

# Communication Workers Union



## North West Regional Annual Report 2016

**#CWUNW17**

## Regional Secretary's Annual Report 2016

As always, I would like to begin by thanking all the Regional Officers, Branch Officials and our Organisers for all their hard work and support throughout the year. 2016 was another challenging year for the union and the whole of the Labour movement. A special thank you to Angela and Dan. Trust me without them the region would not be the force it is, especially with the limited time and resources.



All of the Regional sub-committees have worked tremendously hard on behalf of Branches and for their members, and I would again ask that all Branches make it a priority in 2017 to not only support the work of these committees, but importantly to ensure that they send delegates to the meetings.

The North West Region was once again at the forefront of promoting and supporting the CWU's industrial and political campaigns. Something we should all be very proud of.

It's important that I say a thank you to all the 'Usual Suspects' who turn out to represent the CWU at rallies and elections... you know who you are!

In 2016 the region actively engaged with numerous campaigns, attending conferences, rallies, organising stalls and publicity material for the:

- Trade Union Bill
- Ofcom & BT Openreach
- Peoples Post Campaign
- Peoples Post Bus Tour
- Post Office Closures and strikes
- Delivering superfast broadband
- Labour Leadership Election (failed coup)
- Keeping Your Post Local
- Postal Workers Day
- CWU & Proud campaign
- Raising Awareness of Unfair Competition - Parliamentary Event
- NW Labour Conference
- NW TUC Conference
- North West CWU Regional Conference
- Women of Today event
- Organise appeal for CWU members effected by the floods
- Refugee Appeal
- Maylor candidates elections
- European Referendum

**In January** - Thanks partly to the Region's intervention, CWU BT members received well deserved recognition for working flat out to get flooded telephone exchanges back up and running in Cumbria to restore service and keep communities connected whilst facing highly testing conditions. During this time CWU Lancs & Cumbria worked closely with management and members to ensure Health and Safety was a priority when coping with the floods.



**CWU North West Appeal for Members affected by the Floods in Lancashire and Cumbria** - Thanks to the National appeal requested by branches and the Region, over 30 members working in Cumbria, Lancashire and Bury received much welcome financial support from their union. Many areas saw unprecedented levels of rain and up to 7 foot flooded areas.

Barry Bowes, Branch Secretary North Lancs & Cumbria who visited the areas affected by the floods said "It is heart-breaking to see the impact of flooding, especially on our members who for some Christmas is virtually cancelled this year".

A big thank you to those CWU Branches and members in the region who responded to the appeal.

**2nd Reading of the Trade Union Bill in the House of Lords** - Hidden in the Trade Union Bill is a clause that is deliberately designed to cut off trade unions' financial support for the Labour Party. The Tories want to be in power for a generation, and are fixing the system to make that happen. They're making it harder to register to vote, and are redrawing the Parliamentary map in a way that benefits them.

This Bill is little more than an attempt to end opposition to the government by clamping down on all of our rights to democratic protest and bankrupting the Labour Party.

Dave Ward, CWU GS

**The CWU welcomed** the Competition and Markets Authority's clearance for BT's takeover of EE, and looks forward to the opportunities it will bring employees and customers.



**An agreement** with the CWU and BT resulted in the company creating 1,000 contact centre jobs in the UK.

**Responding to a report from MPs** on Openreach Andy Kerr, DGS(T) said "We firmly believe that this report is badly researched, ill-judged and has no concept of both the physical and geographical challenges in providing a super/ultra-fast broadband infrastructure. "There is no credible rationale nor logic in breaking up BT. This would cost hundreds of millions of pounds which could and should be invested in broadband".

**2016 National Youth Conference** hosted in the NW at the Mechanics Institute, birthplace of the TUC. The region puts on a charity event for delegates & visitors and raises hundreds of pounds for CWUHA.



**CWU Retired Members** descend on Manchester for the 2016 National Retired Members Conference at the Mechanics Institute in Manchester

**Post Office announce large-scale Crown office franchising...**

**CWU slams “ill-judged” BT break-up demand.....**

**In February** - CWU condemns Post Office's shock announcement that the company plans to close their defined benefit pension scheme. The scheme is in surplus – not in deficit. So not only is this all extremely unfair – there is no financial case for the changes either. The CWU pledges to strongly oppose these unfair and unjustified changes.

## #CWUandPROUD North West Region

[www.cwunorthwest.org](http://www.cwunorthwest.org)

@NWCWU

The CWU in the North West pulled together an ambitious programme of events over Hearts Union Week using the theme 'CWU and Proud'. The region targeted over 25 workplaces with A3 banners delivered direct to workplaces, as well as stickers, polo-shirts and big PVC banners, proclaiming #CWUandProud. Our efforts resulted in a significant level of engagement across all of our constituencies and thousands of members used the #CWUandProud hashtag online, even out trending #HeartsUnion

It is clear that the CWU played a leading role in publicising opposition to the Bill, which has been recognised across the movement. I would like to thank all branches, representatives and members who took part.



**CWU NW Conference** - The North West Region held its 2nd Annual Conference at the Mechanics Institute in Manchester.



All regional sub-committees held their AGM's in the morning followed by



the Regional Committee AGM where the region paid special tribute to Richard Morgan who was stepping down as Regional Chair after over 15 years at the helm. The one-day event drew over 90 CWU reps and activists from across the region to debate key priorities for the year ahead.

After receiving presentations from Dave Ward, CWU GS and Tony Kearns, CWU Senior DGS delegates broke into discussion groups to discuss the question *'What do we need to do to create our future and become a union that is more responsive and closer to its members, can achieve internal and external growth and is fit for purpose for the foreseeable future?'*



Each of the groups decided on three priorities to help the CWU redesign the union....The North West is the first region to introduce a conference style event for its representatives a model that is now been adopted by other regions.

This conference-style event allows a cross section of representatives to see the union in a broader context; to understand how we all fit together and how certain issues affect us all, as well as gaining a better understanding of cross-over between sub-committees, and the opportunity to discuss how we tackle these issues as a united region.

**New Regional Chair elected** - Call centre worker **Dan Lewis**, a member of the Bootle Financial Services branch, was elected chair of the CWU North West Region just five years after joining the union as a new recruit at Santander in Bootle. Then aged 21, Dan quickly decided he wanted to get actively involved in the union and within months he'd become a rep on the call centre floor.



Involvement in CWU Youth quickly followed - in tandem with a burgeoning interest in politics that saw Dan campaigning with his local Labour Party. In May 2015 Dan was elected to Sefton Borough Council (Labour, Blundellsands Ward) and at last autumn's TUC Congress he was awarded the movement's prestigious Youth Award.

Dan has achieved so much in his 26 years - mainly down his boundless energy, passion for social justice and the support of his branch Bootle Financial Services.

One thing's for sure - it's going to be one hell of a ride with Dan at the helm!

## **In March - North West TUC conference held in Liverpool...**

### **In April - CWU & Euro Referendum**

The CWU voted overwhelmingly to back a position of remaining in the European Union for the upcoming referendum.

"We've had enough of the Boris and Dave show. This referendum is about our jobs, our rights at work, our homes, our public services and the prices we pay in the shops. We cannot let it be hijacked by a right-wing agenda"

Dave Ward, CWU GS



Branches in the North West launch ' Keeping Your Post Local' campaign in response to Royal Mail's "dash for cash" by selling off local Delivery offices.

### **In May - CWU call for Post Office board resignations in protest at government cuts as a further 1,100 job losses shows a service in crisis**

CWU announce their support for Steve Rotheram MP to be Labour's candidate for Liverpool Metro Mayor and Tony Lloyd for Greater Manchester Mayoral candidate.



**In June - The UK voted to leave the European Union, shocking the world and revealing a divided country. Britain voted to leave by 52% to 48%, but Scotland and Northern Ireland all had a majority for remain. England and Wales voted out.**

CWU GS Dave Ward "What's crucial now is that the whole labour movement unites in shaping the outcome of what taking back control of our country should really mean".

**National Pensioners Parliament - The Annual Pensioners' Parliament was held in Blackpool 14th to 16th June. The conference opened with a shuffle through the streets from the Tower to the Winter Gardens. This was well attended by branches from the North West and we put on a good show of banners and flags. The main speaker was Richard Burgon MP for Leeds East.**



**In July - The CWU Peoples Post bus tour rolls into Manchester and St Helens.** Local politicians, including Tony Lloyd, Greater Manchester interim Mayor, join Post Office Workers to raise awareness of the crisis facing the Post Office which is pursuing an aggressive closure and privatisation programme. The public and politicians queue up to sign the giant 20 foot postcard on the side of the bus. The postcard carries a message asking the government to “protect the heart of the High Street”.



**CWU serves notice for Post Office strike ballot....**

**CWU respond to Ofcom recommendation on separation of BT and Openreach.**

**Andy Kerr, CWU DGS(T)**, said: “Ofcom’s recommendations on Openreach recognise the practical benefits of retaining the division under BT Group ownership. However we are concerned that the legal separation option being proposed will bring significant costs and uncertainties for the pensions of all BT Group employees and will also mean the biggest ever single TUPE of staff. – at 32,000



**In August... CWU nominates Jeremy Corbyn for Labour leadership.** It's policies like Jeremy's announcement on extending the recognition for trade unions which the CWU believe will make a real difference to the working lives of millions. Jeremy also supports the renationalisation of Royal Mail and the repealing of the anti-trade union laws, besides offering a real alternative to austerity.



**CWU welcomes the High Court decision to allow 130,000 members a vote in the Labour Leadership....**

**CWU rejects Royal Mail pension closure.....**

**Terry Pullinger, CWU DGS(P)** said “It is very concerning that the recent press articles, which have prompted this statement, give an impression of fait accompli. Royal Mail will need to bring far more imagination into these on-going discussions and should be in no doubt that the CWU will use every means at our disposal to encourage the company to think again and secure an agreement that defends our members incomes and dignity in retirement”.

**Members of the CWU in the Post Office** vote overwhelmingly in favour of strike action following a series of announcements of cuts to jobs, services and staff pensions.....

**In September.... Thousands of Post Office** staff walk out on strike against attacks on their job security and pensions and in defence of the Crown network and Supply Chain.

**In October.... National Post Office strike.....**

**Santander become** the first major employer of CWU members to sign the 'Dying to Work Charter' - a TUC initiative that aims to ensure that terminally ill workers are treated with dignity and given the support they need to continue in the workplace for as long as they wish.

**Ready...steady...ACTION MONTH...** The CWU's annual month-long focus on organising and recruitment across the telecoms and financial services sector swings into gear with branches across the region pulling out the stops to make young workers the key focus of this year's hive of activity.

**In November** - The CWU pledge to fight the closure of the Intelligent Processing Solutions Ltd (iPSL) site in Bootle. iPSL has announced that the move to image processing of cheques mean its future working plans assume closing seven of its nine sites including Bootle sometime during 2018.

**Government launch public consultation on the future of the Post Office....**The CWU makes submission and also launches Postcard campaign,



which respond to the consultation. Every branch were asked to collect signatures over the next few weeks. The postcards call for an immediate halt to the cuts and a fundamental change in direction from the Post Office to protect



our members' jobs and what is a cherished public service. The region targets Labour party and other unions conferences/meetings.



At the request of the Regional Secretary, all major unions join the campaign as well as local Labour parties resulting in getting thousands of extra postcards signed. Some branches, including T&FS branches, hold street stalls and target large workplaces. Even one of our service providers, Pellacraft get involved.

Preston City Cllrs fully supporting the CWU "Save Our Post Office" campaign.



## CWU packs a punch at Labour's North West Conference



CWU delegates to the Labour North West Conference in Blackpool worked non-stop lobbying Labour MPs, councillors and the 1,000 rank and file Labour Party members in attendance on all the key issues that the



union is currently addressing.

These include the current Post Office dispute, the union's warnings to Ofcom about the dangers of it pursuing a BT break-up agenda and a raft of other CWU campaigning objectives, including the union's drive for better pay and working conditions for Call Centre Workers.



Other issues highlighted by the CWU included delivery office closures, with delegates also promoting the union's demand for a 'New Deal' for workers as well as various ongoing campaigns including the 'Housing for All' drive and CWU

Humanitarian Aid's current Syrian Refugee appeal.

The CWU's motion, calling for a 'New Deal for Workers', was moved by the Regional Secretary, Carl Webb and seconded by GMB Political Officer, Neil Smith, with Carl poignantly asking Conference: "Have you ever heard anyone on the doorstep or workplace say - 'these employment rights, we have too many of them?'" Carl added:



"Previous Labour governments did not do enough to reverse the cruel anti worker legislation introduced by Thatcher... in fact only Bulgaria and Lithuania has worse workers rights in Europe than the UK". The motion was carried unanimously.



Brian Kenny, CWU Mersey Political Officer seconded a motion on Child Refugees, on behalf of the CWU. During his speech, he paid tribute to CWUHA for the tremendous work it has already done in this area, including organising convoys to refugee camps in Hungary and Turkey. That work is now being augmented by a major initiative to deliver two contained loads of desperately needed aid to Syrian refugees in Lebanon this Christmas.

The CWU's North West No 1 branch political officer, Ian Moran, was successfully elected onto the Conference Arrangements Committee, whilst regional secretary, Carl Webb, and CWU Political Officer, Sandra Walmsley, were elected onto the Regional Board.

**In December-** Monday, December 12th marked the 5th National Postal Workers Day and **Mayoral Labour Candidates** Andy Burnham and Steve Rotherham joined national and local politicians to recognise the hard work that post men and women do year round to keep the postal service running.



The Regional Secretary writes to all North West MPs enclosing a copy of the poster and a draft press release. The response was very pleasing with many MPs getting into the spirit of the campaign.

As part of the day the Regional Secretary and North West No1 branch joined Todmorden Labour party members to protest against the proposed closure of their sorting office.



A big thank you to those branches and workplaces that support the day and their members.

**CWU take further strike action in fight to save the Post Office...**



**Members working at Accrington Delivery Office** take industrial action over bullying... Local Labour MP, Graham Jones joins the picket line in solidarity with our members and berates managers. All postal branches in the NW contribute to a strike fund.



**In 2016** branches in the region once again ran an ambitious training programme with over a hundred reps attending regionally ran courses. Targeting training for new reps, is, has, and will always be, a key priority for Branches and the Region.

**The North West Regional website** - Chris Ingram continues to do a fantastic job looking after the Regional Website, which is a good source of information for our reps and members. The site highlights national and regional campaigns that you will not see on the national website.

Chris is always looking at ways to improve the site, so if you have any ideas, please do not hesitate to contact him at: [kris.ingram@berlin.de](mailto:kris.ingram@berlin.de)

**Social Media** - 2016 saw an upsurge in the use of social media to promote the union's campaigns regionally.

Social media is just one of many communication tools that can be used to communicate with our members, but you still can't beat face to face meetings and having well informed representatives in all of our workplaces.



The **CWU Regional Mini Bus** was kept busy in 2016 - Transporting reps, placards, banners and flags to rallies, marches and festivals. It has also been used to help recruit new members. Unfortunately, the mini-bus is currently off the road and a decision will need to be taken as to whether we scrap it, or seek financial assistance

from branches to have it repaired and spruced-up. At present we are the only region to own a vehicle, though others are following our lead.

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



## **ASSISTANT REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT**

**I MAKE NO APOLOGIES FOR THIS**

**However, you may wish to keep a bucket close by.....**

I think as a region we are very lucky to have Carl as our Regional Secretary, I doubt any one of us could match his enthusiasm.

On behalf of the Region 'THANKS CARL' and I feel we should thank Kay, Carl's wife. As we all know, none of us could do anything if we didn't have support at home. Carl gives up weekends and holidays to attend rallies, meetings and events on our behalf, although we do tease him for his deep pockets and short arms: no one would question his commitment and heart.

I will also thank Dan, on our behalf: he too is here there and everywhere, pushing the CWU agenda wherever he can. Once again thanks to Sonya and Brooke for being so supportive.

The photo I loved this year was one of Jeremy Corbyn's rally in Liverpool. There in the middle of all the people was a lone maroon, CWU flag and who was propping this up? Yes Dan.

He plagues us with his camera, the tagging in on tweets, the Facebook updates: but how other regions must envy us.



But all the subcommittee members, branch secretaries, area reps, ..... every one of you have supported me when I have substituted in Carl's absence. I do not know what BREXIT will bring, what trouble Trump will cause us or if Theresa May will be on her way, but I do know we are a strong unit and often do not give ourselves the credit we deserve as a collective (not in the sense of the Borg collective – star trek there for Carl), but we are a body in the North West, we do have strength and it may be that this coming year we will have to pull on that strength to get us through what lies ahead.

**When I'm  
with you, I'm  
standing  
with an  
army...**

Thanks for a good year.....Good luck for an even better one ahead.

## **CWU NW Region Political Committee Report 2016.**

Without any doubt, the EU referendum campaign and subsequent shock result to leave the EU has dominated the political agenda for the last half of 2016.

The rise of right wing politics is harvesting this result to try to prosper on the fears, media hype and divisive message of the combined right wing parties – Tories, Lib Dems and UKIP/BNP. What will be the agenda for 2017 is anybody's guess, but it is an accepted truth now that the UK will leave the EU, once the Prime Minister can shackle her ragbag of Ministers – Messrs Johnson, Davis and Fox, and get on with the job.

The key messages for the trade union movement are how we influence and challenge them on the ever-changing political map. How do we protect our Employment Rights, should The Great Repeal Act state that the government will evaluate and include employment rights revision as they see them?

How are we going to get community protection from the upsurge of racist behaviours and get our elected Police and Crime Commissioners to commit

to reporting and dealing with these issues? What will happen to our jobs and security of employment?

How does the trade union movement; a key stakeholder in our country, move its agenda to protect the democratic values we currently have?

These questions and their answers will evolve over the coming year and the CWU especially, needs to be ready to move on all political fronts. I am guided by the observations of the Senior Deputy General Secretary, Tony Kearns, who wrote in The Voice magazine recently about the industrial scale of lies and mis-information that appeared as factual during the run up to the EU Referendum.

With these words in mind, that is why the CWU must support the Parliamentary Representative Democracy for the UK. We must remember that, on behalf of the people, Parliament took us into the EU in 1973 and it is rightly for Parliament to take us out. Once the document is signed by the Prime Minister, which triggers the intention of the UK to leave the EU as defined in Article 50 (TEU), then we must scrutinise the terms.

It must be Parliament which holds the ground of final decisions, as the Sovereign power on this matter. It will be for Parliament, with all MPs collectively being responsible, to set out the terms of leaving the EU and how Parliament faces up to the other EU Member States. What the current draft of ministerial incompetents cannot come to terms with is the simple reality that since it is the UK which is demanding to leave the EU, it will be under Article 50 (TEU) how the other 27 Member States decide we do so. All the media talk; the raving right wing media circus show and rambling thoughts of Prime Minister May and the Tories are worthless and delusional if there is further talk of 'We will attain a better deal for the UK than other EU Member States'. The very Member States that May talks about are not stupid; they will have their say on what, when and where the UK fits into the European political landscape – not the isolated Member State which has triggered the Article. We are in complete isolation here.

This will not be pleasant reading for some I am sure. But reality and the truth of the matter must be understood from the outset. With reality and truth not being the two major themes that occurred in any great order during the EU referendum.

### **Employment Rights.**

We cannot allow the Tories a free run at dismantling all the rights which have been bestowed upon us by successive Acts of Parliament. There will have to be political campaigns and focussed attentions on the Tory Government, from now onwards.

If not, then the Tory government majority will set the agenda to sweep those employment rights away under the guise of The Great Repeal Act or other legislation.

It is a fact that the vast majority of employment rights that we hold as common place do have the word Regulation in them, such as the Employment Equality regulations on Religion or Belief, Age or Sexual Orientation. Similarly many protections are formed as part of an EU Directive, where the CWU have been active to get a Directive for Agency Workers operating consistently in UK.

We will have to rely on a Tory government dismantling all of these Regulations and Directives and then replicating them onto UK legislation. Given the rabid opposition from the right wing agenda against any form of employment protections for the workforce, then we can see the sheer scale of the political problems ahead.

### **Services.**

The service sector is one part of our economy which has prospered over the last thirty years. It is a fact that the pressures on the banking and credit services will come under increasing pressure, as the financial institutions decide their futures. Whilst we may see a high profile presence of Banks and Finance Houses in the South East, we must surely keep an eye on the regional banking services which will be pressured to shrink accordingly and relocate to the South East. This will certainly be key to iPSL and Santander members.

It is now becoming clearer that many financial institutions regulated by EU law are now applying for licences to operate financial services in other geographical areas of the EU, as the UK on Article 50 trigger date loses all ability to block such moves. When or if the licences for financial services are granted, then contingency planning by major companies could accelerate the centralisation of Finance Houses to the South East so as to shorten the link to London.

On the plus side, the fact that London holds the hub of global finance for the northern hemisphere means that the existing information and technology infrastructure that exists to provide secure financial transactions of capital and money exchange

Certainly services in the Postal and Telecoms industry will be dragged into these debates also. So it is a collective campaign issue on protected services alone.

### **Harmonised anti-discrimination laws.**

The anti-discrimination laws of the UK are contained in hundreds of Parliamentary Acts, and it must be the roll of our trade union, and sister trade unions, to not only preserve what we hold in terms of anti-discrimination legislation, but amend it for the better in the face of a Tory government which displays the sickly smile of those who see ample opportunity to promote intolerance to race, homophobic aggression and all forms of discrimination in our communities.

The CWU in the North West must meet these political challenges and set them as part of the Agenda for our political committee for 2017/18.

The Tory government, and to the same extent past Labour governments, have assembled a long queue of politicians, where their decisions have easily turned into political failures, It is up to us in the trade unions to offer a critical message of the decisions to come.

### **Priorities for 2017.**

1. To represent, at the appropriate level, all CWU members' issues within the Labour Party in the North West.
2. To promote CWU campaigns and support other trade union campaigns through TULO.
3. Where devolution is signed off, the CWU will play its part in all dimensions of devolution as a key stakeholder.
4. To promote Equality, Fairness and Justice as the moral ground, especially where we encounter UKIP/BNP in politics.
5. To promote CWU candidates and CWU objectives where candidates are selected for election to any office.

Ian Tomlinson  
Regional Political Secretary  
CWU North West.

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

Firstly may I take this opportunity to thank Jacqui and Frank for all support and hard work they have contributed to the NW Equality Committee. Jacqui is standing down as the NW Regional Equality Chair; however, she will still be attending our regional meetings in her capacity as her Equality officer. Frank due to other commitments has called it a day and has stepped down from his Branches Equality Officer's role. I am sure that all would like to wish Frank well.

We have had the elections and Peter Pascall has been elected as the Regional Equality Chair and again I am looking forward to working closely with Peter to drive the Equality Committee forward in 2017. Peter, congratulations on your election from all the Equality Officers in the NW Region.

During 2016 we set in motion that we would be taking "Equality on the Road". However, unforeseen industrial issues resulted in postponement of this initiative. Again, in 2017 we will be looking to establish this initiative as a replacement to a portion of our Regional Quarterly meetings. We gladly received £500 in donations from 3 branches in order to purchase promotional gifts, however, Carl Webb has had a costing and we are still £500.00 short of our target for purchasing these promotional items. Any

branch donations would be gladly received in order that we can present a professional approach to our “Equality on the Road” initiative. Donations can be made directly to Carl Webb who will hold all monies in a central fund for the NW Equality committee.

We had one guest speaker during 2016 who was Laura Taylor MSc, BSc (hons) Senior Solstice Fellow, RGN who gave a presentation on mental health. This was well received by all attendees. I have included all the WEB links in which the presentation revolved in this report. (See below).

<http://socialmarketing.org/archives/generations-xy-z-and-the-others/>  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/7760687/Young-adults-believe-in-the-age-of-entitlement-claim-researchers.html>  
[http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental\\_health/en/](http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/)  
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs220/en/>  
<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/statistics>  
[http://publicationslist.org/alex.j.mitchell.](http://publicationslist.org/alex.j.mitchell)

During our last quarterly meeting the subject of attendance was again raised, and again this was subsequently raised at a 2016 Regional Meeting. Our committee has requested that a “three strike” rule to be invoked for the Branch Equality Officers. The mechanics behind this rule is that any Branch Equality Officer that sends no apology/or substitute attendee is deemed as a non-attendee, and that three non-attendances in that year, then the NW Regional Secretary will request that that Branch Equality Officer to stand down and that a new Officer to be elected.

In 2017 where we have not arranged a “Taking Equality on the Road” event we will be seeking guest speakers. Any recommendation will be gladly received and their details can be directed to either me or Peter.

March is the date tabled by this Government to trigger article 50 and the clock is running to leave the EU. After the referendum, we had noticed a sharp increase in “hate” related crimes and 2017 will again prove to be a challenging year for all. Can I take this opportunity to encourage all our reps, officers to be vigilant and to report and challenge this behaviour. We should not take a step back and let other people challenge this disgraceful behaviour that some individual(s) feel that they have the right to discriminate against any individual. We all need to be on the front foot and where safe challenge this behaviour in the appropriate manner.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to bid 2016 a farewell as this was an “*annus horribilis*”. Many celebrities died (Bowie, George Michael, George Martin, AA Gill, Muhammad Ali, Carla Lane & Victoria Wood to name a few) and the biggest death is the prospect of losing the NHS, our “Rights of Employment”, our “Rights to take Industrial action” and having Equality for all. It is increasing evident that the public feel that Unions are only there to create Industrial trouble and they do nothing to assist in developing and fostering good working relationships and a good acceptable working

environment in organisations. 2017 will need all of us to remind the public that the Unions are not a “few individuals in an Ivory Tower”, but are all the people working together to ensure that a few unscrupulous captains of industry do not exploit the workers unfairly to line their pockets.

## **Key Strategic Initiatives**

- Organise and deliver Equality events during 2017: “Taking Equality on the Road”.
- Riase a further £500 in donations from the NW regional branches for promotional gifts
- Encourage all CWU North West Branches to attend the Equality Quartely Meetings.
- To incorporate embedded technologies into the Equality Literature

## **North West Regional Women’s Committee (NWRWC) Annual Report 2016**

The NWRWC have worked to their plan as below and have welcomed a number of new committee members who have either been elected to or are currently covering the role of Women’s Officer for their Branches. The committee had an interesting and productive year with members attending conferences and events outside the CWU to broaden their knowledge

- **To provide support and advice for Women’s Officers & NW branches in recruiting and developing women activists**

The three Toolkits are available on the CWU northwest website to anyone as required. Paper copies are also available on request. It is intended to update the toolkit as soon as possible and re-distribute it across the Region.

A working party has been put together to organise workplace visits/events at Royal Mail sites in the Warrington area and we are hoping to get our first women’s workplace committee up & running this year at Manchester Mail Centre.



- **Interact with the NW TUC and other unions regarding women's issues**

I have been re-elected as one of the Co-Chairs of the NW Women's TUC Committee again and will hold the position through to 2018. A motion has been put forward to the NWTUC Conference regarding harassment of women in the workplace. Women from other unions took part in our Women of Today event 2016 and will be supporting us again in 2017.

# ♥ UNIONS

- **Organise & run workplace visits and events for NWRWC and members**

We had another highly successful 'Women of Today' event in January 2016 with Guests such as Kelly Morgan, the British Champion boxer and Soledad. Our next 'Women of Today' event in January 2017 is planned for Thursday 26th January at the Mechanics Centre with Francesca Martinez headlining (now passed). The information was circulated via a Letter to Branches (LTB746/16) and directly to all Women's Officers. A report will be given verbally today at the AGM.

My thanks go to all the committee but especially to Gail Nicholas, the committee Vice Chair during 2016 and the Northern and National Financial Services Branch for their invaluable help and support with the 2016 event.



- **Highlight the issues of women by utilising support networks and services available to women in our region**

We continue to signpost our members to the support services available to them both inside the CWU and externally.

We created a strong link with Kathy Devlin from Beacon Counselling



Beacon **Counselling** Trust

Reg: Charity NO 1140011

Trust during 2016 and she will be one of our guest speakers at our 2017 Women of Today Event. A Working Party has been put together to create a campaign during 2017 to raise awareness of issues related to gambling.

I was a guest speaker at the Working Class Movement Library's International Women's Day event on the 5<sup>th</sup> March and highlighted issues around the Trade Union Bill. We also held our April committee meeting at the WCML and followed this with a tour of the library.



- **Share knowledge & experience with other RWCs**

We attended the joint WAC/RWC meetings throughout the year. In May we went to Cardiff and South East Wales Amal branch hosted our meeting.

Women from across the CWU Regions will be attending the 2017 Women of Today event. It is unfortunate that most cannot attend the Eastern Region's first Women's Event in Peterborough on 25<sup>th</sup> January as it is the day before ours. A message wishing them good luck and apologising for not being able to be with them has been sent to the Eastern RWC Secretary and Chair on behalf of our committee.

- **Update Women's section of Regional website at least twice a year**

This will be updated as soon as possible

- **Support CWU National and Regional campaigns e.g. Agency Workers, zero-hours contracts, living wage**

CWU women continue to be actively involved with all the campaigns held regionally and nationally.

- **Raise political awareness with women members in the NW and encourage women activists to become more involved in decisions affecting public life.**

The Women of Today event held in January this year gave members and activists the opportunity to meet a number of female MPs, local councillors and women who are politically active. Committee members also attended the NW Labour Party Conference and spoke to our NW MEPs.

- **Encourage branches to set up an informal Women's Group or committee to help branches with issues primarily affecting women.**

This is ongoing business as usual. We are hoping to have our first set up at Manchester Mail Centre this year.

- **Share expertise and knowledge with CWU branches and Regional Committees.**

The committee continue to support other NW committees and branches as often as they can.

- **Encourage communication regarding industrial issues**

Branch reports given at each NWRWC now include more discussion regarding industrial issues and committee members are encouraged to raise motions locally, regionally and nationally. We held a very successful motion writing workshop during one of our meetings so already have ideas for next year's conferences. Committee members are currently providing their knowledge to help RM improve their uniforms for women.

The committee are looking forward to 2017; encouraging each other, arranging site visits and events as well as giving our support for campaigns and initiatives affecting women inside the CWU and beyond across our region.

Our top 3 priorities from the 2017 Campaign Plan will be:-

- ***Organise and run workplace visits and events for NWRWC and members***
- ***Support CWU National and Regional campaigns e.g. People's Post, Post Office Ltd, Agency Workers, Pay before Assignment (PBA) contracts, zero-hours contracts, living wage and the Trade Union Bill.***
- ***Encourage all Women's Officers to submit motions to CWU National, Industrial and Equality Conferences***

Karen Bosson  
 NWRWC Secretary  
[karen@cwu-mancom.org](mailto:karen@cwu-mancom.org)  
 07894 423892

## **North West Regional Women's Committee (NWRWC)**

### **Campaign plan 2017**

- *To provide support and advice for Women's Officers and Northwest branches in recruiting and developing women activists*
- *Interact with the NW TUC and other unions regarding women's issues*
- *Organise and run workplace visits and events for NWRWC and members*
- *Highlight the issues of women by utilising support networks and services available to women in our region*
- *Share knowledge & experience with other RWCs*
- *Update Women's section of Regional website*
- *Support CWU National and Regional campaigns e.g. People's Post, Post Office Ltd, Agency Workers, Pay before Assignment (PBA) contracts, zero-hours contracts, living wage and the Trade Union Bill.*
- *Raise political awareness with women members in the NW and encourage women activists to become more involved in decisions affecting public life.*
- *Share expertise and knowledge with CWU branches and Regional Committees.*
- *Encourage communication regarding industrial issues*
- *Encourage all Women's Officers to submit motions to CWU National, Industrial and Equality Conferences*

**The plan is ambitious but achievable, sets out our priorities for the future and will be amended as needed**



## **NW Regional Learning and Education Committee**

Once more the excesses of the Christmas season are over, the lights and tinsel put away for another 12 months and winter tightens its grip around us, the dark clouds of winter storms rushing across the Atlantic bringing chaos to our shores.

The last 12 months has seen the world step back into a time we should of left behind, an unelected prime minister in a post Brexit Conservative government, a Labour party whose membership is growing but its MP's were

bent on self destruction, a new president who is the American version of Boris, but with his finger on the nuclear button and the Russian leader looking to expand his influence while trying to hack America, you could be excused for thinking it was the 1980's.

The Government has cut the funding for the FE sector for post 19 education, relying on its flagship apprenticeship scheme and the new business levy to fill in the gaps, we now have the new concept of university apprenticeships with businesses picking up the cost.

Closer to home TU education is dying or dead; the government's withdrawal of funding to colleges for this has left unions with the task of providing alternative education provision, this at a time when cash is tight already and most unions are looking at cost savings. We are already seeing the effects of the reduction with the changes to our current union skills courses, with the courses being reduced from three 5 day courses down to two 5 day courses, with pre course work being done with ULR's.

Across the region we have had success applying for sustainability funding, which has allowed us to install smart boards in branch offices and mail centres, this will enable us to facilitate regional union courses and provide us with a level of future proofing.



*Reps waiting for guided tour of museum*

We had an invite from the NE Learning Committee to attend an event they were holding in Hartlepool at the maritime museum, a great example of the community education that is available for our members to access in their own areas. Three of us from the NW attended the event allowing us to meet fellow ULR's and share best practice and ideas, in July this year the NW committee will be holding its own event in Cumbria with an open invite going out to the NE Learning Committee.

The NW committee have purchased a small number of promotional goods that we can use when holding learning /dissemination events, we are also in the process of producing a number of flyers which we will use to promote learning this year. The first one has been printed promoting Mental Health and Understanding Dementia courses with Future Learn and Alison, subsequent flyers will be promoting Digital Photography / Languages and then using fitness trackers which we intend to purchase in conjunction with Health flyers, to look at a inter site challenge across the region to collectively walk a number of distances.

Regionally we have had a reasonable year, but the next six months will see big changes in the way we educate representatives and the colleges provide education for our members. Despite the government's best attempts at

destroying Trade Union Education, I believe that if we do what we do best Educate, Agitate and Organise we will continue to provide meaningful trade union education for our representatives.

Duncan Healey  
NW RLEC Secretary

## **NW Regional Retired Members' Council 2015 Report**

### **Retired Members Council**

The Council continues to be well attended and met 4 times during 2015. We go into the New Year with two new officers. Des Carney of NW No1 Branch takes over from Doreen Watson who resigned as Chair in December after many years service to the Council. I would like to place on record the thanks, not only of myself personally but of the whole of the Council for the contributions Doreen has made. Allan Trotter has also stood aside as Assistant Secretary. His duties will be taken over by Phil Duffy from Greater Mersey & SW Lancs Branch. Again my thanks and those of the Council are well deserved by Allan who never failed to produce succinct and accurate minutes of our meetings. Allan will continue to serve as a member of the RMAC.

The revised Branch Model Constitution caused much disquiet when LTB 664/16 was published in November. It wasn't so much the inclusion of Rule 6.4.8 into a new paragraph 4.4.6 that caused the problem as the additional note which the NEC deemed necessary. The note prevents Retired Members from both standing and voting for the Branch Committee. Motions have been submitted to the Retired Members Conference and others will be submitted to General Conference. Subsequently LTB 723/16 was published early in December and went some way to defuse the issue. Here is an extract. *"In due course it will now be the intention of the NEC to give the whole subject of retired members voting rights and their role within the union further consideration. The intention will be to bring forward an appropriate set of rule changes before annual conference to ensure a consistent position is adopted across the union."*

Unionline now offers help in setting up Lasting Powers of Attorney for members and their families. There are two types of LPA - Property and financial affairs; Health and Welfare. If you wish to do either of these individually our charges are £175 + VAT. If you require both of them the total is £300 + VAT. Please note that these prices only cover Unionline's professional fees and do not cover court fees, which are currently £110 per LPA.

The most significant event of the year on the pension front was the introduction of the New State Pension. Hailed as simple and single tier it is anything but. It will divide pensioners into two groups with increases unfairly varying between the new pension and the old. Nevertheless those on

the New Pension will be worse of over time than they would have been on the old one.

The loss of the Referendum, from a retainer's point of view, throws up many uncertainties for pensioners. How Brexit affects the prosperity of the UK will have implications for pensioner issues such as NHS spending, VAT on fuel, triple lock for pensions, Human Rights Act protection, UK pensioners living in the EU could face loss of income and loss of access to social services.

### **General Conference**

Conference either carried or the NEC accepted several motions of interest to Retired Members on wide ranging subjects such as the Pensions Triple Lock; recruitment of retired members; support for remaining in the EU; the Human Rights Act; cuts to Local Authority spending; support for Jeremy Corbyn; prostate cancer and social care.

Once again there was a very lively Retired Members' Fringe meeting chaired by Allan Trotter. Tony Kearns spoke about various aspects of fairness in society and the responsibility of the state to care for the weak and vulnerable. The Tory's are failing in this preferring to look after millionaires and global companies whilst moving benefits from disabled people all in the dogmatic drive for austerity. NPC National Officer, Neil Duncan Jordan, was guest speaker and addressed many issues that affect both young and old particularly the wedge that continues to be driven between the generations Neil said it is being driven by powerful right wing think tanks, Tory dogma and the right wing media.

### **RMAC**

There was concern that the RMAC did not meet after the Retired Members' Conference in January until the end of November. The SDGS, Tony Kearns has been made aware that this is unacceptable. At that meeting delegates pursued the progress of General Conference motions, the timing and distribution of The Link, the forthcoming NPC Biennial Conference, the RM Conference 2017 and the revised Branch Model Constitution.

By the time you read this the RM Conference will have taken place here in Manchester. Social Care, housing, NHS A & E services, the triple lock on state pensions, support for a protest march in London on NHS funding, retired members benefits and the new branch model constitution are all subject for discussion.

### **National Pensioners' Convention**

The NPC again organise a successful Pensioners Parliament in Blackpool which was magnificently supported by NW Branches. An array of guest speakers and multiple sessions took place over the three days which I have reported fully earlier. Space does not permit me to repeat myself.

In October Dot Gibson and Neil Duncan-Jordan met with the Pensions Minister, Richard Harrington MP. Pension indexation, Brexit and frozen pensions, universal benefits, state pension age and intergenerational fairness all came under discussion. It was more productive than meetings with the previous minister, Baroness Res Altmann and it was agreed to meet again.

The Annual Lobby of Parliament took place early in November when about 200 pensioners were addressed by John McDonnell MP, Shadow Chancellor; Ian Blackford MP, SNP Pensions Spokesman; Kelvin Hopkin MP, NPC Parliamentary Group Convener and Dot Gibson, NPC General Secretary.

The NPC's analysis of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement makes grim reading. He forewarned of the triple lock coming under scrutiny prior to 2020, said nothing about Pension Credit, transferred the cost of Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance to Local Authorities after 2019, benefit spending will be capped at £126bn by 2020/21. The biggest omission from the statement was on Social Care so there will be no increased funding from central government. The NPC continues to campaign strongly on pensioner issues and is fully supported by the CWU

**Dates:**

It's Our NHS Demo 4th March London  
Annual Conferences 23rd to 27th April Bournemouth  
Pensioners Parliament 6th to 8th June Blackpool

**Graham Wilson**  
**NW Retired Members' Secretary**

## **NW Health and Safety Forum 2016 Annual Report**

Last year the Forum met according to the regional calendar but attendance has dropped significantly. We did not have any attendees from Head Office at the Forum but usually received a written report, much of it dated by several months. Last year we committed to taking the meetings around the NW and that will continue, we have also attended other Forums to observe best practice.

Apart from sharing industrial issues that may have an effect across the membership the Forum discussed European Health and Safety week, environmental concerns, violence to staff and high risk areas, the continued growth in a lack of consultation on H & S matters, H & S structures across all our members businesses, HSE statistical data and so on.

The Forum took part in consultations on sentencing guidelines and we have seen punishments for crimes getting more suitable with considerable financial and custodial penalties being handed out. Key points are;

- Work related violence is covered by the Health and Safety and Work Act 1974
- The new guidelines move to risk based rather than outcome based sentencing
- Lower threshold for imprisonment
- A closer relationship between the level of fines and an organisation's ability to pay
- Introduction of a culpability scale

We have mentioned the increasing fines previously and one of the latest prosecutions for a health and safety crime saw a building merchants getting fined £2m after a customer was killed in Milton Keynes. The company pleaded guilty but the Judges said it was an accident waiting to happen. Those who wish to trivialise health and safety should consider the devastated family and friends involved in this preventable death. The Sentencing Guidelines will continue to highlight that responsibility cannot be passed down to workers. Decisions and ethos of management and boardrooms cause preventable incidents and where workers get killed, injured or made ill those responsible must be brought to justice.

The last report by Amnesty International into the working conditions on Qatar's World Cup projects still contains lists of abuses and appalling conditions being suffered. Awful living conditions, the confiscation of passports, illegal recruitment fees all affected many who were supposed to given protection following previous exposures. Restrictive **kafala** laws trap workers including those who tried to return to Nepal following the earthquakes last year. So much for the "new" transparent FIFA and President Gianni Infantino; it's their tournament and it's their problem - FIFA has full responsibility to make sure that the 2022 World Cup is not built on the abuse of workers.

The interim report in to the Shoreham Airshow crash highlighted that there was not a suitable risk assessment. The RA did not consider the hazards posed by each of the different aircraft at the show nor who would be exposed to them. This prevented proper controls and ownership being put in to place. RAs are a valuable tool in safety but only if done correctly and used to minimise danger to workers and in this case the public. In the workplace they should be available at the point of need and not some weighty volumes quoting masses of legislation then stuck on an office shelf gathering dust, only coming out to accuse a worker when there has been an incident.

We have to look at the way we interface with other unions and bodies such as the HSE, both formally and informally. For example there are meetings held with the HSE and the CWU that are almost secret with us never getting a report back from nor being able to get anything on the agenda. Locally we meet with other safety representatives in the NW, organised by Greater Manchester Hazards Centre, these meetings are increasing useful and we have requested that they are more frequent even if less formal.

We still have concerns in the direction of the HSE when there are repeated quotes in the media that they should explore options for further commercialisation. Also the running down of the HSE was an issue raised with Head Office evidenced by the Board meeting schedule for 2016. There were nine Board meetings in 2013, four scheduled 2006 one of which was cancelled at short notice. There are four scheduled for 2017.

There was an event at the Imperial War Museum at the end of November when stakeholders met under the "Help Great Britain Work Well" banner. Martin Temple (HSE Chair), Richard Judge (HSE's Chief Executive) and Penny Mordaunt MP (Minister of State for Disabled People, Health & Work) were all in attendance and available to speak to and raise concerns. The CWU were represented by Dave Joyce and I and we invited Martin to CWU Annual Conference next April. The HSE Board meeting due to be held at Rose Court in London will be one of the few held this year. The major agenda item is The Ionising Radiations Regulations 2017 and the Branch will be involved in the consultation when it ratified by the Board and published. The Directive, which has to be implemented by 6 February 2018, brings together five previous directives and a Commission recommendation. However, disappointing is the Board agenda is the schedule for next year's open Board meetings has been reduced to four. TUC lobbying reset the agenda for the HSE Board and the CWU will continue to involve itself at all such opportunities.

The Control of Electromagnetic Fields at Work Regulations (CEMFAW) 2016 came in to force recently it will look at different frequencies that affect workers causing sensory and health effects and we will consider any issues in BT which may be result from the continuous new equipment in the different frequency ranges that are introduced. Intermediate frequencies between 100kHz and 10MHz can have both thermal and non-thermal effects on the body and also to consider are workers with implanted devices like pacemakers or defibrillators. The concern is not that one piece of kit is unsafe, we are sure it would not pass development – but that there are many different types of kit within the same vicinity and cumulative effects may be unsafe in the longer term.

The Forum had commented previously on the latest driving sentencing consultation and will do again. Driving offences shatter families and have devastating consequences for victims and the term "careless driving" should be binned as it nowhere near describes the offence, callous would be more in line. There is no opportunity to be careless when behind the wheel; a driver is not taking a photograph. Also we'd suggest that the seriousness of injury should not be a major factor but that the seriousness of the offence should be – the offence is the same whatever the result of that breach of legal duty. Postal workers and BT engineers must not be tempted to answer mobiles or respond when driving. If a vehicle is being driven there is no excuse for using a mobile phone for email, text or telephony. None.

CWU Head Office agreed with a fundamental change to national meetings with BT and CWU representation. There was a meeting in Birmingham over the 14/15 June with a CWU representative from each region and someone from every line of business, pan-BT. That was Openreach, TSO, BTFS, BT Fleet, BT Supply Chain, BT Estates, Contracts Management, BT Global Services, BT Business, BT Wholesale and BT Consumer, also EE which is now a BT fully owned subsidiary as is Manx Telecom. When you think that there are several parts to Openreach alone to be represented, then all others like TSO need a senior decision taking manager there plus his/her safety adviser's attendance will soon add up. Head Office is adamant that the regions (the NW) can only send one representative. For many years the NW has sent the best person for that LoB to a national safety meeting. These were to be quarterly meetings, in January 2017 Head Office said that there would be no further meetings with BT this financial year. Meanwhile in the NW we organised an all LoBs Health, Safety and Environment meeting in October at Blackburn TEC which went surprisingly well, the next meeting is February.

The Forum has discussed the internationally-agreed ISO 45001 which should have been out in 2016 but are now due in June 2017 with the BTs different lines of business. This aims to prevent injury or ill health by proactively improving occupational health and safety performance and businesses will be audited on both their leadership and worker involvement. As IOSH point out, senior management set the tone for the rest of an organisation and therefore if they are open and being seen to doing the right things then the rest of the workforce will follow.

Some time ago the Forum voted on five priority issues and they have not changed, namely;

- The legal right to stop the job if a USR considers there to be clear and imminent danger without retribution.
- A positive duty on Directors to make them accountable for health and safety in their organisations and hold them to account.
- A legal duty for employers to respond to safety issues raised by USRs - at the moment they do not have to respond.
- Free legal representation for families of those killed by work during investigation and inquest - they are victims of crime.
- The promotion of the business case for healthier workplaces and healthier workforces - should be easier to get a positive response when prove good health is good business.

As mentioned, the Forum is for the NW and we will continue to move it around the NW. We will also use our own in house expertise from within the CWU, we have experts, who do work in the community that we can use.

Dangerous Dogs - Jamie McGovern [CWU ASR Greater Mersey Amal] is continuing his excellent work with RM, Merseyside Police and Liverpool University on a '**5 Step Avoid**' initiative which was recently successfully

trialled by Royal Mail in Merseyside. Below is tailored to BT speak showing it can be used for the wider CWU membership.

- **Avoid** – avoid interacting with all dogs, a dog only becomes ‘dangerous’ after it has attacked someone. Do not pet any dog, do not give treats it creates unnecessary risks. If you cannot safely access the property follow BT guidance and inform control/manager.
- **Value yourself** – it really could happen to you!! 3000 postal workers are bitten every year, 8 every day. Most people are bitten by a dog they already know. Do not fall into the trap of thinking that ‘dogs like me’ or ‘I will be okay’. Your health and wellbeing is more important than any need to come into contact with a dog.
- **Observe** – stay observant and look for any signs that a dog is present or loose on a property. Make a noise if necessary before you risk entry.
- **Inform** – inform others about the potential risk to avoid them being bitten, use the AIRG or Near Miss procedure but report it, do not ignore it. Report all relevant information, including new dogs to staff, managers and police if need be. It is necessary to keep everyone safe.
- **Defend** – if required, defend against a dog bite by using your equipment, such as tool bag, to create a barrier between you and the dog. Most bites occur on the limbs, so wearing long trousers and sleeves can help protect from serious injury.

RMG ASRs continue meet on the last Friday of each month at North Lancs & Cumbria's Branch office (75 Garstang Road, Preston) and the BT Health and Safety Coord also meets monthly at variable venues depending on issues. The Coord website [[www.unionsafety.eu](http://www.unionsafety.eu)] continues to be well “hit” from around the world particularly USA and Australia, promoting the CWU in general and the NW particularly.

The Forum had planned a safety seminar for all CWU Safety Reps on the 13<sup>th</sup>.May but have had to cancel it. We've had problems with getting speakers to support Afzal Khan MEP and we thought it unfair to ask him to speak for two or three hours. Afzal had kindly agreed to address the Forum specifically on the EU and effects on workplace health and safety as well as the [then] forthcoming EU 'in/out' referendum. We had timed it intentionally, after the locals and during the referendum campaign, but the latter may have been an issue and this may have presented problems in getting speakers who were suitable to support Afzal and relevant to the CWU position which was reaffirmed at conference.

Two thousand and seventeen will bring workplace health and safety challenges like any other year, the continued advancement of driverless vehicles will accelerate (I thought that was good) with a possible Formula E car race highlighting the progress over the last twelve months. It seems unions in UK and further afield may not be looking far enough into the ramifications for workers and society to ensure that this technology is used to benefit workers and not abuse them or their working conditions. Further

technological development of internet and the Over The Top platform will bring such vehicles sooner rather than later and the initial safety concerns raise an interesting paradox whereby if a driver has an incident he/she learns from it but if an autonomous vehicle has an incident all the other vehicles it is connected to learn the lesson and therefore the roads become safer.

It seems to be taken that the workplace induced ill-health costs businesses and the country millions of pounds every year so we will see health taken more seriously and companies eventually acting proactively. We don't care what the driver is if it makes workplaces healthier for the short and longer terms.

One of the biggest political events in the year will be the triggering of Brexit and we need to front up issues head on to prevent a race to the bottom in working conditions. We have seen continual attacks on trade unions throughout the EU but none have faced more than unions in the UK; highlighted by the sometimes near hysterical rants by the popular press against unions who have taken industrial action in the latter part of last year. The drive by the government will be for a cheap labour market, the cheapest in the northern hemisphere. An economy largely driven by SMEs where there has traditionally been a very low union density, we have to address this and offer services and value to these individuals, such as advice and support on health and safety issues. We will never return to 'traditional' working class working in large factories and have to offer value to workers on fixed-term or part-time contracts, we need a clear vision of representation in the new workplaces and the communities where we live. It has not been as important for a worker to be in a trade union for many years as it is today. Whilst we wouldn't even consider that the death of a British worker is more

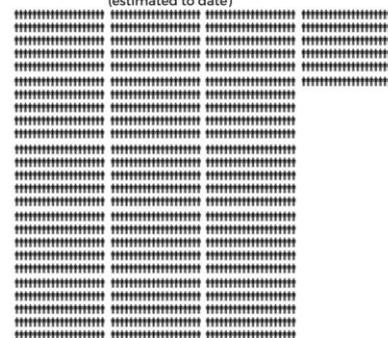
important than all the others who have died working on a World Cup stadium in Qatar, the working conditions again come under criticism. The worker was at the stadium in Khalifa when he fell with a quote from the construction firm

## World Cup Laborer deaths

South Africa, 2010: #  
 Brazil, 2014: #  
 Russia, 2018: #  
 (to date)



### Qatar 2022: (estimated to date)



Sources: Al Jazeera, The Guardian, PlayFair Qatar

saying that a lever hoist supporting the platform failed “for unknown reasons”. Amnesty International said it's the second (reported) death in the workplace at a Qatar stadium in the last three months. FIFA are more concerned with the politics of the World Cup than the lives of the people working on the various building projects. The President of FIFA Gianni Infantino should be investigating what is going on and preventing a single further serious injury to a worker.

The appalling Government playing politics with workers health was highlighted when last month a man died on his way home from a Jobcentre appointment only a few months after being declared 'fit to work'. Despite complaining about long-term health problems, including breathing difficulties, his Employment and Support Allowance had been cut following a work capability assessment which found he was fit to work.

It was interesting to see that workplace inspections are in crisis not just in this country but across the whole of Europe. With very few national exceptions inspectors have been reduced while inspectors have been assigned more extensive duties note the European Trade Union Institute in their recent report. Despite the emergence of new risks such as nanotechnologies, psychosocial risks and so on requiring extra resources the amount of work being put on to inspectors is bordering on the reckless. Society needs strong inspection and prosecution regime but there is a lack of political support for HSE inspectors and largely their only friends are the workers and the unions.

Many of our members work from Mobile Elevated Work Platforms (MEWPs) and they will have seen the recent prosecution of a plant hire company director who was jailed for two years last month following a fatality to one of his workers caused by a substandard repair and a failure to have a systematic examination routine of the MEWP. Responsibility starts at the top and when there is a safety failure so does the guilt.

Thanks to Tony Salt for his work over the year and to all who participate in the Forum meetings. We like to keep it relatively informal so everyone can have a say and the attendances and contributions are varied and wide ranging.

Derek Maylor  
Regional H&S Forum Chair

## **Youth Committee Annual Report 2015**

2016 was a successful start from the beginning as we held youth conference in January 2017 at Manchester mechanics. We had a great turnout with new delegates getting up and speaking at the conference. 2017 Youth Conference is also being held in Manchester on January 21<sup>st</sup> which is exciting and hopefully will be as successful as 2016s conference.

Within the North West we also held a recruitment day at Warrington mail centre to recruit a youth officer and to also engage with the youth who work there to gain membership. We couldn't have done this without the help of Dave Taylor. He helped us organise time with the business



to allow members and non-members under the age of 30 to come and speak to us.

We managed to get all non-members signed up who attended which was a great success. I know this can be a successful way to get a recruitment drive as we do this once a quarter in our branch in Bootle and it always attracts new members and keeps existing members involved and active as they can see the union being active in the work place.

We also managed to increase our attendance for our quarterly meetings for the region our last meeting we had an attendance of 8 people which was great as previously we had an attendance of around 3 youth officers.

In 2017 we hope to continue maintaining a high number of youth officers attending so we can meet our key objectives as we will have more people to help.

Also I would like to congratulate our new regional youth officer for the North West Elli Long. I believe with a new Regional Youth Officer it will bring new ideas to the table and will continue to keep the North West Youth strong and active.

Our AGM is being held in February so we will discuss our key objectives for 2017 and will report back to the region in our next quarterly meeting.

## **North West Postal Annual Organising Report**

### Organising Strategy

The agreed organising strategy for the Postal Department in 2016 has continued to focus on growing the workplace committee structure in Delivery Offices, where the onsite Representative/ Branches have requested assistance in setting them up.

At a local level I have also been working with the North West North Wales Divisional Reps/ Committee in order to link the organising strategy more closely to the industrial strategy, and to identify areas where we can work together in order to grow the union. Our focus for this year primarily centred upon new starters and stopped members. We agreed a Divisional policy regarding Welcome to Royal Mail (WTRM) induction schools to ensure that we were able to make the best use of this important facility. However, this was superseded by the National policy, which came out as part of the strategy to tackle declining membership in the Postal constituency.

### Royal Mail Inductions

The Organising Department has devised a new, more robust structure, to ensure that Branches receive advance notification of all inductions taking place and that those non-members who do not join up on the day are followed up in the workplace.

We have developed a one day training workshop to support our nominated Induction Representatives. The workshop has been designed to standardise our approach to inductions, as well as providing essential training to enable our Reps to speak confidently to new entrants about the benefits of joining the CWU. We have received positive feedback from those who attended the training last year, and therefore, it is our intention to continue to roll this out again this year.

### Project 20

This Project has been designed to tackle non-membership in our larger offices. It is part of the Postal Departments wider strategy to develop recruitment projects to strengthen our workplace organisation and increase membership density. The LTB has now gone out to all Postal Branches, identifying target offices and providing a template for reporting back on workplace activity. In conjunction with the Branches, I have already started the processing of mapping out the majority of these workplaces, so that we can hit the ground running in spring; as the first report is due in March 2017.

On a positive note, the non-membership figure in Royal Mail has now dropped below the 20,000 figure.

### Akinika TV Licensing

Akinika is a sister company of Capita. We initially launched this campaign in 2015, as they represented the non-recognised arm of TVL. During this period we have built a strong and steady membership base and developed a number of contacts on site, who have acted on the CWU's behalf in an informal capacity.

However, as previously reported, we had been anticipating some structural changes in terms of how the business operates, and as a result, the headcount in Preston has reduced dramatically in size in the last twelve months. The company now employs all new TVL Cash agents on a Capita contract at the Darwen site. While this is a positive move for new starters; as it means they are part of the CWU recognition agreement and therefore receive better terms & conditions, the lack of job security for our members in Preston and the company's inaction in confirming the future of the site has caused much stress and anxiety. We have already lodged a collective grievance, which has been signed by over half of the workforce, and the National Officer will be raising this matter too.

### Regional Initiatives

I have continued to work closely with the Women's Committee to look at the issue of proportionality across the Postal sector within the North West. I have also carried out a visit to Warrington Delivery Office with the Youth Committee. This visit, along with the previous visit to Warrington DO the year before with the Women's Committee, both proved to be very



successful, and as a result, I will be looking to carry out more workplace visits in the coming year. Therefore, if any other committees are interested in doing likewise, please can you get in touch so we can discuss in more detail.

I have also worked closely with the Regional Secretary on a number of national campaigning initiatives, including the Crown Closures Postcard Campaign, and I will continue to do so with the Pillars of Security.

#### Next Steps

I will be contacting all Branches who are part of the first tranche of Project 20 in order to develop a workplace plan.

The Organising Department will also be looking to develop\_a plan for external organising and recruitment; including how we build our presence in UK Mail.

In the meantime, if any Branch would like to contact me regarding setting up a workplace committee, or would like to discuss any other additional support, please contact me on my mobile number below.

Elaine Taylor (07872 816746)  
Postal Field Organiser

## **T&FS Organising Annual Report**

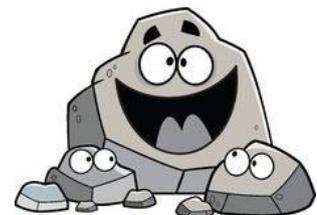
The annual meeting of the of the national ROC's (Regional Organising Committees) is due to take place on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of February at Aston University near Birmingham.

This by now well established meeting were representatives from all of the telecoms and financial services ROC regions come together to discuss the successes of our forums and campaigns over the last year. To share and agree best practices and to set our organising aim's for the year ahead. The delegation from the North West which must include a women's officer/rep and a youth officer/rep will be made up of Dan Lewis from Bootle BFS branch, Laurence McIntosh From Capita Preston Brook and Bury branch and Nikita McQueen also from Preston Brook and Bury.

### **NORTH WEST ROC**

During 2016 a number of significant achievements were agreed, implemented and trialled through the North West ROC. The North West app has now been trialled and is on the app store to download on android phones.

Our next step is to test the app in a workplace environment where we can use the joiner's facility and request that a small group of members test the application further.



We have also produced template documents for branches to use when contacting any new joiners into the branch or members that have left membership for whatever reason.

There are excel and Microsoft Sway training documents that have been produced for branch officers to use to map members in the branch and assist with communicating events and campaigns.

Should you require any details of these documents either contact your branch officer who attends the ROC meetings or Mark Norris T&FSE field organiser.

The major focus points for the North West ROC during the first part of 2017 will be identifying and bringing into membership and activity more young workers into branches the first part of this will be organised around CCAM (call centre action month) taking place during March 20<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> all T&FSE branches have been sent an LTB requesting that they organise an event/events targeting the recruitment and engagement with our young workers and members.

Several more themed CCAM events will be taking place throughout 2017 so please speak to your local branch closer to the time to find out how you can assist.

### **Regional ROC Meetings –**

The North West regional organising Committee meetings (ROCS) take place on the last Thursday of every month should you wish to get involved please speak to your branch secretary or contact Mark Norris.

**Mentoring – It is still the intention** to arrange a training workshop with those branch officer interested in learning the technique's and methods of mentoring colleagues and fellow reps discovering how to put mentoring into practice and using these skills to identify future branch leaders. As soon as we have arranged the course we will be advertising for



applications through the North West ROC.

**Virgin Media –** Although still painfully slow Leafleting of the two main call centres in the NW in Wythenshawe and Baguley still happens on a regular basis and any assistance is welcomed.



Through the Regional Organising committee we will also be undertaking another call to member's activity during the next few months where branches will be asked again to support Manchester Combined to call our members in Virgin to inquire about issues we can organise around and try to bring members into activity.

Mark Norris T&FSE Organiser

# CWU Humanitarian Aid - Update



The last two years has been very eventful for CWUHA, with a number of ongoing projects together with the refugee crisis in Syria and in Europe.

September 2015 saw the opening of the centre for disabled and disadvantaged children in Moldova. The centre was opened by the Moldovan PM and named 'The Phoenix Centre'. It must be remembered that the former communist states did not have facilities for disabled children.



Children and young people with disabilities were usually locked away in institutions or within their homes, never interacting with other young people and being socially excluded from everyday activities. It is now great to see those young people interacting and developing new skills for everyday life.

Late 2015 with the full support of Royal Mail and the CWU the charity responded to the refugee crisis by sending two small convoys of aid direct to refugee camps in Hungary and Bulgaria. The sights that greeted the drivers was quite harrowing, but the usual reaction was “when can we go back”. To continue helping those unfortunate people still in war torn Syria we filled a 40 foot container with medical supplies, bedding, clothing and food that has been delivered direct to hospitals in Aleppo.



**In November 2016** we sent a further two 40 containers of aid direct to refugees in Syria.

We still have the school in Tanzania, which we continue to support, this past year we have agreed to commence the construction of an additional room to be used as a library and computer centre, allowing the youngsters to learn new skills for modern day living.

**In May and September 2016** we delivered tones of humanitarian in Royal Mail and BT wagons direct to Moldova and Transnistria. Aid was distributed to Children’s hospitals in Chisinau and Riscani, Children’s orphanages, including one



in Hincesti which is home to 350 girls, many of whom were disabled, some profoundly. Hundreds of vulnerable families with 2 or more children, in the North of Moldova were given boxes of food, clothing and toiletries. The drivers also provided disability equipment for the Phoenix Centre and building materials for phase 2 of the project.



“MEET MICHA. THIS LITTLE BOY BROKE MY HEART..HE IS A SHY BOY LIKES TO BE ON HIS OWN..I SPENT TIME WITH HIM..SHOWED HIM HOW TO PLAY CANDY CRUSH..NOW HE IS MY BEST FRIEND.”

#THECWU @CWUHA



Just prior to us leaving in May we were asked if we could assist in setting up a football tournament involving eight U-13 teams. They needed kits, trainers, footballs and training equipment. As usual it was all hands to pumps and not only did we manage to raise these items but added a trophy and medals for every player, 120 of them. The semi-finals and finals took place on the Saturday with local politicians, local Mayors and the British ambassador to Moldova present. The national TV channel covered the event .



At the end of the Tournament each child received a medal and certificate and the winning team were presented with the trophy by. The kids had a great day, along with the rest of us. Part of the tournament was a game involving two girl teams. This was the first ever girls competitive game in Moldova, something we are extremely proud of.

It would be amiss of us not to thank the CWU Members and Management at Rochdale delivery office who raised funds for CUHA by doing the 10 peaks challenge and other activities i.e. footy tournament against Bury DO, a Bake Off challenge and a Weight Loss Club!



### **So what does CWUHA have in the pipeline:**

**In 2017** - CWUHA is helping to pay for a new roof for the Phoenix Centre, staff wages, utility bills and food for the children who attend the centre.

**May 17** - we will be holding our 2nd annual football tournament involving more teams and children.

**May 17** we will be refurbishing and equipping the rundown children's ward at the hospital in Riscani, Moldova.

**In May and September 17** - we will be sending two more missions to Moldova and one to Lithuania.

**In 2017** - we will see the completion of the CWUHA supported library/computer room at our school in Tanzania... The next task for the charity will be to supply IT equipment and books.

[www.cwuha.org](http://www.cwuha.org)

**Registered Charity Number: 1078312**