



## Dealing with drug and alcohol misuse

National Officer Roy Rickhuss (right) chaired the first ever conference extended debate which was on the theme of drug and alcohol misuse. Joining him (right to left) were Head of Health and Safety Rob Sneddon, MP for Bassetlaw John Mann and Neil Walters, drug and alcohol campaign co-ordinator in Corus Port Talbot.

### The situation

- Drug and alcohol addiction is a national problem that affects not just the addict but their family, friends, workmates, employers and communities
- 40,000 deaths per year are alcohol-related and alcohol-related illness costs the NHS £3 billion a year
- Around 14 million working days are lost annually due to alcohol abuse
- The cost of drug abuse in terms of crime, absenteeism and sickness is in excess of £20 billion a year.

### What Community can do

Community's drugs and alcohol counselling project with Corus Strip Products is a model for other unions and the Government, said John Mann, 'one that looks beyond the workplace and empowers communities to tackle the issue.' The debate established a number of ways in which Community is already helping and could further help tackle the problem, including:

- extending the Port Talbot drug and alcohol pilot to other regions in the UK
- engaging with employers to develop and implement drug and alcohol policies in every workplace – and monitoring and reviewing these
- working with employers to encourage workers with alcohol and drug problems to come forward by removing fear of dismissal or disciplinary action
- educating members and the community about the issue
- providing drug and alcohol counselling training for health and safety reps
- lobbying the Government for changes in drug and alcohol legislation
- working with community groups to provide support for families affected by drug and alcohol issues.

# Taking a stand on workplace bullying

Community's Rob Sneddon (left) chaired Wednesday's extended debate on bullying and harassment at work. The speakers included Matt Witheridge of the Andrea Adams Trust (centre) and Paul Pearson, Director of the UK Leather Federation (right).



## The situation

- 87% workers said they were bullied or were aware of it in their workplace
- Bullying is rarely about violence but persistent persecutory behaviour
- Bullying affects people physically and emotionally and impacts on their personal and working lives
- 8.9 million days are lost each year due to bullying

## What Community is doing

Community is working in partnership with organisations like the Andrea Adams Trust to develop the union's strategy and policies on this issue. It believes unions play a vital role in dealing with and raising awareness of bullying and harassment at work and is committed to:

- including bullying and harassment training for the union's health and safety reps
- supporting the annual Anti-Bullying at Work campaign
- undertaking surveys among betting industry workers and contributing to the TUC's study on vulnerable workers to raise the profile of the issue nationally
- working with employers to develop bullying and harassment policies
- raising awareness among employees of what bullying is and how to recognise it.

## What you can do

- Visit [www.andreaadamstrust.co.uk](http://www.andreaadamstrust.co.uk) for more information
- Call head office for a copy of Community's guide to workplace bullying
- Download guidance notes at [www.community-tu.org](http://www.community-tu.org).

# Justice for Colombia



The third of conference's extended debates was chaired by Liam Craig-Best, Director of Justice for Colombia (JfC). He was joined by Community's Keren Bender and Gareth Davies who visited Colombia as part of a JfC delegation.

## The situation

- One union activist is murdered every week in Colombia; others are intimidated, imprisoned without trial, tortured or 'disappear'
- People are scared to join a union – only 4 to 5% of Colombians are union members
- The Colombian government relies on this fear to weaken the trade union movement. The Colombian Army, police and their paramilitary death squads are behind many of these abuses
- The Colombian Army receives military aid and training from UK and US governments
- If we don't stand up for the rights of our Colombian colleagues – unions in Colombia will be wiped out.

## What Community is doing

UK unions, including Community and the TUC, established Justice for Colombia five years ago and continue to support its work to provide legal help for imprisoned activists, support recruitment campaigns and arrange UK visits for Colombian trade unionists and for UK groups to visit Colombia. Through the TUC, Community was part of a delegation to the Foreign Office calling for humanitarian not military aid for Colombia.

## What you can do

- Visit [www.justiceforcolombia.org](http://www.justiceforcolombia.org) for more information
- Sign the aid petition at [petitions.pm.gov.uk/Colombia/](https://petitions.pm.gov.uk/Colombia/)
- Get your branch to affiliate to Justice for Colombia