

## **The National Women's Committee Annual Report**

### **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 - Denise Christie

#### **Regional Representatives:**

Region 1 - Denise Christie

Region 2 - Lynda Rowan-O'Neil

Region 3 - Samantha Rye

Region 4 - Patricia Jefferey

Region 5 - Vacancy

Region 6 - Helen Tooley

Region 7 - Helen Harrison

Region 8 - Joanne Byrne

Region 9 - Emma Davis

Region 10 - Sally Harper

Region 11 - Jenny Impey

Region 12 - Vacancy

Region 13 - Diane Critchlow

### **National Women's Committee Meetings**

The National Women's Committee met on the following occasions this year:

18<sup>th</sup> February - NWC Working Meeting - Wortley Hall

19<sup>th</sup> February - NWC Full Business Meeting - Wortley Hall

27<sup>th</sup> April - NWC Annual Conference Delegation Meeting - Birmingham

10<sup>th</sup> June - NWC Working Meeting - Wortley Hall

11<sup>th</sup> June - NWC Full Business Meeting - Wortley Hall

2<sup>nd</sup> September - NWC Working Meeting - Wortley Hall

3<sup>rd</sup> September - NWC Full Business meeting - Wortley Hall

2<sup>nd</sup> December - Women Representatives AGM - Wortley Hall

3<sup>rd</sup> December - NWC Committee AGM - Wortley Hall

### **Committees that the NWC were represented at:**

#### **FBU Executive Council Sub Committees**

International sub-committee - Vicky Knight

National Education Committee - Vicky Knight

#### **FBU Committees**

National Fairness at Work Committee - Kerry Baigent  
National Fairness at Work Strategy Group - Kerry Baigent  
National Education Committee - Helen Harrison/Kerry Baigent  
Regional Education Officers Committee - Helen Harrison/Kerry Baigent  
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  
FF Fatalities campaign - Kerry Baigent  
Firefighter Representative - Sam Rye

### **TUC Committees**

TUC Women's Committee - Vicky Knight  
TUC Gold Badge Panel - Vicky Knight

### **Other Committees**

Charter for Women - Kerry Baigent  
CLG Workplace Facilities sub group - Vicky Knight  
CLG Exit interviews sub group - Vicky Knight  
Equality and Diversity Stakeholder Group - Vicky Knight

### **Conferences/events attended by NWC with speaking commitments WTUC**

#### **Scarborough 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

Delegates:

Vicky Knight - TUC Women's Committee Member  
Kerry Baigent – Delegation Leader  
Dona Feltham  
Denise Christie  
Jo Byrne  
Sam Rye  
Sam Samuels  
Yannick Dubois

The theme of the TUC 2009 Women's conference was 'Women and the Global Recession' and it was formally opened on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March by Annette Mansell-Green (Unison) Chair of conference and a TUC Women's Committee member.

Vicky Knight moved the FBU's motion on Shift Patterns,  
Jo Byrne Spoke in the flexible working debate  
Denise Christie spoke in support of Iraqi women

Sam Samuels (BE&MM) spoke in support of a composite motion regarding women's political representation

Sam Rye (Region 3) seconded a motion entitled Gender Sensitive Health, Safety and Welfare (FBU Compositated motion)

Dona Feltham supported the resolution Prison, a dumping ground for women

Kerry Baigent (NWC Secretary) contributed to a debate around the issues of prostitution and trafficking

The FBU women attended fringe meetings on "The Charter for Women and the Crisis of Capitalism" and "Women, Class and the Crisis of Capitalism.'

**82<sup>nd</sup> Annual STUC Women's Conference**  
**10<sup>th</sup> And 11<sup>th</sup> November 2009**  
**Caird Hall, Dundee**

**Chair:**

Pauline Rourke CWU

**FBU Delegates:**

Denise Christie – STUC Women's Committee Member, Regional & L&B Women's Rep, Delegation leader

Sharon Sales Mossop – Strathclyde Women's Rep

Kerry Walker – Dumfries & Galloway Women's Rep

Kerry Baigent – NWC Secretary

**FBU Motions:**

"Public Sector Cuts" moved by Sharon Sales Mossop (carried)

"Scottish & Local Government Equality Agenda" moved by Kerry Walker (carried)

**FBU Emergency Motion:**

Scottish & English Defence League (SDL) moved by Denise Christie (carried)

Denise Christie introduced the 8 Palestinian firefighters to Conference and talked on the opportunities and experiences they had during their time in Scotland. The STUC Women's committee presented them all with small gifts. The firefighters addressed Conference thanking the FBU for the opportunity and their hospitality, friendship and kindness during their visit. Delegates were then invited to a reception lunch with them in order to hear first hand their experiences and to have photographs taken. Feedback from delegates was very positive as it highlighted the importance of International work the STUC carries out.

The FBU delegation also had an opportunity to meet and speak with the firefighters at the Chairs Reception the evening before Conference commenced.

## **Wales TUC Annual Women's Conference**

**19<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

**The Heronston Hotel, Bridgend**

### **Chair:**

Sian Wiblin - also vice president of Wales TUC

### **FBU Delegates:**

Jo Byrne - Regional & SWFRS Women's Rep, Delegation leader

Tania Morris – NWFRS Women's Rep

### **FBU speeches:**

Gender specific language in policy ending violence against women (GMB) – Jo Byrne spoke in support

Appeal - Knickers4africa campaign, Jo managed to persuade the chair to agenda this item and made the appeal on behalf of the NWC.

### **Other Conferences and Events attended on behalf of the NWC**

13<sup>th</sup> January - TUC Women's Committee - Vicky Knight

20<sup>th</sup> January - National FAW meeting - Kerry Baigent

26<sup>th</sup> January - Charter for Women - Kerry Baigent

26<sup>th</sup> January - Region 1 Women's AGM - Denise Christie

27<sup>th</sup> January - Pay and the Economy Seminar - Vicky Knight and Kerry Baigent

10<sup>th</sup> February - TUC Women's Committee - Vicky Knight

12<sup>th</sup> February - Region 8 Women's Meeting - Jo Byrne

27<sup>th</sup> February - IER Conference - Vicky Knight

23<sup>rd</sup> February - Charter for Women - Kerry Baigent

10<sup>th</sup> March - TUC Women's Committee - Vicky Knight

10<sup>th</sup> March - Region 7 Women's Committee - Helen Harrison

11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> March - WTUC - Vicky Knight, Kerry Baigent, Dona Feltham, Denise Christie, Sam Rye, Jo Byrne, Sam Samuels and Yannick Dubois.

14<sup>th</sup> March - Kirkaldy T/U event - Denise Christie

23<sup>rd</sup> March - High potential sub committee - Vicky Knight, Kerry Baigent, Helen Harrison and Helen Tooley

24<sup>th</sup> March am - CLG Workstream - Vicky Knight

24<sup>th</sup> March pm - Meeting with Minister - Vicky Knight and Kerry Baigent

30<sup>th</sup> March - Region 5 Women's AGM - Vicky Knight

3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> April - Women's School - NWC

13<sup>th</sup> April - Region 13 Women's Meeting - Di Critchlow and Kerry Baigent

17<sup>th</sup> April - London Women's Committee (WAC) Meeting - Sally Harper/ Sian Griffiths

22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> April - Equal opportunities school - Belfast - Kerry Baigent, Denise Christie and Sally Harper

25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> April - NAW AGM - Jo Byrne, Jenny Impey and Helen Harrison

30<sup>th</sup> April - Sections education meeting re: schools - Helen Harrison  
13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> May - Annual Conference - NWC  
2<sup>nd</sup> June - National FAW Meeting - Kerry Baigent, Helen Harrison, Jo Byrne and Sam Rye (On behalf of regions)  
4<sup>th</sup> June - TUC Equality briefing - Vicky Knight  
19<sup>th</sup> June - Region 9 Women's AGM - Kerry Baigent and Emma Davis  
21<sup>st</sup> July - Campaign co-ordinators - Kerry Baigent  
7<sup>th</sup> August - FAW - Flexible Working Sub Committee - Kerry Baigent  
11<sup>th</sup> August - Fairness and Equality update School - Kerry Baigent and Helen Harrison  
18<sup>th</sup> August - CLG Facilities meeting - Vicky Knight  
26<sup>th</sup> August - CLG meeting - Vicky Knight  
28<sup>th</sup> August - Region 7 Women's Meeting - Helen Harrison  
14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> September - TUC - Vicky Knight  
15<sup>th</sup> September - Region 3 Women Members AGM - Sam Rye  
18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> September - Region 13 Women's AGM - Di Critchlow and Kerry Baigent  
18<sup>th</sup> September – EDSG - Vicky Knight  
22<sup>nd</sup> September - Regional Education Officers - Kerry Baigent and Vicky Knight  
23<sup>rd</sup> September - National Education Officers - Vicky Knight and Kerry Baigent  
25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> September - Northern Ireland Political School - Kerry Baigent and Jo Byrne  
28<sup>th</sup> September - South Yorkshire Rally - Kerry Baigent and Helen Harrison  
28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> September - Organising and Planning Education - Kerry Baigent  
1<sup>st</sup> October - National FAW Meeting - Sam Rye  
1<sup>st</sup> October - Region 1 Women's Meeting - Denise Christie and Kerry Baigent  
2<sup>nd</sup> October - TUC Equality Reps Course - Vicky Knight  
5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> October - National Health and Safety Meeting - Kerry Baigent  
9<sup>th</sup> October - TUC Equality Reps Course - Vicky Knight  
16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> October - G and L School - Sam Rye  
21<sup>st</sup> October - National Rally - NWC  
27<sup>th</sup> October - TUC Women's Committee - Vicky Knight  
28<sup>th</sup> October - Region 7 Women's AGM - Helen Harrison  
1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> November - National School - Sam Rye and Jo Byrne  
3<sup>rd</sup> November - IER Equality Law update - Vicky Knight  
5<sup>th</sup> November - am - HPLP Meeting Vicky Knight, Helen Harrison, Sally Harper and Helen Tooley  
5<sup>th</sup> November - pm - Sub education meeting Vicky Knight, Kerry Baigent, Helen Harrison and Sally Harper  
6<sup>th</sup> November - London Women's Committee (WAC) Meeting - Sally Harper/Sian Griffiths  
10<sup>th</sup> November - Liverpool university lecture - Vicky Knight  
9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> November - STUC Women's Conference - Denise Christie and Kerry Baigent  
17<sup>th</sup> November - Region 13 Women's Meeting - Di Critchlow and Kerry Baigent  
18<sup>th</sup> November - Region 8 Women's AGM - Jo Byrne

19<sup>th</sup> November - Wales TUC Women's Conference - Jo Byrne

19<sup>th</sup> November - National Education Committee - Vicky Knight and Kerry Baigent

20<sup>th</sup> November - EDSG - Vicky Knight

### **Affiliations and donations**

- Abortion Rights
- NAW
- CSC
- Amnesty International
- Hands off Venezuela
- Unite Against Fascism
- Working Class Movement Library
- ACTSA
- Fawcett Society Campaign for Equal Pay
- Charter for Women

### **NWC School 2009**

Students: 61

Children: 35

TUC Tutors: Julie Weekes, Michele Marshall and Teresa Bennett

The School was celebrating 10 years of the NWC formalized within the FBU. As such the school was opened by John McGhee who highlighted to students the work carried out by the FBU NWC on behalf of members. He introduced the FBU DVD entitled we are 10 – celebrating a decade of progress for FBU Women and the school then watched the DVD.

Students then held table top discussions in their regions regarding what they had been involved in over the last 10 years and what some of their issues were.

Saturday started with workshops and the women were able to attend two over the course of the day'

The School also had a number of guest speakers and plenary sessions working in regional groups.

The school closed at 1.30 on Sunday and the feed back has been very positive. We have some great suggestions for next year and will try and put as many of them into the agenda at the 2010 school.

## **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 continue our work around the organisation of FBU women members. We have recorded the Regional Women's Meetings earlier on in this report, but in addition to those there has been a huge number of Womens Meetings held within Brigades. These meetings have been held in addition to the continuing work of the regular meetings that are already galvanised within organised Brigades.

### **Website**

The website has continued to be updated throughout the year and the regional reps have kept the members calendar updated.

### **FBU Minimum Workplace Facilities, Best Practice Document**

Following on from the launch of this document, the CLG announced that they had released additional funding to Fire Authorities in England. The NWC developed a strategy to establish what the Brigades were using the additional funding for and to 'get in' early enough to influence the spending. We have seen some progress on facilities within the UK FRS and I am pleased to report that we are continuing our campaign against unisex facilities with some success.

### **Women's Sanitary Packs and Welfare Units**

We have seen some real gains in this area across the UK. Many Brigades have purchased welfare units for the fire ground and some are looking into purchasing them. The FBU has done really well in this area – finally we are beginning to move away from going to the toilet behind a tree scenario.

With the event of Globehuggers being contacted by Strathclyde FBU to provide welfare packs on appliances, this company read our policy and saw a business niche in the market which was to our advantage and have set about supplying bespoke welfare packs to many other Brigades. The Women's Committee has played a pivotal role in this issue.

### **New/old Reps**

The Committee has seen the election of one new regional NWC rep in the year 2009; Di Critchlow region 13 – Di has already made a terrific impact within the region. A big thank you goes to Pauline Layhe and Kate Ellis who both resigned from the FRS at the beginning of the year. We wish them both every success for the future.

### **Siren**

We have produced two copies of Siren this year, which has been distributed to branches and women members' home addresses. The two magazines have been great campaigning tools and we have received many calls from women members who have been inspired by the contents. A thank you must go to Helen Hague and

Anna Zych for all their assistance on the production of the mag, with a big thank you to Tom Gill who has been of real assistance during his time at Head Office. Tom has resigned from the FBU and we wish him well in his new job.

### **Negotiating Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Rights Document**

Last year we learnt that the Isle of Wight had improved their policy to increase fully paid maternity leave to 39 weeks and this year we saw Staffordshire following suit, with several other Brigades improving upon their policies, such as Shropshire offering 26 weeks full pay followed by 13 weeks at half pay. Well done to all concerned.

### **Domestic Violence Policy**

Work is near completion on this policy and we are on the brink of circulating it out for wider consultation. Well done to all concerned; but a particular thank you to Jo and Diane for giving it their special attention.

### **Menopause Policy**

2009 saw the advent of the NWC's menopause strategy. We ran a workshop at our school, which was excellent and inspired many members to go away and begin to push for menopause to become a workplace and trade union issue locally. Several of the NWC reps have run workshops on the menopause at their local meetings/schools. The NWC has begun to write a menopause policy which we hope will be finalised by the middle of next year.