

BRANCH LINES

Equalities
edition

UNISON West Sussex Branch newsletter • www.unisonwestsussex.org.uk

Trans Day of Visibility

March 31st saw the marking of 'Trans Day of Visibility'. It is a day when Trans people and allies celebrate Trans lives; a day to honour and embrace diversity and to raise awareness of the challenges still faced by people who identify as Trans.

This edition intends to mark **Trans Day of Visibility** and has dedicated a page to honour and support our colleagues and those we work with who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and Transgender.

Sophie



As a part of marking Trans Day of Visibility, Sophie Moss who works in lifelong services from West Sussex County Council shared her story about growing up and breaking down some of the barriers that still exist around transgendered lives. You can read Sophie's Story at:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/news/sophie-shares-her-story-to-mark-trans-day-of-visibility/>

If you are interested to learn more about how you can support or be supported in the workplace, Stonewall provides a good guide:

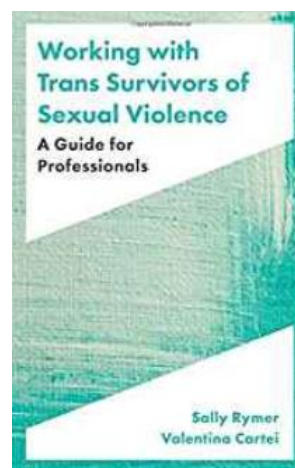
<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/media-centre/media-release/global-guides-for-lgbt-staff>

New book addressing sexual violence

Sally Wrenwood (previously Rymer) co-authored *Working with Trans Survivors of Sexual Violence* with Valentina Cartei. Sally works in the Children and Family Intervention Service at WSCC, which provides specialist assessments and therapeutic interventions to families. Sally is also a UNISON workplace representative.

Sally spoke of how this book grew out of research done with the Brighton Rape Crisis Centre (Survivors Network) about barriers which trans people face in accessing rape crisis services.

Sally's book gives practical advice for professionals working with transgender (including non-binary) people who have survived any form of sexual violence or abuse.



This book gives professionals an understanding of the impact and trauma of sexual violence on trans people, as well as the additional difficulties they face accessing services that have traditionally been designed to serve cisgender clients."

UNISON believes that everyone is entitled to be treated with dignity. The ability to live and work without prejudice is a fundamental right.

Meet Your Equalities Reps



**Heather Andersson -
Disabled members'
officer**

I'm passionate about changing attitudes and injustice, particularly towards people with unseen disabilities. I want to challenge bullying and peoples' beliefs and hopefully overturn them.

I want to make sure employers follow the expectations of the Equalities Act, recognise the protected characteristics of their staff and support them adequately. In my experience, very few managers have ever had any formal training to help them understand the needs of disabled colleagues, so I want that to change. It's one of my priorities.

I've had tremendous support from UNISON. I had no idea of the breadth of support the branch provided to members until I became a committee member.

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**Anusree Biswas
Sasidharan -
Black members' officer**

I am passionate about improving how we experience the workplace, so it is a place where we all treat each other fairly and with respect. For me, equalities work is about dealing with discrimination and its root cause whether this is through addressing the culture of a workplace, actions of managers or colleagues or improving policies, procedures and/or data. When we improve equalities and diversity, we get the best out of our workforce; we acknowledge the skills that we can bring to work and broaden who we can reach.

Black members, like many other members may have concerns about their access to employment, new opportunities, promotion, training and pay. Discrimination can exacerbate the impact of these issues at work. I want to look at our data and capture the experience of members to get a better understanding of our equalities landscape.

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**Paul Woodcock -
LGBT members'
officer**

Being a union member and a gay man have always heightened my awareness of the huge importance of making sure that workplaces are fair, safe and accepting spaces for everyone. We need to make sure that the culture and practice within the organisations that we work in welcome and respect the diversity of the workforce.

UNISON has always played a big part in making sure that employers have a clear understanding of their duties under equalities legislation, and as LGBT members officer I'm keen to make sure that this continues.

LGBT rights have extended enormously in this country in the past few years, but we know that some members still do not feel comfortable being out to all their colleagues and managers. Until this changes they will not be able to be all that they can be at work.

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**Carla Hardy -
Women members'
officer**

Since joining WSCC almost three years ago, I have become more involved with UNISON. Even in that relatively short time I have seen lots of changes for staff and the impact it has had on staff. I feel that being a UNISON rep and officer is one way to have a say in how we are treated by our employer.

I am proud to be able to help members if they require a representative to support them whilst they are going through a disciplinary, sickness or performance issue. Having someone to support you, who is on your side and will listen to you can make a real difference.

I have recently been given the honour of becoming the Women Members' Officer for the Branch. I look forward to hearing women's views on how they are treated at work, any issues that reoccur and any problems that are widespread within the Council that could be highlighted and addressed, with my help, to senior managers and directors.

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