

RCM Briefing - Report of the TUC Women's Conference

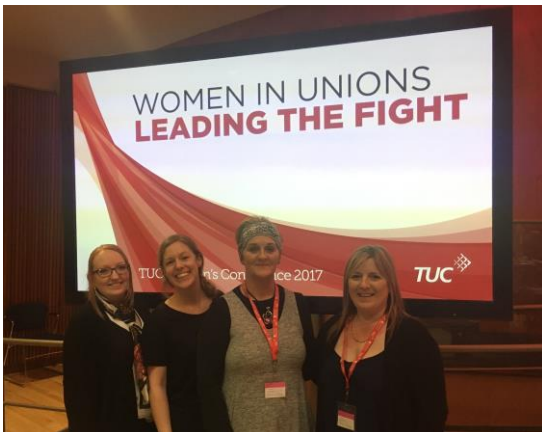
March 2017

From 8th-10th March 2017 the RCM attended the annual TUC Women's Conference. The RCM delegation joined women trade unionists from across the TUC's affiliated unions to debate motions of importance to female workers. The theme of this year's TUC Women's Conference was 'Women in Trade Unions: Leading the Fight'.



The RCM delegation was made up of four RCM members/staff including:

- Amy Leversidge, Employment Relations Advisor;
- Natalie Linder, RCM Board Member;
- Eithne Harte, RCM Workplace Representative; and
- Kate Evans, RCM Workplace Representative.



RCM Delegation to the TUC Women's Conference

The RCM made two motions to the conference: **Right to Remain for EU staff** and **Supporting Workers During the Menopause**. Both motions were voted for unanimously. We also seconded a motion: **Breastfeeding a Human Right** and supported a further two motions: **Putting an End to Pregnancy Discrimination** and **Widening Gender Inequality**. All three motions were voted for unanimously.

All members of the delegation made speeches to the Conference on at least one of the motions (with Kate speaking twice).

Amy Leversidge also spoke at a fringe event organised by Maternity Action about pregnancy discrimination, in particular health and safety risks at work. The fringe was chaired by Jo Swinson with speakers from Thompsons Solicitors and USDAW (the shop workers' union). During the conference our delegate, Natalie Linder, who is an RCM Board Member, was re-elected to the TUC Women's Committee.

As always, we were very warmly welcomed by the TUC and other trade unions and had an inspiring time at the conference.

Eithne Harte said:



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“What an inspiring, motivating and thought provoking three day conference at #TUCwomen. This was my first time at the conference and I was grateful for the opportunity to propose motion 5 : ‘ Right to Remain for EU NHS Staff ’ a campaign I am passionate about being an Irish national and having worked for the NHS since 1981. The RCM is working with the Cavendish Coalition (a group of trade unions, employers and NHS stakeholders) and we are calling for EU workers in the NHS to be granted the right to remain. The motion was carried unanimously”.

Kate Evans said:

“The TUC Conference was three days packed with motions showing that it makes no difference where you work as a woman, the issues are the same. There were tears and laughter, comradeship and a warm welcome from everyone I met in my time there and appreciate the opportunity to see for myself what the issues are facing women regardless of location or employment status.

I was asked to speak on two topics, both important issues especially as my other role is a public health midwife. When I got up to speak, I mentioned that this was my first women’s conference and the room erupted in applause which was a very warm welcome. I discussed the discrimination that still exists around pregnancy and how for some women attending their antenatal appointments with their midwife can be a battle. My second opportunity was to discuss breastfeeding and that women should have statutory rights to paid breastfeeding breaks or flexible working arrangements to support them feed their infants. The TUC and affiliated unions fully supported both motions. I thank the RCM for the opportunity to attend the conference”.

If you have any questions about TUC Women’s Conference please contact Amy.Leversidge@rcm.org.uk.