

**Women Members’ Annual Conference 2024**

**Friday 29 November 14.00 – 17.30**

**Annual report – Women Members’ Standing Committee 2023-24**

From Pat Roche, Vice Chair, women members’ standing committee

**Welcome to this conference**

I was delighted to be elected last year as vice chair of the women members’ standing committee. During this time I have been fortunate to work closely with the chair of the committee, Jo Edge, as well as all the other amazing members of the committee. Together we have achieved a good deal for our women members, a few of which are highlighted below.

At the TUC women’s conference in March this year we nominated Joanne de Groot to stand for election as our representative on TUC women’s committee. Joanna was subsequently elected. We submitted motions to end intimate police searches and ensuring that our women members are empowered within the context of the wider trade union movement. UCU delegates supported motions on the gender and pensions gap, flexible working, women in STEM, student debt, healthcare, cost of living, abortion rights, period poverty, and health and safety. Our UCU President, Justine Mercer, chaired a fringe meeting on ‘’Winning for Women in the workplace”.

We have produced a poster series for this year’s International Women’s Day and other materials celebrating the role of inspirational women and a new wallchart charting women’s fight for equality since the first International Women’s Day is currently being produced. This will be launched in time for International Women’s Day next year. We proposed motions to UCU Congress on race and intersectionality, updated menopause guidance (available to download on the UCU website), began updating the working parents guide, produced a briefing on changes in law in regards to redundancy protection periods for those on maternity/adoption/shared maternity leave. We

continue to affiliate to Maternity Action and to work with them and others as part of the Alliance for Maternity Rights.

We affiliate to – and work with – Abortion Rights, the national pro-choice campaign organisation. We are also a member of the TUC alliance on challenging and eradicating sexual harassment at work and continue to run training and CPD webinars on this matter.

As you can see, this is an amazing group of UCU women members.

All the above work links directly into the theme of the conference in terms of intersectionality, breaking down barriers and enforcing our rights at work. We will hear from women who have done work in this area and look at practical solutions to challenges in the workplace.

As vice chair I would like to speak directly to FE members, especially those from prison educators and adult education who are underrepresented on this committee. We need your input on the committee so that we can advise the NEC via the equality unit of priorities to follow in these areas with regard to women. Please stand for the committee. As vice chair I work closely with Jo Edge, fully supported by our Equality support official, Charlotte Nielsen, and the Equality administrative team.

Therefore, welcome to the conference and let our voice be heard, especially in these challenging times with the rise of the far right.

Thank you.

Pat Roche

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**Chair**: Jo Edge, University of Edinburgh

**Vice Chair**: Pat Roche, Blackpool & Fylde College

**NEC women’s seats**: Jo Edge (University of Edinburgh), Julie Hearn (Lancaster University), Regine Pilling (Capital City College Group) until May 2024, Emma Rees (University of Chester) – until May 2024, Safia Firssi (South & City College Birmingham) – from May 2024, Lesley Kane (Open University) – from May 2024, Suzi Toole (Bolton College) – from May 2024.

**Elected at women’s conference 2023 for two years**: Leanne Bibby (Teeside University), Themesa Neckles (University of Sheffield), Christina Paine (London Metropolitan University), Pat Roche (Blackpool & Fylde College), Lisa Rull (University of Nottingham).

**Elected at women’s conference 2022** for two years: Vicky Blake (University of Leeds), Maria Chondrogianni (University of Westminster), Jennifer Dods (Leeds Beckett University), Gillian Jack (Open University), Victoria Showunmi (University College London).

**Committee secretary**: Charlotte Nielsen, equality support official.