**2018 National Delegate Conference**

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**Motions**

**8. Make 2019 the Year of Young Workers**

**Carried as Amended: 8.1**

Conference believes that the strength and sustainability of UNISON depends on the recruitment and organisation of young workers, and their development as activists and leaders. In the delivery of the fair work agenda the importance of having a strong sustainable union as a key social partner is essential when developing more equal, fairer and productive work places.

Conference notes, however, that while UNISON has had some measure of success in recruiting young workers, their numbers have remained at around 5% of the membership, and less than 2% of our activists.

Conference notes that in the wider trade union movement, in 2016 workers under the age of 25 made up 14% of the workforce, but only 4.7% were members of trade unions.

Conference believes that a step-change is required in our recruitment and organisation of young workers, with the appropriate resources devoted to that aim.

Conference believes recruiting and retaining young workers, investing in their training, learning and skills development will be essential to achieve our trade union leaders of the future. We recognise the good work in regions by their youth committees and congratulate UNISON Scotland’s achievement in 2017 winning the TUC campaign award for their anti-bullying campaign.

Conference welcomes the National Young Members Forum having taken leadership on this matter, and endorses their call for 2019 to be designated as ‘The Year of Young Workers’.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Set a target of a 5% increase in young membership and young member activists by conference 2019, and a further 5% in young membership and young member activists by conference 2020, and allocate the resources required to meet this aim;
2. Seek to work with the National Young Members Forum to devise and deliver a plan of action for the whole of 2019 – the Year of Young Workers – in promoting this idea throughout the labour movement;
3. Publish in its annual report, young members recruitment figures and young activist numbers, to allow for year-on-year comparisons.

**12. Promoting the Union as an Organising Union**

**Carried as Amended: 12.1, 12.2, 12.3**

Conference notes that since the formation of UNISON twenty five years ago there has been significant progress in recruiting and organising new members. As a result of the work done across the whole union, UNISON is now the largest UK trade union. It is particularly pleasing, from the point of view of the future of the union, to note that there has been a year on year increase in the number of young members joining, at a time when other unions report difficulties in attracting young members. The continued increase in private sector membership shows the importance of following and organising public service workers in the private sector, even while UNISON remains committed to public provision of public services. All this has been achieved at a time when the challenges facing the trade union movement both nationally and internationally have never been greater and campaigning to bring those services back in house.

Nevertheless Conference is aware that much remains to be done to turn UNISON into an ‘organising union’. The variation in membership density between branches and employers shows the scope for increased effectiveness. One of the biggest challenges remains embedding best practice across the whole union.

Additionally Conference recognises that there is a challenge for branches to convert these younger members into activists and branch officers. The age profile of our activist base does not reflect the age profile of our membership.

Conference believes that to be more effective we need to ensure that all parts of the union are focussed on:

1. Increasing membership engagement both in terms of the democratic processes and in the promotion of UNISON policies. Self Organised Groups and Migrant Networks clearly have a role to play in this crucial work;
2. Developing more activists across the whole union, particularly in those areas where there is under-representation such as the private sector and from areas that are under-represented such as low paid women, Black and migrant workers.
3. Have honest discussions with branches about the resilience of their branch should activists retire / be made redundant or leave for new jobs.
4. Embedding equality at the heart of everything we do.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to look at how this can be achieved and report back to a future Conferences no later than 2020, having regard to the following challenges:

1. Making sure that best practice is more effectively disseminated to activists and organisers at all levels and in all parts of the union as and when it is identified;
2. Overcoming the barriers posed in organising employers whose workforce cuts across current branch, regional and service group boundaries;
3. The challenge faced by branches in organising and representing an increasingly fragmented membership, when many activists employed by the core public sector employer are denied facility time, particularly when covering workers not employed by the core employer;
4. How to ensure greater inclusion at branch and regional and national level for private and voluntary sector members;
5. The challenge of equality and self-organisation being seen as a minority concern, separate from the main organising agenda rather than key to building our union density and effectiveness;
6. Looking at the ability of branches to carry out medium and long term planning.
7. Preparing the union to deal with the threat posed by automation, both in terms of its impact on jobs and organising.

Recognising that we need a whole union response including support from our retired members.

**13. Organising and growing our membership in the Private Contractors and Community**

**Carried as Amended: 13.1**

Conference notes that UNISON membership in Private Contractors and Community employers continues to grow due to both increased recruitment but also increased contracting. In 2017 recruitment in these areas now represents nearly 31% of all new joiners nationally. This proportion was matched almost exactly in the East Midlands, with around 6% joining from Community and 26% joining from private employers across all service groups. In both private contractors and Community employers UNISON is recruiting more members than its losing, leading to a gradual change in the overall composition of the union.

Conference reflects that the changing make-up of employers in UNISON presents huge challenges, particularly at regional and branch level. This growing membership is highly fragmented; only a small number of employers have a substantial UNISON membership, with the rest of these members in small isolated workplaces like nurseries and small care homes. Many branches do not have facility time to support these members and cuts have reduced our number of activists and put increasing pressure on time and resources. The only way that UNISON will be able support members in Community employers and private contractors is by developing an organising approach at all levels of the union. As Conservative policy at Westminster continues to encourage privatisation UNISON faces a huge challenge, however it also has the opportunity to significantly grow in the outsourced sector.

In the experience of Conference, there is no single organising model for members in private and Community employers. Regions and branches all face specific local circumstances and challenges, ranging from geographical boundaries to hostile employers. Conference however welcomes the way many branches and regions across the country have risen to meet some of these challenges and commends the innovative and creative solutions they have found.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to include and prioritise private company and Community service group organising in their proposed strategic review of resources.

In the interim period before the review reports, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to campaign for facility time in all employers where UNISON has members and to separately consider and promote the following suggestions for:

1. Branches to:
2. Identify through their Joint Branch Assessment one, or a number of, private or Community employers to target for recruitment and activist development. This should be done with due regard to any National Executive Council national targets or wider national or regional priorities;
3. Continue to reach out to their current private and Community membership through targeted communication or organising;
4. Promote UNISON’s National Private Contractor Forum and encourage members to take part;
5. Regions to:
6. Work with branches to look at ideas on how to structure branches and liaise closely with branches when allocating members from private and Community employers;
7. Use Fighting Fund, Regional Pool and other resources, where appropriate, to support branches to organise and recruit in private and Community employers;
8. Identify as part of their Regional plan a number of strategic target employers in the private and Community sector, paying due accord to any National Executive Council priorities;
9. Continue to support new activists to become trained and active, and to ensure that members from private and community employers are engaged with regional structures and democracy.

**19. Low Pay and Women in UNISON**

**Carried as Amended: 19.1**

Conference celebrates the fact that the hard work of our low paid women members has been central to all the many successes of our union.

UNISON’s principles of proportionality and fair representation means that some seats on our elected bodies, including the National Executive Council, are reserved for women low-paid members, so that the make-up fairly represents the wider union.

We have a variety of places where low paid seats exist, and low pay is included in branch delegations to National Delegate Conference.

The definition of “low paid” reflects the median gross weekly earnings for all jobs (full time or part time) and is revised each year.

The median gross weekly earnings figure for 2017/18 has been calculated in the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings at £448.60, a 2.3% increase on last year.

This means the threshold for election to reserved (low pay) seats in the union is now £9.94 an hour. This is reviewed each year in October.

£9.94 per hour x 37 hour week x 52 weeks equals a salary of up to £19,124.56

The national living wage (set by government) is currently £7.50 per hour if you are over 25 years of age.

The living wage (set by the Living Wage Foundation) is currently £8.45 per hour in the UK, (£9.75 in London).

Despite many years of attempting to fill all low paid seats in UNISON’s democratic structures, many vacancies exist. Our membership system does not record our members hourly pay rates, and the application for membership asks no specific questions on whether the person is low paid within our definition (paid less that £9.94 per hour).

It is concerning that not all organising initiatives, whether led nationally, regionally or at branch level, explicitly and proactively seek to organise low paid women.

Questions remain on what more can be done to encourage our low paid women members at branch; region and national level.

For some of our members it may be that they don’t know about reserved/low paid seats; it may be that there is an absence of training; or isolation; or awareness of rights to time off work for trade union duties.

Others may not identify as low paid, or may reject the label of “low paid”, believing it stigmatises them and undermines their role in the union and workplace

Within UNISON there may still be a lack of support and encouragement and positive recognition of the importance of hearing the voices and views of our low paid women members.

Additionally low paid women may not be aware that any expenses could be paid to them in advance so that they are never out of pocket.

Conference affirms its commitment to supporting and encouraging our low paid women members to take their rightful place in UNISON’s democratic structures. Our union will not be able to continue to be the premier public service union unless it continues to demonstrate that its relevant to low paid women in the constantly evolving workforce. Low pay will only be tackled by strong, well organised unions.

Conference commends work in Eastern region which has prioritised low paid women in its organising strategy for 2018 and is working with branches to implement a range of initiatives.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

1. Investigate what barriers to engagement exist for our low paid women members;
2. Explore whether there is a different definition that can be used which low paid women may find more acceptable
3. Produce guidance on the role of National Executive Council and Service Group Executive members, including the frequency and location of meetings, so women are clear about why they should seek to be elected to senior roles in their union and how they will be supported;
4. Consider whether activist education can be delivered in alternative ways to encouraged more low paid women to access it;
5. Report back to conference in 2019 on findings and recommendations for positive action.

**20. Protecting our members and growing in private contractors**

**Carried as Amended: 20.1**

Conference notes that in the 25 years since UNISON was created the world our members work in has changed considerably. Thatcher’s government opened the door to public sector privatisation and this has been built upon by successive governments. Under the coalition government outsourcing doubled and the current Westminster government shows no sign of changing course. We are seeing the biggest squeeze on public service funding in a generation; with continued austerity causing crisis in the NHS and cut backs across all the areas our members work. People who gave their lives to public service used to be rewarded with fair terms and conditions, decent pay and secure pensions; however too many now face zero hours contracts and the minimum wage. In some areas the delivery of services by private companies has become the norm, like in social care where 81% of people in England work for an independent provider. Many precious public services continue to be sold off to the highest bidder and we see the growing issue of privatisation through the back door as English NHS trusts and councils increasingly see wholly owned subsidiaries as a way of outsourcing cuts.

Conference also notes that our union is changing too, to reflect the vast range of employers our members now work for. In 2017 over 30% of new members we recruited work for private or community employers, and private contractors continue to be the fastest growing group of UNISON members.

Conference notes that the collapse of Carillion earlier this year exposed not just the failures of privatisation and the danger of private companies running important services but also demonstrated how vulnerable our members are when these outsourcing experiments go wrong. In the blink of an eye thousands of people delivering public services were suddenly fearful for their jobs, their pensions and their livelihoods. Conference welcomes UNISON’s continued commitment to fighting privatisation and notes that many of the warnings we have given over the years have been proved true.

Conference notes that the restructuring and integration of public services can lead to new institutional and employment arrangements that can be bewildering for members and for branches. Conference believes that reorganisation of public service delivery should not mean increased private sector involvement or reduced democratic accountability. Conference believes that neither existing staff nor new starters should experience a worsening of employment standards as a consequence of service reorganisation.

To enable UNISON to support and protect members in private employers across the UK we need to develop an organising approach at all levels of the union. Where contracts have been outsourced we have a duty to follow and support our members, organising for recognition, facility time and bargaining rights. By building union power in these employers we hold them and the government to account. By developing and training activists in the private sector we will be able to take the pressure off branches. There is a real opportunity to significantly grow in the outsourced sector and to empower our members working there.

Conference notes the ongoing work the Private Contractors National Forum is doing to give our members in private employers a voice at all levels of the union. Going forward these voices need to be at the centre of shaping a union strategy that is fit for the next 25 years and inclusive for all. Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Continue to make the case against privatisation and to campaign for services to be brought back in house;
2. Provide support to branches in dealing with restructuring and integration initiatives in public services and help facilitate work across branch and service group boundaries so as to preserve in-house provision; continue recognition for collective bargaining purposes; and protect jobs, pay and conditions for current and future generations of public service workers.
3. Campaign for it to be a legal requirement for an in-house bid to be fully considered prior to any decision to outsource or retender;
4. Encourage and support branches to actively participate in procurement processes wherever possible, arguing for tendering bodies to fund contracts at a sustainable and fair level. There should be a focus on campaigning for union recognition and access to be part of any outsourced contract and for the Real Living Wage and pay uplifts to be funded. Campaigns should include requirements for facility time to be transferred and protected;
5. Support branches in identifying private employers in their area to strategically target for recruitment and activist development. This should be done with due regard to any National Executive Council, national or regional priorities. The development of more reps in private employers must be a priority across the union. Where we have density and activists we have the strength and power to hold employers to account;
6. Promote, in partnership with relevant service groups, a targeted campaign to recruit and build activism in the social care sector; with targeted materials and communications for care workers. Members who work in social care should be at the core of designing and leading this strategy;
7. Campaign at all levels of the union for better pensions in the private sector, including skilling up our members to engage with scheme management and for wider access to relevant public sector schemes for outsourced workers;
8. Continue to develop a targeted and relevant range of communications to reach out to our private sector members and make them feel a full part of the union. Their participation in seminars, training, and the private company forums should be encouraged and enabled by all levels of the union. Branches and regions should also be encouraged to look at ways they can make their structures more inclusive and accessible to private contractor members;
9. Devise a joined up strategy in liaison with national service groups and devolved nations, for campaigning closely with regions on pay in the private sector; recognising that a vast majority of bargaining is done on a contract by contract level. The approach needs to be informed, strategic and coordinated, with members and branches supported with guidance on submitting pay claims and training on the complexities of how pay is funded through contracts. Branches have a big role to play in pressuring tendering bodies for the funding for pay uplifts.

**39. The Crisis in Health and Social Care**

**Carried as Amended: 39.1**

Conference is alarmed that our health and social care system faces an unparalleled crisis of under-funding, staff shortages, organisational upheaval and privatisation.

With the country set to celebrate 70 years of the NHS on 5 July 2018, Conference is appalled that our health service is currently embroiled in a crisis made in Westminster.

Conference notes that since 2010 successive UK governments have failed miserably to produce an adequate funding settlement for the NHS – either directly in England or via the Barnett formula in the devolved nations.

Conference is deeply concerned about the impact this is having on patients and services, with the situation coming to a head in the final week of 2017 when a record 16,900 patients were kept in ambulances waiting for hospital care in England. This led to NHS England taking the unprecedented decision to postpone operations until the end of January to relieve pressure in the system, accompanied by a series of non-apologies from the Prime Minister and Health Secretary. Some hospitals in Scotland were also forced to postpone operations over the Christmas period.

Conference notes that there have been increasing reports of widespread rationing of services as the local NHS struggles to make ends meet, and that waiting times have been rising steadily for the past year in most parts of the UK for planned surgery, Accident and Emergency attendance and cancer referrals. The average number of health beds in the EU is 5.2 per 1000 of population, but in the UK is only 2.3. The problem in wealthy country like the UK is not too many patients but too few beds.

Mental health is supposed to be an area that the government is prioritising, yet Conference notes the recent UNISON report, “Struggling to Cope”, which showed the huge pressure on our members working in mental health and the services they provide.

Conference notes government frequently attempts to divert blame for the crisis away from their own cuts – instead blaming patients, staff, managers, the elderly and migrants – all of whom have built our health and social care services since 1948.

Conference asserts that we now have a vicious circle of crisis in social care exacerbating problems for the NHS and vice versa. And Conference is dismayed that the situation is, if anything, even worse in social care. The current government has done nothing to reverse years of chronic underfunding, with the 2017 autumn budget and local government financial settlement offering far too little to close the gap between what the sector needs and what it is getting, further deepening the local authority funding crisis. Recent research published by the British Medical Journal has estimated that there have been 130,000 unnecessary deaths due to service cuts.

As a result, Conference notes that we now have a system where the care needs of large numbers of society’s most vulnerable people are not being met and where far too many care workers are left open to exploitation.

As an example of this, Conference condemns the government’s shameful decision in July 2017 to suspend enforcement action against providers who fail to pay the minimum wage to workers who sleep-in at care homes or their clients’ homes.

Conference notes that the care market remains highly dysfunctional, and continues to be based on a failed commissioning model with inadequate regulation and monitoring. Conference remains deeply concerned by the damaging effects of privatisation and by the government’s repeated failure to tackle non-compliance with the minimum wage in the sector.

Conference supports and welcomes the union’s initiatives to improve employment standards, service quality and union organisation in the social care sector. Initiatives including the Ethical Care Charter and the North West Region’s Care Workers for Change campaign are expressions of our union’s mission to pursue social justice and are making welcome progress.

Conference notes the alarmingly high levels of staff turnover and vacancy rates in social care and is extremely concerned about the impact on workforce supply (for both health and social care) of the UK’s impending exit from the EU.

Conference is therefore shocked by the government’s lack of urgency in tackling the many problems facing social care, as demonstrated by the ongoing delay in publishing a social care Green Paper, with the Conservatives apparently still reeling from the fall-out of the “dementia tax” debacle at the 2017 general election. And Conference is particularly concerned that the panel of “experts” announced by the government to begin discussions ahead of the Green Paper contains no care worker representatives.

Conference notes that, particularly in England, the health and social care system seems to exist in a state of near-permanent reorganisation. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in spite of the funding difficulties there are serious attempts towards involving staff, unions and patients in a more integrated and planned service.

Conference welcomes attempts to reinstate the importance of strategic planning in the health service and for more of the NHS to be organised on the basis of regional or sub-regional health economies – rather than focusing on individual local providers competing against one another in the open market.

However, Conference is also deeply sceptical about the ability of the NHS to achieve the level of change sought at a time when NHS funding is painfully inadequate, when there is an unseemly rush to move to new structures, and when staff engagement and patient involvement has been patchy at best.

The establishment of Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPs) and the potential use of Accountable Care Systems or Accountable Care Organisations remain highly controversial in England, and Conference believes that a flawed implementation of such reforms runs the very real risk that any of the potential benefits will be lost.

Conference continues to support the principles behind health and social care integration, but this should never be used as a means of pushing through cuts, and proper safeguards must be provided for staff on job security, pay, terms and conditions.

Conference further notes that lack of funding increases the likelihood of NHS providers looking for short-term solutions to their financial woes, such as outsourcing and privatisation. This is particularly the case in England, where initiatives such as the Carter review and the Naylor report have encouraged trusts to look increasingly to the private sector.

And Conference is particularly concerned about the growing practice of NHS trusts establishing wholly owned subsidiary companies to provide support services. Under this approach members who are directly employed by the NHS are seeing their jobs and services outsourced to limited companies that are owned by the trusts but no longer part of the NHS.

Contrary to trusts’ claims, Conference does not believe that the use of wholly owned subsidiaries does anything to improve efficiency or productivity; instead it exploits a tax loophole, seeks to undermine pay and pensions, and represents further fragmentation of the NHS.

The collapse of Carillion in January has dramatically exposed the problems of outsourcing and private finance for new hospitals and facilities in the health sector. Conference believes all former Carillion services should be bought back in-house.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

1. Continue to work with the TUC, STUC, WTUC, ICTU and other unions to demand that our health and social care system gets the level of funding needed to deliver comprehensive, safe, high quality services;
2. Campaign against any proposals made by STPs or other reorganisations that present dangers to staff, patients or service users;
3. Produce guidance and targeted resources to support branches take an organising approach to the changing health and social care landscape;
4. Continue to promote UNISON’s ethical care and residential care charters by pressing for more councils to sign up to them;
5. Campaign for the government to force social care companies to maintain clear minimum wage records and clear and understandable payslips for workers;
6. Campaign for regulatory change to oblige social care employers to provide their workers with a statement demonstrating compliance with the minimum wage;
7. Promote organising activity and UNISON membership in the social care sector with the aim of developing collective bargaining machinery that facilitates the agreement of sectoral norms in pay and employment standards.
8. Work to resist privatisation in all its forms, including by supporting regions and branches in campaigning against the establishment of wholly owned subsidiary companies in the NHS and urging the government to close the tax loophole that is driving this agenda;
9. Continue to campaign for social care to be directly delivered by the public sector, paid for by general taxation and both universal and free at the point of need;
10. Work with local and national campaign groups to ensure that UNISON remains in touch with those fighting cuts and privatisation in our communities;
11. Mark the NHS turning 70 by supporting the Health Campaigns Together demonstration and celebration events on Saturday 30th June 2018.

**43. Crisis in Health and Social Care**

**Lost**

**45. Housing Affordability is a growing concern for public service workers**

**Carried as Amended: 45.1, 45.2**

Conference recognises that housing is an increasingly significant issue for the workforce in the Eastern Region and nationally, affecting where members can live, what they can access, work life balance and what they can afford.

Government policies have failed to ensure an adequate supply of decent, secure, safe and truly affordable homes that workers and citizens on modest incomes can afford.

Cuts to investment in social rent homes and redirecting investment into the promotion of home-ownership have led to a significant drop in the number of social rented homes built each year. At the same time house price inflation has further restricted access to owner occupation.

In the East of England the following facts show the depth of the housing crisis:

1. The average house price in the region is above the national average at £288,000, this means that the average home costs over ten times the average salary. In Cambridge the average home costs £431,344, which is among the highest in the country;
2. House prices are rising by as much as 10% a year. The region shows the highest annual growth, compared to the South East and London where prices rose by 8.7% and 7.3% respectively;
3. Average rents in the region costs £786 a month;
4. One of the main drivers fuelling housing costs in the region is the rise in the number of people purchasing second homes in areas such as Norfolk, yet a majority of these homes are only occupied for a few weeks a year or used as holiday lets.

The high cost of housing is restricting access to suitable, decent and affordable homes. UNISON evidence shows that a majority of our members struggle to find an affordable home near their places of work. The proportion of their incomes used to meet housing costs is rising, at a time when they face real term cuts to their take home pay. Many spend a lot of money and time commuting to work. This is putting a further financial strain on our members’ household budgets and eroding their living standards.

With housing costs rising, aspiring to own a home remains an impossible dream for many public service workers. As a consequence, more and more workers on modest incomes now face a lifetime of insecure, expensive private lets due to the shortage of social rent homes at genuinely affordable prices. Young people, older single men and women, the vulnerable, and public service workers on low incomes are increasingly finding themselves priced out of the housing market. For a growing number of people the only option is a shared house or house in multiple occupation (HMO) that evidence shows is often unsuitable, poor quality, unsafe and insecure. This trend is fuelling the unhealthy growth in microflats.

Conference is alarmed that:

1. The loss of hundreds of thousands of social rent homes through the Right to Buy will significantly be accelerated by the Housing and Planning Act 2016, if plans to sell off higher value council homes to fund the extension of the Right to Buy to housing associations are enforced;
2. In England the government continues to siphon off capital receipts that could be reinvested to improve council stock;
3. The promotion of the so called “Affordable Rent Model”, under which social rent homes can be converted to misnamed ‘affordable rents’ at up to 80% of market rates is flawed. It results in fewer homes for low income families when demand is rising. It creates a two-tier rent system whereby new tenants and existing tenants living in similar or identical properties, mainly let by housing associations, pay different rents, as properties tend to be converted to market rents when vacancies arise and people take on new tenancies;
4. Government plans to phase out life-time tenancies in council housing and replace them with shorter insecure tenancies of two to five years under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 will lead to housing instability and insecure renting with no hope of a secure and stable home where people can plan for their future;
5. The privatisation of council housing management through schemes such as Large Scale Voluntary Transfers and ALMOs threaten members’ pay, terms and conditions and trade union organisation. The evidence shows that stock transfer often results in higher rents and service charges for tenants and increases public spending on housing benefit, it can also erode the democratic and accountable management of the homes tenants live in as well as their rights to influence decisions made by landlords;
6. The freeze and restrictions on Local Housing Allowance restricts access to the Private Rented Sector. This is creating significant problems for our members living in the Private Rented Sector who rely on the contribution the Local Housing Allowance (housing benefit) makes towards their housing costs, as any increase in rents has to be met from their pay. For our members seeking to find accommodation even in the lower end of the housing market, they can only do so if they can meet the widening gap between the rent charged and the assistance they receive from the Local Housing Allowance;
7. Welfare cuts are deterring some social landlords to invest in homes to house low income families;
8. The affordability crisis is putting a major strain on both public service workers and on service delivery. Some public service workers unable to afford high housing costs are moving to live and work elsewhere. As a consequence, public service employers are witnessing staff shortages and a higher turnover of staff, some are struggling to recruit and retain staff. This is impacting disastrously on the many people, including the elderly who rely on the public services provided by these staff.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to work with the Policy Unit, Labour Link and appropriate partner organisations to:

1. The main single factor leading to the growing number of households, the greater demand for housing and rising house prices is that many of us are living longer. Yet older people’s housing needs and preferences get little attention. There is an under-supply of retirement housing; a majority of over-60s say they want to move but fewer than 3% of them do so each year; most ‘non-decent’ homes are occupied by older owner-occupiers, many of whom find it hard to maintain them let alone bring them to ‘decency’ standards or adapt them to meet their changing needs.
2. Make the case for a fairer housing deal which ensures that that everyone has access to a decent, safe, secure and affordable home;
3. Continue to work with organisations, housing campaigners and trade unions, to campaign for a restoration of direct investment in public housing. A “new generation of council house building” must be supported by public subsidy that supports the capital financing costs and is delivered through a new Housing Revenue Account (HRA) settlement. This will ensure the development of truly affordable homes at social rents accessible to people in low paid employment;
4. Campaign for a mass building programme led by councils and housing associations to develop new housing, which meets modern safety, quality, space, energy efficiency and building regulation standards;
5. Campaign for a review of council housing finance and a new HRA settlement including an examination of borrowing against HRA assets and the removal of restrictions on the use of capital receipts;
6. Campaign for a repeal of measures in the Housing and Planning Act which, if enforced, will further deplete the supply of truly affordable homes, remove secure tenancies, increase rents, and accelerate the privatisation of homes to private landlords and investors;
7. Campaign to end or halt the Right to Buy across the whole of the UK in line with Scotland and Wales to safeguard the existing social housing stock;
8. Work with tenants federations to explore possible models, and the workforce issues that are involved, in enabling council housing to be re-established in areas where stock transfer has taken place and tenants are to have the choice to become council tenants again, reporting to a future conference;
9. Campaign for the pay and conditions of social housing workers to be protected;
10. Encourage the conversion of higher rent “affordable market rent” properties to “social rent rates” as vacancies arise to ensure that social homes are truly affordable;
11. Undertake qualitative research across the union to find out the implications of housing costs on our members and on public service delivery and use the evidence to campaign for improvements in housing policy;
12. Ensure UNISON’s campaign on housing has regard to older people’s housing needs and preferences including incentives to ‘right-size’, an increased supply of sheltered and supported homes across all tenures, lifetime homes that are easy to adapt as their occupants age and older LGBT housing projects. This housing needs to be cheap-to-heat, safe and placed near the services people need, in balanced and sustainable communities. There should be ring-fenced funding and changes to planning regulations to encourage developments like this as part of a broader strategy to increase the total supply of housing.
13. Ensure that the housing needs of vulnerable groups, including the young, adult single men and women, are taken into account of housing policy and that the future housing needs of elderly people who are currently in the latter years of their working lives and living in the Private Rented Sector are planned for.

Conference calls on the government to:

1. Commit to an annual target of building 100,000 new social rent homes and to provide the necessary public subsidy to enable these homes to be built;
2. Establish a funded programme to invest in existing social homes to bring them up to a decent standard, ensuring that tenants have access to a safe home in good repair; introduce bold and radical measures to improve regulation in the Private Rented Sector around affordability, security, tenants’ rights and standards; and reform welfare benefits, to ensure that the social security system is fairer, makes work pay and supports the most vulnerable.

**46. Homelessness**

**Carried as Amended: 46.1**

Conference recognises the increase in homelessness in recent years. This is most readily seen by the increasing numbers of rough sleepers in all parts of the country. However, the number of people living in over-crowded conditions, ‘couch surfing’ and in inappropriate and often unsafe situations has also increased.

The UK government has no credible homelessness strategy and whilst the numbers of recorded people who were homeless increased in England, Wales and Northern Ireland it has decreased in Scotland. However the levels of homelessness in all areas of the UK are a concern.

Conference recognises that the causes of any individual being homeless can be multi-faceted but believes that Tory government policies have exacerbated the circumstances that contribute to the problem. Welfare reforms, a shortage of adequate and affordable housing, reduced provision of women’s refuges, cuts in mental health services, failures to control escalating rent levels in the private sector and pressures on council budgets are all factors that lead to homelessness.

Conference recognises that this is an issue that affects those UNISON members who work in housing, benefit and homelessness services but that all UNISON members and their families can be directly affected and at risk of homelessness. It is therefore an issue that UNISON must take up.

Conference welcomes the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 for England and Wales. This places a duty on councils to help prevent the homelessness of families and single people. Conference recognises that the Act is a step in the right direction. However, it will not be enough to fight the homelessness crisis unless councils are allowed to build more social rented homes and are supported with adequate funding and resources to enable them to implement various duties under the Act to support people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. The Government needs to develop a multi-faceted approach to deal with the homelessness crisis, including a commitment to significantly increase affordable housing numbers and a commitment to end austerity and benefit cuts, ensuring that some of the underlying causes of homelessness are tackled.

Conference calls on the National Executive Committee to:

1. Challenge all political parties and interest groups to establish a coherent core policy position to tackle homelessness and to develop a consensus around a national strategy to address homelessness (including rough sleeping) that:
2. Considers the structural causes of homelessness;
3. Considers homelessness from a health perspective;
4. Recognises the impact of welfare reforms on homelessness;
5. Ensures cross-departmental consistency in the approach taken;
6. Considers placing non-statutory homelessness services on a statutory footing;
7. Considers a range of housing solutions including the building of council and other social housing that is affordable for the homeless and low income households;
8. Considers funding;
9. Continue to call for an end to welfare cuts and to income austerity;
10. Support the campaigning organisations that highlight the plight of homeless people and call for an end to rough sleeping.
11. Call for the new Homelessness Reduction Act to be reviewed periodically, and for councils to be supported with adequate funds to help them to implement the legislation

**48. Public Housing Post Grenfell**

**Carried as Amended: 48.1, 48.4,**

Conference notes that the Grenfell tragedy has transformed discussion about the housing crisis. Sadly, the aftermath of the disaster for many continues to be on going for the victims’ families, survivors and our members; many who were deeply affected and again by the six months’ anniversary. Finding housing remains a priority for everyone directly affected and many of our members are working hard to achieve this, whilst making sure it is at a pace that each family feels comfortable with. Grenfell was an avoidable tragedy created by 30 years of political decisions to cut, deregulate and privatise across housing and public safety which has included:

1. Cutting investment in council and social housing;
2. Privatising Council Housing stock through stock transfer and Right to Buy;
3. Deregulating Housing Associations and promoting mergers into ever bigger businesses;
4. Deregulating fire safety control and inspection and controls over planning, design and materials in building;
5. Cuts to fire, health, and other emergency services;
6. Cuts to local authorities’ housing management and maintenance and through undermining trade union and tenant organisation and representation and not listen to tenants.

We recommit ourselves to stand in solidarity with the Grenfell victims. There must be justice for Grenfell and a long term commitment to ensure nothing like this ever happens again. Those responsible must be held to account though we must not allow central government to evade its responsibilities for failure of its own policies by scapegoating smaller organisations and individuals. Those who suffered must be re-housed permanently within their chosen community.

UNISON welcomes the decisions taken to now hand back management of housing, including repairs to Kensington and Chelsea local authority. It remains however that despite proclamations from Tory ministers that central government policies continue to deepen the crisis.

The freeze to Local Housing Allowances (LHA) is making many areas increasingly unaffordable to people on low incomes. Together with Universal Credit and other benefit cuts, this is forcing up homelessness and evictions – termination of a private-renter tenancy is now the most common reason for homeless claims in many areas.

LHA rates have already fallen behind actual rents in nearly 70% of England, according to Shelter research. Families are chasing an ever smaller number of properties at the bottom of the market covered by housing benefit, or are having to make up the difference by cutting back on essential spending elsewhere. The LHA freeze will exacerbate this.

The controversial and widely-resisted Housing and Planning Act 2016 included further deregulation of housing associations and this is one of the very few measures in the Act which has been implemented.

Of 217,000 homes built in England in 2016-17 only 2.48% (5,380) were for ‘social rent’, with only 1,840 of these built by councils. 92% of local authorities in England failed to meet local affordable housing need in 2016-17, according to the Local Government Association (England).

Shelter’s investigation, released on 28th September 2017, which raised concerns that housing developers are using viability assessments to escape commitments negotiated with local authorities to build fewer housing association/council homes than initially agreed.

Conference welcomes the many progressive policies being developed by Labour on Housing under Jeremy Corbyn such as:

1. By the end of the next Parliament, building at least 100,000 council and housing association homes a year for genuinely affordable rent or sale;
2. Introducing new legal minimum standards to ensure properties are ‘fit for human habitation’ and empower tenants to take action if their rented homes are sub-standard;
3. Controls on rent rises, more secure tenancies, landlord licensing and new consumer rights for renters.

Conference believes:

1. That housing is a basic need and right, and that the housing needs and aspirations of people and communities should have a priority over a market approach;
2. Housing Associations receive public subsidy and must be subject to regulation;
3. Council Housing management and other services should be brought back in house.

Conference resolves to campaign for a comprehensive housing policy that includes:

1. Building at least one million new council homes;
2. Retaining full ownership and control of available public land and ensuring brownfield land is made available to councils for council housing development and is not sold or transferred to private developers;
3. Increasing public investment in existing council and other commonly owned housing to ensure it is decent and safe including full government funding for all fire safety recommendations;
4. Reinstate and enforce independent fire safety inspection and building regulation, and substantially increase funding for the fire and rescue authorities for fire safety work.;
5. Reinstating life time tenancies for Council and Social Housing Tenants;
6. Reversing moves to market rents for Council and Social Housing Tenants;
7. Suspend the Right to Buy;
8. Supporting communities by requiring at least 1:1 advance replacement, within the same neighbourhood of council homes sold or demolished under regeneration schemes, with a minimum of 50% of any additional housing for council rents;
9. A moratorium on estate demolitions without tenants having the right to a ballot;
10. Regulation of private renting to include controlled rents, secure tenancies and an end to no-fault and retaliatory evictions along with appropriate funding for local authorities to enforce these tenants’ rights and housing standards;
11. Repeal the Housing & Planning Act 2016;
12. End the Bedroom Tax and benefit cuts/caps – housing benefit should cover rents;
13. Working and campaign with our branches, forums, tenant and housing campaigns including Homes for All, Generation Rent, Defend Council Housing, Axe the Housing Act and others, and community groups, councillors and MPs who support this;
14. Housing Associations must be subject to democratic oversight and regulation;
15. Landlords must listen to tenants – regulate to ensure recognition and funding of independent tenants and residents associations and federations;
16. Restore full local, democratic and transparent planning powers;
17. All new housing development to include at least 50 per cent really-affordable housing for rent;
18. Respect the traditions and rights of Gypsies, Travellers and Bargee-dwellers, and provide suitable sites to meet need;
19. Councils’ housing plans and targets must match local need for really-affordable homes for rent;
20. Trade Union rights for Housing workers.
21. Prohibit overseas registration of ownership of land and housing that is used to evade housing standards and regulations.

We call on the Labour Link to work with the Labour Party at every level to pursue these policies.

**53. Crisis in Local Government**

**Carried as Amended: 53.1**

Local Government and local services are at crisis point. Demands and expectations of services are increasing year on year while finances are dwindling.

Local authorities provide the glue that hold society together; either through lifelong education, wellbeing, transportation, refuse or social care to name but a few. Services that every person uses at some point, or all of their lives. Services that are essential to all our lives, providing education for the young or not so young, protecting the vulnerable, young and older, providing safe clean environments and ensuring all have equal access to services and life chances.

These services are at the brink of breaking point, demand and expectation is increasing, yet year on year budgets - to provide these services - are being cut to the bone expecting more for less. It is now getting to the point that either services can no longer be provided or that service access is severely restricted. Non statutory services are disappearing and councils are being driven to seek to redefine what is required to even meet their statutory obligations as they seek to manage the demand for services. Some local authorities may attempt to outsource service provision claiming that it saves money but the evidence is that ‘in-sourcing’ delivers more cost effective, higher quality, and more flexible integrated service provision. In contrast, outsourcing often leads to additional costs poorer service quality and the subsequent creation of failure demand. With the increase in council tax over the last year, we have seen that the public are now demanding more for their money, demanding an increase in service and more readily complaining when services do not meet their enhanced expectations..

Workers providing services on behalf of local authorities, but employed by third sector employers, either private or voluntary sector, are seeing the amount of work expected of them increase whilst wages and terms and conditions at best stagnate or are cut in order to save money, staff struggling to provide essential services predominantly within the care sector, where demand is increasing and finances falling.

Staff are struggling to cope. Staff that have seen posts lost and services cut, leaving them covering the gaps, working longer and harder on pay that is increasingly falling behind. This all provides the perfect storm for a crisis in local government. Something has to give and, unfortunately, it is often our members paying with their health.

We call on UNISON and our members to stand up for local government, whether employed in local government or not, we all use the services:

1. To call on the National Executive Council and UNISON national, regional and branches to coordinate a national, Britain wide campaign, to save local services and local authorities;
2. To work within all local authorities to highlight the issues and to campaign locally to begin to address the issues;
3. To campaign with MP’s, MSP’s and Councillors to fight for an increased settlement for local authorities;
4. To educate the public on what local government is and what it does for each and every one of us;
5. To be proud of the services that local government provides, either directly or indirectly, and say that our services matter and it is time society recognises, values and respects these services, we should no longer sit by and hear criticism of local authorities without building a robust media campaign that promotes the work of local authorities and the essential nature of the wellbeing work carried out.

We are part of a group of proud local government funded services, and we ask you to say that you value us and the work that we do and are proud to stand up and support us.

**59. Privatisation and PFI – Building the Campaign**

**Carried as Amended: 59.1**

Conference notes:

1. UNISON’s sustained opposition to privatisation and the private finance initiative for more than two decades;
2. The positive role played by UNISON in securing the motions opposing PFI at the labour party conferences in 2001 and 2002 as UNISON demonstrated the negative impact of such schemes; highlighting that PFI contractors were cutting the pay, pensions, sick pay, maternity pay of NHS porters, catering staff, facilities staff, security staff, and cleaners who had been forcibly transferred to them as the price of building a new hospital;
3. The Workforce Protection Codes and a secondment model for NHS PFI staff developed by Labour were subsequently abolished by the coalition government in 2010;
4. The campaign across public services against privatisation and the ‘two-tier’ workforce which have seen greater success in Wales with a Welsh Labour Government;
5. The mounting evidence showing the deficiencies of privatisation and that the Private Finance Initiative is the costliest form of contracting;
6. The support the General Political Fund has given to “We Own It” campaign to promote public ownership.

Conference recognises that the extent of privatisation and PFI schemes is different within the devolved nations.

For example, as at October 2007, a decade ago, the total capital value of PFI contracts signed across all public services was £56.9 billion. Of this, just £618m was in Wales, or £213 per head. This compares to £50 billion in England (or £1,017 per head), £5.2 billion in Scotland (£1,028 per head) and £1.1 billion in Northern Ireland (£631.4 per head).

Nevertheless UNISON branches continue to be faced with proposals that privatise public services or that are informed by business cases that are underpinned by assumptions about cuts to terms and conditions of new employees and reduced pension entitlement.

Conference believes that the National Audit Office (NAO) report into PFI and PF2 (January 2018) amounts is nothing less than a scathing indictment of a policy introduced in 1992 by Norman Lamont, Tory Minister and sadly continued by the subsequent Labour UK government, confirming the concerns raised by UNISON for more than 20 years.

In particular conference notes the NAO findings:

1. That after more than 20 years of PFI ‘There is still a lack of data available on the benefits of private finance procurement’;
2. The NAO found no evidence that PFI delivers operational efficiency – ‘Our work on PFI hospitals found no evidence of operational efficiency: the costs of services in the samples we analysed were similar’;
3. Costs were the same or higher – ‘Departments who responded to our 2017 survey question considered that operational costs were either similar or higher under PFI’;
4. PFI is a fiscal illusion –‘The Office for Budget Responsibility’s (OBR’s) July 2017 fiscal risks report cited the use of off-balance sheet vehicles like PFI as an example of a “fiscal illusion”. PFI can be attractive to government as recorded levels of debt will be lower over the short to medium term (five years ahead) even if it costs significantly more over the full term of a 25–30 year contract’;
5. PFI adds extra costs – ‘Private finance procurement results in additional costs compared to publicly financed procurement, the most visible being the higher cost of finance.... some 2013 deals, agreed when credit market conditions were poor, projected an annual return for debt and equity investors of over 8%; this was more than 5% higher than the cost of government borrowing at the time’;
6. PFI can add even more costs - ‘There are other areas where the private finance model can result in additional costs and also ways in which it differs to the approach HM Treasury would usually recommend. These include: Insurance, Cash management, Costs of external advisers, Fees to lenders and SPV management and administration fees’;
7. Publicly financed alternatives cost less – ‘The higher cost of finance, combined with these other costs, means that overall cash spending on PFI and PF2 projects is higher than publicly financed alternatives’;
8. Inflexibility is a drawback – ‘In our 2017 survey departments reported that operational inflexibility was a drawback of PFI’.

Conference further believes:

1. That in the wake of the revelations following the liquidation of Carillion it is time to reassert the need for the public service ethos in the delivery of public services. It is over twenty years since the Nolan Committee published the seven principles of public life – selflessness; integrity; accountability; openness; honesty; objectivity and leadership. We now need an equivalent set of principles that will apply to any private company, its management and directors, that receives public money to deliver public services;
2. Selflessness and integrity means there can be no place for companies using tax havens, and the framework for boardroom pay must incorporate a public service ethos and require full disclosure;
3. Integrity also means that there can be no place for companies involved in blacklisting workers, as Carillion admitted (an unlawful act in Wales introduced by a Welsh Labour Government); or those that seek to undermine workers bargaining rights, generate profits by attacking pay and terms and conditions, and forcibly turn over the workforce to cut pension entitlements;
4. The principles of accountability and openness require full transparency with all procurement information available online, including tender documentation, bids and all signed and amended contracts. Freedom of information requirements would be written into contracts alongside the open book accounting called for by the National Audit Office;
5. The quality of the service would be critical, and when failure occurs procurement frameworks would ensure speedy intervention preventing situations such as those at the Great Western Hospital Trust in Swindon which in 2014 reported that, “Concerns about food hygiene and cleanliness, have posed a potential risk to patients, visitors and staff”, but the Trust was powerless to intervene as “Carillion were contracted to provide these services by Semperian - effectively the ‘owners’ of the building under the PFI agreement”;
6. The principle of honesty requires propriety is both rigorous and demonstrable;
7. If companies delivering public services are to fulfill the principles of objectivity and leadership they must be at the forefront when it comes to equality and sustainability and that;
8. The primary motivation for the provision of services must be the public interest, not the pursuance of profit.
9. Conference believes that public sector organisations are best placed to deliver democratically-accountable services in accordance with the public service ethos. Conference notes with alarm government moves to privatise services to Public Service Mutuals (PSMs) and the support for this from some in the Co-operative movement. Conference believes that PSMs are vulnerable to being taken over by larger private comapnies, and that they compete in the "race-to-the-bottom" on terms and conditions.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council:

1. To work with the TUC, STUC and WTUC, political parties and civil society organisations for a complete rethink of outsourcing and PFI, for a root and branch review, for a Doomsday Book of significant contracts (at national and local level) and for the evaluation of performance across the plethora of contracts that an individual company may hold, for in-house provision to be the default option for public services and for new criteria for decisions by public bodies, writing into contracts Freedom of Information requirements, involvement of public and staff, transparent reporting of profit, labour and living wage clauses, union recognition, compliance with fair tax and boardroom remuneration;
2. To continue to oppose privatisation and PFI and to highlight the deficiencies and how the public interest becomes secondary to meeting PFI obligations;
3. To highlight the role of debt and financial engineering in company structures and privatisation, for example in the provision of social care;
4. To highlight the work of the trade unions and the governments in the devolved nations, including the Welsh Assembly Government in delivering services in-house;
5. To work with the TUC, STUC and WTUC, political parties and civil society organisations to create a modern model for public sector delivery of public services, for service quality and efficiency, for skill development and capacity building within the public sector to ensure that there is a public sector alternative for the construction and delivery of public services.

F) To make clear to the Co-operative Movement via all available channels:

1. That UNISON does not support the privisation of public services to co-operatives, mutuals or social enterprises;
2. That UNISON rejects the spinning-out of in-house services in any sector to PSMs and reaffirms our commitment to in-house service delivery;
3. That attempts by some to promote PSMs risk a permanent split between the trade union and co-operative movements that have successfully worked in solidarity since the 19th Century.

Conference also calls on the National Executive Council to advise of UNISON's opposition to PSMs to all branches and regions

**80. Our place on the global stage post-Brexit**

**Carried**

Conference is concerned that post-Brexit, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights will be undermined at home and abroad due to the Tory Government‘s weak and wobbly Brexit and due to trade negotiations failing to take into account social and environmental protections, workers and human rights.

International Trade Secretary Liam Fox started discussions on a potential future trade deal between the United Kingdom and the United States at the first meeting of the UK-US Trade Working Group in July 2017, despite European Union (EU) rules meaning the United Kingdom cannot sign a trade deal until it has left the EU.

Fox had already announced in 2016 that the UK would open new trade offices in 3 US cities, including Raleigh, North Carolina which introduced the “Bathroom Law” discriminating against trans people and contributing to a vitriolic atmosphere of hate for LGBT people.

The US has not ratified some of the most fundamental labour rights conventions set out by the International Labour Organisation, including freedom of association and collective bargaining.

The UK-US trade working group is the first of ten such groups that the Department of International Trade (DIT) is setting up involving 15 countries, including China, Saudi Arabia and South Korea. Crawford Falconer, who started at the DIT as Chief Trade Negotiations Adviser in August 2017, was a member of the Legatum Institute think tank’s “special trade commission” which drew up a report calling for the UK’s regulations to be “put on the table” in trade negotiations with other countries.

Conference is concerned that future trade deals will be made with countries that have little regard for public services, trade union rights, or human rights of LGBT people and workers. Painstaking work over decades to build UK public services that are accessible and inclusive will be dismantled if profit becomes the only driver, which will detrimentally impact the most disadvantaged in society, who are the most reliant on public services and most likely to be in precarious employment.

The UK government still maintains it wishes to promote LGBT equality in its international work, while its actions on trade would suggest the opposite.

Conference notes opportunities to take our campaigns forward, including around the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), hosted by the UK in April 2018. The Commonwealth defines itself as an association ‘committed to’ equality, human rights and non-discrimination, but 36 of its 52 member states still retain laws that criminalise consensual same sex relations, and many also fail to recognise or uphold the rights of their trans citizens. Those laws are largely a shameful legacy of British imperialism and colonialism, and the trade union movement has an important role to play in working for change, alongside civil society organisations representing LGBT people living in the countries that retain these laws.

Conference therefore welcomes the continuing work of the national LGBT committee to build on links with international allies including LGBT networks in other unions and global union bodies, and LGBT community organisations including ILGA and the Commonwealth Equality Network.

Conference therefore instructs the National Executive Council, working with the national LGBT committee, other relevant structures of the union and appropriate external organisations to:

1. Continue to campaign for the inclusion of social and environmental protections, LGBT, human and workers rights in trade negotiations and for no less protection than we have now;
2. Continue work relating to the Commonwealth following the 2018 CHOGM;
3. Raise awareness on these issues and engage branches, regions and self-organised groups in appropriate campaigns.

**81. Workers' Rights in Turkey**

**Carried**

Since the failed coup attempt in July 2016 Turkey has experienced a rapid deterioration of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. President Erdogan has used the state of emergency to detain, dismiss and silence his critics; targeting trade unionists, journalists, human rights defenders and anyone perceived not to support the government.

Approximately 120,000 public sector employees have been dismissed or suspended arbitrarily, accused of terrorism related crimes. In almost every case there has been no credible evidence of wrong doing and no access to justice. Many have been deprived of their pensions, passports and prospects of finding a job either the public or private sectors.

Education and healthcare have been badly affected by the state of emergency. Over 21,000 healthcare workers have been dismissed, forcing patients to endure lengthy delays and travel long distances to receive care.

Trade union activists have been disproportionately targeted by government decrees. Many have been dismissed or arrested for social media posts and conducting legitimate trade union business. Offices have been raided, strikes have been banned and statements critical of the government have been prohibited.

Turkey is now amongst the ten worst countries in the world for workers, according to the ITUC, but denial of workers’ rights did not start with the coup. For many years Turkey has been awarded a rating of 5, i.e. no guarantee of rights, in the annual global rights index as trade unionists have been subjected to repressive laws, a flawed legal system, police brutality and a continued erosion of their rights.

The Turkish government is now the biggest jailer of journalists in the world, and has shut down over 160 media outlets and 3,800 associations and foundations. Conference calls on the government of Turkey to drop the charges and release hundreds of innocent journalists, academics and human rights defenders, including the chair and director of Amnesty International Turkey.

Kurdish communities, particularly in the southeast of Turkey have been devastated by continuing violence, curfews and the mass deployment of security forces, since the 2015 elections and breakdown of peace talks between the Turkish government and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Many have been evicted from their homes and denied access to education and health and fundamental human rights. MPs and democratically elected representatives, particularly from the People’s Democratic party (HDP), have been detained or replaced by government appointed trustees, who have dismissed thousands more municipal workers, further damaging public services.

Conference condemns the Turkish government’s attacks on areas of northern Syrian controlled by the Kurdish YPG militia and their allies which have only served to aggravate the horrors of that country’s civil war.

Conference is concerned that the UK government has failed to respond to the erosion of democracy and human rights in Turkey, instead prioritising its own post EU exit economic interests. Likewise many European Union (EU) member states, including the UK, have failed to respond to the refugee crisis in Turkey, denying any responsibility for millions of vulnerable people fleeing conflict, violence and persecution, particularly the atrocities in Syria.

Conference welcomes UNISON’s solidarity and support for the trade union movement in Turkey and calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Continue supporting workers’ rights in Turkey through EPSU and PSI solidarity initiatives and direct work with affiliate unions;
2. Urge the UK government to prioritise human rights and democracy in its negotiations with Turkey, including calling on the authorities to:
3. End the state of emergency, uphold workers’ rights, end the arbitrary dismissal of public sector workers and ensure those who have been unfairly suspended or dismissed are given the right to a fair hearing and reinstatement;
4. Lift the closure of media outlets and release all journalists detained for exercising their right to freedom of expression;
5. End the repression of the Kurdish population;
6. Release all political prisoners and resume the peace process, in which trade unions and civil society can fully participate.
7. Urge the UK government along with other EU member states to support the resettlement of refugees from Turkey, and end the return of refugees and asylum seekers to Turkey on the flawed basis it is a safe third country.

**89. The UK EU Withdrawal Agreement and the Future UK - EU Relationship: Campaigning for a New EU Deal Fit For Workers**

**Carried as Amended: 89.1, 89.2, 89.3, 89.4,**

Conference notes that since the triggering of Article 50 March 2017 the government’s European Union (EU) withdrawal negotiations have been embarrassingly incompetent. There has been no clear EU exit plan or cohesive strategy to get the best deal from the negotiations for the UK economy and workers.

The weak UK negotiations have been a result of divisive Tory internal wrangling between the hard and soft “Brexiteers”. The endless emphasis on ‘taking back control’, free trade deals, creating a low tax country, the loss of freedom of movement for UK workers and the dismantling EU citizen rights has been created by a clique of Tory hard line 'Brexiteers' and their media supporters. The EU Referendum campaign created an environment where hostility to all migrants flourished.

Conference believes this narrow vision must be challenged.

Their vision of the UK’s future relationship with the EU has overshadowed the government’s negotiations to the detriment of getting a deal that would be best for the UK’s future by providing: stability for investments in quality jobs; funding for public services, regional economies and infrastructure projects; the ending of austerity with guaranteed protection of employment, social, equality and environmental standards; a fairer and more equal society with an emphasis on real opportunities for young people and continued EU freedom of movement.

In contrast, Jeremy Corbyn has set out a positive vision for Britain after Brexit with a new relationship with the EU. Speaking in February 2018, he said:

“That new relationship would need to ensure we can deliver our ambitious economic programme, take the essential steps to intervene, upgrade and transform our economy and build an economy for the 21st century that works for the many, not the few.”

Corbyn went on to say that Labour would:

“seek to negotiate protections, clarifications or exemptions where necessary in relation to privatisation and public service competition directives, state aid and procurement rules...”

Conference welcomes Labour’s commitment to “stop the tide of privatisation and outsourcing” and supports Jeremy Corbyn in his determination to ensure that the UK is not bound by pressures to deregulate and subject public services to market competition when we are outside the EU."

Conference further notes that in the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 the government has given itself unprecedented executive powers to amend, repeal or weaken retained EU law, whilst restricting the sovereign power of parliament in the process. These new ‘Henry VIII powers’ allow Ministers to amend Acts of Parliament, without the need for full Parliamentary scrutiny and are nothing to do with the UK people “taking back control”.

UNISON believes this puts our equality, human rights and workplace rights at risk when the UK leaves the EU. These include laws protecting women, Black, LGBT and disabled workers from discrimination at work; rights to time off for working parents; holiday pay and protections from excessive working hours; equal treatment rights for part-time, fixed term and agency workers; information and consultation rights and health and safety standards. Disabled Members will be particularly impacted by the loss of the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) which guarantees the right to equal health care across other EU member states.

The Scottish Parliament, Wales Assembly and Northern Ireland Assembly (when not suspended) also all have concerns that this Bill threatens and weakens their devolution settlements and arrangements.

Conference believes that existing equality, human and workers’ rights, derived from EU legislation, need to be safeguarded in the future and calls on the government to guarantee that no future changes can be made through the back door and only through explicit primary legislation open to full parliamentary scrutiny, civic and trade union consultation.

Conference also believes that future UK citizens’ and workers’ rights must also be updated in line with progressive improvements and benefits made through both European Court of Justice (ECJ) rulings and the new forthcoming EU Social Pillar of Rights. The government also needs to adopt the equivalent protections that other EU members have in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and international human rights treaties.

Conference further notes with dismay that the exact details of the withdrawal terms are the subject of ongoing and future negotiations and cannot be known until those negotiations are very near completion. This means that parliament and the public will effectively have no say as to what goes in the final Bill on the Withdrawal Agreement.

Given the lack of consultation on the deal and the terms for the UK’s future EU relationship Conference believes that it is vital that the government sticks to its promise to give parliament time to debate, scrutinise and have a meaningful vote on the final Withdrawal Agreement & Implementation Bill.

Conference further believes that the government’s determination to ensure that parliament and the UK public get little say on the outcomes of withdrawal have also been reflected in the proposals in the Bills on Trade, Customs and Immigration which give new powers to Ministers to enact secondary legislation with no guarantees that either new International Trade Treaties or UK Immigration laws will be created through primary legislation, parliamentary debate and scrutiny.

Conference also believes that a new EU deal will only be fair to workers if it does not progressively undermine workers’ rights over time. Therefore any future new trade deal between the UK and EU must include a mechanism whereby the UK cannot fall behind the EU on improvements to employment rights.

Conference therefore is very dismayed with the process that the Government has set out for how the new future EU deal for the UK will be agreed once we have begun to implement the Withdrawal Agreement. Conference notes the new agreement(s) governing the UK’s future relationship with the EU can only be legally concluded once the UK has left the EU and that this may take the form of a single agreement or a number of agreements covering different aspects of the new UK-EU relationship.

However the government has stated that parliament’s role will be limited to just the ratification process of the new EU deal agreements because the ‘CRAG’ (Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010) process is likely to apply to agreements on our future relationship. Parliament will only be allowed to oppose (or tacitly accept) a treaty in full – it cannot amend any of the new agreements or treaties. This means that parliament will not have the power to debate, amend or vote on any of the new Agreements or Treaties but will only be able to agree or disagree to ratify the Agreement or Treaty laid by the Minister.

This means that the European Parliament and the other EU 27 member states are likely to have more of a democratic say on the content of the new UK-EU Agreement or Treaty than the UK public and parliament.

Conference believes this democratic deficit must be immediately addressed and that a new democratic process for treaties, involving public consultation and the opportunity to debate and amend treaties must be adopted.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to campaign for workers’ rights and quality public services to be a fundamental part of a future UK-EU agreement and to:

1. Continue to inform and engage UNISON members and the general public on how exiting the EU negotiations may impact on the four key priority areas set out at Conference 2017:
2. Employment, health and safety standards and trade union rights
3. Public services and professional standards
4. Trade deals/standards, environmental regulations and public procurement
5. Freedom of movement and right to remain. Fighting racism, discrimination and promoting equalities and human rights;
6. Work with the TUC, ICTU, STUC, WTUC, Labour Party, MPs and Peers, MEPs, EPSU, ETUC and PSI and civic alliances - who specifically campaign on protecting public services, employment rights, human rights, equality, migration rights, anti-racism, the environment, animal welfare, health and safety and democratising trade deals - to ensure the government adopts a transparent and democratic approach to all aspects of Exiting the EU negotiations;
7. Campaign with politicians for an open, transparent and democratic process in both the EU and UK so that the UK public and parliament can have a say in the content of the Withdrawal Agreement and Implementation Bill and the new UK-EU Agreements or Treaties. Including addressing all devolved issues in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and protecting the vital Good Friday Agreement and the need for a solution for the Irish border that satisfies the Irish Congress of Trade Unions;
8. Campaign for an Impact Assessment of the final new EU deal with particular attention on how changes will impact the UK in the following areas:
9. Economy and regional growth;
10. Public services and procurement;
11. Employment rights;
12. Income equality and gender pay;
13. Jobs, skills, pay, terms and conditions;
14. Health and safety;
15. Equality, citizen and human rights;
16. Environmental, food, animal welfare, public health standards and consumer protection;
17. Land border between UK and the Republic of Ireland;
18. To campaign to keep public services outside the scope of existing and new EU trade agreements and oppose legislation which seek to liberalise and deregulate public services or downgrade existing EU social, consumer and environmental standards;
19. Oppose any new EU agreement or trade deals which undermine the democratic UK’s right to keep public services public or use special investor protection through ISDS (Investor state dispute settlement) or the ICS (Investor Court System) or ‘ratchet and standstill clauses’ which would prevent the right to return public services to public ownership in the future without huge financial penalties for private profit compensation;
20. Campaign for better and more flexible use in the UK of State Aid and procurement rules to expand public ownership, fund quality in-house public services and intervene in strategic industries, infrastructure and utilities; reject either UK or EU de-regulation; campaign against any continuance of UK membership of the single market where this involves any requirement on the UK government to expose public services to market competition; and over turn European Court of Justice rulings which put market competition and business interests before workers rights;
21. Promote equality and challenge all forms of discrimination, including racism and hate crime, supporting migrant workers and the right for a humane immigration system, maintaining in full the free movement of people between the UK and the EU to work, study, and live with their partners and families and promoting UNISON’s campaign to take action against the cutting of pay and conditions by closing down cheap labour loopholes which exploit low paid workers and thereby strengthening workplace protections and work with Labour Link to consider how we can achieve the commitment of the Labour Party to the foregoing policies and work with Labour Link to raise these issues within the Labour Party; ;
22. Campaign for the maintenance of full EU citizens’ rights for EU citizens in the UK and UK citizens living in Europe and to continue to provide support and information to UNISON’s estimated 70,000 EU members;
23. Campaign for a UK legislative mechanism in the new EU deal that ensures that the UK’s equalities and human rights, employment and labour laws, public procurement social provisions, consumer protection and environmental laws are not weakened or downgraded after having exited the EU and that they continue to be favourably updated and interpreted so that UK workers have the same rights and protections as EU workers;
24. Campaign for like for like provision in any reciprocal agreements to match current EHIC provision;
25. Work with the TUC to campaign for the best transitional terms and democratic dispute resolution options in the Withdrawal Agreement and Implementation Bill;
26. Evaluate the options for the best future trade model and relationship or agreement options that provides the best economic opportunities for the UK to protect living standards and social provisions, public services and jobs, now and for future generations, and share with UNISON members.

**90. Working people already paid for the financial crises; they should not pay for Brexit**

**Carried**

The Conservatives’ self-imposed Brexit deadline is fast approaching but they remain distracted by internal divisions and ideological entrenchment, which is in real danger of pushing the country towards a cliff edge. In February 2018, Cabinet ministers have lined up to produce a series of ‘major speeches’ on Brexit that has only succeeded in highlighting how much the last two years have been a vortex of in-decision, rhetoric, blue passports and chlorinated chicken.

Conferences notes that with no concrete plan on creating a stable economy or how our public services will be decently funded, the need for stability and reassurance for working people has never been greater.

The release of a wide-ranging assessment on the economic impact of Brexit has estimated that the north-east would lose 16% of regional economic growth if no deal is reached. This is a region with already high levels of unemployment, the only UK region to export more than it imports and where approximately 160,000 jobs are directly linked to membership of the single market. Given that this region has already been on the receiving end of some of the deepest public sector cuts in the country the stakes could not be higher.

If Brexit was driven by widespread disillusionment with an economic system that favoured the rich and powerful and reduced living standards, the reality is that the Tories’ strategy will only succeed in establishing a low-tax, low-regulation haven for unscrupulous businesses where competitiveness is driven by attacks on workers’ rights.

Though UNISON had backed Remain after a major cross union consultation exercise, Conference is not willing to indulge in a 2016 referendum post mortem but wants to face the future putting forward arguments that best defend public services and UNISON members’ jobs and employment conditions in all parts of the UK. Talks of a Canada-style CETA arrangement highlights real dangers.

Nobody voted for Brexit to be poorer and work longer hours in unsafe conditions. The trade union movement must therefore argue for a worker’s Brexit which emphasises the need for an economic investment strategy that delivers quality jobs and protects living standards and employment rights.

Already our NHS is experiencing a Brexit-induced drain of qualified European staff. It has recently been reported that almost 10,000 EU NHS workers have already left since the Brexit vote, and one in five of European NHS doctors have made plans to leave the UK. In addition, official figures have shown that the number of nurses from the EU registering to working the UK has dropped by 96%.

Conference therefore believes that public sector workers from Europe who came to the UK to work for our NHS, schools and social care, must be reassured they are welcome and can remain as part of any Brexit deal.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Continue the lobbying on behalf of UNISON members in the Westminster Parliament, European Parliament and devolved administrations in line with the policy passed at the 2017 Conference;
2. Continue to campaign with the the3Million campaign group of EU citizens living in the UK and to promote the UNISON EU members group;
3. Set up a new programme of forward looking member and activist EU briefing materials that can assist the understanding of different types of UK- EU relationships and different types of trade agreements;
4. Assess the costs and benefits of different UK-EU future relationship agreements based on the UNISON EU exit objectives from 2017.

**91. Exiting the EU and Devolution**

**Carried**

Conference welcomes UNISON’s priorities in our Exiting the EU campaign that seeks to inform and engage members and the general public on the impact of the EU exit negotiations. This strategy recognises the importance of addressing all devolved issues in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Conference recognises that exiting the EU can have a differential impact in devolved administrations. Scotland has particular demographic challenges that may require a different approach to migration policy to other areas of the UK. For that reason, UNISON Scotland has been working with the Scottish Government and others to highlight the threat to public services of the UK Government’s approach to the negotiations. In particular, the case has been made for the devolution of elements of immigration policy, building on international models such as those in the Province of Quebec, Canada.

Conference welcomes the submissions made by UNISON at UK level and in the devolved administrations over the devolved issues in the EU Withdrawal Bill. These representations respect the devolution settlements that are being undermined by the UK government’s attempts to retain devolved powers at Westminster. UNISON is not opposed to common frameworks in the UK, so long as they start from the position of respecting devolution. This means that any powers that are not specifically reserved should be automatically devolved in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to work closely with UNISON regions in the devolved administrations, as the EU exit negotiations and related legislation develops. This approach should ensure that UNISON is campaigning for an outcome that respects the devolution settlement and reflects the particular challenges facing different parts of the UK.

**97. Delivering the Promise of the Good Friday Agreement**

**Carried**

Conference notes that 10th April marked the 20th Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, over 40 years of our trade union campaign for peace and justice and 25 years of unswerving support for that campaign from UNISON, our National Executive Council, our regions and branches.

Conference welcomes that the Agreement has led to relative peace in Northern Ireland in comparison to the years of conflict that preceeded it. However Conference also recognises that since the Good Friday Agreement was reached an increasing concern has been regression from its principles and the non-implementation of its provisions, and the provisions of subsequent agreements, relating to equality and human rights. This has been demonstrated by:

1. The failure of politicians in Northern Ireland to properly share-power within a framework of equality and human rights, which has left an even more divided and unequal society;
2. Policy and resource allocation decisions being taken outside of an equality and human rights framework which have led to persistently high levels of poverty, major inequalities in housing and in peoples’ health and educational outcomes, and continuing austerity and welfare cuts;
3. A series of political crises since 1998;
4. The lack of commitment by successive British and Irish Governments to their binding obligations under international law as co-guarantors of the Good Friday Agreement.

Conference expresses deep concern that the Good Friday Agreement has now become a target of those pursuing a ‘hard’ exit of the UK from the EU. Conference is deeply disturbed at the politicians, including a former Tory Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, advocating the view at this time that the Good Friday Agreement has ‘failed’ or is ‘not sustainable’. Conference believes they do so as they recklessly view dismantling the architecture of the peace process as a price worth paying to achieve their own ideological ambitions. Conference believes that such irresponsible views must be robustly challenged.

Conference believes that a lack of political will from the co-guarantors of the Agreement and from some Northern Ireland parties has led to a regression away from the letter and spirit of the Agreement including:

1. The failure of the UK Government to bring forward a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland;
2. Repeated threats by the UK Government to repeal the Human Rights Act 1998;
3. The lack of a comprehensive process to address the issues faced by victims and survivors and to deal with the past;
4. The failure of politicians and public bodies to properly implement the statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998;
5. The failure to implement a Single Equality Bill in Northern Ireland;
6. The failure to bring forward an Anti-Poverty Strategy in Northern Ireland based on objective need;
7. The lack of Irish Language legislation;
8. The continuing use of ‘emergency’ powers in relation to policing and justice;
9. The pursuit of a ‘hard’ exit from the EU by the UK Government, which will undermine key principles of the Good Friday Agreement.

Conference believes that in the years that followed 1998 the opponents of equality and human rights within Northern Ireland were effectively given a veto on progress, as seen through the continuing opposition towards marriage equality, a women’s right to choose, and the prevalence of weak or missing commitments to action in relation to promoting equality and human rights for all of the groups covered by section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to support the Northern Ireland region in its continuing campaign to protect the Peace Agreement and secure full implementation. Conference further calls on the National Executive Council, through Labour Link, to press the Labour party to take all actions necessary to protect the Good Friday Agreement, particularly in the context of the UK exit from the EU.

**98. Human rights and equality protections in Northern Ireland**

**Carried**

In the light of the recent political difficulties on the restoration of devolved Government in Northern Ireland we face the threat of direct rule via the Tories, some of whom are disgracefully trying to dismiss the Good Friday Agreement for their own ends.

It is fair to say that the vast majority of people in Northern Ireland want devolution to work. To be able to hold Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and Ministers to account is an important part of the democratic process. Conference will be aware that there is a major obstacle that we in Northern Ireland need to overcome to help restore devolution. One of the key parties in the negotiations has set its mind against equality and human rights for all. It has put this in its past manifestos and has stated that the ‘status quo’ is important to protect only one section of our population. In fact the opposite is true and this constant battle on equality and human rights is deepening poverty and division, most particularly for working-class people.

Equality and human rights are not under the ownership of any political party in Northern Ireland, but are universal rights which have been at the core of the trade union movement’s demands for over a century.

Conference reaffirms its commitment to work wherever it can for the realisation of rights in Northern Ireland, the restoration of devolved Government within a framework of equality and human rights, and the protection of the peace process.

Should direct rule be imposed, there can be no more ambiguity from the UK Government, whether it be Tory, Labour or a coalition. It must immediately fulfil its obligations to bring forward an inclusive, enforceable Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, which will include the obligations to immediately legislate on issues including an Irish Language Act, abortion rights and equal marriage, all of which are among the most politically contentious issues in our society, but which inside a human rights framework are removed from party political obstruction.

**99. Inclusion in our union – improving equality outcomes**

**Carried as Amended: 99.1**

Equality and diversity in our union is vital. Whilst we have a lot to celebrate and are seen at the front edge of equality policy and organising for equality with our self organised groups, there continues to be significant equality developments within our union, across employers and in our members' workplaces.

There are higher proportions of women and people from black and minority ethnic communities in the workforce than ever before. The population is ageing, with many people either intending to or having to stay in work for longer and many trying to juggle work with caring responsibilities. There is greater recognition of the barriers that disabled people have faced in accessing work and in work, and the lack of awareness and discrimination faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people at work remains persistent.

Conference acknowledges that at this time we are making little progress on equality, which is increasingly seen as a luxury in the workplace, with employers barely abiding by the law. We know they can do more to promote equality in the workplace and it is unions who should be holding them to account.

Conference welcomes the annual equality survey of our members which in 2017 had its highest response rate of just under 12,000 responses but is concerned by some of the findings:

1. Nearly one-third of respondents said their employer did not keep them informed about its equality policies;
2. Nearly 40% of respondents had had not employer-organised equality training, and less than a quarter had had any such training in the past year;
3. A quarter of respondents had experience or had witnessed unfair discrimination in their workplace;
4. Over 40% of those who did not report an instance of discrimination cited fear of being picked on or being victimised, and well over a third thought the issue would not be taken seriously;
5. Only 40% of respondents requiring a reasonable adjustment at work said their employer had implemented it in a speedy and satisfactory manner.

Conference also welcomes work initiated by our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) group to make UNISON’s organisation, events, policies, systems and good practice advice inclusive of non-binary members. Non-binary people are people whose gender identity is not solely male or female. While non-binary people are of all ages and as diverse as any other cross section of society, increasing numbers of young people in particular are identifying outside traditional binary gender norms. The ability to be yourself at work impacts on your work performance, your relationships with colleagues and your health, both mental and physical. This is clearly a trade union issue. Conference notes that steps taken to date include a factsheet titled ‘Gender equality: non-binary inclusion’, a survey of non-binary members, changes to a number of UNISON forms and systems and a start on addressing non-inclusive language. However, there is much still to do.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to work with the self organised groups, regions and branches to:

1. Develop a forward looking equality strategy for the union;
2. Profile equality within the union, across all its communications strands;
3. Seek to influence government and the Labour Party on our equality strategy and building a more inclusive society;
4. Continue to develop guidance for branches on key areas of work on all aspects of equality including inclusive language;
5. Develop guidance and advice for branches to assist stewards to identify discrimination in the workplace;
6. Provide guidance to branches and sectors on reviewing employer equality policies, requesting and analysing workplace data (e.g. pay levels, equality training, reasonable adjustments, disciplinary and grievance) and seek to build an inclusive bargaining agenda with employers;
7. To use the branch Organising Framework to develop equality outcomes.
8. Continue to make UNISON recruitment and organising, advice, negotiations, campaigns, services, communications and language inclusive of non-binary members.

**106. Race Equality Act – How far have we come since 1968?**

**Carried**

On 8 December 1965 the first Race Relations Act came into force in Britain. Prior to this, it was legal to discriminate against people because of the colour of their skin, and this act was the first in many equality legislation to promote non-discrimination and equality, the Act was amended in 1968.

This year is a special one because it marks the 50th anniversary of the amended Race Relations Act. Yet many Black workers are asking not how far we have come since then, but how many gains have been reversed in recent years.

We have seen many blatant examples of racism in our society and in our workplaces. In 1960’s Britain, Black people were subject to overt and cruel racism, typically captured with the ‘No Blacks, No Dogs No Irish’ signs erected by white British landlords. At this time Black people had no legal protection from race discrimination, being denied jobs, access to services, and housing were still legal until the 1968 and 1976 Acts.

The 1968 Act introduced the idea of indirect discrimination which has informed much of subsequent equality legislation today.

Today, Black people are being scapegoated for austerity, they encounter race discrimination in the labour market and beyond, they face disproportionate cuts and austerity and they suffer more from casualisation, zero-hours contracts, low pay and poverty.

Throughout the period surrounding Brexit and the 2017 General election we witnessed an increasingly toxic debate around migration and race, creating an even more hostile environment for migrant and Black workers. As Black people we have contributed positively to British society and supported the public sector.

The most recent equality legislation is the Equality Act 2010 which came into effect from 1 October 2010. This Act, for the first time, gave the UK a single Act of Parliament, requiring equal treatment in access to employment as well as private and public services, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, maternity or pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, now known as protected characteristics.

As a union we need to defend Black workers rights and human rights and resist further erosion of our legal rights, to ensure that this and successive governments make progress towards race equality and renew a commitment to race equality at work and the wider society. Black people are experiencing increasing levels of race discrimination, disadvantage and under-representation in the labour market, service provision and wider society.

Current legislation means Black LGBT migrant workers or people seeking asylum in the UK are entitled to an assessment of potential breach of their human rights, including the risk of them being deported. This assessment engages Article 3, Prohibition of torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and Article 8, Right to respect for private and family life. Yet the threshold of evidence connected with the risks of being Black and LGBT in some countries outside the UK is so high that these assessments are almost without worth.

At a time when we need more legislation and rights, there is major concern regarding the absence of focus on race equality particularly given the growing inequality for UNISON Black Members, their families and communities. Since 2010, we have seen an erosion of equality legislation, seen as nothing but ‘red tape’ by the previous coalition and the current Tory government.

The creation of the 1965 Act and subsequent amendments was intended to outlaw discrimination and give equal rights to Black people, yet we have seen very little improvement over the past 50 years. Young Black males continue to have the highest rate of unemployment, young people continue to be failed by the education system, there remains a massive health inequality between Black and White people, higher numbers of Black people will be housed in poor/substandard accommodation, and the criminal justice system is over-represented by Black people who receive consistently higher sentences. Fifty years on from the Act we should ask whether we need more legislation, more effective policy implementation or more civil society action to finally achieve racial equality in Britain in the 21st century.

Work by UNISON’s Strategic Organising Unit with migrant members highlights the almost impossible task of gaining permanent residence as there is an income threshold of £35,000. This is not a combined household or family income but has to be earned by one individual. Conference is fully aware that most migrant workers are in low paid work that is often zero hours or temporary. This further undermines and exacerbates difficulties for Black LGBT people who are already experiencing high levels of stress.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

1. Engage with the Self-organised groups and the National Service groups to highlight the issues and promote the challenging racism in the workplace guidance and training materials for branches and regions on how to bargain for equality;
2. Liaise with the National Labour Link Committee to highlight these issues with Labour Party MP’s and office holders and address this through the Labour manifesto;
3. Utilise reports that highlight race inequalities in the workplace to hold public bodies to account;
4. Call on the Strategic Organising Unit to develop its work with LGBT migrants.
5. Continue to campaign against all forms of racism and discrimination in the workplace and wider community.

**COMPOSITES**

**COMPOSITES**

**A. STRATEGIC REVIEW of UNISON LOSS**

**B. Palestine – End The Detention of Children**

**Carried**

Conference is appalled at the treatment of Palestinian children by Israel. The arrest of 16-year-old Ahed Tamimi shone a spotlight on Israel’s systematic abuse of minors through the process of military detention. The treatment of Ahed rightly generated a global response, but her situation is far from unique.

Each year the Israeli military arrests and prosecutes around 500 to 700 children. From the moment of arrest, Palestinian children encounter ill-treatment and a denial of their basic rights.

Children as young as 12 are routinely:

1) Taken from their homes at gunpoint in night-time raids by soldiers;

2) Blindfolded, bound and shackled;

3) Interrogated without a lawyer or relative being present and with no visual recording;

4) Put into solitary confinement;

5) Forced to sign confessions (often in Hebrew- a language they don’t understand).

Conference recognises that these practices involve widespread and systematic violations of international law, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Israel is a signatory, and as such condemns them.

Conference believes that Israel has a responsibility under international human rights conventions for the safety, welfare and human rights protection of Palestinian children living under occupation.

Conference welcomes the early day motion 563 tabled in late 2017 (sponsored by Richard Burden MP) and supports its call for “Palestinian children to be treated no less favourably than Israeli children”.

Conference supports calls for the recommendations of UNICEF’s 2013 report “Children in Israeli military detention”, which remain largely unmet, to be carried out in full by the Israeli government without delay and that all children in military detention are released immediately;

Conference also recognises the work of the DCIP (Defence for Children International – Palestine) in supporting and advocating for these children.

Conference condemns Israel’s treatment of Palestinian children and calls on the National Executive Council to:

a) Lobby the UK and devolved governments to press the Government of Israel to end the widespread and systemic human rights violations suffered by Palestinian children in Israeli military custody;

b) Encourage all branches to write to their MPs and MSPs calling on them to raise this issue in the Westminster and devolved Parliaments and to call on their governments to press the Government of Israel to end the widespread and systemic human rights violations suffered by Palestinian children in Israeli military custody;

c) Publicise UNISON’s position to members to raise awareness of the issue and encourage them to lobby their MPs and MSPs;

d) Raise the issue of Israel’s detention and treatment of Palestinian children through Labour Link and call on them to add their voice to the condemnation of Israel’s treatment of Palestinian child prisoners.

e) Make a donation to the DCIP.

**C. Wholly Owned Subsidiary Companies**

**Carried**

Conference is alarmed at the spread of new NHS arm length companies being set up in England. Potentially employing thousands of staff these companies seek to exploit a VAT loophole to reduce their operating costs. Though owned by local NHS trusts they in future could bring in cheap labour and deny pension scheme access to new starters.

In the Yorkshire & Humberside region, NHS Hospital Trusts in Harrogate, South and West Yorkshire are currently pursuing a policy of creating their own private companies to carry out their estates and facilities work on a contractual basis. The companies are known as either SPV’s (Special Purpose Vehicles) or WOC’s (Wholly Owned subsidiary Companies). We are aware that these companies are being set up all over the country.

It appears that the driver for these companies is cost savings. No claims have been made that services will be improved. To the contrary we believe that the services will fragment and the quality of care will be compromised.

Our members are to be TUPE'd into the WOC’s and we believe that they will be vulnerable to attacks on their terms and conditions, with new staff being employed on inferior terms and conditions where sick pay, holidays and pensions are slashed to the bare minimum, thus creating a two tier workforce.

It is the creation of this two tier workforce and the fragmentation of our NHS which makes this an issue for all of us rather than just the health care service group. All the evidence shows that a two tier workforce with the associated fragmentation of the workforce has a negative impact on the quality of the care provided to us as patients.

However, Conference’s gravest concern is that these wholly owned subsidiary companies could easily be sold off to the highest bidder and lead to even greater privatisation of NHS services for UK citizens.

The chaos we are seeing in our hospitals has been created by the choices made by a very vindictive Tory government that wants to break up the NHS. This is yet a further step towards this goal.

These newly created companies will only bring further chaos and disaster with them. When we saw cleaners outsourced in many hospitals we saw MRSA outbreaks going through the roof. These WOC companies further down the line could potentially be sold to the likes of Virgin.

Conference salutes UNISON members in Wigan, Yeovil, Gloucester, Bristol, Harrogate and Huddersfield, to name but a few, who have been fighting these proposals this year. They have been driven by what they have seen of publicly owned arms length companies operating already in Local Government, social care, and education across the UK and other privatisation vehicles.

Conference reaffirms its fundamental support for public services provided by public servants on a not-for profit basis and based on social need.

Conference believes that this is an attack on the whole ethos of our NHS and that it will lead to further break up of the NHS.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

1) Work with the Service Group and the Labour Link and other appropriate parts of the union to oppose these moves at every level;

2) Campaign nationally against new NHS arms length companies as a real privatisation threat;

3) Campaign to close the VAT tax loophole to raise funds for public services;

4) Work with health service group in supporting local negotiations;

5) Support local branches involved in campaigns.

**D. Universal Credit**

**Carried**

Conference notes that:

1) Universal Credit (UC) has been beset with IT failures and delays;

2) There have been many criticisms of UC, which while not opposing UC wholesale, have led to calls for the removal of some of the anti-claimant elements of UC, for example an end to in work sanctions, increased conditionality, monthly payments and the two child rule.

It is increasingly clear that the introduction of UC is being used by the Government as an excuse for introducing cuts to the total benefit bill at the expense of unemployed and low paid workers.

Conference is very concerned that the Conservative minority government will continue on its path to drive disabled citizens and our disabled members into poverty by its implementation of Universal Credit.

This is in addition to changes to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) where people have lost their entitlement or seen it significantly reduced in what is a financially devastating double impact for disabled people affected by cuts in both PIP and UC.

The withdrawal of extra premiums in Employment Support Allowance (ESA) for those in the Work Related group can mean a cut of over £30 per week and in some cases over £70 per week, with even higher losses in UC. There will be transitional protection for those already getting the premiums when people are moved to UC but their benefit level is frozen until it meets the level under the new regulations. Where claimants move from ESA to UC due to a change in their circumstances, no protection is available and benefit levels are significantly reduced unless in the Work Related group.

Any disabled claimant who transfers to UC from tax credit, in part time work, will have to undergo a work capability assessment and if found fit for work may be forced to look for increased hours.

The National Disabled Members Committee has been proactive working with local MPs and the Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in clarifying regulations where decision makers have got it wrong. This means contribution related ESA claimants can now keep that benefit and only have to claim housing costs element through Universal Credit with the ESA deducted from their UC rate. Housing costs are only deducted if the cost is to be paid directly to a landlord, otherwise all of the UC is paid directly to the claimant who is then left with the responsibility of paying the housing costs themselves, except in Scotland.

Universal Credit will impact on both disabled members and other members as it will replace Tax Credits. The benefit pays less money for those who will transfer from (ESA) and the existing Tax Credit system and there will not be the same disability premiums.

For part time workers, there will be the compulsion to find more hours whether you are disabled or not. Any person claiming housing benefit who moves house to another local authority will be forced onto this benefit, alongside the draconian requirements it entails that will cause greater problems for individuals.

Except in Scotland where some different rules apply, Universal Credit is only paid calendar monthly, which again will cause hardship to many disabled people, as some disabled people may find it difficult to cope with such long periods between receipt of payments. With a lack of access to other support such as foodbanks, they run the risk of going without food and falling ill. They are more likely to be unable to keep up their utility payments and risk having no energy supplies to heat food or to keep themselves warm in winter.

We know from experience of the original sanctions imposed on claimants that this will only create the environment for more deaths of claimants unable to cope with these disastrous changes. We know that disabled people have far greater costs and this may force them to seek loans or ask for advance payments from Department of Work and Pensions to be paid back in an unreasonable length of time.

Conference notes there are huge delays in Work Capability Assessments in Universal Credit for new claimants and before decisions are made people could lose benefit for months and pushed into greater poverty and/or homelessness. Existing Support group claimants maintain that status when moved to UC and so get the extra payment, however the Work Related group only get the basic level of ESA. PIP or DLA are not a passport to extra premiums under UC.

To make matters worse, the government announced in February that they would be going ahead with their plans to impose a new income threshold of £7,400 for free school meals, replacing the existing system where benefit claimants automatically qualify for free school meals. Not only will this impact further on disabled families, it will make it more difficult to measure any increase in inequality and poverty as a result of the roll out of UC, as equality measurements have historically been based on free school meals data.

Further perverse and punitive aspects of the government’s welfare reform are coming to light all the time, such as disabled people living in care homes under NHS continuous health care funding who lose the mobility element of PIP and can therefore face the loss of their Motability vehicle and hence their independence.

Universal Credit as currently constituted is not fit for purpose and requires fundamental reform. There are significant deficiencies in the legacy benefits that are being replaced by Universal Credit. First, benefit rates have been falling in real terms as a result of linking benefit uprating to CPI instead of RPI and freezes to benefit rates, secondly there is no link between the payment of housing benefit and the quality of the housing provided, whether rent levels are excessive, the tenancy conditions and whether and there is a good service provided by the landlord – all of which potentially represent poor value for public expenditure and overcharging by the landlord, and thirdly tax credits need to be accompanied by a requirement that employers pay the Living Wage to avoid corporate profits receiving a hidden state subsidy.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council working with Labour Link where appropriate to:

a) Seek to influence public opinion, in particular through highlighting the importance of in-work benefits to disabled workers and the need for out of work benefits that do not push claimants into poverty and homelessness, undermining their ability to seek employment or live independently;

b) Work with Labour MP’s MSPs, AMs and Councillors to push for reform of this benefit and seek opportunities to put pressure on government and other opposition MPs MSPs, AMs and Councillors to back our campaign;

c) Lobby and campaign to restore the UC payments to equate to existing benefit and Tax Credit rates, including all premiums payable for disability and allow 2-weekly payments.

d) Campaign for a pause in the implementation of Universal Credit to allow for fundamental changes to Universal Credit including those set out in i) to xii) below, and the reversal of the cuts to the work allowance, restoring UC payments to existing benefit and tax credit rates, including all premiums payable for disability, abolishing the two child limit and an integrated approach, involving local and central government, to the delivery of a properly funded social security system:

i) A welfare state that ensures everybody has decent standard of living free from poverty and the restoration of the link between basic benefit rates and the level set for retirement pension as a minimum basic income;

ii) An end to the disproportionate sanctions regime common to many benefits;

iii) An end to in work sanctions;

iv) A welfare system based on need and not on moral judgements;

v) An end to the current work capability assessments;

vi) An end to the outsourcing of contracts in the social security system to the private sector;

vii) Adequate staffing levels;

viii) A living wage to be set at level at which all can live based on a nationally recognised Minimum Income Standard;

ix) The introduction of legally enforceable rent controls;

x) An end to all benefit caps;

xi) An end to DWPs target based culture;

xii) Full implementation of the TUC’s Welfare Charter.

e) To coordinate this campaign with other organisations who oppose the Government’s “welfare reforms”.

**Amendment to Rules**

**Amendment to Rules** **Amendment to Rules**

**1. Schedule E Political Fund Ballot**

**Carried**

Schedule E: Political Fund Ballot

2.

Delete:

“ “the Certification Officer” means the Certification Officer for Trade Unions and Employer’s Associations whose address is 22nd floor, Euston Tower, 286 Euston Road, London NW1 3JJ.”

And replace with:

“ “the Certification Officer” means the Certification Officer for Trade Unions and Employer’s Associations whose address is Certification Office for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, Lower Ground Floor, Fleetbank House, 2-6 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8JX.”

**2. Rule C Honorary Members**

**Carried**

C 2.8.2

Add at the end "or in such cases where a Rule I investigation is either impracticable or inappropriate, the National Executive Council shall have the power to revoke the Honorary Membership."

**3. Rule C Membership**

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

Add new rule:

"C 2.10 Employees of Branches

2.10.1

This category of membership shall extend to employees of UNISON branches who shall pay contributions as provided in Schedule A(1). Except as specified below all such members shall be eligible for all the rights and benefits of membership.

2.10.2

Members in this category shall be excluded from eligibility to:

.1 seek or hold office in any lay structure of the Union

.2 be in membership of any branch or of any Group or of any Region

.3 participate as a delegate in any policy-making forum of the Union

.4 participate as a member in any policy making processes of the Union (excepting as set out below) or to vote for any lay member of the National Executive Council or any lay member of any Service Group Executive Committee

.5 be recognised for the purposes of collective bargaining with the National Executive Council.

2.10.3

Members in this category shall have the right to vote in any political fund ballot."

**5. Rule D National Executive Council**

**Lost**

**7. Rule G Branches**

**Lost**

**8. Rule G Branch Officers**

**Carried**

G 4.1.1 Branch Officers

After "Welfare Officer" insert ", Women’s Officer (who must be a woman)"

**9. Rule G Branch Officers**

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

In existing rule G 4.1.6 after "branch secretary" add “, branch chair”

**10. Rule G Branch Officers**

**Lost**

**13. Rule J The Political Fund**

**Carried**

Delete the current Rule J and replace with:

“J The Political Fund

The rules of the Political Fund set out in sections 1-2 below apply to all members regardless of when they joined the Union. The particular rules which apply to members who joined the Union before 1st March 2018 are set out in section 3. The particular rules which apply to members who joined the Union on or after 1 March 2018 are set out in section 4.

1 Rules for the political fund

1.1 The objects of UNISON-The Public Service Union (hereafter “the Union”) shall include the furtherance of the political objects to which section 72 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 applies, that is to say, the expenditure of money:

(a) on any contribution to the funds of, or on the payment of any expenses incurred directly or indirectly by, a political party;

(b) on the provision of any service or property for use by or on behalf of any political party;

(c) in connection with the registration of electors, the candidature of any person, the selection of any candidate or the holding of any ballot by the Union in connection with any election to a political office;

(d) on the maintenance of any holder of a political office;

(e) on the holding of any conference or meeting by or on behalf of a political party or of any other meeting the main purpose of which is the transaction of business in connection with a political party;

(f) on the production, publication or distribution of any literature, document, film, sound recording or advertisement the main purpose of which is to persuade people to vote for a political party or candidate or to persuade them not to vote for a political party or candidate.

1.2 Where a person attends a conference or meeting as a delegate or otherwise as a participator in the proceedings, any expenditure incurred in connection with her/his attendance as such shall, for the purposes of paragraph (e) above, be taken to be expenditure incurred on the holding of the conference or meeting.

1.3 In determining, for the purposes of paragraphs (a) to (f) above, whether the Union has incurred expenditure of a kind mentioned in those paragraphs, no account shall be taken of the ordinary administrative expenses of the Union.

1.4 In these objects:

CANDIDATE means a candidate for election to a political office and includes a prospective candidate;

CONTRIBUTION, in relation to the funds of a political party, includes any fee payable for affiliation to, or membership of, the party and any loan made to the party;

ELECTORS means electors at any election to a political office;

FILM includes any record, however made, of a sequence of visual images, which is capable of being used as a means of showing that sequence as a moving picture;

LOCAL AUTHORITY means a local authority within the meaning of section 270 of the Local Government Act 1972 or section 235 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973;

POLITICAL OFFICE means the office of Member of Parliament, Member of the European Parliament or member of a local authority or any position within a political party.

2 Administration of the fund

2.1 Any payments in the furtherance of such political objects shall be made out of a separate fund of the Union (hereinafter called the Political Fund) which shall consist of two distinct Sections:

(a) the General Political Fund Section, to be known as the Campaign Fund; and

(b) the Affiliated Political Fund Section, to be known as UNISON Labour Link.

2.2 The administration of each section of the Political Fund shall be the responsibility of the National Executive Council which shall delegate this responsibility to the exclusive control of two separate Committees which shall, in the case of the General Political Fund Section, be known as the General Political Fund Committee and consist of members of the National Executive Council who in accordance with these rules are contributors to the General Political Fund Section and, in the case of the Affiliated Political Fund Section, be known as the National Labour Link Committee and consist of 12 members of the National Executive Council elected by members of the National Executive Council who in accordance with these Rules are contributors to the Affiliated Political Fund Section and paid up individual members of the Labour party and one representative elected from each Region (save for Northern Ireland) who in accordance with these rules are contributors to the Affiliated Political Fund Section and paid up individual members of the Labour Party.

2.3 Payments from the General Political Fund Section shall be made to promote the Union’s political objects, provided that no contribution from this section of the fund shall be made to the funds of a political party.

2.4 Any branch with members contributing to the General Political Fund Section shall be eligible to apply for financial support from this section of the fund. The same shall apply to any Service Group, Self-organised Group, Sector or Region having members contributing to the General Political Fund Section.

2.5 Payments from the Affiliated Political Fund Section shall be made to promote the Union’s political objects, provided that no expenditure from this section of the fund shall be made on behalf of or in the interests of any candidate or any representative who has not been officially adopted by the Labour Party (or, in the case of the Isle of Man, the Manx Labour Party).

2.6 Any member who pays a political contribution may, on joining the Union or at any point thereafter, elect whether to contribute to the General Political Fund Section or to the Affiliated Political Fund Section or to both and shall make known her/his election on a form approved for the purpose by the National Executive Council.

2.7 Members can elect to contribute to both sections of the political fund. In the case of a member who joined before 1 March 2018 who elects to contribute to both the General Political Fund Section and the Affiliated Political Fund Section, she/he shall from the date on which her/his election takes effect select to which Section of the fund s/he wishes to have her/his contribution made by deduction from her/his subscription. Any contribution to the other Section of the political fund shall be made by way of an additional levy to be paid annually or at such shorter intervals as the National Executive Council may determine and shall in any event be equal to the annual value of the contributions relevant to their subscription band (See Schedule A: rates of subscription and section 3.8 below). A member who joins on or after 1 March 2018 can contribute to both sections by selecting which section of the fund they wish to opt in to at the point at which they join the union (in accordance with section 4 below), and then undertaking to pay an additional levy for the other section of the fund (See Schedule A: rates of subscription and section 4.13 below).

2.8 A member who is exempt from the obligation to contribute to the political fund of the union shall not be excluded from any benefits of the union, or placed in any respect either directly or indirectly under any disability or disadvantage as compared with other members of the union (except in relation to the control or management of the political fund) by reason of his/her being so exempt.

2.9 If any member alleges that s/he is aggrieved by a breach of any of these rules for the political fund, being a rule or rules made pursuant to section 82 of the 1992 Act, s/he may complain to the Certification Officer, and the Certification Officer, after making such enquiries as they think fit and after giving the complainant and the union an opportunity of being heard, may, if they consider that such a breach has been committed, make such order for remedying the breach as they think just in the circumstances. Any such order of the Certification Officer may, subject to the right of appeal provided by section 95 of the 1992 Act, be enforced in the manner provided for in section 82(4) of the 1992 Act.

2.10 Contribution to the political fund of the union shall not be made a condition for admission to the union.

2.11 The union shall include in the annual return that is submitted to the Certification Officer details of political expenditure as required by section 32ZB of the 1992 Act.

2.12 The union shall ensure that a copy of the political fund rules is available, free of charge, to any member of the union who requests a copy.

3 Rules that apply to members that joined the union before 1 March 2018 and to political funds set up before 1 March 2018

Notice to members

3.1 As soon as is practicable after the passing of a resolution approving the furtherance of such political objects as an object of the Union, the National Executive Council shall cause a notice in the following form to be given to all members of the Union.

Notice to Members

Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (as amended)

A resolution approving the furtherance of political objects within the meaning of the above Act as an object of the union has been adopted by a ballot under the Act. Any payments in the furtherance of any of those objects will be made out of a separate fund, the political fund of the union.

Every member of the union has a right to be exempt from contributing to that fund. A form of exemption notice can be obtained by or on behalf of any member either by application at, or by post from, the head office or any branch office of the union or from the Certification Office for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, Lower Ground Floor, Fleetbank House, 2-6 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8JX. This form, when filled in, or a written request to the like effect, should be handed or sent to the secretary of the branch to which the member belongs.

3.2 This notice shall be published in the union’s all-member journal, which it is the practice of the union to use when information of general interest to all its members needs to be provided to them.

Request for exemption (excluding Northern Ireland)

3.3 Any member of the Union may at any time give notice on the form of exemption notice specified in rule 3.4 below, or by a written request to like effect, that she/he objects to contribute to the political fund. A form of exemption notice may be obtained by, or on behalf of, any member, either by application at, or by post from, the Head Office or any branch office of the Union or from the Certification Office for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, Lower Ground Floor, Fleetbank House, 2-6 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8JX.

3.4 The form of exemption notice shall be as follows:

UNISON-The Public Service Union Political Fund Exemption Notice

I hereby give notice that I object to contribute to the political fund of UNISON and am in consequence exempt, in the manner provided by Chapter VI of Part 1 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 from contributing to that fund.

Print name.......................................

Signature . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Name of Branch . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Address . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Date . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

3.5 Any member of the Union may obtain exemption by sending such notice to the secretary of the branch to which the member belongs and, on receiving it, the secretary shall send an acknowledgment of its receipt to the member at the address upon the notice, and shall process the exemption as soon as reasonably practicable.

Manner of giving effect to exemption

3.6 On giving such notice a member of the Union shall be exempt, so long as her/his notice is not withdrawn, from contributing to the political fund of the Union, where the notice is given:

(a) Within one month of the giving of Notice to Members in rule 1 following the passing of a political resolution on a ballot held at a time when no such resolution is in force, as from the date on which the exemption notice is given; or

(b) In any other case, as from 1st January next after the exemption notice is given.

3.7 The National Executive Council shall give effect to the exemption of members to contribute to the political fund of the Union by relieving any members who are exempt from the payment of part of any periodical contributions required from the members of the Union towards the expenses of the Union as hereinafter provided, and such relief shall be given as far as possible to all members who are exempt on the occasion of their making the same periodical payment.

3.8 For the purpose of enabling each member of the Union who joined the Union before 1 March 2018 to know as respects any such periodical contribution what portion, if any, of the sum payable by her/him is a contribution to the political fund, it is hereby provided that for members who joined the union before 1st March 2018, the contribution to the political fund shall be equivalent to 6.5 per cent of their subscription to the union as set out in Schedule A: rates of subscription. If a member has elected to pay contributions to both sections of the political fund pursuant to rule 2.7 above they will pay the same amount, equivalent to 6.5 per cent of their rate of subscription, to each section of the political fund.

4 Rules that apply to members that joined the union on or after 1 March 2018 and to political funds set up on or after 1 March 2018

Opting in by union members to contribute to the political fund

4.1 A member cannot be required to make a contribution to the political fund of the Union unless they have given notice of their willingness to contribute to that fund (an “opt-in notice”).

4.2 A member of a trade union who has given an opt-in notice may withdraw that notice by giving notice to the union (a “withdrawal notice”).

4.3 A withdrawal notice takes effect at the end of the period of one month beginning with the day on which it is given.

4.4 A member of a trade union may give an opt-in notice or a withdrawal notice:-

(a) by delivering the notice (either personally or by an authorised agent or by post) at the head office or a branch office of the union;

(b) by sending it by e-mail to the following email address politicalfundadmin@unison.co.uk;

(c) by completing an electronic form provided by the union which sets out the notice and sending it to the union by electronic means with instructions by the union.

(d) by any other electronic means prescribed under the 1992 Act (as inserted by the 2016 Act) Information to members about opting in to the political fund.

Information to members about opting in to the political fund

4.5 The union shall take all reasonable steps to secure that, not later than the end of the period of eight weeks beginning with the day on which the annual return of the union is sent to the Certification Officer, all the members of the union are notified of their right to give a withdrawal notice.

4.6 Such notification may be given:- (a) by sending individual copies of it to members; or (b) by publicising this information in the union’s all-member journal, which it is the practice of the union to use when information of general interest to all its members needs to be provided to them.

4.7 The notification may be included with the statement required to be given by section 32A of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

4.8 A trade union shall send to the Certification Officer a copy of the notification which is provided to its members in pursuance of this section as soon as is reasonably practicable after it is so provided.

4.9 Where the same form of notification is not provided to all the members of the union, the union shall send to the Certification Officer a copy of each form of notification provided to any of them.

4.10 If any member alleges that s/he is aggrieved by a breach of any of these rules for giving information to members about opting into the political fund, being a rule or rules made pursuant to section 84A of the 1992 Act, s/he may complain to the Certification Officer. Where the Certification Officer is satisfied that the union has failed to comply with a requirement of section 84A of the 1992 Act the Officer may make such order for remedying the failure as they think just under the circumstances. Before deciding the matter the Certification Officer:-

(a) may make such enquiries as the Officer thinks fit;

(b) must give the union, and any member of the union who made a complaint to the Officer regarding the matter, an opportunity to make written representations; and

(c) may give the union, and any such member as is mentioned in clause (b), an opportunity to make oral representations.

Manner of giving effect to decision not to contribute to political fund

4.11 The union shall give effect to the members decision not to contribute to the political fund by a separate levy of contributions to that fund from the members who are contributors.

4.12 Any form (including an electronic form) that a person has to complete in order to become a member of the union shall include:-

(a) a statement to the effect that the person may opt to be a contributor to the fund; and

(b) a statement setting to the effect that a person who chooses not to contribute to the political fund shall not, by reason of not contributing, be excluded from any benefits of the union or be placed in any respect either directly or indirectly under a disability or at a disadvantage as compared with other members of the union (except in relation to control of the political fund).

4.13 For members who joined the union on or after 1st March 2018, the contribution to the political fund shall be equivalent to 5 per cent of their membership subscription to the union, paid as an additional levy on top of their membership subscription set out in Schedule A: rates of subscription. If a member has elected to pay contributions to both sections of the political fund pursuant to rule 2.7 above they will pay the same amount, equivalent to 5 per cent of their rate of subscription, to each section of the political fund.

5. NORTHERN IRELAND

5.1 Under Article 59 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

no Northern Ireland member of the Union shall be required to make any contribution to the political fund of the Union unless she/he has delivered, as provided in Rule J.5.4, to the Head Office or some branch office of the Union, a notice in writing, in the form set out in Rule J.5.2, of her/his willingness to contribute to that Fund, and has not withdrawn the notice in the manner provided in Rule J.5.3. Every member of the Union who has not delivered such a notice or who, having delivered such a notice, has withdrawn it in the manner provided in Rule J.5.3, is to be deemed for the purpose of these Rules to be a member who is exempt from the obligation to contribute to the political fund.

5.2 The form of notice of willingness to contribute to the political fund is as follows:

Form of political fund contribution notice - Northern Ireland

I hereby give notice that I am willing, and agree, to contribute to the political fund of UNISON, and I understand that I shall in consequence, be liable to contribute to that Fund and shall continue to be so liable, unless I deliver to the head office or some branch office of the union, a written notice of withdrawal. I also understand that after delivering such a notice of withdrawal I shall still continue to be liable to contribute to the political fund until the next following first day of January.

Name: . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Name of Branch: . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Address: . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

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Payroll or Membership Number: . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Date: . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

5.3 If at any time a member of the Union, who has delivered such a notice as is provided for in Rules J.5.1 and J.5.2, gives notice of withdrawal thereof, delivered as provided in Rule J.5.4, to the Head Office or at any branch office of the Union, she/he shall be deemed to have withdrawn the notice as from the first day of January next after the delivery of the notice of withdrawal.

5.4 The notices referred to in Rules J.5.1, J.5.2 and J.5.3 may be delivered personally by the member or by an authorised agent of the member, and any notice shall be deemed to have been delivered at the Head Office or branch office of the Union if it has been sent by post properly addressed to that office.

5.5 The National Executive Council shall give effect to the statutory exemption of Northern Ireland members to contribute to the political fund of the Union by making a separate levy of contributions to that fund from those Northern Ireland members who have provided written consent of their willingness to contribute:

.1 in the case of members who contribute to the General Political Fund Section an amount equal to 3 per cent of their contribution to the Union.

.2 in the case of members who contribute to the Affiliated Political Fund Section an amount equal to 6.5 per cent of their contribution to the Union.

No moneys of the union other than the amount raised by such separate levy shall be carried to the political fund.

5.6 Northern Ireland members who are statutorily exempt from the obligation to contribute to the political fund of the Union shall not be excluded from any benefits of the Union, or placed in any respect either directly or indirectly under any disability or disadvantage as compared with other members of the Union (except in relation to the control or management of the political fund) by reason of their being exempt.

5.7 Contribution to the political fund of the Union shall not be made a condition for admission to the Union.

5.8 If any Northern Ireland member alleges that she/he is aggrieved by a breach of any of the rules made pursuant to Article 59 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (as amended) (“the 1995 Order”) she/he may complain to the Northern Ireland Certification Officer: 10-12 Gordon Street, Belfast, BT1 2LG, under Article 57(2) to (4B) of the 1995 Order. If, after giving the complainant and a representative of the Union an opportunity to be heard, the Certification Officer considers that a breach has been committed, he may make an order for remedying it as he thinks just in the circumstances. Under Article 70(4)(b) of the 1995 Order an appeal against any decision of the Certification Officer may be made to the Court of Appeal on a question of law.

5.9 Additionally, if any Northern Ireland member alleges that she/he is aggrieved by a breach of the political fund rules made pursuant to Section 82 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 she/he may complain to the GB Certification Officer: Certification Office for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, Lower Ground Floor, Fleetbank House, 2-6 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8JX.

If, after giving the complainant and a representative of the Union an opportunity of being heard, the GB Certification Officer considers that a breach has been committed, he may make an order for remedying it as he thinks just in the circumstances. Any such order of the GB Certification Officer is subject to the right of appeal provided for by section 82(4) of 1992 Act.”

**Emergency Motions**

**EM9. Justice For The Windrush Generation**

**Carried**

Conference notes that while the Windrush scandal has led to the resignation of Home Secretary Amber Rudd on 30 April 2018, the policies themselves are still in operation and compensation schemes will be delayed while public consultations are held.

Conference is appalled at the treatment that UNISON member Michael Braithwaite and other members of the ‘Windrush Generation’ have been subjected to. Many have been deported, detained, lost jobs, homes, savings and access to vital public services. Those affected came from the Commonwealth, responding to the call of the UK Governments in the post-war period to come and rebuild the country and our public services. Conference believes that inhumane treatment of commonwealth citizens, many of whom have been failed at the very point they should have been looking forward to a well-earned retirement, echoes the racism they have had to fight all their lives.

It heightens our resolve to challenge the institutional racism that humiliates, threatens and treats the ‘Windrush generation’ and the migrant people who followed in their wake, like second-class citizens in this country.

Conference is also deeply concerned that the Home Office is about to gain sweeping powers in the Data Protection Act to strip any migrant person or British citizen of their data protection rights whenever they use public services, if it is for the purpose of ‘immigration control’. UNISON is disappointed that despite lobbying hard in the Commons, a cross-party attempt to prevent this failed narrowly on 9 May 2018. This exemption will restrict the rights of those affected by the ‘hostile environment’ effectively to challenge Home Office decisions, the very same right used by UNISON member Michael Braithwaite to successfully challenge the UK government.

Conference notes that on 10 May 2018 the government called for personal testimonies and evidence from affected people from the “Windrush Generation”, in order to draw up a compensation scheme, with a further technical consultation to run over the summer. In the meantime, those affected will continue to experience great suffering. Conference believes that immediate redress must first take place, including the release from detention of any facing deportation, the return of those wrongly deported, rights to legal aid and speedy and meaningful compensation not only for financial losses incurred but also injury to feelings.

Conference calls for an Independent Commission to review the workings of the Home Office and the legal framework of the ‘hostile environment’. Parliamentary scrutiny over the past few months has exposed the fact that the Home Office knew before and after they implemented the hostile environment that it would result in problems for people legally resident in the country and for British citizens who did not possess certain documents. The Home Office’s failure to heed multiple warnings, to monitor the impact of its policies and to follow its own rules has also been exposed.

Conference calls into question the operation of new immigration legislation since 2014 which has turned public sector employees such as nurses, doctors, teachers and teaching assistants into de facto immigration officers. Conference notes that landlords now face fines and liabilities for providing housing to anyone lacking documentation with the result that Black people now find it even harder to access decent housing. Conference notes that the offence of ‘illegal working’ criminalises vulnerable workers themselves and makes them vulnerable to the very worst employers. Conference asserts that this is a crisis created Theresa May during her tenure as Home Secretary and now as Prime Minister.

Conference believes that lacking sufficient documentation, as many members of the 'Windrush Generation' do, does not mean a lack of rights to reside, work or access public services. Conference believes that public service workers cannot be expected to act as immigration officials or make judgements about who is legitimately here or can access services if even the Home Office cannot. Conference notes that the Home Office themselves destroyed vital records held on the ‘Windrush Generation’, which should have supported their appeals and should have been preserved as a part of the cultural heritage and history of this country.

Conference asserts that trade unions must work to protect the rights of workers including migrant workers against exploitation from bosses, deportation and loss of access to public services such as health and education and all racist immigration controls.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Campaign for the restoration of full rights for the 'Windrush Generation', Commonwealth British residents and their children arriving in the UK between the 1940s to early 1970s;
2. Working through service groups to support and defend affected UNISON members from job losses and detrimental treatment;
3. Campaign for the UK government to operate a ‘fast track’ stand-alone system to enable any of the ‘Windrush Generation’ to gain immediate citizenship rights free of charge, without citizenship test requirements, whether they are in the country or abroad, as soon as possible;
4. Campaign for rights to legal aid and full compensation for any losses incurred including injury to feelings;
5. Campaign for an independent inquiry into the workings of the Home Office and the legal framework of the ‘hostile environment’;
6. Campaign against the ‘hostile environment’;
7. Work with Labour Link to ensure that the Labour Party adopts a rights based immigration policy , as a vital part of its mission to end the exploitation of all workers and particularly migrant workers.

**Emergency Composites**

**EC2. REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

**Carried**

Conference applauds the historic landslide vote by the people of the Republic of Ireland to repeal the Eighth amendment to the Irish constitution and recognises the huge victory for women’s right to choose both in the South but also as a beacon of hope for all women where ever they live who are still fighting for access to legal, free and safe abortions.

Conference recognises that not all women have the basic human right to choose what she does with her own body and welcomes the renewed call being led by the women of Northern Ireland for abortion to be decriminalised in Northern Ireland.

Conference also recognises that as we celebrate 100 years of some women’s right to vote, the 1861 Offences against the person’s act a law that was passed before this right to vote was won continues to dictate how a woman can choose what she does with her own body. With abortion continuing to be a criminal offense across the UK.

Conference notes with serious concern that following the result of the referendum in Ireland to repeal the eighth Amendment of the Irish Constitution, Northern Ireland will become the only jurisdiction in these islands to persist with restrictive abortion laws that breach human rights.

Conference believes that the time has come for Parliament to take clear action to address the situation.

Conference notes Theresa May’s reluctance to intervene as her Government is propped up by the anti-abortionist DUP.

Theresa May has taken the position that Westminster legislating in this area would breach the devolution settlement, something her Government seems to have no difficulty with in relation to the claw-back of powers within the EU Withdrawal Bill. Whilst both health and justice are devolved matters, this position disregards the obligation placed on the Westminster Parliament under the Good Friday Agreement to “legislate as necessary to ensure the United Kingdom’s international obligations are met in respect of Northern Ireland’’ (Paragraph 33(b), Strand 1)”.

Northern Ireland abortion law is incompatible with international human rights obligations which the UK has signed and ratified. Most recently the UN Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women has found in February 2018 that the current law on abortion in Northern Ireland “violates the rights of women in Northern Ireland by unduly restricting their access to abortion”. The Committee called for the repeal of legislation criminalising abortion under the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 and urged that the UK legislate to provide for expanded grounds to legalise abortion in a range of areas.

The UK Supreme Court has recently found that the current law in Northern Ireland is disproportionate and incompatible with Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in so far as it prohibits abortion on the grounds of rape, incest or fatal foetal abnormality. The Court however did not issue a formal declaration of incompatibility due to the manner in which the case was taken. Conference believes that the views of the court in relation to the current restrictive laws compatibility with human rights are clear. Conference considers it inevitable that the law will be deemed incompatible with the ECHR in due course.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Give our full support to the campaign to decriminalise abortion in the whole of the UK including Northern Ireland;
2. Give our full support to Abortion Rights UK the national pro-choice campaign with regions and branches considering how they can support the campaign alongside the support already given nationally;
3. Call on Labour Link to support Stella Creasy’s call within the Labour party to support a woman’s right to choose and decriminalise abortion;
4. Demand that the UK Government introduce legislation through Parliament to ensure that the law in Northern Ireland is compatible with international human rights obligations, in order to guarantee that women in Northern Ireland do not continue to suffer a serious deficit in rights protections.