

# CWU NORTH WEST REGIONAL CONFERENCE 2020



#CWUNW20

FRIDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2020

9.30AM TO 3.30PM



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

AT THE  
MECHANICS INSTITUTE  
103 PRINCESS ST  
MANCHESTER  
M1 6DD



# **Communication Workers Union North West Region Annual Report 2019**

## **Regional Secretary's Annual Report 2019**

As always, I would like to start by thanking all the Regional Officers and Branch Officials for all their hard work and support throughout the year. 2019 was certainly a roller coaster year for the union and the Labour movement and it was great to see more Reps turning out at events and supporting campaigns. Royal Mail Workplace Reps deserve special praise for the way they helped delivered a massive yes vote that was scuppered by the establishment.

I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to my fellow Regional Officers Karen, Dave and Emma. We don't have the resources of the other unions regionally, but with their support and hard work we are seen as one of the more pro-active and campaigning regions.



Once again, all Regional sub-committees have worked hard on behalf of the Region and the Branches, and I would ask that all Branches not only support the work of these committees and the Leads, but importantly to ensure that they send delegates to all events organised.

It would be remiss of me not to pay tribute to CWU activists who turn out in all weathers to represent the CWU at rallies and elections too. Their support is always there when needed.

In 2019 the Region actively engaged with numerous campaigns, attended conferences, rallies, organised stalls and handed out publicity material for:

- Endgame
- Our Hours
- Four Pillars - Postal Dispute
- Trade Unionists Against Racism
- Blackpool, Liverpool and Manchester PRIDE
- TUC Demonstration at the Conservative Party Conference
- General Election
- Save Our Post Office
- NW Labour and NW TUC Conferences
- Peoples Employment Charters
- North West CWU Regional Conference
- CWU Mental Health Network
- Period Poverty
- Total Eclipse of the Sun
- Redesign
- New Deal For Workers

## In January-

**Endgame Campaign.** The Region and North West Branches join hundreds from across the country to protest outside BT Head Office in London to defend the interests of members in BT Facilities Services. This following BT's



announcement that it intends to outsource the division, leaving 1,700 CWU represented grade employees facing a very uncertain future.



**North West CWU Young Workers** travel to Birmingham for the National CWU Young Workers Conference. Once again our Branch Young Workers make an impact at the rostrum.



## In February –

**CWU Members working at Wythenshawe Delivery Office** take industrial action in response to “two instances of unacceptable use of the conduct code” over recent months, which were just two specific examples of widespread historic and continuing unacceptable and unnecessary behaviour of management towards staff.



**Capita TVL members: 80% Yes to pay deal.** Members working for TV licensing contractor Capita TVL will receive a cash boost in their February pay packets after overwhelmingly approving a deal lifting wages by 2 per cent to 4.8 per cent.



## Members at Telefonica overwhelmingly accept an inflation-beating 2.35% pay increase

CWU launch **'Our Hours' campaign** for all members in Openreach. Removing the 60 minute personal travel time commitment is our top priority. **#CWUOurHours**



**CWU NW Conference** - The North West Region held its 5th Annual Conference at the Mechanics Institute in Manchester.



100 delegates and visitors from across the region attended the one-day event to debate key priorities for the year ahead.

The conference kicked off with a Facebook live event with Dave Ward who spoke and answered questions on Brexit, Fair Employment Charters, Labour's manifesto process, the New Deal for Workers, Redesign, Globalisation and the Gig Economy. We then moved into Mental Health and Community Engagement workshops run by the Health & Safety Forum and Learning committees. Fevzi Hussein then gave an excellent anti-racism presentation.



CWU NORTH WEST REGIONAL CONFERENCE 2019	
FRIDAY 14th FEBRUARY 2019 10AM - 5PM	
North West Regional Conference	
Mechanics Institute 330 Princess St Manchester M2 4BB	
14th February 2019	
Timetable	
09:00 - 09:30	Registration, Coffee, Tea & Biscuits
09:30 - 09:45	Arrival at Conference - Register Open
09:45 - 10:00	Open on 2019
10:00 - 10:30	Open House, 10th Annual Secretary
10:30 - 11:00	Workshops
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A - Mental Health - Main Conference Hall, 2nd Floor</li> <li>B - Working in the Community - Main Conference Hall, 2nd Floor</li> </ul>
11:00 - 11:30	10th Annual Presentation
11:30 - 12:00	Workshops (continued) - Main Conference Hall, 2nd Floor
12:00 - 12:30	Lunch
12:30 - 13:00	Regional Committee AGM
13:00 - 13:30	Regional Sub-Committee - Annual General Meeting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A - Equality: Alan Murray, 2nd Floor</li> <li>B - HR &amp; Finance: Alan Murray, 2nd Floor</li> <li>C - Learning: Alan Murray, 2nd Floor</li> <li>D - Health &amp; Safety: Alan Murray, 2nd Floor</li> <li>E - Industrial: Alan Murray, 2nd Floor</li> <li>F - Marketing: Alan Murray, 2nd Floor</li> <li>G - Operations: Alan Murray, 2nd Floor</li> <li>H - Young Workers: Alan Murray, 2nd Floor</li> </ul>
14:00 - 14:30	Workshops & Regional Training - Main Conference Hall, 2nd Floor
14:30 - 15:00	Coffee of Conference

This was followed by guest speaker John Morgan, National Education Union (NEU) Divisional Officer who spoke about his union's recent merger with the Association of Teachers and Leaders (ATL) making them the 4<sup>th</sup> largest union in the UK. Testing, Pay, Workload and school funding were also mentioned.

After lunch we held the Regional Committee Annual General Meeting then the Regional sub-committees held their own AGMs. The final session was each sub-committee Secretary presenting their Committee's key priorities for 2019.

We were the first region to introduce a Regional Conference and under CWU Redesign it is now mandatory for all regions to organise and hold a similar event.



This Conference is a great example of the #OneUnion approach agreed under redesign. We just happened to be ahead of the game.

**Hundreds of people** turned out in Liverpool today to pay their last respects to Pat O'Hara, CWU former National President.

Dave Ward, CWU GS said "Pat really made his mark on our union and will always be remembered as a man who stood up for our members".



## In March –

### **CWU Celebrates Landmark Low-Level Letter Box Victory as Government Prepares to Change Building Regulations To Help Postal Workers**

#### **Leading the Anti-Racist Struggle**

Nearly a hundred CWU North West activists travelled to London to take part in an anti-racism demonstration in London on United Nation's International Day.

In our bright pink high-vis jackets we headed off marching down Park Lane with our massed flags and pink flares. Once outside the entrance to Downing Street, marchers gathered in the road to hear speeches from a whole range of Trade Union and Labour Party activists.



**North West TUC conference held in Southport.** The CWU Motion on 'New Deal for Workers' and day of action was carried unanimously.



**Government signals a full-on “green light” to the joint CWU/Royal Mail CDC pensions plan**

**Union campaign saves Kendal Crown Office.** After a long and determined local campaign, supported by the Region. This was led by Paul Braithwaite, Political Officer North Lancs & Cumbria Branch and was supported by the whole community. The Post Office announced that proposals to close Kendal Crown Post Office and transfer its operations to failing retailer WH Smith have been cancelled.



**Karen Kendrick, Assistant Regional Secretary** is elected onto the TUC North West Executive Committee. We know you will do the CWU Proud!

## In April -

### **Branches and CWU reps gather in Bournemouth for the union's Annual Conference**

**Big 'Yes' to improved Santander pay offer.** Members across Santander have voted decisively to accept a substantially improved pay deal that was brokered by the union following the overwhelming rejection of the bank's initial 'final' offer by members in Santander UK and Santander Operations. The rejection and improved offer were as a result of a campaign led by the Bootle Financial Services branch.

**Union reaches agreement with EE on recognition.** After eight months of discussions with BT and EE the CWU has now finalised a Voluntary Union Recognition Agreement between EE and the CWU for Contact Centre frontline employees.

**Gary hits the streets of London.** CWU NW No1 Assistant Branch Secretary, Gary Ingram ran in the 2019 London Marathon to raise money for the Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP) Association to help fund their research into finding treatment and a cure for this aspect of the neurological disease Corticobasal Degeneration (CBD) that Gary's dad suffers from.

Gary, who is no Spring Chicken and spends most of his spare time in the Raj Restaurant was over the moon from the support he received from colleagues and Branches.

## In May -

**CWU North West hold day of action** by leafleting in Preston, Liverpool and Manchester against Hatemonger Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, also known as 'Tommy Robinson' #CWUandProud, #AntiRacismDay, #SayNoToRacism



**Solidarity achieves Isle of Man agreement** "Strong collective action and solidarity from the whole union" are the key factors that have achieved a negotiated agreement to the protracted dispute involving over 200 Isle of Man members, reports Deputy General Secretary Postal (DGSP) Terry Pullinger.

By an 89 per cent majority, Manx members voted to accept a two-year consolidated pay deal – fully backdated to April 2018 – giving protection to existing voluntary redundancy terms and mutually agreed 'buyouts' involving significant lump sums in terms of allowances and leave accrual.



**Big step towards justice for the Shrewsbury 24.** A long-running campaign to win justice for trade unionists wrongly prosecuted back in the 1970s took a major step forward this month, with a key legal development that reopens the possibility of quashing the convictions of the Shrewsbury 24.

Explaining the latest legal development, our good friend Eileen Turnbull, the Secretary of the Shrewsbury 24 Campaign, said: “At our judicial review that was heard at the Administrative Court in Birmingham, the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC), half-way through our QC’s submission, agreed to withdraw their 2017 decision not to refer the convictions of the pickets to the Court of Appeal.

“This is a magnificent victory for the pickets and reopens the possibility of quashing the convictions of the Shrewsbury 24”.

**Regional Committee members leaflet outside Piccadilly Station** and the good news was that Yaxley-Lennon was humiliated at the ballot box.. Well done to the North West voting #HopeNotHate



**In June-**

**National Pensioners Parliament.** Delegates from all parts of the country gathered outside the Tower Ballroom in Blackpool then marched through the town to the Winter Gardens for the start of the three day Conference to discuss the many issues that affect the Pensioners of the United Kingdom. The main bone of contention at the conference was the scrapping of the free TV license for the over 75's.





### **The CWU NW/NW Divisional Committee....**

paid homage to their former Divisional Officer, Tony Williams who received a standing ovation, not once but twice. Tony is a highly committed Trade Union Activist and deserved all the plaudits. A long & happy retirement Tony.



**What a fantastic display of solidarity** at the Colloids rally from CWU NW Young Workers standing together with Unite members taking industrial action. #YoungWorkers, #StrongerTogether

### **In July-**

**The North West CWU Mental Health Network, Women's and Equality Officers** played their part in organising and attending the Problematic Gambling Workplace Charter Launch. The event brought together employers, Trade Unions and support organisations to launch a Charter committing employers to supporting those workers affected by or at risk of developing issues due to harmful gambling.



**Rob & Erin, CWU Mersey Branch Officials** bravely abseiled down the side of Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral to raise funds for Freshfields Animal Rescue <https://www.freshfields.org.uk/> which is where Rob's dog Poppy is from!



**The CWU North West was out in full force at the Liverpool Pride event.** So, it was damp and dull weather wise, but we still rocked it with full colour and volume tuned right up. Samba Mundo Community Band blasted out the sounds and helped us celebrate diversity & equality for all. We certainly made an impact!



### **In August-**

**A CWU delegation** met with Andy Burnham, Greater Manchester Metro Mayor to discuss a range of issues from transport, housing, jobs and the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter. Further meetings have been arranged.



**The North West Region** once again took part in the famous Manchester PRIDE parade on a beautiful, sunny day. This fun event was a great opportunity to promote

the CWU as the progressive union we are. Manchester PRIDE is a registered charity that campaigns for equality and challenges discrimination; creates opportunity for engagement and participation and celebrates lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) life.

Once again Samba Mundo stole the show and did a terrific job leading the CWU on the march.

A big thank you must go to Karen Kendrick for doing most of the organising leading up to and on the day.



## In September-

**Capita pay pledge 'better late than never', says CWU.** The CWU has welcomed Capita's pledge to pay a minimum of the Real Living Wage across its UK Operations from April 1 next year – something the union has been demanding for some time

**Tory Party Conference in Manchester.** The North West Region joined a huge coalition of fellow Trade Unions and campaign groups against the Tory Party and its government of austerity. The appalling weather didn't dampen the spirits of the marchers – though Northern Rail cancelling the trains came close!



**Emotions ran high** at the 'Save Dingle Crown Post Office' Community Meeting in Liverpool. Members of the public were literally in tears over the proposed closure of their public service.





**CWU North West Socialist Republic** was well represented on the CWU Delegation at the Labour Party Conference.



## In October-

**CWU Branches show their support for 'Wear Red Day' #WRD19**  
**#ShowRacismTheRedCard**

A special shout out must go to the Warrington Mail Centre branch for all the photos and posts!



**The Young Workers Education Event in Manchester** gives its full support to a New Deal for Workers. Get ready for the 1st May 2020, where unions and workers will be coming together to take action ☐ #NYWEE19 #NewDealForWorkers

**“Prepare to defend our red line on compulsory redundancies” BT Branch Reps told.** Branches with members in BT Enterprise are being urged to ‘prepare for the worst while hoping for the best’ amid blunt CWU warnings to BT that it will have a major fight on its hands if even one compulsory redundancy stems from the hundreds of job losses announced by the division last week.

**CWU calls out the vote – Phonebank volunteers ring 25,000 members in Royal Mail Group (RMG).** An estimated 25,000 CWU members were phoned by the enthusiastic team who came down to the union’s Wimbledon headquarters from all around the country. This was the big push to maximise participation in the industrial action ballot of our RMG members. Greater Mersey Branch also used their branch office to make calls to their members on the day.

**Members cheer as 97.1% strike vote announced.** In one of the largest ‘Yes’ votes and biggest turnouts for many years, CWU members in RMG, not including Parcelforce members, voted by 97.1 per cent for strike action.



**MPs tell Government: ‘Stop attacking our Post Office network’** The top-level probe, which was launched by the Business, Enterprise & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Select Committee in April following the CWU’s high-profile ‘Save Our Post Office’



campaign, gave a clear recommendation that the Government must urgently reconsider its strategy.

**CWU Retired Members** descend on Birmingham for the 2019 National Retired Members Conference at Summer Lane in Birmingham. The North West submitted a motion that sought to clarify entitlements of retired members, category 5 members, and members within non-recognised sectors to stand or vote for positions at National, Regional and Branch level which was carried.

**History in the making** - The first ever CWU North West Regional Executive Committee meeting takes place at the Mechanics Institute, the Birthplace of the TUC. #WeRiseAgain, #OneUnion



## In November-

**CWU's voice of defiance rings out around the country** following the high Court's "outrageous" decision to invalidate our overwhelming 'Yes' vote and enormous turnout for industrial action.

North Wales/North West Divisional Rep Ian Taylor slated the company's manufactured claims, insisting that the union's 'Vote Yes' campaign had been "brilliant."

Members would, he predicted, be "extremely angry" at the verdict of the Court, commenting: "from what I've heard so far, these sound like highly spurious reasons."

"I didn't hear of one single complaint made by members from my division – so that's not one single complaint from about 20,000 members."

**6 hours of evidence - It then took the judges 2 mins to rule against the union and our 110,000 members using the Tory Anti-Trade Union Laws!**

**Judge compares Post Office bosses to 'mid-Victorian factory-owners'**

**United front against BT compulsory redundancy threat.** The CWU's rock-solid determination to defend the union's fundamental red line on compulsory redundancies in BT was forcefully reiterated at an Emergency Branch Forum at CWU headquarters.

**Bright future for Bootle as Santander redevelopment plan gets thumbs up.** Work will start on the complete rebuild of Santander's massive Bootle complex in the

Spring of 2020 following the granting of planning permission for a £75 million investment that will secure banking jobs on Merseyside for decades to come.

**NW Regional Secretary welcomes delegates** to the CWU National Learning event held in Liverpool. Union Learning Reps play an important role in #TheCWU and the wider community. #Learningwithoutlimits

## In December-

**Telefónica announcement triggers unwelcome pre-Xmas uncertainty.** Following a major business strategy announcement by senior management last week, which indicated that headcount reductions will be sought across most of the company's business areas early in the New Year, the CWU served notice that any reductions other than by voluntary means would not be acceptable to the union.

**Postmasters win Horizon pay-out from the Post Office.** The union has called for a full judicial inquiry into this scandal and the full force of the law should be brought down on those board members and Directors responsible.

**General Election – Not a good day at the office.** The result of the General Election was extremely disappointing for the Labour Party, the union and in particular CWU members who stood as Labour candidates.

The North West is a traditional Labour stronghold and again became a major battle ground during this General Election. It was decided that we would work with Trade Union and Labour party Liaison Organisation (TULO) to identify key seats that were considered vulnerable at that time, or had a strong TU member standing.

The CWU NW took the responsibility for 3 key seats, Blackpool North & Cleveleys, Blackpool South and Bury North. Sadly, we lost all three, losing two excellent MPs Gordon Marsden and James Frith who we have worked closely with. Gordon served Blackpool for 22 years and genuinely cared about the people he represented. He is also a good friend to the CWU. Labour lost sixty seats in total losing 12 in the North West.

So why didn't Labour win? Well, the navel gazing will go on for some months, but I feel that we had a good manifesto but the way we presented it at times was amateurish. To some of the public it seemed that Labour were just chucking freebies at them. Labour had an incoherent Brexit policy and should have stuck to their 2017 manifesto pledge. Finally, Jeremy just wasn't trusted when we spoke to people on the doorstep in many areas. You can blame the Right-Wing Media owned by the tax dodging billionaires or the old guard on the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) who stabbed him the back at every opportunity – take your pick.



Financial assistance was given to each of the key seats as well as Wigan, Wirral South, Weaver Vale, Ashton-Under-Lyne, Wirral West, Fleetwood & Lancaster, Stockport, Southport and Morecambe & Lunesdale. A number of campaign days were organised in each of the key seats with varied success. The General Election being held in December really hampered us getting release for member volunteers too.

Finally, thank you to all NW CWU members and Reps who campaigned in all weathers for Labour during the General Election. It wasn't to be, but if this government thinks they have a mandate to remove employment rights and harden anti-Trade Union laws they need to think again!

---

**The North West Regional website** – We have worked closely with Pellacraft to revamp our website in 2019. More work needs to be done and hopefully this will be completed in the next couple of months.

**Social Media** – we now have 1,421 people following on our regional facebook page (an increase of 600 in 2019) and 2,141 following our twitter page (an increase of 800 in 2019) Both continue to be an invaluable communications tool to help promote the union's campaigns regionally, but as the amazing ballot result showed, you still can't beat face to face meetings and having well informed representatives in all of our workplaces.

**Carl Webb**  
**Regional Secretary**

<b>CWU Northwest Region - Annual Equality Report 2019</b>
---

2019 has seen a lot of change across the Equality organisation within the CWU. Redesign is changing the face of how equality will be viewed within the union and we will all be striving to embed equality in everything we do. As early as April 2019, we were looking at ideas of how we might do things differently in the Region and some great ideas were put forward. 2019 also saw the ending of the national Advisory Committees who have done some fantastic work over the years, changing and influencing union policy, raising awareness of many equality issues, attending events, organising forums and creating detailed documents.

Northwest Branch Officers, Equality Officers, BAME Officers and Women's Officers have continued to be involved in local and regional campaigns run by the CWU, other unions and the NWTUC as well as being present at larger events such as PRIDEs. 2019 saw our officers attending the last of each of the four separate CWU Equality Conferences; Women's, LGBT, Black Workers and Disability. Workplace events have taken place across both constituencies and these have been very well received by members. Officers have also worked closely with other Regional committees such as the Young Workers to support them and bring equality into their initiatives too.



2019 may not have been the most settled year for Officers with new Regional Lead positions being created and the uncertainty of how the roles should be approached but we will go into 2020 with fresh eyes and be open to new challenges, learning and development.

Here's to 2020, the year equality becomes embedded in everything we do. Congratulations to the new Equality Strand Leads. Please contact them directly for any help and advice.

**Peter Pascall – BAME**  
**Tony Windle- Disability**  
**Sheila Biggins – Women's**  
**Cathryn Heath – LGBT+**

**[peterpascall01@gmail.com](mailto:peterpascall01@gmail.com)**  
**[tonywindle.equality@gmail.com](mailto:tonywindle.equality@gmail.com)**  
**[sheilabiggins.cwuequality@gmail.com](mailto:sheilabiggins.cwuequality@gmail.com)**  
**[Cathrynheath@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Cathrynheath@yahoo.co.uk)**

**Karen Kendrick**  
**NW Regional Equality Lead**  
**[karen@cwu-mancom.org](mailto:karen@cwu-mancom.org)**

## **Regional BAME Lead Annual Report 2019**

Since being voted in for my new position as North West Regional BAME Lead, I've not been able to engage as much as I would have liked to due to the nature of the hours I work and the shifts I do. There has been a lot of pressure on the department I work in so that has taken up a considerable amount of my time helping etc.

During the last few months I have attended the inaugural CWU North West Executive Committee (NWREC) meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2019 and the TUC North West Equality Conference on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 2019.

Within the NWREC meeting, some very valid and interesting points were raised as to the direction the committee and the roles of the new Equality leads should take. Ian Taylor made some very straight to the point comments that the NEC should bring headline news to the Regional committee, and that the Regional Leads are to be the conduit between the region's branches and the Head office. He also asked what message will the NEC bring to the leads and the branches?

My plans are to work closely with the other Regional leads, to have a united common stance on all equality issues and not just see my role as a singular and stand-alone role or objective.

We have agreed to go to, and help with, events with the other leads of whichever strand to put the message out there that we are totally committed to this cause. So, for instance if there is a disability strand event the BAME, Women's and LGBT+ leads will all be there to help and support that event and so on and so forth with conjunction with events for the other strands.

Another subject that will have to be looked at closely is the mapping of branches in the region to make sure that as Equality Leads, we know exactly who and where the members are that we need address in our individual roles and again help each other where the strands' and our trade unions' objectives overlap. For example, there are female disabled LGBT+ BAME members. So, there is obvious crossover within the

strands so again, we must show solidarity for all members across the board and help each other in whatever capacity we can.

The North West TUC Equality Conference touched on many subjects such as equal pay, period poverty, tackling the far right, sexual harassment, reasonable adjustment disability passports at work, racism in the workplace and mental health awareness – or rather the lack of support and awareness to tackle these things. We touched on the fact that now PRIDE has become a bandwagon that employers and big business have jumped on and hijacked for commercial reasons and not for the real meaning of the events and celebrations. One of the most eye-opening parts of the conference was when Carl Roper the TUC organising and Education Manager gave some very sad, startling and sobering statistics and information on the state of trade union membership in the UK. I was very shocked to hear that only 23% of the UK workforce are in trade unions. He then went on to tell how 20 million people in the UK wide are not in trade unions. There was also the obvious worry of the lack of and dwindling number of young people who are trade union members and how few are joining up to add to the already 6 million total of trade union members.

So, for me the main objectives in my new role are to

1. Help my other Equality leads so we work as a team to help the cause of all the strands and stand as one.
2. Make sure we identify the individuals in each strand in our region from mapping and finding the crossover points within the strands so there are no gaps in our approach.
3. As an individual within a team structure, to acquire and complete all the training necessary to carry out my role and to help recruit new members especially young members who we can get involved and train up to keep this trade union going and keep its future strong.

There isn't very much else I can say until I start getting more involved in the role and I can see exactly what obstacles I may encounter. But I'll give my all and do my best to overcome them.

**Peter Pascall**  
**NW Regional BAME Lead**

## **Regional Disability Lead Annual Report 2019**

The role of Regional Disability Lead is new and still very much a work in progress. There is much to learn and achieve and I hope to do the role justice over the next twelve months and beyond. It is my hope that equality will become increasingly mainstream within the CWU and I plan to play a part in this by developing this role. To enable me to achieve this I have set 3 aims to achieve in the next 12 months.

The Aims are:

1. To be the go-to person for reps and branches for disability related enquiries.
2. Raise awareness on various disability conditions.
3. Organise one equality event per year within the region.

In order to achieve these aims, it is my intention to continue to work with the branches, the equality committee and relevant individuals. Only by doing this will

equality become mainstream and achieve the aspirations of re-design. I intend to encourage all Branches and Reps to work with myself and their Equality Officers, and to equality-proof their local agreements. I already use social media to raise awareness of the various disability conditions and will continue to do so. I want to organise one major event per year in the region that focuses on disability and also support other Regional Leads and Equality Officers and Branches with any of their own events. In order to achieve this, I also need to educate and upskill myself on the relevant law related to equality. This I can achieve with the continuing support of my Branch and the NW Regional Executive Committee (NWREC). Since the start of the role, I've offered information and given advice to various members and Reps regarding equality issues. Using social media, I've also raised awareness from mental health to the plights of disabled people applying for benefit to assist with their daily living, which is something I'll continue to do. I've also supported the postal campaigns, and the recent General Election campaigning. I'm also the Branch delegate to my local Trades Council which I only started this year and attend all meetings. This is a great way to share what's happening in our union and gain ideas from others attending.

**Tony Windle**  
**NW Regional Disability Lead**

## **Regional Women's Lead Annual Report 2019**

I took this role on in October 2019 as a challenge to myself and because I wanted to build on the good work already done for the women's agenda in the Northwest. At the first NWREC meeting I outlined my priorities of:

1. Challenge and educate myself
2. Create a network of women
3. Run events.

I really challenged myself At the National Assembly of Women (NAW) Conference on the 26th October. One of the speakers talked about women only spaces, saying transgender women were stepping all over our rights, which I strongly disagree with, so I verbally challenged this position, in a room full of women who seemed to support her view! I gave a verbal report at the NWREC on 29th October, by introducing myself and outlining my priorities. I asked for a meeting with Karen Kendrick, our Equality Lead to help me develop a plan for the year ahead, progress my abilities in writing reports and to work together to plan the Women of Today (WoT) event for 2020. I am organising the WoT event which is the biggest event I've organised to date. I've applied for courses over 2020 including Essential Skills so that I will be able to represent people if needed. I attended Alvescot for my Equality Rights part 1 course (9th-13th Sept) and met 3 like-minded women which started off my aim of creating a network of women. I set up a WhatsApp group so we could keep in touch, share information and advice. My first opportunity to meet women activists outside of the CWU was at the NAW weekend, which was educational and I also gained some new contacts. I enjoyed the NWTUC Equality Conference at Liverpool on the 2nd November where I met other women and made more new contacts! I've booked the Mechanics in March 2020 for the WoT event, I've got a rough agenda, the stalls are organised and just need to finalise one or two speakers. My next task is to organise a travel pack for the speakers and set up the invitations on Eventbrite. I feel that I am



already well on my way to achieving my priorities for the year ahead and am looking forward to working with my Equality sisters and colleagues.

**Sheila Biggins**  
**NW Regional Women's Lead**

## **Regional LGBT+ Lead Annual Report 2019**

In the previous structure the North West Equality Committee had become quite a presence at the two largest Pride Events held in Manchester and Liverpool, which have been well supported by our branches, officers and members in 2019. I am looking forward to working with my Lead colleagues to bring aspects of LGBT+ knowledge into what they do and to learn more from them about their own strands.

My 3 priorities for 2020 are:

1. To build on the work that the national LGBT+ Advisory Committee had been doing,
2. Support as many Pride and LGBT+ events as possible,
3. Look at workplace policies and encouraging inclusivity for Transgender employees.

Looking forward I intend to ensure that the North West region carries on and builds upon the foundation that has already been set. It is important that realistic achievable goals are agreed. Our aim should be to be inclusive for all.

In the previous decade the CWU LGBT Advisory Committee (LGBTAC) campaigned to kick homophobia out of football but we have all seen in recent months that homophobia and racism are far from been kicked out of the grounds. In a YouGov survey of 2017, 43% of LGBT people felt that public sporting events were not welcoming spaces for them. Stonewall's 'Make Sport Everyone's Game' through its Rainbow Laces campaign have made a good start in trying to tackle this. The campaign has a high profile and a large part of both sporting and non-sporting fans alike are aware of what the rainbow laces stand for. I would like to see the region fully support this campaign not only to continue but to grow and involve other campaigning organisations such as 'Just a Ball Game', and 'Give Racism the Red Card'. Through the region we can involve our branches, members and their children and especially if they are involved with sports or play in local teams. It will also be a great opportunity for the Regional Equality Leads to work together. I've secured funding to enable our region to be able to do this.

Referring to the Government Equalities LGBT Action Plan 2018, 68% of the respondents to the survey of which the report is based on, said that they avoided holding hands with their same sex partners in public for the fear of a negative reaction.

So, continuing with our support and participation in North West Pride events I would like us to take the theme of holding hands into them which also echoes the North West equality logo sentiment too. At whichever Pride events the region joins in with this year, I would like us all to hold hands when we march. As we have before we will

encourage our loved ones, regardless of sexual orientation to hold their hands in solidarity with the LGBT+ community. I will also be looking that any promotional material prior to and on the Pride days reflect this and embrace our NW Equality logo.

Small steps forward together as one.

**Cathryn Heath**  
**NW Regional LGBT+ Lead**

## **Regional Political Committee Annual Report 2019**

### **The General Election.**

The political landscape has changed yet again since the result of the General Election, with the Tories now embolden and planning the next assault on the sectors of the population that would never vote Tory, along with the communities, towns and cities where we represent members.

We need to thank all those hardened folk who went out in the rain, wind and then more rain to get the Party message cross on the doorstep. It is distressing to see the hard work put into Constituencies by affiliated organisations like the trade unions; only to see that local Labour Group Leaders along with Leaders of Councils and Executive Members of Council, to not turn out at all.

This loss of impetus has to be addressed as we need to be aware of where our failings were; where we must improve over the next few years and to what style of politics do we aspire to?

Many times I heard that the Labour leadership on Brexit was so shambolic or was never understood in full, to the extent that hardened labour voters moved their allegiance. This will need to be tightened up for next time.

We also need to have a Leader who has a more focussed support group. For me, just stating that people do not want to hear the messages because they were so confused, allowed many voters to simply vote Tory.

The focus groupings show that the labour Party hit a high watermark with the under 35s; hit a good ballot return for the under 50s, but did not achieve any notable successes for the under 65s, irrespective of the increased volumes voting Labour, we will need, at the next General Election, a swing of 14.25% to generate a Labour majority of 1 seat in the House of Commons.

A headlong retreat into a Blairite or Trump style presidential niche grouping of politics will serve the trade unions less into the future.

Having said that, we must also become a broad church and very tolerant of political parties to attract the voter numbers for a Labour Government. How we get to that point will become more evident in the next few months.

For the CWU branches, I think that we can insist that some format of Hustings takes place for people who have a vote on the next Labour Party leadership contest to make the best informed view.

In the meantime, we have to be proud of the fact that the labour Party is Her Majesty's Opposition party in the House of Commons. We have not gone away. The Parliamentary democracy which we live in ensures that the Leader of the Opposition can hold BoJo and his cronies to account on all of their policies.

### **Work for 2020 onwards.**

We still have many members who are Councillors in their own right and we can measure or increase the social value of our Councillors networking by trying to understand what is available in terms of improving the immediate local environment where our members live.

The Public Works Loan Board can ensure that fully costed and necessary infrastructure building can take place. This will need progressive thinking Local Authorities to mandate their Local Government officials to get cracking on certain civic improvements.

Government Circular 106 has all the details;

<https://www.dmo.gov.uk/responsibilities/local-authority-lending-pwlb/lending-arrangements/>

There also has to be some awareness amongst trade union ranks that our members voted for the full spread of political parties in the December General Election.

### **North West Labour Unions, (formerly TULO).**

We have seen a lot of activity for Tulo recently through 2019, due to the impact of the national political debate. What has come to light is the fact that the TUC and Tulo nationally are adamant that the report by the Special Rapporteur for the UNICEF on Universal Benefits, some of which are in work benefits, are still not fit for purpose.

Listed below, again, the evidence of the problems which Universal Benefits deliver;

The key points he observed about Universal Credit were

1. The harsh and punitive nature of the UK social security system
2. That cuts to social security are a product of political choice not Financial necessity
3. The level of poverty is unacceptably high and it is set to keep on rising
4. The way that Universal Credit works (or doesn't work) embodies austerity
5. Cuts to public services more generally compound the impact of social security cuts
6. The government is in denial about the impact of social security cuts.

Moving into 2020, delegates to the NW Labour Unions Committee will still hold all elected Councillors, MPs and MEPs to account in terms of the Rules stating that all prospective and sitting candidates from the Labour Party must be a trade union member.

As reported above, this will be coupled with certain Labour Leaders not being available during a General Election. I will be consulting with the political committee to make this a requirement for CWU endorsing any new or existing Labour Leader in any future election scenario.



## **Metro Mayor Engagement.**

Following the Regional Labour Party documentation sent to Carl and myself about nominations for the Metro Mayor positions, it was agreed that we support Andy Burnham for Greater Manchester and Steve Rotherham for Greater Merseyside.

We are in a very good position, as the CWU, to engage the Metro Mayors on many issues and we had successes on the Employment models for each Metro Region. If the current Tory government are to be believed, there could well be more not less devolved government of the regions. This will mean that our influence can come to bear on policies such as secure and meaningful standards of employment across the Metro Regions.

What also appears to be on the horizon is social reinvestment opportunities could occur as a result of the above. So it is vital that regular effective contact with the Metro Mayors is maintained.

## **Regional Education Annual Report 2019**

I feel that we are at a crucial moment in FE education and for education in general, at the time of writing we are approaching a general election whose outcome will shape the future of the country and hopefully end 10 years of Tory austerity.

On the one hand under the Labour party we have a progressive education policy that supports all levels of education, from pre-school to degree level a comprehensive cradle-to-grave national education service, that's in complete contrast to the government's education policy of cut after cut.

The government in response to Labours proposed education policy, launched an attack on the policy in a education announcement which was slated by **Angela Rayner, Labour's shadow Education Secretary, she said this about the document**

*"This document is a combination of outright lies, irresponsible scaremongering, and misleading figures. This is a transparent attempt from the Conservatives to avoid addressing their own record on education*

*"The Tories suggesting that children will lose opportunities will be a bitter irony to a generation of parents who have seen their children go through schools as budgets have been slashed, the curriculum has been narrowed, and the life chances of their children have been directly harmed by a senseless programme of austerity.*

*"Labour will give our schools the investment and support they need to make an excellent education the right of every child."*

By the time you read this report we will know the results and we will either have a progressive Labour government or another five years of Tory incompetence, an education system we can be proud of providing the skills that industry needs for the future, or a failing cash starved system where only the rich can afford the luxury of decent education.

Labours vision of education is a breath of fresh air through the musky corridors of Tory stagnation

As part of its vision for a cradle-to-grave national education service Every adult will be entitled to six years of free study under Labour plans for a radical change and expansion of lifelong learning.

Labour's new proposals will shake up the Further Education college setup, where in future any adult without A-level or equivalent qualifications would be able to study for them for free at college, this will give a second chance to learners who have been failed by the current system, add to this financial help with maintenance grants available for those on low incomes, the future of adult education looks in safe hands under a labour government.

FE has withered on the vine under relentless cut after cut in funding; the government's flagship apprenticeship scheme is falling apart as big business cream off the cash to support business administration qualifications, instead of investing in people who need education to progress within the working environment we have today.

### **Priority's for 2020**

- 1, Produce a video a month as part of our communications strategy and look at producing small workshops on using phones and tablets, to create / edit videos with the free software that's built in or available to download.
- 2, Produce Cyber Security workshops and information packs that can be run in the region, looking at the threats of identity cloning, Phishing attacks and the growing threat of phone hacking.
- 3, Mental Health and Wellbeing, The intention is that we promote the mental health resources /training, along with the wellbeing sessions that are currently being run across the region.
- 4, our aim is to gather together a collection of courses available for Reps and members across the region and promote this using sway and other software as part of the communications strategy.

Across the region we have a number of different approaches to members learning, with the loss of FE funding we have had to look at other options that are available, from online learning to health and wellbeing clubs.

The Lead ULR's across the region have been involved with facilitating the Essential skills Pre Course and Bridging Activates, supporting reps as they prepare to do these courses locally or at Alvescot Lodge. The ULR's have also been giving Information, Advice and Guidance to members across the region, as well as attending the Welcome to Royal Mail induction courses  
In Warrington Mail Centre John Forshaw has been running the Know Your Numbers Project

Around 25 - 35 people each month continue to monitor their blood pressure, weight and BMI and take part in the Know Your Numbers project which was started by Unionlearn & Person Shaped Support (PSS). Some of the topics we have looked at this year included:

- Stress Awareness
- Alcohol Awareness

- Tips on how to lower your blood pressure
- Keep physically active
- Healthy eating

Brian and John at National Event in Liverpool

The NW RLEC ULR's have attended a number of learning events over the last year:

CWU ULR National Networking Event: 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> November, Liner Hotel, Liverpool where we had 7 ULR's attending for the two days

Unionlearn Supporting Learners Event 16th October, Mechanics Institute, Manchester

Papyrus Suicide Awareness Workshop 17<sup>th</sup> May, Mowbray House, Stockport

Brian Parsons from the NW Central AMAL branch, who is based at the RDC in Warrington, is currently working on an anxiety blog, as well as this he is progressing with the Christmas debt project, which is to be presented at our AGM in January.



**Brian and John at National Event in Liverpool**

He is also in preparation for January looking to raise funds and awareness, with a charitable idea to get reps/ ULR's to do a 6 week period in January, living only of food parcels with the same content as a food bank would allocate and then give any savings on that shopping period to a food bank charity, Brian will give more detail at the meeting.

I have attended two National Regional Learning Committee meetings in Bournemouth, where we said farewell to Trish Lavelle at the June meeting and welcomed Kate Hudson in September as the new officer of the Education, Equality and Development department.

I did raise the issue over the excessive amount of pre-course work attached to the Fair and Equal course, this was again raised by Brian Parsons on behalf of the NE Education committee at the national ULR event.

I have also asked the dept if it is possible that they could circulate the contact details, of all the Regional Education Leads and the Equality Leads across the regions to enable better networking.

Duncan Healey  
Regional Learning Lead  
[duncan.e.healey88@gmail.com](mailto:duncan.e.healey88@gmail.com)

## Regional Retired Members Annual Report 2019

**Mind the pension gender gap:** The gender pension gap is bigger than the gender pay gap, according to the latest government figures. Women in the UK receive 39.5% less in pension income than men – twice as large as the difference in pay between the sexes.

**Cuts affect human rights:** Vulnerable older people in England are at risk of being denied their human rights because of failures in the way the government allocates care resources since budget cuts, Human Rights Watch has said. It accuses the government of a lack of oversight of a system which is largely devolved to local councils and voices concern about a 140% increase in adult social care complaints since 2010 following a cut of almost 50% in central government funding for councils.

**Hardship faces future pensioners:** New evidence has revealed that millions of people risk missing out on a good retirement due to increasing pressure on health and care services, and low incomes. Today's least well-off over 50s face greater challenges than wealthier peers and are likely to die younger.

The report also reveals that pensioner poverty is rising for the first time since 2010 and is more prevalent for women and black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.

At least 1.3 m over 55s also live in homes that is hazardous to their health.

**Older people and tax:** To kill the myth that pensioners don't pay any tax. Pensioners are paying around a total of £17.9bn was raised by taxing retired people's private and work-place pensions in the financial year to April 2017.

It highlights the contribution to the public finances made by pensioners and offers more evidence to support the claim that bus passes, winter fuel payments and TV licences are not free because older people continue to make a substantial contribution towards their cost.

In addition, around £57bn worth of care is also provided every year by the UK's growing number of older carers.

**Lords attack pensioner benefits:** A new report from the House of Lords has proposed scrapping the triple lock on state pensions, removing the bus pass and winter fuel allowance, means-testing the TV licence and making universal benefits subject to tax.

Given that the UK state pension is bottom of the OECD league table, the need for these benefits clearly remains.

**Pension Age Rise:** Report to raise the state pension age to 75 should set alarm bells ringing. Certain part of UK particularly men, receive less pension over their retired lives.



However, if you live in Glasgow the life expectancy is 73 then you can expect just six years and a meagre five by the time the state pension age rises to 68. **The plan wants people in places like Glasgow to die before they retire.**

**The struggles of the WASPI women:** Waspi women have already been forced to work longer than expected and use their retirement savings as a result of the government's failure to properly manage State Pension age increases.

**State Pension crisis:** Only a third of individuals that have recently retired are receiving the full new state pension. Figures from the Department for Work and Pensions showed that almost two in five pensioners -365,290 people (38%) - received less than £150 a week, while only 282,447 pensioners (29%) are receiving more.

**Huge rise in the number of homeless older people:** Growing numbers of older people have been forced to seek help for homelessness over the last five years, official figures show. Office for National Statistics figures show a 39% increase in the number granted, up from 1,800 in 2012-13 to 2,500 five years later.

### **3 Key priorities for the coming year**

**1. To Improve Social Care and To Campaign for a National Health and Care Service**  
Adequate adult social care funding for local authorities in all part of the country.

The social care system has suffered £5bn worth of cuts since Simon Stevens, the head of NHS England has told MPs that homes should be sold to pay for social care. Due to the hardships faced by people needing social care, this obviously has an adverse impact on the NHS. 1 in 6 people are readmitted to hospital because of lack of social care when they are initially left home.

Health and social care systems in crisis: The report, entitled Destined to 'sink or swim together', shows that funding one service in isolation can't prop up the others, and if they aren't all funded, they risk collapsing altogether. This is a sobering thought. UK pensioners suffering the worst poverty rate in Western Europe.

The NHS should be all inclusive, free at the point of use and include dental, eye and elderly care services. The internal market and privatisation shall be ended, and there should be greater democratic control of services by both users and those working in the NHS.

A National Care Service covering both home and residential/nursing care should be created, funded like the NHS through general taxation, free at the point of use and without means-testing.

Therefore, we need and vigorously campaign for Care Service to be brought under National Health Service.

## **2. To fight to improve the State Pension**

The basic state pension should be set at 70% of the living wage (outside London rate) and above the official poverty level. This is currently around £200 a week in 2018. This should be paid to all men and women, regardless of their National Insurance contributions.

Every year the state pension (basic and second such as State Earnings Related Pension Scheme SERPS) should rise in line with the best of earnings, the Consumer Price Index, the Retail Price Index or 2.5%.

Two thirds of employees aged 45 and over, around nine million, have no idea how much they need to save for a comfortable retirement, research shows.

The full new state pension pays just £168.60 per week or £8,767.20 a year, which means additional savings are essential.

The closure of final salary schemes and a lack of pension advice have worsened the problem: People are living longer and inheriting later, or losing their inheritance to care costs.

THE UK has the worst poverty rates for the elderly in Western Europe and state pensions are to blame, according to a new study.

## **3. Time for a Real Dignity In older age**

It is time for a real Dignity in older age. By promoting the idea that the care of older people needed urgent action.

Since 2010 there have been over £5 billion worth of cuts to funding and as a result 1.2 million people no longer get the care they need.

All forms of abuse against older people should be recognised in law and carry appropriate sentencing, in the same way that there is specific legal protection for children.

There should be a national dignity code which sets out the way in which older people in care should be treated, should be incorporated into statutory guidance and regulations for all health and care providers.

## **Regional Young Workers Committee Annual Report 2019**

At Present the union is undergoing a period of change and the role of the Young Worker is no exception. In the North West Region we are proud of the contribution Young Workers make to the union, their workplaces and their communities. Recently, we have seen young workers represented at some important events such as the Demonstration against the Conservative Party Conference in Manchester, the North West Labour Unions campaign day and leafleting in support of Chris Webb

who will be standing as MP for Blackpool North and Cleveleys. Whilst, internally, YW have made a great contribution to the Royal Mail “#We Rise again” Campaign, with special mention of Elli Long who addressed a gate meeting. Since the General Election was called, many young workers have supported Labour Party Candidates CWU and otherwise by giving up free time to deliver leaflets and door knock. We hope to build on this positive culture of upcoming reps being at the forefront of both political and industrial issues, we aim to introduce a political element to our future events to ensure newer reps are given an opportunity to learn and become more engaged.

## **NW Regional Lead Perspective**

Since attending my first Executive Committee Meeting we have begun to implement some of the strategies of my previous report. I highlighted the need for YW's to branch out into other aspects of the union, Mark Holt and myself are currently arranging for a Mental Health Event at Bootle Financial Services aimed at call centre workers, the event will offer members a chance to engage in conversations with an interactive mental health chess activity. We feel this is a good collaboration between the H+S and YW's equality strands.

Whilst at the NW Executive Meeting we identified a drop in Young Worker Engagement in terms of electing a Young Workers Rep and event attendance. In response to this, I am currently mapping all of the branches in the NW Region to enable us to better monitor branch succession and participation. I previously contacted branch secretaries to offer support from the NW Committee for branches struggling to fill the YW position, I was pleased that Hannah Price of Preston Brook and Bury Branch has approached myself for assistance. We have decided to hold our first Committee Meeting at her branch to raise the profile of Young Union officials in the workplace, which we expect to take place early in the New Year.

I have also sent out a further email to branch secretaries in anticipation of our next National Young Workers Event as we aim to have most branches submit a motion to the YW's Annual Conference. I will also give secretaries a further opportunity to seek assistance from the committee.

We will also continue to develop and implement the Young Workers role description/toolkit which was delivered in person to Branch Secretaries by Elli Long, Erin Brett and myself, which has been well received which we hope will improve the engagement of YW Reps in the next year.

## **NWYEE Manchester**

We recently hosted the National Young Workers Education Event as a Region and enjoyed another successful event. The Event was held at the Mechanics Institute and it was great to see the talent and enthusiasm of young trade unionists on show. The National Executive Committee were represented with General Secretary Dave Ward and Deputy General Secretary Tony Kearns addressing delegates, alongside the North West's own Regional Secretary Carl Webb. However, it was notable that the event was not as well attended as previous events we have hosted in the North

West. We would point to workplace and young worker attrition as a decisive factor with certain branches having to constantly recruit a new Young Workers Rep. Despite this, the event was ended on a high with inspirational speaker Bianca Todd of the Ron Todd Foundation sending delegates around Manchester with old shoes fashioned into a plant pot. Activities such as these are ideal for building a National Network of Young Workers, which will be necessary to ensure the union continues to function cohesively through the process of succession planning.

### **YW Committee Meeting/Supporting Chris Webb**

On 5/12/19 we held our NWW Committee meeting in the Blackpool North and Cleveleys office, which is where the CWU sponsored candidate -Chris Webb is running his election campaign. Due to the election and being in the midst of the Festive Period, many of our committee members were unable to secure release due to the operational needs of Royal Mail. Special mention of Adam Kara who was able to attend and complete several rounds of leafletting after the committee meeting.

As Mapping is currently underway I hope to improve the notice I am giving to NWW's to request release and be able to communicate more easily when we have an up to date record of YW's officers and their contact details.

### **National Young Workers Conference Bristol**

The next National Young Workers Event is scheduled to take part on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020, at the Marriott Hotel in Bristol. We are hoping to ensure that this event is better attended than the NYWEE event prior. As mentioned elsewhere in the report we have begun mapping young workers across the North West Region to ensure they are better engaged with the NW committee, we hope to see some of this work bear fruit with a strong and improved representation of North West Branches. I have sent out an email to North West Branch Secretaries requesting said information, but as a contingency I will use the next event as an opportunity to capture the details in person, meaning we should have a decent picture of North West Young Workers early in 2020. We will also encourage branches in the North West Region to submit at least one motion from each branch, with the North West Committee also to submit a motion.

## **NW Regional H&S Forum Annual Report 2019**

Some of the intended 2019 Forum priorities set were;

- The Forum will continue to engage with other Health, Safety & Environment Forums around the country to learn best practise and share information.
- The Forum will review whether rotating venues around the region to try to improve attendance and raise the profile of the Forum and safety was/is worthwhile.



- The Forum will continue and expand its engagement at the top level of decision makers to expand CWU influence at every opportunity – this cannot be left to business lobbies. We have built relationships and recognition at senior and Board level with several organisations which are essential to use for future of members and their families' health, safety and welfare.
- The Forum will look to work with the new Trade Union Clean Air Network, and we have already influenced the soon to be launched Charter.
- The Forum will continue with HSE, Defra and EU consultations.

Tony and Derek took active part at the NE Forums in York and regularly shared information with the London and Scottish Forums, resulting in us leading the response to H and S within Redesign. The rotating of venues didn't work and saw Forum attendance drop to just a chosen few attendees. Derek attended all the national TUCAN meetings as sole CWU representative

2019 started with the latest Defra consultation on amending allergen information provisions contained within domestic food information legislation for food prepacked for direct sale;

- People who have allergies must take great care for themselves; however, others need to make it easy for them to do the right thing. It would appear that statistically allergic reactions are increasing so it is essential that the food supply industry supports those who may suffer symptoms that can cause death.
- An all interested parties [*or their representatives*] sort of seminar could consider/amend Defra & FSA pre drawn guidelines. For consumer representatives could invite trade union health and safety representatives who have training and a wealth of experience in considering safety from a Risk Assessment approach that would be both proportional and evidenced based.
- The staff/worker understanding is essential and immediate or as soon as reasonably practicable. The labelling is a system change but a year is not too onerous a burden and up 5 years would cost lives.
- We fundamental disagree with the assumption that having an anaphylactic shock but not dying is a Near Miss. Nearly having such a shock but being prevented from eating such an ingredient by a supportive nearby person would be a Near Miss. It is ludicrous that only death can consider such an incident to be worthwhile reporting to relevant authorities and such an approach leaves huge statistical errors which do not help further incidents which may cause a fatality, indeed actually contributes to the likelihood of reoccurrence by gross negligence. The occurrence of the shock should be reportable similarly to the HSE RIDDOR system.

A previous consultation the Forum had taken part in was the review of the physical telecommunications infrastructure and business connectivity markets, which incidentally consisted of ten documents with over 1000 pages, so took some time. Ofcom considered (but declined) the use of an FTTP network utilising sewer networks and electricity pylons but dismissed them as access to the pylons was not feasible in winter months, so it is generally the physical infrastructure that can be used to host fixed elements of a telecoms network being ducts, chambers, and poles (evidently BT has 450,000km of ducts). The Forum raised concerns over health,

safety and environmental issues that may arise from increased access to infrastructure. Dismissively, Ofcom merely said they expect that all operators will comply with the relevant legislation and regulation when it comes to safety in the workplace and protecting the environment. Likewise, we expect no one in the UK to get killed by their work and that doesn't happen either.

The HSE introduced a new Chief Executive last summer, former Inspector General and Chief Executive of the Insolvency Service (IS), Sarah Albon. Part of her remit at the IS was to cut costs whilst "*strengthening the UK's insolvency regime*". We had only just got on speaking terms with the outgoing David Snowball, but he retired. We have concern that part of Sarah's opening gambit was mentioning "new opportunities" – this could be taken as further commercialism of the HSE which we have seen expanding over the last few years, the majority of email contact from the HSE is now selling training or something similar. Fortunately, Martin Temple, HSE's Chair, remains. We attended the first HSE Board with the new CE but the December meeting was cancelled due to Purdah.

The Committee on Climate Change report *Net Zero - The UK's contribution to stopping global warming* recommended a new emissions target for the UK: net-zero greenhouse gases by 2050, they added that net-zero is necessary, feasible and cost-effective. The report was clear and told the government to deliver a Just Transition for workers and their communities noting that if replicated across the world, and coupled with ambitious near-term reductions in emissions, it would deliver a greater than 50% chance of limiting the temperature increase to 1.5°C. The report was excellent reading, in depth, factual and evidence based; but it was optimistic and opens opportunities for our young people that there is a progressive way forward. Climate change is obviously a global issue and UK emissions constitute only a small proportion of the global total, but every tonne of carbon count and the UK will lead on reduction. As mentioned last year the CWU recognised the problem of disposable single use plastics a long time ago, over 8 million metric tons of plastic are ending up in our oceans every year and there are already 150 million metric tons of plastic there. To put this in perspective it is the equivalent of one garbage truck full of plastic ending up in the ocean every minute of the day. The CWU will continue to work with the TUC and Labour Party to investigate ways of drastically reducing the use of these single use plastics.

It was clear that the major health issue at CWU annual conference was mental welfare, with more people speaking on various aspects than any other issue. We have seen the devastating effects suicide can have on families and our members in the workplace. NW Mental Health Network was formed to raise awareness, reduce stigma and to support and signpost our members. There have been regular meetings of the steering group which has led to us creating signposting documents, quiet rooms in workplaces and support national campaign days.

With cuts to the NHS now hitting home and affecting overburdened staff it remains a fundamental ethos that none of the money that is in the system goes out to private care for profit seekers. Future USA trade deals will seek to undermine and make money from the NHS so it is essential that the model of accountable care is to bring together a wide range of public service organisations united by one goal to improve people's lives and not to make a profit. Some Trusts are well ahead and planning to

prevent the rape of the system, making sure that the focus is on improving outcomes for the people not pound or dollar signs. They can remove barriers that stop organisations working together such as integrating Clinical Commissioning Groups and people's services delivered by elected councils, cementing structures in place before any privatisation and selling off NHS services.

The REACH Regulations (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) is a European Union regulation which has been in place since December 2006. REACH addresses the production and use of chemical substances, and their potential impacts on both workers health and the general environment we live in. The copying and pasting of all such regulations will see over 12 000 EU chemical regulations come into a new UK chemical database. However, those substances that are currently awaiting authorisation will not be covered; so, UK companies cannot use them to do business with the other EU countries after Brexit cannot do any dealing leaving us worse off both in welfare and business.

Redesign - there is far too much to include here and work has been ongoing all year on the way forward for Health, Safety and the Environment within the CWU. We have had regular meeting with the General Sectary at Wimbledon, and all have been productive, thus we would like to thank Dave Ward and Tony Kearns for their input throughout the year. Even though there was scant mention of H, S and E in the original Redesign documentation, across the CWU we do have much in common. During the year the HSE statisticians said that 147 Workers killed in 2018/19 and, "92 members of the public died due to work practices", but there were 2,595 deaths mesothelioma alone. So Redesign – the first document, no lies, we had great reservations over it, lots of holes in it, nothing open to improve health safety and welfare of our members – but then thought it was an opportunity that was being missed to improve lives of our members, not just their working lives.

- Members are members 24/7 not just in work time
- CWU and TU values are essential to peaceful thriving communities
- Community based organising is not new to TUs
- CWU will be leading in our communities using skills that are already there

And that, hopefully, is what we all have in common.

## **Priorities for 2020**

- **North West Region CWU Mental Health Network**

**HOPE** (Helping Our People Excel).



Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. It affects us both in

the workplace and outside of work.

The North West Region believe that All CWU Health & Safety Reps and Mental Health First Aiders must be trained to a level where they understand the Equality act and its interpretation in the workplace and to have an understanding of business risk assessment processes that currently exist, which are designed to protect our members covered under the above act. We must ensure the Duty of Care responsibility (which falls all Employers) to make reasonable adjustments is upheld and we must guarantee all reasonable steps are taken to remove the workplace disadvantage facing an employee with a disability- such as a long-term mental health condition.

It is our aim to build on the magnificent work which has already started and continues to raise awareness, reduce stigma and campaign with the TUC and NW charities to support our members and reps.

- **The effects of Environment change and climate change for workers.**

We have all recently observed climate related increases in our exposure to elevated temperatures, more frequent, severe or longer-lasting extreme events, degraded air quality, and stresses to our mental health and well-being. These 'work related climate change risks' are expected to worsen with continued climate change. Some of these weather-related threats will occur over longer time periods, or at unprecedented times of the year. Some people will be exposed to weather hazards not previously experienced.

In response to climate change we must ensure future modifications to the world of work. We must urge everyone from employers to other trade unions and politicians to mobilise and intensify promoting awareness of the impact climate change already has on health.

We would like to build on the work previously undertaken by Derek Maylor and continue to work with the new Trade Union Clean Air Network and promote the TUCAN charter. The charter promotes best practice case studies and training that unions can use to raise awareness. There is rightly a public outcry about air pollution as a public health emergency. But it is also an occupational health emergency. Having decent work means being able to breathe clean air at work. The reality for most workers is that the air they are exposed to at work and on the way to work is polluted wherever they are working. 36,000 deaths a year are caused by air pollution, according to a government report.





The CWU work and campaign to ensure newly introduced risk assessment processes that are fit for purpose, Environmental changes and technology changes need extra scrutiny, so newly developed risk assessments and measuring systems and new exposure risk limits must be part of our risk reduction plan for protecting our members over the next decade.

As a forum we must look to campaign alongside the TUC, Labour Party and employers to mobilise and intensify promoting awareness of the impact climate change already has on the health of our members and future CWU members.

- **Changing the demographic face of the Health and Safety representatives and building for the future.**

Involving our young workers in occupational safety and health (OSH) is a powerful tool to help strengthen workplace safety culture, getting young workers to buy in to the safety culture of a workplace and thinking about becoming a trade Union Health and Safety Representative.

Young workers are often overrepresented in temporary, precarious work which increases their vulnerability to specific risks before they have reached their physical and learning development. Therefore, it is important that every workplace should be viewed as posing a potential risk to young workers. Across Europe, the European Commission estimates that workers in the 18-24 age group are at least 50 per cent more likely to be injured in the workplace than more experienced workers.

We would like to Issue ALL NW region Young workers pocket H&S guides, which are popular within other young worker community groups as many younger workers are unsure of their rights at work. We will look at organising a joint event with the regional young workers aimed at promoting mental health awareness. Working with the young workers we would like to engage them with health and safety, as we must be looking to build for the future.



