

2018 Community Service Group Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Southport Theatre and Convention Centre

02 Mar 2018 04 Mar 2018

Organising and Recruitment

Recruitment & Organisation

1. Raising the Bar in North West Social Care

Conference notes the continued success of the North West Region's Social Care Organising Project 'Care Workers for Change' and the revitalisation of the participation and sector organisation of Community members which are key objectives within its Regional Work Programme.

Funded by the Region and participating branches, its aims are to recruit new members and activists, to establish organising committees, to achieve recognition in 25% of the sector, National Minimum Wage compliance and the Living Wage in 25% of the sector.

Working in key providers including Bupa, Four Seasons, Community Integrated Care, Dovehaven, Anchor, Embrace, Minister Care Group, Orchard Care Homes, Methodist Homes and Making Space, at the end of it's first year of operation the project has achieved:

The high visibility for the 'Care Workers for Change' campaign publicity, a wide-ranging social media presence and campaign spokespeople who have established UNISON as the main union for care workers in Greater Manchester and Liverpool City regions;

The engagement of thousands of individuals and community and faith groups in the 'Demanding Dignity in Social Care' borough campaigns;

The successful passing of Council motions securing union access to private sector social care providers in Sefton, Salford, Halton and Knowsley, with significant progress also being made in Manchester, Wigan and Oldham;

The securing of progressive social care manifesto commitments from the Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham and Liverpool City Region Mayor Steve Rotherham;

The identification of over 90 new members who have engaged in the campaign;

An increase in membership of 88% in the initial target providers, with significant membership growth in some areas including 250+ across Four Seasons and Methodist Homes, 160+ in BUPA homes (despite great hostility from the employer), 350+ across homes in Stockport and growth across a variety of providers in Salford, Sefton, Oldham and Manchester;

The lodging of 150+ National Minimum Wage claims against 13 employers plus support for 22 national claims.

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Conference further notes that none of this work would have been attainable without the ongoing financial support and work of the 35 UNISON branches involved, their staff and activists and the work of the North West's 28 Local Organisers/Fighting Fund Local Organisers.

Conference commends the strategic political and organisational approach that the project has taken to ensure that progress has been made to both highlight the crisis in social care and the working terms, conditions, pay and treatment of UNISON members and their colleagues.

Conference further welcomes the initiative of the Service Group Executive to enable activists from the North West to share their learning from this ongoing campaign at its 2018 Seminar.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Share the learning of the North West and other regional campaigns with regions/nations through UNISON publications such as Activist magazine, digital media and circulars to Regional Service Group Committees;
- 2) Ensure that the progress the North West has made is shared widely throughout the Service Group;
- 3) Actively publicise the work Regional Service Groups and Regions are undertaking to recruit and organise in Social Care;
- 4) In conjunction with UNISON National Office, Regions and Branches continue to produce guidance on best practice for campaigning in the Social Care sector;
- 5) Work with UNISON National Office to produce effective negotiating, bargaining and other appropriate resources for use by activists and workplace representatives in Social Care at local level.

North West Region

2. Training and Development for Lay Activists

Conference notes the annual national training event for Community members facilitated by UNISON Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) which took place in Birmingham in October 2017 and its continued success in assisting to develop and empower our membership base.

Conference also notes that throughout UNISON nations/regions much innovative work has been undertaken in conjunction with LAOS to produce training and development packages which reflect the changing needs of Community members and which seek to address the regional/national differences in organising the disparate Community membership.

Conference further notes that in order to ensure UNISON training is responsive to the changing nature of Community employment and our membership base we must

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assist LAOS to continuously update and refine the training methods and practice utilised to assist our membership base to grow and develop.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- a) Place the issue of training and development at the centre of its work programme for 2018/19.
- b) Consult with Regional Service Group Committees and Regional LAOS teams to establish what existing training and development course/packages are already in place and have been delivered at regional and branch levels.
- c) In conjunction with the National LAOS office, collate the combined learning of Regional Service Group Committees and Regional LAOS teams to highlight new successful initiatives which can be replicated throughout UNISON's regions/nations.
- d) Circulate these findings with recommendations for model courses to Regional Service Group Committees.

North West Region

Negotiating and Bargaining

Negotiation and Bargaining

3. TU Recognition in the Community and Voluntary Sector

This conference recognises the lack of trade union recognition in the community and voluntary sector. This is known to be a contributory factor in the perpetuation of low wages and poor conditions of service in the sector. This situation also mitigates against stewards playing an active role in defending members.

This conference calls on the Community Service Group Executive to issue advice to local government branches on commissioning social care contracts. Such advice should focus on how to make trade union recognition a significant element in tender evaluation.

Dumfries & Galloway Local Authority

4. Mental Health

In the Community & Voluntary Sector which includes care provision, charities, not for profit organisations and housing associations, it is becoming evident that the biggest issue in the workplace is poor mental health. Statistics now show that it causes many millions of working days to be lost every year. The mental health problems experienced by staff range from common symptoms like stress and anxiety right through to more serious and complex conditions like depression, bipolar disorder and OCD. The impact on employees in the community is immense, whereas many employers have now revised terms and conditions of employment resulting in many reducing company sick pay schemes to the extent of employees only receiving

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Statutory Sick Pay means that many employees struggle through everyday routines and tasks for fear of taking time off to treat the issues because of financial commitments and the loss of earnings when not in work.

Work/Life Balance is primarily affected by the low salaries and requirement to support the vulnerable individuals that have the services provided by the organisations. Many staff cannot survive on the basic salaries that organisations pay and the necessity in most cases is to work additional hours to provide a monthly take home pay that will support the families of support workers.

The role of a support worker for vulnerable adults is to ensure the quality of life is maintained and in some cases improved, this sounds like a job that would suit many but the reality is the opposite. Mental health problems as well as having a huge impact on individual employees, poor mental health has severe repercussions for employers - including increased staff turnover, sickness absence due to debilitating depression, burnout and exhaustion, decreased motivation and lost productivity.

Sadly too many employees refuse to admit that they are experiencing a mental health problem, the requirement to cover other staff sickness, in some cases bullying by colleagues and management, and the reduced number of staff to provide the support required on a day to day basis. There are support workers that will work through any issues they have, but a great majority will not and it is important that management are aware about spotting the signs that something might be wrong. Austerity has had an implication on our member's personal and working life.

Organisations in the community need to ensure that steps are taken to reduce the risk of their workplaces being a contributor; they have a duty of care to recognise and respond to mental health as they would with physical illnesses. Openness in the workplace results in a good support network in order for employees with mental illness to continue to work and be supported through tough times by management ensuring the tools available are used with a level of empathy and understanding.

We call on the Community Service Group Executive to:

1. Conduct a review in the Community & Voluntary Sector including the Housing Associations so that the extent of the issue is revealed.
2. Look at the results and start a dialogue with senior management teams in Community & Voluntary Sector and Housing Association organisations.
3. Support Health and Safety representatives of UNISON in these organisations to highlight the issue then encourage a change in the attitude and deliverance by management to improve support and attempt to reduce the lost work time by staff.

Cymru/Wales Region

5. Sickness Management

Around 80% of organisations in Community & Voluntary Sector and Housing Associations reported that the most prevalent form of short term absence from the

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workplace were the common minor illnesses like colds, stomach bugs, migraines and influenza.

40% of organisations reported an increased level of stress related illness; this is thought to be a response to the economic downturn over the last few years. Raised workloads, fears about job losses, family, relationship and financial issues also play a part in illnesses of other forms by not taking care of oneself because of the old excuse of not having time...

Policies and procedures within the Community & Housing Associations are there for employees and management to follow and for the most part they are but there is a growing trend that the policies and management responsibilities are being ignored. Members of staff in organisations have reported having no contact with HR management during their time away from the workplace due to illness.

Throughout the Community there are organisations that rely on low sickness percentages to commit to providing the support of the vulnerable they are contracted to do, and a large number provide the quality of service user support you would expect but there are exceptions. Short term illness can be managed by the staff team covering the absence or using flexi staff and agency staff, full time staff will return from illness and the status quo is restored.

Long term illness however is different; the illness may be serious, and also involve an operation and recovery time, or could be a mental health problem, these require a sympathetic approach, but this approach is sometimes lost; I have experienced issues with members who have advised me that there has been none or very little contact with HR during their absence.

Ideally there would be regular contact with the employee about their position, clarity about their company sick pay and explain any changes within the workplace. Too often the UNISON workplace rep will be the point of contact for the members that are on sick leave whereas it should be the member providing the rep with the updates courtesy of the HR department.

In terms of long term sickness absence there are many parts to deal with and experience says that it is not always handled correctly which results in frustration by the employee as they are sometimes left with inaccurate or repeated requests for details from one source or another. Surely managers have a responsibility to their staff to keep in regular contact... but do they?

There always seems to be a breakdown along the line with the procedure, but as it is a stressful time with illnesses that are sometimes life changing, the one aspect important to the individual is the possibility of returning to work and the proper assistance when that point arrives should not be the responsibility of the UNISON workplace rep but the HR and management departments of the employer.

Far too often messages are received from members who have been on long term sick leave with regard to a HR Department request to attend an Occupational Health Assessment prior to a possible return to work, this really can cause added stress due to the fact that it could in some cases mean that the report might highlight certain restrictions or reasonable adjustments to the individual's role, it could even mean

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medical dismissal if there is no available changes to that employee's job function, this however is the last chance saloon scenario, responsible and empathetic employers will find scope for adjustment wherever possible prior to this point.

We call on the Community Service Group Executive to:

1. Initiate a survey of members and workplace reps in the Community & Voluntary Sector and Housing Associations to try and get some hard evidence of issues highlighted.
2. Assess the responses to build a picture of the extent of the issue.
3. Provide guidance for the workplace reps of UNISON in the Community & Voluntary Sector and Housing Associations to encourage a change in the attitude and deliverance by management so that the relationship of management and staff improves and as a result benefits the sickness statistics of the organisations.

Cymru/Wales Region

6. Wellbeing in the Workplace

Employers in the Community & Voluntary Sector including Housing Associations are taking staff wellbeing more seriously than ever before, healthy employees who feel that they're being looked after are more likely to perform their roles at a higher level, take less time off sick, are more energised and engaged, and better at motivating their colleagues.

Physical inactivity comes at a cost not just to our health, it hurts the economy and an estimated £20bn per year is lost through periods of sickness. In every workplace, the major cause of the 131 million sick days taken in the UK is down to back, neck and muscle pain and over a quarter of UK adults are classed as physically inactive or live a sedentary lifestyle. In a recent survey, 50% of workers stated that they would be more active at work if they were informed of how it would improve long term health.

Lengthy working hours play a large part of the time taken on sick leave, less working hours led to a 50% decrease in time taken off sick, higher levels of contentment, and more energy in both the workplace and at home. This becomes the right work/life balance, reducing the number of hours worked could lead to an ensuing increase in productivity and reduction in sick leave.

Alternatively there are other options available, flexible working - which all UK employees have the legal right to request - allows staff to request changes to the number of hours worked, required working times or being more flexible with their place of work. Giving staff the flexibility to care for disabled relatives, do the school run, or attend classes outside work can help to reduce turnover, improve morale, attract new employees, reduce absenteeism and increase productivity.

Healthy food is better for us may not be a shocking announcement, but the impact goes beyond health: a good nutritious diet improves everything from concentration to memory. It is said that what you eat affects your productivity; encouraging a proper diet should be a must for management who want to look after their staff.

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The British Heart Foundation offers free advice on how to run healthy eating workshops in the workplace, which can help you to assess how things could be improved.

Right, having covered what to eat, how it should be eaten, this is crucial to staff wellbeing, although focused on the office template it also affects other types and places of work. A 2017 report disclosed that nearly 40% of staff have their lunch at their desks on four or more days per week. The issue is also there in care and support provision as service users of all levels of learning disabilities need support when they need it not in 5 minutes or 30 minutes but immediately, at least in some cases there is an option of joining the service users for lunch but not in every supported facility.

Supporting staff to take a proper break for lunch can help. A change of surroundings and company stimulates the mind, and sends staff back to their duties enlivened and ready to work.

Workplace mental health has long been taken for granted – because stress is a sideline in all workplaces, but has gathered pace and gained more attention from the Community & Housing Associations. Many workplaces seem to go about making everyone as stressed as possible and then it's just a matter of which one snaps first. Managers are not doing their job if they aren't paying attention to how their staff are feeling and this leads to poor performance in the organisation. My understanding of the management role is to provide support for the support staff that ensure that the quality of life of the vulnerable is maintained, improved and does not deteriorate due to the lack of support and the wellbeing of support staff.

Mental health problems cost organisations in the UK £30 billion a year through lost production, recruitment and sickness absence, which is a great deal when considering how much organisations can do themselves to improve the mental health and wellbeing of their workforce. The most stressed people are often the most diligent and organisations are at risk of losing really good people if they don't pay attention to what's going on around them.

We call on the Community Service Group Executive to:

1. Generate a survey in the Community & Voluntary Sector and Housing Associations and from the results gauge the level of wellbeing advice provided by organisations to their support staff.
2. Develop a guide to wellbeing and work in the Community & Voluntary Sector and Housing Associations that will provide advice and ways of improvement in workplace wellbeing.
3. Establish courses that will complement the work of all UNISON Health and Safety reps in branches in the Community & Voluntary Sector and Housing Associations to share best practice of wellbeing in work that will promote the benefits of wellbeing to organisations in order to kickstart an initiative to benefit all support staff that may in turn reduce sickness levels.

YMLAEN - FORWARD

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7. Violence towards support staff

Care and support staff in both the Community & Voluntary Sector and Housing Associations should not accept incidents of violent or aggressive behaviour as a normal part of their role. All support staff have a right to expect a safe and secure workplace.

Violent and aggressive incidents are the third biggest cause of injuries reported under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013). Employers and employees should work together to establish systems to prevent or reduce aggressive behaviour from individuals supported in whatever the setting.

Work related violence is defined as 'Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.'

Examples of violent and aggressive behaviour include:

- a. A support worker bitten by an individual with learning disabilities in the course of the support duties that the individual receives.
- b. An angry visitor who considers that his/her relative has not been properly treated verbally abuses a manager of the support organisation.
- c. A carer verbally abused and threatened by an individual who is unwilling to take prescribed medication.
- d. Domiciliary staff providing refreshments is struck by a confused elderly patient.

In the Community & Housing Associations UNISON members make up a significant part of the care and support environment, most care and support staff who were surveyed said that the organisations encouraged staff to report any violent incidents, but struck a worrying chord by saying that employers regarded the violence "as part of the job"

The main risk is the verbal abuse or physical assault of a staff member or other person. There is a high level of under-reporting of incidents of violence and aggression within the health and social care sector.

Care and support staff, visitors, and service users are all at potential risk. Incidents arise primarily because the work involves contact with a wide range of individuals who have varying degrees of requirements and live in circumstances which may be difficult. People receiving care and their relatives may be anxious and worried; some may be inclined towards violence.

Care and support staff that are involved in the following activities are at increased risk of violence and aggressive behaviour:

- i Lone working
- ii Working additional hours

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- iii Support in the community requiring travel
- iv Administering medication or handling valuables
- v Supporting individuals with learning disabilities
- vi Drink or drug induced individuals that require the services of support staff
- vii Individuals with stress related illnesses

Recently in a review on violence against social care and support staff in the UK, 93% of support staff said that they had been verbally abused at some point during their employment. 71% had been threatened or intimidated and 56% had reported a physical assault. These statistics are far too high, support staff are employed to improve the quality of life of the individuals supported whether they are disabled, aged, suffering from health issues such as dementia or have learning disabilities, support staff should be protected and supported themselves when violence becomes part of a daily routine.

We call on the Community Service Group Executive to:

1. Speak to Health & Safety reps in the Community & Voluntary Sector and Housing Associations and generate reports why the prevalence of violence is rising and the reasons behind it.
2. Develop a strategy in the Community & Voluntary Sector and Housing Associations that will provide guidance and support to all support staff.
3. Establish relationships with all UNISON Health and Safety reps in branches in the Community & Voluntary Sector and Housing Associations to share best practice and help each area promote the issue of violence in the workplace as having no place in the health and social care environment.

YMLAEN - FORWARD

8. Creating, Building and Strengthening Black Community links

Conference notes the damaging decline in numbers and workplace density as a result of many housing associations merging. This has resulted in more job losses disproportionately in a community where there is a high concentration of Black workers. This has reduced our effectiveness in the workplace, our impact in collective bargaining negotiations and most importantly member engagement.

However, despite the job losses in our communities, UNISON is to be applauded on successfully maintaining its membership figures and Black members are still said to be 'most likely to join a union'.

Nevertheless, for Black members, the issue of racism and discrimination still prevails and conference notes a continued trend of research that reflects some of the barriers Black member face by lack of engagement and representation across the public/private sectors in our regions and branches.

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Encouragingly, the recent general election campaign, showed overwhelming support of Jeremy Corbyn and a more socialist leadership for the country demonstrating an eagerness of members to become involved in the democratic process, campaigning and participation in the decision making which affects their lives.

Throughout the year our NEC General political fund supports branch regional and national initiatives that encourage and involve our members in the community and in their wider communities via a vast range of diverse equality events.

These numerous events have helped increased membership, interest in the union and positive feedback as to UNISON's visibility. The events provide an opportunity to discover exactly what the union is doing for members, and how we as a union can be responsive to the real issues which concern them.

With deeply concerning issues for Black members which have never been more important, since the Brexit decision was taken. According to Home Office figures, of the 386,474 stops and searches made last year 58,397 were of people who self-identified as being Black or Black British. This is the equivalent of 31.4 stop and searches for every 1,000 Black people in the UK compared to white people for whom there were only 4.9 stop and searches for every 1,000 people. With evidence of racial bias in the criminal justice system, Black men are seven times more likely to be affected by 'stop and search', Deaths in police custody, the rise in racism and attacks specifically affecting women and children and elderly in our Black communities.

Following the Manchester bombing where figures for reported Race Hate crimes rose by 500%; the tragic deaths at Finsbury Mosque and acid attacks of young Asian people, African Caribbean men in the mental health system where unnecessary punitive force is applied such as tasers and the completely avoidable deaths at Grenfell Tower have served only to highlight the overall feeling of distrust and neglect felt by many in the Black community who insist that "Black Lives do Matter".

We must continue to connect with and support our members affected by such events by building sustainable community engagement. By being more visible to our members and offering support which allows them to see the wider benefits of trade union involvement.

Conference therefore calls upon the Community Service Group Executive to work with the National Black Members Committee:

1. Where possible, to engage in specific work to connect with local Black community groups who do work in support of our members in their communities;
2. To seek to explore and undertake statistical survey of racism within the work place for further action and support in the housing and community sector;
3. And with Labour link and NEC in recognising the significance in retaining and supporting membership and self organisation groups in the community sector.

National Black Members' Committee

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Campaigning

Campaigns

9. Sleeping in Shifts and compliance with National Minimum Wage Regulations

Conference notes that in the past year our union has once again been leading the way on the issue of payment of the statutory minimum wage for sleep-in shifts. Many Community members carry out sleep-in shifts and have often been paid less than the legal minimum for their work.

By any reasonable definition of the word, these shifts must be considered as 'work' for the purposes of calculating if an employee has been paid the legal minimum. These staff are disciplined if they leave the place of work, they have work responsibilities which they carry out and they can't spend time with their friends and family. Workers are regularly engaged in active work during these shifts, often to care for people with substantial needs.

Given that this principal was eventually established both by HMRC and Government guidance, conference objects to the government's decision to suspend minimum wage enforcement in the social care sector in the latter half of 2017.

Conference believes that those Charities who have campaigned for sleep in shifts to be exempt from minimum wage regulations are wrong and have risked the reputation of their organisations as a result.

Conference applauds those employers in the sector who have worked constructively with unions to ensure compliance and to deal with the issue of back pay.

Conference calls on the Community Service Group Executive to:

1. Continue to lobby and campaign for the enforcement of regulations defining sleep-in shifts as 'work' for the purposes of national minimum wage regulations, including work with UNISON Labour Link and other stakeholders. This includes lobbying political parties in positions of power and influence in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
2. Lobby and campaign for the funding needed in the sector, particularly via public sector commissioning, for this basic minimum requirement to be met. This includes working with the Health and Local Government Service Group Executives to highlight the issue.
3. Continue to highlight the issue in the media so that the public is better informed about possible breaches of minimum wage regulations.

Community Service Group Executive

10. Collective Sectoral Bargaining and Compliance with National Minimum Wage Regulations

Conference welcomes the statements of Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell at Trades Union Congress (TUC) that the Institute of Employment Rights (IER)'s Manifesto for Labour Law is being taken forward by the Labour Party as "the basis

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for our implementation manual in this field" and of Shadow Business Secretary Rebecca Long-Bailey MP (Salford and Eccles) at the Institute of Employment Rights (IER) and Campaign for Trade Union Freedom (CTUF) fringe event at the Labour Party Conference that the next Labour government will provide workers with all their rights from day one of a Labour Government, will abolish the Trade Union Act 2016, and will establish a Ministry of Labour.

Conference commends the excellent work undertaken by the IER's 15 top lawyers and academics to produce the Manifesto for Labour Law which now forms an integral part of the Labour Party's Manifesto and seeks to set standards across entire industries and throughout the economy by reinstating sectoral collective bargaining.

Conference also commends the work the IER has undertaken to produce "8 Good Reasons Why Adult Social Care Needs Sectoral Collective Bargaining" which shows that thousands of employers of UNISON Community members continue to underpay their staff and calls on the government to promote and support sectoral collective bargaining between Social Care employers' associations and trade unions to establish an agreed upon set of standards to be applied across the industry.

Conference believes that sectoral collective bargaining is key to redressing the imbalance of power between employers and workers, ensures that workers have a democratic voice within their workplace, and prevents employers from exploiting migrant labour (which forces standards down for both migrant workers and those born in this country).

In 2013 a tribunal ruled in the case of Whittlestone v BJP Home Support Ltd that care workers' overnight shifts should be paid at minimum wage. Despite this, thousands of workers continue to receive a flat rate for sleep-ins.

Guidance issued in 2015 by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (DBEIS) stated: "A worker who is found to be working, even though they are asleep, is entitled to the national minimum or NLW (National Living Wage) for the entire time they are at work."

In 2016, Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) began to enforce this aspect of the law, but in July 2017, the government agreed to an 'amnesty' for the thousands of employers who owe their staff back pay as a result following representation from employers that to compensate workers would break the back of the industry.

In September 2017 the government announced that this policy would be extended for one more month stating that all employers should "pay their workers according to the law, including for sleep-in shifts"

Conference agrees with the statement of our General Secretary that this "extended amnesty is a green light for dodgy employers to carry on paying illegal wages without fear of ever being punished."

Whilst some of these employers may be small organisations who struggle to deliver local authority contracts within tight specifications, many care providers are private equity funded companies wrapped up in secretive and complex funding arrangements, making huge profits on the backs of UNISON members and flagrantly

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taking advantage of their skills, diligence, and commitment whilst denying them their rights under law.

Conference, therefore, further welcomes the significant work UNISON is undertaking at all levels of its structure to take forward National Minimum Wage claims against unscrupulous employers who continue to exploit Community members and their colleagues and bring them to justice.

This work clearly exemplifies why the Social Care industry needs collective sectoral bargaining as a matter of urgency.

Conference therefore calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

- a) Work with the Local Government and Health Service Groups to continue to raise the issue of, and campaign for, appropriate funding for the Social Care Sector.
- b) Work with all appropriate bodies to lobby and campaign for the enforcement of regulations defining 'sleep-ins' as work for the purposes of National Minimum Wage regulations.
- c) Work with Labour Link, UNISON national office and appropriate organisations to ensure that collective sectoral bargaining in Social Care is kept high on our political and bargaining agenda.
- d) Consider inviting a guest speaker from the IER to a future Community Conference and Seminar to address the Service Group on the need for sectoral collective bargaining in the Social Care Sector.

North West Region

11. Poverty Pay and Rotten Housing for Housing Association & Voluntary workers

This conference notes

- a) A Chief Executive of a Large Housing Association recently remarked at a meeting that many of the workers and their families employed by the association to support and rehouse the homeless lived in worse accommodation than the people they were trying to help.
- b) Years of below inflation pay rises and massive increase in rents and property prices means that many Housing Association and Voluntary workers live in privately rented shared, damp, expensive, overcrowded and insecure homes.
- c) Most of their income is spent on rent and travel costs with nothing left over in order to save for a better quality home.
- d) Housing Associations and Voluntary sector who operate in expensive property areas have a duty and responsibility to their workforce to ensure that they live in suitable and affordable accommodation.

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- e) If a Housing Association or Voluntary sector worker is inadequately housed and living in poverty then the service they provide to residents and clients will also be adversely affected.
- f) Historically, Housing Associations and other housing providers in the past did provide accommodation for some of their workers and today many still provide service tenancies to staff. Others provide “Key worker” accommodation.
- g) Housing Associations are also major developers as well as Landlords who build homes for sale, shared ownership, provide Student and supported accommodation as well as market, near market and social rents. They are uniquely able to provide housing solutions to their workers.

This Conference resolves:-

- 1) To call upon the Community Service Group Executive to continue to campaign with Labour Link, branches, regions and self organised Groups for extra funding for the sector and better wages for staff including sector pay boards;
- 2) To also work with the National Housing Federation and Voluntary sector employer organisations to campaign for their workers to be treated as “key workers” and for them to provide safe, secure and affordable homes for them if needed.;
- 3) To also work with the Co-operative movement to see if a co-operative housing model could provide decent homes for housing association and voluntary sector workers and their families.

Housing Associations Branch (M)

12. UNISON Pay Campaign and the Community Service Group

Community Conference welcomes the new UNISON wide pay campaign called “Pay Up Now” which seeks to put pressure on the government to end public spending austerity which has proved so disastrous for public services in recent years.

Community Conference supports the campaign objectives which are to:

- a. Put an end to the pay cap
- b. Ensure government money made available for an immediate pay rise for all public sector workers
- c. Put an end to government interference in bargaining arrangements for all public sector pay.

Conference believes it is important that the campaign recognises the impact which austerity has had on workers in the care sector. Many employers in Community use the pay increases in the public sector as a guide to their own stance on annual pay rises. Also, the funding of public sector contracts taken up by Community employers are often funded on the assumption that pay and terms and conditions of work will be driven down.

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Conference calls on the Community Service Group Executive to:

1. Liaise with the NEC to ensure the “Pay Up Now” pay campaign includes detail and language which will also appeal to UNISON members, and potential members, working in the Community.
2. Consult with UNISON members in Community on the impact of long-term pay austerity in the sector and feed this information into the “Pay Up Now” campaign.
3. Produce materials from the campaign adapted for the Community Sector, and distribute them to Community activists and Members.

Community Service Group Executive

13. Pay up now in Community!

Conference notes that UNISON membership in the community service group is increasing and attendance at the community service group meeting at national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) conference improves annually.

Issues affecting LGBT members raised at the meeting include low or no pay increases, attacks on terms and conditions, facility time and bullying, harassment and discrimination.

The equality survey carried out by UNISON during Summer 2017 identified that 44% described their standard of living as worse than a year ago. This was over a 10% increase on 2016. It also showed that people are generally spending more and earning less due to rising costs and inflation. LGBT members have the same pay profile as non-LGBT members.

Conference notes that many community employers have used the Tories’ 1% public sector pay cap as an excuse to cap pay increases to their staff. Many community members have had no or low cost pay increases, way behind the rate of inflation. Conference welcomes UNISON’s Pay up now! campaign and believes it could benefit from greater visibility in the community sector.

Conference welcomes the increase in the Living Wage set by the Living Wage Foundation. For members in community employers who subscribe to it, this can make a real difference. However smaller charities are more likely to pay below the Living Wage, with 77.2% of low paid employees working for charities with less than fifty employees. Conference notes that many LGBT members work for smaller charities where work has been commissioned, as it is no longer viable in the statutory sector but is still an essential service.

The Living Wage should not be confused with the Government’s living wage which is the minimum wage, the increase in which does not match inflation.

Conference therefore urges the Community service group executive to:

1. Promote UNISON’s ‘Pay up now!’ campaign among community members, with relevant and appropriate community campaign messages;
2. Keep community workers pay high on the service group agenda;

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3. Encourage and assist branches to campaign for their employers to sign up to the real Living Wage;
4. Work with the national self-organised groups and young members forum to mainstream equality issues into the pay campaign;
5. Survey community members to identify how pay cuts and working conditions have impacted on them and report the findings to 2019 conference.

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Committee

14. Fair Funding

There is a persistent problem of funding and how contracts are put out for tender.

The impact of this is that there is often so little money in the contract that staffing costs are the area employers target to cut back so members end up with larger workloads and lower pay, wages rarely allow for the living wage so the minimum wage is all that can be offered.

Additionally, employment is insecure with some companies having to pull out when a contract comes up for retender. This often ends up with closures and/or redundancies. Within certain sectors staff are often on fixed term contracts for the length of time of the contract so end up with nothing at the end.

Disabled members have enough problems trying to sustain employment without their wages being paid at the lowest rates and where employers are looking at every cost and haven't got enough finances to cover the workforce costs and we believe they are less likely to employ disabled people and provide the reasonable adjustments needed.

Conference, we welcome the steps taken by UNISON to fight for fairer funding especially in social care, using the social care charter, but more needs to be done. We need to push more for the Government and Councils to properly fund the level of services that they expect to be delivered in contracts. We need to ensure that employers pay the minimum wage and that workloads are manageable.

Finally, employers have to be pressed to ensure sufficient monies are allowed for the real cost of sleep ins and that back pay is provided for staff affected.

Conference calls on Community Service Group Executive to;

- 1) Work with local government service group, to profile where services have been returned in house to local authorities;
- 2) To work across the union including the NEC to continue to push for fairer funding for services provided in the community sector;
- 3) To develop a bargaining strategy for community sector employers to pay up now and improve pay across the employers.

National Disabled Members Committee

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15. Organising for LGBT Equality in the Community Sector

Conference notes that UNISON carried out its second equality survey in summer 2017 and received just 743 responses (6.79%) from members stating that they worked in the community sector which is disappointing considering we are the fastest growing sector with over 60,000 members.

Of all respondents, 6% identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual and 0.4% identified as transgender or having a trans history. Among lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) members, 67% had taken part in a branch LGBT group.

Worryingly, a third of respondents said that their employers did not keep them informed of equality policies and a staggering 41% said their employers had no organised equality training.

A third of members reported experiencing discrimination in the workplace of which nearly 5% was as a result of sexual orientation and just over 1% was as a result of gender identity.

Conference believes that this is just the tip of the iceberg and that with public bodies increasingly cutting their specialist equality functions, LGBT specific work is increasingly carried out in the community sector, with a number of LGBT groups and charities now significant regional and national employers. Many of these are not unionised, though some have individual staff in UNISON and other unions.

Conference further notes that with increasing competitiveness in the community sector, major charity and voluntary sector employers are acting more and more like private employers. There is a growing trend to move away from specific workers forums, such as staff LGBT forums, to generic open equality networks thereby providing the potential for workers with protected characteristics to be excluded. This therefore provides the opportunity to grow union self organisation.

Conference therefore urges the Community service group executive to encourage community branches to:

- 1) Publicise UNISON's work for LGBT equality;
- 2) Use our many LGBT bargaining resources;
- 3) Promote participation in regional LGBT groups;
- 4) Seek to fill branch LGBT officer posts, and signpost them to resources, training and support available
- 5) Support local pride and other LGBT events, recognising their recruitment potential, in liaison with regional LGBT groups;
- 6) Act on the significant potential of LGBT organisation for recruitment and recognition agreements with community employers;
- 7) Encourage community members to complete this year's Equality survey to enable a better representation from members working in the Community sector.

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UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Committee

Efficient and Effective Union

Efficient and Effective Union

16. Digital Organising Framework

Conference notes the introduction by UNISON from 1st September 2017 of the new Digital Organising Framework which replaces the paper-based Joint Branch and Regional Assessment Process (JBRA) and that

It is intended to act as a discussion framework for a sit down conversation between a Regional Organiser and Branch Secretary (or Committee);

It is an entirely paperless online solution;

It has been designed specifically with accessibility in mind;

It aims to accommodate the diversity of situations within branches;

It automatically collates existing data held by the union to reduce the administrative burden for branches and regional administration;

It assists in the process of drafting action plans and budgeting.

Conference believes that in order for such initiatives to be successful branch committees need to have full and active participation in formulating the responses within the JBRA process. Frequently, due to the other pressures on Branch officers this is not always the case.

Conference also notes that the nationally issued guidance on the process allows for optional consultation with branch committees and does not make it a requirement.

Conference further believes that the inclusion and consultation of Community members and stewards in the JBRA can foster greater understanding amongst the Community membership of UNISON processes and the strategies put in place at local level to organise, support and develop our membership base.

Additionally, the JBRA is a mechanism by which Community stewards/branch committee members can positively influence the direction of their branch's work with (and on behalf of) our membership through the setting of democratically determined and accountable budgets, objectives and 'milestones'.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

a) Work with Regional Service Group Committees and branches to ensure that members at branch level are aware that the JBRA process is a key area in which stewards and branch committee members in Community can ensure that sector-specific organising and development objectives are included and actioned.

b) Work with Learning and Organising Services to ensure that training packages for Community members relating to branch organising include specific material relating to the JBRA process and how our members can make their voice heard within it.

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North West Region

Motions Ruled Out of Order

Beyond remit of the Conference

Motion Branch Funding

Conference notes that UNISON's Community membership continues to be the fastest growing sector within our union - a trend that is set to continue and will considerably change both the composition of our membership and the manner in which UNISON operates on many levels.

The increase in collective reorganisations across the public sector at local level due to cuts in central government expenditure, the outsourcing to the Community & Voluntary, Social Enterprise and Private Contractor sectors, and the increase in resultant individual member casework, have all shifted the workload further onto our branches.

Many branches represent and organise members in hundreds of non-core employers at a time when the facility time of lay activists is under attack both from the provisions of the Trade Union Act 2016 and Core-Employers with whom branches have agreements, placing further strain on activists seeking to deliver UNISON's commitments to its membership.

Conference believes that UNISON nationally needs to address many of the most significant issues relating to our growth in membership and how branches within its current structures and financial framework can effectively support, represent and organise our members.

Conference further notes that Motion 121 passed at National Delegate Conference 2016 has been implemented by the National Executive Council (NEC) with limits placed on the additional Activity-Based Budget (ABB) funding that branches can receive, at a time when we hold reserves of over £200million. However, Conference fully accepts that our trade union must live within its means whilst attempting to deliver services to members who fall outside of our traditional bargaining structures.

Conference additionally notes that during the initial round of branch consultations undertaken by the North West Region in pursuit of its Review of Branch Structures of 91 of its branches the issue of fair funding for branches to meet the challenges of organising, servicing and developing members in the Community Service Group was raised in each consultation meeting.

Conference believes that one way to meet these challenges would be to consider making adjustments to the union's branch retention formula, as there remains in UNISON a fundamental mismatch of where the union's resources are and where they need to be.

Therefore, a review must be considered to prioritise activity and expenditure at UNISON's Regional and National tiers in order to free up sufficient funds as are necessary to support branches in their critical and growing work on behalf of Community and other Service Group members, the success or failure of which will determine the future of our union.

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In a number of motions to 2017 National Delegate Conference branches called for:

1. A new scheme of funding based on the following principles:

a) Any branch with more than £16 per full member in general reserves at the annual point of calculation will not qualify for additional funding;

b) All other branches will receive an increase in the standard entitlement of total annual subscription income from 20.0% to 25.0%;

c) If a branch is under the recommended notional reserve of £16 per member, and an increase in the standard entitlement would take the branch above £16 per member, that branch will only receive that portion of the increase in the standard entitlement which would take them up to £16 per member;

d) All additional percentage enhancements for branches will remain unchanged;

e) This will result in the fixed proportion of total annual subscription income allocated to branch funding increasing from 23.5% to no more than 28.5%, and the fixed proportion of total annual subscription income allocated to the regions and national office decreasing from 76.5% to no less than 71.5%;

f) A review of options for significant further devolution of resources to branches.

2. A review of activity and expenditure at the union's regional and national tiers, so as to prioritise union activity and expenditure at regional and national tiers with a view to reducing or ceasing expenditure that may no longer be affordable.

Whilst these motions were not debated, Conference believes that such a scheme, or one of a similar nature, which increases the allocation of funds to where they are most needed - at branch level - would greatly assist branches who are struggling to meet the ever-increasing demands placed upon them by the growth of our Service Group membership.

Conference, therefore calls on the Service Group Executive to:

Work with other Service Group Executives and Community National Executive Council (NEC) members to raise with the NEC the issue of reviewing the current scheme of funding for branches to enable them more effectively to support our members.

North West Region

Motion Universal Basic Income

Universal (or Unconditional) Basic Income, also known as Citizen's Income, is a redistributive policy proposal that has been around for centuries, and is once again making headlines. It was advocated by Martin Luther King, Jr. shortly before his death.

The idea is that every single citizen or legal resident, as a non-withdrawable right, receives a guaranteed monthly income that is sufficient to cover the basics for survival. Firstly it could almost eradicate urgent poverty. It removes the disincentive

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to work that can be experienced with traditional welfare systems in which benefits are lost as earnings rise. Removing means-testing would save a huge amount of bureaucratic surveillance, errors and non-take-up. Education and health outcomes could improve which would also create savings for society as well as improving people's living standards considerably. A guaranteed regular payment would give people dignity, a secure floor to stand on, and relief from stress. It's simple, fair and unifying – ending divisive narratives about who does or doesn't deserve to eat or have shelter. More of us would be able to job share or share the care of our families. Our members could find more time and energy to be active in the union, or do other volunteering. The economy gets a kickstart as people have more to spend.

All of the above, plus the potential benefits for young people, for women, for low paid workers, for people struggling to navigate a precarious job market, and for those needing to leave abusive relationships, means that a Universal Basic Income, in principle, would be in the interests of our members and communities. As members working in the charity and voluntary sector we are often right at the sharp end in terms of assisting people with financial hardship, and we are acutely aware of the rise in inequality and destitution since the 2008 crash and the government's choice of austerity as a response. This is all avoidable in a wealthy economy like ours. Despite our best efforts our sector can only provide sticking plasters to what is a systemic failure.

In recent months debate around Universal Basic Income (UBI) has exploded. Governments in Finland, Netherlands, France, Canada, Scotland and Brazil are committed to investigating it through pilot studies. The private and charity sectors are funding experiments in California and Kenya. Leading thinktanks and economists in various countries believe it to be a necessary direction. There have already been studies and comparable schemes in India, Namibia, Canada and Alaska with exciting results.

Conference notes the recent position adopted by the GMB and Unite to campaign for UBI, and the intention of the Labour party to look into the policy. Conference also notes that Universal Basic Income was the top reprioritised motion from the West Midlands at NDC 2016 and 2017, and that the West Midlands region has asked the candidates for Regional Mayor to run a trial UBI pilot.

It's important that UNISON's voice is not overlooked in the growing debate about details and therefore Conference instructs the NEC to begin looking at the following questions:

1. The ideal level that a UBI should be set at for it to have a positive impact on poverty, health, work-life balance, equalities and people's ability to participate in public life,
2. What complementary policies and services would need to accompany a UBI to ensure that its impact is progressive; for example a shorter work week, restoration of cuts to vital healthcare and education provision,
3. What would be UNISON's favoured method of funding a UBI, not limited to income tax but including new revenue streams that do not as yet exist; for example a

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carbon tax, land value tax, or other tax on unearned income that rightly targets the wealthiest in society.

West Midlands Community Branch

Motion Do electric vehicles represent a risk?

Conference will be aware the use of alternatively powered vehicles is rising with the rights granted to produce hybrid London style taxi cabs for use within city centres and plans by Tesla to produce electric powered delivery vans. These are both commendable as they reduce pollution within city centres, an aim of Unison.

This could however pose a potential hazard to many of our service users and disabled colleagues, especially those who are partially sighted. When under Electric power the taxis only give a quiet whine as they travel. Many of our partially sighted members and service users rely on their other senses (i.e. hearing) to warn them of approaching traffic.

This conference proposes;

1. A study is commissioned to assess the risks to our service users and disabled colleagues as referred to above;
2. As a Union, we lobby the Government that appropriate sound is added to these vehicles to alert the disabled of their approach before a serious injury or fatality happens to one of our members whilst travelling to work.

West Midlands Community Branch

Motion Universal Credit Claimants and Housing Provision

Currently the Government policy of Universal Credit is having a negative impact on Housing Providers and the Provision of Social Housing. This is because the housing element of Universal Credit cannot be claimed for until a property has been signed for and a Tenancy Agreement obtained.

As most housing providers require a bond or at the very least the payment of the first week's rent, this puts the most vulnerable in society in financial hardship at the very outset of a tenancy.

This also potentially impacts on our members by placing them in difficult situations with families suffering severe hardship and having to withdraw offers or find alternative solutions to families' financial hardship.

We call on Conference to ask UNISON to publicise this issue and to lobby all political parties to look to combat the strain of hardship on vulnerable families by making sure that payments of benefits, particularly Universal Credit, are paid promptly to minimise the impact on families and providers of social housing.

Bolton Metro

Motion Mental health Training and Support for Stewards

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UNISON has long recognised that cuts to JOBS, Services and Benefits has led to an increase in Stress and mental health issues amongst service users and the wider membership.

Although UNISON has helped to raise the profile of these issues and dispel the stigma attached to mental health problems throughout 2017 at the NDC, the Cardiff mental health conference and reports such as struggling to cope. We feel that there needs to be a greater recognition of the impact these issues have on activists themselves.

As local government and health services are forced to withdraw from communities by the cuts our members are often left as the only points of contact leaving members and activists dealing with issues they may be unfamiliar with, such as mental health and addiction and an increased risk of violence and aggression as a result.

Activists in our sector often work in isolated and under resourced conditions lacking the support available in larger workplaces where there are established networks. too often activists in this sector also lack access to Branch or Regional support at the same level as those in larger and more established sectors as they compete for limited resources.

We ask Conference to call on the SGE to do the following:

1. Lobby through National, regional and Branch structures for basic mental health training.
2. Commission a survey of activists in the sector to identify problems and solutions.
3. Organise a meeting of regional delegates to begin the work of building a dedicated support system for activists.

Bolton Metro