



BFAWU PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023

PARLIAMENTARY OVERVIEW

This report summarises work undertaken by the BFAWU Parliamentary Group during the period from the return from Summer recess in September 2022 through to June 2023.

The news has been dominated by the intensification of the cost-of-living crisis – leading to double-digit inflation, not seen for decades. The catastrophic “mini-budget” of Liz Truss saw interest rates rocket, leading to panic in the financial markets and forcing up mortgage rates and rents, and ultimately resulted in her resignation and replacement by Rishi Sunak. But the continued emphasis on pay restraint at a time of rising inflation has seen further groups of workers come into industrial confrontation with the Government, with Royal Mail and rail workers, teachers, civil servants, doctors, nurses and university lecturers joining a wave of industrial action.

Meanwhile the Government’s legislative programme (see below) has sought to introduce further draconian restrictions on the right to strike, with new measures to mandate “minimum service levels” and undermine the public’s right to protest. The attempt to demonise migrants arriving in small boats and forcibly deport asylum-seekers to Rwanda for “processing” is part of a deliberate attempt to distract the public from the Government’s economic incompetence by using “anti-woke” culture-war rhetoric.

The BFAWU Parliamentary Group has continued to remain active on the union’s behalf, holding regular virtual Group Meetings, online and offline meetings with Shadow Ministers and other MPs, tabling Written Questions, and intervening at Committees, Oral Questions and in debates wherever possible.

Detailed BFAWU briefings and media releases on a wide range of issues are circulated by Solidarity Consulting to inform MPs and Peers.

Key campaigns pursued in the past 12 months and summarised in this report include:

- Food Prices and Supermarket Profiteering
- Low Pay, Poverty and Food Insecurity (including the Food and Work Network, Right to Food campaign, and Free School Meals campaign)
- Insolvency, Redundancy, Employment Rights and Corporate Governance
- Sexual Harassment



**This report was written and compiled by
SOLIDARITY CONSULTING LTD**

Solidarity Consulting works in Parliament on a not-for-profit basis for trade unions and third-sector organisations, and acts as the Secretariat to the BFAWU Parliamentary Group, Justice Unions Parliamentary Group (JUPG) and the Trade Union Coordinating Group (TUCG). Working directly with BFAWU Head Office, we advise the union and Parliamentarians of opportunities to raise issues of concern to BFAWU members, convene Group meetings, lobbies and drop-in briefings, provide written briefings to MPs and Peers, draft letters to Ministers, table Early Day Motions, written and oral Parliamentary questions, clip video interventions for use on social media, and help to raise the profile of BFAWU in Parliament.

Legislation

Throughout this period, BFAWU Group Members have engaged in opposing key elements of the Tory legislative agenda, including:

STRIKES (MINIMUM SERVICE LEVELS) BILL

As introduced, this Bill represents a historic attack on the ability of trade unions to take effective industrial action in pursuit of a lawful industrial dispute. It introduces a legal power for employers in certain sectors to issue “work notices” requiring identified individuals to cross their own union’s picket lines. Whilst food workers are not currently covered by the proposals, there is a danger that, should future strikes begin to interrupt supply chains, the legislation can be amended to widen the existing remit. It is feared that the new laws will be used to target union reps and stewards to undermine union organising. Moreover, not only can the individual be dismissed for supporting striking colleagues by respecting their picket lines, but the whole dispute can be declared unlawful unless the union itself is judged to have taken “reasonable steps” to ensure that workers named in the notices continue to work, opening up the risk of mass dismissals and the sequestering of union funds. Some significant amendments have been passed in the Lords following a number of Government defeats, but these were then stripped back out by MPs – as Sunak can use his majority to whip through the plans in their original form. The Bill is currently in “ping-pong” between the two Chambers, but is expected to receive Royal Assent before the Summer.

RETAINED EU LAW BILL

First introduced by Liz Truss, but retained under Rishi Sunak, this Bill in its original form would have seen all laws required by EU directives fall off the statute book by the end of 2023 unless a Secretary of State specifically moves to retain them. This would have jeopardised key workers’ rights (such as the right to paid holiday leave), along with laws for example around food standards or animal welfare standards. Under stiff opposition, Kemi Badenoch has restricted the scope of the Bill from an estimated 4,000 pieces of legislation to 800, but the Bill still represents a significant threat and relies on “Henry VIII” powers which give no scope for Parliamentary oversight of the executive. At the same time, Badenoch announced a consultation over weakening regulation on working hours, on TUPE protections and on changes to the ways in which bosses can calculate holiday pay.

PUBLIC ORDER ACT

Building on the repressive anti-protest measures already introduced in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, these laws could see “disruptive” protestors face a six-month prison term or unlimited fine for peaceful acts of civil disobedience. It also gives police extensive new stop-and-search powers, with the possession of items such as super-glue or padlocks in the vicinity of protests becoming a criminal offence. This has resulted in protestors at the Coronation being arrested for the “crime” of taking placards off a van. Shockingly, Keir

Starmer has said that an incoming Labour government would not scrap the Act, but wanted to see how it “beds in”.

ILLEGAL MIGRATION BILL

Despite the ongoing legal challenges to the scheme allowing asylum-seekers to be deported to Rwanda for “processing”, the Government is pushing forward with new moves to make arriving in the UK “illegally” grounds for automatic rejection of any claim. This will almost certainly be challenged by the courts as a violation of human rights legislation, but the Tories appear to be pushing through these measures – which even expose unaccompanied children to the prospect of being deported – in order to make political capital out of anti-migrant sentiment. The charity Care4Calais is working to propose an alternative plan to grant safe routes to enable desperate people to make legitimate claims here without the involvement of human traffickers or the risk of drowning in the Channel. The Bill is currently receiving detailed scrutiny in the Lords.

BFAWU CAMPAIGNS

FOOD PRICES AND SUPERMARKET PROFITEERING

A key driver of inflation reaching levels not seen since the 1970s is the soaring rate of food price increases, which hit an overall average of 19.2% for food and non-alcoholic drink in March 2023, with many household essentials rising further still – such as Bread (28%), Eggs (37%) and Cheese (39%). This begs the question of why food prices are rising so rapidly. It is true that some external factors led to input prices increasing for suppliers and retailers – such as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine leading to higher energy and grain prices, and issues arising with European supply chains in relation to climate conditions and the post-Brexit trading environment. However, whilst supermarkets have continued to post large profits and share dividends, they have come under increasing critical scrutiny for taking advantage of continually higher prices even after energy bills and input costs have begun to fall.

The BFAWU Parliamentary Group was alive to the danger of supermarkets profiteering by so called “rocket and feather” pricing (quick to rise but much slower to fall), with Chair Ian Mearns tabling Early Day Motion 784, which reads:

That this House notes reports in the Sunday Times suggesting that, at a time of an acute cost-of-living crisis for households and food inflation running at over 14 per cent, UK supermarkets are set to announce higher-than-anticipated profits; further notes reports that Tesco alone will forecast increased operating profits of nearly £2.5 billion, significantly above its five-yearly average; shares the reported fears of industry insiders that the supermarket giants are benefitting from so-called rocket and feather pricing, where prices rise sharply in response to an inflationary spike, only to remain persistently higher than necessary as the rate of inflation falls; is scandalised that corporate shareholders are making excessive profits while more and more households are forced to use foodbanks; is concerned that, despite these rocketing profits, large retailers in the food and drink

sector continue to place undue commercial pressures on their suppliers, leading to a further squeeze on the terms and conditions of workers across the food sector and more suppliers closing sites or going into administration; further notes that food workers, like other low-paid groups in society, are disproportionately impacted by the relentless increase in grocery prices; agrees with the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers union in calling for urgent regulatory action to tackle the plague of excessive corporate profiteering by UK supermarkets; and urges the Government to introduce a statutory Right to Food for everyone in the country.

BFAWU Group member Beth Winter secured a Westminster Hall debate recently (17 May) on Food Price Inflation and Foodbanks, at which she pointed out:

Why are prices going up? We have to be clear that there are multiple causes. Droughts, climate disaster, fuel costs and the Ukraine war have all had an impact. However...all of this has been made worse by profiteering along global supply chains, from agribusiness multinationals to high street supermarkets....The European Central Bank recently said:

“Profit growth remained very strong, which suggested that the pass-through of higher costs to higher selling prices remained robust.”

The top eight UK food manufacturers made profits of £22.9 billion in 2021, with both profits and margins up 21% on 2019, with Nestlé, Mondelez and Unilever all benefiting from double-digit growth in profit margins. In the supermarket sector, Tesco, Sainsbury's and Asda—the top three UK supermarkets—nearly doubled their combined profits to £3.2 billion in 2021 compared with 2019.

Supermarkets are turning over hundreds of millions of pounds and handing dividend payments to wealthy investors, who are obviously not the people struggling to eat. In 2021-22, a total of £704 million was paid by Tesco in dividends and last July the company also paid shareholders £1 billion in its share buyback scheme.

Ultimately, the high cost of groceries experienced by customers are the consequence of allowing prices to be determined by market forces. Whilst BFAWU would prefer to see the energy sector renationalised and run in democratic public ownership, at least the industry regulator OfGen has a responsibility to protect the consumer interest and cap the costs passed on by the energy companies. By contrast, there is no supermarket regulator dedicated to protecting the consumer interest, only the Groceries Code Adjudicator whose responsibilities are limited to ensuring contractual “fair dealing” between suppliers and retailers. Even this limited power to hold the supermarkets to account is now under threat, since the Liz Truss administration opened a consultation into scrapping the regulator altogether! The BFAWU Parliamentary Group made a submission into this consultation – proposing that the existing regulator is retained but also strengthened with new powers of intervention.

The introduction of the “energy price cap” begs the question why the Government is unable to intervene to limit the rise in food prices. Richard Burgon used the opportunity of a debate he secured on the topic of “Greedflation” to make this point and highlight the intervention which the French government has made to protect the interest of consumer:

On price caps, for all its obvious flaws in not being set low enough, the Government's energy price guarantee, which was introduced last year, was an important break with the idea that the Government cannot interfere in market pricing to protect people. Surely such price caps should be extended to other sectors. It is very welcome that London Mayor Sadiq Khan has called for powers

to allow him to impose private rent controls in London. Other countries do this, so why can we not do so here? On soaring food prices, the French Government have secured a deal with some of the country's major retailers to place a price cap on staple foods to ease the pressure of inflation on consumers. Why not here?

Fellow BFAWU Group member John McDonnell also pushed the case for price controls:

... immediate action... must mean price controls. Price controls on basic foodstuffs have been introduced in this country in the past, particularly to deal with short-term problems. I do not think that permanent price controls are effective, but on a temporary basis—12 months, for example—they can be. Other countries, including Switzerland and Hungary, are already developing price controls, and France has introduced its own mechanisms for negotiating prices down on the basis of the expectation of price levels.

Clearly feeling the heat of public anger in relation to rising food prices, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak called a “National Food to Fork Summit” in Downing Street, but Government Ministers initially ducked a series of written Parliamentary Questions from Ian Mearns and Ian Byrne which sought to ask which trade unions had been invited to participate. When pushed again by Beth Winter and Ian Byrne (17 May) on why all the main trade unions in the food sector (including BFAWU) had been excluded from the summit, minister Mark Spencer ludicrously replied that:

...of course there is a limit to the capacity in No. 10 Downing Street. There are lots of people who would have liked to be there whom we were not able to accommodate. However, it was important that we drew together industry leaders—retailers, processors, and primary producers—so that they could work together on delivering innovation in the sector, and so that they could try to lower food prices and not only make our great British food producers competitive across the world.

Downing Street was large enough to accommodate all the big supermarket bosses and “industry leaders” but not a single representative of workers in one of Britain's biggest manufacturing sectors from the TUC-affiliated trade unions? It begs the question of how food gets from farm to fork if not via the crucial role played by workers at all stages of the supply chain. Even those who attended the event described it as a “damp squib” which ducked the question of how suppliers could be guaranteed a fair price from the retailers.

However, with the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee and even the Liberal Democrats now calling for an investigation into supermarket profiteering, the demand for action is becoming harder to ignore. As this report is being finalised, it has just been briefed to the Daily Telegraph that the Government is set to propose asking retailers to participate in a French-style voluntary price cap agreement – although the plan has been described as at the “drawing board” stage, so it is unclear how long it will take to see fruition. Unsurprisingly even such a modest step has already been attacked by the supermarkets and free marketeers.

The BFAWU Group will continue to push for radical policy interventions to tackle the problem.

LOW PAY, POVERTY AND FOOD INSECURITY

Whilst food workers have, in many employers, had nominal pay rises in the past 12 months, this has very rarely come close to matching the rate of rising prices, still less outstripping them (see below). If pay settlements are running at below-inflation levels, the argument that they are to blame for kicking off a wage-price spiral begin to fall apart – exposing, as we have seen, the reality of corporate-driven “Greedflation” as prices are pushed upwards to maximise profits.

As this report goes to press, BFAWU Group members have supported the strikes by workers at Allied Bakers in Bootle, with Ian Byrne, Mick Whitley and Kim Johnson all visiting the picket lines and other Group members showing support on social media.

The burden of high food and energy prices falls particularly heavily on low-income households, who spend a greater percentage of their budgets on such basics rather than on discretionary forms of spending. BFAWU’s recently published “Foodworkers on the Breadline” report demonstrates that, notwithstanding the efforts of trade unions to defend pay and conditions in the sector, the impact of inflation outstripping earnings is making its impact felt in terms of workers skipping meals or even using foodbanks. The Group has tabled Early Day Motion 1152 on “Food Workers, Prices and Poverty” to highlight the findings of the report and the absurdity that people whose labour puts food on our supermarket shelves are struggling to afford to purchase the products of their own work. The report’s findings were first cited by SNP member Chris Stephens at Business Questions (11 May). Kate Hollern quoted the report in Westminster Hall (16 May), as did Ian Byrne, who told MPs:

Eight of the UK’s top food manufacturers made a combined profit of £22.9 billion—up 21% since before the pandemic. The four giant agribusiness corporations ADM, Bunge, Cargill and Louis Dreyfus made \$10.4 billion, which is up 255%—absolutely staggering profits.

In the food industry, the workers who grow, distribute and supply our food are left unable to purchase the very food that they produce. The latest survey from the Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union found that four in 10 food workers are forced to skip meals, and over 60% of respondents said that their wages are not high enough to meet their basic needs. One worker wrote:

“I don’t have running hot water, so I can’t wash my hands thoroughly. Either trying to keep warm in bed or running on the spot. Staying at work longer to keep warm.”

Responding for the Government to Byrne and Winter the following day, Minister Mark Spencer appeared to believe that it should be left to the welfare system to top up the wages of low-paid food workers, although he was forced to confirm that, in 2021-22, 2.1 million people had reported using a food bank in the past 12 months.

The report is further evidence that the issue of growing poverty and food insecurity across society – impacting on growing numbers of people in work – is the result of the neoliberal transformation of the labour market and attack on the welfare system. But often the discussions around “workplace” issues like low pay and zero hours contracts are discussed in isolation from issues facing households and communities in relation to access to affordable food. It is precisely to bring into focus these key links between how the production and distribution of food is organised and trends in food consumption that BFAWU and its Parliamentary Group, working especially with Prof Alex Colas of Birkbeck College, University

of London, have worked to develop the Food and Work Network (www.fawn.org.uk). This brings together trade unions, academics and community food practitioners/campaigners to discuss both the drivers of food insecurity and the action necessary to tackle it.

Ian Byrne and John McDonnell spoke at the inaugural meeting in London last May, and FAWN workshops have also been addressed by Beth Winter (University of Cardiff, November 18) and Olivia Blake (University of Sheffield, April 28). The network will be looking to pull together both academic and practical campaigning publications, and developing a series of policy demands for the transformation of the food system and access to food across the UK.

The Network includes campaigners on two critical demands – the “Right to Food” and universal “Free School Meals” – both of which have been generating increasing political momentum over recent months. Following pressure from campaigners, the National Food Strategy report the Government commissioned Henry Dimbleby to produce recommended as an initial step the extension of free school meals to all children from households on Universal Credit (hardly a radical demand) alongside other reforms to tackle obesity. However, Dimbleby himself resigned his advisory role in March this year, lashing out at the Government’s “insane” lack of strategy and “ultra-free market” approach to avoiding regulations. Since then, Dimbleby has added his voice to that of campaigners including the Daily Mirror and National Education Union calling for universal free school meals for primary school pupils. He has also supported the initiative of London Mayor Siddiq Khan to provide funding for free school meals for every primary school child in London next year.

As it stands, the Labour leadership is reluctant to embrace the logic of universal provision of free school meals and is proposing to expand breakfast clubs from primary age children. However, BFAWU Group members continue to push for the extension of universal free school meals, with Zarah Sultana, Kim Johnson and Ian Byrne at the forefront of the campaign in Parliament. Sultana tabled EDM 672 on the Free School Meals for All campaign, and brought forward a Private Members Bill on the issue, which was deliberately denied Parliamentary time by Tory backbenchers. Olivia Blake welcomed the campaign when speaking at the FAWN Sheffield workshop, which also saw NEU Deputy General Secretary Niamh Sweeney join BFAWU and academics researching the positive impact of providing free school meals on improving educational outcomes and combatting stigma.

Meanwhile, on the campaign for a legal Right to Food, following pressure from Ian Byrne and the BFAWU Parliamentary Group, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee heard evidence from UN Special Rapporteur on Food Poverty Michael Fakhri (22 November), who told MPs:

...the right to food is gaining popularity. At the beginning of the pandemic people were reluctant to engage with the right to food because it creates a very specific set of obligations, but as the food crisis continued in the last year I saw the right to food being taken up by all types of countries, advanced economies and developing countries...

In the latest statement from the last G20 meeting, which was held in Germany, they reaffirmed their commitment as the G20 to the right to food. This is the first time the G20 did so. Switzerland is a strong supporter; Germany, France and Spain have always been strong supporters of the right to food.

Fakhri emphasised the importance of free school meals and the work of the Right to Food campaign in pioneering the use of school facilities to operate “community kitchens”. Fakhri has put in a bid for the UN to conduct a formal visit to the UK to ascertain for himself the degree of food insecurity and the action necessary to address it. BFAWU Group members will continue to push for a statutory Right to Food to be included in the Labour manifesto, having already been adopted as policy by local authorities across the country.

INSOLVENCY, REDUNDANCY AND WORKERS' RIGHTS

Two incidents in relatively quick succession have raised significant concerns about the ability of business owners to abuse the process around administration and insolvency, leaving workers in the lurch and denying them the full value of their outstanding pay and redundancy monies owed.

It will be recalled that, back in March 2022, the Group tabled EDM 1053 in relation to the treatment of workers following the closure of the Dawnfresh Seafoods factory in Uddingston – where one of Scotland’s richest men, Alastair Salveson, allowed workers to carry on overtime shifts in full knowledge that he was about to bring in the receivers, since he took the opportunity to rescue his private art collection. The workers were left waiting for weeks without any source of income, obliged to depend on family and friends or use food banks in the resulting emergency.

A not dissimilar instance occurred towards the end of the year at Orchard House Foods in Gateshead, with redundancy negotiations over the closure of the site seeing the company fail to keep promises to pay workers ahead of the Christmas period. The Group tabled EDM 706 to protest the way the workers were treated:

That this House is shocked and angered by the treatment of workers made redundant at Orchard House Food’s Gateshead factory; notes that the company - which supplies companies such as Marks and Spencer, Morrisons and Pret a Manger - remains a going concern with some workers offered the chance to relocate to the Midlands; understands that the majority have been unable to relocate and were initially promised redundancy payments within two weeks of receiving their final pay slip, in most cases on 9 December; is outraged to learn that the workers have since been informed that there will be a delay in processing these redundancy payments until the New Year; is concerned about the impact on families now facing the prospect of Christmas without an income and yet to receive a penny of support from the company, leaving many worried about heating their homes or feeding their children; and calls on the management of Orchard House Foods to ensure that all redundancy payments are received in full prior to Christmas.

Local MPs Liz Twist and Ian Mearns raised the issue in the Chamber at the time, although it later transpired that the companies owners – the venture capitalist Elaghmore Group (which boasted of a £90m investment fund) – had already decided not only to close the site but also to close the Corby site, making a total of 800 job losses, and put the company into the hands of receivers. Ultimately, the rich investment fund managers walked away whilst leaving the taxpayer to pick up the tab. This again left the workers in the lurch whilst they waited for the Insolvency Service to make the payments, but it also short-changed them of money owed, since any payout was only on the basis of the statutory minimum.

Sadly, it is unlikely that this will be the last such occasion in which workers are treated in such a fashion – and these practices are far from unique to the food sector but have become increasingly common across the economy. BFAWU met with Shadow Employment Minister Justin Madders, who shared our concerns and agreed to table a series of written Parliamentary Questions.

Q Justin Madders (Labour, Ellesmere Port and Neston)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, what the total cost to the public purse was of statutory redundancy payments processed by the Insolvency Service in (a) 2021 and (b) 2022.

Answer

Kevin Hollinrake (Conservative, Thirsk and Malton Commons)

The total value of statutory redundancy payments made by the Insolvency service in the 2021 calendar year was £148,379,673 and in 2022 was £148,352,681.

Q Justin Madders (Labour, Ellesmere Port and Neston)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, how many statutory redundancy payments were processed by the Insolvency Service in (a) 2021 and (b) 2022.

Answer

Kevin Hollinrake (Conservative, Thirsk and Malton Commons)

The number of individuals who received a statutory redundancy payment from the Insolvency Service was 37,830 in the 2021 calendar year and 31,815 in 2022.

These shocking figures suggest that there is a growing problem of businesses being asset-stripped (including by those owned by private equity concerns) before being offloaded, with the workers and taxpayer picking up the cost. BFAWU has been seeking to work with the TUC and the Institute of Employment Rights to identify policy demands in terms of fines and enforcement in relation to corporate governance and the responsibility of Company Directors. Most recently we met with former Shadow Business Secretary Rebecca Long-Bailey to discuss the issue and we are now seeking to pursue a Westminster Hall debate to raise the profile of the issue.

Meanwhile, the Group has been kept updated regarding the campaign for Trade Union recognition at Samworth Brothers. Group members Jeremy Corbyn and Claudia Webbe have spoken at campaign rallies, and we will seek to explore further Parliamentary mechanisms to “name and shame” anti-union employers. Currently, the pledge to strengthen the rights of access for trade union organisers remain part of Labour’s New Deal for Working People, but it is essential that this is not watered down ahead of the next General Election and is implemented in full at the earliest opportunity.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

As part of BFAWU’s organising around the McStrike campaign, the union received a significant amount of anonymous testimony from women who had experienced instances of

sexual harassment from male managers whilst working for McDonald's. Bravely, some of these women chose to speak out openly about their treatment. The union made representations to the Equality and Human Rights Commission about what seemed to be an endemic issue across the culture of the corporation. This resulted in a rare legally binding agreement between the company and the EHRC through which McDonald's formally undertakes to improve the way complaints are handled and to provide training to improve the safety of its workers. This secured headline news in the press from the BBC to the Daily Mail, and represents a huge acknowledgement at the company. However, whilst we welcomed the agreement, BFAWU organisers are keen to emphasise that the problem is rooted in the power disparities arising between permanent managers and vulnerable zero hours workers dependent on their bosses for shifts.

Dawn Butler tabled EDM 847:

That this House recognises the legal agreement under section 23 of the Equalities Act 2006 reached between the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and fast-food giant McDonald's UK in response to concerns over the handling of complaints by staff of sexual harassment; believes that this vindicates the campaign of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union and McStrike to highlight a toxic culture which has been allowed to persist within the corporation and a number of its franchisees; further believes that whilst the actions to which McDonald's has committed under the agreement are welcome, no amount of management training and policy statements can compensate for the power differentials between permanent management and workers on zero hours or other casualised contracts; considers that the single most significant step the corporation could take would be accept a voluntary recognition agreement with the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union and facilitate access for union organisers to recruit those who wish to be represented by a trade union, to extend rights to workers on part-time and temporary contracts; and supports the demands of the Zero Hours Justice campaign to end the use of zero hours contracts where they are unilaterally imposed and, in the meantime, improve and protect rights for zero hours workers.

The Group also wrote to the Women and Equalities Select Committee and the Shadow Equalities Minister to raise these issues. Chris Stephens raised the issue with the Government Minister:

Chris Stephens: The Minister will be aware of a legal agreement under the Equalities Act between McDonald's and the Equality and Human Rights Commission over the handling of complaints of sexual harassment. Does the Minister believe that that is solely an issue of a toxic culture at McDonald's, and will she look at whether women working on zero-hours contracts across the economy are at increased risk of experiencing sexual harassment because of depending on male managers for future shifts?

Maria Caulfield : [...]Once again, the Government are keen to tackle sexual harassment in the workplace. That is why we are supporting the private Member's Bill promoted by the hon. Member for Bath (Wera Hobhouse), the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Bill, because it is such a serious issue.

This issue of gender power inequalities between employers and staff ties into BFAWU's support for the Zero Hours Justice and MeToo campaigns, and the Group will continue to push for action to tackle these abuses.

TRADE UNION COORDINATING GROUP (TUCG)

BFAWU is a founder member of the TUCG, which was established in 2008 to coordinate campaigning activities in Parliament and beyond on issues of common concern between member unions. The TUCG now comprises eleven trade unions – BFAWU, Equity, FBU, NAPO, NUJ, NEU, PCS, POA, RMT, UCU and URTU – bringing the total membership of TUCG-affiliated unions to over one million trade unionists.

Key activities in the period covered by this report have included:

- Promoted solidarity with and picket line details for PCS, RMT, UCU, NEU and NUJ national strike action
- Held a Fringe at The World Transformed in Liverpool on "Solidarity in Action: Practical Organising in Working Class Communities" – with National President Ian Hodson speaking alongside Bianca Todd, PCS Equity and NAPO
- Executive meeting on October 2022 with Lord Prem Sikka, discussion the impact of the Tory mini-budget and cuts on public spending
- Fringe meeting at rescheduled TUC Congress 2022 – "Striking Back Together: Why Rising Inflation Can't be Blamed on Workers' Pay Claims" – with speakers including PCS General Secretary Mark Serwotka, alongside John McDonnell MP, POA, PCS, UCU President), Natasha Hirst (NUJ) and economist Ann Pettifor
- Published "*Fair Pay Now: Time to Strike Back Together*", a new pamphlet on pay with contributions from all 11 affiliates and a foreword by John McDonnell MP
- Executive meeting (Dec 2022) heard from Ben Sellers (Director of IER) on the next steps for campaigning to defend trade union and employment rights
- Held Climate Campaign sub-group on 28 January 2023
- Promoted RMT Right to Strike events at 2nd and 3rd Reading of the Minimum Service Levels Bill legislation, and Campaign for Trade Union Freedom event on the Right to Strike held at NEU HQ
- Held AGM and Parliamentary Reception (with Mick Lynch, Jo Grady (UCU GS), and Louise Atkinson (President, NEU) on the Right to Strike
- Organised Women's STUC fringe on Tackling Misogyny (9 March) – with speakers from BFAWU General Secretary Sarah Woolley, POA, NEU and UCU
- Organised STUC fringe on the Right to Strike (with Campaign for Trade Union Freedom and Institute of Employment Rights), chaired by Sarah Woolley – with speakers including RMT's Mick Lynch and speakers from PCS, POA, IER, FBU and BFAWU.

- Executive (March) heard from Paul O'Connor from PCS and Clare Mosely from Care 4 Calais on Safe Passage policy proposals
- Published revised and updated Climate Action statement.
- Executive (May) with Shadow Employment Rights Minister Justin Madders – on the New Deal for Working People.

In 2023 the TUCG is Chaired by the RMT. In addition to core campaigns on the Cost of Living and Climate Change, we are also making the campaign to Defend the Right to Strike a priority of our campaigning.

The TUCG website can be found at www.tucg.org.uk
We are @TUCGInfo on Twitter.

ANNEX 2: CURRENT BFAWU GROUP MEMBERS

Andy McDonald MP	Middlesborough
Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP	Streatham
Beth Winter MP	Cynon Valley
Cat Smith MP	Lancaster and Fleetwood
*Chris Stephens MP	Glasgow South West
Claudia Webbe MP	Leicester East
Clive Lewis MP	Norwich South
Dan Carden MP	Liverpool Walton
*David Linden MP	Glasgow East
Dawn Butler MP	Brent Central
Emma Hardy MP	Hull West and Hessle
Grahame Morris MP	Easington
Ian Byrne MP	Liverpool West Derby
Ian Lavery MP	Wansbeck
Ian Mearns MP	Gateshead
Jeremy Corbyn MP	Islington North
Jo Stevens MP	Cardiff Central
John Cryer MP	Leyton and Wanstead
John Healey MP	Wentworth and Dearne
John McDonnell MP	Hayes and Harlington
Justin Madders MP	Ellesmere Port
Kate Osborne MP	Jarrow
Kerry McCarthy MP	Bristol East
Kim Johnson MP	Liverpool Riverside
Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP	Brighton Kemptown
Louise Haigh MP	Sheffield Heeley
Mary Foy MP	City of Durham
Mick Whitley MP	Birkenhead
Nadia Whittome MP	Nottingham East
Nav Mishra MP	Stockport
Olivia Blake MP	Sheffield Hallam
Paula Barker MP	Liverpool Wavertree
Rachel Hopkins MP	Luton East
Rebecca Long-Bailey MP	Salford
Richard Burgon MP	Leeds East
Sam Tarry MP	Ilford North
Zarah Sultana MP	Coventry South
Lord John Hendy	
Lord Prem Sikka	
Valerie Vaz MP	Walsall South

*Scottish National Party