



LABOUR WOMEN'S NEWSLETTER

Women's Conference Yellow Pages - October 2023
Produced by Campaign for Labour Party Democracy Women



Save our Women's Conference!

The organisation of this year's Women's Conference has been an undemocratic fiasco from start to finish - despite the best efforts of elected CLP and trade union reps on the National Women's Committee and Women's Conference Arrangements Committee.

This appears to demonstrate just how little the current Labour Leadership values Labour's Women's organisation, and the input of Labour's women members and trade unionists. An approach underlined by the selection of so many white male prospective parliamentary candidates with limited life experience - and the lack of challenge to the all-women shortlists legislation.

Women's Conference should have been a two-day event in the spring - no reasonable excuse has been made, other than the suggestion that it was better to be after July's final National Policy Forum meeting. Of course the opposite is true, and the delay and downgrading means less opportunity to influence Labour's Policy Programme. A strong case made by members for a hybrid conference has also been ignored, which would have acknowledged the barriers to engagement of geography, disability and caring responsibilities many women face.

This fits with the current Leadership's Blairite cosplay and is a return to the bad old days of Women's Conference being reduced to a mere fringe event; completely out of line with Labour's rulebook. A two-day standalone Spring Women's Conference would have had plenty of time for policy-making, discussion, networking and workshops, instead we have three hours of policy debate interspersed with keynote speeches - totally inadequate.

Communications have left a lot to be desired - despite multiple requests from the WCAC, visitor tickets went out late and sold out quickly; and it was never properly communicated that motions should explicitly refer to women resulting in multiple motions being ruled out despite being quite obviously relevant to women. It has even been suggested that, outrageously and out of line with all democratic norms, the "NEC" via delegated powers, over-ruled the WCAC on this matter.

Despite Scotland and Wales having separate women's organisations and an ongoing campaign to recognise this within Women's Conference, motions from the devolved nations have not been included. And even had they been, they would have been given the same status as a CLP motion - hardly

appropriate for the motion from a whole nation!

Finally, there remains a lack of support for Women's Branches, both in the Conference process and more broadly, as a crucial building block in engaging women with the Party and feeding into the policy-making process. There also appears to be no recognition of the difficulties caused by boundary changes to Women's Branches - once again women's organisation is, at best, an afterthought.

●Women members and voters cannot be taken for granted. Sign the petition:

<https://forms.peoplesmomentum.com/womens-conference/>

Vote against the WCAC report

Despite the best efforts of CLP and trade union reps on the WCAC, too many motions have been ruled out and grouping is incoherent and suggests efforts to keep left motions from being prioritised - for example many of the motions under girls and schools would have been a better fit in the Violence Against Women and Girls category and it is wrong that CLP resolutions on childcare have not joined very similar ones from the unions in a different category. Overall, there is barely any time for the policy debates. Sisters may wish to raise these points and vote against the WCAC report.

VOTE AGAINST THE WCAC REPORT.

Vote for the CLGA Women for National Women's Committee

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

**Zoe Allan ● Claudia Boes ● Chloe Hopkins
Juliet Miller ● Helen Smith ● Cecile Wright**

for the National Women's Committee.

These candidates supported by the Centre-left Grassroots Alliance stand for a transformative Labour Government; socialist, feminist, and anti-racist policies; and a democratic Labour Party including an active, inclusive Labour Women's Organisation. Their priorities include:

- Defending our Labour Women's organisation - supporting a standalone 2 day Women's Conference and active Women's Branches
- Challenging inequality - working with trade unions for an anti-austerity economic programme
- Addressing climate change, supporting women struggling across the world
- Liberation and social justice - fighting all forms of racism and for inclusive, self-organised Labour Party equality structures
- Defending Labour Party Democracy and the trade union link.

●More information: www.clpd.org.uk

Labour must listen to women

Despite the downgrading of this year's Women's Conference, women members and trade unionists have a real opportunity to send a message to the Leadership that women's voices must be heard.

Austerity, Covid and the cost of living (or cost of greed) crisis have hit women, and particularly Black and Disabled women, hardest. Under-funding of our public services, particularly education, local government and the NHS have hit women as both workers and users of these services. Wages are failing to keep pace with inflation and too many women are really struggling with a lack of affordable housing, childcare and social care.

Meanwhile women face increasing misogyny, violence and

abuse, demonstrated so tragically recently with the horrific murder of 15-year-old Elianne Andam. This in the context of open misogyny on GB News underlines that the position of women in society is moving backwards.

Labour's policy response is completely inadequate. The framework appears to be a repeat of 2015's austerity-lite offer, which didn't go down so well with voters.

While at Labour's National Policy Forum, any funding commitments were rejected out of hand; any proposals for raising extra government income, for example through the equalisation of capital gains tax, were also ruled out. Reeves' economic programme is not one that will deliver the investment in public services so

desperately needed, and embracing privatisation is never the answer.

Apparently there is money for war and nuclear weapons, but not to scrap the deeply regressive two-child cap on benefits.

And on abortion, a long-running commitment of the labour movement to decriminalise abortion has been dropped in favour of mealy-mouthed proposals to avoid custodial sentences but still mean women in desperate situations seeking abortions can be criminalised.

This is not an agenda that will deliver for women - delegates should take any opportunity to raise the key issues we face and support the unions' proposals on rights at work, pensions and equal pay.

Solidarity with Diane!

Diane Abbott MP

- Britain's first black woman MP, who has contributed so much to the anti-racism and women's movements,



has been treated appallingly by the Starmer leadership since her the Whip was suspended earlier this year. A case that would undoubtedly have been rapidly and straightforwardly resolved for MPs on the right of the Party is seemingly being used to remove Diane because she dares to speak out against Starmer and highlight his broken promises. Diane is a champion of the women's movement and of Labour Party democracy; we send our solidarity and call for her reinstatement.

CLPD at Conference

Vote **Jean Crocker** and **Chris Saltmarsh**
for the Conference Arrangements Committee.

Vote **Annabelle Harle**, **Jabran Hussain**, **Dave Levy**,
Marion Roberts and **Harry Stratton**
for the National Constitutional Committee

CLPD rally

Saturday 7 October, 6.30pm

CLPD Conference assessment

Tuesday 10 October, 6.30pm

Both at Quaker Meeting House, Liverpool L1 3BT

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