

Statements for candidates for LGBTI+ seat on the Regional Equality Forum (REF) (you can vote for up to 2 people)

Fiona Heneghan

"I have had the honour of a seat on the REF for 5yrs for LGBT+ working with all strands as allies. I also sit on Regional Committee, I am a CEC member, and part of the Taskforce to implement the Monaghan Report recommendations, which highlighted many inequalities across our Union, effecting Members, Staff, Activists.

My commitment to LGBT+ and all strands in my roles is to highlight, challenge, achieve a more inclusive diverse Union. Covid has highlighted wider inequalities effecting all of us hate crimes, discrimination, cuts, have impacted all of us. LGBT+ Members have a range of struggles in the workplace, with health, in their communities.

I hope to continue in my REF role to highlight, challenge & change this. We need to encourage members who identify with LGBT+ and strands to join us through a collective equality campaign Regionally, Nationally."

Izzy Pochin

"I've been an LGBT+ activist for the last four years and worked closely regional and national equality staff, demonstrating passion and commitment for LGBT+ rights and vocal in GMB's priority that trans rights are human rights. A lack of visibility and action is slowing progress on LGBT+ rights.

Legislation that should support our rights and ability to live equally are lagging behind social progress. The Equality Act 2010 does not support intersectional experiences, while the government's failures to reform the Gender Recognition Act 2014 contributes to harmful myths and feeding the hands and pockets of transphobic groups.

I founded an LGBT+ Forum to create meaningful change for LGBT+ equality and sit on the TUC LGBT+ Committee. I am seeking election to the Regional Equality Forum to ensure self-organisation is a priority and that LGBT+ people can come together to support each other, campaign and challenge LGBT-phobia in our union and society."

Paul Sony

"I've been involved with regional REF for almost 10 years and GMB Southern Shout! since it's relaunched over 7 years ago which I've been involve with and ensuring that GMB Southern Shout! has on average attending about 7 pride events each year and having a present at Tolpuddle and other events.

I've been able to represent GMB on the TUC national LGBTI+ committee and in 2021 I was elected as Chair for the TUC LESE (London, East and Southeast) LGBTI+ Network where I'm already making a difference. Every time I've attended Congress, I have ensured that a voice is given on behalf GMB LGBTI+ members on different motions and been pressing to get funding and better resources (which includes upto date leaflets) for all GMB Self Organised Groups especially LGBTI+ and for Equality surveys to be carried out.

I feel that campaigning for LGBTI+ rights and working with external companies are important."