



SCOTTISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS

73th STUC WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

DECISIONS

Amended Resolution No.1 - A Scottish Health Service for Scotland's Women

“That this Conference welcomes the increase in expenditure on health announced in the Government’s budget in March, which will mean an additional £174 million to be spent by the Scottish Executive for the National Health Service in Scotland. We also welcome the Government’s approach to recognising and addressing health inequalities by taking a holistic approach to preventing ill-health through acknowledging and tackling the effects of poverty, stress and social exclusion.

“Conference believes that careful thought should be put into how this extra money is allocated and that mechanisms should be introduced to ensure that the health needs of women in Scotland in particular, as well as those of other socially and economically disadvantaged groups, are being met in a coherent and strategic manner.

“Conference notes that under the leadership of Susan Deacon, Minister for Health in the Scottish Executive, a number of important initiatives relating to women’s health are being actively addressed. In particular, this Conference applauds:

- the extension of the age range able to access Scotland’s breast cancer screening programme;
- the new National Cervical Cancer screening system, which standardises services across Scotland;
- the promotion of breastfeeding and return to work programmes to assist nursing mothers;
- the provision of a new Sexual Health Centre at Sandyford Road, Glasgow, specialising in support and advice to young women;
- the Minister’s brave stance on abortion and family planning rights in response to the Precious Life Group’s intimidating campaign tactics.

“Conference believes, however, that much more requires to be done to fully address the serious health needs of women in Scotland. For example, breast cancer patients are still waiting up to seven weeks to start radiotherapy after being diagnosed; sexual health centres, like the one in Sandyford Road, should be the rule rather than the exception; the extension of the age range in breast screening has led to a skills shortage in this area, which must be addressed urgently. Furthermore, Conference is deeply concerned as a result of recent published statistics that key issues such as levels of smoking and lung cancer require to be approached from a gender perspective.

“Conference is also concerned at the high number of low paid women workers employed within the Health Service to carry out a wide range of vital support and ancillary services. These low paid, often forgotten, workers form the backbone of the NHS in Scotland and there is a need to urgently review levels of pay and conditions in this area to reflect the importance of the service provided by these workers, and to tackle some of the worst aspects of low pay in the public sector.

“Conference believes that additional funding must be directed towards addressing these issues and that long-term planning should focus on the needs of staff and needs of particular disadvantaged groups of service users, if we are to truly develop an effective, modern and holistic National Health Service in Scotland.

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

- work in partnership with health service unions, women’s groups and the Scottish Executive to undertake in-depth research into women’s health issues and develop a long-term strategy to address women’s health needs across Scotland. This strategy should focus not only on service provision, but also on the links between poverty and ill-health, with a view to mainstreaming this strategy across all government departments;
- campaign for the Government to implement best practice in terms of pay and conditions, in order to promote greater sustainability, tackle staff skills shortages, heighten morale and increase job satisfaction across its predominantly female workforce;
- campaign for the Government to improve access for women to obtain cancer treatment.”

Amended Resolution No.2 - Addressing and Preventing Bullying at Work

“That this Conference is deeply concerned that bullying and harassment is still a major issue facing women in the workplace today.

“Conference acknowledges that women are particularly vulnerable to bullying as a result of their perceived position, both in employment and in wider society, because workplace bullying is an expression of and misuse of power. Often this workplace bullying can take the form of racism, sexism, sectarianism or homophobic and anti-disabled prejudices that are unwanted and unwelcome. Furthermore, unacceptable bullying behaviour can also be reinforced and perpetuated by the institutionalised practices, rules and management culture within an organisation.

“Conference notes that the long-term effects of bullying can be devastating for employees who are exposed to it. These effects are cumulative, in many cases leading to stress related illness and in severe cases resulting in people being unable to continue with their employment and suffering loss of confidence and complete physical and mental breakdown.

“Conference welcomes the introduction of the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law and also the lifting of compensation limits on unfair dismissal to £50,000, both of which it is hoped, will increase the legal powers open to victims of bullying to seek redress from employers. However conference believes that there is a need for more to be done to address institutionalised bullying and change the kind of workplace culture, within which, bullies are allowed to thrive and dominate.

“Conference also welcomes the imminent introduction into the NHS in Scotland (NHSiS) a Scotland-wide policy on ‘Dignity at Work’. The policy seeks to eliminate bullying and harassment in the NHSiS and all NHSiS employers will be required to implement the provisions of this document which will assist in protecting the predominantly female NHSiS workforce against bullying and harassment at all grades of employment.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to continue their work in relation to the prevention of workplace bullying and harassment by undertaking the following steps:

- Produce and publicise a Charter for the prevention of Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace, based on the work already carried out with the EOC at the consultative conference organised by the Women’s Committee last year.
- Calls on the STUC General Council and its affiliates to recognise and address the institutionalised aspects of workplace bullying, by tackling both their own working cultures and that of employers.
- Calls on STUC General Council and affiliated unions with membership in the NHSiS to promote the introduction of the provisions of ‘Dignity at Work’ throughout the Scottish NHS.
- Campaign for improved legal recognition and redress for those exposed to workplace bullying.”

Composite C – Family Friendly Employment Rights (Covering motion Nos 3 & amend, 4, 5 & amend, 6 & amend, 7 & 8)

“That this Conference welcomes the introduction of family friendly employment rights, parental leave and improvements in maternity leave provision by the Government, but recognises that many women still have difficulties balancing work and home life, and that changes are still required in the provision of statutory maternity pay. Conference further welcomes the Government’s review of maternity pay and parental leave, which will be the subject of a consultation at the end of the year.

“Conference notes with concern that:

- Family friendly employment rights do not relate solely to maternity and childcare issues. It is imperative that the agenda also incorporates elements such as elderly/disabled dependents.
- Women on full-time contracts returning from maternity leave do not have the right to return to work on a part-time basis.
- Women are often in short-term employment and, if they are between jobs at the qualifying week, are not allowed statutory maternity pay, but receive the lower maternity allowance.
- There is an impact of unpaid leave on the financial security of children, and only a 2% take up of unpaid parental leave amongst fathers.
- Current levels of paternity leave given by most, if not all, workplaces are inadequate. If equality in the workplace is to be fully achieved for women, it a pre-requisite that childcare is not only an issue for women.

“Conference believes that a review of maternity pay and parental leave is needed to ensure work/life balance for all workers and to clarify and simplify the current regulations. Furthermore, a review offers the opportunity to address concerns of working women and their families and to influence Government legislative programmes for the future.

“Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to work with the STUC General Council to ensure :

- all employed women are entitled to statutory maternity pay and all can easily understand and calculate their entitlement;
- maternity pay of 52 weeks for all women workers from day one of employment, with statutory maternity pay of 6 months at 90% of pay, followed by a lower level for the following 6 months;
- statutory paternity leave, distinct from parental leave, of at least 4 weeks with statutory paternity pay for working fathers;

- statutory pay for parental leave, at a high percentage of individual earnings and available from day one of employment to all parents of young children;
- reform of working families tax credit to improve access and enable extended family members to provide high quality childcare for children;
- greater flexibility of parental leave, in particular to use in segments of less than one week;
- the right to request part-time working, different hours or to refuse employer proposed hours to fit in with new or existing families responsibility. This should be under the same terms and conditions, status and salary as the previous full-time protected contract and such a request should not be unreasonably refused.

“Conference resolves to continue to lobby the Government in achieving a work/life balance for all workers and calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to campaign for the broadest possible family friendly agenda to be introduced into all workplaces. Conference further calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to make a detailed submission to the Government’s consultation, identifying what women face in combining work and family responsibilities in the Scottish economy and making recommendations for change. As well as encouraging and assisting affiliates in drawing up their own submission in response to the consultation exercise.”

**Composite D – Equal Pay Legislation
(Covering Motion Nos.9, 10 & amend, 11 & 12)**

“That this Conference recognises that, despite 30 years of equal pay legislation and a recently introduced National Minimum Wage, women are still not getting a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work. Furthermore, 25 years on from the Sex Discrimination Act, the EOC reports that women continue to experience discrimination at work. There is still a persistent gap between men and women’s income, with women on average earning only 80% of men’s earnings, and in many sectors the pay gap is even wider.

“Conference commends the Equal Opportunities Commission’s Valuing Women Campaign, which aims to understand and eliminate the persistent pay gap between men and women doing equivalent work. Conference also congratulates the Government’s Women’s Unit on its study ‘Women’s Income over a Lifetime’. This study found that even the highest skilled women without children suffer an average lifetime earnings shortfall of 12% or £143,000, compared with male equivalents, purely because they are women. There is also clear evidence among the Government’s own employees in some departments and agencies of unequal pay between women and men.

“Conference is concerned that :

- women working full-time earn only around 80p for every £1 earned by male full-time workers;
- part-time women workers only earn around 60p for every £1 earned by a male part-time worker;
- a recent EU survey showed the gap between men and women’s pay to be widest in the UK, with women on average earning 34% less than men.

“Conference believes that equalities issues, including equal pay, must form an integral part of the STUC’s overall economic agenda. It is now time for concerted action to win equal pay for the many thousands of women who deserve a decent wage, comparable to the wages men can expect to earn. The most important overall explanation of women’s unequal pay is the concentration of women into certain jobs and the low value society places on those jobs. This must be changed.

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

- highlight the continued earnings gap between women and men and challenge any policy of unfair pay levels for women workers;
- develop a strategy of action to close the gender gap, which can be incorporated into both collective bargaining strategies and the broader economic agenda;
- support any Scottish or UK-wide campaigns that may enhance the value of women in the workplace and, indeed, their status in society;
- campaign to amend equal pay and related acts in conjunction with the EOC and CRE to ensure that groups of workers, as well as individuals, are able to bring such claims and ensure equal pay for work of equal value is the basis for all employment;
- lobby for a means of having equal pay enforced at the point of take-up of employment and for action to be taken against those employers that continue to avoid the obligations of the 1970 Equal Pay Act;
- promote the value of trade union membership in helping to close the pay gap;
- ensure that ‘female forfeit’ caused by the under-valuing of female jobs is eradicated;

- call for the introduction of a statutory duty on employers to review and equality proof all of their pay systems based on the EOC Code of Practice on equal pay if a right for trade unions to be involved throughout this process;
- examine the role that the Central Arbitration Committee might play in ensuring the collective enforcement of equal pay rights;
- ensure the Government, as an employer, act as a model of best practice in implementing equal pay policies and practice for its own employees.”

Resolution No.13. Full-Time to Part-Time Work

“That this Conference recognises that the new legislation on part-time workers, the majority of whom are women, does not provide a right to change from full-time to part-time and that many employers still do not accept the advice of the DTI that this is an important element of Family Friendly policies.

“This Conference believes that a statutory right should have been included in the legislation so that employers would have to justify any refused request.

“This Conference calls upon the STUC Women’s Committee to campaign for an appropriate amendment to the Part-Time Workers Regulation.”

Composite E – Part-Time Workers (Covering Motion Nos. 14, 15 & 16)

“That this Conference welcomes, as a step in the right direction, the new Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000, which provides some increase to sections for vulnerable part-time workers and came into force on 1st July 2000. Conference believes these regulations are an important move towards improving the status, pay and conditions of all part-time workers, the vast majority of whom are women.

“Conference is, however, concerned that the regulations do not address several aspects of part-time working, including the limitation on over-time premium rates, which are paid to part-time workers until the same number of hours has been worked as a full-time worker. Working beyond normal hours is as disruptive for part-time workers as for full-time workers, and that this treatment is unjust.

“Furthermore, Conference is concerned that the regulations have been implemented in the most minimal way and so will benefit far fewer part-time workers than may have been expected. These regulations do not fit well with the existing rights affecting many part-time workers under the Sex Discrimination Act and Equal Pay Act. For example, part-time workers can only claim equal pay treatment with a comparable time-worker and the comparison must be made with the person working under the ‘same type of contract’. Conference believes this will seriously limit the number of workers who can identify a comparator and, therefore, would be able to pursue a claim.

“Similarly, Conference is concerned that although the EU Directive on Part Time Working requires Members States to ‘identify and review obstacles of a legal or administrative nature, which may limit the opportunities for part-time work and, where appropriate limit them’, the Government has not produced a statutory Code of Practice to cover this.

“Finally, Conference is concerned that new legislation on part-time workers does not provide a right to change from full-time to part-time work or vice versa, and many employers do not accept the advice of the DTI that this is an important element of family friendly policy.

“This Conference calls upon the STUC Women’s Committee to lobby for the Part-Time Workers Regulations to be improved in the following ways, so that more, including the most exploited part-time workers, can receive this valuable protection and we can truly say that their treatment is equal in every way to full-time workers.

“Conference calls on the Government to include in the Part-Time Workers Regulations:

- a statutory right to transfer between full and part-time employment and vice versa;
- the right to make comparisons on pay and conditions with a hypothetical worker;
- the removal of the requirements that workers compared should be on the same types of contracts;
- the concept of ‘equal value’ so that comparisons can be made where jobs are different instead of restricting it to the ‘same or broadly similar’ jobs;
- a code of practice to ensure that regulations are fully compatible with the EU Directive on Part-Time Work;
- removal of the limitation on over-time premium rates for part-time workers.”

Resolution No.17 - Redundancy Procedures

“That this Conference notes with alarm the economic problems faced by the Scottish manufacturing sector, and in particular the job losses in industries such as textiles and clothing, where most employees are women.

“To this end, Conference is concerned at the relative ease with which companies can close or scale down the Scottish, and indeed, their UK operations.

“As such, Conference calls on the UK Government to seek the harmonisation of redundancy payments and consultation procedures across the EU, with a view to securing:

1. a procedure that places a duty on employers to discuss through normal collective bargaining channels, future corporate strategies on employment levels;
2. a duty to enter into genuine and meaningful consultation when redundancies are being considered, and well in advance of any announcements being made; and
3. improvements in the current statutory redundancy payments scheme.”

Resolution No.19 - SERPS

“That this Conference condemns the Government’s action over SERPS, the consequence of which is that the poverty levels of many older people, the majority of whom are women, will be worsened, and calls upon the Women’s Committee to lobby the Government to review its decision regarding the timescale for the introduction of changes to SERPS provisions.”

Amended Resolution No.20 - Women into the Mainstream

“That this Conference notes that the issue of mainstreaming equalities is growing more and more prominent in the sphere of equalities work. Mainstreaming is often seen as a way of influencing the policy setting rather than influencing the policy implementation.

“This Conference believes that mainstreaming is such a broad area for equalities that it is often not only misunderstood but that the role of women’s self-organisation and other women’s structures working under a mainstreaming agenda is unclear.

“This Conference further believes that mainstreaming is potentially:

- a route to influencing policy development all the way through its development stage;
- a tool towards delivering equality.

“Furthermore, we believe that if mainstreaming is to succeed the role of the women’s self-organised group or other form of women’s structure will require changing to support this agenda. There is a distinct and specialist role for women’s organisations in a mainstreaming agenda, but it is to act as a catalyst for change. If mainstreaming is to succeed then women’s organisation both in the STUC and in affiliate Unions will need to become stronger to ensure that mainstreaming does not become everybody’s job but nobody’s responsibility.

“This Conference instructs the STUC Women’s Committee to:

- Agree a definition of mainstreaming to be used throughout the STUC which encompasses not only the need for women’s perspectives to be included at a policy development stage, but also the pre-requisite for women’s self organisation and other forms of women’s structures.
- Organise a conference on mainstreaming to discuss these concepts further with not only Trade Unionists, but also women in the wider community.
- Liaise with the Youth Committee, Black Workers’ Committee, Disability Forum and LGBT Forum to get a united Scottish Trade Union voice on mainstreaming.”

Resolution No.21 - Access

“That this Conference, in view of intimidatory measures being taken by various employers to actively discourage employees from joining their relative trade unions, urges the STUC to press for legislation that would enable full time officials or nominees the right to reasonable access in order to recruit, especially women and part time workers in low paid jobs who may not be fully aware of their employment rights.”

Amended Resolution No.22 - Women’s Representation

“That this Conference applauds the efforts of the STUC Women’s Committee in campaigning to ensure women are properly represented in political and trade union life.

“Conference welcomes efforts by political parties to improve the representation of women in local government, national government and the Scottish Parliament.

“Conference is concerned, however, that the number of women representatives should not decrease as changes are made to the electoral system at any level of government.

“Conference calls on the Women’s Committee to:

- call on all political parties to devise means of ensuring that women are properly and genuinely involved in selection procedures;
- work with and advise political parties on means of so doing;
- continue its campaign to increase women’s representation;
- continue to promote family friendly policies within political and trade union life.”

Amended Resolution No.23 - Poverty

“That this Conference welcomes the draft proposals set out in the Labour Party’s ‘Health and Community Care’ document and their promotion of a healthy lifestyle, and also that diet has a direct effect on children’ s learning and educational achievement.

“Conference recognises that poverty, diet and nutrition play a key role in our members’ and, in particular, our children’s health. It is also acknowledged that women predominantly bear the burden of providing for their family’s nutritional needs. Research shows that the diet of Scottish children compares poorly with that of our European neighbours.

“We, therefore, ask the STUC Women’s Committee to:

- i. urge the Scottish Executive to implement the Scottish Community Diet Project;
- ii. bring forward initiatives to ensure that all nursery/primary school children receive free milk;
- iii. lobby COSLA to provide guidelines for local authorities and identify funding for any initiatives being brought forward in consultation with education authorities and outside agencies;
- iv. support any Scottish or UK campaigns which support milk for schools campaigns;

- v. engage in community activities to promote free school milk and support the Scottish Poverty Alliance's Free Meals Campaign."

Resolution No.24. Women and Poverty

"That this Conference continues to be concerned that a great number of women and families continue to face unacceptable levels of poverty in their daily lives.

"Conference, whilst recognising that the Scottish Executive has given priority to dealing with deprivation and poverty through its social inclusion programme, believes that more requires to be done to help women and families in particular.

"Conference asks the Women's Committee to:

- i) work with organisations dealing with women and families with a view to carrying out an audit of what improvements have been made to alleviate poverty since the establishment of the Parliament;
- ii) seek discussions with the Communities Minister in order to ascertain what additional steps can be taken to help those women and families who are most affected by poverty and deprivation.

Amended Resolution No.25 - Valuing the Care Sector

"That this Conference recognises the growing importance of the care sector in social and economic terms. It is essential that we have quality care provision for children, young adults, the elderly, people with disabilities, and the sick. Employees within this sector are predominantly female, and pay is generally low.

"Conference calls on the STUC to:

- highlight the importance of the Care Sector,
- negotiate and campaign to address the pay deficiency in this sector,
- value the work done by carers,
- increase the status of carers by negotiating for improved training
- ensure the highest standards and levels of quality care.

"Conference further recognises the social and economic value of the work of unpaid carers, many of whom are meeting the care needs of family members. Conference calls on the STUC to consider ways of addressing the pay and pensions deficit suffered by these unpaid carers."

Resolution No.26 - Merging of Emergency Services

“That this Conference recognises the vital contribution to public safety of emergency service workers. Their effectiveness is often unrecognised and unsung and is a result of dedication and skill dependant on intensive training for their respective roles and local knowledge built up over the years.

“Conference, therefore, opposes proposals to merge Fire and Ambulance services thereby reducing their effectiveness. In particular the merging of Fire and Ambulance controls will do nothing to improve the safety of the public or other emergency service workers. Such moves would undermine the concept of Best Value and end in an unacceptable loss of experience and training through job losses which, in the main, would be those of women Trade Unionists.”

Amended Resolution No.27 - Local Authority Workers

“That this Conference notes with concern the fact that local authority workers have suffered continual erosion of salaries and conditions, and that many of these workers are women in already lowly-paid jobs.

“Conference is gravely concerned at the current poor pay levels for workers such as school cleaners and cooks, care workers, and staff in leisure centres, who all provide vital services to the community. It is clear that over the last five years pay levels for local authority workers just have not kept pace with the rest of the economy.

“Evidence from the 1999 New Earnings Survey (NES) showed major pay differentials between men and women employed in local government, with male employees earning on average £365 per week and women earning £287.70 per week. This is an issue the trade union movement has to address.

“Conference supports these workers and their Unions in their action to secure adequate finance from the Scottish Executive for local authorities to fund acceptable, and fair and equitable salary increases without further so-called efficiency savings.”

Resolution No.28 - Christmas Closing

“That this Conference is concerned by the growing number of attempts by employers in certain industries to undermine workers’ rights to enjoy previously hard-earned customary and public holidays.

“Conference notes that in the retail distribution sector, where the majority of employees are women, a number of major retailers have sought to open on Boxing Day and New Year’s Day in Scotland, often under the guise of ‘24-hour trading’.

“Conference is concerned that it is only a matter of time before Christmas Day opening becomes a normal retail practice, thereby further eroding the whole principle of having established customary and public holidays.

“Conference calls upon the General Council to urge the Scottish Executive to bring forward early legislation which will ensure that both Christmas Day and New Year’s Day at least are deemed as non-trading days by Statute for those retail and distributive units with a trading floor space of more than 3,000 square feet.”

Resolution No. 29 - Council House Stock

“That this Conference deplores the encouragement by local authorities to hive off the council house stock to housing associations and other private bodies and the significant effect this will have on single parents who are predominantly women.”

Composite A – Domestic Violence (Covering Motion Nos. 30, 31 & 32)

“That this Conference welcomes the work being undertaken by the Scottish Executive on tackling domestic abuse, including initiatives to fund services that assist and support victims and campaigns that combat domestic violence and raise the profile of the issue.

“Conference however, acknowledges the increase in incidents of domestic abuse in Scotland and believes that, in developing a co-ordinated strategy, it is essential that victims of domestic abuse are given the support, advice and confidence they need to deal with their own personal situations.

“To do this, Conference believes we must empower workplace trade union representatives so they are able to assist and support victims of domestic abuse. Furthermore, there is a need to address the role of employers in supporting, protecting and enabling women who are experiencing violence, to continue working.

“Conference also recognises that Government campaigns alone, will not help those women who are found guilty of killing abusive partners, as a result of the cumulative effects of violence and abuse.

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

- Take the strong line that domestic violence of a physical, verbal or emotional nature is totally unacceptable at all levels
- Work together with other social partners, to campaign for and facilitate greater workplace awareness of and action on the horrors of domestic abuse.
- Make representations to Ministers and MSPs for the introduction of a code of practice for employers in Scotland on dealing with domestic violence to be drawn up in consultation with trade unions, employer representatives and domestic violence support agencies.
- Campaign for changes in Scottish law on provocation and self defence to take account of the cumulative effects of domestic violence and abuse. “

Composite D – Changes to Rape Legislation (Covering Motion Nos.33 & 34)

“That this Conference notes with deepest concern that less than 10% of reported rapes will result in a conviction. The majority of rapes are carried out by men known to the victim, and are never reported. This Conference believes that the statistics regarding the incidence and reporting of rape are deplorable. The likelihood of a successful conviction is very low. Added to this is the long drawn out ordeal of the legal procedure, which intensifies and prolongs the trauma for the victim.

Furthermore, conference is appalled about the recent series of criminal rape cases in which alleged women rape victims were subjected to harrowing courtroom interrogations during cross-examination from the people charged with their rapes.

“Rape and sexual abuse cases should be prepared in consultation with victim witnesses, and victim witnesses should be kept informed at all stages of the process and consulted about key decisions, particularly when dropping a case is considered.

“The law has changed in England and Wales, and guidelines have been introduced in Scotland, so that in theory victims of rape are not supposed to be questioned about their sexual history without special permission from the judge. However, in practice this is still a routine procedure, and frequently forms part of an aggressive and personal cross-examination on behaviour, appearance and life-style. A woman’s sexual history is irrelevant. Aggressive cross-examination of a rape victim, questioning her style of dress and behaviour at an unacceptable personal level, should stop.

“We need a new statutory definition of consent, based on that currently used in Victoria, Australia. Briefly, this says that consent is to be freely given by the woman; the man must show what he did to seek and obtain the woman’s consent. The idea of dedicated teams of sex crime prosecutors should also be explored.

“Cases involving acquaintances and intimates are most likely to be dropped. It is especially difficult for a victim to persevere when she may be in a continuing relationship with the accused, or if pressure may be brought to bear through other social contacts or networks. Research shows that rape by a partner is likely to involve repeat victimisation. Rape should not be “graded” in any way; the effect of rape on a woman, whether it be so called “date rape, rape in marriage or within a partnership or rape by a total stranger, it cannot be regarded as more or less serious on this basis.

“The change in the law in England and Wales whereby men accused of rape are no longer allowed to conduct their own defence, which prolonged and intensified the ordeal by further humiliating the woman in court, is long overdue, but welcome. A similar change in the law is urgently required in Scotland to protect women from this method of cross-examination and the way in which these cases are conducted.

“This Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to work with other women’s organisations and bodies such as the Scottish Rape Crisis Network, the Campaign to End Rape to lobby the Government and Scottish Parliament for improved legislation which will afford women the rights, respect and dignity they are entitled to.”

Resolution No.35 - Speak out Against Racism – Defend Asylum Seekers

“That this Conference condemns the current atmosphere of racist hysteria against refugees and asylum seekers.

“We join the churches, the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees’ representative in Britain and Bill Morris, the General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers’ Union, in condemning the way in which both Government and Opposition have tried to out-bid each other in the intolerance of their statements about asylum seekers.

“We reject as unacceptable the way in which the Conservative Party seeks to exploit the fate of asylum seekers for electoral advantage.

“We believe the Government’s decisions to withdraw benefits from asylum seekers, detain more and more of them and disperse others to ‘designated accommodation’ all over the UK, have contributed to the atmosphere of racism against asylum seekers. In this context of growing racism, the threat of racist violence has increased for all non-white communities in Britain.

“Further, we recognise that women who are asylum seekers are particularly vulnerable to humiliation and denigration as they attempt to care and provide for their families totally reliant on vouchers and substantially reduced benefits.

“We, therefore, call upon the Women’s Committee to support the Speak Out Against Racism – Defend Asylum Seekers campaign and pledge to:

- Defend the right of refugees to seek asylum in Britain under the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees;
- Demand an end to attempts by political parties and leaders to exploit racism for electoral gain;
- Call for legal action against newspapers which publish material inciting racial hatred;
- Call upon the Government to restore asylum rights by ending the voucher and designated accommodation systems and restoring benefits.”

Resolution No.36 - Rights of Children and Young People

“That this Conference welcomes the commitment of both the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Parliament to improve the quality of life for everyone in Scotland, and to seek to make Scotland a more inclusive and fair society. We recognise that women still bear major responsibilities in the family for the wellbeing of children and young people.

“We, therefore, believe that special attention needs to be paid to the rights of children and young people in Scotland - rights which include having a good quality and safe homelife, irrespective of the diversity of the family; good quality housing; access to the highest quality health care and education; a healthy and varied diet; and the opportunity to decent employment.

“We note with deep concern, however, that for many children and young people in Scotland the realities of life include poverty and deprivation, poor accommodation and shelter, violence, drug and sexual abuse.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the Scottish Executive to give priority to the rights of children and young people by:

- a) creating a dedicated Minister for Children in the Scottish Executive;
- b) co-ordinating departmental work within all devolved policy areas dealing with children and young people.

“Conference further believes that, in order to inform and open the debate on the rights of children and young people, the Scottish Executive should:

i) draw upon the views of young people using different fora, including the Youth Parliament, the STUC Youth Committee, and other youth organisations;

and

ii) organise a Scottish Children's Summit involving agencies and organisations working with and on behalf of children and young people in Scotland.

“In addition, Conference asks the Women's Committee to initiate dialogue with organisations such as Children in Scotland, Save the Children, Scotland, Council for One Parent Families, Scotland, One Plus, with a view to presenting to the Scottish Parliament a wide consensus on the rights of children and young people in Scotland.”

Resolution No.37 - Gender/Attainment/Achievement

“That this Conference welcomes the use of disaggregated statistics by the Scottish Executive in providing an overall picture of gender differences in attainment between boys and girls in examinations results. It notes that low attainment has declined dramatically among both sexes since 1978.

“In expressing concern about gender difference in attainment, Conference emphasises its belief that education is about more than examination results and that it is important to avoid an education system that is too narrowly focused, failing to give credit and award achievement.

“Conference welcomes the achievements of Scottish education since the introduction of a comprehensive system of education. Conference believes that this system is the most effective means of ensuring equality of opportunity and access for all learners.

“Conference is concerned to ensure that disaggregated statistics are properly analysed and interpreted. It believes that some of the responses to the improvement in girls' attainment are inappropriate.

“Conference is concerned that the statistics as presented mask a continuing and deep rooted problem of under attainment of girls from poor socio-economic backgrounds

“Conference recognises that examinations statistics also show continued gender segregation of subject choice at school which has implications for continuing education and training opportunities for girls and women and, therefore, consequences for employment opportunities and pensions.

“Conference calls on the Women’s Committee to:

- seek a meeting with appropriate members of the Scottish Parliament to raise issues relating to the education of girls and women;
- continue to campaign for continuing education and training opportunities, including work-based training, for girls and women;
- continue to work in conjunction with the EOC (Scotland) and other appropriate organisations to highlight this issue;
- work with education trade unions and other affiliates to highlight this issue among their own members.”

Amended Resolution No.38 - Lifelong Learning

“That this Conference welcomes the establishment of the STUC Lifelong Learning Centre.

“Conference also welcomes the comments made by the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning that Trade Unions have a key role to play in urging members to make the most of learning opportunities and that ‘lifelong learning is the currency of the 21st century and will buy those who take part in it a vital stake in the Scottish economy’.

“However, Conference notes with concern that with continuing casualisation, employees on fixed term contracts are, in many cases, not afforded the opportunities to improve their skills due to limited access to training and development. Training for workers on fixed term and casual contracts is often seen by employers as less important than training for permanent staff.

“Conference also recognises that amongst permanent staff, women are less likely to be afforded access to training because they are less likely to hold senior positions and are more likely to be employed on a part-time or flexible working hours contract.

“Conference notes that women are disproportionately represented among this group of workers and that women workers in general have specific caring responsibilities which may present barriers to participating in education and training.

"Conference recognises gender segregation in work-based training and welcomes efforts by employers and trade unions to address this through developing education and learning strategies which are free of gender bias.

"Conference further notes that the Trade Union formed Science Alliance has published a Charter for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology which, as one of its aims, seeks to promote career development for women.

"Conference welcomes the work of the Science Alliance in this field and endorses its charters on 'Training and Development for Scientists' and 'A Fair Deal for Women in SET'. Conference also welcomes IPMS 'Opportunities for Change' programme, which seeks to support the personal and career development scientific staff on fixed term contracts.

"Conference calls on the STUC Women's Committee:

1. to campaign for the implementation of the Science Alliance charters;
2. to ensure that training for workers on fixed term contracts is raised through the Trade Union Working Party on Lifelong Learning;
3. to campaign for a reduction in the use of fixed term contracts as a mode of employment;
4. to ensure that access to learning for women workers in particular is promoted and supported by the STUC Lifelong Learning Centre and by affiliates;
5. to support initiatives to improve access to work-based education and training free of gender bias."

Resolution No.39 - Equal Opportunities in Universities

"That this Conference notes that Research by AUT(S) and other Higher Education unions has shown that universities are directly discriminatory in their employment practices. Women and staff from ethnic minorities are discriminated against in appointment and promotion procedures and often have to endure bullying and harassing behaviour in the workplace.

"AUT(S) has negotiated a framework for the introduction of proper and applied equal opportunities in universities with university employers. This agreement sets out detailed commitments to training, targets and monitoring arrangements for the achievement of equal opportunities in Higher Education.

"Conference calls on university employers to work with AUT(S) and other HE unions to ensure that this agreement is funded and implemented fully so that the scandal of discriminatory employment practices in Scottish Higher Education is finally ended."

Resolution No.40 - Women and the Research Assessment Exercise

“That this Conference notes that the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) is carried out every four years in all institutions of higher education. Since performance in the RAE has a very significant effect on budgets, it is taken very seriously by all institutions.

“Returns to the RAE are generally made by departments, which can decide which members of staff they include in their return. Being excluded from the RAE generally has a very significant effect on career prospects and can totally wreck them. In the last RAE women staff were on average 12% less likely to be included in RAE returns than their male colleagues.

“Another important factor is the type of contribution made to the RAE. In previous RAE rounds maternity leave (and other extended periods of absence, for instance due to illness) have not been taken into account. This means that the research of women staff has been devalued. Some women staff have been pressurised to produce research actually during maternity leave or to write additional papers when they come back.

“These are only two of the ways in which the RAE discriminates against women members of staff. There are many others.

“Conference urges University employers to:

- i) properly train those involved in compiling and selecting RAE returns in Equal Opportunities issues, so that they understand the importance of recognising and overcoming bias distorting the RAE procedures which might be found to lead to discrimination;
- ii) take care to ensure that decisions are not left in the hands of a single individual, but are cross-referenced to eliminate bias or prejudice in selection decisions;
- iii) have a clear and appropriate mechanism for staff to challenge decisions impacting on their careers. This is especially important for 'vulnerable' staff such as those on fixed term contracts, women on maternity leave and inexperienced staff.

“Conference urges the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) to:

- a) ensure that all members of all RAE panels participate in equal opportunities training. The content of this training should be drawn up in consultation with HE unions;
- b) ensure better gender balance in the composition of the RAE panels.

“Conference urges that SHEFC and university employers monitor the RAE process for gender discrimination and report publicly their findings.”

Emergency Resolution No. 1 – Palestine

“That this Conference is gravely concerned over the continuing violence in the Old City of Jerusalem and throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and is particularly shocked by the tragic deaths of Palestinian children.

“Conference supports the action of Palestinian women in organising protest marches against the attacks by Israeli forces on unarmed men, women and children and calls for adherence by Israel to the obligations of the Forth Geneva Convention and the relevant UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

“In particular, Conference supports the terms of UN resolution 1322 deploring the provocation at the holy site of Al-Haram Al-Sharif, condemning the acts of violence, stressing the importance of a speedy and objective inquiry into the recent events and calling for the resumption of negotiations within the Middle East peace process.

“Conference believes that the UN should continue to exercise its responsibility towards all aspects of the question of Palestine, calls for the intervention of international observers and welcomes the call by the Prime Minister for the presence of observers from Europe.

“Ultimately, Conference believes that peace in Palestine, Israel and the Middle East should be based on a just settlement that:

- i) restores the West Bank and Gaza Strip to an autonomous Palestinian state;
- ii) recognises the legitimacy of the UN’s declaration that refugees wishing to return to Palestine should be allowed to do so;

“Conference calls on the STUC to continue to work with the Scottish Friends of Palestine in promoting the cause of peace with justice for the people of Palestine.”

Emergency Resolution No. 2 – Scottish Executive’s Equality Strategy

“That this Conference welcomes the recently published Scottish Executive’s Equality Strategy ‘Working Together for Equality’.

“This Conference welcomes the Scottish Executive’s vision of a just and inclusive Scotland that respects the diversity of the people of Scotland, and their commitment to work in partnership to tackle equality issues, including with Trade Unions.

“Conference notes the recognition contained within the Strategy that systems, behaviour and attitudes cause and sustain discrimination and prejudice.

“Conference welcomes the definition of mainstreaming used and the Scottish Executive’s intention to put in place systems and mechanisms for mainstreaming. Conference also welcomes the focus on equalities statistics, and urges the Scottish Executive to require public bodies to collect and collate equalities statistics using a standardised data collection method. Effective distribution of this information is essential.

“Turning the Strategy into action will be demanding, but must be a priority for the Scottish Executive. For example, lesbian women and gay men continue to be discriminated against in the law as parents, partners and employees. Conference calls on the STUC Women’s Committee to:

- i) urge the Scottish Executive to implement the Equality Strategy in full;
- ii) urge the Scottish Executive to reaffirm its commitment to eradicating all discriminatory laws and practices towards lesbian women and gay men, and consider drafting a consultative document outlining what legislative action the Scottish parliament could take to ensure equality for lesbian women and gay men in Scotland;
- iii) continue to engage in the Women in Scotland Consultative Forum.”

Emergency Resolution No. 3 – Human Rights Act Protocol 12

“That this Conference welcomes the introduction of the Human Rights Act into UK and Scottish law. For the first time fundamental human rights are now protected by law, as the UK Government has signed up to Articles enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights.

“This presents great opportunities for trade unionists, and is a significant cultural shift towards the importance of individual and collective rights.

“However, Conference is concerned that the UK Government failed to sign up to Protocol 12 of the ECHR at a recent meeting of the Council of Europe on 4 November 2000, when Protocol 12 was open to signatures of Member State Governments.

“Protocol 12 gives individuals the free standing right to claim discrimination without the need to refer to the other specific rights set out in the Human Rights Act.

“Conference urges the STUC to actively encourage the UK Government to sign up to Protocol 12. This would give disadvantaged groups, such as women, lesbians, the elderly and disabled, the basic right to claim discrimination.

“By signing up to Protocol 12 we will improve our basic civic and human rights, reduce unfairness, discrimination and inequality, and work towards achieving a fairer society.”

Emergency Resolution No. 4 – Health Respect

“That this Conference condemns the vicious personal attacks on our Health Minister, Susan Deacon MSP, by the groups such as ‘Precious Life’ and ‘Parent Truth Campaign’.

“Conference welcomes the recently announced initiatives by Susan Deacon to set up ‘Healthy Respect’ to provide informed sex education and advice, counselling and contraception for young people.

“Conference calls upon all affiliates to work together to support the Minister in these initiatives and condemn the work of the extremist bigots who represent a minority view in Scotland”

FELL

Motion No.18 - The 1976 Sex Discrimination Act (FELL)

“That this Conference notes that the Sex Discrimination Act does not protect UK women who work, for example, as tourist guides during the tourist season, in countries such as Turkey. This is because such workers work wholly outside the UK and the European Union.

“Conference calls on the General Council to campaign for an amendment to the above Act which will allow all women, who are UK citizens, employed by UK employers, under UK contracts of employment, to bring claims of sex discrimination before an Employment Tribunal.”