



SCOTTISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS

76th STUC WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

DECISIONS

I – RESOLUTIONS CARRIED

Composite D (covering resolution nos. 1 and 35) “Dungavel Detention Centre”

"That this Conference is appalled at the detention of asylum seekers and their children within Dungavel Detention Centre in Scotland. Conference notes with grave concern the recent case of the Ay family, Kurdish asylum seekers who, after being kept at Dungavel for over a year, were deported to Germany.

“Conference welcomes the recent actions of the STUC in organising a demonstration at Dungavel Detention Centre on Saturday 6th September. This event, which was originally called by the STUC Women’s Committee, aimed to build on the growing public concern in opposition to Dungavel and coincided with the second anniversary of its opening.

“Conference reaffirms its support for the aims of the demonstration, which were to:

- end the enforced detention of asylum seekers and their families, which breaches their human rights;
- ensure all children residing in Scotland are able to access mainstream education; and
- secure the closure of Dungavel Detention Centre in favour of a more humane system for accommodating asylum seekers and their families in Scotland.

“Conference notes that the recent report of the HM Inspector of Prisons states that Dungavel is ‘the only detention Centre in the UK where children are routinely detained for long periods of time’. It is not acceptable for children in Scotland to be treated differently in this respect.

“Conference is further alarmed at the Home Office proposals to expand Dungavel, despite overwhelming support for its closure. Conference calls on the Government to withdraw these plans immediately.

2.

“Conference calls on the Home Secretary to meet with the STUC to discuss how the serious human rights issues, around the detention of asylum seekers and their families, can be addressed. Conference urges the STUC to raise the case of the Ay family with the Home Office in discussions to improve conditions and procedures for families seeking asylum in the UK.

“Conference believes that all children residing in Scotland have the right to access mainstream education and is highly concerned that the report of the Scottish Executive's own Inspectorate of Education, who revisited the former jail a few months ago, repeated the view that facilities at Dungavel for school-age children are ‘unsatisfactory’.

“Conference, therefore, calls upon the Scottish Executive to adopt a policy in relation to Dungavel that opposes the detention of children in prison-like conditions and ensures it meets its commitments under the 2000 Standards in Scotland's Schools Act, to provide mainstream education for all children in Scotland, including children who are 'looked after' or have special needs.

“Finally, Conference calls on the STUC Women's Committee and the STUC General Council to continue to campaign for the Government to deliver a more humane system for caring for asylum seekers and their children that meets UN International human rights standards. The UK Government has obligations to uphold the human rights of all individuals within its borders. When will it start doing this for asylum seekers?”

Resolution No. 2 “Scottish Women's Convention”

“That this Conference welcomes the announcement earlier this year by Communities Minister, Margaret Curran MSP, to develop a new Scottish Women's Convention. This announcement followed detailed discussion between the Scottish Executive, the STUC Women's Committee and Engender on how best to support the development of the women's agenda in Scotland and ensure that our key issues are effectively mainstreamed into the work of government.

3.

“Conference notes that the Convention will be funded initially for a period of three years, to facilitate better engagement between the Executive and women’s organisations. It will be run by its own dedicated team of staff working from the offices of Engender.

“Conference supports the remit of the Convention, which is ‘to provide a vehicle for women’s organisations in Scotland to come together to discuss issues, to provide a further channel for them to engage with the Scottish Executive, Scottish Parliament and other institutions, and to provide strategic input from women’s organisations into policy development, in order to mainstream key issues of importance to women in Scotland’.

“Conference believes that the establishment of this body will enable the development of a stronger agenda for women in Scotland, to address a wide range of key challenges to women’s equality, such as equal pay, job opportunities, childcare, poverty, access to public services, violence, and decision-making in public and political life.

“Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to seek strong representation for trade union women on the Convention’s Steering Group at a level that reflects the wide range of women’s groups and issues represented by the STUC’s membership. Conference further calls on the Women’s Committee to engage fully in the Steering Group and do all within its power to ensure that the Scottish Women’s Convention becomes a real force for promoting and affecting policies, which will make a positive change to women’s lives in Scotland.”

Composite A (covering resolution nos. 3, 4, 5 &6) “Equal Pay”

“That this Conference condemns the fact that women’s pay continues to lag behind that of men, despite over 30 years of the Equal Pay Act. Full time women workers earn, on average, 19% less than men; part time women workers even less – 40% of male earnings. In a study of European countries, UK women’s average earnings as a proportion of men’s average earnings, came 13th out of 16 countries surveyed. We further note that this gender pay gap is widening, and will continue to do so if we do not tackle the root causes of pay inequality.

4.

“Conference is concerned that the problem of occupational segregation is being persistently overlooked. The Equal Pay Task Force report, ‘Just Pay’, revealed that occupational segregation was a major contributor to the gender pay gap, as the work women do tends to be hugely undervalued.

“Occupational segregation is both ‘horizontal’ and ‘vertical’. It results in women being concentrated in lower paid occupations, and in the lowest grades of occupations. Research has shown that, while men make up the majority of employees in the five highest paid occupations, women predominate in four of the five lowest paid. It is essential that the ‘glass ceiling’, which currently acts as a barrier to women’s progression, is broken. Many women struggle to advance to higher graded jobs. Therefore, there is a ‘sticky floor syndrome’ that they simply cannot overcome. Without a change in the culture and practices of workplaces, the occupational segregation, which is currently restricting the choices of many female employees, will not be addressed.

“It is two years since Denise Kingsmill published her report, ‘A Review of Women’s Employment and Pay’. In it, she recommended that pay reviews remain voluntary unless companies failed to conduct them, at which point legislation should be considered. There is little evidence that companies have taken up this challenge, and unions’ own experiences are that employers are incredibly reluctant to carry out equal pay reviews or audits.

“Conference supports those unions who are placing equal pay at the heart of their bargaining agenda and calls on all affiliates to make equal pay a bargaining priority.

“Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to urge the UK Government and the Scottish Executive within their respective remits take action to:

- reform equal pay legislation to place a duty upon employers to carry out statutory regular equal pay audits, place the burden of proof on employers in equal pay cases, and allow the taking of collective cases;

5.

- encourage employers to adopt the EOC Code of Practice on equal pay and consider the record of employers on equal pay when considering applications for grant support;
- explore ways to ensure employers address the issues that surround equal pay, occupational segregation, and cultural barriers to women's career progression;
- support measures to counter the stereotyping of career paths as 'male' and female', and segregation in subject choice at crucial stages in the education of young people;
- include equal pay initiatives in government equal opportunities policies and give specific consideration to improving opportunities for women in education, training and lifelong learning policies;
- provide financial support to TUC and individual union-led equal pay training, including equal pay audit training, and give equal pay reps statutory recognition;
- ensure that suppliers of goods and services to government bodies at all levels adhere to equal pay policies and practices;
- improve resources for community childcare services; and
- recognise that unequal pay affects the pension levels of women, and introduce measures to address this when determining pensions policy.

“Conference calls on the STUC Women's Committee to work with affiliates to:

- campaign for compulsory equal pay reviews;
- encourage the training of more equal pay representatives to carry out pay reviews;
- equality proof existing and new collective agreements;

6.

- work with the TUC in setting up a database of companies and organisations, who refuse to comply with requests to carry out pay audits; and
- name and shame recalcitrant employers.”

Resolution No. 7 “Gender Pay Gap in Higher Education”

“That this Conference notes that the gender pay gap in Higher Education has grown by 2% in the last two years, and calls upon the Scottish Executive, the SFEFC and SHEFC to take steps to reverse this in developing their strategies for tertiary education in Scotland. We refer particularly to the "Partnership for Equality" document published in February 2003, which makes a number of recommendations such as equal pay audits, and call for the funding of institutions to be made dependent on their ability to demonstrate movement on equality issues.”

Amended Resolution No. 8 “Work Life Balance”

“That this Conference notes with concern that workers in Britain have the longest working hours in Europe and that 42 per cent of workers regularly work more than 48 hours per week. Conference believes that this ‘long hours’ culture leads to an increase in stress, anxiety and depression and less time for family, friends and leisure, and this problem is exacerbated for women workers by the fact that they take on most of the caring responsibilities within the family.

“Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to lobby the Government and Scottish Parliament to resist the CBI’s stance on the Working Time Directive and bring forward legislation to make work/life balance a reality in the workplace by introducing:

- a) quality, affordable nursery and childcare provision for all who need it;
- b) a 35 hour week with no loss of pay as part of a managed reduction in working time;

7.

- c) improved arrangements and financial support for those with caring responsibilities;
- d) improved provisions and payments for maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave; and
- e) improved rights for part-time workers, including rights to work flexibly and transfer back to full-time work as appropriate.

“Conference calls for unions to make working time reductions a priority in negotiations, as well as a political priority.

“Conference also calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to lobby the Government to end:

- the individual opt-out in the UK Working Time Regulations; and
- the derogations which mean there are no statutory limits to hours for some workers, e.g. train drivers, in safety-critical industries, thereby completely undermining the Government’s policies in terms of health and safety, but also work-life balance.

“Conference notes with concern the results of a recent IPD study on working hours, which shows paradoxically that, whilst men still work more hours on average than women, the average working hours for men have decreased, whilst those for women have increased. Conference asks the STUC Women’s Committee to lobby the Government and the Scottish Parliament to:

- commission further research to establish the reasons for the increase in women’s average working hours; and
- agree to act on the findings to ensure that this unacceptable increase is halted and reversed.”

Resolution No. 9 “Flexible Working”

“That this Conference welcomes the introduction of the new right to request flexible working for parents with children aged under 6, or under 18 if disabled.

“We congratulate the Government for giving parents, and women in particular who continue to remain primarily responsible for childcare, a better say in how they balance the demands of work with family life.

“We regret the limitations of this new right, particularly the fact that the employer is not required to justify refusals and the restricted amount of compensation available to employees.

“We note that in Scotland flexible working opportunities are thin on the ground. Despite the fact that over two-thirds of women in Scotland are in work, only one quarter of women employees have access to at least one kind of flexible working arrangement.

“We also note that in Scotland women with dependent children are considerably less likely to be in work than men with dependent children. This needs to change.

“We, therefore, call on the STUC Women’s Committee to do all they can to raise awareness of the right to request flexible working in Scotland and, in particular, to:

- support and encourage the work trade unions are currently doing to make sure their members are aware of this new right and able to exercise it; and
- encourage trade unions in Scotland to monitor take-up of the new right amongst their members.”

Amended Resolution No. 10 “Scope of Collective Bargaining and Representation”

“That this Conference is aware of the many loopholes in the existing employment legislation. While Conference acknowledges that there have been some improvements, there are two important areas where women are not able to fully access their rights – on the bargaining agenda and in rights to flexible working.

“To address these anomalies, Conference calls on the STUC General Council and Women’s Committee to:

- campaign for the right to union representation, when taking up rights under the new Flexible Working Regulations;
- raise awareness of the benefits and limitations of the new Flexible Working Regulations; and
- campaign for an extension of the issues that a recognised trade union has the right to bargain on to include equality issues, especially access to training.”

Resolution No. 11 “Stress in the Workplace”

“That this Conference continues to be deeply concerned that the ‘stress epidemic’ continues to wreak havoc in Scottish businesses.

“Conference recognises that the causes and effects of occupational stress are well documented by trade unions and research. A particular worry is that the research confirms the extent to which young people (18-24) are being affected by stress at work.

“We applaud the work of the trade unions campaigning against ever increasing burdens on their members. We recognise that long hours, bad employers and difficulties in managing work/life balance are key contributors as sources of potential stress in the workplace.

“Conference asks the STUC Women’s Committee to:

- i) continue to campaign to promote stress free and improved working conditions, especially for our young people, as for many it is their first step into employment; and
- ii) urge the Government to legally oblige employers to establish a rehabilitation policy, setting out how they will deal with employees who are injured or made ill at work.”

Resolution No. 12 “Sexual Harassment and Mental Health”

“That this Conference notes that the Guardian reported in 2001 that ‘analysis of employment tribunal cases over the last three years found that more than 90% of staff, who were victims of sexual harassment, lost their jobs or resigned as a result of the experience’.

“54% of women and 9% of men had been sexually harassed at work, but only 1 in 20 of the victims pursued a formal complaint (Survey 1993: Industrial Society).

“Many cases go unreported and victims can suffer serious health problems, such as stress, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Survivors have been treated for a number of emotional, physical and psychological effects including denial, humiliation, self-blame, anger, sleeping and eating disorders, fatigue, headaches, weakened immune system and so forth.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the STUC Women's Committee, Affiliated Organisations and the STUC General Council to:

- increase the awareness and to acknowledge the psychological impact of sexual harassment on the mental and physical well being of victims;
- help eradicate barriers, which prevent victims in workplaces from bringing issues out into the forefront without fear of retribution; and

11.

- encourage separate sexual harassment policies in organisations, in order to address the serious legal implications of unwanted behaviour.

“In addition, Conference calls on the Women's Committee to work and liaise with trade unions, employers and the Equal Opportunities Commission to promote and recognise the processes to remove sexual harassment.”

Amended Resolution No. 13 “Bullying at Work”

“That this Conference notes that bullying at work has received considerable media coverage in recent years and is gradually being acknowledged as a serious and widespread problem.

“Research carried out by Staffordshire University in 1994 revealed that 78% of a sample of 1137 employees had witnessed bullying at their workplace and that 51% had experienced it themselves.

“Bullying in the workplace can take many forms. Bullies in a position of authority may subject their subordinates to humiliation and ridicule. In some cases, they may remove employee’s responsibility, refuse requests for leave and training and block promotion. Bullying is not confined to managers and supervisors. An employee may bully a colleague on the same grade and groups of employees victimise an individual.

“Women are particularly vulnerable to bullying, since there are high concentrations of women working in chronically under-funded organisations, such as social security departments, hospitals and schools. Bullying is also evident in some of the best and most profitable organisations driven by target culture, which puts profit before people. Women tend to react to bullies by withdrawing and internalising their feelings of humiliation. This often leads to low self-esteem, depression and occasionally suicide.

“Conference calls for the STUC Women’s Committee to campaign in favour of legislation against bullying in the workplace and compels companies to provide adequate person-management skills and equality training prior to appointing people into management positions.”

Resolution No. 14 “Pre-menstrual Syndrome”

“That this Conference recognises that Pre-menstrual Syndrome acutely affects large numbers of working women, and that there is a lack of workplace policies to support them. Conference calls upon employers to consult unions and employee councils to establish workplace policies for women with acute PMS.

“These policies would address the following issues relating to women with PMS:

- provision of appropriate and sufficient workplace facilities;
- adjustments to work-schedules, work-flow, tasks and routines;
- absence-management policies and procedures; and
- provision of individual advice and support.”

Amended Resolution No. 15 “National Childcare Strategy”

“That this Conference notes and gives a cautious welcome to the Scottish Executive’s Consultation on an Integrated Strategy for the Early Years.

“Conference believes that a proper strategy for children and families in their early years is an important public service, and one which we cannot afford to get wrong. It is, therefore, essential that the newly elected Scottish Executive has an ideal opportunity to create these foundations now. In particular, we believe that a major plank of this policy must be the development of a comprehensive and fully-funded National Guidance Strategy.

“According to the Scottish Executive Pre-School and Day Care Census results:

- the number of children attending pre-school education is up 6% since January 2002 to 105,000; and

- the number of staff working in pre-school education has fallen by 300 since 2002 (a fall of 2%).

“It is safe to conclude that there are more children in pre-school education and less staff, which ultimately means that the remaining staff are supervising, caring for and educating more children than in January 2002.

“At present, the Government’s policy is to provide free social and health care. It is not, however, government policy to provide universal full-time childcare.

“Conference calls for the provision of full-time childcare for all ages from 0+. The existing Executive provision of part-time, free pre-school education for all 3 and 4 year olds is helpful, but inadequate. Britain’s 2.3 million working mothers have less than 10% of their salaries left once they have paid for childcare and domestic help according to a British Gas survey.

“With the gender pay gap and cost of childcare, the burden of paying for it is always placed on the mother, not the parents. The current split between early education (in schools) and care (mainly by the private and voluntary sector) means that multiple arrangements are necessary every day. The availability of part-time places in nursery classes means that working parents must still rely on childminders in addition to nursery school. This is disruptive for children and the combination of childcare arrangements can be volatile and difficult.

“Many European countries have more extensive public provision for the early years sector, spending three or four times more than the UK. In Sweden and France, the early years system is an almost universal public service and in Finland, every child has the right to a childcare place from birth, with highly qualified educators.

“Part-time workers face particular difficulties in organising childcare arrangements. Nursery classes rarely coincide with the working time of part-time workers, particularly if they work irregular hours. Day nurseries charge the full price, even when only a part-time place is needed.

“All of the above problems would be solved if there were sufficient publicly funded centres for children from birth to compulsory school age, staffed by fully qualified teachers, early education and care workers. This could then be supplemented by private provision, but real choice is only possible if both private and public provisions are options.

“The high quality care that working parents want and society needs can only be provided by properly qualified trained staff. We believe that key workers should be fully involved in devising service provision and should be backed up with adequate resources and support.

“Conference supports UNISON Scotland’s current campaign to improve the pay and conditions of qualified nursery nurses. Their professionalism and their high responsibility for the care and development of young children should be reflected in better rates of pay. This is the only way to retain this highly motivated group of staff. The right kind of people can only be recruited and retained if the pay in the sector improves.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to urge the Scottish Executive to develop a comprehensive and fully funded childcare strategy which will:

- provide free universal full-time childcare for all ages from 0+;
- ensure sufficient publicly funded centres for children from birth to compulsory school age, staffed by fully qualified teachers, early education and care workers; and
- provide fair pay and conditions for nursery nurses and other key early education workers.”

**Amended Resolution No. 16 “Improving Support for
Childcare”**

“That this Conference notes with concern the statistics from the 2001 census, confirming that Scotland’s birth rate has dropped to 53,000 - the lowest level since records began. Declining fertility rates are a feature of modern Western Europe, but are of particular concern in Scotland, where an excess of deaths over births means that the population is also shrinking.

“Conference recognises that there are a variety of biological, economic and socio-cultural reasons for this, but believes that the chronic lack of good quality, affordable childcare is a major contributory factor.

“Conference calls upon the STUC Women’s Committee and the General Council to:

- campaign for more government investment in childcare provision and financial assistance to parents with childcare costs;
- campaign to promote the take up of working tax credits and child tax credits;
- support unions in campaigning and negotiating for employer supported childcare provision and assistance with costs, including nursery provision, out of school clubs, holiday play schemes, and childcare vouchers;
- encourage unions to consider the merits of salary sacrifice schemes as part of employer supported childcare initiatives, taking into consideration the specific implications for individual women in terms of extra payments and long-term finances;

16.

- work closely with the Scottish Parliament, employers and other relevant organisations to ensure that childcare provision is appropriate to reflect working patterns of parents and recognises the need for supported childcare at weekends and evenings, that services are provided in a joined up way and that information about local provision is easily and widely available; and
- campaign to promote and encourage fathers to take on a greater share of parenting and childcare responsibility.”

Amended Resolution No. 17 “Childcare – Trade Union Branch Level”

“That this Conference is committed to encouraging the involvement of women in all aspects of Trade Union activity. We recognise that it is difficult for women with young children to fully participate, especially when they have to work variable shift patterns.

“We are conscious that involvement in Union activities begins at Branch level. It is, therefore, vital that we ensure that no-one is disadvantaged from attending such meetings, because of childcare commitments. If women, or men for that matter, cannot attend Branch meetings because of childcare responsibilities, we cannot realistically expect that they can progress through their Unions or fully engage as delegates to external conferences, etc.

“Whilst most Unions have provision for childcare at national events, provision at local level can be patchy. Importantly, we are conscious that there is not a single solution that will enable full participation.

“Conference asks that the STUC Women’s Committee and General Council conduct a survey amongst affiliated Trade Unions, to establish the various strategies employed at local level to encourage participation by members with childcare responsibilities.

“Once the relevant information has been collated, this should be disseminated to all affiliates, so that we may learn from each other and encourage best practice.

“Conference further notes that there is a gender under-representation of women at all levels throughout the Trade Union Movement. In order to explore more fully why women members do not become involved at Trade Union Branch level, Conference asks the STUC Women’s Committee and the General Council to ensure that the survey among affiliates includes a section asking:

- what are the other barriers to participation?; and
- what can be done to help women members overcome these?”

Resolution No. 18 “Child Poverty”

“That this Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee and General Council to use all means at their disposal to support the Child Poverty Action Group’s campaign to persuade the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, to give an extra £5 a week for each child living in low income families from next April.

“Conference welcomes the Government’s commitment to halving child poverty by 2010, but is mindful that the relatively small fall so far revealed in the latest statistics, which claim that one child in ten in the UK lives in poverty, means that this target is unlikely to be achieved.

“Tackling child poverty is a long-term investment and is crucial to delivering world-class education and health services. Poverty is one of the most serious problems facing children today and is often hidden, driven behind closed doors by stigma, embarrassment and isolation, with a negative impact on health, education, social and psychological development and future life chances and opportunities.

18.

“Conference believes that the Budget 2004, which will make child poverty a key theme for next year’s Spending Review, is the ideal opportunity to kick start the eradication of child poverty and ensure that our children grow up in an environment where they are valued and able to participate fully in their education and future life.”

Resolution No. 19 “Putting our Communities First”

“That this Conference recognises the importance of developing community strategies to ensure that individuals and families are able to live and work in a safe and secure environment.

“Conference further recognises that the behaviour of some individuals threatens this goal and places unacceptable pressures on communities leading to stress and fear.

“Conference applauds the work undertaken within communities to tackle this serious issue and the support for these efforts from a wide variety of agencies.

“Conference recognises the emphasis placed by the Scottish Executive on protecting and empowering communities. However, Conference is concerned that some of the provisions outlined in ‘Putting our Communities First’ will have a detrimental affect on these efforts and place undue burdens on the most vulnerable members of communities.

“In particular, Conference is concerned that the measures outlined for the under-16 age group will have serious implications for single parents, the vast majority of whom are women.

“Conference urges the STUC Women’s Committee to raise this concern with the relevant Ministers of the Scottish Executive.

“Conference also urges the STUC Women’s Committee to contact the Equality Unit of the Scottish Executive to determine whether or not a gender impact analysis was conducted on all or part of these measures.”

Resolution No. 20 “Tracking of School Pupils”

“That this Conference expresses its concern that there is, at present, no fully reliable system of establishing the whereabouts of school-age children after they leave a given school. As a result, it is possible for such children to cease attending school, without any automatic method of triggering an investigation into their whereabouts, particularly if they move to a different UK country.

“Conference calls upon the STUC Women’s Committee to urge the Scottish Executive Education Department to consult other UK education authorities, with a view to establishing collaboratively a tracking system to ensure that young people do not miss out on their right to education. Conference recognises that this system needs to be able to take account of the particular circumstances of the travelling communities.”

Resolution No. 22 “UK Breast Cancer Coalition”

“That this Conference notes with dismay that in each year over 3,500 women in Scotland are diagnosed with breast cancer.

“Conference recognises the campaigning work achieved by the UK Breast Cancer Coalition. The Coalition was founded by women with personal experience of breast cancer. It aims to enable everyone to have access to the best breast cancer services, no matter where in the UK they live. The Coalition is a campaigning body, which organises members to act collectively by:

- sending letters and e-mails;
- attending training events; and
- attending meetings with MPs and health managers.

“The Coalition welcomes affiliate members from organisations sharing a commitment to such collective action.

“Conference applauds the Coalition’s success in lobbying the Westminster Parliament, especially around equity of health care and an end to postcode lottery for effective timescales for treatment.

“Conference notes the relatively limited membership of the Coalition in Scotland and asks the STUC Women’s Committee to support the ongoing development of the UK Breast Cancer Coalition in Scotland by:

- inviting a speaker from the coalition to address the STUC;
- working with the Coalition to promote further development in Scotland;
- urging affiliated unions to affiliate to the UK Breast Cancer Coalition; and
- supporting the Coalition members to lobby the Scottish Parliament in the same way that the Coalition has supported members to have an organised lobby of the Westminster Parliament.”

Resolution No. 24 “Baby Walkers”

“That this Conference notes that, despite the CSP presenting evidence to the UK government in 1997 highlighting the dangers of baby walkers, there has been little evidence of action to stop their use. Studies have shown that up to 50% of children placed in baby walkers suffer injuries usually to the face and head.

“Conference further notes that baby walkers are responsible for injury to an estimated 4,000 babies every year in the UK alone. These injuries include burns, grazes and head injuries. Shared experience of physiotherapists working with young children show that baby walkers can hold back motor skills development.

“Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to join the campaign to end the use of baby walkers.”

Composite B (covering resolution nos. 25 and 26) “Women and Call Centre Jobs”

“That this Conference notes with grave concern the increasing tendency for companies to relocate part or all of their call centre operations overseas to countries, such as India, the Philippines and China. Household names, such as BT, Norwich Union, Tesco and British Airways have all joined this obscene rush for easy profits, with little or no regard for the interests of their UK-based workforces.

“Conference notes that this trend is having a disproportionate impact upon Scottish women. Around 70% of workers employed in Scottish call centres are women, and call centre jobs amount to more than 2% of all Scottish jobs. Call centres are a vital component part of the Scottish economy, having helped to fill the employment void left by the decline of manufacturing and other ‘heavy industries’.

“There is also an indication that those employed in call centres are being paid a lower rate for the job than workers employed by the same employer in retail divisions.

“Conference believes that the Labour Movement needs to face up to the threat posed by the export of call centre jobs, and calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to work with affiliates and the Scottish Executive to:

- raise awareness and research the impact that the loss of call centre jobs will have on women workers;
- undertake research into wage rates in the call centre sector;
- conduct an independent survey into the gender breakdown of call centre workers in Scotland; and
- ensure skills of call centre workers are meaningfully redeployed through comprehensive programmes of retraining and upskilling, where jobs are lost.”

Amended Resolution No. 27 “Manufacturing”

“That this Conference recognises that the economy is now facing the most challenging period since the recession of the early 1990s.

“The manufacturing sector in Britain is in crisis through a deepening recession. The sector is vital to the success of the whole economy, directly providing over 4 million jobs, 20% of our GDP, and over £150 billion in exports. Manufacturing also contributes another 5 million jobs indirectly to the economy.

“Conference calls on STUC Women’s Committee to demand a new approach from the Scottish Parliament and the Government to:

- stress the benefit of manufacturing in the UK and campaign for investment in manufacturing from domestic employers and inward investors;
- encourage employers to act responsibly in the difficult times, stressing that the future of manufacturing is reliant on the skills that their workforces possess at present;
- develop a policy for industry through all the relevant stakeholders that ensures sufficient investment is directed into the industry, to ensure that its infrastructure is maintained and built upon;
- appoint a Labour Minister for manufacturing in the Scottish Executive;
- reconnect Pension Funds to the UK industrial base and take other action to stem the massive flow of external investment from the UK; and

23.

- develop a comprehensive manufacturing strategy, with full employment as its goal, which includes measures to introduce training levies, reduce working hours, implement family friendly policies, provide legal rights to information and consultation, develop integrated transport and tie the provision of grants to commitments on jobs, employment standards and the environment.”

Resolution No. 28 “Scottish Textiles, Clothing, Footwear and Leather Manufacturing”

“That this Conference makes no apologies for again raising the concerns facing the Scottish Textile, Clothing, Footwear and Leather Industries.

“Conference has praised the work done by the Scottish Executive in support of the Scottish National Textile Forum and the re-establishment of the Scottish Manufacturing Steering Group. However, even with these organisations in place, manufacturing in general, and textiles in particular, are declining faster than in other regions in the UK. These industries employ mostly women. Therefore, the decline in these industries has a more adverse affect on female employees.

“Conference, therefore, calls upon the STUC Women’s Committee to seek further co-operation between the STUC General Council and the Scottish Executive to come up with a practical action to reverse the decline of the manufacturing base in Scotland.”

Resolution No. 29 “Violence Against Workers”

“That this Conference is concerned that many workers, particularly women workers, experience threats, abuse and violence whilst carrying out their work.

“Conference notes that the Scottish Executive is currently considering measures, including the use of an aggravated offence, to deter violence against public service and emergency workers.

“Conference, whilst welcoming these moves, believes that it is important that the definition used to apply an aggravated offence does not exclude workers from its protection, or lead to lengthy legal debate and processes. In particular, Conference believes that it should cover workers, who provide a public service whilst in the employment of private firms, e.g. transport and shopworkers.

“Conference, therefore, in addition to calling upon all employers to introduce protective measures, following discussions with the relevant trade unions, to tackle violence at work, calls upon the Scottish Executive to introduce an aggravated offence in law to address cases where workers providing a public service experience threats, abuse and violence.”

Resolution No. 30 “Violent Attacks and Abuse Against Shopworkers”

“That this Conference supports USDAW’s ‘Freedom from Fear’ Campaign and calls on the Scottish Executive, local authorities and the police to take action to stop the rise in violent attacks and threats against shopworkers.

“Conference notes with concern that the majority of frontline retail staff are women. Violence at work is increasing for many ‘front line’ retail staff. According to the Scottish Retail Consortium’s Crime Survey, 31% of Scottish retail outlets had at least one reported incident of violence against a shopworker. There are many more instances of verbal abuse and threats against shopworkers, the vast majority of which go unreported.

“To help tackle this escalating problem, Conference calls on the Scottish Executive, working with local authorities and the police, to:

- promote anti-retail crime partnerships in towns and shopping centres with sustainable funding;
- make retail crime a police Key Performance Indicator to enable police to give the issue the attention it deserves;
- improve the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme to help shopworkers who have suffered attacks; and

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- provide more resources for local authorities to meet their responsibilities for health and safety inspections and enforcement.”

Composite C (covering resolution nos. 31 and 32) “Domestic Violence”

“This Conference notes that:

- 1 in 4 women experienced domestic violence in their adult lives;
- 100 women per year are killed by partners or ex-partners;
- 90% of domestic violence occurs around children; and
- domestic violence accounted for nearly one fifth of all violent crime reported in the 2001 Crime Survey, and has a higher rate of repeat victimisation than any other crime.”

“Conference recognises that trade unions have a role to play in combating domestic violence, and therefore, calls on all affiliated organisations to promote awareness and information on domestic violence and to offer support and help to members affected. Conference calls on unions to promote proactive support and the adoption of formal policies by employers on this issue, including the adjusting of hours of work where appropriate and ensuring counselling is available.

“Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee and all affiliated organisations to work with the Scottish Parliament and the Executive for the reduction and elimination of domestic violence and for improved funding for Women’s Aid.”

Resolution No. 33 “Drug and Alcohol Misuse”

“That this Conference expresses profound concern about the deeply harmful, permanent damage inflicted on Scottish communities, and particularly on women and young people, through drug and alcohol addiction, which generates violent crime frequently directed against women shopworkers and other women who serve the public. Conference notes that the incidence of drug-related crime is linked with rapid industrial decline and that scarce public resources have to be deployed to deal with the damage done to individuals and to the communities concerned.

“Conference welcomes the decisions of the British Government to allocate additional resources to combating drug misuse, as well as the revised drugs strategy. These must recognise the ruthless greed and depravity of the people who seek to profit from the illicit drugs trade, as well as its international organisation and influence, and the very high priority which fighting drug misuse should have in public policy. Conference calls on the Scottish Parliament to extend immediate and effective treatment for all drug addicts and to extend provision for educating young people about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse.

“Conference affirms the significant contribution, which the Trade Union Movement can play in this campaign, in particular in combating drugs in the workplace and in protecting the health and well-being of working people, through effective workplace drugs policies, protection for women front-line workers, and support to the families of drug addicts. It calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to urge affiliates to ensure that plans to combat drug abuse in the workplace are agreed with all employers, in a form that will allow drug misuse to be effectively and urgently tackled without dismissing employees.”

Resolution No. 34 “Emergency Fire Control Rooms and Emergency Services Control Rooms”

“That this Conference urges that the STUC Women’s Committee, using all means at its disposal, fights against the amalgamation or regionalisation of Emergency Fire Control Rooms and Emergency Services Control Rooms, mentioned in this Labour Government’s recent White Paper ‘Our Fire & Rescue Service’.

“This imposition would have a devastating affect on the service provided to the public, as it will result in call prioritisation and increased response times. Ultimately, the lives of both firefighters and the public will be endangered.

“Increased responsibilities and call handling will result in an increase in stress levels. This will also compromise the ability of control operators, who are predominantly women, to benefit from this Government’s own family-friendly initiatives in the workplace.”

Resolution No. 36 “Women Asylum Seekers”

“That this Conference recognises that many women asylum seekers may have been persecuted and forced to flee, because of their determination to access education and other rights in their country of origin.

“Conference commends the work being undertaken in Scotland by local authorities, further education institutes and voluntary agencies to ensure that education is provided to asylum seekers.

“Conference recognises that there are particular circumstances that will impact on women asylum seekers, who are usually the primary carers of children and who have, therefore, specific access needs to education.

“Conference urges the STUC Women’s Committee to campaign to ensure that the specific access needs of women are properly addressed through appropriate funding.”

Resolution No. 37 “Female Prisoners in Cornton Vale Prison”

“That this Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to highlight the conditions of female prisoners in Cornton Vale Prison. Currently, many women who are sentenced to this prison have committed minor offences. They are often young women with drug related problems, or with a history of social and domestic deprivation. The rate of assault is increasing and suicide figures are high. The Scottish Executive is already working with the Scottish Prison Service, but more must be done to tackle the problem of women’s offending and prioritise the need for rehabilitation.”

Resolution No. 38 “The Plight of Women in Zimbabwe”

“That this Conference notes that Amicus MSF recently hosted a visiting trade unionist from Zimbabwe. She described the plight of women and women trade unionists working in Zimbabwe at an Amicus MSF women’s meeting.

“Women in Zimbabwe, in addition to other gross violations of their human rights, are suffering the further indignity of having no access to sanitary wear. Male dominated policy making forums in Zimbabwe have little or no understanding or sympathy and do not prioritise availability of sanitary wear. Indeed some men refuse even to allow discussion of the subject of menstruation and sanitary wear at all.

“Conference recalls previous work done by the STUC Women’s Committee to help co-ordinate containers of sanitary wear being sent to South Africa. Conference, therefore, asks that the STUC Women’s Committee take similar action to co-ordinate the organisation of shipments of sanitary wear to Zimbabwe.”

Resolution No. 39 “Rape Victims in Kenya”

“That this Conference is appalled at the treatment of the Masai and Samburu women of Kenya, 650 of whom are alleged rape victims of British soldiers.

“The alleged crimes stretch back over three decades, and many are characterised by the systematic manner in which they were carried out. Despite promises made to Masai chiefs in 1983, no action has ever been taken to investigate or discipline any soldiers, nor to stop the attacks from happening.

“Conference recognises that the Ministry of Defence has recently sent members of the Royal Military Police to start an investigation, but believes that this is such a serious issue that a more public and accountable inquiry is needed.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the STUC Women’s Committee and the General Council to:

- raise awareness of the campaign amongst affiliates;
- support Amnesty International’s call for an independent inquiry, and ask affiliates to show their support; and
- organise a campaign to enlist MSPs’ & MPs’ support for an independent inquiry.”

Emergency Resolution No. 1 “Demonstration Against State Visit of George W Bush”

“That this Conference notes the increasingly imperialistic and aggressive nature of the US foreign policy, and in the light of this, calls on the UK Government to respond to the overwhelming wish of the British public to break away from this policy.

“Conference condemns the State visit to Britain of George W Bush and resolves to support the demonstration taking place in Scotland against the visit.”

Emergency Resolution No. 2 “Fire Fighters’ Pay Award”

“That this Conference is concerned at the actions by the Fire Service employers in renegeing on a key part of a collective agreement, which should serve as a warning to all public sector Unions and their members.

“The disgraceful actions of the Government and employers during the national fire dispute gave many concerns to the Trade Union Movement.

“By cynically and deliberately showing their contempt for the principle of collective bargaining, the message is clear. If they can do it to the FBU – they can do it to other public sector Unions.

“It is, therefore, crucial that the Trade Union Movement not only supports the FBU, but sends an equally clear message to all public sector employers that the breaching of collective agreements is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the General Council and the Women’s Committee to put pressure on COLSA and the Scottish Executive to:

- (i) pay firefighters and control room staff the full 7% backdated to 7 November 2003, as precisely agreed;
- ii) reach a partnership agreement that all future, successful negotiations with public sector Unions will not be breached.”

II – RESOLUTION REMITTED

Resolution No. 21 “Children with Special Needs in Education”

“That this Conference notes that last year, under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, educational institutions were obliged not to treat disabled people less favourably than others.

“Whilst Conference welcomes the advances that have been made, we are gravely concerned at a Bill, which is presently being drafted – the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Bill – that could stop children’s ‘records of needs’ being legally enforceable.

“It is clear that there are still concerns for disabled children to have the same educational and social opportunities as everyone else, particularly for children with more complex needs.

“Conference asks the STUC Women’s Committee to:

- i) campaign for children with special needs in education, to gain appropriate access and for support to be given within the classroom setting; and
- ii) to work with the Disability Rights Commission to improve the choice and opportunities for disabled children and their parents in education.”

III – RESOLUTION WITHDRAWN

Resolution No. 23 “VAT on Women’s Sanitary Products”

“That this Conference is concerned that women’s sanitary products are still classed as a ‘luxury item’ and consequently have VAT added to their cost. Having a monthly menstrual cycle is not optional and, for many of the poorest women, this is an added expense they can ill-afford.

“Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to campaign for the removal of VAT from women’s sanitary products.”