



Fire Brigades Union

# National Women's Committee

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## National Women's Committee Annual Report to Women Members AGM 2007

The Fire Brigades Union

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# National Women's Committee

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## 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/Denise Christie
Region 2	Lynda Rowan
Region 3	Samantha Rye
Region 4	No rep
Region 5	No rep
Region 6	Staci Leach
Region 7	Helen Harrison
Region 8	No rep
Region 9	Emma Davis
Region 10	Sally Harper
Region 11	Jenny Impey
Region 12	Julie Barton (resigned in early 07 – to become the regional official for region 12)
Region 13	Pauline Layhe

## 2. National Women's Committee Meetings

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

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Location</b>
12 <sup>th</sup> December 2006	NWC exec	Wortley Hall
13 <sup>th</sup> December 2006	NWC business meeting	Wortley Hall
21 <sup>st</sup> February	NWC working meeting	Wortley Hall
22 <sup>nd</sup> February	NWC full business meeting	Wortley Hall
20 <sup>th</sup> June	NWC working meeting	Wortley Hall
21 <sup>st</sup> June	NWC full business meeting	Wortley Hall
1 <sup>st</sup> August	NWC business meeting	London
17 <sup>th</sup> September	NWC business meeting	London
18 <sup>th</sup> October	NWC full business meeting	Wortley Hall
19 <sup>th</sup> October	NWC working meeting	Wortley Hall

### 3. Committees that the NWC were represented at in 2006/07

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

<b>FBU committees</b>	<b>NWC Official</b>
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	Kerry Baigent
Firefighter Representative	Sam Rye

<b>TUC Committees</b>	<b>NWC Official</b>
TUC Women's Committee	Vicky Knight
TUC Gold Badge Panel	Vicky Knight

<b>Other Committees</b>	<b>NWC Official</b>
Charter for Women	Kerry Baigent/Sian Griffiths
CLG Retention of Women ff's strategy Group	Kerry Baigent
Equality and Diversity Stakeholder Group	Vicky Knight

## 4. Conferences/events attended by NWC with speaking commitments

### WTUC Scarborough 14<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> March 2007

#### **Delegation:**

Ruth Winters  
Vicky Knight  
Dona Feltham  
Kerry Baigent  
Patsy Griffith  
Sian Griffiths  
Sue Offland

The following resolutions were passed by Conference. "Women in Zimbabwe" was the substantive motion and "Childcare" was our emergency motion.

### ***WOMEN IN ZIMBABWE***

Conference welcomes the TUC's long standing relations with the trade union movement in Zimbabwe, particularly the most informative visit from Tabitha Khumalo to Congress 2006.

We now recognise that there is much support and assistance required from affiliates to assist women in Zimbabwe, millions of whom, due to financial and political constraints, are without safe affordable sanitary products.

The lack of this most basic requirement leads, via improvised sanitary protection, to an increase in vaginal infections, infertility and depression. Drug shortages mean that treatment is either unaffordable or unavailable and domestic violence is increasing due to a lack of understanding and knowledge regarding the difference between STI's and vaginal infections.

The situation for Zimbabwean women is at crisis point.

Conference calls upon the TUC and its affiliates to:

- i) write to the Zimbabwe Government via the Zimbabwe High Commission;
- ii) lobby the UK Government to support the campaign;
- iii) keep pressure on the TUC to take all possible steps to achieve the campaign's objectives;
- iv) support the ACTSA campaign;
- v) send donations to the sanitary appeal; and
- vi) download and distribute "Dignity.Period!" information.

## **Emergency Motion**

### Childcare – FBU emergency motion

Conference deplores the decision of the General Council, reported to the TUC Womens Committee on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2007, not to expand the current childcare provisions for conferences and events run by the TUC. We are appalled that this decision has been taken despite the overwhelming endorsement by delegates to the TUC Women's Conference 2006 to expand childcare provision.

The TUC Women's Committee have repeatedly made it clear that inadequate, inappropriate and unaffordable childcare is a huge barrier to parents and carers and in particular, to women's involvement in the trade union and labour movement.

We believe that childcare provision for conference hours solely, is certainly not adequate for delegates wishing to expand their knowledge and experience at any conference, e.g. fringe events or organised social events such as the International Women's Day rally this year, or simply to network and debate outside of session times.

Conference further deplores the General Councils decision which has based its conclusion not to expand childcare provision on the lack of commitment or response from affiliates during the recent childcare consultation. This Conference believes that the TUC should be a 'Leader' of best practice, not solely the provider of the 'average' of its affiliates.

This resolution was chosen by conference to be the motion proposed to main congress in September.

Ruth Winters spoke at the Latin America 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 great speeches.

### **TUC 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> September – Brighton**

Dona Feltham was part of the FBU delegation to the TUC and seconded the childcare motion moved by the TUC Women's Committee. This resolution fell, however we will come back again next year.

### **STUC Women's Conference – 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> November - Glasgow**

Delegates:

Denise Christie

Kerry Baigent

Linda Shanahan

Julia Small

Rachael Connolly

The FBU submitted two resolutions, maternity and dignity period, both were carried by conference. Denise Christie was elected onto the STUC Women's Committee – congratulations Denise

Linda Shanahan was presented with the STUC meritorious award by the chair of the conference. Linda deserved this award for her amazing commitment to the trade union movement. Linda has been a tremendous support to the FBU Women's Committee over many years and we congratulate her on her achievements. We can't think of anyone else more deserving. The NWC sent a bouquet of flowers to Linda at the conference.

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

Date	Event	NWC Attendees
22nd November 2006	Pro choice Lobby	Kerry Baigent, Jo Winrow-Jones, and Sally Harper
5 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup> December 2006	EC	Vicky Knight
7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> December 2006	Transnational conference	Dona Feltham
14 <sup>th</sup> and 15 <sup>th</sup> December 2006	NJC	Vicky Knight
19 <sup>th</sup> December 2006	CLG – retention of women firefighters meeting	Kerry Baigent
22 <sup>nd</sup> December 2006	NASUWT	Vicky Knight
9 <sup>th</sup> January 2007	DHPB	Vicky Knight
12 <sup>th</sup> January	Equality and Diversity stakeholders group	Vicky Knight
16 <sup>th</sup> January	TUC Women's Committee	Vicky Knight
17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> January	Grievance training	NWC
19 <sup>th</sup> January	Special EC	Vicky Knight
24 <sup>th</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup> January	ADAE meeting	Kerry Baigent
1 <sup>st</sup> February – am	Re-organisation sub committee	Vicky Knight
1 <sup>st</sup> February – pm	International sub committee	Vicky Knight
5 <sup>th</sup> February	EC	Vicky Knight
6 <sup>th</sup> February	NJC	Vicky Knight
7 <sup>th</sup> February	CLG workshop on the FRS equality and diversity strategy	Kerry Baigent, Dona Feltham, Vicky Knight and Helen Harrison
7 <sup>th</sup> February	London Women's School	Sally Harper and Sian Griffiths
12 <sup>th</sup> February	Re-org sub committee	Vicky Knight
13 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup> February	EC	Vicky Knight
16 <sup>th</sup> February	Pensions seminar	Kerry Baigent
20 <sup>th</sup> February	TUPE seminar	Vicky Knight and Kerry Baigent

26 <sup>th</sup> February	IER	Vicky Knight
26 <sup>th</sup> February	Charter for Women	Sian Griffiths
28 <sup>th</sup> February	TUFB Conference	Vicky Knight
8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> March	NJC	Vicky Knight
8 <sup>th</sup> March	TUC – International Women’s Day	NWC Exec
12 <sup>th</sup> March	TUC Women’s Committee	Vicky Knight
13 <sup>th</sup> – 16 <sup>th</sup> March	WTUC	NWC Delegation
21 <sup>st</sup> and 22 <sup>nd</sup> March	Equality Seminar	Kerry Baigent
26 <sup>th</sup> March	CLG – retention meeting	Kerry Baigent
27 <sup>th</sup> March	FAW meeting	Kerry Baigent
2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> April	Legal Conference	Dona Feltham
3 <sup>rd</sup> April	FAW meeting	Kerry Baigent
4 <sup>th</sup> April	Sections meeting – Head office	Vicky Knight, Kerry Baigent and Dona Feltham
5 <sup>th</sup> April	NJC working party	Vicky Knight
12 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup> April	Women’s School	NWC
16 <sup>th</sup> April	Campaign Coordinators	Kerry Baigent
18 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> April	TUC equality course	Kerry Baigent
19 <sup>th</sup> April	Special EC	Vicky Knight
25 <sup>th</sup> April	SW TUC Women’s conference	Vicky Knight
25 <sup>th</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup> April	Region 13 Annual Conference school	Kerry Baigent, Helen Harrison, Pauline Layhe, Vicky Knight and Denise Christie
3 <sup>rd</sup> May	NJC working party	Vicky Knight
8 <sup>th</sup> May	EC	Vicky Knight
9 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup> May	Annual Conference	Vicky Knight, Kerry Baigent, Dona Feltham, Helen Harrison, Sam Rye, Emma Carr, Jo Winrow-Jones, Jenny Impey and Lisa Smethurst
19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> May	NAW	Dona Feltham, Sam Rye
21 <sup>st</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	FAW Strategy Group	Kerry Baigent

31 <sup>st</sup> May	Cornwall rally	Kerry Baigent and Dona Feltham
5 <sup>th</sup> June	CLG	Kerry Baigent
12 <sup>th</sup> June	Membership Pack Meeting	Kerry Baigent
26 <sup>th</sup> June	FAW meeting	Kerry Baigent
28 <sup>th</sup> June	CLG meeting	Kerry Baigent, Dona Feltham and Helen Harrison
17 <sup>th</sup> July	Control seminar	Kerry Baigent and Dona Feltham
19 <sup>th</sup> July	Membership pack meeting	Kerry Baigent
16 <sup>th</sup> August	Charter for Women Meeting	Kerry Baigent
17 <sup>th</sup> August	Sylvia Pankhurst Memorial Lecture	Kerry Baigent, Dona Feltham and Helen Harrison
22 <sup>nd</sup> August	EC	Dona Feltham
10 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> September	TUC	Dona Feltham
13 <sup>th</sup> September	FAW meeting	Kerry Baigent
18 <sup>th</sup> September	Equality and Diversity Project Board	Kerry Baigent
18 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> September	EC	Dona Feltham
1 <sup>st</sup> October	Equality and Diversity Stakeholders Group	Kerry Baigent
2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> October	Health and Safety meeting	Sally Harper
4 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> October	How to be an effective rep school	Kerry Baigent, Helen Harrison, Sam Rye and Pauline Layhe
9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> October	Avon LGBT conference	Kerry Baigent
12 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> November	WSTUC	Denise Christie, Kerry Baigent, Julie Small, Rachael Connolly and Linda Shanahan
16 <sup>th</sup> November	CLG meeting – survey	Helen Harrison

## 6. Affiliations and Donations

### **6. Affiliations and donations**

- Abortion Rights
- Sylvia Pankhurst Memorial Statue
- National Assembly of Women
- The Charter for Women
- Dignity Period - ACTSA

## 8. Women's Annual School

### **Wortley Hall Sheffield 13<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> April 2007**

This Years Theme was **Enthusing Educating Empowering**

56 FBU Women attended alongside 6 Women from the UFUA (Australian firefighting union)  
35 children attended

Our International Speaker was Lucia Matibenga from Zimbabwe TUC

Our other speakers were:

Megan Dobney Regional Secretary SERTUC

Terry Marsland National Assembly Women

Matt Wrack FBU General Secretary

Our TUC Tutors were: Theresa Bennett, Lorene Fabian and Julie Weekes from Dunstable College.

Workshops were:

Workplace Bullying - Identify and challenge it: Helen Harrison and Emma Carr

Women in the Fire Service: Lorene Fabian, Dona Feltham and Julie Small

Finding Your Voice: Theresa Bennett and Vicky Knight

Pensions - Local Government and Firefighters Pension Scheme: Ivan Walker and Sam Rye.

Know your rights -Family Friendly Legislation: Jo White, Jenny Impey and Sam Rye

Campaigning. Terry Marsland, Sally Harper and Sue Offland

FBU Women's Charter: Julie Weekes, Theresa Bennett and NWC

Moving forward together: Lorene Fabian, Theresa Bennett and NWC

The school was a great success with incredible reviews and some great ideas for next years school, which is being held on the 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> March 2008. The application form is on the back of the November issue of Siren.

## 9. Other areas of work that the NWC have undertaken

### **Brigade Women's Committees**

The agenda set by the NWC for the past 12 months was to prioritise our work around the organisation of FBU women members. We have therefore organised and held meetings for the first time in the following FRS': Grampian, Strathclyde, Lothian and Borders, Tayside, Cleveland, Northumberland, Humberside, West Yorkshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands, Kent, Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Wiltshire, Avon, Gloucestershire and finally Dorset. These meetings have been held in addition to the continuing work of the already established Brigade Women's Committees in regions previously represented at the NWC. All of these meetings were organised with the support of local officials and we have been really encouraged by this joint approach and thank those officials for their support.

### **Regional Women's Committees**

Due to the above mentioned work in FRS' the NWC has progressed the Regional Women's Committees even further. In region 1, region 11 and region 13 – the NWC now has functioning committees with dedicated officials. The regions that are already well established have, in the main, continued to organise and have grown stronger with better representation. This is down to NWC officials' tireless work and the support of active women in these areas. We would also like to thank the regional officials in those areas that have provided great support in getting meetings off the ground.

### **Website**

The website has continued to be updated throughout the year with new sections being placed on it. Of particular note is the women members' calendar, which has been designed to enable women members to access it to see what is going on in their area. Please view on [www.nwcfbu.co.uk](http://www.nwcfbu.co.uk)

### **Committee Education**

The committee held its own grievance training at the start of the year. This training has enabled officials to gain some vital knowledge on the complexities of grievances. Of particular note for NWC reps is that many of our grievances could end up at an ET and as such the type of skills gained at this training event was vital. In addition to this training the South West Region invited members of the NWC to attend the two schools they ran in 2007. These schools provided terrific education for members of the NWC and we would like to thank the South West region for inviting us and enabling members of the NWC to continue to develop.

### **CLG work**

NWC officials have been working hard with the CLG this year on two main areas. The first area is the fire-fighter survey carried out in the summer. The NWC advised CLG on the types of questions needed to be asked and have been involved at all meetings. The results will be formalised and put into the public domain later this year. The NWC has set up a sub committee to look at the results and to develop a strategy that will help to protect women members from any backlash that could occur and to ensure that the findings are pursued properly. The second area of work has been around the development of the FRS equality and diversity strategy. The FBU are represented by John McGhee on the main body that is working on the strategy, but the NWC have been involved in discussions around the targets for FRS'. The strategy has recently been sent out for consultation and the NWC will continue to be fully involved in that.

### **Facilities**

Due to the NWC resolution on facilities being passed at Annual Conference this year, the FAW committee in conjunction with the health and safety committee have carried out a survey of all FRS workplaces. The results are currently being collated. The main area of our opposition is the notion by some FRS' that unisex facilities will help to challenge the culture. The NWC oppose this view and as such a resolution of this nature has been put to this AGM.

### **Women's secretary and Chair election**

Both Kerry and Dona were re-elected unopposed in the secretary and chair elections in 2007

### **New/old Reps**

The Committee has seen the election of two new regional NWC officials, Denise Christie – region 1 and Pauline Layhe – region 13, a big welcome to Denise and Pauline who have been working tirelessly since they were elected. Thank you to Heather Lawrie, Gayle Banks and Julie Barton, who have had to stand down from their positions for various reasons, for all their work on behalf of women members.

### **Siren**

We have produced three copies of Siren this year. Siren has been distributed to branches and to women members' home addresses. We have received positive feedback about Siren this year.

### **NWC Papers**

The NWC wrote the following papers:

1. Maternity, adoption and breastfeeding negotiating document
2. TUC childcare review
3. Assisted John McGhee on the re-write of ADAE
4. Welcome to the FBU and the NWC booklet

### **Support and advice to women members**

NWC Officials have represented 50 women in the year 2007.

**This has been a really great year for the NWC who have all worked really hard. I would like to thank you all on behalf of the Exec for all your hard work and commitment, the work you are doing and have done is paying off – well done.**

**Kerry Baigent  
NWC Secretary**