



National Women's Conference

24



National Women's Conference 2024

Suggested Groupings

It is recommended that the following motions be taken in common debate:

| Motion Number | Name of Motion or Grouping |
|----------------------|---|
| 1 | Securing Paid Union Facility Time |
| 2 | Access to Justice and Impact on Women |
| 3 | Valuing Women's Work |
| 4 | Gender Pensions Gap |
| 5 & 6 | Impact of AI on Women |
| 7 | Call to increase maternity payments and improve support to new parents |
| 8 | PPE for Women |
| 9 | Violence in Schools |
| 10 | Menstrual health and impact in the workplace |
| 11 | Need to Pee Campaign Proposal Motion |
| 12 | Implementing Suitable Breastfeeding Policies in the Workplace |
| 13 | Endometriosis |
| 14 & 15 | Women's ADHD in the Workplace |
| 16 | Ending Modern Day Slavery and Protecting our Members from Exploitation |
| 17 | Abortion Clinic Buffer Zones |
| 18 | Women's Representation |
| 19 | Progression of Women within Unite |

1. Securing Paid Union Facility Time

This Conference is firmly committed to increasing the participation and activism of women within Unite.

We understand that to achieve a greater representation of women across our structures, it is essential that access to paid union facility time to collectively organise is available.

All too often, in order to attend meetings not deemed as “trade union duties” by their employer, women representatives are instead either underrepresented, taking holiday, swapping rest days or their attendance is being supported by a loss of earnings claim.

Whilst this Conference recognises the importance of our union making loss of earnings payments, this is too often not equitable in terms of actual loss of pay and future earnings as average holiday pay and pension contributions can be negatively impacted. Similarly, losing annual leave or rest days, when women are carrying out so much unpaid work or often have caring responsibilities is not acceptable.

In addition, our Unite Women’s combine, through a survey of over 400 women representatives, identified the lack of paid facility time as a huge barrier preventing women from participating and progressing in their union.

As we aim for 50:50 representation across our union, Conference calls on:

1. Unite to:

- Launch a national campaign across the union on the importance of paid union facility time
- Make sure that union recognition agreements are reviewed against the model facility agreement on Work, Voice, Pay, to ensure they provide the best guidance to our reps on paid time off
- Ask Regional/National Officers to re-approach companies to negotiate secure paid facility time when they receive a claim for loss of earnings
- Promote paid facility time for union equality representatives as we recognise that this role is demographically more reflective of women and under-represented groups

2. The National Women’s Committee to:

- Set up a working party to track progress on this issue and report back to the Committee and the Executive Council

National Women’s Committee

2. Access to Justice and Impact on Women

This Conference notes that over recent years, the Conservative Government through its ideologically driven austerity programme has taken an axe to legal aid, and justice is increasingly out of reach for those in most need.

Conference notes that alongside the negative impact of funding cuts, the former Tory government proposed changes to the employment tribunals and appeals systems which would be detrimental to women seeking access to justice for workplace disputes.

Whilst recognising that the best place to resolve issues is in the workplace, tribunals provide crucial services to individuals going through difficult disputes such as discrimination, unpaid wages or holiday pay. Any potential barrier for workers to use this route to seek a just outcome therefore must be challenged.

This Conference therefore believes that the re-introduction of tribunal fees is harmful as its disproportionate effect on women and discrimination cases has already been established.

We further note that the original intention of including lay panel members was to ensure a balance, usually a trade union perspective with more experience in the industrial settings of issues being raised in the workplace. Therefore, we also oppose any proposed reduction of the composition of panels from three members to one judge sitting alone, especially as lay members are more likely to be female (56% compared to judges at 52%)

Conference asks Unite to:

- Campaign against any proposal to re-introduce tribunal fees, ensuring that women workers voices are heard
- Oppose any measure to reduce tribunal panel compositions further, especially for discrimination cases
- To encourage members to seek full panels when presented with a choice on the current range of cases
- Work with our industrial sectors in raising the issue of cuts to legal aid and its impact on women

National Women's Committee

3. Valuing Women's Work

This Conference notes that occupational segregation is still prevalent in many workplaces, and we believe that the traditional view of “women's work” is often patronising and undervalued. All too often, women have to put in extra effort to prove their ability to work. The chronic issue of undervaluing work predominantly and historically done by women is also a major contributor of the gender pay gap, leading then to a gender pension gap. Until this is addressed, women will never achieve true equality. Certain job roles, such as that of a cleaner, need to be reevaluated and the tasks and skills needed to carry out this role should be appreciated. The Covid pandemic saw these roles classed as “essential” or in

the case of care workers “critical”, yet they are still seen as “unskilled” workers and often paid only minimum wage.

Conference, why are these roles being afforded such low pay?

Conference calls on the National Women’s Committee to request that Unite:

- Requires all those who negotiate pay, terms and conditions are aware of the gender bias when rating job roles
- Ensure that the issue of gender stereotyping forms part of any union reps courses for pay negotiators
- Promote job evaluation schemes that have been agreed with Unite
- Organise outsourced workers that may sit outside of any collective bargaining agreement as they are disproportionately women
- Provide to the National Women’s Committee a gender and sector breakdown of our members paying the low rate of membership

East Midlands

4. Gender Pensions Gap

This Conference notes the gender pensions gap can mean the differences in retirement income or retirement wealth for men and women. It can be measured in different ways, for example, differences in pension wealth at different ages, differences in pension income received, and the difference in state pension income.

As well as concerns about the impact on equality, the gender pensions gap interacts with differing life expectancies between men and women and changes in policy over their lifetimes. On average, women live longer than men and so on average need more pension wealth to have the same amount of income each year over their retirement. In addition to this, pensions are built up over a lifetime and so there is a time lag in policy changes to affect pension wealth or pension income.

This Conference notes the gender pay gap currently stands at 14.3% and at current rates will take at least another 20 years to close. The gap compounds throughout women’s lives leading to a pension gap of 40.5%.

Among people receiving the state pension women’s income are 37.9% lower than men’s.

Closing the gap will require effort and measures from government, employers, unions, and wider civil/ society.

The Gender Pensions Gap is caused by various issues, such as:

- different working patterns (for example taking time off work for caring responsibilities, or working part time)
- different earnings (women on average earn less than men).

- differences between men and women in the type of scheme in which they are more likely to participate
- historic State Pension rules resulting in different pension outcomes for men and women
- the impact of how people are enrolled into pensions can affect men and women differently due to differences in their employment patterns
- how divorce settlements treat pensions
- menopause

Conference calls on the National Women's Committee to ask Unite to:

- Develop a campaign to encourage higher take up of credits that can boost women's pension income
- Develop information/materials on the Gender Pension Gap; ways to increase pension contributions, what level of income is required in retirement, the importance of having a pension, information on state pension and private pensions, and encouraging people not to opt out of auto-enrolment.
- Ensure Pensions are on the bargaining agenda with employers to increase employer contributions.
- Lobby Government for:
 - a requirement for employers to report out on the Gender Pensions Gap, like they do for pay.
 - A statutory requirement for the government to report to Parliament on the gender pay gap and its plan for tackling it.
 - An enquiry by Work and Pensions Committee on the gender pensions gap
 - An additional state pension credit for those who are not working because they are looking after children under 12
 - Measures to make affordable childcare more widely available so that people who want to return to work can do so.
 - An independent Commission to consider the appropriate level of contributions under automatic enrolment
 - Reform automatic enrolment from the earliest possible date
 - Changes to the tax system to resolve the 'net pay anomaly' whereby low earners do not benefit from tax relief on their contributions.

London and Eastern

5. Impact of AI on Women

Conference notes that the vast expansion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the subsequent impact on sectors of the economy. The affects are acutely felt in Retail, Finance, and Aerospace and its impact has the real potential to push many workers, mainly women into low paid jobs resulting in them facing poverty pay.

Whilst we understand that there has been some progression for workers from the introduction of AI in workplaces, eliminating certain repetitive tasks, there is still much work that needs to be done to ensure that low paid jobs predominantly carried out by women are not eroded away in the name of progression. AI should be a benefit to all and create opportunities, for example the ability to work less hours at no loss to pay, and upskilling opportunities.

Conference therefore asks the National Women's Committee to call on Unite to:

- Ensure that the new technology agreement to be used at every negotiating table with women and low paid workers must be at the forefront.
- Regular monitoring of job losses and redundancies when influenced by AI to allow strategies to be created to help prevent a mass impact on women
- To seek examples of good practice across sectors that have been impacted so positive experiences can be shared
- For this to form one of the campaigning priorities for the National Women's Committee.

East Midlands

6. Rise in Artificial Intelligence use in Domestic Violence

This Conference notes the rise in the use of surveillance apps and is aware of the Artificial Intelligence used by sexual abuse perpetrators. The rise of smart devices such as Phones, Alexa, doorbell cameras and Smart TVs has brought both convenience and risks, and in the case of domestic abuse it has been exploited by abusers to maintain control over their victims. The use of spyware whereby perpetrators can monitor movements and collect recordings and images of victims and survivors is on the rise.

According to Refuge, the largest specialist provider of gender-based violence services in the UK, 59 percent of the women and children it supported in 2020–21 experienced abuse involving technology. Improved transparency is a necessity to reduce abuse. There needs to be mitigations put into place urgently, safety by design must prioritise protection from abuse, the need for notifications that signal to individuals when smart devices are collecting information and data is being shared at the minimum. This will help diminish the likelihood of covert surveillance.

Conference calls on the National Women's Committee to raise awareness on this issue and highlight the ways it is used negatively against women.

Ireland

7. Call to increase maternity payments and improve support to new parents

This Conference is shocked to read in Maternity Action's report "The impact on mothers and families of low maternity payments and the cost of living crisis", that current maternity and parental statutory pay equates to less than half of the National Living Wage and just over a third of women's median earnings; that many parents cannot access the existing limited support mechanisms due to restrictive eligibility criteria and other barriers; and that many pregnant women and new mothers continue to experience discrimination at work.

The sudden drop in income faced by women on maternity leave is causing hardship, distress and poor mental health, all of which have been shown to impact negatively not only on the women themselves but also on their babies' development.

Opportunities and support for fathers and partners to equally participate in childcare are very limited which further hinders gender equality both at home and in the workplace, with women remaining the primary caregivers at the cost of experiencing a persistent discrimination in the workplace.

Migrant and asylum-seeking mothers, already at high risk of poverty and destitution, have faced increasing restrictions to their entitlements to benefits and services. This leaves women to face extreme financial hardship at a time when they most need support.

Conference asks the National Women's Committee to call upon Unite to:

- Raise awareness of the impact of the UK's low maternity payments, which has been exacerbated by the cost of living crisis, on pregnant women and new mothers. Unite can do this by supporting and amplifying Maternity Action's campaign.
- Support Maternity Action's calls for the Government to:
 - raise maternity payments to at least the national living wage rates and expand eligibility;
 - replace the failing shared parental leave scheme by the 6+6+6 model proposed by Maternity Action;
 - support all parents to access entitlements, to allow women to remain in work if they wish to do so, and promote gender equality at work and at home; and
 - improve support for asylum seeking and migrant women.

South East

8. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Women

This Conference notes that the increase in campaigns across our industrial sectors around Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for women shows employers still have a "one size fits all" attitude. This fails to acknowledge clear anatomical and sizing differences between men and women's bodies and puts female workers at an increased risk of injury and further perpetuates discrimination in the workplace.

Conference notes a number of issues, such as:

- Safety boots without the necessary insoles or ankle support needed for women's feet leading to blisters, bunions, ankle strains and other long term health implications.
- Trousers, overalls, and jackets designed for men which are too tight on the hips, thighs and chest, and too baggy or long in the legs and arms for women. This increases the risk of slips, trips, and falls and exposure to harmful substances.
- Breathing apparatus that is designed for a "standard" US male face shape means it is not working as effectively for most women or a lot of men from black and minority ethnic groups. This increases the risk of exposure to harmful substances.
- Very few women were provided suitable PPE during pregnancy, particularly PPE to fit each stage of pregnancy. Pregnant women are often then forced into changing roles or duties in the run up to maternity leave.
- Work equipment like desks, chairs and machines are designed with men in mind so are less ergonomically suited to women. This can lead to musculoskeletal problems from poor work posture or workstation heights.
- Women facing ridicule from colleagues or not being taken seriously in the workplace due to ill-fitting PPE, resulting in women not progressing in their careers or moving away from the sector, further promoting job segregation and discrimination.

Conference believes ill-fitting PPE is a clear health and safety risk for women, presenting an increased risk of trips, slips and falls or exposure to harmful substances and long-term health implications. But it is also an equalities issue because poorly fitting PPE contributes to feelings of exclusion, lack of respect and reduced perceived professionalism. The lack of female PPE is preventing women entering and remaining in technical roles, particularly in male dominated areas where we need to be seeing progress in gender equality rather than barriers. Conference notes that the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002 and the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (as amended) do not go far enough to protect women and other individuals whose body type does not fit the "standard" used for PPE design, so should be updated to reflect and protect our diverse society.

Conference therefore calls on the National Women's Committee work with the National Health and Safety Committee to:

- Run a campaign to educate workplace reps, Health and Safety reps, Equalities reps, organisers and officers on the issues of PPE designed for women.
- Provide a toolkit around women's PPE and work with all sectors to ensure we are negotiating policies to include specific requirements for PPE that suits different body types.
- Work in partnership with the TUC and other organisations to bring about changes to existing PPE legislation to ensure proper protection for different body types.

Wales

9. Violence in Schools

Conference notes the horrendous working conditions that affect our predominantly female members within all primary, and secondary school environments, in relation to violence sustained against them by pupils.

We therefore ask the Unite National Women's Committee work with the Local Authorities and Education National Industrial Sector Committees (NISCs) to:

- Campaign and highlight our school support staffs issues. Bringing to the attention of all in education and government across the UK the gross underreporting of violent incidences.
- Lobby the government to ask of them that better protections, strategies, and support are put in place to ensure that our members are both safe and protected from harm within the workplace.

Scotland

10. Menstrual health and impact in the workplace

This Conference notes that challenges around menstruation and menstrual health are common and can have an impact on working life. Despite menstruation being a normal part of life, these issues are often shrouded in taboo and silence in the workplace. Research has found that around half of employees experiencing challenges at work due to menstruation, would not tell their manager this was the reason and are not aware of any specific support available or the opportunity to ask for reasonable adjustment to assist with any symptoms.

This Conference further notes that our union's work on Menopause awareness has made a significant impact in removing any stigma regarding this issue and instead has ensured has been taken forward as a Unite campaign and a workplace issue. We recognise that the guidance, model policy, leaflets, posters and training sessions have reinforced the importance of our union's commitment to taking this forward via a collective approach.

Given the positive work taken forward on Menopause, Conference requests the National Women's Committee to ask Unite to:

- Launch a national campaign across the union on the importance of menstrual health and its potential affects in the workplace
- Produce a model policy, leaflets and posters and guidance on why this is a workplace issue for many members
- Refresh the materials on period dignity

North West

11. Need to Pee Campaign Proposal Motion

Conference supports those affected to have the basic human right to be able to pee during our working day.

Conference is concerned that many Councils are shutting an ever-growing number of public toilets because of Funding and Vandalism. This is having a huge impact on remote workers especially Bus drivers and taxi drivers.

Conference is further concerned that some drivers are having to hold their urine for up to 5 & a half hours the duration of one part of their driving shift or some are having to pee behind bushes. The other issues include females not being able to change sanitary products along with implications for women during the menopause.

Conference also notes that office staff that are timed using toilet facilities is highly unacceptable, and adversely affects women especially during menstruation and menopause who require longer than normal bathroom breaks, and timed toilet breaks should cease with immediate effect.

Conference acknowledges civil aviation crew who also have trouble accessing toilets due to passenger/crew ratio, while working flights, and accepts that this also causes issues.

This is not acceptable and can lead to a series of health implications.

Conference calls upon the National Women's Committee to work with the relevant NISCs to organise a campaign to highlight this issue. We are calling for support to help bus drivers and other professional drivers to have automatic access to any suitable facility (shops, hotels, petrol stations etc) to allow us to use their facilities to enable professional drivers comfort breaks this in turn taking away the embarrassment and health implications we are suffering now.

We are asking for a change in law for more responsibility be given to companies to provide and source toilet facilities for their professional drivers.

We believe that in 2024 this should be a basic right and this issue should not be happening.

South East

12. Implementing Suitable Breastfeeding Policies in the Workplace

Recognising the fundamental rights of women in the workplace, including the right to adequate conditions for breastfeeding, is essential for promoting gender equality and supporting working mothers. The provision of suitable breastfeeding policies within

workplaces is crucial to ensure that women can balance their professional responsibilities with their maternal duties without facing discrimination or hindrances.

Conference recognises the importance of backing working mothers in their breastfeeding journey for their and their infants' health.

We recognise that suitable breastfeeding policies in the workplace contribute to creating a supportive and inclusive environment that upholds the rights of women employees.

Conference believes employers should establish breastfeeding-friendly policies, including:

- a. Flexible work hours or breaks for breastfeeding.
- b. Accessible, private lactation rooms with necessary facilities.
- c. Zero tolerance for discrimination or harassment against breastfeeding employees.
- d. Educational programmes to promote understanding and acceptance.
- e. Support for transitioning back to work after maternity leave.

Conference asks the National Women's Committee to urge Unite to campaign for providing necessary resources and training for effective policy implementation, including training for managers and staff on accommodating breastfeeding employees.

We encourage collaboration among employers, Union, and stakeholders to develop guidelines and best practices.

We emphasise the importance of regularly reviewing and updating policies with input from breastfeeding employees.

By adopting and implementing suitable breastfeeding policies in the workplace, we demonstrate our commitment to promoting gender equality, supporting working mothers, and creating inclusive work environments where all employees can thrive.

South West

13. Endometriosis

This Conference notes that Endometriosis is as a condition that can start with your first period and last until Menopause. The NHS states that 'Endometriosis is a condition where tissue similar to the lining of the womb grows in other places, such as the ovaries and fallopian tubes.'

We note that Endometriosis does affect women in the workplace therefore we want Unite to address the impact by raising awareness, understanding and support for women in the workplace. We believe this is extremely important as we need to stop the talent/skill drain of professional & working women, non-binary and trans men from exiting the workforce due to lack of understanding, support, policies and processes in the workplace around this condition.

Conference notes that:

176 million women, born female at birth suffer with Endometriosis worldwide.

- 1 in 10 women, in the UK suffer from endometriosis.
- 1 in 6 women leave the workplace/career due to lack of support in the workplace.
- Non-Binary and Trans men suffer from endometriosis and lack of appropriate services.
- Black women are 50% less likely to be diagnosed and on average 2.5 years later than white women.
- Asian Women are 60% more likely to be diagnosed than white women.
- Endometriosis is estimated to have cost the UK economy £8.2bn a year in treatment, loss of work and healthcare costs.
- 55% of individuals with this condition are frequently absent from work.
- 54% of people with this condition find themselves with a reduced income.
- Endometriosis is not an automatic disability; it is currently classed as a long-term health condition

Conference therefore asks the National Women's Committee to call on Unite to launch a campaign across Unite in line with Endometriosis awareness month to do the following:

- Raise awareness of the condition and the implications this may have on women in the workplace.
- A guide/training to support reps/members understand this condition and other related conditions and how to support people in the workplace.
- A toolkit with best practice examples, workplace policies templates, signposting and posters to raise awareness in the workplace and support reps to implement best practice in the workplace.
- To survey Unite members before the campaign and evaluate to see if this campaign/toolkit/guide has had a positive impact across unite. (e.g., members awareness, policy changes, flexible working, job modification etc)

South West

14. Women's ADHD in the Workplace

Conference notes that:

Historically, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) was believed to be a condition related purely to boys and men, but in recent years it has become apparent that girls and

women are affected too. Boys tend to exhibit the hyperactive/impulsive type of ADHD whereas girls more commonly exhibit the inattentive type, meaning it is much less visible.

UK based surveys with children aged 5 – 15 show that almost 1 in every 100 girls have ADHD, yet they are diagnosed at just under half the rate at which boys are. This means that many women are struggling with symptoms today because they have been misdiagnosed or undiagnosed.

Women and girls tend to internalise their ADHD symptoms and just “get on with it”. But the symptoms they can experience can make life very difficult at times. Those symptoms can include:

- Difficulty in functioning in busy/noisy environments, leading to reduced productivity,
- Losing and forgetting things,
- Feeling easily overwhelmed,
- Zoning out regularly, in conversations, or in the middle of doing something,
- Quickly becoming overly emotional and being pushed over the edge by small things,
- Unable to keep home, room, desk, or office tidy and organised,
- Often being late or too early for meetings and struggling to hit deadlines,
- Struggling to relax and unwind as your mind is on the go 24/7.

This list is not exhaustive, there are other symptoms too, and each individual woman will experience ADHD in her own way.

There is a range of other disorders that can co-occur with ADHD which can make correctly diagnosing ADHD difficult, such as eating disorders, OCD, depression and anxiety, social anxiety disorder, sleeping disorders, and substance abuse. And of course, the menopause, which can have very similar symptoms.

This all affects every aspect of a woman's life, which is why ADHD in women needs to be recognised as a workplace issue, and women should be able to expect appropriate support from their employers, managers, and colleagues.

Conference asks the National Women's Committee to work with the National Disabled Members' Committee to call on Unite to:

- Create a training programme and negotiating guidance for reps in the specifics of ADHD in women, so they can support those impacted members,
- Mount an awareness campaign so that employers and other workers recognise how women's ADHD presents and know what reasonable adjustments they need to make, and what effective support to give,
- Ensure that the union itself considers ADHD when organising meetings, events, and training etc.

North East, Yorkshire & Humber

15. ADHD assessments for young women

This Conference notes that Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is more commonly diagnosed in boys than girls, with girls often presenting later in late adolescence as their behaviour becomes more apparent. Girls with ADHD often go unnoticed, with many only realising later in life as adults that they have ADHD, particularly when they're in education or the workforce and therefore seek referrals for a diagnosis over the age of eighteen where there is little or no service in some of the NHS Trusts. Where there is a service, consultants are in undated with referrals. Those who can afford the £1000.00 cost to go private then have to pay for private prescriptions to access their prescribed medication at a cost of £200 per month. This is because it is a class A drug, and GPs are not prepared to honour the assessment as it needs to be referred through the NHS shared care scheme.

In the Republic of Ireland, the Health Service Executive (HSE) currently have only four Adult ADHD clinics and you must be living in a Community Health Organisation (CHO) catchment area to avail of the service. Access to the assessment and treatment is by GP referral to your local Community Adult Mental Health Team for initial screening, unfortunately those outside the catchment areas for this service must get the assessment done privately with costs of up to €1150.

Conference recognises the importance of diagnoses for some people to allow them to ask their workplaces about supporting their needs as a recognised disability. Often the extent of the needs and the suggested workplace accommodations are not known without a formal assessment and diagnoses.

Conference recognises the huge financial barriers that obtaining an official ADHD diagnosis as an adult can have on workers, particularly for those who feel it is impacting their job but feel the cost is too much for them to pursue the diagnoses. As many women already face the hurdles of gender pay gaps, over representation in low paid work, additional menstrual costs and unpaid labour in the home, this is an additional gender weighted cost women face.

Conference calls on the National Women's Committee to work with the National Disabled Members Committee to raise awareness of this issue, call on the abolishment of fees for ADHD assessments, and to lobby the government to address this concern which predominantly impacts young women more so as they haven't been diagnosed in earlier years.

Conference also mandates the National Women's Committee to work with the National Disabled Members Committee to ask that a union resource be created on how to negotiate for disability accommodations in the workplace that specifically mentions ADHD accommodations.

Ireland

16. Ending Modern Day Slavery and Protecting our Members from Exploitation

This Conference welcomes the union's focus on better jobs, pay and conditions and the campaign for the Real living Wage as a base line. Unite has always been at the forefront of ensuring workers are safe and protected from exploitation.

This Conference notes with concern almost 50 million people are trapped in slavery worldwide. It's a problem that affects every country on earth – including ours. Modern Day Slavery is on the rise in the UK and is happening in our workplaces in our communities. Modern slavery – as a term – encompasses many forms of slavery, including human trafficking and people being born into slavery. Anti-Slavery International, are defining modern slavery as when an individual is exploited by others, for personal or commercial gain. Whether tricked, coerced, or forced, they lose their freedom. This includes but is not limited to human trafficking, forced labour and debt bondage.

Conference further notes that in the U.K it is estimated that 130,000 people are working in modern slavery conditions, with only 12k cases reported and referred to the authorities in 2021. In February 2024, the government confirmed more than 500 companies were found to be paying staff less than the minimum wage.

This Conference agrees that this an issue impacting on Women across the globe, and we must go further to protect our women members. We further need to stop 3.5 million people being paid below the real living wage in the U.K.

This Conference calls on the National Women's Committee to:

- Raise awareness of what modern-day slavery is across our membership and local communities.
- Lobby the Government to take harsher measures against those willing to exploit others.
- Develop information and guidance for Reps, Officers, and Members on how to recognise the signs and how to sign post our members to appropriate support.
- Work with the TUC and organisations to ensure we are holding Government and workplaces accountable when it comes to enforcing Modern Day Slavery Laws and develop a campaign to end Modern Day Slavery for good.
- Work with high-risk sectors for modern slavery including domestic work, agriculture, logistics and services to raise awareness and inform workers of their rights.

Wales

17. Abortion Clinic Buffer Zones

Abortion clinic buffer zones that are meant to be in place to protect the right to choose went into a mysterious consultation with the English government in the December of 2023 and Scotland past the first part of the zone bill in Scottish parliament in April 2024. However at the point of writing this both have stalled, elections and unfavourable governments have left a void that's dangerous.

Unite has policy of supporting choice. We need to ensure this is continues with safe workplaces for those that work there, safe areas for those that attend the clinic and residents in the surrounding area don't live with intimidation on their doorsteps.

Conference therefore asks the National Women's Committee to call on Unite to reinforce its existing policy and work with the sitting government to get past consultation blocks and into enforcement, and for parity across all nations.

West Midlands

18. Women's Representation

Women are underrepresented on all constitutional committees of this Union, including the equalities strands committees. As women, we are marginalised in all aspects of society. We make up over 50% of the population yet we are the most discriminated group in society.

As a trade union we should seek to find remedies to this and should seek to put our own house in order:

- To increase representation within constitutional committees, we call on the National Women's Committee to ask the union to recognise the importance of empowering members with the knowledge of our structures to encourage engagement:
 - To aid this, all members upon joining should receive an information pack explaining our structures.
 - At each triennial period all activists should be contacted to be made aware of the structures and how they can get involved.
 - After each triennial period all RWEO will hold an awareness day for all equality strands in person or via zoom.

Conference asks the National Women's Committee to call on Unite and the Executive to ensure that this is in place for the next triennial election period.

North West

19. Progression of Women within Unite

This Conference notes that women comprise roughly 28% of Unite's membership, and approximately 27% of Unite officials. It is a great source of pride that the union is now led by a woman General Secretary. However, the representation of women among Unite Officers & Organisers varies among regions and nations, and in some cases, women remain underrepresented in paid posts. Some recent recruitment opportunities for Unite Regional Officers have seen worryingly low rates of women applying – in one instance, just 1 woman applicant to 25 male applicants.

This Conference believes that Unite's women activists need further support and encouragement to progress within the union.

This Conference resolves to ask the National Women's Committee:

- To ask National Equalities & Education Officers to explore the scope for developing shadowing and mentoring schemes for women reps.
- To ask Regional Equalities & Education Officers to explore extending the provision of Women in Leadership education courses beyond the current session forming part of National Women's Week.
- To continue promoting the development and progression of women within the union.

London and Eastern

Emergency Motions

Darzi Report/NHS Consultation the Impact on Women's Health Provision

The Darzi Report which was commissioned by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care in July 2024, has recently been published. Whilst acknowledging the failings of maternity services the report does not acknowledge the differential treatment by the NHS of half the patients treated, women!

The UK healthcare system has been designed around the needs of just half the population. Training, research, and clinical practice has historically been based on the premise that patients are male and as a result women's health and the diagnosis and treatment of female patients has been marginalised. The provision of services for women such as maternity and gynaecology which are largely provided by female healthcare staff, is not allocated the level of funding and support in many NHS Trusts that it warrants. Decisions are made by largely male Trust Boards who "allocate funding to sexier areas of medicine which are dominated by male consultants" .

It is matter of national shame that the UK has the widest gender health gap in the G20.

Researchers at University College London found that [women with dementia receive worse medical treatment than men with the condition](#). They found that women make fewer visits to the GP, receive less health monitoring, and take more potentially harmful medication.

Women fare more poorly compared with men in relation to disease prevalence, access to healthcare, and outcomes after treatment. For example, women are [less likely](#) than men to have a heart attack correctly diagnosed, and are [more likely](#) to experience poor mental health and not able to access the range of services available.

The UK Government has published England's first Women's Health Strategy to address these issues which unsurprisingly was not mentioned by Darzi.

The key areas of focus in respect of women's health are as follows though this is not a definitive list.

1. improved education for all healthcare practitioners on the gendered nature of healthcare provision
2. menstrual health and gynaecological conditions
3. fertility, pregnancy, pregnancy loss and post-natal support
4. menopause
5. healthy ageing and long-term conditions
6. health impacts of violence against women and girls.
7. Cancer in women
8. Provision of mental health services which meets the needs of women in a timely manner

Conference calls on the National Women's Committee to work with the Health National Industrial Sector Committee (NISC) to ensure that Unite submits a formal response on behalf of its women members who are both workers and patients to the NHS Consultation, which is the biggest National conversation about the future of the NHS since its birth, and hold the Government to account in ensuring that gender equitable health services are developed and delivered in practice.

North East, Yorkshire, and Humber

Gisèle Pelico

Conference on Wednesday 23rd October, Gisèle Pelico took to the stand in French court room and said, “it’s not for us to have shame, but it’s for them”. Although she was giving evidence regarding her own horrendous case where multiple men had raped her, she was also sending a message and talking for every woman who has also been the victim/survivor of sexual abuse and sexual assaults.

Those few words capture and challenge the societal stigma when women come forward to report these crimes, and also explain why so many don’t. Rape is one of the most underreported crimes with some of the lowest prosecution rates. When women do report, they have to endure intrusive examinations, perverse questions about their sexual history, choice of clothing; all the time wondering if the lack of consent means anything to the justice system.

Conference, although rape and sexual violence towards women has been committed throughout the ages, this case and in particular Gisele’s testimony as an incredible survivor, put the focus of shame back to these ‘ordinary’ men. By staring down at the men who committed these acts, she reminded us that they were characters who occupied the community in her life, even ones she unwittingly greeted in her everyday life:

“I saw him now and then in the bakery; I would say hello. I never thought he’d come and rape me,”- Gisèle Pelicot

Conference calls for the National Women’s Committee to:

- Send solidarity to Gisele and all women who have experienced sexual assault or rape,
- Demand greater awareness on active consent across our education institutions and society
- Circulate materials from campaigns on preventing rape and changing societal attitudes to stop victim blaming
- work with organisations supporting women’s after rape or sexual violence and encourage affiliation by our branches
- Lobby for increased funding for all services providing vital support

National Women’s Committee