



Women's Committee Report

to the Women's Conference 2012

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1. Women's Committee

The General Council have been represented on the Women's Committee during the year by:

Sheila Bearcroft	Angela Lynes
Christine Blower	Fern McCaffrey ¹
Mary Bousted	Lesley Mercer
Joanna Brown	Gloria Mills
Jane Carolan	Julia Neal ²
Gail Cartmail	Alice Robinson ³
Maria Exall	Alison Shepherd
Sue Ferns	Liz Snape
Janice Godrich	Patricia Stuart
Sally Hunt	Fiona Wilson
Chris Keates	

¹ From March 2011

² Until Sept 2011

³ From March 2011

Members elected to serve on the Women's Committee at the 2011 Conference were:

Linda Roy	Joanna Wright	Eleanor Smith
Tracey Clarke	Michelle Stanistreet	Sujata Patel
Denise Christie ⁴	Max Hyde	Hayley Pickles
Sharon Harding	Sue Bond	Diana Holland
Evelyn Martin	Pauline McArdle	Susan Matthews
Barbara White	Maire Daley ⁵	Jane Stewart
Kathy Duggan	Clare Williams	

⁴ From March 2011

⁵ From March 2011

Pat Stuart was re-elected as the Chair of the Committee from October 2011. Sarah Veale, Head of the Equality and Employment Rights Department, continued as Secretary to the Committee.

Members of the Equality and Employment Rights Department working with the Committee during the year were: Sally Brett (Senior Policy Officer), Scarlet Harris (Women's Equality Policy Officer), Carol Ferguson (Departmental Secretary), Jane Cook (Administrative Assistant), and Julie Lawrence (Administrative Assistant).

2. Congress 2011

There were 49 unions registered to attend Congress, of which 43 returned equality monitoring forms for their delegation. This was an increase on the previous year when 38 returned forms.

The total number of delegates registered to attend Congress was 281, less than half that attended last year (645), due to a smaller Congress being held in London. 244 delegates returned individual monitoring forms. This meant the monitoring exercise had a very high return rate of 87%. This compared to 78% in 2010 and 70% in 2009.

As in previous years, individual monitoring forms were sent to delegates and completed forms were submitted to delegation leaders. Delegation leaders then collated the results for their delegation and submitted a summary form, often together with the individual responses. The information in this report is based upon the information provided by delegation leaders, cross-checked against the individual returns where possible.

Table 1 shows the percentage of women attending Congress since 2002. 113 of the 281 delegates registered to attend were women and 168 were men. The gender composition was therefore 40.2% women, 59.8% men. This has not really changed from the previous year when it was 40.3% women, 59.7% men.

There was no significant difference between the proportion of men and women returning monitoring forms, with 88% of the women delegates returning forms compared to 85% of the male delegates. This means that the gender composition according to the monitoring forms was 40.6% women, 59.4% men, which is very similar to the actual figures.

The representation of women did not decline despite the smaller Congress and fewer delegate places. However, the gender profile of Congress still does not reflect that of the membership of TUC-affiliated unions. According to the latest figures from affiliates who provide a gender breakdown of their members, there is a 48% female membership.

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Table 1: Proportion of women delegates attending Congress

	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
Women as % of delegates	40	40	39	38	40	38	34	38	36	35

Since 2008, information has been gathered on the percentage of women speakers at Congress. In 2011, 76 of the 188 speakers were women, 112 were men. The proportion of women speakers was therefore 40.4%. This is an improvement on previous years and it is the first time that the gender composition of speakers reflects the gender composition of delegates.

Table 2: Proportion of women speakers at Congress

	2011	2010	2009	2008
Women as % of speakers	40.4	36.5	31.0	34.5

3. Women and the cuts

Resolutions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 18 called for the Committee to work with policy staff in ESAD, CCD and with affiliates to contribute to high profile campaigns defending public services and making gender equality central to the campaign for jobs, growth and justice.

These motions also called for the Committee to organise and support working women for the TUC rally on 26 March 2011, work with women's organisations involved in anti-cuts campaigns, build support for co-ordinated industrial action in defence of public service jobs and conditions, and to support women in communities fighting to defend public services.

EERD has worked closely with OSD and CCD to ensure that women were a strong, visible presence at the march for the alternative on 26th March 2011 – both in terms of women and children marching and ensuring that there is a diverse mix of speakers, including women speakers. The front party of the march included women General Secretaries and senior trade union officials, women representatives from Child Poverty Action Group, End Violence Against Women, Abortion Rights, Eaves, Women's Aid, the Women's Budget Group, the Women's Resource Centre, Imkaan, and Southall Black Sisters amongst others. Women Against the Cuts coordinated a women's group on the march. Speakers at the rally included Christine Blower, General Secretary

NUT, Denise Marshall, Director of Eaves, Bernadette Segol, General Secretary ETUC, Dot Gibson, National Pensioners Convention, Donna Covey, Chief Executive of the Refugee Council, and Chitra Nagarajan of Southall Black Sisters.

Composite Resolution 1 called for the TUC to work more closely with the Council of the Isles Women's Committees and with voluntary sector organisations fighting against the cuts. The TUC has built upon existing relationships and developed new relationships with women's committees in the devolved administrations and with women's sector organisations. In November 2011 the TUC launched a new publication called the Women and Cuts Toolkit. This toolkit built upon the work of a voluntary organisation called Coventry Women's Voices which had produced a detailed analysis of the impact of cuts and welfare reform on women living and working in Coventry. Local trade unions had been involved in the Coventry Women's Voices report as well as a range of local women's organisations. The Women and Cuts Toolkit built upon the success of this report and provided a blueprint for any voluntary sector organisation or trade union to adopt a similar approach in mapping local cuts and their impact on women.

The first print run of the Women and Cuts Toolkit had run out within three weeks of publication and a further print run had to be ordered to meet the demand. To date, Bristol Fawcett have produced a report on the impact of cuts on women in Bristol using the report and with input from unions in the South West region, East London Fawcett are in the process of writing a report with the support of SERTUC and local union branches, the TUC Northern Office is in discussion with local women's sector organisations regarding the production of a report, and the TUC Yorkshire and Humber region is also planning to use the toolkit to produce a report.

In furtherance of Composite Resolutions 1 and 2, the TUC organised a conference in November 2011 entitled The Equality Deficit. The conference aimed to build on the campaign against unfair cuts to the public and voluntary sector and to highlight the negative effect of the cuts on equality.

The audience for the conference was varied and encompassed trade union officers, union reps, voluntary sector workers/campaigners, and anti-cuts campaigners. One of the main objectives of the conference was to build capacity for union/voluntary sector equality-focussed organising activities and to build on existing relationships between unions, the voluntary sector and community organisations.

The conference also set out to equip union reps, community organisers, NGOs and anti-cuts campaigners with the tools and arguments to fight workplace cuts on grounds of equality.

Speakers included Brendan Barber, Mary Bousted (ATL), Kate Green MP, Diana Holland (Unite), Rob Berkeley (Runnymede Trust), Kate Pickett (co-

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author of *The Spirit Level*), Sean McGovern (Chair TUC Disabled Workers' Committee), Maria Exall (Chair TUC LGBT Committee) and Michael Rubenstein (Equal Opportunities Review). Workshops were held on Pensions, Health and Social Care, Using the equality duty to fight cuts, Organising for equality, The impact of cuts on further and higher education, Welfare reform, Contracting out services and Access to justice. Both trade union and voluntary sector speakers were represented in each plenary and workshop session.

The conference was attended by approximately 250 delegates and received some media coverage on Woman's Hour and in the Guardian newspaper.

The TUC also produced an updated briefing note called *Gender Impact of the Cuts Revisited* in November 2011.

In December 2010, the EHRC announced that it would use its powers under s.31 of the Equality Act 2006 to carry out a formal assessment of the Treasury's compliance with the statutory equality duties when making decisions in the Spending Review 2010. It invited representations from third parties and the TUC made a formal submission based on analysis it has carried out of the disproportionate impact on women, ethnic minorities and the disabled. The EHRC was due to report on the findings of the assessment in December 2011 but the publication of the findings has been put back and is now anticipated in March 2012.

4. Equality duty

The new public sector equality duty which replaced the race, disability and gender equality duties came into effect on 5 April 2011 (s.149 EA 2010). It requires public bodies to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Voluntary and private sector organisations that carry out public functions are also bound by the duty when carrying out those functions. The duty applies to eight protected characteristics: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, maternity and pregnancy, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

The coalition Government introduced weak specific duties to support the new duty. There are just two specific duties for English and GB-wide public authorities to meet (the devolved administrations in Wales and Scotland have developed much stronger specific duties): a duty to publish information related to the protected characteristics of service users and the workforce where there are more than 150 employees and a duty to set equality objectives.

In the absence of strong and detailed specific duties, the TUC recognised in line with Resolution 3, that it was important for trade unionists to understand what the duty to pay due regard to equality means in practice and how they should still be pressing public authorities to properly consider the impact on equality of their decisions and policies. In June 2011, the TUC held a seminar

with John Halford, a partner from Bindman’s solicitors, who litigated the first race equality duty and disability equality duty cases and had run a number of successful public duties cases since. He provided an overview of the key principles of “due regard”, drawing on successful case law examples such as the challenges to cuts in social care, welfare advice services and funding for voluntary organisations and emphasised that public authorities still needed to be properly considering equality in all that they do. The seminar also included a panel of trade union officers who highlighted some of the ways in which they have successfully used the public duty to support equality bargaining.

Following the seminar, the TUC developed an equality duty toolkit for trade union reps and officers which is available in hard copy or is downloadable from the TUC website. The toolkit makes clear that in order to show due regard: organisations must consider the impact on equality before a decision is made, that decision-makers need to be aware of and understand the requirements of the duty, that sufficient information needs to be gathered by the public authority to properly consider the impact on equality, and that if a negative impact is identified then actions to mitigate that impact must be considered, and that organisations should document this information and consideration otherwise it would be difficult for a court to conclude that they had shown due regard. It also includes a checklist for trade unions when negotiating with an employer to ensure they are abiding by these principles and a draft letter that can be amended and sent to an employer if they are refusing to do an equality impact assessment. The toolkit has been widely distributed and there has been very positive feedback and Sally Brett, TUC Senior Equality Policy Officer, has spoken at a range of trade union and workshops and events on the public duty.

At the TUC’s Equality Deficit conference in November 2011 there were two very well attended workshops on how to use the public duty to campaign against cuts. The panel of speakers were: Barbara Cohen, independent discrimination law consultant, Pragna Patel from Southall Black Sisters who have positively used the duty on two occasions to successfully stop cuts, Caroline Underhill from Thompsons’ solicitors and Sally Brett, TUC.

The annual TUC/EOR discrimination law conference in January 2012 also included a session on the public sector equality duty for the first time which was delivered by Helen Mountfield QC who has represented service users and voluntary sector organisations in many of the public duty challenges. The keynote speakers at this year’s conference were Brendan Barber and Professor Sir Bob Hepple QC who both raised concerns about the failure to fully implement the Equality Act 2011 and the increasing barriers to justice and compliance with equality law: the cuts to the EHRC, the proposed reform of the EHRC, the cuts to advice services and the introduction of tribunal fees. There was positive media coverage of Brendan Barber’s speech and the TUC’s concerns.

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In addition, in June 2011 the TUC submitted a response to the Government's consultation on its plans to reform the EHRC in which it opposed all the proposals and the cuts to the EHRC's resources. In February 2012, Brendan Barber wrote a letter to Theresa May raising concerns again about cuts to the EHRC's budget and he pressed the Government to publish its response to the consultation which it had not yet done.

In parallel to the equality duty toolkit, the TUC has worked with Mary Ann Stephenson from Coventry Women's Voices to produce a women and the cuts toolkit which provides guidance for unions and campaigners on how to do their own equality and human rights impact assessments of cuts in their area and use it to gain support and media attention.

On equal pay in the private sector, the TUC hosted a meeting between the Government Equalities Office, Acas and trade unions to discuss the voluntary gender equality reporting framework 'Think, Act, Report' the GEO has launched, which is aimed at private sector employers with more than 150 employees. At the meeting GEO agreed to contact the relevant unions when it was targeting particular sectors and listened to concerns that the workforce should have a say on what gender equality indicators an employer might choose to report on and make progress against under the scheme. It was also agreed that the TUC would facilitate a network of union representatives interested in equal pay in the private sector.

5. Education

Resolution 14 highlighted the issue of cuts to free school meals and the health consequences for children from low income families. The TUC opposed the early decision by the Coalition Government to cancel the extension of the entitlement to free school meals to primary school children with lower-income working parents who had previously been ineligible because they were not in receipt of out-of-work benefits.

The 2009 Pre-Budget Report set out that the extended entitlement would affect families with a household income below £16,190. The extension was due to be staged - half in September 2010 and the rest a year later - ultimately benefiting about 500,000 children at a cost of £140m a year.

At the same time the previous government announced the extension of existing pilots testing out universal entitlement to free school meals for primary school children to allow for one these pilots in each English region. As part of the first phase of cuts imposed by the Coalition Government in 2010, extension of the entitlement to free school meals was cancelled and funding was withdrawn from the pilots testing out universal entitlement.

The TUC and many other stakeholders argued that these policies would have done much to cut education and health inequalities by supporting improved

educational outcomes among disadvantaged groups and lifting many of them out of poverty.

Resolution 15 called on the TUC to highlight the effect on women and girls of cuts to education, including cuts to EMA, ESOL, and Further Education budgets. Composite motion no.9 to Congress 2011 set out the TUC policy opposing the government's cuts to public services, including education, and it also "salutes those students" who have opposed these cuts along with trade unionists and community activists.

A number of motions to Congress 2010 highlighted the attacks on post-16 education and the disproportionate impact on groups facing particular disadvantage in the labour market, including women (Composite 13 Defending further and higher Education, Composite 14 Graduate unemployment, and Motion 52 Young people and the recession).

The TUC has continued to press the government about its decision to abolish the Education Maintenance Allowance and highlighted this in its recent submission to the government consultation on Study Programmes for 16-19 year-olds. The TUC submission says the following:

"The key issue overshadowing the wider 16-19 policy reform agenda is the impact of the cuts to spending as a result of the government's commitment to eliminate the structural deficit over 4 years. In particular, the abolition of the Education Maintenance Allowance is destined to have a hugely negative impact on 16-19 participation rates over the coming years".

The TUC has also pressed the government to reconsider other cuts to post-16 education policies which will have a disproportionate impact on women, including cuts to ESOL courses, the introduction of FE student loans for those aged over 24, and cuts to government subsidies for adult workplace skills programmes. The TUC set out its opposition to these policies in some detail in its responses to the two FE and skills policy consultations undertaken by the Coalition Government (Skills for Sustainable Growth and New Challenges, New Chances).

The TUC has also strongly opposed the government's policies on higher education via its submission to the Browne Review and its response to the Higher Education White paper. In particular the TUC has highlighted the detrimental impact of the decision to allow universities to charge fees up to a maximum of £9,000 whilst also completely cutting the teaching block grants in the humanities and social sciences. A summary of the TUC's response to the White Paper is as follows:

"In brief the central message of the TUC's response to the HE White Paper is that the decision to allow tuition fees to be increased significantly, allied with a range of other government announcements (e.g. significant funding cuts), will seriously damage the HE sector and in particular risk making university a no-go area for a large swathe of society. New measures announced in the White

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Paper designed to boost a market-led approach will simply exacerbate matters and lead to a more polarised HE system where widening participation is further undermined.”

The TUC has also actively campaigned against government proposals to restrict the current funding arrangements for teenage parents in further education. The TUC responded to the Care to Learn consultation and joined forces with the NUS, UCU, Platform 51 and other organisations campaigning against the proposed cuts. The campaign won a reprieve and funding has been secured until 2015.

Resolution 36, *Championing Education*, called on the TUC to support education unions in defending state education. Composite Motion 11 to Congress 2011 - *State education, free schools, academies and privatisation* – confirms the TUC's opposition to the government's school reform agenda.

The General Council has argued that these reforms are a direct attack on the state schooling system that will lead to greater social segregation and undermine national and local bargaining arrangements.

The TUC and education unions have also raised serious concerns that the coalition government's policy of rushing through major changes to the school system, with little or no consultation, has left parents, teachers and governors confused and concerned about the future of school education.

As part of the campaign the TUC, with the support of the education unions, held a major event in November 2011. *The Future of our Schools* conference was attended by over 250 people and the line-up of speakers included the TUC Deputy General Secretary, the head of the school governors' body, a head teacher, a parent involved in campaigning, a national official from a Swedish teachers' union and many other prominent figures in the world of education.

The education unions also led a series of workshops on a number of key campaigning issues. A clear demand articulated by all those in attendance was the urgent need for the government to halt its rushed reforms and to undertake a proper national debate on the future of our schools.

Over the past year the TUC has facilitated monthly meetings of the education unions to coincide with the monthly meetings of the Public Services Liaison Group in order to support coordination of the schools campaign with the wider public services campaign. These meetings have provided an opportunity to achieve coordinated action in a number of areas, including:

- discussion on a set of agreed priorities for union campaigns against specific aspects of the Education Bill
- agreement on an extensive set of joint campaign resources - aimed at parents, staff, head teachers and school governors – with the explicit aim of building local alliances against the option of maintained schools converting to academy status

- establishment of a new working group with a remit to assess the impact and effectiveness of the TUC Academies Model Agreement to date and to discuss strategies to optimise its potential to safeguard union recognition and terms and conditions in academy schools (and free schools once they begin to become established.)

6. Tax

Resolution 19 addressed injustices in the tax system and called for campaigning on this issue. Over the year the TUC has continued to campaign for a fairer tax system. We have released figures showing that the Government's VAT and corporation tax changes would mean that banks were set to pay a lower tax rate than consumers, basic rate taxpayers and small businesses, and we have criticised the Government's limited levy on bank bonuses and called for pay and bonuses above £250,000 (ten times the level of average pay in the UK) to be considered company profit and liable for corporation tax. We also published Corporation Tax and Competitiveness, which argued that the corporation tax cuts set out in the Spending Review would not lead to significant levels of job creation. The report further considered the impact of the Government's proposed changes on regulations for controlled foreign companies showing that they would lead to the erosion of the tax base, thus further reducing corporation tax revenues.

Over the year the TUC has continued to work closely with the Tax Justice Network on this work and has regularly highlighted the impact that staffing reductions in HMRC have had upon the Government's ability to collect the taxes which are due to it. Our wider economic work continues to make the case for tax to play a far greater role in deficit reduction.

7. Women and pensions

Throughout 2011 the TUC has continued to work on pensions issues and to highlight the gender impact of the cuts.

The TUC is strongly opposed to changes in State Pension Age (SPA). During the course of the recent Pension Act 2011 we lobbied against the increase in SPA to 66 – on a timetable that particularly impacts on women. The Act brings forward the increase in the SPA to 66 by six years. The Pensions Act 2007 originally set out that it would increase SPA to 66 between 2024 and 2026. Both women and men are affected by the bringing forward of the SPA, but it particularly affects women aged 56 and 57. The Coalition Agreement said the increase in SPA 'will not be sooner than 2016 for men and 2020 for women'. However the Act breaks this commitment by making the change from 2018 for women.

The Government made a concession at the last minute to change the timetable to cap the maximum increase in women's SPA to 66 at 18 months. While an

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admission by the Government that it got its plans wrong as the original plan would have seen some women's SPA rise by two years, their changed plans still mean many hundreds of thousands of people are affected by the increase in SPA.

There are two stages for increasing the SPA set out in the Bill. Firstly, equalisation of the increase of the SPA between men and women will be accelerated from April 2016, so that women's SPA reaches 65 by November 2018 (rather than in March 2020 as set out in the Pension Act 2007). This will be followed from December 2018 by the increase in the SPA from 65, reaching 66 by April 2020. The Government amendment changes this so that men and women reach 66 by October 2020.

The TUC will continue to oppose this change and any further changes, such as the bringing forward of the increase in SPA to 67 recently announced in the Autumn Statement.

The TUC has also been working to demonstrate the gender impact of cuts. For example TUC research has shown that 750,000 earning less than £15,000 - the overwhelming majority of whom are women - will have to pay higher contributions. This is because the government determines workers' contribution rates by looking at their full-time equivalent pay, not their actual pay. Someone working half-time on £14,000 a year is considered to be earning £28,000 for the purposes of deciding what rate they should pay. The TUC research shows that 806,000 public sector part-time workers earn less than £15,000 but have full-time equivalent earnings of more than this and will therefore have to pay the increase in contributions being demanded by ministers. Of these 732,000 or nine in ten (90.8 per cent) are women. For many, this could mean a 50 per cent increase in the amount they pay for their pension.

The government said that public sector workers earning less than £15,000 will not have to pay any more for their pensions this year and those on less than £18,000 will see a maximum contribution increase of 1.5 per cent of their pay. Yet only one in six public service workers (15.8 per cent) - around a million - have full-time equivalent earnings of less than £15,000 and will therefore escape higher contributions this way.

Overall because women make up almost two-thirds (65 per cent) of the public sector workforce, and just under 40 per cent of women's jobs are in the public sector (compared to 15 per cent of men's), women will be the disproportionate losers from the changes the government is seeking to make to public sector pensions.

A short briefing note on women and pensions was produced in advance of the 30 November 2011 industrial action.

8. International

The TUC continued to put women at the heart of international work, and especially international development. Sally Hunt continued to act as the General Council's spokesperson on international matters, with Gail Cartmail leading on international development. Diana Holland continued to chair the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Women's Committee.

In May, a TUC delegation including TUC Brussels Officer Elena Crasta, Ruth Gregory (the youth delegate from the TSSA) and Judith Kirton-Darling attended the Congress of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) in Athens. Gloria Mills and Liz Snape from the General Council attended on behalf of European industry federations. The Congress elected Bernadette Segol as the ETUC's first female General Secretary, and a majority of the secretariat elected were women (four out of seven) including the TUC candidate Judith Kirton-Darling, formerly of Unite, as a confederal secretary.

The 2011 TUC Women's Conference carried six resolutions on international matters: two on Colombia, one each on Haiti and Iran, one on gender and international development and one on violence against women. In addition, the TUC continued to give a high profile to the international dimension of women's experience of the global economic crisis.

For International Women's Day 2011, the TUC produced a booklet called *Bearing the brunt, leading the response*, which gave examples of how women trade unionists around the world were responding to the global economic crisis. As usual, the TUC hosted an event at the beginning of the week when International Women's Day falls, and in 2011 this was held on Monday 7 March, with a focus on the global economic crisis. A course on women and globalisation was held in the same week. The 2012 event is planned for International Women's Day itself, on the theme of women and austerity: *impact and resistance*, on Thursday 8 March, with ETUC General Secretary Bernadette Segol and TUC Deputy General Secretary Frances O'Grady as the keynote speakers.

Colombia

The 2011 Women's Conference resolutions drew attention to the plight of women trade unionists in Colombia, including death threats, forced disappearances, torture and sexual violence, all in a climate of impunity where perpetrators are rarely prosecuted. Conference called on the TUC to continue to support the work of Justice for Colombia (JFC) and press for the EU free trade agreement with Colombia to be conditional on real improvements in human rights. The TUC has continued to provide financial and political support to JFC, led by its Director Mariela Kohon, and has campaigned through the ETUC for tough benchmarks on human rights to be included in any trade agreement with Colombia. In particular, as called for in the other resolution, the TUC has drawn attention to the plight of women trade

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unionists in prison such as Lilianny Obando. Following representations and interventions by Justice for Colombia and British trade union delegations, it has been reported that Lilianny Obando will now be released from prison.

Haiti

The 2011 conference drew attention to the plight facing women in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake, including the risk of violence facing women in temporary camps. During the year, the TUC arranged for trade unionists to meet a delegation from a Haitian women's rights organisation and discussed the possibility of supporting a campaign on rights for the predominantly women workers in the export processing zones. Plans are still under discussion with the ITUC. In January, the TUC hosted a community-organised event to mark the second anniversary of the earthquake.

Iran

The 2011 conference expressed concern about the situation facing women in Iran, and called on the TUC to work with the ETUC and ITUC to assist Amnesty International in drawing attention to the problems women face, and in lobbying the UK Government to take action. The TUC circulated material from Amnesty on the issue, and raised the problems of women in Iran in meetings with the human rights section of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, with a view to raising these issues through the UN Human Rights Council. The TUC continued to play a leading part in the global union family's campaigns for trade union rights in Iran.

Palestine

Further to the general awareness raising project on workers' rights reported to the 2011 conference, the TUC has been funding the salary and activities of the inaugural women's officer of the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) for an initial 12 month period.

Zimbabwe

The TUC women's committee signed a twinning protocol with the ZCTU women's committee in 2010, and this has led to a continued exchange of information between the two committees. The TUC continued to support the ZCTU financially and politically, including its work on promoting women's involvement in trade unionism and political life.

International development

As reported to the 2011 conference, the TUC has an international development strategy entitled Global Justice, Global Solidarity, and of the four priorities for the strategy, two particularly relate to women: securing equality and social justice through the trade union movement; and supporting vulnerable workers

in improving their lives. The 2011 Conference called in particular for action against human trafficking, and the TUC continued to work closely with Anti-Slavery International and others, including through the Government-backed UK Human Trafficking Centre which provides a central point for the development of expertise and coordination in relation to the trafficking of human beings. During the year the TUC was represented at a conference convened by Finnish trade union centre SAK which exchanged national experiences on fighting trafficking, and supported the successful campaign (as called for in the resolution) to persuade the UK Government to commit to adopting the EU Directive on Trafficking.

Migrant domestic workers

The 2011 International Labour Conference saw a major advance in the adoption of a new Convention (C189) on rights for domestic workers. The TUC representative on the committee which negotiated the Convention was Marissa Begonia from Unite, a domestic worker herself. The TUC condemned the UK Government for abstaining on the vote and the CBI for voting against. Since the Convention's adoption, the TUC has been pressing the UK Government to ratify the Convention, and is also raising the matter through the ETUC with the European Union, with a view to developing a Directive which the UK Government will not be able to avoid implementing. The TUC has also continued to support the cause of migrant domestic workers in alliance with organisations such as Kalaya'an, Unite and others. The TUC took part in a demonstration at the Houses of Parliament for migrant domestic workers' rights, and more broadly in a campaign of lobbying to persuade the Government to retain the protections for migrant domestic workers facing abuse from their employers secured under the previous Government. As this report went to press there were worrying leaks in the media suggesting that the Government had decided to abandon those protections and the TUC will work with others to oppose such changes.

9. Women and trade unions

In line with Resolution 27, the TUC commissioned the Labour Research Department to do further analysis of the information submitted to it by trade unions as part of the TUC Equality Audit 2011 which was presented to Congress in September 2011. A summary report will be made available to delegates. The TUC intends to organise a roundtable of union equality officers to discuss the findings in more detail. The report will also be presented to the TUC Women's Committee and to the General Council.

The TUC also developed a new version of the Lay Leadership Development course specifically for women who are already in or who expect to move into senior lay leadership positions in their union. The course aimed to increase participation by and representation of women and all levels of the trade union

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movement. While we have seen take up amongst senior women activists on the generic route, the women specific course was cancelled due to lack of demand. The TUC is currently considering the reasons behind the lack of demand for this course and will consider alternative ways of offering this training.

In line with Resolution 28, the TUC Organising Academy continues to support the work of engaging young women within trade union positions. To that end, 75% of this year's intake has been female. The TUC also worked closely with Platform 51 (formerly YWCA) throughout the year and is collaborating with Platform 51 to engage with the young women who use Platform 51 services, establish what their perceptions of trade unions are, and to raise awareness of trade unions and the benefits that collective bargaining can offer. A short survey of Platform 51 members has been developed which will be placed on the chatroom area of the website.

10. Strengthening women's voices

Following the abolition of the Women's National Commission in 2010, the Government Equalities Office undertook a consultation in 2011 entitled *Strengthening Women's Voices in Government*. The purpose of the consultation was to seek effective ways of ensuring that women's voices are heard in government in the absence of the intermediary representation of the Women's National Commission. The TUC and many unions responded forcefully that the abolition of the Women's National Commission had been a mistake and that the proposed IT platform and email newsletters were no substitute for the work of the Commission. The TUC's consultation response was made available on the TUC website. A senior Government Equalities Office official addressed the TUC Women's Committee during the consultation period.

Ex-Commissioners, including Sarah Veale, Head of Equality and Employment Rights, TUC, met in December 2011 to discuss the legacy of the Women's National Commission a year on. It was agreed that in every aspect of women's lives, from the labour market, to VAWG services, to education, to abortion rights, to pensions, there had been retrogressive steps made by the government since the abolition of the Women's National Commission and the Government Equalities Office had not fulfilled its promise to ensure that the work of the WNC was continued. The ex-Commissioners wrote a letter to the Minister for Women and Equality outlining the erosion in gender equality that has taken place since the abolition of the WNC and the lack of a suitable replacement mechanism for engaging with women and for making women's voices heard in government.

The TUC has also been working with the EHRC and the Women's Resource Centre to provide evidence for their respective shadow reports to the UN Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). A meeting of trade union officials is planned for late

March to gather evidence and plan the TUC's report on women and employment which will inform the EHRC and WRC shadow reports.

11. National minimum wage

Resolution 31 has informed the TUC's work on the National Minimum Wage (NMW).

First, as one of our strategic goals is to entrench the NMW, the TUC welcomed the Coalition Government's decision simply to accept all of the Low Pay Commission's recommendations when the new Government consider this matter for the first time.

In April 2011 BIS announced a modest cut to the NMW enforcement budget. This would have reduced their capacity by dropping one regional enforcement team, representing about 8 per cent of their total strength. However, the proposed cut was withdrawn after representations from a number of parties including the TUC. Less positively, the government budget for awareness and dissemination of the NMW was reduced to zero shortly after the 2010 general election and has not been restored. The TUC continues to campaign on this issue.

The apprentice rate was increased by 10 pence from 1 October 2011, which represented an increase of 4.0 per cent, but it remains at far too modest a level.

In December 2011 the TUC will publish a new guide to enforcing the NMW and other employment rights. The TUC will be scheduling a series of meetings with affiliates in the New Year in order to take the NMW campaign forward.

12. Making work pay

Resolution 31 points to the growing number of children affected by in-work poverty. It highlights the role of low-paid part-time work predominantly carried out by women and expresses concern at plans for benefit cuts. The resolution calls on the TUC to campaign to increase in-work earnings and to call for policies that create more jobs.

The TUC has lobbied against the cuts to benefits and called on all politicians to re-commit to the goal of full employment. The TUC has, since it was first announced, vigorously denounced the switch from the Retail Price Index to the Consumer Price Index for uprating social security benefits – by the time of the next election this will cost benefit claimants nearly six billion pounds a year.

In addition to items on the Touchstone blog and the monthly Labour Market Briefing, the TUC produced second reading briefings for MPs and members of the House of Lords on the Welfare Reform Bill and promoted the campaign against disability benefit cuts by publicising the 'Hardest Hit' demonstration on 11 May and the wave of local actions on 22 October.

Women's Conference 2011

In June, the TUC published Britain's Livelihood Crisis, written for the TUC by Stewart Lansley, which argued that there has been, in recent years, a decline in the number of middle-paid and skilled jobs, and a rise in the number of routine low-paid service jobs. Alongside this 'hollowing out of the middle' has been a steady growth in the number of 'bad jobs' that offer poor conditions of work, minimal rights and little security.

In July, the TUC published Fairness and Prosperity, a 'Touchstone Extra', written by Howard Reed, which marshalled international evidence to show that it is perfectly possible to combine economic success with greater equality. The report was launched at a web-based seminar, chaired by Kate Green MP, which was addressed by Prof Richard Wilkinson, author of *The Spirit Level*.

13. Children and poverty

Resolution 17 notes that the poorest families are hit hardest by the cuts to public services and welfare. These cuts will bear down hardest on women, and therefore children. The resolution instructs the TUC Women's Committee to promote the End Child Poverty campaign and to highlight ensure the disproportionate impact of the cuts on women and children.

Items on the Touchstone blog and the monthly Labour Market Briefing have repeatedly highlighted the growing number of unemployed women. They have also drawn attention to the impact of the cuts on women and children; this was also a theme of preparations for the March 26 'March for the Alternative.'

The TUC has continued to support the End Child Poverty campaign. During the past year the campaign has completed a difficult transition from being an independent charity to a campaign coalition, hosted by the Child Poverty Action Group. The TUC is actively represented on ECP's Steering Group and on its policy and media groups. The TUC helped develop and promote a Budget briefing.

The General Secretary was a signatory of a letter to the Prime Minister, and the TUC helped draft the ECP submission to the government's Child Poverty Strategy, arguing for retaining relative low incomes as an element of the definition of child poverty. These elements were successful at that point, but the Prime Minister, Deputy PM and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions have more recently suggested that this issue is again under consideration.

The TUC helped draft an ECP response to the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, which scrapped a planned increase in the child element of Child Tax Credit, condemning an extra 100,000 children to poverty.

14. Women's health in the workplace

Resolution 32 highlighted the issue of how employees with cancer are treated in the workplace. Under the Equality Act people with cancer are automatically accepted as a disability without an individual having to prove that it has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. TUC briefings on disability and on the Equality Act have explained the protections afforded to employees with cancer under the Equality Act.

Resolution 33 called on unions to encourage women to be aware of breast cancer and to attend regular screenings after the age of 50 and urged employers to allow employees time off for screenings. The TUC recognises that breast cancer rates remain alarmingly high and too many women die unnecessarily from breast cancer. The TUC has been working on an updated guide to the occupational risks associated with breast cancer. Shift work is known to be the second most significant cause of occupational cancer. Plans are underway for a TUC guide to work, health and wellbeing which will include information on screening.

Resolution 34 called for action to end the stigma attached to mental health issues in the workplace. The TUC continues to campaign on the issue of mental health and in the past year has participated in World Mental Health Day, produced press releases on mental health at work, written about the impact of the cuts on mental health services in a briefing on disability and the cuts, and has included a section on mental health in the new TUC Disability at Work guide. The TUC has also supported Platform 51's campaign to raise awareness about mental health issues amongst young women and to challenge the culture of prescribing anti-depressants as a first course of action before exploring talking therapies or other avenues.

15. NHS

Emergency Motion 1 addressed the disastrous consequences of the proposed NHS reforms and the impact on women. The TUC has worked with affiliates, non-affiliated health unions, and relevant voluntary sector groups throughout the year under the umbrella of the *All Together for the NHS* campaign, including parliamentary lobbying and wider campaign activities throughout year.

Key milestones in the campaign over the course of the last year included a day of action for the NHS on April 1st, a range of events celebrating the birthday of the NHS on 5th July, a vigil during the third reading of the Health and Social Care Bill in the Commons on the 7th September, and a *Drop the Bill* rally on 7th March 2012.

Women's Conference 2011

The TUC has produced parliamentary briefings, campaign materials, and online campaigns including the highly successful Adopt-a-Peer campaign - an online facility for lobbying peers on the Health and Social Care Bill.

The All Together for NHS campaign also held an extremely well attended and successful fringe at the Liberal Democrats conference.

Composite 10: *All Together for the NHS* was passed at TUC Congress 2011.

Emergency Motion 2 called for action to defend the maternity ward and A&E ward at King George Hospital in Romford. In furtherance of this resolution, a letter was sent to the Secretary of State for Health urging the government to reconsider its decision to cut maternity services in an already under-resourced area.

16. Maternity rights

Resolution 30 called for a robust defence of maternity rights. The TUC has been working hard to defend maternity rights over the course of the past year. Policy Officers at the TUC have been working closely with the Alliance Against Pregnancy Discrimination and have been involved in guidance being produced by ACAS for employers regarding pregnancy, maternity leave, and selection for redundancy. Policy Officers have also been working closely with Maternity Action and Working Families amongst others to defend existing maternity rights.

2011 saw a series of leaks from the government regarding the “burden of excessive red tape” including maternity legislation. As well as the Red Tape Challenge, which invited members of the public to suggest legislation that should be scrapped, including the Equality Act and employment legislation, there were also leaked government papers proposing exempting small businesses from maternity regulations and even scrapping maternity rights altogether. As part of the government’s bid to address flexible working and shared parenting, the Modern Workplaces consultation was launched. The TUC responded cautiously, welcoming some of the proposals. The TUC continues to work with unions, Working Families, Maternity Action and others to ensure that any legislation emerging as a result of the Modern Workplaces consultation does not lead to cutbacks in statutory maternity leave.

The TUC Equality Deficit conference in November 2011 included a well attended and lively workshop on Health and Social Care. Speakers from healthcare unions were joined by speakers from organisations such as Abortion Rights and Age UK to explore the many ways in which cuts and reforms to the NHS are eroding equality of access to healthcare and disadvantaging those with the greatest need.

17. Abortion rights

Resolution 35, A Woman's Right to Choose, highlighted the concerns of many trade unions and pro-choice organisations that attempts are being made to erode abortion rights. In March 2011 Nadine Dorries MP and Frank Field MP proposed an amendment to the Health and Social Care Bill which would restrict timely access to abortion care, delaying women receiving treatment and potentially exposing them to biased and directive counselling offered by organisations which are explicitly opposed to abortion in all circumstances.

The TUC argued in a letter to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health that abortion services are already extremely well regulated in the United Kingdom. The informed consent of the patient is already required before any medical procedure, including abortion, can take place and impartial, expert advice is already given, using evidence-based clinical guidelines produced by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

The proposals would have opened the door to a range of "pregnancy crisis" advice providers who are anti-abortion but do not state this upfront to women seeking advice. In August 2011 the Guardian newspaper used undercover reporters to expose several large pregnancy crisis centres and found evidence of scaremongering and tactics such as showing the pregnant woman baby clothes. In September 2011, the amendments to the Health and Social Care Bill were overwhelmingly rejected in the House of Commons. However, the government undertook to carry out a review of existing counselling services.

At the end of May it was announced that LIFE, an organisation which is opposed to abortion in all circumstances and which does not provide any sexual health services, had been appointed to the government's newly formed Sexual Health Forum, and would be advising on health policy. The Department of Health justified the group's appointment (and the exclusion of abortion-provider BPAS) in the name of providing 'balance' on the panel.

In February 2012 The Telegraph newspaper leaked a story that the government is planning to press ahead with the changes to counselling proposed by Nadine Dorries MP in spite of the fact that a majority of MPs had voted against the amendment.

The TUC has worked closely with Abortion Rights throughout the year and built new links with other pro-choice organisations such as Education for Choice, the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, the Family Planning Association, and pro-choice MPs. References to the impact of cuts on sexual health and abortion services were included in the Gender Impact of the Cuts Revisited briefing note. Abortion Rights spoke at the TUC's Equality Deficit conference in the NHS workshop. The TUC spoke at an Abortion Rights press conference and a rally outside parliament in 2011, reaffirming the commitment of the trade union movement to defending women's right to choose.

18. Violence against women

Resolutions 37, 38, and 39 called upon the TUC to support campaigns to end violence and harassment against women and girls in transport, betting shops, and schools respectively. The TUC has continued to play an active role on the Board of the End Violence Against Women coalition. Furthermore, the TUC has been an active member of EVAW's Prevention Network. In 2011 EVAW published a report called *A Different World is Possible: A call for long-term and targeted action to prevent violence against women and girls*. The report called for:

- The government to ensure that preventing violence against girls is national priority in schools
- All teachers to receive training on violence against women and girls including domestic and sexual violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- The National Curriculum must include sex and relationships education which discusses sexual consent and respectful relationships
- Ofsted should inspect schools on how well they are responding to violence against women and girls and all schools to collect and report data on violence against girls
- All schools to implement 'whole school' policies on violence against women and girls to create a school culture of respect and equality
- Central and local government must also play their part by funding women's services and running public awareness campaigns

EVAW also produced a report entitled *Promising Practices* which included five case studies of successful education campaigns to challenge attitudes that condone violence against women and girls.

An innovative viral campaign was produced for EVAW by an advertising agency. The campaign used a short film called *We Are Man* to challenge young men's attitudes to sexual violence.

Policy Officers in EERD and OSD have worked with transport unions to gather evidence about the impact of transport cuts on women passenger's safety. This information has been shared with EVAW who will be campaigning on sexual harassment and women's safety on public transport over the course of 2012.

The TUC submitted evidence to Vera Baird QC's *Everywoman Safe Everywhere* Commission into the impact of cuts on women's safety. A large section of the TUC's report was given over to cuts to transport and the consequences for women's safety, both as railway employees and as members of the travelling public.

The TUC also worked with the False Economy website and a range of violence against women campaign groups to gather information on the impact of local authority cuts on VAWG services.

The data compiled through Freedom of Information requests to all local authorities was used in an academic study into the impact of the cuts on VAWG services by Professor Sylvia Walby, Lancaster University. The report received significant media attention.

The 2011 conference drew attention to international day for the elimination of violence against women on 25 November and called on the TUC to mark the day, which was done with an e-petition aimed at the Home Office over the UK Government's failure to sign the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention to combat violence against women and domestic violence (the action is still live at <http://action.goingtowork.org.uk/page/s/tell-the-uk-government-to-match-its-rhetoric-on-violence-against-women>).

19. Outsourcing in the workplace

Resolution 41, Outsourcing in the workplace and how it affects women, drew attention to the negative impact of outsourcing on wages, terms and conditions, and collective bargaining. The TUC has continued to campaign on this issue through the vulnerable workers project and the work of the organising department. A well attended workshop on the equality impact of contracting out services was held at the Equality Deficit conference in November 2011. Speakers from Trade Unions and the voluntary sector explored how the contracting out of services and the consequent downward pressure on pay and conditions can be challenged using the Equality Duty and other tools.

20. Access to art

In furtherance of Resolution 43, Access to Art, the TUC continues to support the work of the Federation of Entertainment Unions. Cuts to the Arts were the subject of a Congress resolution in 2011. The TUC has participated in Equity campaign activities against cuts to the arts. Cuts to the Arts feature in the TUC's broader anti-cuts campaign work.



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