

Representing our branch at the TUC and RMT Women's Conferences



This year I had the opportunity to attend the **TUC Women's Conference**, representing **RMT** alongside a strong **delegation** of women from across the union. The RMT delegation was as follows:

Emma Abel - Conductor for Northern Rail, from Sheffield and District Branch

Fiona Adams - Commercial Guard FOR Southwestern Railway in Weymouth

Rose Aweah - Cleaner for Churchill, Health and Safety rep, Victoria Station

Caroline Carr - Bus driver for Stagecoach, Local Rep and Branch Secretary East Midlands Bus

Sarabjit Gill - Ticket Office Supervisor at Southhall Station, Elisabeth Line, Company Council Rep

Marie Harrington - Station Supervisor, London Underground and Stations Functional Council Rep, District and Piccadilly Branch

Roxsanne Lesieur - Customer experience host for LNER in Leeds, Learning Rep

Luminita Nicolae - Train Driver for London Underground and Women Officer Neasden Branch

Emma Purcell - Liverpool Shipping Branch, Stewardess for Stena Line, Crew rep

Jessica Robinson - Train manager for LNER in Newcastle from Darlington No 1 Branch

Annala Saghir - Train manager for LNER, Kings Cross Branch

Anthonia Taiwo - Southwestern Railway, Platform staff. Waterloo, Wessex Branch Women Officer

Maria Taylor – TFL 1 & MATS, TfL Customer Service Adviser, Company Council Rep, Disability Branch Officer and Assistant Branch Secretary

Helen Rees Powell -

Donna Jones, bus driver in Poole, District Bus Branch

Holly Davies, Train manager at TfW Wales, Learning Rep, Education Officer from Cambrian Branch

Luminita Nicolae – Train driver for London Underground, Women Officer Neasden Branch

The conference brought together women trade unionists from across the UK to debate the issues affecting women at work and to push forward policies aimed at improving working lives. From AI and online abuse to workplace safety, pensions and maternity rights, the conference covered a wide range of topics over three days of debates, speeches and discussions. One of the key themes was the impact of artificial intelligence and digital technology, including concerns about AI generated misogynistic content and the growing problem of online abuse targeting women. Economic equality was also high on the agenda. Delegates debated motions addressing the gender pay gap and the gender pension gap, as well as the challenges faced by freelancers, self-employed workers and women working in lower-paid sectors. The conference also discussed the ongoing WASPI campaign, which highlights the pension injustice experienced by many women affected by changes to the state pension age. Another strong focus of the conference was women's safety at work. Motions covered sexual harassment, misogyny, domestic abuse as a workplace issue and the increasing number of assaults faced by frontline workers. Delegates called for stronger protections and better support for workers who experience abuse or violence on the job. Women's health and wellbeing at work was also widely discussed, including motions on occupational health and safety, reproductive health, menopause support and perinatal mental health. Delegates also debated wider issues affecting women in society, including global women's rights. The rise of the far right and the impact of climate change. At the end of the conference, delegates voted for Composite 8 – Tackling the Far Right and the Weaponisation of Women and the Girls' Safety to go forward to the TUC Congress in September, where it will be debated as part of the wider trade union movement's agenda.

RMT Women at the TUC Conference



RMT was well represented at the conference by a strong delegation of women from across the transport industry. Our delegates came from rail, bus, maritime and London Underground, bringing a wide range of workplace experience to the discussion. RMT delegates didn't just attend the conference – we actively took part in the plenary. **Annila**, from the Kings Cross Branch, moved the motion “Action against assaults” highlighting the increasing risks faced by frontline transport workers and the urgent need for stronger protections for staff experiencing violence and abuse at work. I also had the opportunity to move a motion supporting the WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequality) campaign, an issue that is particularly important to me following research I carried out on the gender pension gap. Many women retire with significantly smaller pensions because they spend years of raising children, working part-time or working in lower paid sectors. The motion highlighted the need to address these inequalities and push for fairer outcomes for women. Other RMT delegates also spoke in support of important motions: **Jessica Robinson** supported the motion on Women’s Occupational Health and Safety, highlighting the need to better recognise women’s health issues in the workplace. **Roxanne Lesieur** supported the motion on Flexible learning in the Trade Union Movement, stressing the importance of access to education and training opportunities for working women. **Emma Purcell**, stewardess for Stena Line, seconded the motion Supporting Seafarers through menopause at sea, drawing attention to the challenges faced by women working in the maritime sector. The conference showed just how important it is for women to be involved in shaping union policy and standing up for workers’ rights. The strong participation of RMT women ensured that the voices of transport workers were heard loud and clear. Conferences like this also remind us how important it is to encourage more women in our union to get involved, speak up and take on leadership roles.



RMT Women Conference - Liverpool

After attending the TUC Women's Conference in Bournemouth, I travelled straight to Liverpool for the RMT National Women's Conference. As soon as I arrived, I was greeted by Ken and Bessie, and I was immediately struck by the welcoming atmosphere and the great vibe of the city. The conference was hosted by Central & North Mersey Branch and took place at the Liner Hotel, right at the heart of Liverpool.

The weekend started with a boat trip on the river Mersey, organised by the host branch for delegated arriving early. It was a great opportunity to get to know each other and enjoy Liverpool's famous waterfront before the conference began. Afterwards there was the option to try the famous Liverpool scouse but I decided to skip it and explore the city before heading to the conference venue (something I slightly regreted later!)



The conference was opened by **Cara Lynch** from the host branch who welcomed delegates to Liverpool. We then heard from **Kim Johnson MP**, who spoke about her work in the Parliament and her collaboration with the RMT on key issues affecting workers, including the campaign to end outsourcing. She also took questions from the floor where **Donna Jones** made the point that she would like to see buses brought back into public ownership. Another interesting presentation came from **Michael Carty, RMT Personnel Manager**, who spoke about GDPR and data protection laws and the importance of safeguarding personal information. He also highlighted issues around employment references and the historical problem of trade union blacklisting, reminding us why protecting workers' data remains an important issue. We also heard a report from **Keir Chewings (NEC)** on the progress of resolutions passed at last year's Women's Conference. Among the resolutions discussed were:

Menopause Course - referred to the union's Education and Training sub-committee as part of a wider review of RMT trade union education.

Reasonable adjustments for **breastfeeding** - referred to the Equal Rights sub-committee with instructions for the General Secretary to raise these issues with employers and campaign for changes in the law.

Body worn cameras Health & Safety assessment highlighting concerns about the health implications of wearing cameras and calling for proper risk assessments particularly regarding how cameras attach to uniforms and potential risks to workers' health.

Gender Equality and the **WASPI Women** – the union has continued supporting the WASPI campaign and invited speakers from the campaign group to discuss how RMT can provide further support.

We were also visited by **Michelle Rodgers**, who encouraged members to join the credit union. She explained that while the interest rates may not always compete with banks, credit unions are about supporting each other collectively, helping members in times of need.

After the first day of the conference, delegates headed to a social event at Flanagan’s on Mathew Street, right next to the famous Cavern Club. It turned into a great night out where we danced the night away and enjoyed spending time together outside the conference setting. The food wasn’t particularly memorable though and at that moment I regretted skipping the scouse earlier!



On Sunday, the conference heard from **Darren Ireland**, who addressed delegates with a report on the **state of the union**. He noted that almost 20% of RMT members are women and stressed that more needs to be done to increase women’s membership and participation in the union. He also reported that the union’s finances are in a healthy position, with a **surplus of £2.3 million**, some of which will be allocated to support the work of the union’s committees. Darren also spoke about the many challenges the union is currently facing across different companies, including attempts by employers to push through **modernisation programmes** that worsen members’ terms and conditions. He highlighted that in some workplaces these challenges are made more difficult by inter-union tensions, particularly where unions are unwilling to take industrial action and instead accept the changes proposed by employers, ultimately worsening the working lives of both their members and RMT members.

Several important resolutions were debated during the conference, covering issues such workplace safety, caring responsibilities, technological harassment and equality in the workplace. Key issues discussed:



Safeguarding black women workers - maternal health. The motion highlighted the disproportionately high maternal mortality rates among black women in UK and the impact that systemic bias in healthcare can have on workers and their families. The motion called for the union to work with experts in maternal health advocacy and to develop guidance for workplace representatives, helping them better support members who may face discrimination or inadequate treatment during pregnancy.

Impact of the compressed working week on women train operators - the motion addressed concerns about the proposed compressed working week for London Underground train operators, which RMT is currently in dispute over. The resolution highlighted the potential negative impact on women workers, including longer shifts, lack of adequate sanitary facilities, increased uncertainty in shift patterns and difficulties managing childcare and caring responsibilities. Delegates warned that such changes could discourage women from entering or progressing with operational roles, further reinforcing the male-dominated nature of these jobs. The conference called for the NEC to seek **legal advice** on the equality implications of the proposal.

Action against assaults - focus on football travel. A particularly strong discussion took place around assaults on transport workers, with a motion focusing on the role of football related travel. Delegates highlighted the growing problems caused by large groups of intoxicated football fans, including violence, racist and misogynistic abuse, vandalism and unsafe working conditions for staff. Women

workers in particular reported feeling unsafe on football days, with incidents of harassment and intimidation becoming increasingly common. The motion called for the union to strengthen its **Action against assaults campaign**, push employers to improve safety measures, increase security presence, and work with football clubs and transport operators to address the issue.

Workplace agreements for working parents – submitted by **Neasden Branch**, focusing on the need for workplace agreements that reflect the realities faced by working parents. The motion highlighted that women still carry out the majority of unpaid caring work and are often disproportionately affected when workplace policies make it difficult to take annual leave during school holidays

Protecting women workers from deepfake technology – a forward-looking resolution addressing the growing threat of AI generated deepfake technology and digital harassment. The motion called for all employers to update their Dignity at Work and anti-harassment policies to specifically cover synthetic media and digital harassment.

The RMT Women's Conference highlighted many of the challenges women continue to face in the transport industry, but it also showed the strength, experience and determination of women members across the union. Attending both the TUC Women's Conference in Bournemouth and the RMT Women's Conference in Liverpool back to back was a great opportunity to see how issues affecting women workers are discussed both across the wider trade union movement and within our own union. Many of the themes raised at the TUC conference, including workplace safety, equality, pensions, caring responsibilities and the impact of new technologies were echoed in the resolutions at the RMT Conference. This shows that the challenges faced by women in the transport industry are part of the wider issues affecting women workers across many sectors. At the same time, the RMT Women's Conference allowed members to focus specifically on the realities of working in transport, where issues such as assaults on staff, shift work, caring responsibilities and workplace safety have a direct impact on our members. Together, both conferences highlighted the importance of women's voices in shaping union policy and campaigning for fairer workplaces.

Both conferences were a powerful reminder that women's voices matter in our union. The more women who get involved in meetings, conferences and union activities, the stronger our collective voice becomes when fighting for safer workplaces, fairer conditions and equality at work.

Luminita Nicolae

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