



LABOUR WOMEN'S NEWSLETTER

Women's Conference Yellow Pages - September 2024
Produced by CLPD Women



Labour must listen to women

Once again, Labour's Women's Conference has been downgraded and deprioritised, allowing virtually no input from democratically elected women's representatives in the organising and cutting down both the size of the venue and the time for grassroots women members and trade unionists to share their experiences and views - always the most inspiring and empowering part of the conference.

The timetable was ridiculous, the criteria for motions changed making it almost impossible to submit a valid motion - unless, it has been reported, it was suggested to the CLP by a member of Party staff, which would be a shocking development - it is surely up to grassroots members to discuss and debate their own motions without interference.

This is a crucial time with a much-needed Labour government. Women's voices matter. Our experiences as workers, carers, pensioners, students and so much more can make a vital contribution to making sure our new Labour government remains in touch with ordinary women. It is easy to see why democracy in Labour's women's organisation has been pushed to one side - in a democratic conference, women members and trade unionists would

undoubtedly call on the Labour government to abolish the two child limit for benefits and to keep the Winter Fuel Allowance for pensioners. Abolishing the limit would cost approximately £1.3bn pa, but the Women's Budget Group estimates that lifting 250,000 children out of poverty could save roughly £2.3bn in societal costs. Keeping the limit is a false economy - Women voting Labour did not vote for more of the same, we voted for a government that would invest in public services, not for more austerity and privatisation.

●Meanwhile the suffering of women in Palestine is horrendous beyond words. According to the UN, more than one million women and girls in Gaza have almost no access to food or safe water, with disease growing. An estimated 6,000 mothers have been killed leaving 19,000 children orphaned. Our Labour government should be supporting an immediate and permanent ceasefire, imposing a full arms embargo until Israel complies with international law, and ending trade with illegal settlements and all other trade that aids or assists Israel in maintaining its illegal occupation.

CLPD continues to call for a two-day standalone Women's Confer-

ence in spring with time for women to contribute, and debate these important issues, not just be spoken at. Labour must genuinely listen to women if it is to succeed in government.

Organising Scottish Labour women

With a sizeable contingent from Scotland again attending Annual Women's conference in Liverpool, it is frustrating to see that the priority topic chosen by Scottish women at their own Women's conference has not made it to the agenda.

For the third time, there has been no serious attempt to implement the rulebook intention to give due regard to the devolved nations.

The Scottish Labour Women's (stand-alone) conference 2024 has now been confirmed for Saturday 30th November in Stirling. Four of our policy priorities will be chosen to go to Scottish Party conference in the spring of 2025, helping to shape the Labour manifesto for Scottish Parliament elections in May 2026. Women will also select a priority to come to the UK Women's Conference.

This is another reason for getting the UK Party's women's conference back onto the intended timetable, for two days of policy making in the spring.

This helps us to build a more relevant and stronger Labour women's organisation, working with the trade union movement, across all nations. It needs strong commitment from the Party leadership and the wider membership, as we go forward under this Labour Government.

Vote for the Centre-Left Grassroots Women for National Women's Committee

CLP delegates at Women's Conference are encouraged to vote for:

Zoe Allan ● Jean Crocker ● Rathi Guhadasan

for the National Women's Committee.

●More information: www.clpd.org.uk

Promoting Women's Voices

Grassroots women's voices are the heart of Women's Conference. CLP reps on the Women's Conference Arrangements Committee (Women's CAC) have sought to support them, though the Committee has less power than often supposed.

- Debates on motions – the more there are, the more women are heard. We had eight debates at the two-day Conferences. When we were cut to one day last year, there was pressure to have only four debates. By rule we were able to hold firm on six, and again this year.

- In longer debates, more women are heard. This year, Women's CAC strongly opposed a reduction to 20 minutes per debate, but were overruled.

- We place motions into topic groups, so that delegates can vote on which they want to debate. The CLP reps have aimed to avoid having many small groups (as far as makes sense, given the actual motions that come in); e.g. a larger group on Women's Health rather than several small groups on different aspects of women's health - because only six groups will succeed in the ballot, and if they are all small, fewer CLP voices will reach the Conference floor.

By Jean Crocker

- We have achieved time for Women's CAC to read all motions to ensure CLPs and trade unions get a fair deal and minimise pressure to rubber-stamp Party advice.

- Compositing – this happens when delegates who have motions on the same topic meet to produce a single motion for Conference. There is a front-bench MP there and other advisers. We try to make it clear as Chairs of the compositing meetings that the final wording is up to the delegates alone.

- This year the requirement that a motion must be on an issue that arose after the General Election was not sent out till mid-July, ahead of a deadline in the holiday period. We were not consulted,

and next year the requirements for motions must be sent out in plenty of time.

- We have worked on user-friendly advice on writing motions and navigating Conference, which needs to be made available to members next year.

- Networking – in earlier years we had fringes, and successfully argued for free space for CLPs to express views and share information. Fringes have now been severely reduced, but we got agreement on a Welcome Reception last year and it is still in place.

Do you want reps on Women's CAC who will battle for a democratic and interactive conference against any odds that come?

Vote for:

- Zoe Allan

- Jean Crocker and

- Rathi Guhadasan!

Labour and Palestine fringe event

Palestine: What should the new UK Government do?

Saturday 21st September, 4.30pm

Main Room, Racquet Club Hotel,
Hargreaves Buildings, 5 Chapel
St, Liverpool L3 9AG

Speakers:

H.E. Husam Zomlot,
Palestinian Ambassador

Richard Burgon MP

Kim Johnson MP

Maryam Eslandoust,
TSSA General Secretary

Jess Barnard,
Labour NEC member

Hugh Lanning,
Labour & Palestine

Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP

John McDonnell MP

Mick Whelan

ASLEF General Secretary

Matt Wrack

FBU General Secretary

CLPD at Conference

CLPD rally

Saturday 21 September, 6.30pm

Defending Labour Party Democracy

CLPD Conference assessment

Tuesday 24 September, 6.30pm

Both at Quaker Meeting House, Liverpool L1 3BT

National Constitutional Committee

Elections take place at Annual Conference,
please vote for:

•Rachel Garnham •Emine Ibrahim

•Dave Levy •Khaled Moyeed

Stay in touch!

The Campaign for Labour
Party Democracy Women's



Collective campaign and organise for a National Labour Women's Organisation that is accessible and democratic, and that CLP positions are won by grassroots women who support an active, inclusive Labour Women's Organisation, locally, regionally and nationally. We support women in setting up women's branches and suggest draft motions and rule changes for Women's Conference, working closely with trade unions where we can.

- To stay in touch, please email clpdwomen@gmail.com