

TUDA Magazine September 2015

1) Welcome to this new edition of the Trades Union Disability Alliance (TUDA) newsletter.

2) Introduction to TUDA

TUDA - the Trade Union Disability Alliance - is an organisation of Disabled Trade Union Members. We are a campaigning group with individual members from over two dozen different Trade Unions. TUDA aims to:

- Co-ordinate the perspective of Disabled people in the Trade Union movement;
- Bridge the gap between the Trade Union and Disability movements;
- Work within, and lobby, Trade Unions to ensure they make their own services accessible and relevant to Disabled Members;
- Ensure that Trade Unions support our continuing campaign for full civil rights;
- Promote understanding of disability as an equalities issues, giving talks and training to Trade Unions;
- Work with Disabled people to persuade them of the benefits of Trade Union membership and activity.



All Opinions stated herein are the personal opinions of the authors of each article and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of TUDA unless specifically stated.

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The Annual General Meeting and Conference

Of

THE TRADE UNION DISABILITY ALLIANCE
INVITES YOU TO THIS YEAR'S AGM AND CONFERENCE TO
BE HELD ON SATURDAY 28th NOVEMBER, 2015

FROM 11 AM

AT:

UNITE HOUSE, 128 THEOBALDS ROAD,
HOLBORN, LONDON, WC1X 8TN

This year TUDA will have guest speakers from:

DPAC - Disabled People, Against the Cuts

&



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Reclaiming Our Futures Alliance - ROFA

I would like to attend the AGM/Conference:

Please reserve me _____ place(s).

Name: _____ Trade Union: _____

Address for correspondence:

_____ **Post Code** _____

Contact:  _____  _____

E mail: _____



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I would like you to invoice my Trade Union at:

Contact Name _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

Please send completed registration form together with fee of £25:00 (made payable to TUDA) per delegate for those being sponsored by their unions. We recognize that some members may be unable to secure funding to attend, in which case a minimum rate of £5 is asked for, where possible. If you can afford more than this, it will help to cover our expenses and support others. Conference materials will be handed out on the day.

I would like my conference information in the following format:-

Standard Print (14 point) _____ Large Print (point size) _____

Audio Tape: _____ Braille _____

BSL Video: _____ Email _____



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The venue is wheelchair accessible. Please let us know all your access and dietary requirements. Please tell us if you will be bringing a support worker / personal assistant.

Access & Dietary requirements:

Please let us know details of any access and dietary requirements by Monday 16th November 2015 by email at jm225@btinternet.com

I enclose the registration fee(s) of _____ (Payable to TUDA)

Please Send to: TUDA
C/o Seán McGovern
26 Fiveways Road
London SW9 7LY

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5) TUDA's Website & E-Mail Address

The address of the TUDA website is <http://www.tuda-online.org/>

Please check this site for the latest news regarding TUDA

The official TUDA E-mail address is info@tuda-online.org so if you need to send an E-mail to TUDA this is the address to use.

6) The Independent Living Fund

The Independent Living Fund (ILF) opened in the late 1980s. The fund was set up to finance the social care and support of disabled people assessed to have complex and high support needs. The ILF allowed recipients to live in their own homes rather than in residential care.

The ILF was managed by a non-departmental public body based in Nottingham with a staff of 120. There were around 18,000 recipients of ILF with a budget of around £320 million itself funded by the Department of Work and Pensions; and managed by a board of trustees.

So why was the ILF important to disabled users? Well, while local authority care packages tended to focus on the wellbeing of the service users personal needs, dressing, cooking, shopping, laundry, some domestic work, etc; increasingly, and particularly as austerity bit harder, local authorities began paring back care packages. In the paring back process the areas that were hit first were support for things such as social wellbeing.

As the ILF funded care and support for social needs and wellbeing those in receipt could still participate in social events such as visiting family, volunteering, going out with friends, going on holiday - you know, everyday activities that most people take for granted.

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In short the Independent Living Fund afforded disabled people to engage socially on their own terms. It allowed us to choose when we got up; who assisted us with personal care; and to go where we wanted to go, when we wanted to go there. It gave us an independence so long denied us by restrictive economic and societal barriers.

The coalition government in 2010 closed the ILF door to new comers; and in 2012 announced the closure of the entire fund by 2015. Their argument was that outcomes met by the ILF should be able to be met by Local Authorities.

Yet undeterred by the government's decision ILF users Anne Pridmore, Gabriel Pepper, Stuart Bracking, Paris L'Amour, and John Aspinall challenged the closure decision in the High Court. To the joy of thousands of disabled people and their supporters the court ruled, in November 2013, that the closure decision was unlawful.

However, after much legal toing and froing the government eventually closed down the scheme. As for ex-ILF recipients it is a mixed bag. Some LAs took on the ILF and incorporated it into current care packages, while some LAs reviewed service users and as a result reduced packages.

Though disabled people lost an important battle with closure of the ILF, the war is not over. The ILF campaign, as with the anti-Atos campaign, demonstrates the power of collective action by disabled groups such as Disabled People Against the Cuts and their supporters. The campaign will continue to target both central and local government to allocate sufficient funds for social care.

This article was **submitted by our Secretary Sean McGovern**

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7) ILF poem

A PA may help me
bathe
To toilet and
dress;
But there's more
to living
Than just personal
care.
Through access to
work
I can hold down a
job;
Earn some corn
To satisfy my soul.

And, pay my way.
Thus social care
Maintains the
body;
While access to
work
Supports me in my
job.
But what of life
itself;
Of social
interaction?
Without support,

How do I exercise
my soul?
The ILF bridges
The empty
shadowland
Of social exclusion
Giving us the
sunshine of
freedom.
So, give me bread
To feed my body;
But allow me roses

This poem was submitted by our Secretary Sean McGovern

8) DPAC Comment: DWP Statistics on Claimant Deaths (27/ August/2015)

DWP has at last published the mortality statistics for the ESA group. It will take time to analyse them, but what they show is that the WCA is not fit for purpose. 2500 people have died after being found fit for work. Another 7,200 people died after being placed in the WRAG, the group for disabled people who can do 'some work', another 7540 died waiting to be assessed

But these figures do not tell the whole story. They ignore the suffering of disabled people who survived, being found fit for work but unable to claim JSA because they cannot meet the conditionality of the benefit. The suffering of 3000 disabled people sanctioned every month, and who cannot compensate for their loss of income, because they were found unfit to work, and they are.

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The suffering and the humiliation of disabled people who have to prove their impairment/long term health issues over and over again to DWP staff who don't believe them. The suffering of disabled people being portrayed as scroungers by the media. This suffering cannot be captured by statistics.

Under the last Labour government, the aim was to force 1 million disabled people out of benefits and into work. Almost 10 years later, the aim is the same, while in a meantime a Coalition minister recognised that people on disability benefits were 'sicker' than they thought.

And those in the middle group, who would expect before too long to be mandated to the Work Programme, have proved to be sicker and further from the workplace than we expected. So it will take far more time than we predicted for them to be ready to make a return to work

This has not changed. Some people will never get better and need long term support. To pretend that they can do 'some work' is disingenuous, as no employer is prepared to offer 'some work' to disabled people.

People died because of the welfare reforms, but others suffered and still suffer. Let's not forget any of them

The figures released by the DWP will need to be looked at carefully before any further conclusions can be drawn from them, and we will be doing just that, and will report back when we have done that. You can see the release of data for yourself here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mortality-statistics-esa-ib-and-sda-claimants>

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We saw the above article on the **DPAC website** and we are **grateful to DPAC for granting us prior permission to reproduce it here** for your convenience.

<http://dpac.uk.net/2015/08/dpac-comment-dwp-statistics-on-claimant-deaths/>

9)ROFA Report

This is a Report From the "reclaiming Our Futures Alliance"
Conference, Novotel, Sheffield, 14 July 2015

The ROFA Conference held in Sheffield on 14th July attended by around 100 disabled people and representatives from 36 leading disabled DPOs, including DPAC, Stay Safe East project, Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People, Change, TUC, Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE), Inclusion London

The conference organised by the Reclaiming Our Futures Alliance (ROFA) produced an overwhelming consensus on the need for a new umbrella organisation to represent disabled people and fight for their rights.

ROFA was formed in 2012 by Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC), Inclusion London, Equal Lives, The Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE), People First and Sisters of Frida, and now also includes Shaping Our Lives, Equalities National Council and the TUC Disabled Workers Committee.

Though ROFA does not have any funding it has over the past three years managed to hold a national conference in 2012, compile a UK disabled people's manifesto, and write a shadow report on the UK's

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progress in implementing the UN disability convention, in addition to being involved in high-profile campaigning and direct action protests.

ROFA now feels it is time to expand into a genuinely national network.

If ROFA is successful this could see the demise of the UK Disabled People's Council (UKDPC); an organisation experiencing grave organisational and financial issues.

Mark Harrison, chief executive of Equal Lives (the old Norfolk Coalition of Disabled People) declared that: "UKDPC doesn't exist. It is a dysfunctional, disbanded organisation, so there is not a national organisation of disabled people.

"ROFA has filled that gap since 2012. It is an alliance of DPOs. We want to expand that to draw the rest of the disability movement into the ROFA world."

Going on to say that this would allow ROFA to join international organisations of disabled people, such as the European Network on Independent Living and the European Disability Forum.

Harrison also said it was vital, in a time of government austerity, to build "powerful, strong, sustainable DPOs that can support disabled people in local communities to live independent lives".

He said that non-user-led disability charities and disability businesses would not do that, and nor would companies such as Atos and Capita that "live off the backs of disabled people".

Tara Flood, ALLFIE's director, said the conference had made it clear there was a need for a national, collective, representative organisation of disabled people and their organisations.

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But she warned there would now be a “huge task” to turn campaign and policy priorities suggested by delegates into “both an achievable but inclusive and accessible and doable campaigns action plan.”

Among the issues raised by delegates as possible priorities for ROFA were the importance of human rights in every aspect of disabled people’s lives; challenging the dismantling of the welfare state; the right to a living income; the impact of abuse and violence; the need to build the capacity of DPOs; the need to mainstream disability equality; direct action; the need for good quality evidence; inclusive education; the need to communicate the impact of cuts to the public; access to justice and legal aid; social care and independent living; and cuts to the Access to Work scheme and disabled students’ allowance.

Seán McGovern, TUC General Council Councillor for Disabled People, gave a message of Solidarity from the TUC. He went on to point out the Motion from the TUC Disabled Workers’ Conference going to Congress this year called upon trade unions to:

1. Unite and work closely with the disabled people’s movement to organise campaigning, including direct action;
2. Mobilise support for trade unions campaigning and taking industrial action;
3. Actively encourage disabled people to exercise their existing rights as a proactive way of defending those rights under attack.

Tracey Lazard, chief executive of Inclusion London, said after the conference: “There were huge amounts of energy and goodwill and consensus in the room about what we need to do.

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"There is clear consensus that we want an alliance, we need an alliance. And people want to contribute to it."

She added: "The latest actions around the Independent Living Fund show that we can get things on the agenda and ensure things are impossible to ignore, and we need to build on that. We are determined to fight back."

It is likely that ROFA will change its name, after several delegates expressed concern that it did not yet mention disabled people.

It will now work to develop formal terms of reference and membership, a website and other online tools, an annual campaign action plan, an annual policy and practice plan, and organise an annual conference, set up a national steering group, and raise resources to fund its work.

This article was **submitted by our Secretary Sean McGovern**

10) TUC Disabled Workers Conference 2015

Report from TUC Disabled Workers' Conference 20 & 21st May 2015 for TUDA Newsletter. 11.8.2015 from Berni McCrea (*TUDA Executive Committee*)

TUC DISABLED WORKERS FIGHTING BACK

The TUC disabled workers' conference was held at TUC House on 21 & 22 May, 2015, and was attended by more than 207 delegates from 24 trade unions affiliated to the TUC, 23 observers and visitors. The delegations present were made up of some first-time delegates and more experienced reps.

TUC General Secretary, Frances O'Grady, in her opening address deplored the negative post-election issues facing trade unionists, and in particular the growth in socially divisive rhetoric.



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She thanked Unite's Sean McGovern for his sterling work in chairing the TUC Disabled Workers' Committee and his work on the General Council. She paid tribute to TUC's Sarah Veale who is soon to retire & said 'If you ever want proof of Sarah's red blooded commitment to equality, you should listen to a radio debate she did with the then UKIP MEP Godfrey Bloom'. She then paid tribute to Peter Purton, Equality Officer, who will retire in the spring of 2016 and congratulated Peter on the brilliant contribution he made to the TUC equality team. I recommend that you access Francis's speech in full and her analysis of the Tory election victory

www.tuc.org.uk/equality-issues/disability-issues/disabled-workers'-conference/frances-ogradys-speech-tuc-disabled

Other speakers who contributed were: Leslie Manesseh TUC President, Richard Rieser, UK Disability History Month, & Paula Peters, Disabled People Against the Cuts.

On Friday morning there was an informal plenary session led by a panel made up of Ray Ludford (former Remploy Worker and a member of the Trade Union Disability Alliance (TUDA) Executive Committee), Katherine Wilson (Carers UK) Richard Carling (Life Works Campaigner) & Rory Heap TU & community activist.

Unite's motion on Hidden Disabilities **welcomed the work of the TUC in actively campaigning around awareness of hidden disabilities and called on TUC Disabled Workers Committee to develop a fact sheet on hidden disabilities, hold awareness seminars and reasonable adjustment training and work with trade union Equality Reps to identify best practice employers.**

NASUWT's amendment highlighted the fact that **in too many workplaces "disabilities are hidden by employees who fear that they will face bullying and discrimination"**.

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There was an emergency motion submitted by the TUC Disabled Workers' Committee, on "Disabled People and the New Government" expressing grave concern at the election of a Conservative government and implications for disabled workers and deploring their attack on benefits, services and rights. It was unanimously passed.

Unison's motion for a Disabled People's Manifesto called for **justice, democracy & transport to be more accessible; better health & social care for disabled people and increased support for disabled people in education & employment and a complete programme of disability awareness training.** This motion was passed unanimously and was selected by Conference to go forward to the TUC Conference in September 2015.

PCS moved a motion on Universal Credit (UC). This not only affects disabled citizens but also trade union members in DWP who are the frontline administrators of the scheme. The motion called for the TUC to ensure disabled people have full access to UC, ensure disabled claimants are not penalised further and to oppose the extension of sanctions to working people claiming UC. It was carried unanimously.

Other motions called for improvements in Access to work, Better Access to Sports Events, Impact of Austerity on Disabled People, Impact of Longer Working Hours, Cuts in Transport, SEN reform, Welfare Reform & Universal Credit, Privatization/Outsourcing and the Equality Duty, Mental Health & Reasonable Adjustment and Carers & Mental Health. These motions can be read in full on the TUC website www.tuc.org.uk/equality-issues/disability-issues

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Unite organised a packed lunchtime Fringe Meeting entitled "Disabled People Fighting Back against Austerity" It was chaired by Sean McGovern and addressed by Ellen Clifford, DPAC, Peter Purton TUC & Dave Allan Unite. Peter, during his impassioned speech deploring the actions of the current government against the poor and disabled, said "It is time we stopped speaking to ourselves and get out there and speak to the community ...or we're sunk".

A large number of trade unions affiliated to TUC now have a disability committee/section which meets regularly, contributes to their national body and ensures issues relevant to disabled members are addressed.

This article was submitted by our Membership Secretary Berni McCrea

11) ACCESS TO WORK

Access to Work is a government scheme delivered by the DWP through Jobcentre Plus. The scheme is in place to assist people with disabilities to overcome barriers either in the workplace or getting to the workplace. In order to qualify for Access to Work a person must have a disability or health condition that obstructs their ability to carry out their job or parts of their job - as you can see everything about Access to Work is predicated by the Medical Model of Disability.

The assistance usually takes the form of grants that can be used for the funding of areas such as support workers, IT equipment, furniture, alterations to the working environment and help towards transport costs such a taxis to work. If you need a support worker funding is normally allocated on a three-yearly basis.

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The total number of people helped between April 2007 and December 2014 was 120,430. In 2013/14, funding of £108.0 million was spent on access to work, an increase on each of the previous four years.

While there has been an increase in the numbers in the past year, numbers dropped from 37,270 in 2009-10 to a low of 30,780 in 2011-12 before picking up again 35,560 in 2013-14.

This drop in figures came despite Liz Sayce's "Getting in, staying in and getting on..." report on disability employment in June 2011 (the same report that signed the death warrant for the Remploy factories) stating that:

"Access to Work should be transformed from being "the best kept secret in Government" to being a recognised passport to successful employment, doubling the number of people helped. Government should improve equity of access, use innovation to create efficiencies, remove unnecessary waste and mobilise the power of peer support."

Or even despite the fact that for every £1 spent on Access to Work the Exchequer recoups £1.48. Indeed the only positive to come out of the Sayce report, after she had taken the hatchet to both Remploy factories and Residential Training Colleges, was her support for Access to Work.

Sayce's recommendations to close Remploy and RTCs saved the government over £60 m, £42.5 m and £18 m respectively; and though Sayce did push for greater funding to the scheme the government instead gave an extra £15 m over three years to Access

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to Work. So much for its commitment to helping disabled people into work.

Not content with putting thousands of Remploy workers out of work and short-changing Access to Work this government is making further attacks on disabled workers by putting a cap of £40,800 per annum on an award. This cap will particularly hurt groups such as deaf workers who rely on high quality British Sign Language interpreters.

The interpreters are organised with Unite as the National Union of British Sign Language Interpreters, or NUBSLI, and alongside their deaf clients, with a growing outside support, they are taking the fight to the government. Indeed they would like to invite all interested parties to march with them to 10 Downing Street on Saturday 26th September 2015, follow this link for details:

<http://stopchanges2atw.com/>

This article was **submitted by our Secretary Sean McGovern**

12) Future Direction of TUDA

As you are all aware disabled people are being attacked from all directions. Our benefits and services are being cut, in some cases phased out completely. These cuts are felt across all aspects of our lives from the workplace through to social care.

With this in mind the TUDA Executive would like to ask its membership and affiliates the direction in which it should go in the future. Below you will see a list of disability related issues (it is not exhaustive as the 'Other' choice demonstrates). The Executive would be grateful if each affiliate and member would select three or four different issues. From the returns the Executive will draw up a list

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of the most popular and endeavour to act upon them over its term in office.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Access to Work	
Getting disabled people into work	
Reasonable Adjustments in the Workplace	
The Personal Independent Payment (PIP)	
The use of Capability in Employment Severance	
Introduction of an Employment Quota System for Disabled People	
The Work Capability Assessment (WCA)	
Transport	
Pay Parity for Disabled Employees	
Properly Adapted Housing	
The Ending of Benefit Sanctions on Disabled People	
Impact of Cuts in Public Sector on Disabled People	
Stigmatisation of Disabled People by Politicians and Across the Media	
Disability Hate Crime	
Other (use space below or on a separate sheet of paper to list any disability related issues you feel we should cover)	

We request that you consider and discuss the above questionnaire within your respective unions so that the delegates that will represent your union at our AGM of your preferences because we intend to discuss this matter at this year's TUDA AGM.



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13) How To Join TUDA

If you wish to receive more Information about TUDA you can:

Email: info@tuda-online.org or write to:

TUDA, (C/O) Sean McGovern, 26 Fiveways Road, London, SW9
7LY

TUDA Membership Application Form

Name _____

Contact Number _____

Trade Union _____

Membership Grade: _____

Position (if applicable) _____

E mail: _____

Post Address (if applicable) _____

_____ Post Code _____

Newsletter Preferred Format (Please Tick the Appropriate Box)

By Email [] By Post [] Audio []

Text Print Size: 14 point (standard) [] 11 point (small) []

Large Print, please give size [] _____ Point



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BSL / Video [] Braille []

Please make **cheques** payable to "Trade Union Disability Alliance"
and send to: **TUDA**

C/o Seán McGovern
26 Fiveways Road
London SW9 7LY

14) TUDA Membership Grades & Fees

1. Individual Disabled Person £7.00
 2. Individual Disabled Person (Unwaged) £2.00
 3. Supporting Subscriber £10.00
 4. Union Branch £25.00
 5. Union Region £50.00
 6. National Unions with 100,000 members or less £100.00
 7. Unions with 100,001 to 500,000 members £150.00
 8. Unions with over 500,000 members £200.00
-

14) TUDA News Letter

I do hope that you've enjoyed reading this issue of the TUDA newsletter! I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people who have submitted these articles, without which this newsletter couldn't exist. New submissions from TUDA members are always welcome. You can contact the editor, Ray Spiteri, by E-mail at info@tuda-online.org. Please put "TUDA Newsletter" in the subject line.