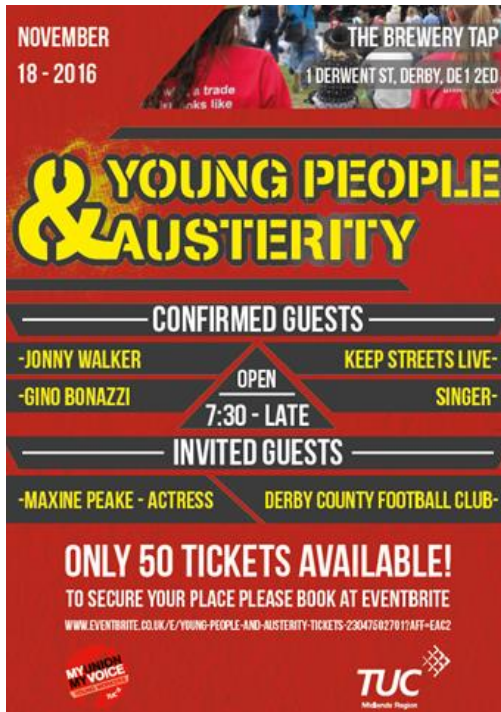
The format for the Playfair Qatar action is for a group of fans, preferably (at least some) in club colours to gather before a match to take part in a photo opportunity, hand out leaflets to fellow fans and call on FIFA to use its leverage over Qatar to compel them to improve human and labour rights. We will also have an e-petition backing up this last point.

The TUC will produce and send whatever materials are required, including banners and placards, and we are happy to hear ideas about what else might be eye-catching and generate more interest in the campaign.

If you are interested in taking part please contact Rob Johnston at rjohnston@tuc.org.uk

Midlands TUC Update

Young Workers & Austerity: November 18



The Young Workers Forum are hosting an evening of music on Friday November 18 to pull together young workers for a social event that will involve debate about the reality of being a young worker in a time of austerity.

Places are limited to 50 so to book your place visit, <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/young-people-and-austerity-tickets-23047502701?aff=eac2>

TUC Midlands Awards Night

18th November 2016
Trent Bridge Cricket Ground

The annual Midlands TUC Reps Awards Night will be held on Friday November 18 at the iconic Trent Bridge Cricket Ground in Nottingham.

The event promises to be another fabulous celebration of the work of our trade union reps, without whom there would be no movement.

Nominations are sought for the following categories:

- Campaign of the Year
- Campaigning Rep of the Year
- Communications Rep of the Year
- Health and Safety Rep of the Year
- Learning Rep of the Year
- Mary Macarthur Equalities Rep of the Year
- Organising Rep of the Year
- Andy Becker Student Award for Trade Union Education

Please email Michelle Kesterton at mkesterton@tuc.org.uk for both nomination and booking forms. Nominations close at the end of October.

Keeping in touch

Published by TUC Midlands Region, 24 Livery Street, Birmingham, B3 2PA.

Copyright in this publication is held by the TUC unless otherwise stated. For more copies of this newsletter contact Michelle Kesterton on 0121 262 6383 or mkesterton@tuc.org.uk

This text may also be made available in accessible formats such as Braille, audiotape and large print, at no extra cost.



0121 262 6383



midlands@tuc.org.uk



tuc.org.uk/midlands



[@midlandstuc](https://twitter.com/midlandstuc)