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Can a film stop homophobic bullying?

The statistics on homophobic bullying in schools make for a disturbing read. According to a 2009 Stonewall study, teachers reported 41% of gay children having been beaten up and 90% of secondary school teachers said that they had heard anti-gay taunts among pupils.

Last month, when the Government announced that by September all schools would be required to record homophobic bullying, along with all other kinds, in an attempt to combat the issue, the news was met with restrained optimism, but Schools Out, a charity against homophobia in education, warned that: "There needs to be some sort of action that goes with it to help teachers tackle homophobic bullying".

And now we have it: Stonewall has produced a feature film called *Fit* that dramatises the issue

and a DVD of which will be sent out to every secondary school in Britain next month.

In an hour and 45 minutes, more insight into gay youth issues, sexual identity and the nature of bullying is offered than in any other film that has broached these topics.

But how will they ensure that teachers actually show it in class? The makers of the film say they will be doing screenings around the country for teachers to come to and ask questions. Faith schools may prove harder to access. The Stonewall report found that 75% of young gay people there have been subject to homophobic abuse, 10 per cent higher than in secular schools.

Taken from an article in The Times by Patrick Strudwick, January 22nd 2010.



Equality Matters

Communication Workers Union - South West Region Equality & Diversity Newsletter

April / May 2010 Edition 10

TUC Women's Conference 2010 - A Century Of Solidarity

Colleagues will be aware that I attended this years TUC Women's conference as Vice Chair of the Women's Advisory Committee. There where 10 delegates to conference from The CWU this year including our National Equality Officer Linda Roy. We also had a CWU representative from the Trades Council.

The conference had a very full agenda, with 43 motions and two emergency motions submitted. The CWU motion was moved by Linda Roy and is as below:

Prop 15 Flexible Working.

Conference believes there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that the current laws concerning flexible working do not go far enough to support women who wish to balance care commitments with their work.

Why should women not have the right to return back to full-time work, once their care commitments ease after raising children? These are the types of questions that need to be fully considered – the working breaks that invariably fall on women's shoulders continue to disadvantage women in the workplace and more needs to be done to protect them.

Conference urges the incoming TUC Women's Committee to instigate a full review of the current flexible working regulations. This should include gathering data on the number of Employment Tribunal cases where the complaint has related to alleged breaches of flexible working. Confirmation of the number of successful outcomes against the number of applications

should also be clarified. Suitable recommendations to assist women in these situations should be considered, as part of the report. These suggestions are not exhaustive.

This motion was passed unanimously with speakers in support.

I spoke on three motions; Equal Pay in the private sector – the prop was carried. Call Centre working (calling for a call centre charter) – prop was carried, during my contribution on this prop I made reference to companies including Orange. Risk assessment for pregnant workers – this prop was also carried.

Another of our delegation spoke on the final prop of conference Women & Alcohol for which I provided the speech but did not speak myself as I had been up to rostrum on the previous prop colleagues may recall we had a branch prop to CWU Women's conference on Women and Alcohol moved by our Women's Officer Amanda Collick.

The guest speakers at the conference were: Doug Rooney, TUC President, Frances O'Grady TUC Deputy General Secretary, and the Rt. Hon. Harriet Harman MP, Minister for Women and Equality who took a short Q & A session following on from her contribution to conference.

I also attended the following two fringe meetings: A celebration of International Women's day with speakers Diana Holland Asst General Secretary Unite the Union and Chair of the ITUC women's committee.

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Equality Officers Profile

Hello. Please allow me to introduce myself, I am Lynn Hart The Equality & Diversity Officer for The South West & Thames Valley Branch, a large geographically challenged branch as we have members from the bottom of Cornwall up to and including Harmondsworth with approximately 2000 members give or take. I myself am based in Plymouth, cap badged to a BT Business Sales line of Business in BT Retail.

I started off a Local Occupational Committee member of my branch, and then know as The South West Clerical & Computing Branch when I was recruited into BT in 1998 – it only seems like yesterday! The following year I was afforded one days facilities as a workplace representative and, as the saying goes I have never looked back since!

I have enjoyed (?) full time union facilities for the past eight years during which time I have taken on, how shall I put this additional responsibilities and roles including from March 2009 the role as Equality & Diversity Officer for my branch. I am delighted to advise that my branch has always, without exception been in full support of all things Equality and my branch has one of the very few women branch chairs.

Taking over the role as Equality Officer last year fitted in quite well with my activities as a member of The Women's Advisory Council – where I am currently the Vice Chair.

Equality should be for everyone – equality is truly or should be at the heart of everything we do on a day to day basis and especially in our roles as union officers & representatives. Being in a union is all about ensuring the best for all our members regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation or disability – this I believe with all my heart – therefore I am more than happy, and honoured to be in The Equality Officers role for my branch.

Personally I don't care if an individual is bright yellow with blue hair (hang on think I just described Marge Simpson!) straight, gay, male, female, young old, disabled or whatever I see the person – I trust until I am given a reason not to - everybody at least for the first time gets the benefit of the doubt from me.

So in my role I have applied my principles to those within whom I come into contact and have been happy to explain why – I have an equality committee member in each of the parts of the branch who I regularly keep in contact with and they are my eyes and ears in their areas. I have and will continue to attend as many “equality events” & conferences as I can and encourage other representatives and members to attend where possible.

I am encouraged by the new GCSE & AS Level course on Citizenship in schools rolling out for the first time this year my own 17 year old son is taking AS and hopefully on to A Level Citizenship currently and there is a large section on equality in the course which supports my believes that you need to teach from an early age.

Finally, I feel I must mention the restrictions being imposed on Equality from within our own organisation and out with in terms of equality issues and the way in which they are dealt with especially in light of the General election – should we not strive as activists and interested individual to champion equality wherever we can we will be failing BIG TIME!

We will be taking steps note the use of the word steps and not step backwards and I would suggest at some speed – we cannot accept an erosion of the hard fought for advances that have been made in recent years we MUST demand Equal consideration for all Equality issues we MUST continue to engage with our membership to make them aware of the importance of Equality we MUST ensure we overcome any obstacles in our way.

Lynn Hart, South West & Thames Valley Branch, Equality & Diversity Officer.

Photo: Lynn at CWU LGBT Conference 2009



CWU Black Workers Conference 2010



This years CWU Black Workers conference was held in the Apex City Quay Hotel, Dundee (photo left) - the city of Discovery. It was my second visit to

Scotland in 4 months, as Devon and Somerset Branch's Equality officer, the first being the Disability conference 2009 as a member of the DSNAC . And for the second time the Apex was the perfect host.

We were welcomed to Dundee at the Friday night social by Dundee's Lord Provost. His speech underlined his support for trade unions and his delight in the multiculturalism of the City of Dundee and he wished the 2010 CWU Black workers conference great success.

Unfortunately Billie Hayes was unable to be with us on Saturday morning but Graham Colk from the NEC read a short speech from the General Secretary and added his own enthusiasm at being with us in Scotland .

One emergency prop was added to the 9 motions on the agenda. This was seeking support for the victims of the Haiti earthquake and for Haiti's debts to be written off

The two guest speakers for this years event were Simon Woolley Director of OBV and Piara Power Director of “kick it out”. OBV is Operation Black Vote, a political organisation that aims to encourage black and ethnic minority voters to get involved in politics. Kick It Out was established in 1993 and campaigns for equality and inclusivity and against racism in football.

Simon gave a passionate and motivating speech asking people to see their potential and to not leave it to others.

He gave an example of the direct racism he has experienced as a black man in a nice suit trying to hail a cab in London. He described how the cab driver will see him and make eye contact but drive by without stopping. This is a sign of professional racism in the 21st century.

Piara Power also told us about the professional racism in football. He described how, when he started 30 years ago, the meetings were held in smoky back rooms of pubs where middle aged men would hold court without the fear of a challenge to their position. Now in 2010 the meetings are in accessible hotel conference centres with hot refreshments on-tap and not a “round” on a Watneys red barrel beer tray.

He explained that a top player with caps for his country and cup goals behind them still cannot get a job as a lead coach or manager in the top teams because they are black. So after 30 years – nothing had really changed!

The Debate on the motions was mainly supportive but as always delegates were encouraged to come to the podium to express their thoughts.

At the final vote for which motions were to go to CWU General Conference, Motion E1 and Motion 1 were those selected by delegate vote, so for 2010 the Black workers conference will be asking the CWU to debate:

Support for Haiti and for their debts as a nation to be written off and for The RAC and NEC to be proactive in getting the hierarchy in the union to be more reflective of the diversity of the membership.

I know its a long way to go, but for those people who did not travel to Dundee this February I say you missed a fantastic event.

And unless there was a Delegate from the Channel Isles or Cornwall I would like to take any reward for the furthest distance travelled but as I said before, it was definitely worth it and I hope that if this conference ever visits Cornwall or Devon the delegates from the north and bonny Scotland find it as worth while to visit as I did going to Dundee.

Garry Jacobs, Equality Officer, Devon and Somerset Branch.



TUC Women's Conference 2010 - A Century Of Solidarity

Continued from front page.

Hariyatu Bangura: Women's Leader in the Western Region of the Sierra Leone Teachers Union. Elma Geswind Gender Policy Officer COSATU. This fringe meeting focused on the under representation of women globally and highlight concerns about union activity in some countries and what we might do to support women in other unions and countries.

My second fringe meeting was on Yarl's Wood Hunger strike: Detention and denial of women asylum seekers which was a small meeting where we were given information from speakers about women being detained at Yarl's Wood and the continuing difficulties associated with the treatment of these women.

The theme of this year's conference was Women and recession one year on following on from last year's theme Women and The Global recession.

The TUC has provided a report and a women's committee report copies of which I can provide should colleagues make such a request. Linda Roy was elected to The TUC Women's Committee which was very good news.

Unconfirmed reports say that 160+ attended conference, over the two and one half days, and that all 43 motions were debated and carried with a large percentage of these being unanimously carried.

In total our delegation were due to speak eleven times but in the event we only made it to the rostrum 9 times – as the Chair of Conference due to time restrictions limited some contributions.

I also, along with some but not all of our delegation, attended the Social event on the Thursday night which was a good networking exercise even though it did mean that we had to "take to the mic" as is expected at the social event to sing a karaoke type song!

I was happy to attend conference again this year and to hear how things have moved on since last year.

I came away with the impression that once again we have our work cut out, that women have in the

main are faring worse in the recession and that equality is fast becoming the poor cousin of other concerns in which The TUC is involved.

As Vice Chair of the WAC without the Chair in attendance, I also chaired the pre-conference meeting of our delegation and in doing so encouraged as many people as possible to speak at conference with some success.

Should colleagues have any questions and/or comment relating to conference I would be more than happy to respond.

Lynn Hart

BRANCH EQUALITY OFFICER & VICE CHAIR
WOMENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

Secretary's Report

For the first time the regional equality & diversity committee will have a budget of its own, a agreed at the last regional committee meeting.

This will enable us to move forward on some of the work we have committed to for 2010, including producing leaflets and material for regional events, continuing the publication of this newsletter and ensuring we are able to meet the demands of members and branches dealing with equality issues.

I am also asking branches to consider supporting the many Pride events in the region, see next page. We don't want your money (unless you have any spare you don't need) but we are after your bodies!

Please try to get along to your nearest Pride and bring members, friends and families. You don't have to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender to join in.

If you know of any equality events locally please let us know so that we can advertise them and finally, don't forget the Tolpuddle Rally - 16th to 18th July.

Gary Williams, Secretary, Regional Equality & Diversity Committee

Regional Events

TOLPUDDLE 2010

Tolpuddle will be from 16th - 18th July with the rally on Sunday 18th. *Photo: some of the committee at Tolpuddle 2009*



Torquay - Pride Torbay takes place between Friday 11th and Sunday 13th June in and around Torquay, events include a boat trip, pool barbecue, street party, football tournament, an LGBT history walk and exclusively for this year - Circue du So Gay, a specially developed gay circus in the UK's only pink big top! Website: www.pridetorbay.org/

Worcester Pride, Pitchcroft Racecourse Worcester's first GLBT "Free" Pride Event, Saturday 26 June, website: www.worcesterpride.co.uk

Gloucestershire Pride, the small Pride with the BIG heart. This year in Gloucester's famous historic, and preserved, Victorian docks. Pride parade through City Centre at 1pm Saturday 26 June 2010 website: www.gloucestershirepride.org.uk/

Bournemouth Pride, Saturday 10th of July 2010, parade from Meyrick Park 12 noon, website: www.bournefree.co.uk/

Bristol - This year's event will be an entire week 16-22 August of LGBT events. The main event will be in Castle Park 21st August 2010 website: www.pridebristol.com/

Cornwall Pride, now the 3rd year for Cornwall Pride and again this year's event is to be held in Truro. Saturday 28 August 2010: 11am: Parade. 12-5pm Victoria Gardens, stalls, entertainment. Website: www.cornwallpride.co.uk/



Photo: Truro Pride 2009

Dorchester Pride, 29th August *to be confirmed*

Committee Report

CWU SOUTH WEST EQUALITY & DIVERSITY COMMITTEE Bristol 16th March 2010

Roll Call: Trevor Matty, (Chair) Hereford & Worcester; Gary Williams (Secretary) Solent; Katy Hartland Gloucester Amal; Sandie Best South West No. 7; Garry Jacobs, (Devon & Somerset); Cathy Chilcott Bristol & District Amal; Lynn Hart South West & Thames Valley.

Apologies: Les Glover Gloucester & North Wilts; Andy Rathbone Wessex South Central; Pascal Mensah South West Engineering; Kevin Beazer Regional Secretary; Linda Roy, Assistant Secretary Equal Opportunities.

Minutes of Previous committee meeting: Agreed

Matters Arising:

Due to last minute problems Linda was unable to attend.

Guest Speaker: See apologies

Branch & Regional Reports:

Those attending reported on CWU Women's conference, TUC Women's conference, an event in head office to celebrate International Women's Day with guests and visitors, the unions stance on going along with new relationship with employers but they do not share information on bullying and harassment with the union, the need for some independent mechanism to deal with allegations of bullying and harassment. And proposed reduction of equality conferences.

Aims and Objectives for 2010:

A call was made for volunteers for Tolpuddle and to arrange for the stand to get there and also to liaise with regional youth committee regarding leaflets pointing out dangers of a Tory government and the BNP to equality.

Newsletter & Equality Officers Profile:

The next edition of the newsletter and the next equality officers profile were discussed.

Date Of Next Meeting: 22nd June 2010, Bristol Regional Office. Guest Speaker invite to Linda Roy

Defining Bullying and Harassment



To tackle harassment and bullying at work, it is necessary to define the type of behaviour considered unacceptable, and to provide examples so that people understand what is meant by it.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) publishes useful guidance on bullying and harassment, it says that, for practical purposes, bullying and harassment involve something that is "unwelcome, unwarranted and causes a detrimental effect".

ACAS uses the following definitions: "Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

"Harassment, in general terms, is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of people. It may be related to age, sex, race, disability, religion, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident.

The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient."

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) also says bullying is "a form of organisational violence and as such is a potential source of work-related stress" and a form of "psychological harassment".

Crucial to these definitions is that the behaviour is unwanted and not encouraged or reciprocated by the recipient. Another important element is that the behaviour is perceived by the recipient to be offensive, regardless of whether or not it was intended to cause offence.

Bullying may take place over a period of time, but it can also occur as a single, grossly offensive act - and some legal cases involving claims of harassment have counted a solitary occurrence as unlawful discrimination.

ACAS says it is good practice for employers to provide examples of unacceptable behaviour in their organisation. Examples of bullying behaviour include:

- spreading malicious rumours or insulting an individual (particularly on grounds of race, sex, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief)
- copying memos that are critical of an individual to others who do not need to know;
- ridiculing or demeaning an individual
- picking on them or setting them up to fail
- excluding or victimising an individual;
- treating an individual unfairly;
- supervising an individual in an overbearing manner, or misusing power or position;
- making unwelcome sexual advances - touching, standing too close, displaying offensive materials etc
- making threats or comments about an individual's job security without foundation;
- deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism
- preventing an individual from progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.

Bullying and harassment do not necessarily take place face to face. They may occur by written communication, e-mail (so-called "flame-mail"), telephone or automatic supervision methods (such as computer recording of downtime from work, or recording of telephone conversations) if these are not universally applied to all workers.

Forms of harassment

Harassment can take particular forms, based on a person's sex, race, disability, sexuality or age; as such, it may amount to unlawful discrimination. It is important to recognise different forms of harassment so that they can be tackled appropriately. The CWU reps' guide, How to deal with harassment lists some of them:

Sexual harassment

- unwelcome sexual advances, propositions and demands for sexual favours;

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.....Defining Bullying and Harassment

- unwanted or derogatory comments about dress or appearance;
- leering and suggestive gestures;
- display of offensive material, pornographic pictures or page-three-type pin-ups or calendars (including computer screensavers)
- physical contact, ranging from invasion of personal space and unnecessary touching through to sexual assault and rape.

Racial harassment

- refusal to work with someone or deliberate isolation of them because of their race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin;
- display of racially offensive material, including graffiti;
- racist jokes, banter, insinuations, insults and taunts;
- unfair work allocation; and
- physical attacks on individuals because of their race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin.

Harassment of workers with disabilities

- intimate questions about an individual's disability;
- name-calling, jokes, taunts and use of offensive language;
- assumption that a physical disability means that the individual has a mental disability
- assumption that a mental disability means that the individual lacks intelligence
- speaking to colleagues rather than the person with the disability; and
- exclusion from workplace and social activities.

Religious harassment

mocking or derision of people's religious beliefs; unwanted comments on dress; and making it unnecessarily difficult for people to conform to their religious beliefs.

Harassment of lesbians and gay men

unwelcome comments or jokes
stereotypical assumptions
intimate questioning about an individual's personal or sexual life;
assumption that everyone is heterosexual;
physical abuse or intimidation.

People may also be harassed on the grounds of their age; this could take the form of pressure to retire, or assumptions or derogatory remarks about their ability or competence. Harassment can also involve deriding or mocking people's political beliefs, or their trade union involvement.

Any difficulty in defining personal harassment should not deter a member from seeking support or complaining of behaviour which causes them offence or distress.

What To Do Next

If you believe you are being subjected to bullying or harassment of any form, you do not have to feel it is your fault and you do not have to tolerate it. Any member who suffers from harassment from any individual or group will have the support of the Union in seeking to ensure that harassment ceases.

There are various ways in which an individual can deal with harassment, ranging from asking the person to stop to taking up a formal complaint. The choice is yours.

CWU HELPLINE
HARASSMENT
0800 107 1909
or email cwu.dignityandrespect@firstassist.co.uk

CWU HELPLINE
HARASSMENT

The CWU harassment helpline:

- is for anyone who feels unable to speak to anyone locally about a harassment problem
- offers a 24 hour service for logging calls which will be passed to union HQ for action
- can also give direct access to professional counsellors if you need additional emotional support

To seek advice, just call **FREEPHONE 0800 107 1909**

CWU - General Secretary Billy Hayes - 150 The Broadway London SW19 1RX - 020 8971 7200 - www.cwu.org