

TUDA News

January 2008

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Conference and Annual General Meeting of Trade Union Disability Alliance

CALLING NOTICE FOR REGISTRATION

Saturday April 26th, 2008 From 10.30 A.M.

All disabled people welcome. See TUDA website for further information and registration form. Or contact TUDA: PO BOX London WC1N 3XX.

At; NCVO, Regent's Wharf, 8 All Saints Street, London, N1 9RL.

Defend Access to Work: Respond to DWP Consultation NOW!

A little publicized consultation document by the Department of Work and Pension asks whether Access to Work should be withdrawn from the whole public sector! Scandalously the Consultation is only available on the internet:

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/resourcecentre/consultation_papers.asp TUDA will protest this approach which excludes so many disabled people who cannot access the internet. Get access to a computer and respond if you possibly can by 10 March 2008. The Consultation is titled: Improving Disability Equality Services. It also suggests that the amount that employers must contribute to the cost of Access to Work adjustments from the present £300. It also asks a wide range of questions about vital services to enable disabled people to work:

“If you have used the Jobcentre Plus DEA service to help you find or retain suitable employment, what aspects of the service do you like and are there

aspects that you think could be improved?

If you have recent experience of our Access to Work provision, what aspects did you like the most and do you have any suggestions for improving the service?

What can we do to ensure Access to Work is used more effectively to meet

the needs of individuals?

It is our opportunity to tell them what we think, what needs to be done – and then keep pushing until the changes get made.

Background

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions wrote to his Cabinet colleagues on 2 May 2006 to tell them that from October 2006 Jobcentre Plus would not fund Access to Work support required by people working in a government department. There was no prior consultation with disabled people or unions on the likely impact of such a change. Departments, from October 2006, pay for new and ongoing disability adjustments out of their running costs.

This is in line with Recommendation of the ‘Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People’ Report (produced by No 10 Strategy Unit 2005). The recommendation also stated: “DWP to evaluate the likely impact...” and added that “the practical implications of such a change need to be carefully assessed – there must be no negative impact (even if only short-term) on the employment prospects of disabled people”. If the DWP has carried out such an evaluation it has not been made public.

The Life Chances report also suggests that ATW might ‘in due course’ be withdrawn from the whole public sector. This would be an unmitigated disaster for the employment prospects of disabled people.

TUDA News Round Up NAPO subscribes to TUDA Charter: At NAPO AGM, David Quarmby and Desiree Leete Co-Chairs of National Disabled Staff Network presented a motion for NAPO to become a signatory to the TUDA charter. It passed and NAPO became the fourth trade union to subscribe to the TUDA Charter –which sets out a basic

framework for delivering equality to disabled trade union members. BECTU were the first union to adopt the Charter, followed by CWU and UCU.

Come on disabled activists in other trade unions lets see who can become 5th 6th and 7th to adopt the charter. Copies can be found on TUDA website.

South East Region of UNITE donates £700 to TUDA

A huge thanks to them for this money to help TUDA carry out its vital work. We are totally dependent on subscriptions and donations.

DAN Restarts – and needs money!

The Direct Action Network was a groundbreaking network of disabled people from all over the country taking direct action to promote equality. It has been in a lull for the last few years but is now starting up again – and God knows we need it! And it needs cash to get itself going again. TUDA donated £50, which was really appreciated. Come on – get your branch or region to donate. More information from **Haringey Direct Action Network** Nick Saunders 1a Bonnington Square, London SW8 1TE

Communication Workers Union (CWU) Disability and Special Needs Conference

We received an invitation for TUDA to have a stall at this conference back in August. It took less than a blink of an eyelid to send back a response saying yes, we would be delighted to be at the conference. Besides very positive debate on a number of motions there were several guest speakers at the conference, and there was a ballot to choose two motions to go forward to the CWU annual policy conference. It was clear that their disabled members at BT,

the Post Office and other employers face many of the same difficulties faced by disabled workers face across the country, regardless of who the employer is, and what the law says about how disabled employees should not be discriminated against. There were over 100 delegates and visitors at the conference, I think everything about the event supported the fact that the CWU are absolutely serious about ensuring that the issues faced by their disabled members are at the forefront of their campaigning efforts. CWU appears to understand that it is campaigning on the issues and having trained and skilled workplace reps in the workplace that is essential to provide some kind of protection for their members. There was a lot of interest in the stall. The idea of raffling two bottles of Fair Trade wine was a resounding success.

Liverpool Peace & Ecology Festival 2007.

This event, organised by Liverpool Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), was held on Saturday 22nd September 2007. It was held at St. Johns Gardens in the shadow of Liverpool's St George's Hall, a splendid neo-classical architectural treasure in the heart of Liverpool City centre. TUDA was there along with many campaign groups covering a broad spectrum of social and political issues. TUDA was the only disability group represented. It was the first time that TUDA had held a stall at such an event, and was therefore something new in terms of our

campaigning activity. Would it work what kind of response would we encounter?

OK, I'm biased because it was Sherrell's and my idea to have the stall, and we were up early in the morning and they're all day, but I have to say it as a success. We met with many, many people, some disabled, some not, some were trade union members, many others were not, but from virtually everybody that we met the response was positive.



Two aspects of the response were striking. Firstly, there was a group of teenagers out in town on a beautiful sunny afternoon, hanging around in the park, who was so eager to find out about what trade unions could offer them when they shortly enter the world of work. No they weren't threatening, they weren't drunk on cheap booze, and they weren't only interested in pop music, clothes and make-up, they were genuinely eager to know who we were and what we had to say. Some also bought items of our merchandise, Secondly the number of people we encountered who were disabled but had no idea what their rights were was striking. Several told us that they had been told by a doctor that because they were disabled, they were unable work. They were simply unaware that it was their choice. If they felt able to work and were able to find work than yes of-course they can work.

Besides this very positive response we also sold merchandise. I'm sure that this kind of activity, besides regularly having a presence at trade union and disability events, will help us enormously to maintain a high profile. It has to be deemed a success.

Just a thought from the TUDA newsletter editor. Please let Richard Cook know!

findcook@hotmail.com Richard's post address is 141 Vale Road Northfleet, Kent

DA11 8BX. **In an attempt to try to save TUDA money** and speed up the provision of information, if you have e-mail (and we understand not everyone does), would any TUDA members like to have all future newsletters via e-mail? Thanks to those who signed up after reading recent newsletters. NB: Views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of all the trade unions represented on our Executive but reflect the opinion and policies of most of them. **Our website www.tuda.org.uk** also has lots of news and information. Please tell us of any issues you feel we should cover. We encourage people to submit both information and articles for inclusion so get writing if you can. **TUDA Secretary Alan Martin, Membership Secretary Sherrell Martin. Co-Chairs Ju Gosling & Caroline Gooding can be contacted via our box number, BM TUDA, London WC1N 3XX. Email: mail@tuda.org.uk**

**By popular request TUDA Merchandise
'From the Membership Secretary'**

The prices for postage and packaging are available on request.

The address is just before the end of this article.

Tee Shirt	£6.00
Calculator	£2:50
Triangle Highlighter	£1.00
Lapel Pins	£1.00
Yo-Yo	£0.75
Blue Pens	£0.50
Yellow Pens	£0:20
Badges	£0.10
Mugs	£3.00

By Sherrell Martin Membership Secretary

For a number of years TUDA has had a stall at the TUC disability conference in London. This has always been of value to us in TUDA; we meet up with old friends and make new ones. For the past few years we have sold merchandise on the stall. Unfortunately to the fact TUDA is completely dependent on membership payments and affiliations for its income we are unable to give things away such as pens.

2007 has proved to be a good year at conference for us. We gained 10 new members and sold a reasonable amount of stock, it was definitely our best year to date. The TUC as ever did not charge us for the stall and this helped greatly so many thanks to them.

As you enjoy your newsletter please ask yourself the following questions.

- * Is my membership up to date?
- * Have my access requirements changed?
- * Would I like the newsletter via email?
- * Can I get more involved in TUDA?
- * How about attending TUDA conference and AGM next year, 19/04/08, date to be confirmed.

If you want the answer to any of the above do not hesitate contacting me at BM TUDA, London, WC1N 3XX or email me on mail@tuda.org.uk. I look forward to hearing from you.

DISABLED TRADE UNIONISTS: RIGHT TO KNOW

One of the most contentious motions at last year's Disability Conference as BECTU's motion, requiring the TUC Disability Committee to publish

minutes of its meetings. The motion was remitted on the basis that the Committee would report on its work but not publish formal minutes. Nothing has happened as yet. BECTU is likely to re-submit its motion at this conference if this agreement is not acted on.

In the mean time Richard Cook, TUDA member and TUC Disability Committee member reports for TUDA members:

Disability Committee Meeting held on Thursday 20 September 2007 at Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS

Acronyms, shortened terms used Disability Law Review (DLR) Peter = Election of Chair: As Mark Fysh was absent Anita Halpen was moved for the morning session.

TUC Disability Conference 2007 report

We discussed speakers for 2008 TUC Disability Conference: may need to reduce the time even further. We would welcome less outside speakers so we can take a more pedestrian pace, which suits our disability conference. We are still too relaxed at the start and move much quicker at the end. It was felt we could pace conference much better. We must listen and understand the individual needs better and make sure they are met.

Peter (Peter Purton, TUC Disability Equality Officer) said: it will be better next year with more space as the Unite delegation will be one and not two lots of delegates.

Monitoring: Peter said he was pleased with a good return of evaluation forms.

Informal session: I said: Bert Massie was good and was understood by me, but some said they could not understand him.

I said: All Guest Speakers worked well last year in 2007. I thought the Chairs address was extremely good.

Richard Exell introduced health standards in teaching and nursing

The last thing the DRC did to publish this report of the formal investigation. The most important recommendation made was the removal of health requirements of registration in those professions. There is some evidence of direct discrimination against disabled people. Our committee agreed that this must stop.

We discussed the motions from the Disability Conference. On Welfare reform the TUC has emphasised our opposition to coercion and to privatisation. First of all in our submission, secondly in our response which was extremely detailed and probably the most important policy development in this area for some time. The next opportunity to make this point is in the submission in response to the green paper. The green

paper has a slight difference in emphasis from the Froid report. Peter Hain will be taking a draft submission to the executive committee. My intention is to cover matters that are related to the first three motions passed by the disability conference in response to the green paper. There was a lot of media interest in what he said a month or so ago where he seemed to be indicating that privatisation would not be as significant as John Hutton had said. We have just heard the announcement that pathways to work and the hiving off and that is definitely going ahead. We will continue our opposition to that.

We also need to consider the incomes of disabled people who are often in poverty, and push Government to ensure that people actually receive the benefits they are entitled to as this could make a huge difference. We are holding fire on employment and support allowance because at present we don't know what the rates are going to be. I think it's outrageous that parliament passed an act without knowing what the rates would be, the TUC are a little more rational, so we will wait until we do.

Equality duty: We surveyed this year just before conference in May Negotiators are aware of this but will have to see what happens to the duty before we proceed further, that is a major part of our work. I said: I have not had time to read this yet, but I will.

Anita said: the worry is much of the historic material which was on the Disability Rights Commission site will actually be lost. Richard said: he understands the DRC website will stay in place post CEHR but unfortunately it will not be updated?

Motion 8 concerned the mental health bill: Peter said: This bill has now become an act. It covers a wide range of the mental health agenda, some of which are of interest, some more than others do. He proposed that we make this a major project over the coming year with a view to writing an up to date and expert guide on mental health issues. Clearly something we have talked about for a long time. Peter said that he did not have the expertise to write this. After much discussion this was agreed approach Mind.

Motion 13 sickness absence: This of course is another very important subject. It has been raised many times before. The focus was, to tighten up the issue of recommendations, but also to put pressure on government. The recommendations are firstly to unions and secondly to government to separate out sickness and disability leave.

Motion 19 concerned a publication of guidance on the social model: Having a common approach for unions. We will knock up a draft to show the committee, for your approval.

Report of meeting with General Secretary and chairs of all the discriminated committees. I said: This is a cracking new idea.

Sara said: On Union equality reps, we have had good news given the TUC it is now able to employ a full time project officer for a year, giving tutor and reps training and a couple of large unions have done this too. A delegate asked if the disability conference timing could be changed. Sara veal said: I am afraid the answer is simply no because the equality conferences have to slot in to each other to fit into the congress timetable, so I am really sorry. We had this question a couple of years ago and it can't be done.

The chosen motion to go forward to the TUC Conference was on the Single Equality Act; Moved by Richard Cook at Brighton: Richard said he was a bit fed up at first because all my arguments had been used already for a similar TUC motion. So that meant Brighton delegates had to listen to me saying the same thing again from the disability conference, so that upset me? Despite all that it was in fact well received.

Also, I would have been much better speaking in the morning, my access issue, but no one asked me so they did not even know.

Discrimination Law Review

I asked how confident are we they will not dilute public sector duties, because there has been a lot of talk around that. I wonder if the TUC have a better insight into what we could expect. TUC answer: No was the short answer.

Remploy campaign update

We were told the Remploy campaign had been absolutely brilliant. Disability training for union officials. The chair said: He had attended the last course and it was very positive. The TUC was pleased to note that, and Unionlearn are going to run similar courses on the same lines.

Date of next meeting: 17 January 2008

Subject: Threatened cuts to Remploy

The Remploy Consortium of Trades Unions unveiled their plan, sent to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, to secure a future for all 83 Remploy factories and stop the sacking of 2,500 disabled workers. This follows the plan that was submitted by the Remploy management that saw 28 factories shutting and 2,000 disabled workers being sacked. The trade unions consider that the Remploy management plan fails to go far enough in slashing waste and rationalising the business. This failure has the consequence of requiring far too high a growth in public procurement business. Elements in the Remploy Consortium of Trades

Unions plan to remain inside the annual subsidy of £111 million are as follows:

- * Cap spending on Employment Service at £31 million and not £34 million as planned by Remploy management

- * Reduce running and overhead costs by £17 million per annum.

This is achieved by having a single head office instead of three at present. Cutting number of payroll systems from 17 to one, pulling out of loss making activities, reducing the number of middle managers, reworking pension fund liabilities, ending waste and duplication in the £10 million annual spend on marketing, rationalising the IT department and reducing procurement costs and improving working practices.

- *Secure an additional £50 million of profitable public procurement orders out of an available grand total of £132 billion per annum.

Paul Kenny, GMB General Secretary said, "When we started this exercise with management they did not see scope for cost saving. They now admit that they can achieve an average of £10 million a year. We say to the Secretary of State that there is scope to go to £20 million a year. When we started the management did not see that public procurement could save the factories. They now agree that it can. The Trade unions plan envisages the Board running the business in a hands on way and getting rid of layers of expensive and unnecessary management. The business must be

Restructured and we want a new development plan so that Remploy can get into the public procurement business in a serious way as was agreed at the Labour Party Conference 2007. There is massive scope to trim costs by rationalisation, better methods of procurement and improved working practices. There is also a need for a root and branch and very realistic reworking of the pension fund liabilities to bring them in line with the objectives of the business. We see Remploy in Employment Service, in manufacturing and services. Recycling presents a huge business opportunity. Above all we see a new management developing an innovative model for Remploy's future.

We want the Secretary of State to give us a new management that we do not have to drag kicking and screaming to develop a vibrant Remploy for the 21st Century. We always said that if this is about costs we could square the circle. We plan to do this with the Secretary of State

Contact: Phil Davies, GMB National Secretary

TUDA COMMENT Many TUDA members, and many in the disability movement, are divided about REMPLOY seeing it as providing segregated employment. But the key is that disabled people should have the right to choose and NO COMPLULSORY REDUNDANCIES.

Unite protest at the Labour Party written by Richard Cook

Thousands of Unite and other members came out in force for the beginning of the Labour Party Conference in Bournemouth. It was fantastic with the new union united, marching together to send a powerful message to the Government that our members want a well resourced and managed NHS, affordable housing, secure jobs and pensions.

The venue for the start was held in Hasketh Park on grass. I could not hear at first, I did eventually get to the front so I could hear. I also met people from other unions. They shared the Unite aims. That was a truly great thing to see.

Gordon Brown will need the support of the Unite two million members, so let's hope he is listening.

Derek Simpson spoke: He listed all the reasons why we were marching, waving the Unite flags, blowing whistles and blowing horns. He said this is a message that we go out and protest and we will definitely win.

John Crudas

This must all be on the agenda. We have a review going on and within the last year especially around the health service. Overall for the Labour party deputy leader Unite came from nowhere and we did that by organising people. We must see that what we want in the manifesto. Working class ex Labour voters must be encouraged to come back to the Labour Party and they must see our agenda is paramount we can then win the next general election.

Tracy Young a rep who works with disabled children

This year we celebrate 60 years of the NHS. With postcode prescribing, closure of services in favour of PFI. Going into the private sector will wreck the NHS. 23 million pounds is going into the private sector that is taxpayers money, which should be used to improve services. With reorganisation after reorganisation increasing the bureaucracy. When I joined the NHS you had a job for life. We have seen that change so much. We must not see the health of our nation deteriorating. In my own profession we are seeing erosion of our work. We know what we all want, a publicly funded high quality NHS. With any funding going to the NHS not into the fat cat coffers. So join us.

Tony Woodly

This our very first march and rally for our brand new union Unite, and what a great union we are going to be. For all our dissatisfaction with Labour let's not underestimate the difference between disappointment and down right disaster. That is what we would have if we saw our friends the Tories under Cameron get back in. We might be struggling in the polls and struggling at the moment to get labours message across. One thing you can not underestimate. Billions and Billions are spent buying an election. But they can't buy peoples rights or peoples effort especially if we get the right policies. We must tackle exploitation and casualisation of the whole of our country. Labour has got to wake up and understand this. The polls tell you that if the Tories had the health service it would be better and that is unbelievable that any working class person could think that, but they do. Help to get .the message across and halt privatisation within our heath service.

NHS Together rally 3 November 07,

The march was rather fantastic with thousands of people all walking or in my case wheeling along the embankment by the Thames to Trafalgar Square. We had a group of professional people beating drums and they were rather fantastic too. They must have been tired as they worked really hard for all us protesters? I did manage to see a few people I knew but because the crowds were so vast this was a bit difficult.

We listened to hours of videos and speeches.

The protest celebrated 60 years of the NHS.

All trade unionists all heath workers, all patients gathered here, proud to protest and speak about our communities. The TUC brought together chief executives to ambulance workers from the whole of the NHS.

The rally was well attended and it was a really good experience. But what I think is disappointing is this. So many people use the NHS all the time and it is true, people do value it. So why were there not even more people protesting. Perhaps it is that they did not know the protest was happening, so perhaps better more clear information is needed.

FORTHCOMING EVENT SERTUC Transport Industries Network

Saturday 16th February 2008 11am-3pm

Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS

Securing high quality transport choices for disabled workers:
What should the trade union agenda be?

Further information from: **SERTUC, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS 0207 467 1220 dlewis@tuc.org.uk**
www.tuc.org.uk/sertuc

I wish to receive more Information about TUDA: -

Please send post to: Alan Martin at **BM TUDA, London WC1N 3XX ---**

Name _____

Position in Trade Union (if applicable) _____

E mail: _____

Post Address (if applicable) _____

_____ Post
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Preferred format : Email - Audio -----

Normal Print 12 point ----- Large Print size -----

BSL Video----- Braille -----
Membership Fees:

{Individual Disabled Person -----	£7.00-----
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{National Unions with 100,000 members or less	£100.00 ---
{Unions with 100,001 to 500,000 members ---	£150.00 ---
{Unions with over 500,000 members -----	£200.00 ---

NB: We recently raised our subscription rates for national unions in recognition of continued mergers. However, we have held our rates down for smaller unions.

Please make cheques payable to Trade Union Disability Alliance
