

North West Regional Women's Lead

INTRODUCTION

Hello my name is **Sheila Biggins** I am the North West Women's Regional Lead Officer. I hope to pop these newsletters out every now and then to keep you informed and up to date on what's going on in our region. I have worked as a Postal delivery worker at Bolton West Delivery Office since 2003 and has been a CWU member from the start.

I am both the Equality Officer and Women's Officer for North West Number 1 Branch and have gone on to be more involved in the wider trade union movement and currently sits on the North West Trade Union Congress (NWTUC) Equality Committee.

Email: sheilbiggins.cwuequality@gmail.com



International Workers Memorial Day (IWMD) 28th April



Carl Webb (Regional Secretary), Karen Kendrick (Assistant Secretary) and Dave Kennedy (Regional Chair) invited Navendu Mishra (Labour MP for Stockport) and Labour Councillor Janet Mobbs to unveil a plaque in memory of the CWU members who have sadly lost their lives at work.

IWMD raises awareness about how workers can protect themselves in their workplaces, more than two million workers die as a result of work-related accidents and diseases, approximately 270 million accidents and one worker dies every 15 seconds worldwide.

It is trade unions that fought to protect workers by negotiating to make work safe and to have lobbied for compensation for the families of those who have lost their lives.



Mental Health Matters Workshops



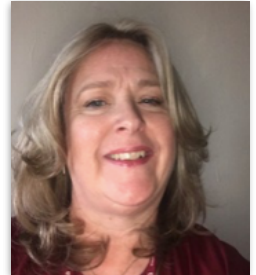
Karen Kendrick has been working with Trade Union Congress (TUC) to develop a series of Mental Health Matters monthly workshops. Themes have included Covid-19 and the Emergency Services, Mental Health and forgotten key workers as well as Suicide Awareness.

These events have been thought provoking and have given an insight

into the different effects of mental health.

These workshops are not recorded because they are classed as safe places, so members can talk openly. The only way to experience and benefit from these events is to register and attend. Karen has written a blog about her own Mental Health-see link below.

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/blogs/mental-health-matters>



Preventing work-related stress workshop 12th May

Mark Holt (NW Health & Safety Lead) Area Safety Rep (ASR) NW Number 1 Branch and founder member of the CWU NW Mental Health Network (MHN) worked with Jamie McGovern (ASR) Greater Mersey Amal Branch also a founder member of the (MHN) to produce and run this workshop. Consisting a slide show, Stress Risk Assessment and the HSE's Talking Toolkit (Guided Conversations) this was an interesting, informative and useful workshop.

Guest speaker Tony Dunbar, also known as the painting postman, is an Operational Postal Grade (OPG) at Speke Delivery Office in Liverpool, he has been taking his art into the workplace with the total blessing of his colleagues, his manager and his union.

Being able to do this and express his thoughts (In Art format) offers a coping mechanism which acts as a type of self-care.

You can watch it here on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiaLVRiWD8&ab_channel=CWUNorthWestRegion





Beverley Kenyon DIP HSWE Nebosh General HSWE says.....

As a Women's Officer, Health & Safety Officer and Representative in Bootle Financial Services Branch, I was aware of the many issues in the workplace. Helping out at the local Walton Constituency Labour Party (CLP), I realised that there were many of the same issues that crossed over like Health, Equality, Mental Health, Food poverty, Environment and Education. So, when the opportunity came up to apply to get on the panel and become a Labour Councillor within Liverpool City Region through the Women's panel. I went straight ahead and filled in the form. Thinking I could use my union knowledge and

experience as well as my local knowledge. There have been a few barriers; family balance and working full time plus my union work, but I would like to thank my husband Stephen for his patience and even the dogs who help in their union coats.

The network within the CWU and the TUC all help as well. Another barrier was Covid having no face-to-face contact, so I had to learn how to use social media to raise a profile using twitter Facebook etc. Once face to face was allowed, I started helping in Walton Vale Community Food Hud and Environmental work, leafleting and forming Walton Community Association Facebook.

Within our Ward we have strong Councillors, many of whom are women and members of the CLP who support me and encourage me to take part in different activities and demonstrations. I have just put my name down to stand as Vice Chair in Warbeck CLP, my local ward.

I am looking forward to becoming a Councillor in the future . It's hard work but enjoyable. I feel that I have been given a great opportunity and I'm looking forward to the challenge



June Pride Month

Pride is an exciting and important event, celebrated all over the world. The word 'Pride' in this sense was first used by Brenda Howard, the organiser of the first LGBT+ Pride March in the wake of the Stonewall riots of 1969, and it's become meaningful to the LGBT+ community ever since. Pride is about encouraging people to speak up proudly.

The CWU promotes a positive agenda around LGBT+ issues, using social media platforms and holding events which are designed to develop awareness on LGBT+ issues in the workplace and wider society.



Telecoms & Financial Services, Capita

CWU protests have taken place outside the former Telefonica O2 site in Radcliffe, one of two centres dealing with the outsourced contact centre services provider's Tesco Mobile contract, with the later addition of work associated Capita's TV Licensing contract.

The CWU believes that scores of employees will be placed 'at risk' under the company's proposals which include:

- Displaced employees being transferred to the company's Preston Brook site – a full 70 mile round trip from Bury for which there are no good public transport links and a notoriously difficult journey by car, especially in peak times. However, there are a number of employees who don't live in Bury, but in locations that mean Preston Brook is viable.
- A 150 headcount reduction on the Capita Tesco Mobile (CTM) account (including managers) even after the work stream has been concentrated on Preston Brook
- 75% of the remaining 431-strong workforce, most of whom are currently working at home, will be expected to return to the office post-Covid pandemic
- Where redeployment opportunities exist to other contracts within the Capita business that allow for homeworking, parity of pay, terms and conditions and role similarity cannot be guaranteed for a small number of redeployment scenarios.

Nadeem Khan (Tesco Mobile rep at Bury) has forcefully represented our members interests in several meetings with management.

Bury Labour Cllr O'Brien insisted "I'm in full support of the proposals put forward by the CWU to retain these jobs in Bury by allowing employees to continue working from home where appropriate and looking for an alternative site in Bury to keep these jobs in our borough. The Council is ready to engage with Capita about how we can help explore these proposals."

Andy Burnham added: "These key workers, who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic helping to keep the country connected, deserve better and I would urge both Tesco Mobile and Capita to work constructively with the local council and the CWU to find a solution that benefits all stakeholders."

CWU NW regional secretary Carl Webb concludes: "Capita's decision to close down this call centre truly beggars belief.

"These workers have built up this brand from the bottom up – and to treat these key workers like this, after their year of bravely keeping the country connected, is astonishing. There won't be any doubt that the CWU will stand in solidarity with its members and will be resolute in supporting a better proposal than what the company are currently offering.



Menopause at Work- Let's talk about it

Coping with menopausal symptoms at work can be tough and some women are, understandably, reluctant or even afraid to talk to their employer about it.

Women now represent nearly a half of the UK labour force, that surely makes menopause mainstream and as important as any other occupational health issue.



Working through the menopause

- Many women aren't prepared for the menopause at work and don't disclose their symptoms to their manager
- The majority of women feel they need further advice and support
- Workplaces & practices are not designed with menopausal women in mind
- Hot flushes, mood swings, fatigue and poor concentration cause significant and embarrassing problems, causing lowered confidence
- Women are often uncomfortable disclosing their symptoms to managers, particularly if they are young or male.
- Most women do not disclose the real reasons for their absence from work, when it's related to the menopause.
- Women feel they need to work extremely hard to overcome their perceived shortcomings due to their menopause, some even considering cutting their hours at work.

Wouldn't it be great to see employers providing...

- Greater awareness among managers of the menopause as a real occupational health issue
- Provision of a culture where women feel comfortable about discussing their symptoms and what impact that has on their working lives
- Options around flexible working hours and working arrangements to help manage symptoms
- Improved access to support – formal or informal
- Options to improve your work environment temperature and ventilation

You might find it helpful to...

- Find out more about menopause in general, talk to your GP
- Talk with a manager/ HR department/ Union Rep you feel comfortable with
- Use technology where it can help you – setting up reminders on your phone
- If you have supportive work colleagues talk about your experiences with them. Humour can help deflect embarrassment and increase your confidence
- Look into mindfulness techniques you can practice at work and home
- Consider lifestyle changes – could you exercise more? Stop smoking or set a revised weight goal?

Remember...

- Employer's have a legal obligations to their employees health and safety
- Menopause at work is covered by certain pieces of legislation to protect employees:
- Under the [Equality Act 2010](#), menopause is largely covered under three protected characteristics: age, sex and disability discrimination.
- The [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#) provides for safe working, which extends to the working conditions when experiencing menopausal symptoms.



27 June - 3 July 2021 is Deafblind Awareness Week

Deafblindness is far more common than many people realise... around 400,000 people are affected by sight and hearing loss in the UK. That's enough to fill Wembley Stadium nearly five times!

It affects everyone differently, some might need to adjust the settings on their TV or turn up the volume on the phone, and others might need assistance dogs, canes and more formal care.

But for anyone affected, everyday activities can be difficult and time consuming. Imagine trying to book a doctor's appointment, meet a friend for coffee, or even make dinner if you can't see or hear very well.

