

# **STUC**

## **DISABLED WORKERS' CONFERENCE 2025**

### **ACCESS ALL AREAS**

**22 & 23 November**

## **AGENDA**

**22ND ANNUAL STUC DISABLED WORKERS' CONFERENCE**

**22ND & 23RD NOVEMBER 2025**

**CHAIRPERSON: CAROL WOOD (NASUWT)**

SCOTLAND

**NASUWT** THE  
TEACHERS'  
UNION

# CAMPAIGNING FOR A BETTER DEAL

**NASUWT WELCOMES ALL  
DELEGATES TO THE  
22<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL STUC DISABLED  
WORKERS' CONFERENCE**

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**GOOD LUCK TO THE CHAIR:  
CAROL WOOD, NASUWT**

JOIN US



# TABLE OF

# CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Conference Sessions   | 2  |
| STUC Equality Conferences A-Z Guide                                   | 3  |
| Conference Guide for Delegates and Visitors                           | 5  |
| Motions and Amendments to STUC Disabled Workers' Conference 2025      | 9  |
| Nominations   | 26 |
| List of Delegates   | 27 |
| Report: Work of the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee                  | 29 |
| Report: Disabled Workers' Representatives on the STUC General Council | 32 |
| Report: Disabled Workers' Representatives to STUC Congress 2025       | 35 |
| List of Exhibitors  | 39 |
| Constitution of STUC Disabled Workers' Conference                     | 40 |

# CONFERENCE SESSIONS

**SATURDAY  
22ND NOVEMBER**

10:00am - 12:45pm

1:45pm - 5:00pm

**SUNDAY  
23RD NOVEMBER**

10:00am - 1:15pm

# CONFERENCE AGENDA

- i) Secretary's Welcome
- ii) Address by Chairperson
- iii) Announcements
- iv) Consideration of Reports and Motions
- v) Speakers
- vi) Election of Committee 2025/26
- vii) Vote of Thanks and Close of Conference

**Secretariat to the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee:**

**Linda Somerville, STUC Deputy General Secretary**

**Rachel Thomson, STUC Equality Policy Officer**

**Fiona Low, STUC Committees and Admin Officer**

# STUC EQUALITY CONFERENCES

## A - Z GUIDE

### AMENDMENT

A proposal to amend a motion by adding, deleting, or replacing parts of the original motion.

### CONGRESS

STUC Congress is the STUC annual conference which formulates policy and shapes the main priority campaigns for the whole organisation to follow.

### DELEGATE

An elected member attending conference to represent their union.

### EMERGENCY MOTION

Deals with an issue or subject that has happened since the closing date for motions. It is debated and voted on in the same way as other motions at conference.

### FORMALLY SECONDED

Any delegate can call out “Formally” to allow a motion to be debated if there is no speaker to “Second” the motion.

### MOTION

A formal written proposal submitted by affiliated trade unions or trades union councils to be debated at conference or congress. Delegates will vote in favour of, against or abstain at the end of the debate. A motion needs to be “Moved” then “Seconded” before it can be debated.

### MOVER

The delegate who speaks first to start the debate on the motion.

### ORDER OF BUSINESS

A note of the timings of the conference and what will happen at each section i.e. Motions for debate, workshops, etc.

### OBSERVER

A member attending a conference to observe but has no voting rights on motions or proposals at the conference.

### POLICY

An agreed position or demands on an issue. Policy is decided by motions passed by delegates at our equality conferences.

### SECONDER

The delegate who speaks second in the debate and in support of the motion.

### STANDING ORDERS

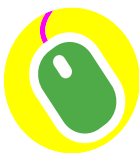
The rules for the conference - they note how the debate will be conducted, voting will take place and any other procedures that need to be followed. The standing orders also note the composition and deadlines for motions and amendments.



# Celebrating and supporting disabled workers

**Greetings to all delegates at the  
STUC Disabled Workers' Conference 2025**

**Three simple ways to join UNISON today  
and get essential cover wherever you work**



Join online at  
[joinunison.org](https://joinunison.org)



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# CONFERENCE GUIDE

## WHO ATTENDS THE DISABLED WORKERS' CONFERENCE?

- Trade Unions with membership of up to 10,000 - 6 delegates
- Trade Unions with membership over 10,000 - 6 delegates plus one for every 10,000 members or part thereof
- Trades Union Councils - up to 6 delegates

Observers / Visitors sit together in a separate section of the Conference Room and are not allowed to vote. Also in attendance are STUC staff and exhibitors.

## HOW LONG DOES THE CONFERENCE LAST?

The Conference lasts two days. It normally opens at 10:00am on the first day (with registration from 09:30 am), closing at approximately 5:00 pm. It assembles at 10.00 am on the second day until approximately 1.00 pm.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CONFERENCE ARRANGEMENTS?

The Disabled Workers' Committee is responsible for Conference arrangements, in conjunction with STUC Staff.

## WHO CHAIRS THE CONFERENCE?

The Chair of the Committee will also be the Conference Chair, this year's Chair is Carol Wood of NASUWT.

## WHAT ROLE DOES THE DISABLED WORKERS' COMMITTEE PLAY AT CONFERENCE?

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee sit on the platform, together with a member of STUC staff – usually the Secretary to the Committee.

## HOW IS THE DISABLED WORKERS' COMMITTEE ELECTED?

The Disabled Workers' Committee comprises 10 members in the Trades Union Section and 1 member in the Trades Union Council Section, and are nominated on the

following basis:

Trades Unions and Trades Union Councils can nominate 1 member to the general seat and / or to one of the women's seats on the Committee. Nominees must be part of the nominating affiliates' delegation to Conference.

If there are more than 5 members nominated to the Trades Union General Seats; 5 members nominated to the Trades Union Women's Seats and / or more than 1 member nominated in the Trades Union Council Section, then an election at Conference will be necessary.

Each delegation leader will receive a ballot paper and can vote up to 10 candidates from the Trades Union Section (5 from the General seats and 5 from the Women's seats); and 1 from the Trades Union Council Section. Delegations are requested to deposit completed ballot papers in the ballot box by 5.00 pm on the first day of Conference, when votes are counted by 2 scrutineers who are appointed at the start of Conference. The results are then announced on the Sunday morning of Conference. Successful candidates hold office from close of Conference for one year.

## WHAT DOES THE CONFERENCE DISCUSS?

Each Trades Union and Trades Union Council can submit up to 2 motions, on topics which must relate specifically to the working lives of disabled people in Scotland. Each motion can be no more than 300 words. Motions are published in a Preliminary Agenda and Trades Unions/ Trades Union Councils are then invited to submit up to 2 amendments which can be no more than 50 words for each amendment.

Certain motions on the Preliminary Agenda, together with amendments, may be grouped into a composite motion, with the agreement of the Trades Unions/Trades

Union Councils concerned.

The Motions and amendments are included within the Conference Agenda which is given to all delegates and visitors.

Support: In order to allow more time for delegates, the Committee usually (but not always) waives the right to speak in a debate on a motion or amendment they support.

Support with Statement: If necessary, a Committee member will explain to Conference any particular points they wish to emphasise or reservations the Committee may have on a motion or amendment they otherwise support.

Remit: The Committee may seek remission of a motion before Conference. If the union will not agree to remit the motion, a Committee member will speak in opposition to it.

Oppose: A Committee member will speak on any motion or amendment opposed by the Committee.

A Committee member may also speak on points of explanation on a motion or amendment.

A member of the Committee will also introduce any special report on behalf of the Committee.

#### HOW ARE DEBATES CONDUCTED?

- i. Moving and Seconding Motion: The mover of a motion may speak for up to 8 minutes and the seconder is allowed up to 4 minutes. It is important that these times are adhered to. If business overruns allocated time, it may be necessary during the course of the Conference for the Committee to reduce speaking times.
- ii. Debate and the right of reply: Subsequent speakers on the motion are allowed up to 4 minutes. A delegate is not normally allowed to speak more than once in any debate, unless permission is given by the Chair, to make a point of order or explanation. Whether or not a motion has been opposed, the mover may be allowed 4 minutes to reply to the

discussion on the motion, but no new issues may be introduced.

- iii. Moving an amendment: The proposer of an amendment is called to speak immediately after the seconder of the motion. Amendments also have to be seconded or they fail. Further amendments are called in their order on the agenda. Delegates moving amendments have no right of reply.
- iv. Group Debate: Some motions cover similar topics for discussion and may be grouped together for debate and voted on separately once moved. There are no Group Debates this year.
- v. Voting: Delegates must remain in their seats during a vote. Voting is by show of hands and all delegates are entitled to one vote. It is the Chair's responsibility to call the result of the vote. However, 2-4 tellers are appointed prior to Conference to count the votes in the event of a close vote.
- vi. Point of Order: Delegates can raise points of order on the conduct or procedure of the debates.
- vii. Chair's Ruling: The Chair's ruling is final.

#### WHAT ARE EMERGENCY MOTIONS?

An emergency motion must deal with issues that have arisen since the closing date for ordinary motions.

Emergency motions can be no longer than 300 words and must be signed by the Delegation Leader of the organisation submitting the emergency motion. Emergency motions must be submitted to the Chair or Secretary of the Disabled Workers' Committee no later than 3:00pm on the first day of Conference. Emergency motions must be a genuine emergency otherwise they will not be approved for inclusion on the Agenda by the Disabled Workers' Committee. If deemed competent they will be circulated to delegates prior to being discussed.



## **REPORT OF THE STUC DISABLED WORKERS' COMMITTEE**

As well as discussing motions, the Conference receives the Report of the Disabled Workers' Committee to Conference, which reports on work of the Committee over the past year. Delegates are entitled to question the Committee on issues contained in the Report. Any questions should be put in writing.

## **WHAT HAPPENS TO MOTIONS AFTER CONFERENCE?**

Motions which are carried (now termed 'resolutions') or remitted will form the Committee's Work Plan for the following year. Resolutions are also referred to the STUC General Council itself and/or relevant STUC departments as part of the overall work of the STUC.



## With warm wishes to delegates at the STUC Disabled Workers' Conference from UCU Scotland

[www.ucu.org.uk/join](http://www.ucu.org.uk/join)



### Scottish Union Learning

supports trade unions in developing, organising, and delivering work-related learning and skills programmes for their members that contribute to collective prosperity and wellbeing, Fair Work, and equality for workers across Scotland.

Scottish Union Learning is keen to work with the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee to support the development of the skills base of disabled workers.



#### Find out more:

[www.scottishunionlearning.com](http://www.scottishunionlearning.com)

Email [learning@stuc.org.uk](mailto:learning@stuc.org.uk)

Facebook [@scottishunionlearning](https://www.facebook.com/scottishunionlearning)

LinkedIn [@scottish-union-learning](https://www.linkedin.com/company/scottish-union-learning)



# MOTIONS & AMENDMENTS

## STUC DISABLED WORKERS

### CONFERENCE 2025

#### SECTION 1: WORKERS' RIGHTS

##### 1. INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

“That this Conference notes that neurodiverse workers can face barriers in securing employment with the interview stage of recruitment processes often disadvantaging them. Disadvantages arise when employers use traditional interview formats, marking down candidates for lack of eye contact, asking indirect, vague and abstract questions or engaging in group tasks and role play to assess candidates.

“Conference is concerned that traditional interview formats have contributed to the ‘autism employment gap’ as highlighted by the ONS in 2020 and further evidenced by the National Autistic Society’s Buckland Review in 2024.

“Recruitment processes for train drivers used by some employers include group tasks and role play which can be challenging for neurodivergent people who may have difficulty with social cues, experience sensory overload or pressure to perform in a competitive environment. This is despite the train driving role itself involving long periods of time lone working.

“Conference believes employers should focus on identifying whether candidates have the specific skills required for the role and utilise inclusive recruitment practices to do so.

“Conference therefore calls on the STUC Disabled Workers Committee to raise concerns with

traditional hiring practices highlighting how this disadvantages neurodiverse applicants, by building upon current research and publishing information on inclusive recruitment practices to be shared with affiliates to encourage more inclusive recruitment practices”.

*Mover: Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF)*

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##### 2. PROTECTING SUPPORTED BUSINESSES – REFORM ACCESS TO WORK NOW

“That this Conference notes the crisis facing supported businesses due to systemic failures in the Access to Work (AtW) scheme, which is marked by backlogs, poor communication, and inconsistent decisions. These businesses provide vital employment for disabled workers and are being undermined by severe delays and financial strain.

“Conference notes that:

- May 2025 saw a backlog of over 62,000 applications, with employers waiting nine months for claims to be processed; disabled workers across Scotland are facing even longer delays in receiving support. At RSBi in Glasgow, employees have waited over 12 months for ‘Travel to Work’ applications to be approved, leaving applicants to fill financial gaps through fear of losing their employment;
- delays in the provision of workplace adjustments and equipment such as adapted software, communication aids, or specialist furniture are preventing disabled workers from carrying out their roles;
- assessors often lack understanding of supported employment models, leading

to inappropriate or denied support; small employers, who disproportionately employ disabled workers, are forced to absorb costs while awaiting AtW decisions.

“Despite AtW’s intended role as a lifeline for disabled workers, these issues are pushing people out of work and threatening the sustainability of inclusive employers. The scheme’s funding is budgeted at £385 million for 2025-2026, yet demand continues to outpace delivery.

Disabled workers need timely access to adjustments and support if equality in the workplace is to be meaningful.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee:

- lobby the UK Government and DWP for urgent reform of AtW, including clear time limits on processing, specialist assessors, and ring-fenced support for supported businesses;
- gather evidence from unions and employers to highlight the impact of delays and underfunding in Scotland; and
- campaign for transparency and accountability in AtW delivery, ensuring it meets the needs of disabled workers and the employers who support them.”

**Mover: Community**

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### 3. STRENGTHENING EMPLOYER ACCOUNTABILITY UNDER THE EQUALITY ACT

“That this Conference notes with concern that many employers continue to misunderstand or disregard their legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010, particularly in relation to disabled workers. Despite clear protections enshrined in law, disabled employees frequently face barriers to reasonable adjustments, discriminatory practices, and a lack of recognition of their rights in the workplace.

“Conference believes that the Equality Act must not be treated as optional guidance but as binding legislation that employers must uphold. It is unacceptable that disabled workers are often forced to “prove” their disability or justify their need for accommodations, even when their condition clearly falls within the Act’s definition.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to campaign with affiliates

and interested organisations for stronger enforcement of the Equality Act across all sectors, including:

- mandatory training for employers and HR professionals on disability rights and legal obligations;
- clearer guidance from government and regulatory bodies on what constitutes compliance; and
- support for trade unions to challenge non-compliance and advocate for disabled members.

“Conference further instructs the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to lobby for penalties against employers who fail to uphold the Equality Act, and to promote a workplace culture where disabled workers are respected, supported, and empowered”.

**Mover: Communication Workers Union (CWU)**

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### 4. NEURODIVERGENT WORKERS

“That this Conference notes the current estimates that over 10% of people in Scotland are neurodivergent and that The Equality Act 2010 has established rights and protections of neurodivergent employees and sets out the obligations employers must meet.

“Conference believes that having different viewpoints and mindsets is hugely beneficial within workplaces. Sadly, however, neurodivergent people often face a wide range of barriers within work and when seeking employment

“Conference further notes that employment rates are only 4-8% for people with learning disabilities and 29% for autistic people, compared with Scotland’s national employment rate of 82.5% for non-disabled people and 50.7% for disabled people. This indicates large numbers of neurodivergent individuals in Scotland are unemployed or unsupported in the workplace, representing a significant loss of talent.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to work with the General Council to:

- promote the recently piloted Neurodiversity Employers Index (NDEI) with employers – encouraging them to measure themselves against best practice, highlight areas of strength and areas for improvement.



“Conference further calls on the Disabled Workers’ Committee to work with the General Council to lobby the UK Government to:

- improve the Disability Confident scheme (DC) - increasing the rigour of developmental work needed to achieve higher DC levels, increasing the frequency of DC assessments, and building in strong links to the NDEI - so that neurodivergent jobseekers can seek out Disability Confident organisations knowing they will offer support.”

**Mover: Community**

**Amendment:**

After paragraph 3 insert new paragraph:

“Conference also notes the Disability Confident Scheme lacks accountability and even allows some employers to describe themselves as disability confident without a formal assessment and without ever employing any disabled people.”

**Amendment Mover: Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers’ Union (RMT)**

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## 5. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

“That this conference notes that reasonable adjustments are not always well understood or implemented by employers, to the detriment of disabled workers. Conference further notes the importance and benefit of supportive processes to access reasonable adjustments.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to:

- gather good practice examples of implementation of reasonable adjustments from affiliates’ disabled members;
- with the permission of the members, share these experiences on social media to raise awareness of positive stories of access to reasonable adjustments; and
- continue to seek to raise the issue of reasonable adjustments in all relevant STUC activity in respect of Fair Work.”

**Mover: The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)**

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## 6. DISABLED WORKERS’ ACCESS TO REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

“That this Conference notes the TUC report, ‘Disabled Workers’ access to flexible working as a reasonable adjustment’ was published in 2021 and contains recommendations for the Government, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), employers and trade unions.

“Some of the recommendations have been put in place – for example, Government has implemented a day 1 right for workers to apply for flexible working. However other recommendations within the report have not yet been carried out.

“The EHRC last updated their Statutory Code of Practice in 2019 – 2 years prior to the recommendations made in the TUC report.

“Disabled workers requesting flexible working as a reasonable adjustment are subject to the same process as non-disabled workers. The right of a disabled worker to be treated more favourably, in line with the Equality Act, is often overlooked and the statutory business reasons for refusing a flexible working application are used by the employer.

“Conference believes that strengthening the rights of disabled workers can be achieved by more specific guidance on this subject, including the removal of the business reasons for refusal of flexible working applications for disabled workers.

“Conference asks the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to work with the General Council to pursue implementation of more specific guidance for employers on matters relating to reasonable adjustments for disabled workers.”

**Mover: GMB Scotland**

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## 7. TACKLING BARRIERS FACED BY DISABLED FREELANCERS

“That this Conference notes that disabled musicians are doubly impacted by the benefits cap that limits their earnings and simultaneously facing barriers when they are working due to access requirements not being met.

“The Musicians’ Census found that the majority of disabled musicians are not in receipt of any benefits, amidst a £4,400 disability pay gap.

“Whilst Access Riders are becoming more widely

used by disabled musicians to share their needs, how they are received and applied by those involved in the delivery of live music is less consistent.

“In a competitive industry, there are many reasons why disabled musicians face barriers in disclosing their disabled status and needs. Less than a third of disabled musicians are open with everyone they work with, according to the Musicians’ Census; a fifth are open with no-one.

“The music industry, like many parts of the arts and entertainment sectors, is largely freelance, limiting the impact of improvements in the employment of disabled people.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to work with the General Council to lobby the UK Government:

- for better provisions for reasonable adjustments for disabled freelancers;
- to consult with disabled people to create more accessible, streamlined and holistic approaches to benefits that reflect the way freelancers work; and
- to review permitted work rules in relation to benefits so they don’t create a poverty trap for disabled musicians or limit their careers.”

**Mover: Musicians’ Union (MU)**

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## 8. NEURODIVERSITY AT WORK

“That this Conference notes that more workers are being diagnosed as neurodiverse, yet at the same time many are still waiting for tests and a diagnosis of neurodevelopmental disorders.

“Conference notes that the wide range of waiting times in Scotland and the postcode lottery to receive a diagnosis are symptomatic of a wider waiting-times crisis in our NHS.

“Conference is concerned that many people do not disclose the fact that they are neurodivergent to their employer because of a fear of losing their job and the stigma attached.

“Conference believes workplaces remain both inaccessible and unsafe for many, when employers do not always understand what neurodiversity is, as well as the needs of the person who is neurodivergent.

“Conference believes that unions need to campaign alongside others to reduce the barriers

and challenges that neurodivergent workers continue to face and tackle the stigma and misconceptions about neurodiversity.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to:

- seek and promote trade union policies which focus on neurodiversity in the workplace and include training for reps and activists to enable them to signpost members to the help they need, all while adopting an intersectional lens;
- promote action to employers to create workplaces that are inclusive, including by anticipating the needs of workers who are neurodivergent;
- lobby the Government to invest in professional learning for all teachers on neurodiversity in children and young people;
- campaign for reduced waiting times and improved diagnosis pathways within the NHS; and
- ensure neurodiversity remains a campaign priority for the STUC so all neurodivergent workers can feel safe, supported and needed in their workplace.”

**Mover: (NASUWT)**

### **Amendment:**

In bullet point three, delete “for all teachers on neurodiversity” and insert “for employers and workers on neurodiversity and neurodivergent inclusion”

**Amendment Mover: The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)**

### **Amendment:**

Paragraph 1, line 4, replace “disorders” by “conditions”

Paragraph 4, line 4, after “needs” insert “and strengths”; line 5, after “neurodivergent” insert “and the great diversity of neurodivergent people”.

In bullet point 1, line 3, after “training” add “developed and delivered by neurodivergent people”; replace “help” with “support”; and after “need” add “and enables them to work effectively with neurodivergent colleagues”,

In bullet point 2, line 3, after “anticipating” add “and consulting with”; at end of bullet point add “providing reasonable adjustments in a

timely way and providing opportunities for neurodivergent workers to use their strengths”.

In bullet point 3, line 2, after “learning” add “supported by neurodivergent people”.

**Amendment Mover: University and College Union (UCU)**

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## 9. ESTABLISH A SCOTTISH PUBLIC SECTOR DISABILITY RIGHTS STANDARD

“That this Conference notes that disabled workers in Scotland continue to face systemic barriers to employment, retention, and workplace dignity. Despite the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, disabled people remain underrepresented, under-supported, and disproportionately impacted by austerity and inaccessible services.

“Conference further notes that Scottish Ministers have powers to set specific duties on public bodies under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations

“Conference believes that:

- disability justice is central to our vision of true equality and equity;
- a national standard would embed accountability, transparency, and dignity across Scotland’s public sector; and
- disabled workers must lead the design and implementation of any such standard.

“Conference calls upon the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to:

- campaign for a Scottish Public Sector Disability Rights Standard, including:
  - i. statutory disability leave and paid time for assessments/training;
  - ii. mandatory two-week response time for reasonable adjustments;
  - iii. hybrid access to all meetings, events, and consultations;
  - iv. facility time for equality reps and disabled members’ networks; and
  - v. public reporting on adjustment outcomes and disability pay gaps.
- lobby the Scottish Government to embed this standard across all Scottish public Sector bodies; and
- develop a STUC Disabled Members’ guide

to bargaining, branch action, and political education for disabled workers.”

**Mover: Public & Commercial Services Union (PCS)**

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## 10. PROMOTION

“That this Conference notes the continuing discrimination and disadvantage experienced by disabled workers in promotion and progression.

“Conference believes that:

- this discrimination is much worse for disabled workers with intersectional characteristics;
- the lack of reasonable adjustments, difficulties and delays in obtaining them and indirect discrimination resulting from criteria which disadvantage disabled workers all contribute to promotion discrimination.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to work with the other equality committees and affiliates to:

- produce a list of recommendations for overcoming disability discrimination in promotion and encourage affiliates to campaign for their implementation; and
- produce case studies of good practice.”

**Mover: University and College Union (UCU)**

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## 11. TACKLING DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE.

“That this Conference is disappointed and dismayed at the recent rise in reports of Disability Discrimination in the workplace.

“Data from ACAS shows that there has been a significant increase of 41% in cases being brought before UK employment tribunals. Disabled workers already face far too many barriers when searching for jobs, applying for jobs and gaining paid employment, the existence of any discrimination in the workplace is unacceptable but this stark rise in recent months is simply shocking.

“The increase has been attributed to many factors and drivers, these include

- lack of understanding and awareness of how to support disabled workers particularly those with neurodivergent or mental health conditions;
- failure to implement or recognise the need for

reasonable adjustments;

- lack of consistency in supports when manages change.; and
- moving to dismissal too quickly;

“We must do all we can to reverse these shocking figures and reaffirm our commitment to protecting our disabled members in the workplace

“Conference calls on the Disabled Workers’ Committee to oversee:

- the creation of a guide for reps that sets out the entitlements and rights of disabled workers and how these should be implemented;
- awareness raising campaigns to highlight the challenges and barriers faced by disabled workers and how these can be overcome; and
- linking in with the Disability Confident Employer Scheme to ensure it takes account of all issues faced by disabled workers and can offer support to employees in overcoming these.”

**Mover: STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee**

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## 12. THE DISABILITY EQUALITY PLAN AND THE CONTINUING DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT GAP

“That this Conference acknowledges ‘The Disability Equality Plan’ was published in June 2025 by the Scottish Government, further to a wave of criticism around a lack of meaningful progress to complete this and a questioning of its commitment to disability and human rights.

“This plan is the latest in a stream of documents produced by the Scottish Government since 2016 on the subject but with little observable impact on disability equality in the workplace. To date, employment actions have very much focused on targeted groups and while welcome, it neglects a substantial proportion of disabled workers and fails to tackle a main contributor to disability inequality: employer shortcomings.

“Conference notes the plan has few disability employment actions despite recognition of the barriers faced by disabled people entering, remaining and progressing in work. Also, while there is a continuing commitment to halve the disability employment gap by 2038, from 2016 levels when it stood at 37.4%, conference

believes that the plan falls far short of what is needed to achieve that.

“The Disability Employment Charter describes a series of actions aimed at government and employers to address disability employment issues to get more disabled people into the employment market and lower the persisting disability pay and employment gaps. Conference continues to believe that it is precisely these actions that are needed to bring about the significant change needed, and that the Scottish Government can tackle employer shortcomings head on through implementation of the Charter’s actions.

“Conference calls upon the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to:

- vigorously lobby the Scottish Government to incorporate the Disability Employment Charter actions within the Fair Work Agenda;
- encourage unions to incorporate relevant actions of the Charter into their bargaining priorities; and
- contribute to public debate on the progress of the Disability Equality Plan.”

**Mover: Unison Scotland**

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## 13. ENDING NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF DISABLED PEOPLE

“That this Conference notes the continued negative attitudes, treatment, and portrayal of disabled people, this is ever present in popular culture, social media and most worryingly seems present in the views of the far-right movement. Sadly, the negative effects of this bleed into every aspect of life for disabled people and hamper their ability to access supports, society, and the world of work.

“UK Government research published in November 2024 gave an overview of the many issues faced by disabled workers and highlights barriers faced by disabled people in all aspects of work from accessing job adverts to attending interviews and taking up employment. It also reports that negative attitudes held by employers towards disabled people influence workplace practices and ways of working that can further impede and even discriminate against disabled workers.

“The trade union movement knows that



disabled people can succeed and excel in their chosen field of work but as a movement we need to showcase ourselves and our colleagues to combat these perpetuated and negative stereotypes and attitudes to disabled people and the many unfair barriers they face.

“Conference asks the STUC Disabled Workers Committee to:

- showcase the talent that exists within the movement in Scotland, providing positive role models and mentors for others and encourage affiliates to do the same;
- create an award that recognises the dedication and contributions of our disabled workers in the trade union movement in Scotland;
- campaign to challenge negative stereotypes and attitudes and highlights the importance of a diverse and lived experience led workforce and movement; and
- create resources detailing the rights, supports and entitlements that disabled people should be receiving in order for them to gain and retain employment.”

**Mover: Unite the Union**

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## SECTION 2: COMBATTING THE FAR RIGHT

### 14. HATE SPEECH – CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

“That this Conference believes that over the last decade the Government has peddled a hostile environment agenda that has created the conditions for hatred to flourish.

“Conference notes with increasing concern the prevalence of hate speech on social media and beyond, seemingly with impunity.

“Conference is appalled to see the language of the far right and right-wing extremist influencers permeating and becoming normalised, including amongst some of our young people.

“Conference is deeply concerned about the climate and impact of ableism affecting the lives of children and young people.

“Conference is further concerned that teachers with protected characteristics are being disproportionately targeted, with increased challenges to their authority, as well as abuse and assaults.

“Conference agrees that if such behaviours go unchallenged, this creates a corrosive working and learning environment that can have a devastating impact on the health and welfare of teachers as well as the young people witnessing it.

“Conference is concerned that current behaviour approaches in schools take little cognisance of prejudice-based abuse, in particular the use of restorative approaches and the impact of these on staff who have been abused.

“Conference asserts that it is incumbent on all of us to work collaboratively to challenge hate speech at all levels and calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to help change the narrative by:

- promoting positive stories of those whose activism challenges far-right narratives;
- providing training on challenging conversations;
- providing training and webinars on disability equality issues, empowering allies to stand up for the rights of all;
- campaigning for earlier support and education on hate speech at primary schools; and
- building solidarity across STUC equality committees to ensure the movement remains vigilant and united against the threat of far-right populism which seeks to dismantle our values and democratic principles.”

**Mover: (NASUWT)**

**Amendment:**

5th paragraph, line 2, delete “are being disproportionately targeted, with increased challenges to their authority, as well as abuse and assaults” and insert “may be disproportionately affected by increased incidents of violent, aggressive and disruptive behaviour.”

6th paragraph, line 1, insert “the root causes of” after “Conference agrees that if”, and insert

“are not addressed” after “such behaviours”. Delete “go unchallenged” and insert “and those exhibiting such behaviour” after “young people witnessing it”.

7th paragraph, line 1, delete “is concerned” and insert “believes” and delete “take little cognisance of” and insert “must consider the impact of”. Line 3, delete, “in particular the use of restorative approaches and the impact of these” and insert “including”.

**Amendment Mover: The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)**

**Amendment:**

At end of 4th bullet point, delete “and” and add new bullet point:

- “calling on the Labour Government and Labour politicians to:
  - stop reflecting racist rhetoric about migrants;
  - provide safe routes for refugees; and
  - place rebuilding community cohesion at the heart of economic strategy, targeting public investment at struggling local economies, creating decent jobs and supporting trade union organising.”

**Amendment Mover: Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers’ Union (RMT)**

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## SECTION 3: EQUALITIES

### 15. ACCESSIBLE TOILETS ON TRAINS

“That this Conference notes that Scotrail is currently procuring replacement trains for its ageing fleet with a long-term plan to replace the inter-city trains by late 2026 and then the wider fleet from 2027 through to 2035.

“Conference welcomes ScotRail’s intention for the new fleet to have level boarding. However, more work is needed across the rail network to make stations truly accessible, the new trains will further highlight the lack of step free access across Scotland and encourage improvements.

“The new trains will also be built to comply with higher accessibility standards. However, as the fleet replacement is expected to go on for another decade, old rolling stock built before the turn of the century and upgraded to attempt to meet higher accessibility standards will still be in operation for years to come.

“Currently a fault with any facility on a train for disabled persons such as accessible toilets, passenger information systems and tactile signs must be reported and fixed within six working days for the train to still be compliant with accessibility standards, this means that a train can be in service for a whole working week without a working accessible toilet.

“Train operators are also required to have an Accessible Travel Policy (ATP), this ATP enables an operator to set higher standards for themselves than the bare legal minimum such as considering a non-working accessible toilet on a train as a fault barring the train from entering service or requiring a fix sooner than the current minimum.

“Conference therefore calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to:

- write to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport calling for the ATP of Scottish Rail Holdings’ operators to state that trains with faulty accessible toilets will not enter service and a reduction to the time period for fixing faults to 3 working days.”

**Mover: Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF)**

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### 16 THE IMPACT OF ADULT DISABILITY PAYMENT (ADP) ON DISABLED PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND

“That this Conference notes the introduction of the Adult Disability Payment (ADP) in Scotland as a replacement for Personal Independence Payment (PIP). While the ADP aims to offer a more compassionate and person-centred approach, many disabled people continue to experience significant barriers in accessing support.

“Conference is concerned that the ADP assessment process still relies heavily on medicalised criteria and fails to fully recognise the social model of disability. Many disabled people report anxiety, confusion, and delays in receiving payments, which can lead to financial hardship, reduced independence, and deteriorating mental health.

“Disabled workers are particularly affected, as the ADP plays a vital role in enabling access to employment, transport, and daily living support. The lack of transparency and consistency in decision-making undermines trust in the system.

“This Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to:

- campaign for a fully accessible, transparent, and rights-based ADP system;
- demand meaningful involvement of disabled people in the design and review of ADP policy;
- push for improved training for Social Security Scotland staff on disability equality and lived experience; and
- monitor and challenge any discriminatory outcomes in ADP assessments;

“Conference believes that ADP must empower disabled people—not marginalise them”.

**Mover: Communication Workers Union (CWU)**

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## 17. AGAINST CUTS TO WELFARE

“That this Conference is gravely concerned that the UK Government’s Universal Credit Bill is projected to push even more disabled people into poverty, with the United Nations warning that the proposed measures will increase poverty rates and further embed systemic violations of disabled people’s rights. Already in Scotland, close to a quarter of all households with a disabled person are living in poverty after housing costs.

“Conference notes that these figures do not take account of the higher costs associated with being disabled.

“Conference acknowledges the devastating impact of proposed welfare cuts, to disabled people and their families. Conference further acknowledges the connection between disability and child poverty, and notes that in Scotland, 41% of children living in poverty come from a household where an adult is disabled.

“Conference believes that placing the burden of fiscal savings on disabled people is a political choice, and that the proposal to apply cuts only to future claimants, will create a two-tiered system of access to essential support for disabled people.

“Furthermore, Conference understands that

proposed changes to welfare systems will disproportionately affect people with fluctuating or progressive conditions.

“Conference, therefore, calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to campaign alongside partner organisations against cuts to welfare, and a benefits system, that disadvantage disabled people.”

**Mover: The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)**

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## 18. ADDRESSING THE LACK OF DIVERSITY BEHIND THE CAMERA IN THE TELEVISION AND FILM INDUSTRY FOR DEAF, DISABLED, AND NEURODIVERGENT COMMUNITIES

“That this Conference notes the significant underrepresentation of Deaf, disabled, and neurodivergent individuals in key roles behind the camera in the television and film industry. Despite some progress in onscreen representation, the industry remains overwhelmingly inaccessible to disabled individuals in critical positions such as directors, producers, writers, editors, and other creative and technical roles.

“Conference notes the absence of disabled, Deaf, and neurodivergent professionals behind the scenes means that stories involving these communities are often told without lived experience, resulting in misrepresentation, stereotyping, and a lack of authenticity. When disabled individuals are included in the production process, their contributions are often limited to stereotypical or shallow portrayals, disconnected from the true depth of their experiences. The barriers to entry for these communities remain high, from inaccessible hiring practices to the physical, attitudinal, and systemic barriers that limit access to education, training, and professional opportunities within the industry. The lack of proper support and accommodations for disabled workers further exacerbates the situation, making it harder for individuals to pursue careers in these fields. Productions providing work placements and shadowing opportunities would be a step forward as well as the use of Crip Time planning to be used across all industries. By ensuring these communities have equal opportunities to shape the narratives, we can build a more authentic and inclusive industry that reflects the full diversity of the world.

“Conference therefore calls upon the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to work with the General Council to lobby the Scottish and UK Governments to implement policies to address this imbalance. This includes pushing for policies that ensure equal access to behind-the-scenes roles for Deaf, disabled, and neurodivergent individuals, the implementation of inclusive hiring practices, and the creation of supportive work environments that accommodate the needs of disabled professionals including recruitment of more Access Co-ordinators.”

**Mover: Prospect**

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## 19. BRIDGING THE GAPS—ENDING PAY INEQUALITY THROUGH INTERSECTIONAL ACTION

“That this Conference notes:

- disabled workers in Scotland face a persistent pay gap of up to 17.2%, equating to thousands of pounds lost annually;
- this gap is compounded by intersecting inequalities—particularly those based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and migration status—creating layered disadvantage and economic exclusion;
- current pay gap reporting requirements do not mandate disability data, and voluntary declarations by workers are undermined by fear of discrimination and lack of trust in data handling;
- the Scottish Government’s Fair Work agenda lacks enforceable mechanisms to close these gaps or hold employers accountable.

“Conference believes:

- the disability pay gap is not an isolated issue—it is a symptom of wider structural inequality and must be addressed through intersectional analysis and action;
- pay equity is a fundamental right. Trade unions must lead the demand for mandatory pay gap reporting across all protected characteristics, backed by robust safeguards and meaningful enforcement.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to:

- campaign for mandatory disability pay gap reporting by all public sector employers in

Scotland, alongside race, gender, and other equality metrics.

- urge the Scottish Government to embed intersectional pay equity into its Fair Work Action Plan, procurement policies, and funding criteria.
- develop and promote member-led resources—including infographics, briefings, and training—to raise awareness of the disability pay gap and its links to broader inequality.
- build a cross-union coalition for intersectional pay justice, amplifying the voices of disabled workers and those facing multiple barriers.”

**Mover: Public & Commercial Services Union (PCS)**

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## 20. SEXUAL ABUSE AND HARASSMENT

“That this Conference acknowledges Prospect’s drive to stamp out widespread sexual abuse and harassment across the creative industry, particularly in the TV industry, Prospect’s BECTU Sector has long campaigned for the need to bring about significant structural change in the sector.

“Deeply concerning findings from a 2024 and 2025 survey, and a June 2025 STUC report all highlight the urgent issues faced by those identifying as female in the arts sector: poor working conditions, low pay, late payments, sexual harassment, abuse, and bullying. An alarming 92% of creative professionals experienced sexual harassment or discrimination, with 25% witnessing pornography in the workplace, and a significant portion reporting serious sexual assault or harassment.

“Deaf, disabled, and neurodivergent freelancers are at a much higher risk of discrimination, harassment, bullying and sexual abuse, exacerbated by cuts to Access to Work and the illegal signing of NDAs to keep victims silent.

“Freelancers face precarious employment and financial instability due to high unemployment and the practice of hiring heads of department from London for Scottish productions, often leaving local crew unemployed.

“Conference urges the STUC Disabled Workers Committee to:

- lobby the Scottish Government for dedicated funding to train more safeguarding officers, specifically in identifying predator behaviour,



through BECTU Sector and other creative industry union led campaigns;

- encourage all relevant unions to work collegiately to send a strong, clear message to broadcasters and production companies that freelancers, the diverse backbone of our industry, must be safe, respected, and free from fear;
- lobby for continued funding for the Creative Industry Independent Standard Authority (CIISA) to enforce industry-wide behavioural standards, and ensure ongoing, accessible support for victims via helplines and dedicated organisations;
- raise awareness of anonymous reporting tools including BECTU and Prospect's sexual harassment support service.

"Conference believes we must act now to bring about the significant change."

**Mover: Prospect**

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## 21. MAKING SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE FOR ALL

"That this Conference recognises the importance of accessible and reliable public transport for accessing employment, education, healthcare, leisure activities and for reducing social isolation.

"Conference is therefore concerned that disabled people still face additional barriers when travelling by rail and as a result make fewer journeys by rail than non-disabled people.

"Conference believes that the presence of staff at stations, ticket offices and on trains is vital to making the railway properly accessible.

"Conference notes with concern that around two-thirds of ScotRail stations are currently unstaffed and that disabled people in Scotland take around half as many journeys by rail as non-disabled people. Furthermore, conference condemns the decision by ScotRail to reduce ticket office hours, and the presence of staff, at many of its stations, despite being overwhelmingly opposed by passengers.

"Conference also recognises the role the British Transport Police play to keep disabled passengers safe and notes with concern that planned cuts will leave little to no BTP coverage in Scotland.

"Conference welcomes the UK Government's progress towards the creation of a national, publicly owned and integrated rail network and believes that the creation of Great British Railways (GBR) must lead to significantly enhanced powers for the Scottish Parliament.

"Conference believes however that to make our railways fully accessible we need mass investment in new rail infrastructure and staff to ensure that passengers can turn up and go and travel independently.

"Noting that 2026 is an election year for the Scottish Parliament, Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee to campaign for manifesto commitments on rail staffing and accessibility including that there will be no cuts to BTP coverage, no future attempts to extend Driver Only Operation on Scotland's railway; no further attempts to cut ticket offices and for investment in the expansion of staffing and services."

**Mover: Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers' Union (RMT)**

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## 22. ACCESS TO WORK

"That this Conference is aware that the Access to Work scheme was introduced in 1994 offering practical advice and support and providing financial help. The scheme does not replace an employer's legal duty to make reasonable adjustments, and it has provided a lifeline to disabled people to allow them to gain and to remain in work.

"However, despite an independent review in 2011 that recommended the expansion of the scheme (among other recommendations), the next decade saw tweaking in order to make savings.

"In March this year, the UK Government published its Green Paper 'Pathways to Work', which includes specific proposals for reforming the Access to Work scheme. Its 'Keep Britain Working' review focuses on tackling low employment rates among people with health problems and disabilities, including a focus on Access to Work.

"The Green Paper notes that only 1% of working disabled people receive Access to Work support and only 23% of employers provide reasonable adjustments. Conference is concerned that without a fundamental shift in employer culture and robust enforcement powers, changes to the Scheme that places more responsibility

– particularly financial – on employers may have the opposite effect, undermining the UK Government’s disability employment agenda.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to:

- contribute to public debate in Scotland arising from the review of Access to Work and any proposed changes;
- publicise the impact of proposed changes to the Access to Work scheme on the ability of disabled people obtaining and remaining in work;
- encourage STUC affiliates to press employers to review their current practices around recruitment, workplace accessibility, and attendance management; and
- encourage STUC affiliates to continue to challenge employers where they are aware of delays to disabled members receiving reasonable adjustments and refusal to provide reasonable adjustments.”

**Mover: Unison Scotland**

**Amendment:**

Add new bullet point after second bullet point:

“to work with affiliates and their equality committees to pressure Scottish and UK Governments to ensure:

- Access to Work support is not reduced;
- disabled workers are treated with respect throughout the application process; and
- unnecessary barriers to applying for support, e.g. having to answer ‘security’ questions by phone, are removed.”

**Amendment Mover: University and College Union (UCU)**

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## 23. INCLUSIVITY

“That this Conference notes concern around the lack of accessible and inclusive practices in venues and spaces.

“Conference further notes that 49% of working age disabled people say they feel excluded from society and 41% say they do not feel valued.

“With an estimated 23% of working age adults being disabled these shocking statistics paint a clear picture that more needs to be done to include and involve our disabled members.

“Having accessible practices ensures a more inclusive and equitable trade union movement allowing for more participation and involvement from all.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to continue and enhance commitment to ensuring accessible and inclusive practices are embedded in all events and conference as standard.”

**Mover: Unite the Union**

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## 24. THE IMPACT OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES, INCLUDING AI, ON DISABLED WORKERS

“That this Conference notes new technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), are dramatically changing the world of work and the daily lives of workers. The pace and scale of this change is accelerating.

“Conference further notes that disabled workers are disproportionately affected by technological advancement. New technologies, including AI, present both challenges and opportunities for disabled workers. How the Scottish Government responds to these opportunities and challenges remains a significant factor in determining whether new technologies, including AI, sustain or challenge disabled people’s inequality.

“If designed in consultation with disabled people, technology has the potential to dismantle barriers. However, when excluded, it can reinforce existing and create new obstacles, further marginalising disabled workers.

“There is a sharp contrast between the benefits of new technologies at an individual level, and the risks it poses to disabled people in the workplace and wider society.

“Nothing about us without us, a concept fundamental to the pursuit and achievement of equality for disabled people, is as relevant to the development and implementation of AI and new technologies as it is to any other aspect of scientific advancement in society. Unless unions, and specifically disabled workers, are properly consulted about the development, application and implementation of new technologies in the workplace, including AI, disabled workers will continue to be discriminated against and excluded.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to work with affiliates and to lobby

Government to:

- ensure conversations and decisions regarding the introduction of new technologies in the workplace include disabled workers in order to improve their access to and experiences of paid work; and
- introduce a statutory duty requiring employers in both the public and private sectors to conduct and publish Equality Impact Assessments specifically on the introduction of new technologies at work.”

**Mover: Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW)**

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## SECTION 4: HEALTH

### 25. MENTAL HEALTH

“That this Conference notes a 2021 report published by UCU and Education Support showed that half of university staff were experiencing depression.

“Conference believes:

- mental health is a major workplace H&S issue with stress, casualisation, workloads and discrimination being major causes of poor mental health;
- minority groups e.g. disabled and LGBTQ+ workers experience particular mental health issues;
- line managers and HR frequently do not know how to support workers with mental health issues;
- workplace mental health is a major H&S issue;
- the potential of disability passports including mental health adaptations; and
- stigma may prevent workers from raising mental health issues and obtaining support.

“Conference calls on STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to work with other equality committees and affiliates to:

- organise an event on mental health in the workplace;
- produce case studies of good practice in

workplace mental health;

- identify/produce posters on mental health as a workplace H&S issue;
- encourage affiliates to promote training for H&S reps on workplace stress and mental health issues as H&S issues;
- encourage affiliates to campaign for disability passports including mental health adaptations and high-quality training on mental health for all line managers and HR.”

**Mover: University and College Union (UCU)**

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### 26. THE USE OF AUTOMATIC DOORS IN ALL HOSPITALS

“That this Conference advocates for automatic doors in all hospitals to improve accessibility for disabled people, to promote hygiene and create a more efficient flow of traffic in healthcare facilities.

“Hospitals are high-traffic areas with diverse groups of people, including patients with mobility issues, healthcare professionals, visitors, and support staff.

“Ensuring ease of access is essential in such settings to enhance patient experience, support accessibility, and maintain hygiene.

“This inaccessible struggle with manual doors affects both those visiting the building and the staff that have to try to navigate objects and patients or visitors in wheelchairs through them, potentially leading to strains and injuries.

“The installation of automatic doors in hospitals aligns with modern standards for accessibility, infection control, and operational efficiency that hospitals can improve the experience for patients, visitors, and staff, ensuring a safer, more accessible environment that meets the demands of healthcare settings.

“By introducing automatic doors, in all hospitals they can:

- provide easier access for patients with mobility challenges, including those in wheelchairs, using walkers, or with limited strength; and
- reduce the need for physical assistance to enter and exit, fostering independence for those who may otherwise struggle with manual doors.

“Automatic doors support a smooth flow of people. They help avoid bottlenecks and allow for quick movement in all areas. Hospitals operate 24/7, and reducing friction points ensures that critical areas are always accessible, increasing overall operational efficiency.

“Conference asks the STUC Disabled Workers Committee to:

- lobby the Scottish Government to work with the NHS to provide the finance that will help support the easy access for disabled visitors, patients and staff; and
- encourage the Government to survey hospitals and act positively on the results, to continue to fight for the rights of disabled people to access buildings with ease, ensuring better accessibility for all.”

**Mover: GMB Scotland**

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## 27. PATIENT PARTICIPATION

“That this Conference notes that a commitment to a free press and open journalism requires transparency from public bodies. That parties including the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow and the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh have expressed ‘deep concern’ at the lack of strategic thinking in the Scottish Government’s Long Term Conditions Framework, saying that Government plans have the ‘potential to have significant unintended negative impacts’.

“Conference believes that patient participation should be at the heart of Scottish Government and NHS Scotland decision making. That this should not be limited to the recruitment of representatives from favoured groups and organisations, and that Scottish Government decision making on disability in health should be fully transparent.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to:

- work with the Scottish Parliament’s Cross-Party Group on Chronic Pain and other relevant organisations to develop a co-ordinated trade union response to the Long-Term Conditions Framework;
- write to the Scottish Government and parties standing in the 2026 elections urging them to commit to transparent decision making and genuine patient involvement;

- support the campaigning of the National Union of Journalists and the Campaign for Freedom of Information in Scotland in their campaigning for stronger transparency laws and Scottish Government compliance with existing laws.”

**Mover: National Union of Journalists (NUJ)**

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## 28. MENTAL HEALTH AS A DISABILITY – REDUCING STIGMA TO IMPROVE DISCLOSURE

“That this Conference notes a recent NHS Staff survey indicated that 40% of staff reported feeling unwell due to work-related stress. Additionally, a 2022 RCM Scotland branch survey found that burnout, stress, and anxiety are concerns for midwives.

“Conference is aware that healthcare settings can be especially intense, as midwives may feel pressure to appear “resilient” and fear that disclosing mental health issues could damage their reputation or career prospects. Stigma and fear of discrimination prevent midwives, maternity support workers, and student midwives from disclosing mental health conditions or seeking support. Mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, and burnout can severely impact individuals, yet are often not recognised or accommodated in the same way as physical health conditions.

“A workplace culture that overlooks mental health as a legitimate disability fosters silence, stigma, and harm. Under the Equality Act 2010, mental illness is a protected hidden disability, yet many employees struggle silently due to the personal nature of disclosure. Reducing stigma, building supportive environments, and training managers in compassionate responses can encourage early disclosure, timely support, and protect both staff well-being and patient safety. Mental health awareness must go beyond campaigns and be embedded in workplace policies

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to:

- advocate for improved understanding and visibility of mental health as a legitimate and protected disability;
- campaign to reduce stigma by promoting mental health literacy and open conversations;



- support unions campaigning to implement the Ministerial Scottish Nursing and Midwifery Taskforce: report and recommended actions, that foster psychologically safe environments enabling midwives to disclose mental health conditions without fear of discrimination or judgment;
- provide updated guidance and resources for reps to support staff living with mental health conditions; and
- champion inclusive workplace policies that offer reasonable adjustments and support for those with mental health-related disabilities.”

**Mover: Royal College of Midwives (RCM)**

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## SECTION 5: SOCIAL

### 29. PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF ARDROSSAN HARBOUR

“That this Conference notes with concern that the ownership of harbours can directly impact the accessibility of ferry services for disabled people.

“Conference welcomes the Scottish Government’s decision to directly award the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service contract to CalMac Ferries for a ten-year period from 1st October 2025. However notes that CalMac services from Ayrshire to Arran are being affected by the behaviour of Peel Ports.

“Conference notes Peel Ports is the private owner of Ardrossan Harbour and they have taken millions of pounds in dividends from Ardrossan and yet failed to invest in upgrading the harbour infrastructure.

“Ardrossan Harbour has an integrated ScotRail service and was earmarked for a necessary upgrade in 2016 to accommodate more environmentally friendly fuel bunkering for the Glen Sannox and its sister ship, Glen Rosa. The delay and cost overrun in delivering these vessels from Ferguson Marine has been exacerbated by Peel Ports obstruction of work to upgrade Ardrossan.

“Conference notes this obstruction by Peel Ports has resulted in the closure of the Irish berth for

safety reasons and the transfer of these lifeline ferry services to Troon which is harder to access for disabled passengers as it necessitates using a shuttle bus service between the station and the ferry.

“Conference notes that while public ferry services are receiving record levels of public investment and that the Scottish Government has announced its intention to renationalize Ardrossan, the stalemate with Peel Ports has actively reduced accessibility to ferry services for disabled people.

“Conference re-commits its support for the RMT’s People’s CalMac Campaign and calls on the Disabled Workers’ Committee to work with trade unions and local campaigners to return Ardrossan Harbour to public ownership which is in the direct interest of all ferry workers and disabled passengers in Scotland, the UK and internationally”.

**Mover: Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers’ Union (RMT)**

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### 30. ACTION TO ADDRESS AND PREVENT DISABLED PEOPLE’S POVERTY

“That this Conference is aware disabled people are already more likely to be living in poverty in Scotland and they remain caught in the middle of the continued cost of living crisis.

“This is in addition to the extra costs they already experience from living as disabled people. Furthermore, disabled people in Scotland continue to face discrimination in the labour market, and (as elsewhere in the UK) are more likely to be employed on short hours contracts and receive less pay than their non-disabled colleagues.

“Conference notes the Adult Disability Payment (ADP) in Scotland is key to enabling disabled people to meet the additional costs of being disabled, including costs associated with work.

“The recent publication of the independent review into the ADP calls for a simplified and more accessible application process. Significantly, the review urges the Scottish Government to protect and improve access to ADP, advising them against restricting eligibility or introducing further barriers to application, as recently proposed by the Westminster Government.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to work with the STUC General Council to urge the Scottish Government to adopt the recommendations set out in the independent review including investing in sustainable funding for welfare advice services and more inclusive communication.

“Furthermore, Conference asks the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to continue to press the Scottish Government to take a strategic and preventative approach to disabled people’s poverty by dealing with the long-term drivers including:

- reviewing the adequacy of all disability benefits and disability-related premiums;
- working with the UK Government to fully implement the disability pay gap reporting proposals in the UK’s Draft Equality Bill; and
- raising awareness of the crucial role the social model plays in disability equality, and ensuring that they lead by example, embedding it in their approach to policy and decision making.”

**Mover: Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW)**

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### 31. DISABLED WORKERS OPPOSE WELFARE CUTS

“That this Conference notes with anger the UK Government’s Spring Statement which sets out regressive welfare reforms including major changes to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Universal Credit (UC). These proposals threaten to force many disabled workers into unemployment and poverty. Since the spring statement the Government was forced into reducing and removing some aspects of the plans however these reforms still pose credible threats to disabled people.

“ADP has now been fully rolled out in Scotland with all former PIP and DLA claimants now receiving the Social Security Scotland benefit as of August 2025.

“Conference welcomes Scottish Government reassurances that ADP will not be cut however as the budget allocated to Scotland is set by Westminster there is fear this could be reduced to reflect UK wide changes.

“Disability benefits offer financial support

allowing access to aids, equipment, therapies and support which allows disabled people to lead more equitable and independent lives. Reduction in welfare benefits will undoubtedly limit access to vital support increasing barriers to work, socialising and managing their disability or long-term health condition.

“Conference acknowledges the stark links between disability and poverty and condemns plans by any Government that push disabled people further into financial hardship and poverty.

“Conference calls on the STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee to work with the General Council and affiliates to:

- publicly condemn the proposed cuts and demand their immediate withdrawal;
- lobby the UK Government to halt changes to PIP/UC, and campaign for a supportive, adequately resourced social security system;
- work with Scottish Government and MSPs to ensure ADP and devolved welfare benefits deliver dignity, respect, and protection against poverty;
- collaborate with disability organisations to build resistance and amplify opposition to cuts; and
- mobilise trade union members in Scotland to show solidarity with disabled people, including public campaigning, and direct action.”

**Mover: STUC Disabled Workers’ Committee**

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# NOTES

# NOMINATIONS

## STUC DISABLED WORKERS' COMMITTEE 2025/26

### 1) GENERAL SEATS (5 SEATS - 7 NOMINEES) - CONTEST

Margaret Boyd, GMB Scotland  
Dougie Henderson, Unite the Union  
John McCue, ASLEF  
Steven McGurk, Community  
Tony Slaven, UNISON Scotland  
Tony Sneddon, CWU  
Gerard Wilkie, EIS

### 2) WOMEN'S SEATS (5 SEATS - 5 NOMINEES) - NO CONTEST

Pearl Abernethy, Community  
Mary Finn, GMB Scotland  
Margaret Gilmurray, UNISON Scotland  
Carol Wood, NASUWT  
Maria Zani, Prospect

### 3) TRADES UNION COUNCIL SEAT (1 SEAT - 0 NOMINEES) - NO CONTEST

## DISABLED WORKERS' SEATS ON THE STUC GENERAL COUNCIL 2026/27

### 1) GENERAL SEAT (1 SEAT - 2 NOMINEES) - CONTEST

Tony Slaven, UNISON Scotland  
Steven Maison, Unite the Union

### 2) WOMAN'S SEAT (1 SEAT - 3 NOMINEES) - CONTEST

Mary Finn, GMB  
Margaret Gilmurray, UNISON Scotland  
Clare Sweeney, Unite the Union

## DISABLED WORKERS' CONFERENCE DELEGATION TO THE STUC ANNUAL CONGRESS 2026\*

(plus 2 reserved places for the nominated STUC Disabled Workers' General Council Reps - 6 places in total)

### 1) GENERAL PLACES (2 PLACES - 5 NOMINEES) - CONTEST

Margaret Boyd, GMB  
Dougie Henderson, Unite the Union  
Steven Maison, Unite the Union  
Tony Slaven, UNISON Scotland  
Tony Sneddon, CWU

### 2) WOMEN'S PLACES (2 PLACES - 3 NOMINEES) - NO CONTEST

Mary Finn, GMB Scotland  
Margaret Gilmurray, UNISON Scotland  
Clare Sweeney, Unite the Union

\*There are 6 seats available in total for the delegation to STUC Annual Congress (2x General, 2x Women's, and 2x for the successful nominees to the STUC General Council 2026/27).

# LIST OF DELEGATES

## TRADE UNIONS & TRADES UNION COUNCILS

### ACCORD

\*Alan Hay

### ASLEF

James Johnson

\*John McCue

### COMMUNITY

Pearl Abernethy

David Birrell

Paul Cassidy

\*Steven McGurk

Robert Mooney

Sean Paul Gracy

Ronald Regan

### COMMUNICATION WORKERS UNION

Amanda Marshall

Colin Reekie

\*Tony Sneddon

Joyce Stevenson

### EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SCOTLAND

Jenny Ann Glennie

Selma Augestad

Ryan Barrowman

Julie Chrystal

Julie Ferguson

Sharon Iddir

Mark Ireland

Eleni McMillan

Cristina Rodriguez Nunez

Pauline Stewart

\*Gerard Wilkie

### GMB SCOTLAND

Margaret Boyd

\*Annette Drylie

Mary Finn

Thomas McAvoy

Jillian McFarlane

Mary Mulligan

Teresa Will

### MUSICIANS' UNION

Louise Braithwaite

\*Ben Lunn

### NASUWT

\*David Anderson

Emma Cheung

Michael Fernandes

Marie Sparrow

Graham Thomson

Carol Wood

### NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS

Derek Forrest

\*Jim Symons

### THE PHARMACISTS' DEFENCE ASSOCIATION

\*Maurice Hickey

### PROSPECT

Eddie Baines

David Foote

\*Maria Zani

### PUBLIC AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES UNION

\*Christian Goulart-McNerny

Steve West

## **ROYAL COLLEGE OF MIDWIVES**

\*Meggan Reid

## **RMT**

Davie O'Donnell

\*Sean McCrudden

## **TSSA**

\*Gordon Campbell

## **UCU SCOTLAND**

\*Marion Hersh

## **UNISON SCOTLAND**

Frank Cairns

Margaret Callander

Linda Clotworthy

Andy Crosbie

Margaret Gilmurray

\*Alison Mitchell

Tony Slaven

## **UNITE THE UNION**

\*Lorna Glen

Siobhan Graham

Dougie Henderson

Steven Maison

William Paton

Clare Sweeney

Irene Trench

## **USDAW**

\*Lorraine Barr

Noreen Dalglish

Kevin Gunn

Scott Lapsley

Moira McGurk

Jemma Wood

**\*Denotes Delegation Leader**

# REPORT TO

# DISABLED WORKERS' CONFERENCE

## REPORT OF THE STUC DISABLED WORKERS' CONFERENCE 2024

The 21st Annual STUC Disabled Workers' Conference was held at the Golden Jubilee Conference Hotel on Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th November 2024.

The theme of Conference was 'Thinking Differently: Championing Neurodivergence at Work' and was Chaired by Carol Wood, NASUWT. 68 delegates, representing 19 Trade Unions and Trades Union Councils, and 3 visitors were registered to attend Conference. Over the weekend, 59 delegates and 2 visitors were in attendance.

The Conference appointed Linda Gibson, NASUWT, and Annette Drylie, GMB Scotland, as Tellers. Bev Laidlaw, PCS, and Kathleen Kennedy, Aberdeen Trades Union Council, were appointed as Scrutineers.

In total, 24 motions were debated at Conference. There were 3 emergency motions submitted, titled 'BSL and the Education (Scotland) Bill', 'Save Scotrail Ticket Offices', and 'Impact of Israeli Genocide on Disability in Palestine'.

Throughout the Saturday of Conference delegates debated motions on: Safe and Accessible Transport; Discrimination, Bullying, and Harassment; Social Model of Disability; Cuts; Mental Health & Wellbeing; Access; and Neurodivergence.

Unfortunately, due to adverse weather, Lilian Macer, STUC President, could not attend Conference as guest speaker on the Saturday but Conference was addressed by Pearl Abernethy, Chair of the STUC Women's Committee. Conference also held a workshop titled 'Thinking Differently' with Ramon Hutchingson, the Coordinator of South Lanarkshire's Autism Resources Coordination Hub.

In the morning of Sunday at Conference, delegates welcomed Janine Booth from Red in

the Spectrum to hold a workshop titled 'Beyond Neurodiversity Awareness – Organising for Workplace Change'. At the close of Conference, delegates heard from Roz Foyer, STUC General Secretary, via video recording.

All 24 motions and 3 emergency motions at Conference were carried.

The Conference was supported and promoted throughout with a press release, videos, and on social media, using the hashtag #STUCDWC24

Conference elected the following to serve as members of the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee for the year 2024/25:

- Margaret Boyd, GMB Scotland
- Julie Ferguson, EIS
- Mary Finn, GMB Scotland
- John McCue, ASLEF
- Steven McGurk, Community
- Tony Sneddon, CWU
- Clare Sweeney, Unite the Union
- Irene Trench, Unite the Union
- Carol Wood, NASUWT

Clare Sweeney, Unite the Union, and Mary Finn, GMB Scotland, were nominated to contest the election to the STUC General Council 2025/26 seats reserved for Disabled Workers at the STUC Annual Congress 2025.

Margaret Boyd, GMB Scotland, Julie Ferguson, EIS, and Tony Sneddon, CWU, were elected to the STUC Disabled Workers' Conference delegation to STUC Annual Congress 2025 along with Clare Sweeney, Unite the Union, and Mary Finn, GMB Scotland, who took the seats reserved on the delegation for nominees to STUC General Council 2025/26.

Ben Lunn, Musicians' Union, and Richard Hardy, Prospect, were appointed to represent the



STUC General Council on the Disabled Workers' Committee.

### **STUC Disabled Workers' Committee 2024/25**

Following the Disabled Workers' Conference, the Disabled Workers' Committee developed a workplan which was presented to, and endorsed by, the STUC General Council in February 2025.

Carol Wood, NASUWT, was elected to serve for another year as Chair of the Committee, and Steven McGurk, Community, was elected to serve for another year as the Vice-Chair. Following Conference, the STUC wrote to affiliated organisations not yet represented on the Committee to submit nominations for co-option onto the Committee. In January, Maria Zani, Prospect, and Kathleen Kennedy, Aberdeen Trades Council, were co-opted.

The Committee workplan incorporated a number of priority areas, campaign, and themes including:

- Accessible and Inclusive Transport
- Workers' Rights and Discrimination
- Health
- Organising and Campaigning for Equality

### **Accessible and Inclusive Transport**

Members of the Committee worked alongside STUC Just Transition Officers in campaigning, including lobbying the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Fiona Hyslop MSP, against the closure of ticket offices, the scrapping of peak fares, and ensuring public transport is accessible.

### **Workers' Rights and Discrimination**

Maria Zani, Prospect represented the Committee at a meeting with Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) on 8th August and the Committee continued work alongside the TUC Disabled Workers' Committee in lobbying the EHRC to sanction employers who systematically discriminate workers on the grounds of disability.

### **Health**

The STUC continues to contribute to the Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry, working alongside the Committee. Julie Ferguson, EIS, represented disabled workers in giving oral evidence to the Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry during a session on Equalities and Human Rights.

### **Organising and Campaigning for Equality**

The Committee wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Jenny Gilruth MSP, calling for the inclusion of BSL in the Scottish Government's Education (Scotland) Bill. Julie Ferguson, EIS, also represented the Committee when working alongside the Cross-Party Group on Disability, lobbying to ensuring BSL is included in the Bill. Work is ongoing to submit Freedom of Information requests to Local Authorities regarding their provisions for disabled workers.

Members of the Committee attended a Hope Not Hate webinar which provided information, tools and resources to support unions and the Committee to challenge the far-right.

### **EVENTS**

#### **STUC Youth Conference 2025**

Carol Wood, NASUWT, spoke as a guest speaker on behalf of the committee at the STUC Youth Conference in June 2025.



# Usdaw sends solidarity to all delegates and visitors to STUC Disabled Workers Conference.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments is crucial to creating accessible workplaces and removing barriers.

And yet over half of disabled workers aren't getting the adjustments they need at work.

It's time to strengthen the duty and improve enforcement.

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Joanne Thomas General Secretary | Jane Jones President

Usdaw Head Office, Voyager Building, 2 Furness Quay, Salford Quays, Manchester M50 3XZ

[www.usdaw.org.uk](http://www.usdaw.org.uk)



UsdawUnion



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# REPORT OF THE DISABLED WORKERS' REPRESENTATIVES ON THE STUC GENERAL COUNCIL

## REPORT OF THE DISABLED WORKERS' CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVES ON THE STUC GENERAL COUNCIL 2025

Disabled Workers Conference Representatives on the STUC General Council

- Mary Finn - GMB
- Clare Sweeney – Unite

Representatives from the Disabled Workers' Committee attended and contributed to the General Council meetings ensuring the voices, experiences and challenges faced by disabled workers were heard, acknowledged and actioned for attention in future planning, organising and inclusion on the General Councils agenda. The STUC General Council held a strategy session in June and further meetings were held in August and October 2025.

Specific consideration and discussions occurred around the impact Welfare Reform plans of the current UK Government would have on disabled people, the plans to reform the benefits system initially focused on redesigning eligibility criteria for some benefits delivered by the DWP and posed a serious and credible threat to many disabled workers. Although these plans were watered down there is still fear about the impact of the reforms and the proposed redesign of the Governments Access to Work programme. The General Council are working to lobby the Scottish Government and challenge any decisions that will have a negative impact on disabled workers, campaigns and awareness raising have also been planned around this issue.

The need for robust and consistent approaches to accessibility and inclusion across the work of the STUC was also highlighted by representatives with discussions taking place around the need

for the STUC to lead by example and promote accessibility and inclusion to partner unions and organisations.

The representatives highlighted to the General Council further campaigns in line with the Committee's workplan such as:

### Accessible and Inclusive Transport

This was raised and noted again that disabled people still do not have acceptable public transport. We continue to lobby the Scottish Government to provide safe and affordable transport. After awareness raising and lobbying and sharing feedback from the Disabled Workers' Committee, we were pleased to see peak fares were abolished as of September this year.

### Workers' Rights and Discrimination

The representatives noted a significant rise in disability discrimination in the workplace over the last year. Work has continued with the TUC Disabled Workers' Committee to challenge employees who are discriminating against workers on the grounds of disability. The Committee is also committed to lobbying the EHRC to implement sanctions on offending employers and removing "Disability Confident" status.

### Health

The representatives noted that the document created around reasonable adjustments has been rolled out and used to raise understanding and awareness of reasonable adjustments.

The theme of last year's Conference was around Neurodiversity, all delegates received insights from two excellent organisations who gave insight and information about supporting neurodivergent workers in the workplace the Committee have used this new learning

and insights to work on the creation of a Neurodiversity Workplace Toolkit.

### **Organising and Campaigning for Equality**

The representatives noted the commitment to include British Sign Language in the Education Scotland Bill, members of the Committee have raised this at the Cross-Party group on Disability and are taking forward Freedom of Information requests to Local Authorities.

Discussions were initiated and are ongoing around assisted dying.

Work continues around raising awareness on how we can provide and promote accessible and inclusive events and communications through the work of the STUC, partner organisations and members workplaces.





**Celebrating over 40 years of standing up for  
workers' rights and access to justice for all**

## **CONFERENCE GREETINGS**

Thompsons Solicitors Scotland are proud to have served the trade union movement in Scotland for over 40 years.

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# REPORT OF THE DISABLED WORKERS'

## CONFERENCE DELEGATION TO

## STUC CONGRESS 2025

### REPORT OF THE DISABLED WORKERS' COMMITTEE CONFERENCE DELEGATION

128TH STUC Annual Congress  
28th – 30th April 2025  
Caird Hall, Dundee

STUC Disabled Workers' Committee Delegation:

- Clare Sweeney (Unite)
- Mary Finn (GMB)
- Margaret Boyd (GMB)
- Julie Ferguson (EIS)
- Tony Sneddon (CWU)

The 128th STUC Annual Congress took place in the Caird Hall, Dundee over the period Monday 28th to Wednesday 30th April 2025.

The theme of Congress for 2025 was 'Building on the New Deal for Workers' and was chaired by Lilian Macer (UNISON) President of the STUC for the year 2024/2025. The Civic welcome was given by Councillor Bill Campbell, Lord Provost of Dundee City Council; and Stuart Fairweather, of Dundee Trades Union Council provided the Trades welcome.

Just under 350 delegates representing Trade Unions, Trades Union Councils and the Black Workers', LGBT+ Workers', Youth and Disabled Workers' Conferences attended Congress.

#### STUC Congress Speakers

Several guest speakers contributed to Congress over the three days providing fraternal greetings and keynote addresses.

These included:

- Councillor Bill Campbell, Lord Provost, Dundee City Council
- Stuart Fairweather, Chair, Dundee Trades Union Council
- The First Minister of Scotland, John Swinney
- Anas Sarwar MSP, Leader of the Scottish Labour Party
- Tara Lillis, Vice-Chair of the STUC Women's Committee
- Shavanah Taj, General Secretary, TUC Cymru
- Ismara Mercedes Vargas Walter, Cuban Ambassador to the UK (video)
- Satwat Rehman, Co-Chair of the Just Transition Commission

A session on Social Care took place on the Tuesday afternoon. The session was chaired by Rozanne Foyer, STUC General Secretary with contributions from Danny Cullin (Unite), Robyn Martin (Unison), and Tamara Beattie (GMB). Peter Hunter (Unison) also provided an update on sectorial bargaining in the care sector.

Delegates were shown various videos during Congress including 'Scotland Deserves Better Campaign' and an exclusive clip from the upcoming documentary by Debasers Films Ltd on the 2021 Kenmure Street protest "Everybody to Kenmure Street".

A ceremony to mark International Workers' Memorial Day took place in Dundee City Square on Monday 28th April.



## Congress Reflection

The STUC Disabled Workers' delegation played a full and active role at STUC Congress 2025 with the delegation moving the motions submitted in a positive manner and all were carried unanimously.

The delegation starting with a meeting on the evening prior to Congress to discuss attitudes to motions over the course of the three days. Countering the far-right was an important theme of the meeting, as it affects every union member in Scotland. Trans rights was brought in as a emergency motion, and highlighted the trials of and need for support for LGBTQ+ people, as a specific example of far-right extremism. The delegation also spoke against the far right in the context of disability and social security.

Congress was well organised and debates were thorough although speaking times were reduced on the final day to allow all motions, including emergency motions, to be taken. Additionally, some emergency motions were taken outwith the allocated time slot of Wednesday afternoon. The delegation noted that the event was a supportive and productive one which allowed a sustained opportunity for collaboration, affirmation for workers' rights and robust discussion.

The delegation gives a special thanks to Julie Ferguson who represented the delegation at a fringe meeting at short notice, and was well received.

## STUC Congress Awards

The STUC Union Rep Awards were presented by John Swinney, First Minister of Scotland, on Monday 28th April, to:

- Gwen Gwenffrewi, UCU, with the STUC Equality Award;
- Mark Vincent, GMB, with the STUC Organising Award;
- Jean Pickering and Fiona Macdonald, Unison, with the STUC Frank Maguire Award for Health and Safety;
- Steven Black, Unite, with the Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong Learning; and
- Paul Gracie, Community, with the Learner of the Year Award.

Following presentation of the awards, the First Minister addressed Congress.

## STUC Motions to Congress

116 motions were put forward to the 2025 STUC Congress on a wide range of subject matters. The STUC Disabled Workers' Committee submitted 3 motions on Closing the Disability Employment Gap; Countering Far Right Rhetoric and Policies (which became Composite B); and Neurodiversity in the Workplace (which became Composite I).

The Disabled Workers' representatives spoke in support of the other STUC Equality Conference motions and participated in activity throughout the duration of Congress.

Motions and the decisions of Congress can be found on the STUC website.







# LIST OF EXHIBITORS

## ROYAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BLIND PEOPLE (RNIB) SCOTLAND

The Royal National Institute of Blind People Scotland supports blind and partially sighted people of all ages live as fully and independently as possible. It provides advice, support, training and information about equipment. Through its campaigning RNIB Scotland gives people with sight loss a voice.

Web: [RNIB.org.uk/Scotland](http://RNIB.org.uk/Scotland)

Facebook: [@RNIBScotland](https://www.facebook.com/RNIBScotland)

X: [@RNIBScotland](https://twitter.com/RNIBScotland)

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## THOMPSONS SOLICITORS

Thompsons Scotland are a trade union law firm. We stand up against injustice, mistreatment, and injury in the workplace. We are at the forefront of cases involving discrimination, unfair dismissal, industrial disease and health and safety breaches. Unlike other lawyers we do not see the courts as the only means of achieving a goal for our clients. If the courts cannot assist we campaign for change and we are proud to have secured many important legal reforms over the years.

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## SCOTTISH UNION LEARNING

Scottish Union Learning supports trade unions in developing, organising, and delivering work-related learning and skills programmes for their members that contribute to collective prosperity, fairness, and equality for workers across Scotland. Scottish Union Learning is part of the STUC.

Facebook: [/scottishunionlearning](https://www.facebook.com/scottishunionlearning)

X: [@unionlearning](https://twitter.com/unionlearning)

## UNIONS INTO SCHOOLS

STUC Unions into Schools was originally launched as part of the Enterprise in Education, Determined to Succeed Agenda in 2005/6. The programme of school visits from 2005 to 2025 has been coordinated and managed by the STUC with support from Scottish Union Learning.

Unions into Schools is supported by a learning programme delivered by the STUC, with varied options available depending on representative's experience and confidence. With the assistance of trade union representatives, Unions into Schools has delivered over 3,000 classroom and virtual online sessions to school pupils throughout Scotland in the past 20 years.

Contact: [schools@stuc.org.uk](mailto:schools@stuc.org.uk)

X: [@ScottishTUC](https://twitter.com/ScottishTUC)



# CONSTITUTION OF THE STUC

## DISABLED WORKERS' CONFERENCE

### 1. Title of Conference

The Annual Conference of Disabled Workers' representatives of Trades Unions and Trades Union Councils shall be known as the "Scottish TUC Disabled Workers' Conference".

### 2. Date of Annual Conference

The Conference shall meet annually, normally in the month of November or December, over two days.

### 3. Basis of Representation

Each organisation affiliated to the Scottish TUC shall be invited to appoint delegates who must be disabled. In addition, each affiliate may send officials to accompany its delegation. The basis of representation shall be as follows:

- Trade Unions with membership of up to 10,000: 6 delegates
- Trade Unions with membership over 10,000: 6 delegates plus one for 10,000 members or part thereof
- Trades Union Councils: up to 6 delegates

### 4. Disabled Workers' Committee

There shall be a Disabled Workers' Committee composed as follows:

- |                         |           |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| • Trade Unions          | 10 places |
| • Trades Union Councils | 1 place   |
| • General Council       | 2 places  |

The General Council members elected to the Disabled Workers' Seats on the STUC General Council and nominees from the Disabled Workers' Conference to the STUC General Council – if they have not been elected to the Committee in any of the above categories – shall be additional members of the Committee, with rights equal to all other members.

a) The Trades Union and Trades Union Council places shall be elected by ballot of all delegations to the Conference. Ballot papers will be issued to delegation leaders.

b) In the Trade Union Section, the ten candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected, with the proviso that at least five women must be elected in the Section. In the event that there are fewer than five women nominees for election, the Committee shall fill the vacant places by co-option. In the event of a tied vote in the ballot, the tied candidates shall be put to a re-ballot. In the event of a further tie, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote(s).

c) Each Trade Union shall be entitled to nominate up to two candidates (one male and one female) for election to the Trades Union Section of the Committee. Candidates must be members of the Union's delegation to the Conference.

d) In the Trades Union Council Section, the candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected. In the event of a tied vote in the ballot, the tied candidates shall be put to a re-ballot. In the event of a further tie, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.

e) Each Trades Union Council shall be entitled to nominate one candidate for election to the Trades Union Council Section of the Committee. The candidate must be a member of the Council's delegation.

f) The General Council shall appoint one male and one female representative as observers to the Disabled Workers' Committee.

g) The Disabled Workers' Committee shall elect from among its own number a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson: the members nominated by the General Council shall not be eligible for election to these positions. The gender of the Chair shall alternate at least every 2 years.

h) On the death or resignation of a member of the Disabled Workers' Committee, or should that year's Committee have vacant places, the Committee shall fill the vacancy by co-opting the highest unsuccessful eligible candidate. In the event that there is no such candidate, the position shall be filled by co-option.



## **Conduct of Elected Disabled Workers' Committee Members**

If at any time there appears to the General Council to be justification for an investigation into the conduct of an elected member of the Committee on the grounds that the activities of that member may be contrary to the objects of the STUC, or to Trade Union principles, or to the declared policy of the STUC, or on the grounds that the member has contravened or failed to obey any requirement of these rules, or on the grounds of the member's standing with his or her affiliated organisation, the STUC President may appoint a Sub-Committee consisting of three other members from the General Council to carry out such an investigation.

In the event that the member, whose conduct is the subject of this Rule is the President, the Vice President may appoint the Sub-Committee. The Committee shall thereafter investigate the alleged conduct. If, after such investigation, the Sub-Committee considers that there is a case to answer in respect of said conduct, it shall give notification to the President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, and to the member concerned of the conduct complained of and of the ground or grounds of complaint.

Upon receiving such notification from the Sub-Committee, the President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, shall, within a reasonable period, summon the member concerned to a hearing. At the hearing, the President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, shall hear, in the presence of the member concerned, any evidence, information, or explanation presented by the Sub-Committee in respect of the alleged conduct.

Thereafter, the President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, shall give the member concerned an opportunity of presenting such evidence, information and explanation, if any, as it wishes to present. Upon conclusion of the hearing, the President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, shall have the power to decide whether the member has been guilty of the alleged conduct. In the event of the member having been found guilty of the said conduct, the President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, shall afford to the member an opportunity to

present such further evidence, information and explanation as he or she wishes in relation to imposition of penalty, and shall thereafter have power to reprimand, and/or suspend the member or to recommend the removal of the member from the Committee. The President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, shall notify the member concerned of his or her decision including the penalty to be imposed. The member, if dissatisfied with the decision of the President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, or the penalty imposed, shall have the right of appeal to the General Council. The member's intention to appeal shall be communicated in writing to the General Secretary within seven days of the initial decision. The General Council shall hold a meeting to hear an appeal within one month of the notification to appeal having been received. The President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, shall submit a report to the General Council setting out the reasons for the decision taken. The report shall also be made available to the member at the same time. The member shall have the right to be heard by the General Council. The General Council may decide to affirm or revoke or otherwise amend the decision of the President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, or to affirm or revoke the penalty and may, if a recommendation to that effect has been made, remove the member from the Committee.

The decision of the General Council shall be final and conclusive. Members of the Sub-Committee appointed to investigate any case against the member and the President, or Vice President if the member concerned is the President, shall not be entitled to be present at any stage during, or to vote, or take any other part in the deliberation of the General Council as to its findings in respect of the alleged conduct, or in respect of penalty.

## **Duties of the Disabled Workers' Committee**

It shall be the duty of the Committee to implement the policies agreed by the Conference, in line with the requirements of these rules. At all times, in undertaking this duty, the Committee shall recognise the sovereignty of the policies determined by the Annual Congress.

The Committee shall prepare a Report of its work for submission to the Conference and shall include in it a record of attendance of members at Committee meetings.

## 5. Delegation to Annual Congress

The Disabled Workers' Conference shall elect a delegation of not more than four representatives, two male and two female, to attend the Annual Congress of the Scottish TUC. Two additional delegation places will be automatically reserved for the Disabled Workers' Conference nominees for the Disabled Workers' Seats on the General Council, making a total delegation of six. Each affiliated Trades Union and Trades Union Council shall be invited to nominate one member for the General place and one woman for the place reserved for Disabled Women Workers. Nominees shall be delegates to the Annual Disabled Workers' Conference.

On the death or resignation of a member of the Disabled Workers' Delegation to Annual Congress, or should a vacancy arise following the Conference elections, the Committee shall fill the vacancy by co-opting the highest unsuccessful eligible candidate. In the event that there is no such candidate, the position shall be filled by co-option.

## 6. Nominees for Disabled Workers' Seats on the STUC General Council

The Disabled Workers' Conference shall elect nominees to stand for election at the Annual Congress for the Disabled Workers' Seats on the General Council.

Each affiliated Trades Union and Trades Union Council shall be eligible to nominate one member for the General Seat and one for the Seat reserved for Disabled Women Workers. Successfully elected nominees must be delegates to the Disabled Workers' Conference and will automatically be given a place on the Disabled Workers' Delegation to Annual Congress.

Ballot papers shall be issued to delegation leaders. In the event of a tied vote in the ballot, the tied candidates shall be put to a re-ballot. In the event of a further tie, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.

On the death or resignation of a member of an elected nominee for the Disabled Workers' Seat on the STUC General Council, the Committee shall fill the vacancy by co-opting the highest unsuccessful eligible candidate. In the event that there is no such candidate, the position shall be filled by direct election and nomination to the STUC Congress.

## 7. Voting

Each delegation shall be entitled to vote according to the number of delegates registered.

The election of the Disabled Workers' Committee, the Disabled Workers' Delegation to Annual Congress and the nominees for the Disabled Workers' Seats on the STUC General Council shall be by card vote. All other voting shall be by show of hands, except where a card vote is called.

## 8. Motions

a) Motions for the Annual Conference Agenda (not exceeding two from each affiliated body) must be signed by the Secretary of the organisation submitting them and must reach the Scottish TUC at least ten weeks before the date of the Annual Conference.

b) Such motions shall be sent to each affiliated Trades Union and Trades Union Council entitled to be represented at the Conference as soon as possible after the closing date for their submission. The order in which subjects shall be discussed will be decided by the Disabled Workers' Committee.

c) All amendments to the motions submitted by affiliated organisations (not exceeding two from each body) must reach the Scottish TUC by a date to be decided by the Disabled Workers' Committee. Such amendments must be signed by the Secretary of the organisation submitting them.

d) Notwithstanding the aforementioned provisions, the Disabled Workers' Committee or any affiliated organisations shall be permitted to submit emergency motions for consideration by the delegates to the Annual Conference. Any emergency motions submitted for the Conference will require to be signed by an appropriate official (Secretary, Chairperson or Delegation Leader) of the originating organisation, prior to, or immediately following the opening of the Conference.

## 9. Childcare Facilities

Appropriate childcare facilities for the children of delegates shall be available, if requested. Any such request shall be made in writing at least three weeks in advance of the opening of Conference.

## 10. Standing Orders

Hours of Meeting:

- First Day                              10.00 am – 1.00 pm  
   2.00 pm – 5.15 pm
- Second Day                            10.00 am – 1.30 pm

### Conference Chairperson

The Conference will be presided over by the Chairperson of the Disabled Workers' Committee.

Appointment of Tellers and Scrutineers

The appointment of three Scrutineers and four Tellers shall be made by delegates at the start of the Annual Conference.

### Limitation of Speakers

No more than eight minutes shall be allowed for the mover of a motion and no more than four minutes for each subsequent speaker.

A delegate shall not speak more than once on any question, unless permission to do so on a point of order or explanation is given by the Chairperson.

### Suspension of Standing Orders

Standing Orders may be suspended only if agreed to by at least two-thirds of delegates to the Annual Conference who are present and voting.

Chairperson's Ruling

The Chairperson's ruling may only be overturned by a vote of at least two-thirds of delegates to the Annual Conference who are present and voting.

# NOTES

[illegible]



