



Fire Brigades Union

National Women's Committee

National Women's Committee Annual Report 2006

The Fire Brigades Union

National Women's Committee

National Women's Committee Report

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1. The National Women's Committee

National Representatives:

EC Member	Vicky Knight
National Women's Committee Chair	Dona Feltham
National Women's Committee Secretary	Kerry Baigent
National Women's Committee Vice-chair	Helen Harrison

Regional Representatives:

Region 1	Heather Lawrie
Region 2	Lynda Rowan
Region 3	Samantha Rye
Region 4	No rep
Region 5	Jo Winrow-Jones (Resigned September 06)
Region 6	Staci Leach
Region 7	Helen Harrison
Region 8	Emma Gibby
Region 9	Emma Carr
Region 10	Sally Harper
Region 11	Jenny Impey
Region 12	Julie Barton
Region 13	Gayle Banks

2. National Women's Committee Meetings

The National Women's Committee met on several occasions this year.

Date	Meeting	Location
27 th January	NWC Executive	Birmingham
22 nd February	NWC Executive	Head Office
23 rd February	NWC full business meeting	Head Office
15 th June	NWC Working meeting	Wortley Hall
16 th June	NWC Full business meeting	Wortley Hall
1 st August	NWC Executive	Merseyside Office
28 th September	NWC Working meeting	Merseyside Office
25 th October	NWC Executive	London
10 th November	NWC Full Business meeting	Region 7 office

3. Committees that the NWC are represented at

FBU Executive Council Sub Committees	NWC Official
EC Representation Appeals Committee	Vicky Knight
EC International sub-committee	Vicky Knight
EC Re-organisation sub committee	Vicky Knight

FBU committees	NWC Official
National Fairness at Work Committee	Kerry Baigent
National Fairness at Work Strategy Group	Kerry Baigent
National Education Committee	Dona Feltham
Regional Education Officers Committee	Dona Feltham
National Health and Safety Committee	Sally Harper
Campaign Coordinators	Kerry Baigent
IRMP Coordinators	Kerry Baigent
Control Care campaign	Kerry Baigent
Final Appeals Committee	Dona Feltham

TUC Committees	NWC Official
TUC Women's Committee	Vicky Knight
TUC Gold Badge Panel	Vicky Knight

Other Committees	NWC Official
ODPM Point of Entry Selection Tests strategy Group	Kerry Baigent
Charter for Women	Kerry Baigent
DCLG Retention of Women ff's strategy Group	Kerry Baigent
Equality Stakeholder Group	Vicky Knight

4. Conferences/events attended by NWC with speaking commitments

WTUC Eastbourne 8th – 10th March 2006

Delegation:

Ruth Winters
Vicky Knight
Dona Feltham
Kerry Baigent
Patsy Griffiths
Staci Leach
Emma Gibby
Emma Carr

The FBU motions on Childcare and Abortion Rights were overwhelmingly carried by Conference

Childcare

This Conference has repeatedly acknowledged that the lack of affordable Childcare is one of the many barriers to Women's active involvement within the workforce and therefore the Trade Union movement. With this in mind and in support of Women members seeking trade union activity and education:

This Conference demands that the General Council in conjunction with the TUC Women's Committee, ensures that the fundamental provision of good quality childcare forms an integral and consistent part of the planning and organisation of every Conference, school, course or seminar being run by the TUC.

This would not only facilitate Women's access and involvement in all TUC events but would also alleviate many problems facing affiliates when encouraging Women members and officials to undertake active participation in events all year round.

Abortion

This Conference is appalled by the current anti-choice campaign in the UK which is calling on the Government to reduce the current legal time limits for a woman to have an abortion down to 20 weeks. This Conference believes that the US aligned right wing anti-choice campaigners are using this particular point as a smoke screen in order to gain sympathy amongst the British people and then make further attacks on a woman's right to choose.

This Conference calls upon the TUC Women's committee and wider trade union movement to:

- Reassert its support of a woman's right to choose.
- Campaign to correct the prevalent false impression that pregnancy termination is easily accessible
- Urge the UK Government to provide all women with access to free, safe abortion services at the earliest possible time and not further restrict a woman's right to access abortion.
- Vigorously oppose any reduction in the time limits for abortion in order to preserve a woman's rights to choose.

The FBU hosted the Charter for Women fringe meeting in our hotel which was a success.

Ruth Winters spoke at the Abortion Rights fringe meeting.

Vicky Knight got re-elected onto the TUC Women's Committee – congratulations Vicky

Well done to all of the delegation for their hard work and dedication. We did have a problem with the hotel and so must remember not to stay at the Ambassador in Eastbourne again - reported to Head Office.

TUC 11th – 14th September – Brighton

Vicky Knight was part of the FBU delegation to the TUC and spoke on a motion moved by the LGBT Committee entitled 'The Importance of Equality' and seconded ASLEF's motion on the Emergency Bill.

STUC Womens Conference - Perth – 13th and 14th November

Delegates:
Linda Shanahan
Heather Lawrie
Ruth Winters
Denise Christie
Kerry Baigent

The FBU submitted two resolutions and one emergency resolution. The emergency resolution on Scottish Fire and Rescue Services Cultural Audit was carried by Conference

5. Other National Conferences/Events/Meetings attended on behalf of the NWC

Date	Event	NWC Attendees
10 th Jan	TUC Womens Committee	Vicky Knight
16 th Jan	Charter for Women	Kerry Baigent
16 th Jan	ODPM - NFS	Kerry Baigent
18 th Jan	FAW Meeting	Kerry Baigent
31 st Jan	Lobby of parliament	Kerry Baigent and Helen Harrison
7 th Feb	TUC Womens Committee	Vicky Knight
8 th Feb	National Regional Education Officers Meeting	Dona Feltham
8 th Feb	Diversity Business Case Workshop	Kerry Baigent
16 th Feb	Re-call conference	Vicky Knight, Dona Feltham, Kerry Baigent, Emma Carr, Sam Rye, Jo Winrow-Jones and Helen Harrison
27 th and 28 th Feb	All section meet to compile FBU response to ODPM promotion and leadership document	Kerry Baigent
7 th March	TUC Womens Committee	Vicky Knight
22 nd March	Re-call Conference	Vicky Knight, Kerry Baigent, Jo Winrow –Jones, Emma Carr, Sam Rye and Helen Harrison
8 th April	National Education Committee. (Sub ed)	Dona Feltham
21 st and 22 nd April	NAW AGM	Sam Rye and Helen Harrison
24 th and 25 th April	International School	Kerry Baigent
27 th April	Women ff's awareness campaign briefing	Kerry Baigent and Helen Harrison
1 st May	May Day Rally	Kerry Baigent and Julie Barton
2 nd May	NFS meeting Head Office	Kerry Baigent
9 th May	TUC Womens Committee	Vicky Knight

9 th May (pm)	Today's Woman	Vicky Knight and Kerry Baigent
10 th May	Trade Union Freedom Bill seminar	Kerry Baigent and Vicky Knight
16 th May	Launch of women ff's awareness campaign	Kerry Baigent and Sally Harper
23 rd May	TUC Womens Committee	Vicky Knight
8 th June	TUC Equality Briefing	Vicky Knight
14 th June	NWFS and FBU meeting	Vicky Knight, Dona Feltham and Kerry Baigent
1 st July	Wortley Festival	Vicky Knight
1 st July	Euro Pride	Dona Feltham
3 rd July	Membership Packs meeting	Kerry Baigent
4 th July	FAW meeting	Kerry Baigent
6 th July	Abortion Rights public Meeting	Kerry Baigent, Vicky Knight, Dona Feltham.
7 th – 9 th July	NWFS – FBU Stall	Kerry Baigent, Vicky Knight, Emma Carr and Helen Harrison
11 th July	TUC Womens Committee	Vicky Knight
14 th – 16 th July	Tolpuddle	Kerry Baigent, Vicky Knight, Helen Harrison and Jo Winrow-Jones
17 th and 18 th July	Diversity and equality Conference	Vicky Knight
8 th September	CPD officials meeting	Vicky Knight, Dona Feltham and Kerry Baigent
11 th September	TUC Womens Committee	Vicky Knight
18 th September	Charter for Women	Kerry Baigent
21 st September	Campaign Co-ordinators CPD	Kerry Baigent
21 st September (pm)	Justice for Colombia conference: War on Women	Kerry Baigent
27 th September	Equality Stakeholders group	Kerry Baigent
9 th October	TUC Womens Committee	Vicky Knight
11 th October	Angela Smith lobbying meeting	Vicky Knight and Kerry Baigent
16 th October	Meeting with Judy Foster, UNISON	Kerry Baigent
17 th October	Meeting with Doug Mackay (CFOA – equalities)	Vicky Knight and Kerry Baigent

18 th and 19 th October	Avon – women leaders conference	Vicky Knight, Dona Feltham, Kerry Baigent, Helen Harrison, Sally Harper and Sian Griffiths
24 th October	The retention of women firefighters tender panel	Kerry Baigent
26 th October	Meeting with DCLG Officers	Vicky Knight, Kerry Baigent, Dona Feltham and Helen Harrison
27 th and 28 th October	B&EMM school	Dona Feltham
30 th October to 2 nd November	All officials seminars	Kerry Baigent and Dona Feltham
7 th – 8 th November	Officials school (Region 13)	Kerry Baigent, Helen Harrison, Emma Carr and Denise Christie
14 th November	FRS Equalities seminar	Helen Harrison
14 th November	Sub education meeting	Dona Feltham
15 th November	Meeting with Judy Foster - UNSION	Vicky Knight and Kerry Baigent
16 th November	Meeting with ICM re retention of women ff's research	Kerry Baigent

6. Affiliations and Donations

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- Abortion Rights
- Sylvia Pankhurst Memorial Statue
- National Assembly of Women
- The Charter for Women
- Justice for Colombia

8. Women's Annual School

Wortley Hall Sheffield

7th – 9th April 06

Tutors: Lorene Fabian, Julie Weakes and Mary Davis

Students: 53

Children: 37

The School programme was

Day one

TIME	TOPIC	LOCATION
14.00	Welcome	Ball Room
14.15	FBU Structures, stage 1 and 2	Stage 1 Ball Room Stage 2 Library
15.15	Tea Break	Bar Area
15.30	Regional groups Intros/expenses etc	Ballroom
16.30	Ruth Winters (President) Overview	Ballroom
17.30	End of day 1	
18.00	Dinner	

Day 2

TIME	TOPIC	LOCATION
09.30	Women, Class and Oppression - Mary Davis	Ball Room
11.30	Tea Break	Bar Area
11.45	Abortion Rights - Anne Quesney	Ball Room
13.00	Lunch	
14.00	International Speaker - Kurdistan	Ball Room
15.00	Workshops	Various
17.30	End of day two	
18.00	Dinner	

Day 3

TIME	TOPIC	LOCATION
09.30	Workshops	Various
12.00	Regional organisation	Ball Room
13.00	End of school review	Ball Room
14.00	School closes/lunch	

Workshop choices at the school

A. Harassment and Bullying in the workplace

This workshop is designed to equip women with the skills needed to identify bullying and harassment in the workplace. We will look at the different approaches and techniques that can be adopted when challenging bullying and harassment in the workplace. Vicky Knight and Helen Harrison will be running this workshop.

This workshop is suitable for members of any level of experience.

B. Women's History

- Saturday - **Women's work**: women in the labour market from 19th to 21st centuries
- Sunday - **Women fight back**: women in the labour movement from 19th to 21st centuries

This workshop is designed to give women an insight into our own history, struggles and achievements over three decades. Mary Davis is running this workshop and will use some great slides to stimulate interaction/debate with the students.

This workshop is designed for all members

C. Find Your Voice (Speaking up for yourselves)

Ever wanted to get a message across, put points over at a branch meeting, speak in a formal setting like a conference? This workshop is aimed at women who would like to develop their skills and confidence to enable them to 'speak up'. Working collectively in small groups, we will develop key techniques for researching, putting your message together breathing and speaking techniques and body language. Julie Weakes will be running this workshop.

This Workshop is suitable for members who lack confidence and/or skills when speaking in public and will run across the two workshop periods.

D. Pensions – LGPS and FPS

This workshop is designed to help you understand your current pension arrangements and to fully understand the consequences of any changes that have taken place. Julie Shuttleworth from Thompson's will be running this workshop.

This workshop is suitable for members of any experience level

E. Stress and work related stress – How to deal with it!

Stress is a natural reaction to certain events in our lives and we each have our own physical and mental response. Problems arise when it is unrecognised or badly managed. We can't wave a magic wand and make stressful situations disappear, but we will examine the causes and symptoms of stress and our reactions to it, and consider ways to deal more effectively with these, including the avenues

open to employees to tackle work-related stress. The sessions are very informal and interactive and feedback from previous participants has always been positive. WHISC will be running this workshop.
This workshop is suitable for members of any experience level

F. Lets get involved in the FBU

The aims of this workshop are to develop and practice the skills needed to take part in FBU meetings. We will look at the many different roles within the Union, gain a better understanding of how the equality structures work, identify best practice when running a meeting and finally in groups we will present an issue at a mock branch meeting. Lorene Fabian will be running this workshop.

This workshop is suitable for members with little experience of the FBU.

9. Other areas of work that the NWC have undertaken

Women's EC member election

On the 19th April Vicky Knight was re-elected unopposed to represent women members of the FBU. Congratulations to Vicky.

New/old Reps

The Committee has got one new regional representative (Jenny Impey region 12) welcome to Jenny and Jo Winrow-Jones (Region 5) has stood down. Thank you to Jo for all her amazing hard work and for being a wonderful sister to all. Jo will continue to support the NWC and will still be a woman activist within the FBU.

Siren

We have produced two copies of Siren this year. The publication will be done under the new format next year which is an 8 page Siren issued four times a year.

Firefighter

The NWC has written the following articles for Firefighter:
National Firefighter Selection Tests
Shift patterns
Select committee findings on Diversity

NWC Papers

The NWC wrote the following papers:
TUC consultation on childcare
Briefing note for Angela Smith
CPD Briefing note for officials

NWC Campaign - Women against shift changes

The NWC launched a campaign on this subject following the research published showing that 96.9% of all women who work the 2.2.4 shift system support it. The NWC produced flyers, newsletters and issued press releases.

Abortion Rights Campaign

The NWC have worked hard to raise the pro-choice campaign amongst the FBU membership. We have lobbied MPS and promoted the campaign wherever we have gone. The NWC moved an emergency resolution at the WTUC in March.

Support and advice to women members

NWC Officials have represented 56 women in the year 2006

Brigade Womens Committees

This year has seen the work of the past start to take hold in regard to the organisation of Womens Committees. We have seen newly formed and active Brigade Womens Committees in Lothian and Borders, Fife, Merseyside, Hereford and Worcester and Warwickshire

Supporting Brigade Disputes

The NWC have supported in various ways the different disputes that have taken place through out the year. Women members have sent letters of support, made telephone calls and stood on picket lines with our Comrades across the UK. Well done to all members in Cleveland, Hertfordshire, Staffordshire, Retford and Merseyside for your strength and determination.