**2013 National Delegate Conference**

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**Motions**

**1. Organising**

**Carried as Amended: 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6**

Conference welcomes the revitalisation of UNISON’s organisation and recruitment work in response to the challenge posed by the UK government’s austerity programme.

Coalition government policies are leading to the increasing fragmentation of public services, whether through outsourcing, personalisation or the breakup of established bargaining arrangements such as academy schools. This fragmentation leaves workers isolated in areas that can be perceived as more difficult to organise. Members working in fragmented workplaces can find it difficult to access support from branch activists who may be working for other employers. In addition, the hard won equalities provisions negotiated in the public sector over many years may not translate to fragmented workplaces, leaving Black, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT), women, young and disabled workers without vital workplace protections. Some areas such as social care, schools and the community and voluntary sector have been more affected than most, but fragmentation is impacting across all the services in which UNISON organises. Low paid women have been particularly badly affected by fragmentation.

Conference recognises that the appointment of Fighting Fund Organisers (FFOs) has undoubtedly strengthened the organising capacity of UNISON, at a time when UNISON is under sustained attack. Conference welcomes the continuing development of the role and deployment of FFOs to ensure their best use based on an evaluation of their effectiveness. FFOs are an important part of a range of responses to the challenges faced by UNISON.

Conference also recognises that some branches where resources are available, have made arrangements to employ Branch Organisers or Organising Assistants under the direction of the Branch leadership to organise in particularly difficult and fragmented private sector employers, with some success as in the case of the Camden NSL contract, where some 170 Traffic Wardens joined the union and waged a campaign of industrial action over poverty pay in 2012. The effect of local organisation is to give dedicated time to both recruitment of members and recruitment of and support for new Shop Stewards.

Conference believes that developing new ways of organising and supporting members in fragmented workplaces is also a priority. Conference therefore welcomes the work being done by the Organising and Membership Working Group in developing new approaches to organising across UNISON, with support from branches, regions and the strategic organising unit.

The evidence from the organising campaigns supported by the Organising and Membership Working Group is that where there is properly planned, coordinated and resourced organising campaign it is possible to recruit significant numbers of new members and build a sustainable organisation in these fragmented workplaces.

Conference also recognises that in order to increase our membership we need to retain the members that we currently have. The economic climate is hitting our members hard and in order to retain members, we need to prove to them the continued benefit of being a UNISON member.

While there is no one best way to organise, Conference believes that the single most effective way to recruit new members and retaining existing members is by talking to workers about the benefits of union membership including improved workplace equalities provisions. However, fragmentation can make it difficult to talk to workers face to face. Conference therefore welcomes the steps being taken to develop new communications media and mechanisms for supporting organising in such workplaces.

Conference also notes the importance of organising at community events as a way to recruit members from fragmented workplaces and welcomes the initiatives taken by our self organised groups. For example, our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) members self organised group attends scores of LGBT Pride and other community events, spreading our campaign messages and bringing new members into the union. Further, self-organisation encourages members into activism: many members have started by involvement in self-organisation and gone on to become valued branch activists, helping relieve the pressure faced by branches. UNISON’s presence at LGBT Pride events also demonstrates our union’s commitment to LGBT workers equality, renewing the commitment and enthusiasm of existing activists.

Conference recognises that attracting new members and retaining existing members also depends on activity in the workplace. It has never been more important to develop new activists than now when existing activists are under increasing pressure at work and when trade union facilities are threatened.

At the heart of an effective organising and recruitment strategy is accurate membership data. Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to instigate an annual membership line count at the end of the first quarter of the year to provide accurate national, regional, branch and service group membership figures. Using the information on membership figures, Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to organise four one week national organising and recruitment drives (one each quarter).

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to develop new and existing resources aimed at supporting organising in the fragmented workplace, including:

1. an online toolkit containing practical advice and real examples of how to recruit and organise fragmented workers, including focusing on using bargaining for equalities as a recruitment and organising tool;
2. the UNISON skills bank, where members including retired members, can volunteer their skills and time to support the work of UNISON;
3. the smart phone ‘App’, which enables members and activists to stay in contact with UNISON.

Conference also calls on regions to develop plans for organising fragmented workplaces:

1. utilising information and advice from service groups and the strategic organising unit, as well as regional intelligence to identify target employers;
2. ensuring that relevant branches and self organised groups are fully engaged with the process, and that sustainability is built into the organising plan;
3. ensure that the retention of members is given no lesser organising priority than recruiting new members;
4. that best practice examples of local Branch and Regional organising in fragmented, isolated and/or anti-union private employers, are made available as part of the organising plan to support and sustain union organisation;
5. supporting self-organised group community organising as a further way to reach potential members in fragmented workplaces, encouraging branch and regional involvement in LGBT Pride and other equality events in the community.
6. use and promote the use of the toolkit, skills bank and App, as part of the process of supporting organisers and activists in fragmented workplaces.

**2. Building on our recruitment campaign**

**Carried**

Conference welcomes the major recruitment drive whose aim has been to strengthen the union in order to defend better our member’s interests and campaign even more effectively in defence of public services.

Conference believes that the next stage of this work must be to step up the union’s work to bring more members into active membership in order to build sustainable workplace organisation.

Conference also believes that for young members in particular, this means not only undertaking ‘like-recruits-like’ exercises in the workplace, and seeking to identify potential activists and leaders, but looking to the potential sources of our membership and future activists and leadership amongst young people who have not yet started their working lives.

Conference notes that UNISON has already done good work in building relationships with organisations that include potential members, e.g. the National Union of Students (NUS) - notably the joint campaigning on the Living Wage; and the British Youth Council (BYC) – which is supporting the union’s campaign to stop Police privatisation, and also offers opportunities to reach out to young people with a positive message about trade unions.

Conference further notes the widespread use of the TUC’s ‘Unions Into Schools’ online resource for teachers and activists – and which was developed with the full support of UNISON – that is used to teach young people about the role, history and achievements of trade unions.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. support further building of the union’s outreach work to young people, and especially with the aim of recruiting those such as students pursuing courses designed to lead to work in the public services;
2. build on our existing relationships through identifying joint campaigning activities with youth organisations;
3. consider what joint work may be done with youth organisations to raise UNISON membership and develop sustainable workplace organisation.

**7. Dealing with complaints within a branch**

**Withdrawn**

**8. UNISON women – active, campaigning, leading**

**Carried**

UNISON is proud to be the leading trade union for women. We have a solid history of women being at the heart of the union; through enshrining self organisation into our rule book along with proportionality. As a union which has a majority of women members we do not just talk the talk. Women are the foundation on which UNISON is built.

Women are now in unprecedented times. The Tory led government are attacking women on all sides: employment, terms and conditions, welfare reform, education, health care, cuts to public sector services, attacks on our equality and employment rights. UNISON women are at the front of the fight to oppose these draconian attacks.

The marches and the rallies that we have organised through UNISON and the TUC have seen thousands of our women members take to the streets to show that as public sector workers and citizens we will fight a government that wants to erode the quality of life that we have and to diminish our opportunities to achieve our potential.

As a union, UNISON has to harness the capability and enthusiasm of our women members; to build on those women activists that we have and to develop new women. It is incumbent on us to nurture new women members to come forward as activists and as leaders. Women’s experiences prepare them for leading our campaigns. This includes taking the message out to our families and communities, rallying support for our causes and highlighting the reality of what the coalition government is doing and the attacks they are making to the fabric of our society. Our strength is in our diversity. We are from all types of families and all communities and we can speak to the whole of society.

Experienced women need to be mentoring and buddying new women to come through whether that is at branch, regional or national level. It is our responsibility to pass on our knowledge to others.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. continue to build our self-organised groups, increasing participation and fair representation in women’s self-organisation and encouraging women to participate in the other self-organised groups and young members organisation;
2. promote and develop mentoring and buddying across UNISON and to work with the relevant departments in UNISON to achieve this through training programmes including stewards training;
3. encourage branches to support women’s training designed to provide women with campaigning, negotiating and organising skills and involve them in all aspects of the branch’s work;
4. identify and encourage women to be role models within UNISON;
5. promote UNISON’s Women into Leadership training at local, regional and national level.

**10. Bargaining through austerity**

**Carried as Amended: 10.1**

We are faced with the most severe economic and political challenges for a decade. The changes being introduced into the world of work and the wholesale privatisation of public services are having a severe impact. UNISON needs to have a clear and effective bargaining agenda that challenges the worst aspects of employment trends, and protects terms and conditions of employment, both for members where we organise in both the public and private sector.

The Coalition government’s slash and burn response to the economic crisis, and their austerity measures have resulted in drastic financial cuts to the public sector. Public sector employers are being forced to make radical cost savings. It is no surprise that the first attacks being made are to pay, and terms and conditions of employment.

Employers are looking to meet the financial constraints by introducing measures that diminish job security, create a flexible labour market that removes long held employment protection, and more insecure and vulnerable employment practices across our membership. Aligned with this is a push into arms length organisations that employ staff on reduced terms and conditions, or push members into the private sector, where again terms and conditions are cut.

There is a growth in the use of zero hours contracts, sometimes known as permanent variable contracts, which mean that employers do not have to provide specific hours or days of work to staff, or specific work location. The legal implications are very serious especially in terms of maternity rights, national insurance, redundancy, holiday and sickness rights. Employers are using this as a means of avoiding their responsibilities including pensions. The reality of these contracts is that staff :

1. have no guarantee of earned income;
2. have difficulties in arranging dependent care due to uncertainty;
3. face increases in travel costs if they have no designated work location;
4. may lose training opportunities;
5. face the erosion of terms and conditions of employment;
6. threaten equality at work;
7. social care provision both for service providers and service users are under threat;
8. face threats to their work life balance;
9. the potential for bullying and victimisation at work by withholding hours increases.

These developments in eroding employment protection and workers’ rights, make it even more imperative that UNISON is seen as the leading champion of the Living Wage campaign. Low paid workers who are forced to increase their income through in work state benefits are being demonised as benefit scroungers; young people who refuse to work for no pay are being castigated as work shy. It is imperative that UNISON fights to defend those most vulnerable in our society from the excess of abuse imposed by a government with no compassion or understanding of the reality of life for those on low pay or no pay. Low pay blights the lives of decent hardworking people who deserve better.

Conference notes the success in Scotland of achieving the Living Wage throughout NHS Scotland with the removal of the bottom point of band 1 and in all 32 local authorities. This was achieved through consistent political campaigning involving members, media work and lobbying politicians at local and Scottish level. To take this success forward a campaign to ensure that the Scottish government and councils use their procurement policies to extend the Living Wage beyond their directly employed workforce are being developed.

Too many people are faced with being unable to find permanent employment and are being forced to move from one temporary low paid insecure job to another that deprive them of employment rights and financial security.

UNISON was the leading voice of opposition when Chancellor George Osborne sought to promote regional pay. We can rightly say that UNISON won the first battle, but the issue has certainly not gone away. UNISON is the leading voice speaking up for hard working families in this country who deserve better; for the youth unemployed who are being deprived of a start in life; for our communities and families that are seeing vital services cut or lost; giving a voice to the most vulnerable in our society.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to campaign:

1. for an end to low pay in the public sector;
2. build our campaign for a Living Wage;
3. against the increasing trends in a flexible labour market that increases job insecurity, deprives workers of employment protection including zero hours contracts and permanent variable contracts that give no guarantee of hours or pay;
4. against the introduction of regional pay;
5. to link changes in employment trends to our alternative economic strategy for growth and jobs.

**12. Campaigning, recruiting and organising around health and safety**

**Carried**

Conference recognises the importance of health and safety as a campaigning, organising and recruiting tool, particularly in the light of the government’s continued assault on the health and safety regulatory system, including:

1. cuts to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and local authority budgets resulting in the continued reduction in the number of workplace inspections;
2. the dumbing down of HSE advice, guidance and Approved Codes of Practice;
3. ill thought out legislative proposals such as the removal of the ability of an employee to enforce a civil claim for workplace injury on the grounds of a breach of workplace regulations, and of the removal of the self employed from the scope of health and safety legislation.

Health and Safety reps with their protected functions are ideally placed to play an active role in the campaign against the assault on health and safety and the government’s wider attacks on public services and trade union facility time. Health and Safety reps have the right to:

1. investigate potential hazards, dangerous occurrences and complaints relating to employees’ health and safety;
2. make representations on matters arising from the above and general matters affecting the health, safety and welfare at work of employees;
3. carry out inspections;
4. be consulted on any measure at the workplace which may affect the health and safety of employees;
5. take sufficient paid time off during work hours to perform their functions and undergo the necessary training.

The cuts to public services have led to an agenda of almost perpetual organisational change resulting in increased stress levels and other detrimental effects on the health and safety of the workforce. Safety reps’ right to paid time off means that safety reps are ideally placed to fight and campaign against this agenda.

In addition health and safety is inextricably linked to equality and other wider negotiating agendas including health and safety issues linked to gender, age and reasonable adjustments for disability. Safety reps have a key role to play in these areas too.

If safety reps are to play these roles it is vital that UNISON recruits more safety reps and also ensures they receive the right training, sufficient paid time off and are representative of UNISON’s membership as a whole taking into account all the equality strands.

It is for this reason that UNISON has re-launched its Safety-in-Numbers (SIN) campaign with the aim of increasing the number of safety reps. SIN is currently being rolled out nationally.

The recent success of UNISON’s National Health and Safety Seminar demonstrates the importance of health and safety. However it is important to build on this success and therefore this Conference calls on the National Executive Council to continue to:

1. produce material as and when required to promote and encourage branches to participate in the SIN campaign;
2. work with UNISON’s Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) to improve the training UNISON provides for safety reps;
3. produce guides and other material highlighting the importance of health and safety and the various health and safety issues to the different groups within UNISON covering gender, ethnicity, age and all other protected characteristics;
4. use guides, factsheets, bulletins, the website, Twitter and other forms of social media to promote the role of safety reps and provide bargaining advice to assist Safety Reps get the time off they are entitled to;
5. produce negotiating guides linking health and safety to UNISON’s wider agendas such as equalities and the cuts to public services;
6. work in partnership with the TUC, HAZARDS, other trade unions, its partners in Europe through the ETUC and EPSU, charities and pressure groups to combat the government’s reckless attacks on health and safety.

**18. A National Health Service means no to postcode pay**

**Carried**

Conference notes with concern and anger the threat to health workers, their families, patients, communities and our National Health Service that has been represented by the Pay Cartel in the South West (aka the Pay Consortium). Conference further notes the ongoing threat posed by NHS Employers across the country who unilaterally or in collaboration with other employers look to move away from the nationally negotiated Agenda for Change terms and conditions.

Conference expresses its extreme concern that despite the commitment of both the Employer Side and the Staff Side to agree at national level changes to Agenda for Change, and to work with employees and union members across the country to maintain effective and efficient national bargaining measures, a large number of Trusts continue to attack their own communities and staff by attempting to cut pay and terms and conditions. If this is not resisted, it will only be a matter of time before other service groups face the same attack.

Conference recognises and deplores that the Tory-led Coalition government's "Austerity" agenda has contributed to this attack on our hard-working members, their families and our communities with a strategic failure to recognise the changing demographics and health needs of our populations, and to undermine the NHS by aggressive and continuing real terms funding cuts.

Ever since it was set up, at a time of huge national financial difficulty following World War Two, Conference believes that the National Health Service, and the staff that keep the National Health Service working 24x7, has been a foundation stone of our country's national identity and an expression above all other of our national commitment and belief that regardless of class, wealth, race, age, gender, sexuality, ability or other personal characteristic every citizen of this country is equally entitled to the best health care that can be provided.

Conference therefore:

1. reaffirms UNISON's fundamental commitment to a truly National Health Service now, and into the future;
2. stresses the central role of effective organising in resisting attacks on our members’ pay, terms and conditions, and reinforces the importance of maintaining and building membership density to maximise UNISON’s bargaining strength;
3. mandates the National Executive Council to lead and co-ordinate a long-term bargaining strategy to retain national conditions and to reinforce the value of national pay, with a long term approach;
4. requires the National Executive Council to identify and implement a strategy to enable the effective allocation and deployment of emergency resources to support branches on the frontline of such sustained attacks.

**19. Regional and local pay threats**

**Carried as Amended: 19.1**

Conference notes with concern the continued attempts by the Coalition government at Westminster to break up national pay bargaining in the public services with attempts to introduce local and regional pay. Conference welcomes the fact that active campaigning has deterred some of the immediate threats through the pay review body system but threats remain, not least in the NHS pay cartel in the south west of England but also in other public bodies opting out. It is becoming clear that pay fragmentation is Coalition policy linking in with the marketisation and privatisation of public services, for example academy schools in England.

Conference reaffirms that regional pay is unequal and unfair for staff and bad for local economies as it will cut wages in areas already hard hit by the recession, cuts and austerity policies. Conference notes that many large businesses do not operate a Regional pay approach as it is bureaucratic and inefficient and that national collective agreements are efficient and fair in public, voluntary and private sectors.

Conference welcomes the hard hitting TUC and UNISON campaign of 2012 putting pressure on local members of parliament to oppose regional pay plans. UNISON commissioned research from IDS has demolished many of the myths spread by free market think tanks and economists. This resulted in the Chancellor stepping back from promoting his regional pay plans in his Autumn Statement on the 5 December 2012. However there has now been a fresh attack on school teachers pay by the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove MP, who announced that he intends future annual pay scale increments to be discretionary, individualised and in the control of local managers.

Conference salutes the UNISON members in the South West of England, and all others who have supported them, in continuing to oppose the NHS pay cartel to break the Agenda for Change agreement and commits to continue to give its full support to the Health Service group in this campaign.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. continue the national campaign, working with service groups and regions, to oppose Coalition plans for regional and local public sector pay systems and further fragmentation of Public Sector pay;
2. promote the benefits of national collective bargaining as securing fair and equal pay for the greatest number of employees;
3. continue to support the Health service group and South West region in their campaign against the NHS pay cartel;
4. work with the GPF and Labour Link to build political support for these positions so that no political party has regional pay plans in their manifesto at the 2015 general election.

Conference welcomes the work of the Northern regional young members forum in campaigning against regional pay, including the production of a short video making the case against regional pay. Conference agrees that a link to the video be circulated to all branches to:

a) support the campaign against regional pay and highlight key arguments against it; and

b) demonstrate the kind of imaginative campaign tools available to us.

**25. Fighting privatisation**

**Carried**

Conference welcomes and applauds the actions of branches, branch officers, regions, the Police and Justice Service Group Executive, its committees and staff in opposing privatisation across the Police and Probation Services in 2012. Events have shown that campaigning against privatisation does work and that public opinion is on our side and not on the side of the privateers in government.

Conference acknowledges in particular the following work within branches:

1. the excellent campaign run by the Police branches in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire to oppose their forces signing up to the three-force privatisation proposals to join the Lincolnshire Police G4S contract was a resounding success. The branches commissioned expert analysis of the forces’ privatisation proposals from the Association of Public Sector Excellence (APSE) to challenge the business case for privatisation ensuring APSE attendance at the crucial police authority meetings. They lobbied their police authorities and made a real impact in the local and regional press. They launched an ‘e-petition’ as well as taking the petition to the streets of the three counties and secured excellent local press and TV coverage;
2. the magnificent campaign fought and won by the West Midlands Police branch to oppose the disastrous Business Partnering Proposals forced on the police service by the Home Office. The branch engaged with the public through a petition taken out onto the streets of the West Midlands to shame the West Midlands Police Authority over its non-existent public consultation policy. They worked with Labour Link and West Midlands MPs and members of the West Midlands Police Authority to challenge the proposals at every key meeting. They won the public relations battle via the media. They forged an effective alliance with Unite in the West Midlands to carry the fight to the force and police authority. They worked with their region and the Service Group to ensure the campaign was at the forefront of the public and media.

Other initiatives launched to stop the attacks on a public service include:

1. the launch of the Service Group’s ‘Stop Police Privatisation’ campaign, with its distinctive branding, dedicated web-site, campaign materials and briefings, opinion polling and resources for branches and regions;
2. dedicated procurement training for branches and regions, tailored to specific outsourcing proposals;
3. Service Group research into police privatisation;
4. coverage of the union’s campaign on national and regional TV and in all key UNISON publications;
5. the mainstreaming of the ‘Stop Police Privatisation’ campaign in UNISON’s work with Labour Link in the run up to the Police and Crime Commissioner elections;
6. the Service Group’s efforts to extract key information from the Home Office, Cabinet Office and Ministry of Justice, under Freedom of Information, in relation to privatisation proposals for the Police and Probation Services;
7. UNISON evidence to the Parliamentary Justice Committee highlighting the dangers of the government’s privatisation proposals for the Probation Service particularly in relation to Community Payback;
8. UNISON work with the Local Government Information Unit to promote public partnerships for Probation as an alternative to the government’s privatisation mantra.

Conference believes that outsourcing will never be of benefit to our members, and that direct employment within the public sector with nationally agreed terms and conditions remain the best option for our members.

There is no evidence that the private sector provide value for money.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

1. continue to oppose privatisation in the Police and Probation Service, by supporting branches facing privatisation locally and by seeking to persuade other police and probation stakeholders of the dangers of privatisation;
2. provide support, guidance and assistance to branches faced with privatisation threats;
3. maximise publicity to ensure the public are aware of the consequences of privatisation to their police and probation service;
4. ensure local branch campaigns are integrated into a national campaign;
5. work with Labour Police and Crime Commissioners to seek to keep privatisation off the agenda;
6. seek to influence other Police and Crime Commissioners in relation to the stop police privatisation campaign;
7. develop and expand the ‘Stop Police Privatisation’ and ‘Stop Probation Privatisation’ campaigns so that we can continue to respond to challenges around privatisation in the future;
8. seek to influence the decision makers in relation to the privatisation in probation.

**32. Government attack on childcare**

**Withdrawn**

**33. Affordable, safe, adequate, secure housing for all**

**Carried as Amended: 33.1, 33.2**

Conference notes:

1. the death of Margaret Thatcher in April served as a reminder that her administration's Housing Acts of 1980 and 1988, largely unaltered by new Labour in government, contributed to the current crisis of affordable housing through drastically depleting the stock of council housing, while enabling private landlords to dramatically increase rents
2. that the housing policies of the Tory led coalition government is leading to the cleansing of ordinary working people from London and other areas of high rents across the country;
3. this process was started by a local area housing allowance benefit cap which deliberately ignored actual rent levels. While the imposition of a total benefit cap will finish the cleansing;
4. families and communities will be split as people have to move hundreds of miles across the country to find cheap private sector accommodation. Soon there will be concentrations of poverty and deprivation in suburbs that circle middle class city enclaves as they do in the divisive and polarised “Banlieues” that are a blight and a disgrace upon Paris;
5. this will not just affect the sick and the unemployed but also on the working poor who rely on housing benefit to top up their poverty wages;
6. due to the absolute shortage of social housing, rent for everyone in the private sector is becoming more and more unaffordable while overcrowding and insecurity of tenure increases;
7. there are now more UNISON members who live in the private rented sector than in social housing. Many members have grown up children living with them who are unable to afford to leave home due to high housing costs;
8. the underlying reason for this housing crisis is the failure of the market and successive governments to ensure a sufficient supply of low cost public and private housing. Instead of investing in building homes, housing benefit has been squandered on subsiding high rents. Often going into the hands of criminal Rachman landlords;
9. at the same time that we have massive under capacity and unemployment amongst construction and development workers.

Conference calls for:

1. a mass housing investment programme. This should involve committing to a target of 250,000 homes per annum, as argued for in the Housing Voice report, and include 80,000 local authority and housing association homes every year. Building new, refurbishing and retro-cladding older homes with a particular emphasis on renewing the existing stock and overall supply of council housing. Paid for in the short term a funding for building scheme supported through non conventional funding mechanisms by increases in progressive taxes and in the long term by reductions in housing benefit and the Keynesian multiplier effect of an increase in the government finances from building workers paying taxes rather than claiming benefits;
2. the compulsory licensing and regulation of all landlords, social and private and strict enforcement of minimum environmental, management and repair standards. Rents levels for all regardless of tenure must be fair and reasonable to tenants and landlords which will require the introduction of rent controls to be enforced by local authorities;
3. in the meanwhile local housing allowances and benefit caps should reflect the reality of living in high rent areas;
4. calls on Labour Link to consider advocating such policies on a regional and national level.

**38. Demise of the state education system**

**Carried as Amended: 38.1, 38.2, 38.3**

Conference believes that this government is intent on dismantling state education in the same way they are dismantling our National Health Service. Conference recognises the need for a national campaign to defend local authority run comprehensive education and will work with other unions, parent groups, local councillors, as well as organisations such as Campaign for State Education in England and Anti Academies Alliance with such a goal in mind.

The views of support staff, parents and teachers are being ignored whilst the Coalition government’s Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, arrogantly decides that he has the freedom to overturn 150 years of state education without the need to consult local communities.

Both staff and parents have grave reservations about Academy and ‘Free School’ status. Conference welcomes the successes of a number of local communities across the country in fighting against their schools being handed over to Academy sponsors who know little about how to run our schools.

Conference notes that there are now more than 2,600 Academies, with another 500 set to join them soon. Many of these will be forced academies when parent and local communities are not consulted and firms like Harris Carpets will become sponsors and control the board of governors. State education will further be dismantled with the increase in the creation of so-called ‘Free Schools’.

Conference further notes that the Academies Commission has expressed concern that because academies are their own admission authorities they are in a position to covertly select pupils on the basis of their socioeconomic background. This skews data on the performance of Academies and could widen social segregation.

Conference believes there remains an important role for democratically accountable local authorities in education and that Free Schools, for example, are failing to provide new school places in areas where the population is growing.

Conference believes that the quality of education has not been improved through Academy or Free School status. One clear outcome of Academy and Free School status is that it presents a threat to the terms and conditions of our members. Support staff are dedicated and committed to providing the best education for pupils and we must work to counter attacks to our members’ pay and conditions.

Conference reaffirms policy passed at 2011 conference including the following:

i) continue to promote good local comprehensive schools for every child;

ii) work with the other education unions, the TUC, the Anti Academies Alliance, and Campaign for State Education against privatisation and in favour of comprehensive education provided through local education authorities;

iii) work with Labour Link to influence Labour party policy to support comprehensive education provided through local education authorities.

Conference notes that the ATL and NUT have both passed motions of no-confidence in Secretary of State, Michael Gove, Conference also wishes to express that it has no confidence in Mr Gove.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to pursue a twin-track strategy of:

1. opposing and campaigning against Academy and Free School status through:
2. working with other trade unions, communities and teacher colleagues;
3. promoting closer working relationship with teacher trade unions in Academies.
4. where possible working with local councillors and local authorities;
5. assisting with community meetings and leaflets;
6. encouraging our members and local residents to write to local councillors and MPs;
7. organising petitions and engaging with community campaigns;
8. continuing to work with Anti-Academies Alliance and TUC education unions.
9. making the case against Academy and Free School status.
10. working with other groups to establish a national campaign calling for future governments to reverse the fragmentation of state education and re-establish comprehensive education provided by local authorities.

Conference supports the Academies Commission’s call for each Academy to be compelled to publish comprehensive data, including socioeconomic data, on who applies and who is admitted.

1. protecting our members who are employed in Academies and Free Schools through:
2. pursuing recognition agreements;
3. highlighting the benefit of Academies buying into a central funding pool to pay for trade union facilities time
4. developing decent pay and conditions, including pensions;
5. organising and recruiting more members to strengthen the collective voice;
6. developing a structure in each school, and ensuring good communication flows between members and stewards in Academies, Free Schools branches and the wider union.

**54. A living wage and a living pension**

**Carried as Amended: 54.1, 54.2, 54.4**

Conference believes that low pay is not just an issue for those underpaid, it also blights our local communities. Low paid workers often have to work long hours to support their families making it hard to spend what little disposable income they have on their children’s education, community activities and leisure or even in local shops. Similarly low income pensioners also have problems making ends meet but without the opportunity, in most cases, to gain additional income through work. As such low pay and pension income, hand in hand with Tory austerity, is suppressing economic recovery.

The Living Wage Foundation has provided substantial evidence that the introduction of a London Living Wage has had net benefits for employers in terms of staff loyalty and declining absenteeism.

Similarly, studies by organisations such as the Joseph Rowntree Trust show that low incomes have a negative effect on the health and social mobility of communities. Declining wage rates also often correlate with rising crime. A living wage of £7.45 an hour must therefore be an essential component of economically sustainable communities. But that cannot be the end of it we must ensure that every pensioner has a living pension enabling them to live with dignity and free from poverty.

In view of the above, UNISON calls for the TUC to campaign for a living wage and pension nationally and across all regions. In particular Conference believes the TUC must call for local councils and other large public sector institutions not only to implement the living wage but to act as living wage champions within their local economies, not least by promoting the living wage with private sector contractors currently providing public services.

Conference notes that there have been successful campaigns for the Living Wage across all service groups over the last year. For example, the sector wide deals on the Living Wage in Scottish Local Government and NHS, and Further Education Colleges in England have been hugely beneficial for low paid members. UNISON regions have supported many individual campaigns to pressurise employers into paying the Living Wage in public, community and private sectors. This experience has been built upon by the National Executive Council and the new "Principles of Living Wage Campaigning and Negotiating" guidance helps Branches on how the Living Wage should be implemented and on issues such as equal pay, avoiding cuts to other terms and conditions and engaging with voluntary groups in the wider community.

Conference further agrees to campaign with the TUC and others across the labour movement to campaign for a state pension at least in line with the official poverty line figure, currently £178 per week, and uprated annually in line with the greater of prices, wages or 2.5%.

Conference notes that the Low Pay Commission is tri-partite body with worker, employer and academic membership and though it has built up authority, there is obvious concerns that its annual recommendations on National Minimum Wage can be at best cautious and at worst seriously inadequate.

Conference also believes we need to campaign for a statutory living wage that does not discriminate on grounds of age which could be overseen by a ‘Living Wage’ Commission taking over responsibility from the current Low Pay Commission operating with an expanded role to oversee the statutory minimum living wage rate.

Conference believes that this campaign must involve UNISON’s young members and retired members, as a part of our work to develop inter-generational campaigning activity.

**63. Attacks on facility time**

**Carried as Amended: 63.1**

Conference is concerned at this government’s concerted attacks on trade union facility time in the public sector.

The United Kingdom has a proud tradition of progressing industrial relations through a joint approach with trade unions. Public sector employers recognise the worth of allocating facility time as a means of supporting trade union activists to fulfil their roles. This is borne out by a recent report by the National Centre for Social Research which demonstrated that facility time saved organisations money and provided a ready-made structure for meaningful consultation and negotiation.

UNISON women play a vital role in building and representing the union at branch, regional and national level. Women’s involvement helps to break down the barriers to other women becoming active and challenges the stereotype of a traditional trade unionist. However, women activists still spend additional hours of their own time to fulfil their union roles and it is essential that available facility time is shared fairly to enable women to achieve an acceptable work/union/life balance. This should include encouraging Branches to open up facility time posts to job sharing and look at the distribution of facility time to ensure that as many people as possible have access to it, especially those with less access e.g. part-time workers, low-paid workers, shift workers and outsourced workers.

Conference also recognises the value of facility time for self organisation, which allows women to participate across our structures at all levels and provides another route to women becoming active in UNISON, the only union with a rule book commitment to self organisation.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

1. continue to campaign for the right of all our activists to facility time to perform their trade union duties;
2. include the women’s perspective in UNISON’s campaign to defend facility time, particularly highlighting its importance for women activists;
3. highlight to our members the attacks that are being made to facility time in the public sector by the Tory led coalition government.

**68. Decolonising LGBT equality: aid conditionality and LGBT human rights**

**Carried**

Conference notes with concern the statement by UK Prime Minister David Cameron that overseas aid should be cut to countries which criminalise homosexuality.

Conference notes that UNISON is opposed to such aid conditionality. Conference believes that it would not advance lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) human rights or equality but rather would create a real risk of a serious backlash against LGBT communities and organisations, and against human rights defenders, particularly in the Global South. Homosexuality is strongly portrayed in some countries as somehow being a ‘western import’ and LGBT rights the result of ‘western influence’. Cameron’s announcement, made without any reference to local struggles for LGBT rights or the role of LGBT and broader social justice movements in such countries, feeds and supports these notions.

Conference recognises that the laws criminalising homosexuality in most countries potentially affected were imposed by the British colonial power. Economic threats to try to force decriminalisation smack of neo-colonialism, and there has been a long history of Northern governments conditioning development aid, usually by fixing economic strings. There is a danger in LGBT people's rights getting lumped together with trade policy, or becoming an extra conditionality in an assistance regime that requires opening local markets to foreign products.

Conference also recognises that singling out LGBT rights in a context of wider human rights violations in some countries, reinforces the notion that LGBT rights are ‘special rights’ and considered to be ‘more important’ than other human rights

Conference believes that such a reduction in aid would penalise the poorest and most vulnerable people in developing economies - including LGBT people - affecting famine prevention, provision of clean water, education and health care.

Further, Conference recognises that development is itself a human right and aid conditionality in the LGBT rights or any other ‘single issue’ sphere pits human rights against each other.

Conference believes that a “rights-based approach to aid giving” would mean not using rights to justify cutbacks or curtail development, but using aid actively and creatively to promote rights, including funding decision-making and participation by the most marginalised communities.

Conference heeds the concerns raised by activists – LGBT and others – in the Global South that aid conditionality would lead to reprisals and scapegoating for them. It recognises that there has already been evidence of the announcement being used by some governments and political leaders to scapegoat LGBT people and exacerbate an environment of intolerance and hatred. It is essential that we listen to these front line activists, taking the lead from those directly affected in the types of action that they would like us to take.

In order to assist LGBT people whose human rights are denied, we need to engage in genuine dialogue and solidarity and get behind their initiatives, not decide what should be done for them.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council, working with the National LGBT Committee and other appropriate structures of the union, to:

1. campaign to expose the dangers of such aid conditionality and promote an understanding of international solidarity amongst UNISON members;
2. explore how UNISON’s International Development Fund can be used to support LGBT equality initiatives;
3. raise these issues with the government and also with the Labour Party, with a view to influencing future Labour policy.

**73. Solidarity with Nicaragua**

**Carried**

UNISON notes the long standing friendship between UNISON and UNE, the Nicaraguan Public Service Trade Union, and the strengthening of that relationship in recent years. It also applauds the progress made by the Sandinista government since being elected in 2007 towards social and economic justice in Nicaragua. In the present harsh climate for trade unions in the UK, it is heartening to hear of, for example, an increase in the minimum wage and a range of new laws designed to protect Nicaraguan workers’ rights including collective bargaining.

In particular we note the signing of a twinning agreement between Greater London region UNISON and UNE Managua in 2009, the successful visit of Domingo Perez, the General Secretary of UNE, to UNISON’s local government conference in 2011, and the participation of two young Nicaraguan trade unionists at National Delegate Conference 2012.

We also note the support given by the trade union's International Development Fund to the opening of a legal office in Managua specialising in employment law, which has helped many workers to overcome difficulties in the workplace and have their rights recognised by their employers. This legal office is the first of its kind in Nicaragua, and its impact benefits not just UNE membership, but the wider union movement and therefore all workers’ rights.

We consider that these advances provide golden opportunities for UNISON and UNE to continue working together to their mutual benefit at a time when trade unions in the UK are under constant attack whilst in Nicaragua, trade union membership, particularly amongst young people, is flourishing.

We also recognise the pivotal role that the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign has played in maintaining an awareness of Nicaragua’s progress both amongst trade unions and the general public, and in facilitating the deepening of the relationship between UNISON and UNE.

With this in mind, Conference calls for the following:

1. encourage all branches and regions to affiliate to the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign Action Group and promote NSCAG events and campaigns;
2. urge the international relations department to continue to work closely with NSCAG and to further explore how relations with sister Nicaraguan trade unions can be strengthened and enhanced. This could include not only UNE but also FETSALUD, the health workers’ union;
3. to widely disseminate “good news” stories from Nicaragua such as the success of the legal office to raise awareness of the effectiveness of international solidarity amongst UNISON members;
4. encourage all UNISON regions to develop twinning agreements with UNE regions in Nicaragua.

Conference further urges the National Executive Council to explore new ways to work with the Nicaragua solidarity Campaign and to build support for the Nicaragua people through the strengthening of relations with our sister unions at all levels.

**79. Palestine**

**Carried as Amended: 79.1**

Conference reaffirms UNISON’s existing policy on Palestine with the following principal aims:

1. Israel to withdraw to the borders of 5 June 1967, demolish its Apartheid wall and remove all its settlements;
2. the right of Palestinians to establish a state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with its capital at Jerusalem; and,
3. the Palestinian refugees’ right to return.

Conference welcomes the United Nations (UN) General Assembly resolution recognising Palestine as a state. It regrets the United Kingdom’s (UK) abstention in the vote but welcomes the Labour front bench’s call for a vote in its favour.

Conference notes that:

1. the rights of people living under occupation are guaranteed under article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention to which Israel is a signatory and which states that “the occupying power shall not deport or transfer part of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies” but successive Israeli governments have pursued a policy of building and expanding colonies (or ‘settlements’) in occupied territories; and,
2. the UN, European Union, and the UK government all acknowledge that these colonies, besides being illegal, threaten the prospects for peace but the EU and its member states, including the UK, continue to allow companies to import goods from these colonies and to provide them with services which encourages their continued existence and expansion.

Conference notes in particular the renewed settlement growth put in hand by the Israeli government in retaliation to the UN vote to recognise Palestine. This will more or less complete the encirclement of East Jerusalem, cut it off from the rest of the West Bank and put the viability of any two state solution in serious doubt.

Conference recalls the decisions of last year's conference:

1. to note the conclusion of the Russell Tribunal that Israel's treatment of the Palestinians amounts to Apartheid as defined under international law;
2. to note the tribunal's recommendation that global civil society replicate the spirit of solidarity that contributed to the end of Apartheid in South Africa including by supporting the campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions; and,
3. to instruct the National Executive Council to give effect to this recommendation.
4. furthermore, Conference welcomes the findings of the final session of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine held on 16/17 March 2013 – that the International Criminal Court should recognise Palestinian jurisdiction and that a special session of the United Nations General Assembly should be convened on Israeli apartheid. The National Executive Council is instructed to circulate to branches and regions the final report from the Russell Tribunal and actively campaign for support of its recommendations.

Conference also recalls last year's decision to instruct the National Executive Council to:

1. use the UNISON website to include an explanation for members on settlement produce, international law and why UNISON supports boycotting Israeli settlement goods with template letters to supermarkets and Members of Parliament for members to use;
2. where UNISON is represented on bodies concerned with pension fund investments, ensure such representatives are briefed on UNISON policy and trained and supported to carry it out;
3. develop guidance for branches on campaigns to stop public service contracts being awarded to companies which are complicit in Israeli violations of international law, including the 4th Geneva Convention, for instance by contracts which service the illegal settlements, construct the Apartheid Wall or provide security in prisons holding Palestinians illegally transferred from the Occupied Territories.
4. review relations with UNISON’s partner organisations which accept sponsorship from companies that are complicit in the occupation.

Conference confirms and repeats these instructions.

Conference further recalls the decision of last year’s Conference to strengthen UNISON’s cooperation with the new trade unions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Israel which oppose the occupation and seek to organise Palestinian and migrant workers. Conference is therefore glad to know that the Arab workers union was registered in Israel April 2010 (replacing the NGO) Sawt Al Amal (Workers Voice). This union seek solidarity affiliations from overseas trades unions so Conference further instructs the National Executive Council:

1. to consider exercising its power under rule D.2.9.7 to affiliate to the Arab Workers Union; and,
2. to circulate material to regions and branches with the request that they consider affiliating too.

**83. Kick It Out - Racism has no place in football**

**Carried**

With the events of racism being highlighted amongst several high profile football players, it is clear that the game has some way to go to shed itself of this vile and evil mindset.

When FIFA president Sepp Blatter under played the significance of racism in the game it raised concerns about his ability to deal appropriately with equality issues in football. Overlooking racism makes it even harder to educate and eradicate the problem.

When the European Championship took place in Poland and Ukraine in June 2012 there was real concern that far right groups would use this opportunity to pedal their hatred and racism during the games.

UEFA and FIFA will have to stop paying lip service to racism in the game and put in clear and transparent zero tolerant deterrents to those football federations who choose not to take the issue of racism seriously and tackle the issues within their domestic and national game.

During Euro 2012, UEFA fined one Danish player £80,000 for inadvertently advertising a betting shop during a goal celebration against sponsorship rules; yet only fined the Croatian FA £65,000 for racist chanting by 300 of their fans against an Italian player. This is another example of racism being downplayed within the game.

In addition we are disappointed with the delay by the Football Association (FA) not investigating the issue of alleged racial abuse by John Terry towards a fellow Black professional and question the timing of the delay in the criminal proceedings which ensured he was able to play in the European Championships in 2012.

We in UNISON are encouraged by our affiliation and donations made to organisations like Show Racism the Red Card as we are in no doubt that this work is of vital importance to the education and awareness of racism amongst young people. We are also mindful of the work Kick It Out are doing across the football federation and believe their work fits into UNISONS work programme on challenging racism. Football is the national sport and what happens on the field in professional football is a public and high profile reflection of what is occurring in our society. The concern is that unless there are robust challenges to attitudes in football then racism will become more pervasive at football matches, in our communities and in our workplaces. Where racism exists in the workplace we can never be truly organised.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work with the National Black Members’ Committee to:

1. support Kick It Out programmes and initiatives that fall in line with UNISON’s aims and objectives on challenging racism in the workplace;
2. write to the FA, UEFA and FIFA outlining UNISON’s concerns on the issue of racism in the workplace and the lack of action taken by the federations on this issue;
3. support and link into other partners groups that ‘Kick It Out’ work with like The Black and Asian Coaches Association and Stephen Lawrence Trust;
4. organise a meeting with these organisations to develop stronger links within the community and highlight the importance of the trade union movement in tackling these issues.

**85. Disability hate crime**

**Carried as Amended: 85.1**

Any incident or crime, which is perceived to be motivated because of a person’s disability or perceived disability, by the victim or any other person, will be classed as "Disability Hate".

This can be committed against a person or property.

This would include anyone who is targeted as a result of their physical disability, sensory impairment, learning disability or mental health.

Disability Hate Crime can be carried out in or near the home, in the street, in fact anywhere.

Whenever or wherever it happens it has a devastating effect on the health and wellbeing of the person who has experiencing it.

Some of these effects may be:

1. loss of self confidence;
2. depression;
3. lack of concentration;
4. loss or increase of appetite;
5. discrimination in the workplace;
6. insomnia;
7. fear of leaving the house;
8. physical, emotional and/or sensory impairment.

UNISON recognises that disability hate crime may not happen in the work place but the affects of it may have a profound impact on that person at work. Time off work to deal with recuperation from injury, assistance with police investigations or the installation of improved security measures within the member’s home and other related hate crime absences should be treated as disability leave.

UNISON believes all forms of discrimination should be dealt with fairly with equal weight. Stewards and branches need to be aware of it and how they can support our member during and after these experiences especially in the case of Deaf members for whom the experience of hate crime may be heightened due to:

1. the predator’s ability to approach without audible warning;
2. kerbcrawlers’ verbal assaults being inaccessible and intimidating;
3. police reporting systems being largely inaccessible to Deaf people.

Conference asks the National Executive Council to:

1. work with other sections of UNISON and external organisations to campaign on the issue of disability hate crime;
2. to raise the awareness of disability hate crime in union publications and website, in easy to read, plain English, to give the message that disability hate crime will not be tolerated and that union stewards and branches will support members;
3. to campaign for disability hate crime to be treated equally to other forms of hate crime;
4. contact all Police and Crime Commissioners and the Chair of the Scottish Police Authority asking them to make disability hate crime a priority
5. explore "the Offences (Aggravation by Prejudice)(Scotland) Act 2009" with a view to campaigning to have similar legislation adopted in England and Wales.

We further call on the National Executive Council to lobby police authorities and Police and Crime Commissioners to take action to ensure disabled and Deaf people are protected from hate crimes and that the processes for seeking advice and registering complaints of crime are available in all accessible formats, including British Sign Language and in appropriate formats to those who have learning difficulties.

**92. Work capacity assessment and the denial of disability**

**Carried**

Conference rejects without qualification the revised Work Capability Assessment (WCA) that underpins the government's drive to deny people who are sick or disabled the financial support they need because they cannot secure paid work. Thousands of disabled people's lives are being turned upside down by the new assessment regime used to decide eligibility for Employment and Support Allowance.

Conference notes data in Early Day Motion 295 which reports that last year 1,100 claimants died while under compulsory work-related activity for benefit and that a number of those found fit for work and left without income have committed or attempted suicide.

Conference agrees that there is a multi-dimensional link between the WCA being run by the company ATOS, the demonisation of disabled people in the press and the 100% increase in disability hate crime, as identified in the disabled members newssheet to National Delegate Conference 2012.

Conference congratulates the British Medical Association for calling for the work capability assessment to end immediately and for it to be replaced with a system that does not cause harm to some of the most vulnerable people in society and we commend the numerous representations in the media that have illustrated the dire impact on disabled people's lives as well as exposing distorted versions of the benefits process as part of the government's austerity plans.

Conference affirms WCA to be a trade union issue because it aims to destroy the dignity of disabled people who are unable to secure their place in the labour market; we have a responsibility to challenge this systemic injustice faced by disabled citizens

Since the purpose of introducing the WCA is to reduce the numbers eligible to receive financial support from the state, ATOS' ability to renew this and gain other similar contracts, such as that for the Personal Independence Payment, is likely to be linked to how many people are judged 'fit to work'. A key reasons for replacing the old Personal Capability Assessment was that it was resulting in 'too many' people qualifying for out of work sickness benefits. The history of collectively funded provision for those who cannot sell their labour because of impairment and/or illness, is marked by countless points at which the state, supported by popular media and politically driven ideologies decide that the current eligibility rules and procedures are too slack, and instead introduces new systems which are thought will better identify so-called genuinely sick and disabled people, thereby reduce the numbers qualifying for support.

Conference notes the two underlying factors running through the whole history of out of work sickness benefits, namely:

1. that there are political and economic factors which create a desire to limit or reduce public expenditure on supporting those who cannot support themselves through selling their labour;
2. that there is an unequal relationship between those who design and deliver the welfare system and those who are subjected to it.

UNISON is committed to continuing its defence of a welfare system that does not punish people for being unable to sell their labour and that an economic system should developed which can sustain a level of taxation sufficient to fund to support a decent standard of living for all. Such a system must defend and promote a welfare framework that respects the inactivity of a small number of disabled people in the labour market, one which seeks to empower disabled people as citizens and one which is co-produced by those who depend on it.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. join calls for the immediate abandonment of the Work Capability Assessment and continue its work with the National Disabled Members Committee to pursue this end;
2. seek to ensure that any replacement criteria for benefit for people who are disabled or have long term limiting health conditions that prevent them from working includes a provision that early retirement under Occupational Health advice with release of pension triggers eligibility for state benefit;
3. affiliate to appropriate user led organisations of disabled people that are campaigning against government policy to reduce welfare support to disabled people;
4. promote existing assessment guidance that is issued to ATOS or other medical practitioners who carry out benefit assessments;
5. publicise existing information and advice for contesting adverse WCA assessments.

**COMPOSITES**

**COMPOSITES**

**A. Pay**

**Carried as Amended: A.2**

Conference condemns the prolonged public sector pay freeze that has drastically reduced the amount workers have received in recent years and now the punitive pay cap of 1% for two years from 2013.

Conference also notes that many private companies and community/voluntary sector providers of public services have mirrored this freeze.

On top of the three year pay freeze there have been cuts in car allowances, weekend enhancements, overtime and mileage rates and redundancy pay. Large numbers of workers are also suffering cuts to contracted hours, shift and call out payments and bank holiday rates. Schools staff are being moved on to less favourable “term-time only” contracts.

Council workers are also seeing their terms and conditions of employment being slowly but surely chipped away. Many of those being hit hardest are the low paid working in home and residential care as well as sheltered housing and schools, where shift payments are a critical element of their incomes.

Conference notes that over this period inflation has often been up at 5% and rarely below 3%, as energy and food bills have soared.

Despite claims to the contrary, Conference notes that real protection for the lowest paid public sector workers has been non-existent, with many not even receiving the promised £250 pay rise.

Conference notes recent research by the TUC that shows the average worker will lose around £6,000 by 2014 as a result of wages failing to keep pace with rising prices. For public sector workers the picture is bleaker still.

Conference deplores the cumulative impact the pay freeze and cap has had on workers – effectively a 15% cut in the value of wages for those working in local government, for example.

Conference is particularly concerned about the political consensus that has developed amongst the main Westminster parties on holding down levels of public sector pay.

Given this backdrop, Conference is unsurprised that reports continue to point to rising levels of working people living in poverty. For example, the majority of those entitled to social security are now in work, and the number of working households forced to rely on housing benefit has doubled since 2008.

Conference is alarmed that this retrenchment is set to continue until the end of the decade with the Resolution Foundation pointing out that living standards for low- and middle-income households are expected to fall until 2020.

When combined with the vicious attacks on social security and benefits, Conference notes that many of those in work are increasingly forced to turn to food banks or to their wider families for assistance.

Conference highlights the particularly stark evidence of applications to the UNISON Welfare fund, “There for you”, where those applying for school uniform grants have jumped by more than a quarter in the past year, and applications for assistance with heating bills went up by a massive 388%.

Conference believes that not only are such policies grossly unfair and deliberately inequitable, they are also counter-productive in the wider context of the struggling UK economy. Depressing public sector workers’ pay and living standards sucks demand from local economies and contributes to economic stagnation.

Conference recognises the progress that UNISON and our allies have made in the past year in raising the profile of the Living Wage as a campaigning tool against poverty pay. In addition to the London Living Wage, there have been huge strides in Higher Education and Scotland and Wales. As of January 2013, there were 11 Labour-controlled local authorities fully accredited as living wage employers for both employees and contractors with more on the way.

But in Solihull UNISON has campaigned for a Living Wage of £7.45 an hour only to have this refused by the majority Tory council. At the same time the pay of Solihull’s top 47 managers has been scaled up.

Conference notes that many more public bodies are paying the Living Wage for direct employees but need to focus next on contractors. However, we believe that it is essential that the Living Wage is used as a means of bringing pay up and not levelling it down. We note for example that in Local Government the impact of pay erosion means that significantly more directly employed workers are now potentially covered by the Living Wage than when it was first conceived over a decade ago. Whilst providing essential underpinning the Living Wage is not a substitute for fighting for fair pay increases for all. We do not believe it is acceptable for employers to seek to offset the cost of implementing the Living Wage by further restraint of pay for other workers.

Conference asserts that the Living Wage also brings benefits for employers and government, with the IPPR think tank finding that turning the National Minimum Wage into the Living Wage could save government £2bn a year as result of paying out less in benefits and receiving more in income tax and national insurance.

Following the Chancellor’s autumn statement, Conference congratulates the union in fending off the prospect of regional or local pay in the majority of the public sector, with the damaging exception of teachers in schools, where progression will be discretionary. However, Conference remains concerned by the attempts of NHS employers, particularly in south west England, to break away from the national Agenda for Change system.

Conference deplores the Budget announcement on 20 March 2013 that the Coalition government's 1% public sector pay restraint policy will extend to 2016 and condemns the Chancellor's proposals to block incremental pay progression (which is a contractual right for hundreds of thousands of UNISON members).

This union demands fair pay now to restore pay levels and bring them back in line with inflation. It commits itself to campaign for pay justice and a more equal society.

Moreover, low pay is bad for local economies and reduces the consumer demand needed for economic recovery.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

1) prioritise the campaign to end the punitive public sector pay cap;

2) promote a living wage as part of an overall strategy to put an end to the blight of in-work poverty and secure adequate living standards without a dependence on in-work benefits;

3) continue its policy of working through service groups to co-ordinate industrial action in accordance with the union’s industrial action procedures; including employers not covered by national bargaining agreements where possible.

4) coordinate meetings of the Service Group Executives to plan legal industrial action across the sectors for the 2014/15 pay round;

5) campaign through Labour Link at all levels within the party to ensure that Labour support the right of public sector workers to fair pay rises rather than pay freezes. This should include co-ordinating an evidence based review, carried out in accordance with UNISON rules by service groups and sectors, of the fitness for purpose of all current pay bargaining and pay determination arrangements in which UNISON is involved;

6) work with the TUC, STUC, WTUC, ICTU to coordinate action and to ensure that public and private sectors cannot be turned against one another;

7) continue to resist regional and local pay in the public sector, whether enforced by central government or championed by groups of employers;

8) lead and co-ordinate a long-term bargaining strategy to retain national conditions and to reinforce the value of national pay, with a long term approach;

9) promote the argument that higher wages are needed for the good of the economy;

10) develop a longer term strategy across all service groups to reinvigorate collective bargaining and investigate ways of boosting pay levels across all the sectors where we organise;

11) identify and implement a strategy to enable the effective allocation and deployment of emergency resources to support branches on the frontline of such sustained attacks.

**B. Outsourcing and privatisation**

**Carried**

Conference condemns moves by the coalition government to encourage greater use of outsourcing and privatisation in the delivery of public services. In doing so governments have ignored the impact of this US style approach which includes:

1) increased inequality in access and delivery of public services;

2) fragmentation of services, confusion for service users and loss of democratic accountability;

3) inefficient and exploitative contractual arrangements which retain risk with the public sector purse whilst allowing private companies to maximise profits at public expense;

4) contract failures which place vulnerable people at risk such as the Southern Cross Care Homes fiasco and the risk to public safety with the G4S debacle;

5) exploitative employment arrangements designed to undermine democratic rights to collective bargaining and employment protection;

6) the creation of a ‘sellers’ market allowing major corporations to suck up public service contracts with little or no effective challenge.

It is also noted that the US style model is reliant upon the ‘Big Society’ concept with patchy misuse of charities and third sector providers to prop up a failing model of public service delivery which leads to even greater inequality amongst the most deprived communities. Conference notes with regret the support for such models such ‘cooperative councils’ by some Labour led local councils and notes that such models are not an alternative to democratically accountable and properly funded public services.

Conference notes with alarm that the current outsourced market for public services in the UK already has an annual turnover of £82bn, representing around 24 per cent of the total spend on public services. In addition, Conference notes that this trend pervades all sectors of the economy, and impacts across all of our service groups.

Conference further notes that the business model that underpins outsourcing continues to deliver large profits, whilst at the same time threatening the ethos of collectively provided public services and driving down the pay and terms and conditions of those who devote their careers to delivering them.

However, against this backdrop conference is encouraged by a countervailing trend, in many cases driven forward by the campaign activities of UNISON members and their communities, demonstrating that not all of the traffic is one way. Large scale outsourcing plans at Edinburgh, Suffolk and Cornwall councils have unravelled over the last 18 months. In the West Midlands, Surrey, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire, police privatisation has been put on hold. A recent survey showed 80 out of 140 councils had brought services back in house, including refuse collection, recycling, street cleansing, housing management, cleaning, catering, grounds maintenance, IT and accountancy. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have all seen hospital cleaning brought back in house over recent years.

Reasons cited by providers of public services for bringing services back in house have included the recognition that in-house provision can improve service quality and lead to better value for money. In the case of Islington council, a commitment to greater equality and better pay and conditions for workers is the driving force for insourcing.

Whilst we should welcome these examples, we should also recognise that, when seen alongside a determined coalition government drive to create ever more mutuals and attempts to encourage greater use of private sector shared services, we are operating in a public services landscape that is becoming ever more fragmented.

We are seeing a proliferation of providers, and ever more members and potential members in the private and community and voluntary sectors than ever before. One government estimate suggests that already by 2007 there were 1.2 million staff working for private and community and voluntary sector organisations providing public services.

This has implications for how we campaign as a union in the period ahead. Clearly we have to fight against further outsourcing and privatisation, as well as support campaigns to bring services back in house. We also need to make it apparent in campaign materials and political activity that we are on the side of those who deliver and rely on public services, regardless of provider.

As workforce, occupational and community champions, we are uniquely placed to perform this role. In a shifting landscape, UNISON represents continuity and durable values to both safeguard against ideological attacks on public services, and hold the people who make decisions about their scope, reach and character to account.

In practical terms this will require a redoubling of our efforts in the period ahead. Moves to introduce further privatisation within the police, whilst set back, have not been eliminated completely and the threat of a joint privatisation contract that would place 25% of total police funding into private hands in England and Wales is still present. The Coalition government also continues to pursue, at speed, the implementation of the Open Public Services white paper and the promotion of mutuals, ‘spun out’ from the public sector, as the future of public services. All of this against a backdrop in which contracts are increasingly being awarded to the large outsourcing giants, and the ability to enforce quality standards or respond to changing need is drastically reduced.

Conference also notes with concern government threats to privatise the fire service.

Conference notes that the Coalition’s overarching agenda is a deeply ideological attempt to reduce the size of the state and to replace collectivist responses to societal needs with a smaller, meaner settlement that risks damaging the breadth and quality of public service that our communities have access to. This damage will affect us all, but ultimately fall disproportionately on certain groups within our communities, including women, Black people, LGBT people, disabled people, young and older people.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

a) continue to promote the value of public services as the best vehicle for service provision and as best value for money for the public purse;

b) encourage and support a forceful interpretation of the Social Value Act, that can help branches and regions to put pressure on those procuring services to consider labour standards and other non-cost criteria

c) continue to resist all attempts to outsource and privatise public services;

d) continue to ensure that our information data base on outsourcing firms is up to date and its resources are available to activists leading anti privatisation campaigns;

e) work with the Labour Link to seek commitments from the Labour Party that the first Parliamentary term of a Labour-led government would:

i) ratify ILO Convention 94;

ii) introduce a legislative framework that requires those procuring public services to:

A) consider an in-house option;

B) consider non-cost criteria including service quality, employment standards, tax compliance, impact on the local economy and the provision of apprenticeships.

f) work with UNISON Labour Link to engage and support a serious and intelligent debate about the future shape and development of public services based on a shared understanding of the vital role public services play;

g) encourage branches to get involved with community campaigns or to assist in setting up community campaigns against privatisation

h) highlight the loss to the public purse of private solutions based on extracting profit from services;

i) continue to provide every assistance necessary to branches and services involved in procurement to ensure that the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector solutions is highlighted and to encourage them to campaign for public alternatives.

j) campaign for a future public services manifesto that places at its core:

i) the retention of the founding principles of public services delivered by democratically accountable public sector providers funded by fair taxation;

ii) an end to the US style ill-conceived and unworkable concept of a public services market place which is de facto privatisation by stealth of all public services;

iii) new legislation to enforce those operating in the public sector are able to meet a social value test prior to contract award to ensure that every £1 of public money spent on public sector contracts contributes to:

A) skills and apprenticeships;

B) high quality employment including trade union organisation and collective bargaining;

C) continuous improvement in public services;

D) fair taxation with the ability for the public sector client to end a contract with any contractor found to be circumventing UK taxation;

E) a renewed recognition that regulation alone is not enough and the public sector needs to retain and develop its core capacity to deliver public services directly, including where contracts are placed with charities and third sector providers;

F) that the public and private economies are intrinsically link and that the public sector can be used as an effective economic tool to stimulate growth, jobs and skills and a move to a new green economy stimulating not just traditional public sector jobs but the creation of a new green manufacturing basis for the UK economy.

Conference welcomes the emergence of the ‘We Own It’ organisation which is campaigning nationally against privatisation and calls on the National Executive Council and regions to support 'We Own It' to enable this campaigning work to continue and develop in the lead up to the 2015 General Election to promote manifesto commitments which would:

I) require private companies running public services to be transparent about their performance data;

II) create a new 'right to recall' private companies when public service users are not happy with their performance;

III) ensure that procurement of public services always involves the creation of a realistic in-house bid, so that public sector performance can be compared to private company performance, in terms of customer satisfaction, environmental impact, wages and so on.

**C. NHS and social care integration**

**Carried**

Conference condemns the failure of political leaders to grasp the nettle and implement a long-term sustainable solution to the funding deficit in social care.

The numbers of people who need social care and support are continuing to rise as a result of the ageing population and medical advances which have improved life expectancy. But the availability and quality of care is shrinking.

Conference notes that inevitably it will be women who will carry the burden of the cuts in social care, both as workers directly impacted by the cuts in the services which are primarily provided by women, and as carers

There is a conservative estimate of one in four women acting as unpaid carers, and as many as one in five men. This figure is likely to rise significantly as caring costs continue to increase and people are forced to leave work or reduce working hours to provide care themselves as they cannot afford the quality professional care their adult dependants need

Meanwhile the increased imposition of zero hours contracts for primarily women workers in the care sector severely impacts on their family income, their ability to budget and plan effectively and to contribute long term for an adequate pension, thus perpetuating in - work poverty into retirement

Continuing cuts to health and social care budgets, the fragmentation of services and increasing reliance on a struggling voluntary sector will have a devastating impact on individuals and families whose quality of life depends on social care support, and the hard-working dedicated staff who provide it

The Coalition government has announced the introduction of a £72,000 life time cap to help fund social care from 2016 in England and Wales (whilst the Scottish and Northern Irish governments have chosen different solutions)

On its own, a cap is not enough to sort out long-term care though it may help individuals with significant costs

The cap is unlikely to solve the current underfunding of social care. Instead it will encourage a private insurance market to develop but there will be no extra funds. We can’t dodge the fact that local authorities are already facing an estimated £1.89 billion cut to social care budgets, while the cost of social care already takes up more than 40 per cent of council budgets – for some it’s over 60 per cent – and this could increase further still in years to come

Conference further notes that there is little clarification of how the cap will work to integrate free NHS health care with a privately funded social care system. The UK is now diverging into four different devolved models of health and social care services, yet there has been little evidence based research on what is the best and most efficient model to deliver quality health and social care – either for those working in these services or service users:

1) the current cap proposals in England and Wales are a limited solution to funding long term sustainable care;

2) that nearly 800,000 older people with care-related needs continue to receive no formal support at all. Evidence is emerging that with Local Authority budgets being cut, care providers cannot meet the public’s expectations of quality, and a ‘two-tier’ service is developing that favours people who are self-funding. The Department of Health has responded by saying that allocation to social care budgets is a local decision. eligibility for services is being tightened;

3) charges are being increased;

4) prevention services are being cut;

5) the economic crisis is creating greater need;

6) privatisation is driving down care standards;

7) low pay, poor conditions and the lack of training are endemic;

8) personalisation and commissioning polices are driving cuts and workforce casualisation

Conference therefore agrees that the National Executive Council should commit to and lead the union’s work to:

a) continue to work with the National Pensioners’ Convention and promote UNISONs policy to support a national social care service free at the point of need based on the NHS model in all devolved countries of the UK which is regulated nationally and provides clear statutory accountability in professional health and social care roles with clear, beneficial outcomes for service users;

b) highlight the importance of workforce and equalities issues in response to government proposals on future funding, regulation and legislative frameworks for adult social care; a national portable assessment system; a personalised care service; a well-paid, skilled and registered workforce;

c) develop alliances at national, regional and local level with community, user and equality groups to campaign against cuts, and in favour of sustainable investment and action to tackle low pay and poor conditions to include highlighting the disproportionate impact of the cuts on women as workers and carers;

d) campaign about the impact of personalisation policies on the quality and reliability of services, on safeguarding of vulnerable people and the workforce;

e) campaign for a national debate to research, discuss and present the issues, concerns and best practice and ‘workable’ models of free national integrated health and social care services;

f) call on Labour Link to work with the Labour Party to promote a debate on integrated care and current devolved models;

g) campaign for public authorities and local providers to adopt the UNISON Ethical Care charter to raise employment and training standards in care work;

h) encourage cross national discussions and opportunities for learning that recognise the variety of practice across the devolved nations.

**D. NHS Campaigning**

**Carried**

The creation of the NHS in 1948 was one of the greatest achievements of the post war Labour government. The founding principles were that health care should be funded from taxation and delivered free at the point of use.

Since its creation the NHS has come under attack from successive Tory governments. However, since the election of the coalition we have seen the greatest ideological attack on the NHS since its formation in 1948.

Conference notes the widespread outrage in opposition to the massive cutbacks in the health service.

The new commissioning framework in England, introduced in April 2013, will have serious and damaging consequences for the provision of health care. The sole purpose of the legislation is to remove the oversight and control of health from Parliament. This will allow for the introduction of competition and privatisation.

Private companies now run significant parts of our NHS for profit. More and more business consultants milk it for money.

By replacing Andrew Lansley with Jeremy Hunt, the Prime Minister gave a clear signal as to the government’s intentions for the NHS. Hunt, while in opposition, made it clear that he believed the NHS was ‘this country’s greatest mistake’. In one of his first speeches as Secretary of State for Health he praised Andrew Lansley’s Health and Social Care Act, saying it was the “right legislation to ensure that the NHS was opened up to the private sector”. Conference is alarmed at the way Hunt and the government have looked to use the Francis report into the Mid Staffordshire scandal to make political capital and to denigrate the wider NHS.

Running alongside this costly reorganisation (£2bn, not including the cost of thousands of redundancies) is the severe financial squeeze on NHS Trusts. The requirement to make £20bn savings means that every Trust has to cut their budget by between 4% and 7%. Already many Trusts have declared the need to make significant redundancies and/or are attacking national terms and conditions of employment, in order to balance the books.

Health care services are already being dramatically affected, with most trusts seeing significant increases in waiting times, and missed targets on A&E waiting and cancer care.

We are witnessing the greatest challenge to the NHS since it was created. The government is adopting a two-pronged attack on the service.

Firstly by a costly structural reorganisation designed to break up the regional and central control on health commissioning. This will free up services to be commissioned from the private sector. In addition the introduction of ‘Any Qualified Provider’ will impose mandatory testing of the market for the provision of services. This has already led to an increase in the use of tendering, with essential services such as North West Ambulance's Patient Transport Service being handed over to Arriva Bus Company.

Secondly by deliberately underfunding the service while subjecting Trusts to crippling financial regulation by Monitor (the NHS Foundation Trust regulator turned ‘promoter of competition’). This has led directly to the possible sacking of 500 staff at Bolton Foundation Trust.

Hospital and community services up and down the country are faced with cutbacks, closures and the prospect of privatisation. NHS staff now face the most serious attack ever on their jobs, their pay and conditions of work.

There has been massive opposition to these attacks with huge local protests (with some 25,000 on the streets of Lewisham on 26 January) against closures, which have involved health workers, trades unionists and local communities. Elsewhere, as in Mid-Yorkshire NHS Trust, UNISON members have struck to defend jobs and basic pay rates.

The coalition government, lacking in any democratic legitimacy, has no mandate for their attacks on the NHS cloaked in the language of choice.

Conference notes and welcomes the Labour Party’s public support for the repeal of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, while urging the Labour Link to campaign within the party to make such a repeal a firm manifesto commitment. This should come alongside pledges to reverse the privatisation of existing health services by bringing them back into the NHS and to end the principle that ‘any qualified provider’ should be allowed to bid to deliver health services. In particular, Conference believes that through the Labour Link UNISON should seek a commitment to the cancellation of the toxic legacy of debt associated with the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and to move towards the cancellation of the PFI programme for hospital construction and redevelopment as a whole.

Conference believes that it is imperative that the fight to defend the NHS is a priority for the coming year and calls on the National Executive Council to:

1) encourage branches and regions to work with local communities, patient groups, and politicians to challenge the destruction of local services and to develop a clear vision for health care in the localities;

2) encourage work with the TUC to organise a publicity campaign and demonstrations to be held to coincide with the 65th anniversary of the founding of the NHS;

3) monitor the impact of the new Clinical Commissioning arrangements on local health services and highlight any deterioration in services;

4) develop and promote an alternative vision for the provision of health care. Such a vision is to be based on the principles of (a) funding through taxation, (b) free at the point of use, (c) available due to need and not ability to pay, (d) to be delivered by the public sector;

5) defend health workers’ terms and conditions of employment where NHS employers make a concerted effort to impose changes;

6) give maximum support to local campaigns and lawful industrial action (within UNISON rules) against cuts to health workers’ pay and conditions;

7) demand sufficient public funding for the NHS in a publicity campaign to illustrate how this, along with other measures, can be achieved by ensuring the progressive taxation of wealthy individuals and households, and ending the widespread tax avoidance by corporations at the same time as terminating the artificial market of the purchaser – provider split in the NHS, which inflates bureaucratic costs;

8) counter the attacks on the NHS to show clearly that coalition policy will lead to a diminished, fragmented and ultimately more expensive health service;

9) continue to campaign against and highlight the deficiencies of PFI; a massive exercise in financial incompetence which is literally bleeding hospitals dry. The billions of pounds of taxpayers’ money used to pay private companies is causing further strain on trusts finances with many hospitals threatened with closure;

10) work with allies, including the TUC’s All Together for the NHS campaign, to build national rallies and protests in Autumn 2013 in defence of a publicly funded, publicly run NHS, free at the point of delivery;

11) urge the Labour Link to pursue these policies within the Labour Party.

**E. Alternatives to austerity**

**Carried**

Conference finds no joy in being proved right that the Coalitions austerity programme continues to cause a slump. Final UK growth is forecast by the Chancellor for minus 0.1 percent in 2012 and optimistically for 1.2% in 2013. The Quantitative Easing scheme run by Bank of England has propped up the financial firms with cheap money but little has reached the real economy and pay packets. The self defeating programme means the Chancellor and the Office for Budget Responsibility keep lowering forecast after forecast and keeps putting back the deadline for eliminating the budget deficit.

Whilst employment has been increasing very slightly there is is still wide spread unemployment and under employment with large numbers of workers working part time but seeking full time hours. Furthermore, much of the increase can be accounted for by quarter of a million unemployed workers taking part in unpaid government work experience schemes and much of the supposed growth in private sector jobs is accounted for by the re-classification of the further education sector and the privatisation of public services. The rise in zero hours contracts, particularly in health and social care, is typical of the continued squeeze on job security.

Conference expresses its concerns about the increased use of volunteer projects to deliver services which used to be seen as the core business of both health and local government. We believe that this provides a risk to services continuing as volunteers, quite rightly, can’t be obliged to provide a service as a member of staff can.

Working people and vulnerable groups should not be paying the cost of a crisis they did not create. We need to start building a fairer economy that works for everyone. There is an alternative to the austerity measures being pursued by a Government that is out of touch with the realities of ordinary people’s lives and which stands in sharp contrast to the vitriolic campaigns of UKIP and the right wing media, who seek to lay the blame for the current economic crisis on immigration and the most vulnerable.

Conference is angry that the squeeze on living standards is continuing with earnings lagging behind inflation driven by rising food, energy and fuel prices. The contrast with the millionaires tax cut in the higher rate of income tax and the non-stop rise in directors pays is obscene. To continue the pain to families and the economy the Coalition plan to cap tax credits and benefits at 1% for three years from April 2013, meaning an extra 200,000 children will move in to poverty, in addition to the 800,000 already estimated by the Institute of Fiscal Policy to do so by the end of the Parliament.

Conference also notes that at the same time the government has pledged around £1,350 billion in financial support to rescue the banks and the financial system from collapse since 2008. This is equivalent to Britain's annual gross domestic product, twice the annual total of public expenditure and six times the disastrous cuts in public spending announced for the next four years. However this vast injection of monies into the banks has not been used to stimulate industrial investment or house building to boost the economy, it has merely been used to help repair the banks’ balance sheets and maintain the perverse banking bonus culture.

These policies are having a devastating impact on some of the most deprived areas that have the greatest need for regeneration, jobs, social provision and growth, especially in the North East. The government has pledged to cut 730,000 public sector jobs by 2017 and to cut spending by £80bn. For millions, their jobs pay and pensions are under threat, as are the local services they provide and use. In the North East the Association of North East Councils (ANEC) warned of a further £100m of "stealth cuts", and an extra 1,000 job losses across the region's local authorities. Urban areas are being hit by steeper cuts than wealthier parts of England. The government announced in December that the overall spending power of North East town halls will be slashed by up to 2.2 per cent next year and by a crushing five per cent-plus in most areas in 2014-15. Compare this to Tory-run West Oxfordshire, David Cameron's local council, which is among many in the South that will enjoy a spending rise in 2013-14 and escape with just a small cut the following year.

Conference recognises that devolution in Wales has allowed a Labour government to mitigate against some of the worst affects of the ConDem policies by limiting the cuts in health and local government expenditure and introducing positive initiatives such as: the Jobs Growth Wales and the expansion of apprenticeships which have particularly assisted young people.

All of these disastrous policies are devastating our communities and in particular having a disproportionate affect on women and young people; three-quarters of the adverse changes to tax and benefits affect women, with over one million women unemployed and 40% of the unemployed in this recession will be young people.

Conference, for the last five years, has borne testament to the pain and anger of public service workers who have lost jobs, had services cut, suffered pay freezes and had conditions attacked. Our members have been the backbone of the resistance to austerity in every town and city across the UK and their struggles must continue to inspire us all and be the basis of our Million Voices campaign to rebuild living standards and the economy.

The voice of opposition to the Coalition government is being led by UNISON. We are promoting the need for an alternative economic strategy. One that invests in the public sector, creates a climate for economic growth, reduces unemployment levels especially targeting youth unemployment, ensure a tax system that is fair for all and closes loopholes that allow tax avoidance by multinational organisations, and addresses the excesses of the banking sector including the introduction of a financial transaction tax.

Conference, therefore, salutes the many UNISON branches campaigning and achieving living wages and notes that raising the National Minimum Wage to the Living Wage would raise £2billion in extra taxation, result in less paid out in means tested benefits and boost local economies throughout the UK.

The changes to housing benefit are having a devastating impact on the lives of so many. In addition the crisis in social housing is exacerbating the situation. Only 10% of housing benefit recipients are unemployed. These changes will harm a significant number of working households and pensioners.

Conference notes with concern attempts by the Tories to divert anger created by their austerity programme and to create division by attacking benefit claimants and, especially after recent UKIP successes, immigration. In Greece and elsewhere we have seen the danger that bitterness about austerity can be channelled by even more dangerous forces such as Golden Dawn.

Conference believes the country is crying out for an investment programme in public services and infrastructure to tackle social need, inspire confidence and reflate the economy. The Coalition programme is small, inadequate and slow, and despite earlier statements to the contrary will revive the notorious Private Finance Initiative in a slightly different form.

Our priorities and alternative economic strategy is not just a message for the Coalition government it is a message for all politicians at local, regional, national and European level. A strategy that will build on the TUC’s work on an Alternative Economic Strategy and support for the People's Charter for Change which advocate boosting the productive economy, creating jobs, enhancing public services and, as a result, improving the lives of millions of workers and their families.

In addition a more innovative use of the Bank of England’s Quantative Easing powers could be utilised to boost the real economy by developing a Funding for Building Scheme, a public sector equivalent of Funding for Lending scheme, available to public authorities to support infrastructure expenditure and to private businesses to support green manufacturing.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to set the following plans in 2013 and 2014 for economic and public service revival.

To promote an alternative economic strategy to boost local economies and confidence through:

1) an expansion of affordable housing;

2) creation of a state investment bank to back long term strategic projects ignored by our banks;

3) investment in green, affordable and sustainable energy;

4) development of a regional economies plan;

5) a more progressive taxation system in Britain, including taxes on financial transactions, bankers' bonuses and empty properties; higher corporation tax; action on tax avoidance and evasion; reform of tax haven and residency rules;

6) ending the public service pay cap, cuts to services and redundancies;

7) introduction of a jobs guarantee for the long term unemployed;

8) legislating against zero hours contracts;

9) introduction of a living wage that would end the dependency on tax credits and social benefits, while increasing tax revenue to the Exchequer and end low pay by raising average earnings;

10) minimum staffing and appropriate skill mix for all areas of the public services;

11) a reduction in unnecessary public spending on private sector with no further outsourcing and PFI schemes restructured and phased out to halt profiteering and increase accountability;

12) new investment in NHS in-house cleaning services to eradicate infections acquired during healthcare treatment.

To do this by:

a) reinvigorating our campaigning based on boosting members job security and living standards;

b) working with TUC, STUC, WTUC and ICTU on building the national alternative economic strategies;

c) working with the ETUC to campaign against European austerity;

d) a renewed focus on organising and recruiting members to build our collective bargaining strength and coverage, and strengthen the union wide campaign for an alternative to austerity;

e) building living wage campaigns through organising in the workplace and community coalitions;

f) working with service groups to support and co-ordinate their pay campaigns, including through lawful industrial action;

g) helping regions and service groups get maximum resources to Branches in dispute with their employers over changes to pay and conditions, job cuts and outsourcing;

h) working with the political funds to influence all political parties contesting the next general election that fairly funded public services, investment, job security and raising living standards will restore our economic health and work with Labour Link with the aim of getting UNISON’s alternative economic strategy adopted by the Labour party in time for the next general election;

i) making the case that an economic stimulus is not only necessary but affordable, through clamping down on tax dodgers both individual and corporate, fair taxation, increased economic activity resulting in increased tax revenue, and reductions in military spending to the European Union average together with cancellation of a new post-Trident nuclear weapons system;

j) to ensure that as an integral part of our campaigning we resist all attempts to divert anger at austerity and create division in our ranks for example by the scapegoating of benefit claimants or migrant workers.

To continue to campaign at local, regional and national level with elected representatives and other relevant organisations to promote an agenda that:

i) tackles youth unemployment which is at record levels;

ii) strengthens regulation to prohibit speculative financial activity and channel investment into socially beneficial and environmentally sustainable job creation;

iii) promotes accountable public provision of healthcare, education, housing and social services that are protected and expanded to meet social and economic needs;

iv) fights privatisation of public services;

v) Conference calls on UNISON Labour Link to campaign vigorously within the Labour Party for support for the policies contained in this motion.

**G. Employment and trade union rights**

**Carried**

Conference is angry at the Coalition government’s continued attacks on individual and trade union employment rights that have been stepped up this year and calls on the National Executive Council to lead a campaign to reverse policies that have laid waste to our economy, our public services and the living standards of our members since May 2010.

Conference therefore condemns this economic strategy that pretends to be a growth strategy as it will increase unemployment and casualised work, lower living standards, set back equality and increase poverty.

Conference rejects the ideologically driven notion of so called “red-tape regulation” and the accompanying Con Dem policy of “one-in-two-out”, which leaves workers’ safety and living standards unregulated and unprotected.

Conference calls for the repeal of Con Dem attacks on protections against unfair dismissal including the extension of the qualifying period from one year to two; the concept of Protected Conversations and no-fault dismissals; the sale of rights for shares, the weakening of protection for whistleblowers and the reduction in redundancy consultation periods from 90 to 45 days.

In terms of access to justice, Conference calls for the removal of Con Dem restrictions including the massive cuts in legal aid, the introduction of fees for Employment Tribunal (ET) cases, the caps on compensation awards, the extension of costs and the changes to ET procedures which will see more judges sitting alone, more compulsory arbitration prior to ET cases and fewer powers for an ET to make wider recommendations in response to discrimination cases.

Conference also recognises the government’s continued parallel assault on the health and safety regulatory system, including:

1) cuts to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and local authority budgets resulting in the continued reduction in the number of workplace inspections;

2) the dumbing down of HSE advice, guidance and Approved Codes of Practice;

3) ill thought out legislative proposals such as the removal of the ability of an employee to enforce a civil claim for workplace injury on the grounds of a breach of workplace regulations, and of the removal of the self employed from the scope of health and safety legislation.

Conference also calls for the “self employed” and so called “low risk industries” to be reintegrated into the regulatory and inspection system.

In relation to equality issues, Conference calls for a damage-reduction review of the Equality Act to ensure that the original Parliamentary purposes behind the Act - including the socio-economic duty, the third party harassment provisions, equality impact assessments and the Public Sector Equality Duty – are restored following Con Dem attacks aimed at undermining equality provisions.

Conference is without doubt that all these measures are designed to weaken workers rights and increase the power of employers, weaken collective bargaining and the share of national wealth that goes to workers, and turn back the clock on advances in workplace health and safety.

Conference believes that the trade union voice at work would be significantly strengthened if a future Labour government took active steps to improve the recognition procedures and strengthen collective bargaining coverage.

Current recognition procedures are inadequate, they fail to meet international standards as outlined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Committee of Experts and they allow companies like News International and Virgin to use sweetheart arrangements and unfair labour practices to undermine independent trade unions.

Conference therefore calls for the repeal of the recognition procedures to ensure that:

a) small companies are no longer excluded from the statutory provisions;

b) non-independent bodies cannot be used to block recognition requests and only independent trade unions (as certified by the Certification Officer) can be recognised by employers;

c) the Unfair Labour Practices clause should be extended to prevent employers using such tactics before the ballot process begins and during derecognition campaigns;

d) unions who fail to win 51% support of the whole workforce should still be able to represent, and negotiate for, their own members;

e) issues covered by a recognition agreement should be extended to include pensions, training and equality.

Recognition of a trade union voice in the workplace should be reinforced by the introduction of sectoral bargaining structures at national level. Such a move would assist in extending the benefits of collective bargaining to vulnerable workers, ensuring a living wage safety net and removing the race to the bottom encouraged by fragmented bargaining within and across sectors.

Conference welcomes the TUC and Trade Union Labour Organisation (TULO) campaigning in defence of our employment rights and the 12,000 strong petition delivered at Christmas by Ian Murray MP, shadow employment rights minister. Furthermore, Conference welcomes UNISON and the Institute of Employment Rights putting together a Coalition time line of all attacks since 2010 and help bringing together a united union voice. Furthermore Conference supports the new Campaign for Trade Union Freedom launched in March 2013, a result of a merger of the United Campaign to Repeal the Anti-Union Laws and the Liaison Committee to Defend Trade Unions.

Conference records that it is the rights based on European Union directives that the coalition cannot strip away so easily and believes that a workers voice must be heard in the European Union debate. Regardless of this, the Coalition Government is intent on weakening the UK Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) regulations by taking out the 2006 service provision changes.

Conference is clear that this will make it easier to privatise public services through a cost cutting procurement process, increase uncertainty for staff and make litigation more likely.

Conference salutes our workplace stewards and representatives fighting cuts and fighting for employment rights, fairness and dignity at work. It is therefore not a surprise to Conference that trade union facility time is under attack from the Coalition in all sectors and that the template in cutting civil service facility time in 2012 will be copied elsewhere.

Conference believes that employment rights are human rights, good for the economy and a sign of a healthy society and that unions are a force for tackling inequality and therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

i) continue to campaign against and publicise the systematic Coalition attack on employment and trade union rights;

ii) link the attack on employment rights to the Coalitions austerity, cuts, inequality and privatisation agenda;

iii) consider how the union can best respond to changes in the tribunal system requiring fee payment;

iv) support the European Public Services Union (EPSU), TUC, STUC, WTUC and ICTU in their campaigns to defend employment rights;

v) continue to work with the Institute of Employment Rights;

vi) work with the political funds to influence UK politicians of all parties in favour of rights at work;

vii) work with the political funds to prepare a plan to influence the political parties contesting the 2014 European Parliament elections so that workers rights are promoted and protected;

viii) work in partnership with the TUC, HAZARDS, other trade unions, its partners in Europe through the ETUC and EPSU, charities and pressure groups to combat the government’s reckless attacks on health and safety.

Conference believes that such a programme of reform would be electorally popular, socially just and economically productive and urges the National Executive Council to work with others – to develop these ideas into a framework of fair employment practices for future implementation.

**H. State pension**

**Carried**

Conference recognises that many UNISON members, especially low paid and part-time workers, receive very low occupational pensions and many of our members chose not to join the occupational schemes at all. It is important that UNISON remembers that these members are still very reliant on the state pension for their livelihood in retirement.

Conference notes that UK pensioners are among the poorest in Europe with over 2.5 million pensioners living in poverty, 1.6 million of whom are women.

It also acknowledges that under the coalition government, people are having to work longer and pay more into their pension pot to get less on retirement.

Recent governments have primarily attacked state pension provision by increasing the retirement age, currently to 68. Conference notes that in 1948, universal state pensions were introduced for men at 65 and women at 60, in the same year as UK national debt stood at 240% of GDP – more than three times today’s levels. The myth that decent pensions for workers cannot be afforded in a wealthy country such as Britain must be challenged and so must the arguments that longevity makes decent pensions unaffordable. UNISON should be campaigning to reduce the state pension age.

This conference notes the recent Pensions Bill which is to introduce a flat rate state pension of £144 per week from 2016.

Despite the introduction of the Equal Pay Act disposable income for older women is still disproportionate to that for older men. In particular the average state and occupational pension for women is considerably lower than for male pensioners and, that the government's decision to accelerate the increase in women's state pension age will affect many thousands of women who will have to work longer to receive their basic state pension.

Whilst the introduction of such a flat rate pension will alleviate the disparity between women’s and men’s pensions in the future, conference believes it is unacceptable for future pension reforms to reproduce historic sex discrimination. Ending sex discrimination must be at the heart of reform.

Conference notes that no new money is to be provided and the increase in basic pensions will be funded by making people work longer and retire later.

People will have to pay more National Insurance and work longer before they can draw their pension in retirement. Contracting out of the state second pension will end and, importantly for our members, this will mean an increase in employee National Insurance contributions (NICs) for those in occupational pension schemes. This will cause additional hardship following a long period of wage stagnation, and alongside higher occupational pension contributions already agreed in the public sector.

Higher employer NICs in the public sector could also have negative consequences for jobs, pay, and public services as employers try to manage this additional cost with no additional funding.

Private sector employers will be able to unilaterally alter the terms of their pension schemes to force their employees to either pay more or get less pension.

Conference also notes that, for those that may benefit from this bill, anyone who has already retired is excluded from the plans, the end of Savings Credit will return some pensioners with savings to being no better off as a result and many pensioners will remain financially disadvantaged.

By combining the basic state pension with the state earnings related pension (SERPS) some future pensioners, probably women in particular, will actually be worse off than under the present scheme.

This Bill equalises state pension payments for men and women for the first time in history, however this does not address the current situation of pensioners living in poverty and reliant on means tested benefits and the proposals do nothing to end sex discrimination in current pension provision.

This conference believes that the rate of state pension should be no less than the official level of poverty which currently stands at £178 per week (before housing costs 2012).

This conference therefore instructs the NEC to work closely with our retired members section and alongside the National Pensioners Convention, Scottish Pensioners’ Forum , other trade unions and relevant organisations, the TUC and the STUC to:

1) campaign to have a basic State pension to be set at or above the defined level of poverty in the UK; and

2) for this increased rate to be paid to all existing and new pensioners;

3) work with the National Women’s Committee to highlight the gap in pension provision between men and women and include the ending of such discrimination in all future campaigning to improve the state pension;

4) work with the Service Group Executives and with other trades unions to seek a common approach to the proposed ending of contracting-out and its impact upon wages and pensions;

5) campaign to reduce the state pension age to the equivalent of previous levels (equalising male and female ages).”

Conference also notes that it was the previous Labour government that introduced the policy to increase the state pension age. It is important that this policy is challenged within the Labour Party. Therefore, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to ask the Labour Link to campaign within the Labour Party to adopt policies to seek to reduce the State Pension Age.

**I. Colombia**

**Carried**

Conference notes that Colombia remains one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a trade unionist and that the country is pursuing one of the most right wing, neo-liberal political and economic agendas anywhere in the world. UNISON’s National Delegate Conference therefore commits the union to continue its long term support for working people in Colombia in their struggle for human and trade union rights and to build a better quality of life.

Despite promoting an image to the international community that Colombia has entered a new era of progressive government, the assassination of trade unionist and social movement leaders continues.

Having supported the campaign to stop the European Union from signing a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Colombia while the government of that country continues to deny basic human and trade union rights, UNISON is disappointed that the agreement has recently been passed by the European Parliament but pledges to continue working in this area and to ensure that the Colombian government implements and meets the commitments it has entered into in return for the agreement.

Colombia is the second most bio-diverse country in the world, but in its drive to promote economic growth through mining, communities are being displaced and the destruction to the environment is significant. According to Human Rights Watch, more than 4 million Colombians have been internally displaced, and more than 100,000 people continue to be displaced each year. The government’s implementation of the Victims and Land Restitution Law, which aims to return millions of acres of abandoned and stolen land to internally displaced persons, has advanced slowly, and there have been threats and attacks against individuals seeking land restitution.

Conference welcomes the beginning of peace negotiations last November between the Colombian Government and FARC and continues to support trade union and other civil society calls for a bilateral ceasefire to be agreed and for civil society to be allowed to participate in the peace process. Conference also notes the success of Justice for Colombia’s (JFC) Peace Campaign which has been supported by UNISON, particularly the November 2012 cross-party Northern Ireland delegation to Colombia.

Conference congratulates the new political and social movement, the Patriotic March, in mobilising trade unions, indigenous communities and peasant farmers to call for peace with social justice and condemns the false accusations, threats, assassinations and imprisonment of many of the movement’s leadership and activists.

UNISON is rightly proud of the joint project working that it has undertaken, over many years, with trade unions in Colombia. We have helped train human rights activists, supported women’s groups, supported campaigns against impunity and privatisation and to assist unions to increase their capacity. We will build on and develop that work to ensure that trade unions in Colombia are able to maintain their resistance to the government’s political, social and economic attacks.

UNISON Northern region has continued and strengthened its long history of supporting projects and working with organisations within the south-west Cauca region of Colombia. These include a women’s capacity building project working with the Corteros’ sugar cane communities; developing communication capacity with Sintraunicol (education union); supporting an annual Women’s Assembly, and working with Human Rights NGOs. The region has also prioritised work with War on Want supporting trade union and social movement campaigns.

Conference therefore instructs the National Executive Council to:

1) continue its support for the courageous trade unionists of Colombia and publicise the continuation of violence against trade union and social movement leaders in Colombia;

2) develop the union’s joint project work with Colombian trade unions and to continue to provide political and economic support to JFC’s Peace Campaign;

3) work with JFC and other UK unions to continue to oppose national ratification of the FTA and to ensure that the Colombian government implements and meets the commitments it has entered into in return for the agreement;

4) continue to put pressure on the Colombian government to fully respect trade union and human rights, to end the persecution of human rights and peace campaigners and to guarantee the safety of the members of the Patriotic March and Colombians for Peace;

5) actively encourage regions and branches to promote and organise campaigns that build a sustainable infrastructure, supporting community organising, protecting workers and their families;

6) continue to work with War on Want to support campaigns in Colombia;

7) encourage regions and branches to affiliate to JFC and to increase their support for the organisation, in order to help develop relationships with trade union organisations in Colombia and to develop these links with a view to providing practical support.

**J. Welfare cuts**

**Carried**

The Coalition government’s attempt to cut billions from the welfare budget will have a devastating impact on low income households across the UK in the period ahead and in so doing, create a divided society in which Victorian themes of the deserving and undeserving poor are used.

Conference notes in particular that:

1) the provisions of the Welfare Reform Act, recently passed by the ConDem government, will lead to increasing poverty amongst disabled persons, homelessness and debt;

2) in reality, the impact of cuts to welfare will fall heavily on many working families – for example, 60% of the real term cuts made by the impact of the Welfare Uprating Bill will fall on working families, leaving households £165 a year worse off. However, this figure rises to £215 per year for those households with no one in work, meaning that the poorest families in society, and those most vulnerable to food and fuel price rises will suffer even further;

3) the one per cent cap on increases in tax credits and working age benefits at a time when inflation is predicted to remain at more than two per cent will be the first time the incomes of the poorest have been reduced as a deliberate act of government policy since the 1930s;

4) the comments made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, in the wake of the Philpot convictions on the potential capping of child benefit to large families. The modern family is diverse and complex and this should be reflected in the benefits system. A cap on child benefit at two children would disadvantage large families and blended families and could potentially put children at risk. We believe that Child Benefit should be a universal benefit which should not be capped at the number of children that government deems is acceptable;

5) the next tranche of changes to the housing benefit system, including the bedroom tax and cuts to housing benefit for under 25s, coupled with £500 weekly benefit cap, will see more families forced to move out of areas where they work and have put down roots, disrupting family life, destroying communities and placing huge strain on local authorities, schools and other public services;

6) Housing Benefit changes will cause landlords to more readily use eviction as a way of managing arrears and lead to vulnerable people being put at risk through the need to share accommodation;

7) the replacement of council tax benefit with the reduced council tax support, which comes with a 10 per cent funding cut, has the potential to see many low income households who are currently exempt pursued through the courts for non payment;

8) at the same time that those seeking work will receive a rise in benefits of 72p per week millionaires will receive a tax cut worth £2058 per week and that the 1000 wealthiest people in the UK have between them an estimated wealth of £414bn;

9) the likely impact on members in local authorities and elsewhere of these changes in welfare and terms of the impact on jobs and the work they undertake with the public;

Conference believes that

a) coupled with welfare reform and the roll out of universal credit, these measures demonstrate the government’s callous determination to put its own ideology ahead of the well-being of ordinary families. To make matters worse, the government, and their friends in the right wing press, continue to demonise recipients of benefits as skivers and scroungers;

b) the UK in the 21st century we collectively have the means to ensure that everyone lives in a decent home, has the opportunity to work and earn enough to live on, and where people unable to work are able to live with dignity.

We also reject the claim by the government that it is unfair for benefits to rise higher than earnings. The value of unemployment benefit has fallen consistently since 1979, when it was worth 22% of average weekly earnings and is worth 15% of average weekly earnings today. ‘Tough Choices’ could be made by this government to condemn poverty pay, support a Living Wage across the public and private sector and reverse the pay freeze, bringing much needed demand into our stagnant economy.

Conference recognises that the fairest and most effective way for any Government to reduce spending on benefits is to ensure that there is a job available for all who have the capacity to take one up.

Conference agrees that it is morally wrong to make the least well off pay for a crisis that they did not cause, which force families to choose whether to eat, heat or pay their rent and which the Coalition’s policies continue to make worse. It is abhorrent that repeated messages are used to encourage the public to believe that their real enemies are those too sick to work or unable to find work.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

i) work with relevant partners, in alliance with other unions, disability, older people, children and families organisations and other groups of people in the welfare reform consortium to build an alternative vision of welfare provision for the 21st century providing genuine solutions. This should include making housing affordable by building significant numbers of genuinely affordable homes, promoting decent wages to end in-work poverty, providing universal childcare, and underpinning this approach with an economic policy that prioritises jobs and growth. This alternative should then be promoted through Labour Link;

ii) continue to make arguments for an economic alternative, which includes the provision of welfare and makes the case for growth, the provision of jobs and a Living Wage;

iii) continue to support the welfare support services and information and advice provided by UNISON Welfare – There for You - to members;

iv) work with branches and activists, educate our own members on the facts of welfare reform, the damaging impact on our economy and the alternatives promoting branch guidance and negotiation advice with employers on the impact of welfare changes on frontline jobs particularly in health, local government and community services;

v) promote successful UNISON local community campaign stories with case studies of good practice in welfare provision being delivered through local public services;

vi) work through appropriate channels and organisations to lobby the government to resource local authorities appropriately so that they can:

A) help with the local impacts of housing benefit changes;

B) increase frontline staff in service areas where increased service demand and workload will occur as it becomes necessary to provide safety net services to fill in the gaps left as a consequence of the reform changes.

vii) promote the need for an integrated and 'people based' local delivery housing benefits advice service, for people to meet benefits officers face to face locally in addition to any national 'online' arrangements;

viii) work with housing advocacy bodies such as the National Housing Federation (NHF), Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), Crisis and Shelter who highlight the impact of the changes on tenants and the knock-on consequences for housing associations and local authorities;

ix) develop strong links with campaigning organisations such as Child Poverty Action Group and Shelter to present a united front and message on the impact of austerity measures on the most vulnerable in our society;

x) work with the National Campaign for Benefit Justice.

**Amendment to Rules**

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**1. Rule C Unemployed Members**

**Carried**

Rule C 2.4.1

After "redundant" add:

“or having accepted a compromise agreement as an alternative to dismissal.”

After “date if dismissal”, remove “or” and add “,”

after “redundancy” add “or agreement”.

**2. Rule C Retired Members**

**Carried**

Rule C 2.6.1

Delete "in receipt of a pension and who are not in other paid employment." and replace with "are retired."

Add new Rule C2.6.2

"Retired members who return to paid employment, which falls within the scope of Rule C 1, will be obliged to pay the appropriate subscription rate to remain in UNISON membership. Such members will be able to resume retired member status on ceasing paid employment.

Retired members, who return to paid employment, which falls outside the scope of Rule C 1 will cease holding retired member status. Such members may apply to resume UNISON retired member status when they cease paid employment. Such members may apply to resume retired member status."

Renumber current Rule C 2.6.2 as C 2.6.3.

**3. Rule D Composition**

**Lost**

**4. Rule D Composition**

**Carried**

Rule D 1.3.3.1

Delete "Rule G.9" and replace with "Rule G.10"

**5. Rule D Conference Quorum and Procedure**

**Fell**

**6. Rule D Regional Representatives**

**Withdrawn**

**7. Rule D Service Group Representatives**

**Withdrawn**

**9. Rule D Service Group Executive**

**Not carried by required 2/3 majority**

Replace current Rule D 3.5.8 with:

"No member of the National Executive Council can hold seat on a Service Group Executive, except as indicated in Rule D 3.5.9."

Replace current rule D 3.5.9 with:

"Those members of the National Executive Council who are elected members of a Service Group under Rule D 2.3 shall be members of their Group Executive with no voting rights."

**10. Rule D Service Group Executive**

**Not carried by required 2/3 majority**

Insert a new rule D 3.5.9:

"Service Group Executive members will be eligible to stand for election on the National Executive Council and will remain a member of the Service Group Executive, until she/he has taken office on the National Executive Council after being elected."

Renumber each remaining rule accordingly.

**13. Rule D Self Organised Groups**

**Carried**

Amendment to Rule D 4.2

In existing D 4.2, delete all after "shall be, within the framework of the rules of the union, to" and replace with:

"assist the union to:

.1 promote the union's equalities and bargaining agenda

.2 defend jobs, terms and conditions and services

.3 build its density and have a strong and dynamic presence in the workplace"

Insert new D 4.3 and renumber remaining rules accordingly:

"4.3 To this end, self organised groups shall:

.1 meet to share concerns and aspirations, and establish their own priorities

.2 elect their own representatives to other levels of self organisation and to other appropriate levels of the Union's organisation

.3 have adequate and agreed funding and other resources, including education and training access, publicity and communications

.4 work within a flexible structure to build confidence and encourage participation and provide opportunities for the fuller involvement of disadvantaged members

.5 work within the establised policies, rules and constitutional provisions of the Union."

**14. Rule G The Branch Committee**

**Carried**

Add new Rules G 2.2.8 and G 2.2.9:

".8 shall from 1 January 2014 maintain records of its financial transactions, assets and liabilities using the national online branch accounting system (OLBA);

.9 shall from 1 January 2014 develop an appropriate annual budget as part of the joint branch assessment process in accordance with the Union's objectives and priorities."

**15. Rule H Payment to Branches**

**Carried**

Delete existing wording of Rule H.4.2 and replace with:

"With effect from 1 January 2014 such sums shall be remitted by branches in accordance with a timetable to be published to branches concerned by the National Executive Council and paid into a current account held in the name of the branch with Unity Trust Bank."

**16. Rule K Qualifications**

**Carried**

Amendment to K 2(i):

Delete "member knowing that she/he had need of legal assistance and seeks" and insert "incident or occurrence that leads to her/him seeking legal assistance."

**Emergency Motions**

**Emergency Motions**

**001. Future Directions dispute in Rochdale and the use of anti union laws**

**Carried**

Conference deplores the use of anti union legislation by Future Directions, a Community Interest Company, to frustrate a 96% vote for industrial action by its workforce in Rochdale on a ballot turnout of 72%.

On 24 May 2013, the employer secured an interim injunction to restrain a three day strike (barely 12 hours before it was due to commence) by exploiting a technicality regarding workplace addresses for non-DOCAS subscription payers.

The dispute exemplifies the growing problem of the NHS and local authorities exploiting commissioning in order to make difficult budget cuts. Outsourcing services often leads to third party organisations cutting pay and conditions when service funding is reduced within the commissioning exercise or 'loss leader' bidding is employed.

Conference agrees to:

1. send a message of solidarity to the 115 UNISON members at Future Directions who provide supported living and domiciliary care to adults with learning disabilities and are facing pay cuts of up to £10,000 per annum as well as attacks on conditions of service;
2. call on the National Executive Council to ensure that the union provides all necessary bargaining, financial and legal support to enable a successful outcome to the dispute;
3. donate £5,000 to the Rochdale branch Future Directions strike fund.

**002. Bangladeshi garment workers**

**Carried**

Conference shares the shock and horror felt around the work at the death of over 1,000 mainly female garment workers in the collapse of a factory building in Rana Plaza, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Dangerous working conditions are endemic in the garment industry in Bangladesh and deaths are shamefully all too common. The scale of this tragedy has however forced the world to take note and to support the demands of Bangladeshi workers and their trade unions for change.

Many major UK high street brands and global clothing retailers such as Primark, Gap, and many others source clothing from Bangladesh and they bear a major responsibility for the conditions and safety of the workers making the clothing form which they profit.

We reject the argument that the cause of the poor conditions for Bangladeshi garment workers is the demand for cheap clothing. Labour costs in Bangladesh are a tiny fraction of the cost of clothing. Securing decent conditions for garment workers is easily affordable for the big clothing retailers.

Conference welcomes the Bangladesh Safety Accord. This is a landmark project, bringing together brands, supplier factories, trade unions and NGOs to end the appallingly unsafe factory conditions and ensure decent working conditions. The heart of the agreement is the commitment by companies to pay for the renovations and repairs necessary to make factory building in Bangladesh safe. This agreement will save lives.

Crucially the Bangladesh Safety Accord differs from company codes of conducts and other voluntary initiatives in that the agreement is transparent, enforceable, legally binding and ensures meaningful representation of workers and trade unions. Crucially the agreement forces brands to accept responsibility for the safety of the workers who make their clothes.

We welcome the fact that at the deadline date of 15 May 2013 a number of major retailers including Primark, Mango, Tesco and Sainsburys had signed up to the accord but that others including Gap and Asda Walmart had not.

We resolve to work all those organisations, such as war on Want in the UK, who are calling on all major clothing retailers to sign the accord.

We further resolve to send a message of support to the National Garment Workers Federation in Bangladesh and call on the National Executive Council to make a suitable donation to support the work of the independent unions in Bangladesh.

**EC1. UNISON response to the far right after Woolwich**

**Carried**

Conference condemns the brutal murder of Lee Rigby, a serving soldier, in Woolwich on Wednesday 22nd May. Conference pays tribute to the family of Lee Rigby who have appealed for no reprisal attacks to take place in his name and pays tribute to the many people that attempted to intervene before the emergency services arrived.

Conference condemns the actions of those that carried out this murder and reject the stated motivation for their actions. Conference rejects the methods of terrorism which are portrayed by some as an alternative method of struggle because the mass movement failed to stop these wars. Our current coalition government must recognise any occupation of a foreign state cannot be rubber stamped when the protection of the nation is put at risk. Conference believes UNISON, alongside many other trade unions, was right to oppose both wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and also demand that foreign military forces in those two countries were withdrawn immediately. UNISON took part in demonstrations and mass action to stop these wars. The mass movement had the support of the majority of the population, peaking at 90% opposition. During the mass movement against the wars, right-wing Islamist groups such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir and Al-Muhajiroun, advised Muslims not to participate in the mass demonstrations to oppose those wars. Conference believes that had the mass movement, which included the trade unions, followed the example of mass walk-outs and strikes by young people in schools and colleges that took place on the day war broke out against Iraq then the movement could have stopped the war.

We do not hold Norwegian Christians responsible for the actions of the fascist Anders Breivik, whose 2011 rampage left 77 dead. We do not hold white people collectively responsible for Timothy McVeigh, the US neo-Nazi whose 1995 Oklahoma City bomb killed 168 people, or for David Copeland, the former BNP member who planted bombs across London in 1999. Nor should anyone suggest that Britain’s Muslims are collectively responsible for the 22nd May attack.

Conference is deeply concerned at increasing attacks, verbally, physically and on social media on Muslim people in the following weeks. Fascist organisations such as the English Defence League (EDL) and British National Party (BNP) are trying to use the murder to whip up racism and direct hatred against all Muslims. Faith Matters reported a 15 fold increase on attacks being reported to their ‘Tell MAMA’ project including attempted firebombings, smashed windows and bacon being left outside a mosque.

The English Defence League rushed to capitalise on any resulting tensions by organising marches in Newcastle and London on 25 and 27 May 2013. Conference notes that the underlying economic conditions coupled with this murder could lead to an increase in their support. Their disgraceful actions included violent intimidation, inflammatory chants including calls for the repatriation of all Black people and giving Nazi salutes at the Cenotaph.They do not care about Lee Rigby, his family or the interest of any community. They want only to see Muslims attacked and a race war on our streets. UNISON condemns them and opposes their attempts to call “demonstrations” to exploit these issues. Further, conference applauds the anti-fascist demonstrators who prevented the BNP from marching to the Cenotaph war memorial, chanting, “They shall not pass” on 1st June 2013.

While the vast majority of the people that the EDL claims to speak for have rejected their activities, Conference believes that our Black, Muslim and migrant worker members and their communities are facing an increasingly intolerant climate where they are vulnerable to discrimination and abuse.

Conference further recognises, but does not believe is a defence for those who carried out this and other similar attacks, that there is a growing alienation of a layer of Black and Asian youth from mainstream society. More importantly the trade unions are also failing to connect with or have a positive influence over the lives of these alienated youth who are becoming angrier about their condition. A TUC survey reported that unemployment amongst Black young men stands at 50%, amongst Asian young men it stands at 30%. Conference believes that the policies of this and previous governments have condemned a whole generation of young people because of their attacks on working class communities in favour of big-business.

It’s time conference also call into account the media coverage for its insensitivity and sensationalism.

Conference believes that we have a responsibility to ensure the British media take a responsible and sensible approach when reporting acts of violence on our streets and that they, along with politicians must stop using inflammatory language that feeds the fascists and racists. We must reject those who want to divide our communities and set them against each other, and stand fast to the ideals of anti-racism, multiculturalism and respect for all.

Conference is also concerned that, fresh from their recent success at the local elections held on 2 May 2013, the UK Independence Party (UKIP) stand poised to benefit from perceptions that they are the respectable face of the populist anger being generated against immigration and migrant workers. UKIP campaigned for the May elections on a platform that blamed immigration rather than the Coalition government for the effect of austerity policies. Their actual policies on the workplace involve repealing almost every statutory protection for all workers, massively increasing job insecurity, encouraging bad practices by managers and damaging workforce morale across the private sector.

Conference notes that a ComRes poll conducted between 22-24 May found that among those certain to vote in next year’s European elections, UKIP would come first overall with 27%. Conference fears that long after the dust settles on marches by the far right, policies that worsens life for migrant workers, immigrant communities, Muslim and Black people will be its lasting legacy. UKIP’s entrance into mainstream politics gives added impetus to those who seek to slash public service, deregulate industries and privatise schools and hospitals.

UNISON is in a key position to organise opposition to the cuts and play a key role in the fight against racism. UNISON’s activists in recent years have organised and campaigned successfully to check the far-right at the ballot box, on our streets and in our workplaces and communities. In the North West, UNISON activists working closely with Hope not Hate finally freed Burnley from the grip of the BNP in May, the culmination of an 11 year campaign. Activists distributed specially targeted materials throughout the year, informing people about the activities of the BNP and their utter failure to improve the lives of voters. HOPE not hate materials also featured examples of positive campaigns by others to improve people’s lives locally.

Conference believes that the lessons learned from the campaigns to tackle the BNP, engaging with communities and their disillusionment with politics in a positive way, should be transferred to the new challenges that face us following the rise of UKIP and the resurgence of the far right street activity.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

1. Work in conjunction with the National Black Members Committee to organise a high profile anti-racist campaign together with other trade unions that demonstrates the benefits of united struggle in the workplace and in working class communities, including our political education and communication strategies;

2. Supports trade union action to defend working class communities against racist attacks;

3. Work with HOPE not hate, Unite Against Fascism (UAF) and other trade unions to oppose the far-right’s attempts to organise either on the streets or electorally;

4. work with HOPE not hate to produce new materials addressing the issues raised by the motion in preparation for the 2014 European Parliament elections;

5. encourage UNISON members to join the HOPE not hate campaign, particularly its collaboration with the Daily Mirror ‘No place for hate’ wall where voices of hope can speak out and call a meeting with HOPE not hate in conjunction with national Black members’ committee to address specific issues of racism and Islamophobia;

6. work with Labour link to discuss these issues with MPs;

7. organise a fringe meeting at the 2014 Conference on these issues and report back through UNISON media throughout the year on the campaign strategy;

8. provide renewed support for our members facing racist harassment and abuse in the workplace;

9. campaign vigorously against cuts and for apprenticeships at trade union rates of pay with a full-time job at the end, free education at all levels with a living grant whilst studying and to fully fund services for young people, alongside other trade unions;

10. campaign alongside young people and other trade unions to help organise in those commes where youth alienation is potentially high;

11. oppose any new measures aimed at reducing our democratic rights, such as the right for security forces to read emails and texts.