

Text for ESH email - Disabled Members

Welcome to my fourth email of 2018. It was good to see so many disabled members and allies at conference.



My comments in the last email about Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) seem to have caused quite a stir. Thanks to those of you who have taken the time to contact me to say how much you and your members have benefited from the

training. The executive is continuing to review the use of activity grants to pay for MHFA training

I think the “organising around mental health” course currently in development by the union will be helpful in striking a good balance between supporting individuals and challenging systems which cause stress.

One of the motions at conference which didn't have sufficient time for debate was around funding for Special Educational Needs /Disabled (SEND) pupils. It seemed to me that there was an unnecessary argument about the role of special schools and inclusion going on around the time of conference. This centred around the fact that the proposer of the motion runs a consultancy for inclusive education. He was accused of potentially profiting if more SEND pupils were educated in the mainstream. Despite it being impossible for this to be the case, I felt the core of the motion about the need to fund SEND pupils appropriately was lost.

I'd like to go on record as being an advocate of inclusive education. I believe ALL pupils should have the right to a good education in a local school. I think it is possible for all pupils, including those labelled as SEND to be educated together. Of course, this needs to be fully resourced and funded which is why the union is right to challenge cuts in SEND provision.

I have recently had the pleasure of attending the LGBT+ conference which was truly glorious. Over 260 NEU members celebrated and discussed key issues for LGBT+ members. It included a number of workshops and key speakers who stressed the importance of members being able to identify themselves according to their lived experience. This is particularly important as the union moves forward with its policy and practice to support trans members.

I was particularly encouraged to attend the first LGBT+ Disabled Member Caucus. Despite the fact that there were only four of us. Well done Nick Lucas for hosting that. If you are interested in joining the What's App group please let me know.

Do please remember the Disabled members' conference on Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st October (lunchtime to lunchtime) at the Oxford Belfrey Hotel.

Please do keep in touch via my email:

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