



UNISON

Local Government

Service Group Conference

Preliminary Agenda

**15 – 16 June 2014
The Brighton Centre**

2014 Local Government Service Group Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

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Prioritisation Process

The Standing Orders Committee has agreed to continue to operate a prioritisation process similar to that applied to the National Delegate Conference. The Service Group Executive, national 'sector' committees, national self-organised groups, the National Youth Forum and regional local government service groups, in consultation with branches, will now be asked to prioritise motions by **12.00 noon Thursday 17 April 2014**. The Standing Orders Committee will consider the results of this exercise at its next meeting.

**Brighton
15-16 June 2014**

1. Young Workers and Local Government Employment

Conference believes that there is a staffing crisis in local government, with around half a million jobs lost since the General Election in 2010 (mainly as a result of UK Government cuts in local authority funding). The cuts mean diminishing prospects for young people of finding work in local government, and also on their prospects for proper training and career development.

Conference believes it is essential that local authorities strive to reclaim their position as model employers, part of that work being to seek to recruit and develop young workers.

Conference notes that some local authorities have developed apprenticeship schemes, and that more than 70% of all apprentices in UNISON membership are in the Local Government Service Group. Conference welcomes the work undertaken by the service group executive to develop a recruitment and organising plan for apprentices in local government. Conference remains concerned that many apprentices are still low-paid and believes this must be addressed.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) survey all young members in local government as to the key service conditions issues they face, including identifying issues of low pay, such survey to make it possible to disaggregate apprentices and to disaggregate by sector to determine any specific issues related to those groups of members.
- 2) consider the results of the survey to determine drawing up a charter for young workers in local government, such charter to be the basis for a recruitment and organising campaign.
- 3) issue the results to sector committees for consideration in their workplans.

National Young Members' Forum

2. Contempt of Court Attacks on Social Workers

Conference is deeply concerned about recent events in Edinburgh and elsewhere in Scotland where contempt of court proceedings have been brought against social work

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staff as individuals whilst acting in their social work role to fulfil their statutory duties consistent with their codes of practice.

Social work members have an overriding legal duty to ensure the child's welfare is paramount in all that they do. However, it seems the paramountcy of the welfare of the children is not considered relevant during contempt proceedings. UNISON believes this constitutes a conflict of laws which places those working on the frontline in a very difficult and vulnerable position.

The fact that individuals, rather than the organisation they work for, have been put in this position has wide-ranging implications for the employer/employee relationship and could have a ripple effect on all frontline workers. This Conference is concerned that this may also compromise the welfare of the children for whom our social work members are responsible.

Accordingly, Conference:

1. Congratulates UNISON for providing legal support and standing by the members concerned. Without UNISON membership, some of these workers could have faced individual legal costs running into tens of thousands of pounds.
2. Welcomes the advice issued to members by UNISON City of Edinburgh Branch which has since been issued to all branches in Scotland.
3. Welcomes UNISON Scotland's action in writing to the Scottish minister concerned to call for an urgent legislative review.
4. Resolves to continue to campaign for legal changes through UNISON Scotland's Social Work Issues Group.
5. Agrees to mount an awareness and recruitment campaign among all social work and social care staff.

City Of Edinburgh Council Unison

3. Zero Hour Contracts

Conference deplores the fact that many local councils are using the cuts agenda to worsen our members' terms and conditions.

There are now many councils who are exploiting staff by issuing zero hours contracts. Whilst we acknowledge that there can be a genuine use for such contracts, in many cases these contracts are used in place of permanent contracts. By doing this it leaves our members in a vulnerable position.

UNISON members are telling us about the uncertainty and problems that these zero hour contracts bring, and we know many of these jobs should be permanent with minimum hours and full employment rights.

Conference therefore calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Continue to monitor the extent of zero hour contracts by Councils across the UK.

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- 2) Use this issue as an opportunity to recruit and organise these staff.
- 3) Mobilise our members in the campaign regarding the exploitation of the use of zero hours contracts and liaise with other Service Groups affected.
- 4) Work with Labour Link to encourage the Labour Party and Shadow Ministers to promote a sustainable funding regime to ensure adequate funding in Local Government to provide fair pay and permanent posts.

City of Sunderland

4. Cuts in Youth Services

Conference notes that under the Conservative-led Government, massive cuts have been made in youth and community services. In a survey of UNISON members carried out in 2013, 89% of respondents reported that their local authority had cut services for young people. And according to responses to a Freedom of Information request by UNISON at the end of 2013, 72% of local authorities had cut their youth service budgets between 2012 and 2014 alone. Cuts of several hundred thousand pounds have been common-place over this period. In some authorities as much as three-quarters of the youth service budget has been cut, while in others the whole service has been cut.

These cuts have led to hundreds of UNISON members losing their jobs – 82% of survey participants reported job losses as a result of cuts. 52% of survey respondents said youth centres had closed. And thousands of hours of outreach work have been lost in many local authorities.

Conference further notes that youth services will suffer far worse cuts between now and 2015/16, as the full impact of the Government's local government funding cuts becomes evident. In Cymru/Wales, local authorities which have until recently shielded youth services from cuts are now reducing jobs and services.

Conference also notes that UNISON's membership in youth services has fallen, and that it is vital that we maintain and improve our membership and organisation, to strengthen our fights against job cuts and for fair pay.

Conference believes that fully funded youth services, provided by trained professional youth workers and youth support workers, are a crucial element of support for young people. The relationships developed between youth work professionals and young people provide immense benefit to young people and their communities. They help young people make their own choices in life, for example in employment and education, and they reduce the burden on other services such as the health service, social care and the justice system.

Conference further believes that the cuts in youth services will lead to higher youth unemployment, less empowerment among young people, an increase in mental health and substance abuse issues among young people, and particular problems for young lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people, those from poorer backgrounds, and those from minority ethnic groups. Large numbers of respondents to UNISON's survey reported on an increase in these problems following cuts in youth services.

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Conference therefore instructs the Service Group Executive:

- 1) To ensure that cuts in youth services form a key part of the Service Group's UK-wide campaigning against the Government's cuts, using particularly badly hit youth services as examples of the impact of the cuts, and raising awareness of these cuts among the public, the media and politicians.
- 2) To work with other campaign groups, such as In Defence of Youth Work and Choose Youth, to highlight the importance of youth services, and to ensure that those groups focus on the importance of a well-trained, fairly paid, professional workforce.
- 3) To support and promote the planned Choose Youth lobby of parliament, set for February 2015.
- 4) To work with Labour Link to influence the Labour Party's general election manifesto to develop a coherent youth policy that is fully and appropriately resourced, emphasising the clear benefits for wider society as well as for young people.
- 5) To provide support, through Regions, to branches in their efforts to defend jobs and support members who are going through transfers of employment.
- 6) To work with the National Youth and Community Workers Committee, to develop recruitment and organising initiatives aimed at maintaining and increasing UNISON's membership and organisational strength in youth services.

Youth & Community Workers Committee

5. Cuts in Social Work Services

Conference notes the continuing pressures on local government social care staff and the developing crisis in care across the UK. Staff employed in care are finding the demands on their services are increasing due to the impact of the increasing numbers of older people, and people with disabilities and long term health needs and the impact of austerity policies on communities and services such as education and housing which are so damaging to communities, families and vulnerable people.

In addition, the cuts in local authority budgets are leading to reductions in the numbers of social care staff and the resources they have available to them. This is leading to bigger caseloads, less time with service users, worsening staffing levels and an increase in the risk to both service user standards of care and the well being of staff.

Initiatives such as personalisation, individual budgets, reablement, promoting greater independence and developing community supports have been compromised by being used to disguise cuts in services thus undermining the integrity of these professional concepts.

There are an increasing number of examples where social care staff feel under pressure to compromise their professional standards and integrity in order to meet the demands to achieve savings or minimise time spent with service users. This can include social workers being told to change assessments to decrease packages of care and home carers being told to reduce the time spent with service users whilst still

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completing the same tasks. These issues can have an impact on the registration of workers and can lead to our members being subject to lengthy investigative procedures causing significant stress and ill health as well as a threat to their ability to continue to practice.

Further political responses to the pressures are regularly inappropriate, based on changing structures and demanding more accountability from staff whilst continuing to reduce resources available. Inevitably these responses fail and sometimes cause more harm than good.

Conference welcomes the work that has been undertaken to promote UNISON's Ethical Home Care Charter and the work of UNISON Scotland's Social Work Issues Group (SWIG) to promote workload management and supervision policies and safe professional practice in the workplace. UNISON is the only trade union which takes these issues seriously, campaigns on them and has the membership and resources to make a difference to the working lives of social care staff.

Conference asks that the Local Government Service Group Executive, working with the National Social Care and Home Care Forums and the regional social work issues groups (such as SWIG).

1. Continues to highlight the impact of austerity on social care and on social care workers.
2. Produces guidance to social care members on protecting themselves in the workplace and in their practice.
3. Researches and publishes material similar to the Ethical Home Care Charter but covering all social care sectors, making demands on employers and governments to protect and improve on the standards of care that our members want to deliver to their service users.

Scotland Region

6. Campaigning for Local Government Workers and Services

Conference is concerned by attacks on Local Government Workers' pay and conditions which are placing additional pressures on a substantially reduced workforce.

Media reports suggest around 275,000 jobs have been lost in local government in the UK since 2010, 75% of the overall losses reported in the public sector. In Scotland 35,000 local government jobs have been lost since 2008 leaving authorities unable to sustain the same level of service provision.

These cuts are driven by the neo liberal ideology of a coalition government at Westminster and subsequent decisions by the Scottish Government to inflict deeper cuts to local authority budgets, substantially reducing their ability to sustain a decent level of public service provision.

A continuation of the failing austerity programme will, if left to run its course, result in a broken society where the gap between rich and poor will continue to widen and become virtually irreversible.

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Local Government is under attack on many fronts across the UK and any attempts to undermine its important role need to be a priority for our union. We must fight to protect local democratic accountability and the services our members provide to the communities where they live, work and serve.

Local Government workers are now amongst the lowest paid in the public sector with pay stagnation and below inflation pay rises exacerbating the problem. UNISON must continue its fight to end low pay by campaigning, as a starting point, for the introduction of the national living wage.

A further threat to our public services comes from privatisation and outsourcing. We must ensure that we maintain our resistance to the hiving off of our services on the cheap and that we support branches/regions where this occurs.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

1. Mount a significant campaign for the protection of local, democratically accountable services.
2. Raise awareness of the impact of cuts in local government within UNISON and in the public domain.
3. Provide resources for a national campaign and funds for devolved regions to allow them to address local issues.
4. Co-ordinate pay campaigning as a priority as part of UNISON's "Worth It" initiative.
5. Work with elected members, community groups and other trade unions in promoting our vision for local government.

Scotland Region

7. Improving Local Government Democracy

Conference believes that the Local Government council election process is undemocratic as local government employees are not allowed to stand as a candidate for election to the council for which they work.

The process is undemocratic because:

1. It does not allow for fair representation in particular low paid, women, part time are unable to afford to relinquish their post prior to an election.
2. It discriminates by job, financial situation and age.
3. It discriminate between private and public sector.
4. It does not allow for full use of local knowledge and experience of Local Government employees.

Conference therefore call upon the Service Group Executive to mount a vigorous campaign to lobby for a change in the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act

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2013 and the equivalent Acts that govern this issue in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, to allow local government employees to stand as a candidate for their local council elections whilst employed in a post neutral to the electoral process until such time as they are elected.

Cymru/Wales Region

8. NJC for Wales

Conference notes the inability of the current National Joint Council (NJC) to effectively negotiate on behalf of UNISON members. Primarily this is because of intransigence from the employers' side buoyed by a hostile Westminster Government.

Conference recognises that the current NJC arrangements restrict the ability to negotiate on a National basis within Wales with a predominantly sympathetic Welsh Government and employers association.

Conference believes that the NJC is effectively being left to 'wither on the vine' and that the trade unions need to take decisive action to prevent its collapse and the unwelcome consequence of local bargaining.

Conference recognises that in Wales, UNISON has a strong track record in influencing Welsh Government policy and protecting Local Government spending which has protected services in Wales during a sustained period of cuts in England.

Conference understands that an existing Welsh body, the Workforce Partnership Council, could easily extend its remit to take on the role of negotiating on pay, terms & conditions across Local Government in Wales.

Conference therefore agrees for:

- 1) UNISON to approach the employer's side to seek their views on national bargaining within Wales.
- 2) UNISON to inform the other NJC trade unions of our actions.

And should the employers' side be receptive to such a proposal:

- 3) The Service Group Executive to produce a report for the 2016 Local Government conference on this issue to include the provision for a ballot of Cymru/Wales UNISON members to seek agreement to pull away from the current NJC in order to create a National Bargaining body for Cymru/Wales.

Cymru/Wales Region

9. Pay Consultation Procedures

Conference notes that the Local Government Service Group's pay consultation procedures were last revised by Conference in 2006. During that time, technological advances have meant that electronic means of voting and consultation are now available.

Conference believes that the Service Group's pay consultation procedures should enable the Service Group:

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- 1) To consult all members in a sector on a final pay offer, once negotiations are exhausted.
- 2) To ensure that all branches consult members by the same means, using the same questions.
- 3) To ensure maximum participation in the consultation process.
- 4) To ensure that this participation goes beyond simply voting, so that members can ask questions and engage in debate.
- 5) To conduct consultations which sit within our democratic structures at branch, Regional and sector-wide levels.
- 6) To ensure the consultation can be used as a vehicle for recruiting and organising members around pay.
- 7) To gain maximum possible access to groups that are harder to reach – for example (but not limited to) those in smaller geographically dispersed workplaces, and part-time workers (most of whom are low-paid women).
- 8) To make maximum possible use of technology without compromising principles of participation.
- 9) To ensure any use of technology is secure and provides for consistent consultation.

Conference instructs the Service Group Executive:

- a) To conduct a review of the Service Group's pay consultation procedures, based on points 1 to 9 above, including an assessment of what electronic consultation methods would be possible and appropriate.
- b) To involve sectors and Regions in this review.
- c) To present revised pay consultation procedures to the 2015 Local Government Conference for approval.

Local Government Service Group Executive

10. Fragmentation of Local Services

Conference condemns the spread of privatisation throughout our public services. National Audit Office figures show that half of total spending by the public sector goes on privatised contracts.

The recent fraud investigations into G4S and Serco have highlighted how privatisation can rip the public off at a time when public funds are being slashed. The parcelling out of services to different contractors makes it harder to uncover wrongdoing and ensure that the public gets value for money.

Conference is concerned that the fraud investigations only focus on the companies' activities in central government and ignore the major contracts they also operate in local government.

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Conference notes that the combination of privatisation and cuts leads to the fragmentation of local services.

In areas such as social care, housing, leisure and transport it is clear that services need to be joined up and accountable to ensure that vulnerable people don't fall through the gaps. Multi-agency working is essential but made all the more difficult where parts of services have been hived off to the private sector.

Privatisation makes it harder for staff to work together across boundaries because they are subject to different management structures, performance measures and priorities. The profit motive prioritises competition not collaboration, and leads to unstable employment, deteriorating pay and conditions and can undermine equal pay proofed pay structures. The 2014 Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) Regulations further weaken protections for transferring staff.

When a council's priorities or policies change, fragmented privatised services require multiple contract renegotiations to bring about change or innovation. And the risk of failure always stays with the council. When the building firm Connaught or social care provider Southern Cross went bust, councils had to pick up the pieces.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Highlight the issue of service fragmentation in campaigns against cuts and privatisation.
- 2) Promote the ability of in-house services to drive collaboration, innovation and joined up delivery.
- 3) Help branches to use legislation around social value to campaign against service fragmentation.
- 4) Ensure that every effort is made to protect pay and conditions and retain equal pay proofed pay structures.
- 5) Work with the NEC and UNISON Legal Services to campaign against the attack on TUPE.
- 6) Campaign for new and more effective legislation to tackle the "two-tier" workforce.

Local Government Service Group Executive

11. Ethical Care

Conference welcomes the progress of the Local Government Service Group's Ethical Care Campaign. A number of councils now commission homecare according to our Ethical Care Charter, leading to improved working conditions and better care outcomes.

Conference recognises that there is still much to be done to improve the pay and working conditions of homecare workers, especially around non-payment of travel time and zero hours contracts. It is estimated that in excess of 200,000 homecare workers are routinely paid less than the National Minimum Wage through non-payment of travel time. Not only is this practice illegal, but it helps drive high staff turnover in the sector and can also lead to visits being shortened, both of which harm standards of care.

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Conference deplores this practice and condemns the factors that lead to it: underfunding by governments, poor council commissioning practices, unscrupulous business practices and the lack of meaningful enforcement action by HMRC.

The Service Group's Pay Up For Travel Time campaign can help to end this illegal practice. It is also a great recruitment tool and will help branches engage with the wider Ethical Care Campaign. Branches have been provided with comprehensive mapping information about their local homecare providers, along with the tools to help them engage with the homecare workforce over the issue.

Conference congratulates those local government branches that have already taken action on the Pay Up For Travel Time Campaign. Branches have already found examples of homecare workers receiving as little as £3.50 an hour due to non-payment of travel time and have taken action to end the practice.

Conference therefore instructs the Service Group Executive, in liaison with the national self-organised groups to:

- 1) Prioritise the Pay Up For Travel Time campaign by providing regular advice, guidance and campaign materials.
- 2) Ensure that the campaign contains a strong emphasis on recruitment, to help us build the union in homecare and maximise our strength and influence among homecare workers.
- 3) Encourage Regions and branches to engage with the campaign.
- 4) Use the Pay Up For Travel Time campaign to encourage branches to take forward the wider Ethical Care Campaign by negotiating over their local council's wider homecare commissioning practices.
- 5) Continue to campaign for improved pay and conditions for homecare workers which do not include zero hours contract clauses, alongside the Low Pay Commission, Age UK, community organisations such as Citizens UK.

Local Government Service Group Executive

12. The Effects of Cuts on Women

Conference values local government's history as an important part of the gender equality movement, acting as a key employer for women. Women make up 77% of local government and school support staff and many of those women are low-paid and work part-time.

Women are also more likely to use public services than men, and use them more intensively to meet their own and their family's needs. There are many public services that women access more than men because of pregnancy, longer life expectancy and lower wages, or as carers for children and older or disabled relatives.

Conference is outraged that local government's tradition of supporting women as staff and service users is in reverse. Attacks on workers' pay and conditions, including cuts to paid leave, unsocial hours payments, overtime and sick pay, have huge impacts on women and the provision of local services.

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Conference notes that since the election of the coalition government, women have been disproportionately affected by austerity:

- 1) By July 2013, the number of women working in local government had plunged by 253,600 to 1.43 million since the coalition came to power in 2010.
- 2) In 2013 the gender pay gap widened for the first time in five years, so that women working full-time now earn £5000 less than men each year.
- 3) Less government support to meet the increasing costs of childcare has meant that 24% of mothers have had to quit work, while 16% have reduced their working hours.
- 4) Single parents (92% of whom are women) and women pensioners have been even more affected by the cuts, losing 15.6% and 12.5% respectively from their incomes because of welfare cuts and cuts to services.

Conference believes that the disproportionate impact of austerity on such a crucial part of the local government and school workforce is unacceptable. Fighting against the further impact of cuts on women's pay and conditions and services they use should be a priority in UNISON's wider campaign against the cuts.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- a) Work with self-organised groups, other trade unions, the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC), supportive politicians and elected members, think tanks and equalities groups to campaign against cuts to pay and conditions and services that will have a negative impact on women.
- b) Raise awareness of how redundancies in local government and cuts to services such as children's centres and supported bus services act as barriers to women's employment.
- c) Build on the findings of the Service Group's 'The Damage' report on women, to recruit and organise around the impact of cuts on pay and conditions and services on women.
- d) Emphasise the further impact of service cuts on women who also identify with other equalities groups, including Black, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT), disabled, older and younger women.
- e) Continue to press the Local Government Employers and schools to develop a 'gender agenda' to meet the needs of a workforce in which women are the majority and resist attacks on already poor conditions of work.

Local Government Service Group Executive

13. Contractual Rights

Conference views with alarm the increasing undermining of the employment law framework protecting members across the Service Group. Over half a million workers in local government and schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland alone earn below the Living Wage and many of these are employed on contracts with very few protected rights. We have seen:

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- 1) Sub-contracting creating longer supply chains where enforcement of rights becomes more complex.
- 2) The use of dismissal and re-engagement to cut hard fought the National Joint Council (NJC) and the Scottish Joint Council (SJC) terms and conditions of employment.
- 3) Payment of wages below those of the National Minimum Wage.
- 4) Offsetting wages by requirements on workers to provide their own equipment and materials.
- 5) Failure to provide a safe environment in which to work, free from stress, bullying and hazards.
- 6) Reductions in Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) protection.
- 7) Extension of the use of zero hours contracts.
- 8) Undermining of the rights of agency workers by employing the Swedish derogation of transferring employment from the principal employer to the agency, thus depriving them of the right to equal treatment with a comparable permanent worker.

Many of these are the result of government action, privatisation and cuts in inspectorates policing the National Minimum Wage and health and safety. Nevertheless, we call upon the NJC and SJC Employers and individual councils to ensure their policies and practices and those of contractors do not remove these basic rights, but improve on them. They should set nationally agreed standards for the employment rights of local government workers both for local authorities and for contractors including:

- a) Promoting recognition agreements which provide for collective bargaining and encourage trade union membership.
- b) Payment of the living wage by contractors as well as councils.
- c) Strengthening continuous employment provisions for those contracted out of local government employment.
- d) Undertaking needs assessments of the training and development needs of workers.
- e) Promoting cohesion and integration in the workplace.
- f) Promoting staff awareness of core employment and human rights and the relevant enforcement agencies.
- g) Training for contracting staff in using procurement as a mechanism to ensure employment and human rights enforcement.
- h) Provision of interpreters where required.

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We also call upon a future Labour government to reverse the hostile anti-trade union and worker measures of the Coalition and restore more security in the workplace, improved contractual rights, proper policing of minimum legislative standards, the removal of fees for tribunal claims, restoration of full TUPE protection and a new 'two-tier' code to protect new starters on outsourced contracts.

Local Government Service Group Executive

14. Integration and Shared Services - Branches Working Together

Conference notes that the integration of health and social care has once again become a key debate across the UK over the past year.

Conference notes that although only Northern Ireland has full structural integration of health and social care, governing parties from all political persuasions are pursuing integration policies in Scotland, Wales and England.

Meanwhile austerity cuts are prompting an acceleration of moves by councils and other public bodies to share services.

Conference believes that integration has the potential to bring about benefits for service users and patients, in terms of a more seamless joined-up service. In addition, it may help reduce some of the time and money wasted when responsibility for a patient or service user's care is transferred, sometimes repeatedly, between the NHS and local authorities.

However, Conference asserts that integration and shared services should never be used as a cover for cuts. It cannot be done on the cheap and requires decent funding if it is to work properly.

Conference warns that the cultural differences and pay and conditions between the NHS and local government should not be under-estimated. There is a need to promote equality and guard against two-tier workplaces or a feeling of "takeover" by the NHS of local government or vice versa.

Conference therefore believes it is essential that integration is not used to level down NHS pay, terms and conditions. On the contrary there is a need to level local government and privatised care sector pay and conditions up to match those in the health service.

Conference is concerned by the complacent view of the Westminster government that integration is fully compatible with competition. Conference is clear that competition leads to fragmentation and therefore undermines integration.

Local authorities are setting up shared service initiatives such as IT, payroll, HR and estates with other local authorities, and/or with NHS organisations and other public sector bodies. Organisations are assuming that sharing services will reduce staffing and slash costs. However, experience shows that these savings are not always realised and service quality suffers – especially when shared services are outsourced to the private sector.

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Integration and shared services require close and constructive working between all the UNISON branches involved, with strong regional co-ordination.

Conference therefore calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Keep branches up to date on the ongoing initiatives across UK nations on health and social care integration, monitoring the progress of those areas undertaking integration.
- 2) Campaign for integration which is based on co-operation not competition and levelling up of pay and conditions, not levelling down.
- 3) Monitor shared services developments.
- 4) Ask UNISON Regions to co-ordinate and support joint working between affected branches.
- 5) Work with UNISON Labour Link to feed the union's views into the shaping of Labour's Whole Person Care agenda and
- 6) Provide branches and activists with guidance and appropriate support to assist members affected.

Local Government Service Group Executive

15. Zero Hours Contracts in Local Government

Conference deplores the rise of the use of zero-hours contracts in local government.

Zero hour contracts are a throwback to the sorry days of casual labour waiting at the dockside hoping to be picked out for work. Working hours can become unpredictable, meaning no guaranteed wage to help people pay their bills or plan for the future. This often unsteady flow of income can also stop people from claiming certain benefits such as Working Tax Credit.

Zero hours contracts require people to be regularly on call for work, often with little notice. This disrupts life outside of work and places a particular strain on families and care for dependants. They often result in a loss of important employment rights and we have seen UNISON members being victimised simply because they have tried to assert their rights in the workplace.

Conference notes that these contracts are being increasingly used across local government, in areas such as social care, library and leisure services. They represent a shift a more casualised workforce and have the potential to undermine decades of hard won rights at work. Conference is also very concerned that they are disproportionately affecting women workers as they are most commonly used in female dominated sectors such as social care. Furthermore one in every three zero hours employees is under the age of 25.

Conference believes that the use of zero hours contracts is not only detrimental to the workforce but will also hurt the quality of service provision. Good quality public services are best delivered when they go hand in hand with a workforce that is fairly treated and awarded dignity.

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Conference asserts that austerity and privatisation will intensify the zero-hours culture for both in-house and outsourced public services and that the quality of our public services will suffer.

Conference therefore instructs the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Campaign for an end to the use of all zero-hours contracts within local government and schools.
- 2) Campaign to ensure that where zero-hours contracts are still used that they do not include punitive elements such as exclusivity clauses and fines for late notification of non-attendance.
- 3) Provide guidance for branches and regions on how best to negotiate with councils and schools to ensure that contracted hours are used in place of zero hours contracts or other forms of casualised work.
- 4) Feed into ongoing reviews by the Government and Labour Party into zero hours contracts to highlight their damaging nature.
- 5) Ask Labour Link to raise this issue within the Labour Party to seek commitments from all Labour councillors to oppose the use of zero hours contracts in local government, local authority schools and on outsourced contracts.

Local Government Service Group Executive

16. Cuts and Funding for Local Government

Conference is alarmed by David Cameron's statement that Coalition government policy "...means something more profound. It means building a leaner, more efficient state. We need to do more with less. Not just now, but permanently" and by the further cuts to local government planned by George Osborne beyond 2015/16.

Conference notes with alarm that:

- 1) Catastrophic damage is being visited on local government services, jobs, pay and conditions as a result of reductions in central government support announced in Spending Round 2013. Before adjusting for inflation, these cuts will bring a total cut in support of £11.3bn between May 2010/11 and 2015/16 in England alone.
- 2) In Scotland distributable revenue funding will fall by £1.311bn from £10.668bn in 2010/11 to £9.257bn in 2015/16. Councils in Wales face cash reductions of 3.5% this year and councils in Northern Ireland are being re-organised and facing overall cash reductions.
- 3) These cuts are unnecessary. The UK has the sixth largest economy in the world. Only the US, China, Japan, Germany and France have larger economies.
- 4) The removal of the National Insurance partial exemption for local authorities from the move to a Single Tier pension will create an additional annual cost to local authorities of £2.6bn in 2015/16.

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- 5) While David Cameron, declares that there is “no magic money tree”, the Government has already allowed the Bank of England to create £375bn of new electronic money to finance purchases made under Quantitative Easing which have not benefited public services or public service workers.
- 6) The Treasury is the principal benefactor from local government pay awards through National Insurance and taxation.
- 7) The pre-briefed version of David Cameron’s 2011 Conference speech included "The only way out of a debt crisis is to deal with your debts. That means households – all of us – paying off the credit card and store card bills."
- 8) Instead the current ‘so called’ recovery is being driven by the Government encouraging increased household debt through public sector pay restrictions, benefit cuts, high increases in fuel, travel and utility costs and measures such as the Help to Buy scheme. New record levels of household debt of £1,431,565,000,000 were recorded in November 2013.

Conference believes that:

- a) We need local government funding structures and settlements which provide sufficient resources to improve service provision, meet unmet need, restore the value of local government pay and restore lost working conditions.
- b) The Conservative-led Coalition is simply using the 2008 banking crisis as a justification to drastically cut public expenditure in an ideological move to create a ‘smaller state’.
- c) It is important for the UK economy to improve services provided by local authorities because they are critical to our economic performance, generate good health and levels of education and skills and prevent imprudent use of public money on crisis intervention.

Conference therefore calls on the Service Group Executive to work with other parts of the union, other local government bodies and Labour Link to build on UNISON’s current alternative economic strategy which includes a ‘Robin Hood’ tax, tackling tax evasion and avoidance and reversal of tax breaks on the ‘super rich’ and develop an accompanying agenda for local government finance, jobs and pay and conditions within the four UK nations that includes:

- i) New proposals for the future direction of local government finance that are sustainable, fair, provide for equalisation, local democratic accountability and determination and which minimise avoidance and maximise ease of collection.
- ii) The ‘greening’ of local government to increase efficiency and create environmental sustainability.
- iii) A resource distribution model that is based on need.
- iv) A ‘sharing model’ that better enables local authorities to support public sector efficiency and share in the results.

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- v) Immediate financial measures to increase local authority service budgets from 2015/16, including exploration of:
 - A) using the (debt free) money creation powers of the Bank of England to re-finance existing local authority debt.
 - B) the development of a public sector equivalent to quantitative easing or the application of 'overt money finance'.
- vi) Careful progress on merger of Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) funds, accompanied by the removal of the 'hidden charges' by city institutions, the application of the Institutions for Occupational Retirement Provision (IORP) Directive and the move to in-house investment management - bringing savings estimated at £500 million.
- vii) A new workforce strategy that includes the Living Wage as the minimum pay rate, maintains equal pay proofed pay structures and provides access to high quality training and workforce development, apprenticeships and a 'gender agenda' to address the needs of a predominantly female workforce.

Local Government Service Group Executive

17. Administration of Medicines in Schools

Conference notes that discussions continue with governments across the UK on responsibility for administration of medicines and medical procedures in educational settings. Employees whose contract includes the administration of medicine and/or health care tasks should receive specific, regular training and be indemnified by their employer against any allegation of negligence, which enables them to feel confident and competent. Staff whose contract does not specify these duties cannot be required to do them and should not be bullied into carrying them out.

Conference is pleased that the recently published NJC school support staff role profiles, do not specifically include duties relating to supporting pupils with health needs, allowing them to be included through proper negotiation and agreement. The profile documentation is clear that where such a duty is agreed between employers and unions, it should be set out in the job description, allowing it to be accounted for in the evaluation of the role and in remuneration as appropriate.

Conference congratulates UNISON's pupil support assistants in Glasgow schools, who took industrial action spread over a period of 17 weeks against their employer's proposal that all pupil support assistants should carry out the full range of administration of medication and healthcare tasks for no additional money. Members' action forced revised proposals that give staff the choice over whether or not to take on this additional level of responsibility rather than be forced into doing it, along with additional payment where additional responsibility is taken on.

Conference welcomes the news that the Department for Education in England has listened to concerns from UNISON and other campaigners; proposing an amendment to the Children and Families bill that introduces statutory guidance on the administration of medicine from September 2014. UNISON has long campaigned for such guidance to

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address current inconsistencies in the provision of health support, which leaves both pupils and the support staff that provide these services vulnerable.

In the meantime, UNISON members working in UK schools are still too often forced into difficult positions where they want the best for their pupils, but are asked to administer medicines with little or no training.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Continue to raise this issue with all governments and ensure that enforceable national standards are established, accompanied by comprehensive guidance covering workforce concerns and training needs.
- 2) Monitor the new statutory guidance that will apply to schools in England to ensure that it reflects the best practice set out in UNISON's joint statement with the Royal College of Nursing.
- 3) Help regions and branches to negotiate joint workplace policies and to develop or review guidance, which will include accredited training, support and pay for additional or extended duties in relation to medical procedures in educational settings.
- 4) Work with voluntary organisations and the Health Conditions in Schools Alliance to demand properly funded and robust accredited training for those staff who administer medicines and medical procedures.

Local Government Service Group Executive

18. Fighting Cuts and Redundancies in Local Government

Conference deplores the continuing cuts to local government resulting in mass redundancies and cuts to all Council Services. No Council Service is safe from the threats of cuts in funding.

The workforce faces mass redundancies, and for those who retain a job within the employer there is an onslaught of attacks on terms and conditions.

Conference notes the vigorous campaigns that many Branches have had in challenging these financial decisions.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to continue to:

- 1) Defend members' jobs and terms and conditions including where appropriate through industrial action within UNISON's rules and procedures.
- 2) Provide guidance and support to Local Government Branches and Regional Campaigns on Fighting the Cuts in Local Government.
- 3) Build an inclusive campaign to support our call for an alternative to the current austerity measures within Local Government.

Northern Region

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19. National Joint Council (NJC) Pay

Conference notes with concern that Local Government workers pay is falling behind other public and private sector workers.

Many local authorities are trying to move away from NJC Pay and Conditions which could lead to Regional or Local Pay. If this happens it is likely to divide UNISON members and further erode pay and conditions. Currently Local government pay is the lowest in the public sector – from the bottom to the top of the NJC pay scales. For most Local Government workers pay has fallen by 18% after inflation since 2010.

Conference, in response we call upon the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Promote the benefits of the NJC for pay.
- 2) Highlight the dangers of moving towards regional or local pay.
- 3) Use this as an opportunity to use existing UNISON campaigns such as the “Worth it” campaign to recruit and organise Local Government members around pay.

Northern Region

20. Combined Authorities

Conference deplores the cuts in funding from Central Government to Local Government. As a result of these cuts, groups of Councils are looking to become a combined authority.

There is currently one combined authority in Greater Manchester, although by the end of April 2014 there could be another four such combined authorities in England.

Such combined authorities are being formed to receive certain delegated functions from Central Government in order to deliver transport, economic skills development and regeneration.

Conference we call upon the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Issue advice to Branches on how to respond to the formation of such combined authorities.
- 2) Provide support and training to representatives to ensure any combined authority recognises UNISON.
- 3) Ensure that comprehensive support is available from the Service Group, Regions, and External Experts for Branches dealing with combined authorities to ensure our members jobs and terms and conditions are not lost due to the formation of any combined authority.
- 4) To liaise with and work with other service groups in the regions potentially affected by the formation of a combined authority to ensure that all citizenship issues are addressed.

Northern Region

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21. Integration – taking the workforce with you

Conference notes that the integration of health and social care has become a key debate in the NHS and in Local Government across the UK during the last decade and in particular over the past year.

Conference notes that governing parties from all political persuasions are pursuing integration policies in Scotland, Wales and England. The Public Bodies (Joint Working) Bill is currently going through the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Assembly Government has recently consulted on its Framework for Integration, and in England there is now a £3.8 billion Integration Transformation Fund as well as 14 sites that will “pioneer” approaches to integration.

In addition, Conference notes that the Labour shadow health team has come up with an ambitious plan for Whole Person Care that would bring about the full integration of national health and social care budgets and services in England.

Conference believes it is important that if local authority health and wellbeing boards are given health commissioning powers, as suggested by Labour, then there is a need to ensure that this money is ring fenced and privatisation resisted.

Conference believes that integration has the potential to bring about benefits for patients and service users, in terms of a more seamless joined-up service across sectoral boundaries. In addition, it may help reduce some of the time and money wasted when responsibility for a patient or service user’s care is transferred, sometimes repeatedly, between the NHS and local authorities.

However, Conference believes that :

- 1) For meaningful integration to take place, staff and patient/client involvement is essential.
- 2) Moreover, Conference asserts that integration should never be used as a cover for cuts; it cannot be done on the cheap and requires decent funding if it is to work properly.
- 3) Conference warns that the cultural differences between working in the NHS and local government should not be under-estimated, and that there is a need to guard against two-tier workplaces or a feeling of “takeover” by one sector or another.
- 4) As part of this, Conference believes it is essential that integration is not used to level down terms and conditions.
- 5) Conference is concerned by the complacent analysis of the Tory government that integration is fully compatible with competition; this is not the case – integration should be used as an anti-market tool to cut down on fragmentation.
- 6) Conference believes that integration should proceed on the basis of public sector values and benefits in quality of service to patients and clients.

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- 7) It is also vital that within UNISON, the health and Local Government Service Groups work more closely together as the boundaries between the two are not helpful in plotting a way forward.

Conference therefore agrees to:

- a) Support the integration of health and social care where this is in the interests of patients and service users, but on the basis of full staff involvement and with the proviso that integration should never be used as a cover for cuts.
- b) Resist any attempts to use integration to reduce terms and conditions.
- c) Keep branches up to date on the ongoing initiatives on health and social care integration, monitoring the progress of those areas undertaking integration.
- d) Involve branches and Service Groups in the ongoing discussions.
- e) Work with UNISON Labour Link to feed the union's views into the shaping of Labour's Whole Person Care agenda.
- f) Provide branches and activists with guidance and appropriate support to assist members affected.
- g) Set up joint working between the Local Government and Health Service Groups on this subject with immediate effect.

Dudley General

22. School Support Staff deserve our support

Conference we acknowledge the success of the national celebration of teaching and classroom assistants, held on 29 November 2013.

The day of celebration promoted the work teaching assistants (TAs) and classroom assistants do and the incalculable benefits they bring to pupils across the country. It is a glowing recognition of the high esteem that TAs are held in by teachers, parents and the students they support.

The messages of support that were received on that day, tell us time and time again what a huge difference TAs make in schools. However, the vital contribution they make is often not understood or recognised.

Conference whilst we continue to celebrate the hard work that TA's and classroom assistants make in school, our other support staff in school are also vital to the effective running of the school.

Without the school cooks many children would not receive a hot meal, and without the cleaning and caretaking staff schools couldn't operate. Not to mention all the office based staff who carry out an invaluable role.

Conference we call on the Service Group Executive to:

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- 1) Have an annual day celebration to highlight the vital role that our members undertake in schools, similar to the TA event held in November 2013.
- 2) Hold an annual award for the school based staff.
- 3) Provide support and resources to regions and branches to support our members working in schools.

South Tyneside Local Government

23. Local Government Conference

Local government is living through an unprecedented period of challenge and uncertainty. Conference acknowledges in this environment the need to share experiences and develop strategic direction has never been greater.

Conference instructs the Service Group Executive (SGE) to investigate, with Regions and Branches, the pros and cons of changing the timing and format of Local Government Conference and report back on this to LG Conference 2015.

North West Region

24. Synchronising Local Disputes

Across the Service Group local terms and conditions and those underpinned by sector-wide agreements reside in the bargain basement of public sector employment. Even where a statutory basis exists they are rarely above the minimum entitlement.

Yet many employers, with overt encouragement from sector employer organisations, are choosing to use central government funding cuts to reduce local terms and conditions further. Research by the Service Group has shown widespread diminution of payments for overtime, weekend and evening work, unsocial hours, shift working and car allowances, plus the use of increment freezes and unpaid leave, to ease their financial pressures by placing additional financial pressures on our members.

If the wealthy faced losing 20% of the real value of their earnings through increasing tax rates, they and their mouthpieces would scream about unfairness and the impact of 'negative confidence' on entrepreneurial investment and the economy. But for local government workers to lose 20% of the real value of our earnings through falling pay levels and cuts to terms and conditions is apparently fair, acceptable and justifiable.

It is shameful that local employers resort to this approach. Activists are sick and tired of Councillors and Management Board Members wringing their hands and mouthing empathetic platitudes whilst signing Section 188 notification letters to rip up terms and conditions. Crocodile tears do not pay the bills. Fair pay and decent terms and conditions do.

Conference recognises that in such situations Branches and activists are placed in an extremely invidious position. There is clear pressure exerted to enter into concession bargaining under the threat of imposing something worse. However, the reality is that local government jobs and services are ultimately not being saved by a 'trade' for cuts in pay and conditions. Since this government came to office over 400,000 local government jobs have been lost, some 80,000 in the North West alone by the end of

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this year. And there is evidence that where Branches organise to resist we are, in many cases, able to defend the terms and conditions fought for by the generations we follow.

The scale of funding cuts in local government is intensifying over the next two years. In many areas the scope for voluntary workforce reductions is running out and it is inevitable that we will increasingly face compulsory redundancies. Concession bargaining, however well intentioned, is not going to prevent this or even make a noticeable dent in it. But continuing to accept reducing pay and reducing conditions actually makes it cheaper to get rid of jobs.

Conference agrees that proposals to cut local terms and conditions and make compulsory redundancies should be resisted wherever possible.

We recognise that due to statutory restrictions local employer proposals can only be met by local disputes and actions. Even where Branches receive the full organising support of their Region and widespread messages of solidarity the nature of local disputes can often lead to activists and members feeling isolated.

Conference instructs the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Request that Regions work with Branches where official local disputes are in place to seek to synchronise the timing of any dispute actions across Branches wherever practicable and in accordance with UNISON's industrial action procedures.
- 2) Ensure any necessary operational and legal guidance is issued to regions and branches.

North West Region

25. Tri-borough, what next for Local Government and Equality Duty

The tri-borough initiative across Hammersmith and Fulham, Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea has seen a massive reduction in the workforce, despite saving numbers of front-line jobs under section 113.

The sovereign Councils are now looking at discussion to harmonise the workforce in what we know will be an attack on our conditions of service and a battle to defend our local terms and conditions and sovereignty as a union local government branch.

The implications for local democracy and those that depend on vital public services are at risk. Despite local community and trade union campaigning, libraries, youth services, leisure facilities, children family centres and other services are being closed or funding cut in the name of austerity.

Public sector jobs are being increasingly outsourced and our members' confidence in the trade union defending these services is at an all-time low as significant pressure on the remaining workforce, community and voluntary organisations supporting vulnerable people continue, we must ask ourselves, what next for local government?

The office of national statistics (2012) reported that Zero hour contracts had reached the 200,000 mark with 23% of employers having it as one of their employment contract options, which will affect employments rights so vigorously fought for by the trade unions.

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However it is not just the lowest paid who are feeling the squeeze, but those in professional and technical jobs who are being paid less than their private sector counterparts.

UNISON's recent freedom of information research confirmed the highly disproportionate attacks on women and Black workers and the over-representation in disciplinary, capability and redundancies.

The removal of Equality Impact Assessments, an over-representation in disciplinary procedures resulting in dismissals the impact on Black workers, especially is unprecedented.

Challenging discrimination and winning equality needs to continue to be at the heart of our trade union work, every trade unionist, every UNISON member and activist has a duty to challenge inequality and discrimination wherever they see it. UNISON has a responsibility to lead the way through our campaigning, bargaining agenda and labour movement.

We call on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Continue to work with the NEC to highlight UNISON's anti-cuts campaign.
- 2) Monitor and review the Equality Strategy across local government and report back its findings with clear aims and objectives to tackle this issue.
- 3) Encourage local government branches to use the 'making equality happens' initiative and work within regions to develop and support implementing this programme.
- 4) Ensure that resources are made available to local branches negotiating to save terms and conditions and that the tri-borough initiative is monitored vigorously and support given when needed to defend local government jobs and services.
- 5) Explore with the NEC a renewed approach and campaign to save local government.

Hammersmith & Fulham

26. Zero Hours Contracts

Conference believes that a disproportionate number of women working in local government are increasingly being subjected to zero hours contracts.

The Coalition Government and private sector claim that zero hour contracts offer both the employer and employee flexibility, and that they might suit those who want 'occasional earnings'. In truth, they offer workers insecure low paid employment at a time when austerity measures, pay freezes and job cuts are decimating the local government workforce.

It is estimated that more than 300,000 social care workers in the UK are employed on zero hour contracts, and that up to 61% of (primarily women) domiciliary and homecare workers are affected.

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Now evidence suggests that employers are using these contracts unlawfully and in a discriminatory manner, as an easy means of removing employees with health and disability issues from the workplace. Zero hours contracts are being imposed on such individuals as an alternative to redundancy or capability measures, but the employee is subsequently never contacted for work – a practice known as zeroing down.

Conference welcomes the UNISON bargaining guidance on zero hours contracts, but believes that further work needs to be done to establish the scale of the problem and how members are being affected.

Conference therefore calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Carry out a survey of local government branches and/or members working in local government to establish the extent of the use of zero hours contracts; the impact on members lives and the scale of the abuse of such contracts through zeroing out.
- 2) Use the information gathered from the survey to raise awareness of the issues and produce updated guidance for branches.
- 3) Work with the wider union to oppose the further spread of zero hours contracts, including campaigning for legislation to restrict their use.

National Women's Committee

27. Ethical Care Campaign

Conference recalls the resolution of last year's conference on the Ethical Care Campaign. The campaign puts recruiting and organising the workforce at its heart and highlights how low wages and poor terms and conditions for home care workers undermines the reliability of the service for users and service users' human rights.

Conference welcomes the progress made so far, in particular:

- 1) The commitment of a small number of local authorities, led by Southwark and Islington, which have been first to adopt UNISON's Ethical Care Charter and the work of the respective UNISON branches which have brought this about.
- 2) The launch of UNISON's "Pay Up for Travel Time" campaign and the successful legal challenges which have established that travelling time between service users' homes is work time and must be paid.
- 3) Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs' (HMRC) exposure of the growing number of social care employers not complying with National Minimum Wage legislation by not paying for travelling time, not paying for training time, unlawful deductions and other practices and it welcomes the new rules to name employers to whom HMRC has issued Notices of Underpayment, and,
- 4) The splendid results of the UNISON Northern Ireland Home Care Project where innovative approaches have trebled the number of home care workers in membership.

However, this leaves the position unaltered in the great majority of local authorities which deliberately under-fund the commissioning of home care distorting the market

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and driving it ever downward. Nor have many local government branches made much headway recruiting and organising the growing home care workforce.

Conference urges again that all councils commit to commission home care services which meet the standards of the charter, in particular to:

- a) Commission services based on users' needs not workers' time, end the scandal of fifteen-minute visits, end "call-cramming" and give workers enough time for the human contact and care people deserve.
- b) End the practice of commissioning from large numbers of providers without guaranteeing work from one week to the next so that providers cannot guarantee hours to their staff.
- c) Refrain from commissioning from providers which do not pay the Living Wage, which make unlawful deductions from wages for items like uniforms, which impose zero-hours contracts, which do not pay for travel time or training time or which fail to offer staff an appropriate range of training, and,
- d) Rebuild a local authority sector in home care with in-house services which offer an excellent standard, accountability, an organised and trained workforce and where none of the resources are creamed off as profit for shareholders.

Conference considers that achieving UNISON's objectives widely will need sustained local campaigning based upon:

- i) Learning the lessons of the Northern Ireland project to recruit and organise a scattered workforce with rapid turnover where there are many small employers mainly in the private sector.
- ii) Linking workforce demands with the needs, experiences and aspirations of service users and strengthening UNISON's links with appropriate pensioners' organisations, charities etc. to help do so.
- iii) Ensuring equality and diversity issues arising both among the workforce and among service users are addressed appropriately, and,
- iv) Building local coalitions to exert influence upon councils seeking support from each section of the Political Fund as appropriate.

Conference instructs the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- A) Continue to work in pursuit of the action points adopted last year.
- B) Work with the Self-Organised Groups to seek to ensure that equality and diversity issues including those of migrant workers are addressed appropriately, and,
- C) Work with National Executive Council to seek to ensure that.
- I) This campaign is given an appropriate priority in regions and relevant local government branches.

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- II) Campaign material and other resources are available to mount campaigns in line with i) – iv) above.
- III) Regions offer opportunities to exchange information and build on campaign successes, and,
- IV) Work is put in hand with Labour Link to encourage the Labour Party and Shadow Ministers to adopt the Ethical Care Charter in local authorities, promote an adequate and sustainable funding regime for social care, to commit to issuing human rights guidance to local authorities etc. with respect to social care and to extending the definition of “public function” under the Human Rights Act 1998 to include home care provided by the private and voluntary sectors.

Wolverhampton General Branch

28. The Impact of the Cuts on Jobs and Services

Conference is acutely aware of the attacks on public services by the ConDem government and of the disproportionate impact on Local Government in particular, with thousands of jobs lost and a reduction in service provision.

Those who remain employed in Local Government often suffer severe stress as a result of anxiety over the lack of job security, and the pressure of maintaining an acceptable standard of service provision with a reduced workforce.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive:

- 1) To build a campaign amongst members and the local community that raises awareness of the negative impact of Government policy on services and local democracy.
- 2) To highlight examples of good practice, where direct service provision provides high quality service and value for money.
- 3) To highlight examples of poor service provision as a result of cost cutting.
- 4) To seek information from members and employers about the impact of increased stress levels in the local government workforce.

Eastern Region

29. Local Government Workers and the Cost of Living

Conference is aware that the majority of local government workers live within the Local Authority that employs them. Conference notes with concern the increasing numbers of Local Government workers who are struggling to make ends meet, with the increase in the cost of living and years of below inflation pay rises, many seek second jobs or are faced with the decision to “heat or eat?”.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Raise awareness with members and the public, of the direct correlation between Government policy and the cost of living crisis for local government workers.

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- 2) To either commission research or promote research that already exists, that shows how increasing the pay of Local Government workers can have a positive impact on businesses within the local community.

Eastern Region

30. School Governors

Being a school governor is a very fulfilling role and one that any UNISON member can be involved in. There are many types of Governors, staff, community, parent and associate.

The rise of Academies has seen the dilution of governance in schools due to the way governors are selected in the Academy system.

UNISON in local government at all levels needs to encourage and support members to become governors in schools that are still in the local authority control so that they can take an active part in keeping schools within the local authority.

The Service Group Executive should make available materials to those interested in becoming school governors and encourage Branches to provide support and advice to members if they are interested in becoming a school governor including through members who have already taken up this role.

South Tyneside Local Government

31. Support for Local Government Pension Fund Board Members

Conference fully supports the Unison campaign for transparency and better governance with regard to Local Authority Pension boards. It also supports the encouragement of Unison members to become Member Nominated Representatives (MNRs) on those boards.

The performance of Pension funds are currently under review. Members of Local Government Pension Funds need a voice on these boards to fully represent and report on the viability of their schemes. The ability to influence and ask questions of their pension fund, as set out in Recommendation 17 of the Hutton Report is fully supported by UNISON but present Pension Fund Committees continue, in some instances, to be unsupportive and negative to such changes. Members need to be assured that UNISON will do everything to facilitate such changes and Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to continue to provide support and training to existing and potential Unison Local Government Pension Fund Board members.

South Tyneside Local Government

32. Campaigning for Arts and Leisure Services

Conference fully recognises the huge importance of publicly provided Arts and Leisure Services. In this age of austerity it is crucial that we continue to fight to protect these services. They should not be allowed to be portrayed as somehow less important or non essential.

The devastating cultural and social impact on local communities is immense when cuts in these services happen. Our communities, our members who serve them and which

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they are part of, deserve to have access into a world of learning, cultural enjoyment, health and fitness pursuits. They should not require a banker's salary to gain entry to and pursue these activities. Our class has a fundamental right not to be excluded from the Arts. Our Museums and Libraries should be cherished and protected for the continued benefit of our communities today and for future generations. They form part of our heritage and, like our family silver, should not be sold off, be outsourced or underfunded in order to pay for a deficit that was not of our making.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Continue to highlight, through UNISON's Save Our Services campaign, the importance of cultural and leisure services.
- 2) Work with elected members, community groups and other trade unions to promote publicly provided cultural and leisure services.

Renfrewshire Local Authority

33. The Disproportionate Impact of the Cuts on Women

Conference notes that women are disproportionately bearing the brunt of this government's austerity measures, not least in the local government workforce.

Black, disabled and LGBT women are the worst hit, experiencing multiple discrimination as both workers and the users of specialist services which have traditionally been provided by our members working in local authorities.

- 1) According to the latest Labour Force Survey statistics, the employment rate of Black women is 52 per cent compared with 72 per cent for the working population as a whole. Being Black and female is detrimental to employment prospects, career progression and job security, while Black women – particularly those who wear religious dress – are likely to experience discrimination at every stage of the job recruitment process.
- 2) Disabled women are already less likely to be in employment and suffer widespread discrimination in the job market, but have traditionally found the local government workplace supportive, in part because of the Equality Duty and previous legislation requiring public sector employers to avoid discriminatory practices.
- 3) LGBT women, as evidenced in the recent UNISON/NatCen report, reported feeling more marginalised and isolated in the workplace, and feared the rise of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

In society generally, unemployment among women is set to rise to 1.5 million by 2018, according to a report by the Fawcett Society. Already more than 360,000 jobs have been lost in local government, with more to come – and the vast majority of these will be women's jobs, as women make up 65% of the public sector workforce.

In redundancy selection, it is again Black and disabled women who are most likely to be selected. In February 2012, UNISON surveyed 17 out of 27 local authorities in London and found that Black women are being disproportionately hit in 12 London councils: for

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example, in one council Black women constituted 5% of the workforce but 23% of redundancies.

The same report found that disabled women were also more likely to lose their jobs, particularly where sickness absence and capability procedures were used in the selection process.

The demise of the public sector has exposed the weakness of the private sector in recruiting Black and disabled employees. The private sector remains less transparent and accountable in how it recruits and in its employment practices. Black women, for example, are primarily employed in the lower and junior administrative roles, despite their qualifications and in the social care sector – jobs that have been disproportionately affected by job cuts and privatisation.

Conference believes that the ways in which local government cuts are being applied is unfair and their disproportionate impact on women cannot continue unchallenged.

Conference therefore calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- a) Monitor the scale of redundancies by gender, including, wherever possible by ethnicity and disability to establish the scale of multiple discrimination.
- b) Raise awareness of the disproportionate impact of the austerity measures on women working in local government.
- c) Work with the self organised groups, all appropriate bodies in UNISON and partner organisations to campaign and develop strategies to counteract the discriminatory impact of the austerity measures.
- d) Issue guidance to branches on challenging unfair redundancy selection processes.

National Women's Committee

34. Young Workers and Cuts to Further Education

Conference condemns the cuts to funding for Further Education.

Conference believes that these cuts impact disproportionately on the disadvantaged, including young people who are faced with mass youth unemployment. Not only are opportunities to acquire vital job skills being reduced, but jobs themselves are being lost in the sector.

Those already working in Further Education suffer redundancy, lower pay, and worsening terms and conditions. There is also the impact of cuts on training provision for those workers.

For young workers wanting to take up employment in Further Education, the job opportunities are fewer, and the prospects for career progression with decent training are diminishing rapidly.

There is also great concern that a demographic “time-bomb” is emerging in the sector – for example amongst technicians - with an ageing workforce retiring with too few properly-qualified younger workers to adequately fill vacancies and provide services.

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Conference agrees that sustainable workforce planning is essential, and that the employment and development of young workers is an important part of creating that sustainability.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Continue its work to recruit and organise members in Further Education.
- 2) Work to defend Further Education services and jobs, pay and conditions.
- 3) Call on the employers to monitor the impact of the cuts on:
 - a) The age profile of the workforce.
 - b) Budgets for training and developmentand to make the monitoring data publicly available.

National Young Members' Forum

35. Cooperatives in Local Government

Conference notes increased pressure on local authorities to consider co-ops, mutuals and social enterprise as an alternative to 'traditional privatisation' due to the continued attack on the finances of local government by the coalition government. Many councils are using the argument of inevitability to justify mutualisation as the only option to prevent further reductions, or selling off of public services. These forms of 'spinning out' still conform to the ideological drive to reduce public services, despite being promoted as an option that will empower workers and improve service quality.

Conference believes that mutualisation may result in poorer, fragmented services ripe for takeover by competitors waiting for them to fail. Moreover, recent weakening of Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) legislation further plays into the hands of private companies eager to make a profit from services relied on by communities.

Great claims are made for mutuals being able to deliver higher standards at lower cost without a great deal of independent evidence. A recent study in outcomes for public service users, focused on the provision of adult social care, found that there 'was no significant difference in outcomes between care homes in different sectors.'

In many cases, mutualisation can be seen as "soft outsourcing", offered to our members as an alternative to wholesale job cuts and sold as "the best-worst option". This needs to be resisted as members transferred into new models of delivery face the very real prospect of reductions to existing terms and conditions, as these mutuals face the same diminishing funding climate as the "parent councils" from which they emerged.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive (SGE) to:

- 1) Continue to support branches to campaign for the retention of services to be delivered in-house.

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- 2) Maintain and support the UNISON branch network of co-operative council branches to share information and best practice.
- 3) Continue to publicise the impact of mutualisation on member's terms and conditions and the services they deliver, across all Local Government branches, and
- 4) Continue to publish guidance, and to offer support to branches facing the imposition of mutualisation by their employers and assist in the development of a twin-track approach.

Newcastle City

36. Local Government Pay Campaign

Conference notes that local government pay is the lowest in the public sector after a period of a 3 year pay freeze between 2010 – 2012 and a measly 1% pay increase in 2013. UNISON and the joint trade unions in the pay claim have publicised that our members have faced an 18% drop in earnings since the Government's austerity measures were introduced while over the same period, the cost of living has increased; and all members see the cost of utility bills and basic essentials soaring.

2014 must be the year that UNISON's pay campaign strikes a chord with our members who are struggling to make ends meet and are resorting to food banks and pay day lenders in order to survive.

UNISON must lead the way in encouraging members to take the pay campaign seriously against a back drop of fears over job cuts and attacks to terms and conditions engendered by the Coalition Government's swingeing cuts to council funding.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

1. Support and encourage regions to coordinate regular activity across branches in support of the 2014 pay campaign to ensure regular events take place to ensure member interest is maintained.
2. Support and encourage branches to use the local press to get the pay campaign message across to the general public.
3. Continue to produce campaign material that branches can use with their members and the public.
4. Encourage branches to campaign jointly with the GMB and UNITE unions across the workplace.

Newcastle City

37. Local Government Re-organisation in Wales

Conference notes the recommendations of the Williams Commission on public service delivery in Wales, in particular the recommendation to merge most of the existing authorities with at least one other adjoining local authority. Conference believes that the report fails to set out the detailed justification or evidence to support these mergers as proposed. Conference is also concerned that these recommendations have been made without any adequate assessment of the potential costs of such mergers, and at a time

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when Council budgets are facing huge cuts, to proceed with these recommendations without a detailed cost analysis would be financially and morally reckless.

While conference believes that some form of local government re-organisation can help to address the issue of the long term sustainability of public service provision in Wales, the Williams Commission report, on its own, cannot be used as the basis of such a re-organisation and that the local authority mergers as proposed are not an acceptable way forward.

Conference therefore calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to closely observe the proposals for local government re-organisation in Wales as they develop and to support the Wales/Cymru region with the resources and expertise necessary to properly assess any substantive proposals for local government re-organisation in Wales as they emerge, with the objective of defending members jobs and the public services that they deliver.

Ceredigion County Branch

38. Organising and Supporting Community and Voluntary Sector Members in Local Government Branches

UNISON is the largest union in the community and voluntary sector with over 60,000 members. And conference notes the increasing recruitment of members from the Community and Voluntary Sectors (CVS) seen throughout 2013. While this is welcome news and should be celebrated, an increase of members from the CVS sector requires Local Government Branches to use their already stretched resources to Organise and support these new members.

This increased need comes at a time when there are growing attacks and reductions on trade union facility time by Councils which is having a consequent impact on the ability of Branches to organise and service their members.

This is a particular issue for Branches with a high proportion of CVS members, more specifically where their employers place restrictions on Branch Officers supporting members in organisations outside of the core employer who provide the facility time.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Provide guidance and encouragement to Branches with CVS members about working collaboratively across Branches within regions to ensure that CVS members are supported appropriately.
- 2) Liaise with the Community Service Group to review areas of good practice and share that across the Local Government Service Group.
- 3) Ensure that Regional Local Government and CVS leads and Regional Organising staff, are working together to support Branches with CVS members.

Newcastle City

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39. Campaigning to Save Sure Start and Early Years Services

Conference notes the continued threat to Sure Start through imposed budget reductions nationally.

There has been more than 500 Sure Start Children's Centres closed, most during the first two years of this Coalition Government.

While the Coalition Government's continued austerity cuts are the catalyst for local councils to review the future of Sure Start Children's Centres, UNISON believes that many young people and parents have benefited from the services provided within Sure Start Children's Centres, particularly those located in less affluent areas, and there is a need to continue to provide them in the future, councils must do all they can to retain these services, as a universal service.

Sure Start funding has been cut by 40% and more than a fifth of Sure Start workers have lost their jobs, and a sum of £150million was top sliced by Education Minister Michael Gove from funds earmarked for early intervention projects such as Sure Start and Family Support and given to the government's adoption strategy.

Sure Start provides help and support from various teams of professionals, including education, care, family support, health services and employment; provided in a way that is easy and convenient for families.

The House of Commons Select Committee last report shows that Sure Start Children's Centres are essential for families and must be seen as a one stop shop and community cornerstone where all families can find the help they need to flourish.

The expansion of funded early education and childcare places to 40% of two year olds is to be welcomed, but this should not come at the expense of funding for Sure Start, family support and other early years services. Integrated good quality early education alongside properly funded Sure Start Children's Centres is needed.

Unison believes that funded early education and childcare for two year olds should be universal for all children, similar to three and four year olds.

We face the very real prospect of further cuts and closures in the coming years.

Conference call on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Campaign to oppose all cuts to Sure Start and Early Years services.
- 2) Support and encourage branches to coordinate campaigns to protect Sure Start Children's Centres, bringing together workers, parents and families.
- 3) Support and encourage branches to use the local press to publicise the work that is undertaken by the Centres and the impact these cuts will have on families and communities.
- 4) Produce campaign materials that Branches can use with their members and the public.

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- 5) Consider how to recruit, involve and organise more early education and childcare workers and respond to considerable changes in the sector.
- 6) Lobby Government and opposition to support the expansion of funded early education and childcare to all two year olds.

Newcastle City

40. Campaigning against Cuts and Attacks on Services and Workers

Conference believes that the current level of cuts by the Westminster and Holyrood governments is threatening the very viability of Local Government. Local councils have already been singled out by both governments for the lion's share of cuts and more are planned.

This branch believes that statements about 'protecting front line services' are grossly misleading. Services are being cut by stealth. Job losses mean that front-line staff are struggling with increased workloads and many are finding that expected levels of service are impossible to meet.

UNISON stress surveys, including Aberdeenshire Branch's stress survey, have shown increasing levels of stress at work leading to sickness absence and even more pressure on those left to provide the services.

Conference therefore calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Continue to monitor and analyse the impact of the cuts and to prepare material for publicising case studies and the true effect of cuts.
- 2) Continue to lead the debate about fairer and more progressive local government funding.
- 3) Support branches to engage with existing connections including local Trades Union Councils, local community groups, service users and organisations like the People's Assembly to build a broad coalition against the cuts.
- 4) Support branches to use all resources available to protect members from excessive workloads and unacceptable working conditions by:
 - a) Putting resources into building and supporting a wide network of stewards.
 - b) Working with members to resist increasing workloads and poor working conditions.
 - c) Led by branch Health and Safety Officers, campaigning to ensure that workplaces are "fit for purpose" and that workplace stress is identified and addressed.

Aberdeenshire

41. Pay 2014/2015 - We're Worth It!

Conference condemns the imposition in Scotland by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) of a two year 1% pay rise for 2013/14 and 2014/15, despite UNISON members voting in a ballot in good faith to accept CoSLA's one year 1% offer.

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CoSLA's action outwith the agreed bargaining structures to impose what is in effect a further two year pay cut, is a slap in the face to local government workers.

While we welcome the application of the Living Wage in Aberdeenshire and in other Local Authorities across the UK, our members are still faced with the reality that the value of local government pay has fallen at least 13% since 2010. Workers in Scotland are on average £1,753 worse off, with the gender pay gap widening. This is the longest real wage pay squeeze since 1870. For the first time, we have more in-work poverty than out-of-work poverty.

Meanwhile top earners continue to amass obscene wealth, profiting from austerity. In the last four years the wealth of Britain's 1,000 richest people has soared by a staggering £190bn to £449bn. The country is not broke, it is just the money is in the wrong hands.

There is a growing realisation that this is not about what the country can afford, it is about an ideology of planned poverty and a low wage, low skill economy. We must organise to get that message out to members.

Conference therefore applauds UNISON Scotland's decision to ignore CoSLA's 1% imposition for 2014/15 and to build to lodge a pay claim in 2014.

Conference further recognises that action on pay will not be delivered unless we fully consult and engage with members on why a decent pay rise is affordable, why it would boost local economies and why we are 'Worth it' in the words of the UNISON campaign. Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:-

- 1) Provide appropriate information and publicity, based on the "Worth It" Campaign but taking account of the different negotiating arrangements in Scotland, for Branches to take forward the arguments with members and to recruit non-members.
- 2) Continue their co-ordination of a UK campaign to challenge this Government's rhetoric and dogma and to make the arguments why increasing the pay of public service workers is not just good for our members but also for the wider economy.

Aberdeenshire

42. Protection of Social Work Members in Contempt Proceedings

Conference is deeply concerned about recent events in Edinburgh and other Scottish authorities, where contempt of court proceedings have been brought against social work staff as individuals whilst acting in their social work role to fulfil their statutory duties consistent with their codes of practice.

Social work members in Scotland have an overriding legal duty to ensure the child's welfare is paramount in all that they do. However, it seems the paramountcy of the welfare of the children is not considered relevant during contempt proceedings. UNISON believes this constitutes a conflict of laws which places those working on the frontline in a very difficult and vulnerable position.

The fact that individuals, rather than the organisation they work for, have been put in this position has wide-ranging implications for the employer/employee relationship and

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could have a ripple effect on all frontline workers and this Conference is concerned that this may also compromise the welfare of the children for whom our social work members care.

The court ruling in Edinburgh highlights the need for a legislative review and this Conference welcomes UNISON Scotland's call for ministers to address this as a matter of urgency and congratulates UNISON for providing legal support and standing by the members concerned. Without UNISON membership, some of these workers could have faced individual legal costs running into tens of thousands of pounds.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive, working with the Regions, to:

- 1) Ensure that all our members in social work have guidance on how best to ensure their protection from allegations of contempt of court.
- 2) Make sure that steps are taken to provide members who do find themselves in this position, with legal advice and representation at the earliest possible stage.
- 3) Publicise these matters to all staff in social work and related services, eg council legal services, and encourage them to join a trade union for their own protection.
- 4) Monitor local and national developments in relation to this and communicate these to our members.
- 5) Support UNISON Scotland in pressing the Scottish Government for a legislative review and to ensure that UNISON's voice is heard in any such review.
- 6) Support a campaign for legal changes through UNISON Scotland's Social Work Issues Group.
- 7) Mount, in consultation with branches, an awareness and recruitment campaign among all social work and social care staff across the UK.

Aberdeenshire

43. Union Learning Representatives

Conference recognises the important work that Union Learning Representatives (ULR's) do throughout the UK in both in promoting learning at work, signposting members towards further education, advising on basic skills and working with employers to increase the skills of the workforce. The main role is helping individuals to overcome barriers which may prevent them getting involved in learning but its now becoming more common for ULR's to have to overcome their own barriers such as time off (for duties and training), reduced funding for training and often managements refusal to allow for training. Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to arrange regional meetings with existing ULR's with a view to exploring issues around identifying ULR's, recruitment, training and networking with a view to put in place a plan to recruit more ULR's throughout the UK.

Southwark

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44. Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Meat Inspection

Conference notes that the Food Standards Agency is too close to the food industry without being sufficiently robust in protecting independent meat inspection, despite the recent and ongoing horsemeat scandal.

Conference recognises that de-regulation and privatisation is the preferred direction of travel of our government and the European Union (EU). This was clearly shown in the recent intense lobbying by British civil servants in the EU alongside the meat industry to end the physical inspection of pigs post-mortem.

Conference believes that within a decade, there will be very few independent, state employed meat inspectors in employment and this poses a risk to public health and food wholesomeness.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to campaign and fight against these changes to the delivery of meat inspection, along with the enhancement of animal welfare and consumer protection by:

- 1) Supporting an organising and recruitment approach to sustain our workplace density and build on our negotiating strength.
- 2) Developing a campaign to highlight our members' views about the long-term costs of cutting front-line meat inspection jobs and eroding of pay and conditions.
- 3) Negotiating an 'in-house' approach to the duties of Official Veterinarians (OV), many of whom are currently outsourced to private contractors.
- 4) Improving the working lives of migrant workers - many of whom are our members - currently employed by private contractors as OVs on poor terms and conditions.
- 5) Engaging with the public on the role of meat inspectors and OVs in protecting and informing them on how their food is produced.

Food Standards Agency Committee

45. The Gender Agenda

Conference notes with dismay that cuts to pay and terms and conditions in local government are hitting women hardest across the UK. Local government is a highly gendered workforce - seventy-six per cent of National Joint Committee (NJC) workers are women, over half of all jobs are part-time and women carry out 90% of those part-time jobs. In Scotland, 67% of the local government workforce are women.

Conference also notes that women in local government hold the majority of posts at the bottom grades, often depending upon benefits to make ends meet. The Fawcett Society states that on average, benefits make up twice as much of women's income as men's. Low paid women in local government face overwhelming financial pressures. Childcare costs are spiralling upwards while 74% of cuts to benefits, tax credits, pay and pensions have been taken from women's incomes. As service users, our members also face the double whammy of services most used by women being cut to the bone.

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Conference believes that local government should set the highest standards on pay, equal pay, maternity rights, childcare, eldercare and flexible working. It should offer women genuine career development opportunities to reduce occupational segregation caused by gender discrimination and shrink the gender pay gap in the process. Employers should also value the roles traditionally undertaken by women. Instead, local government currently offers women bargain basement terms and conditions and is becoming a minimum wage employer.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Campaign for a new gender agenda that puts women's issues at the forefront of negotiations with the Local Government Employers and for Service Group campaigns to reflect the needs of our women members.
- 2) Work with the National Women's Committee and other equality bodies inside and outside UNISON to ensure that the diverse needs of women are reflected in our campaign.
- 3) Further research the needs of our women members in local government and explore the issues of most importance to them.
- 4) Start a widespread consultation with members on what the gender agenda should contain and how to engage women members in achieving it at local and national level across the UK nations.
- 5) Demand that the local government employers across the UK nations treat the gender agenda as a core issue for discussion in a new and positive approach to collective bargaining.
- 6) Ensure that the gender agenda is built into our strategy on commissioning.

NJC Local Government Committee

46. Rewiring Public Services and the Local Government Workforce

Conference believes UNISON must have a vision for the future of local government services as well as pay and conditions and that achieving workforce involvement and buy in to the development of that vision will be crucial.

Conference is concerned that there is no real mention of the workforce in the Local Government Association (LGA) policy document and campaign 'Rewiring Public Services'. These set out the LGA's vision for the future of local government and local public services and are designed to influence political manifestos in the run-up to the General Election.

Rewiring Public Services can only be realised through employees who are valued, given opportunities to up-skill and motivated by a real sense of identification with their employers. As pay and conditions are slashed further, our members are less and less likely to act as advocates for them.

Conference notes the local government reorganisations and changes to service delivery occurring across all four UK nations. In Scotland the Christie Commission Report outlines principles for public sector reform. The recently published Williams

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Commission sets out proposals for restructuring Welsh councils. The Review of Public Administration exercise underway in Northern Ireland will reconfigure 26 councils into 11 new councils. Education and Library Boards will also need to be reconfigured to realign with the new councils.

Conference re-asserts the importance of sector wide collective bargaining and agrees with the National Joint Committee (NJC) employers that the NJC is the body best placed to deal with the employment issues arising from the huge change local government is undergoing. This is also true for our members in Scotland and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA.)

Local government workers fare worse than other public sector groups, in terms of pay, conditions and training. However, they are increasingly required to co-operate with other groups on more favourable pay and conditions through shared services, integrated working and marketisation. Conference believes NJC and SJC pay and conditions need to be harmonised upwards so that our members are no longer the poor relations of the public sector.

Conference therefore deplores the Local Government Employers' (LGE) decision that from this year they will only negotiate nationally on pay and not on Green Book conditions. Further, that they will assist and encourage councils to achieve further cuts to terms and conditions locally. Weakening the NJC negotiating structure will not benefit local authorities or the communities they serve. Further discretion will result in further pay discrimination and vastly increased negotiating and resource burden on councils. Conference believes that councils do not have the capacity for organisational development and change management.

The NJC and SJC workforce is a highly gendered one, with the consequent need to have appropriate pay and bargaining systems. This must reflect employers' legal obligations to tackle gender segregation, ensure pay equality and provide for family friendly working practices, access to training and career enhancement for part time workers.

Conference supports the idea of bringing the smaller bargaining groups into the NJC. There is no longer an objective rationale for maintaining separate bargaining structures for craft, youth and community, chief officers and soulbury employees when there is a common employer. Where this happens single table bargaining is the logical consequence.

Conference instructs the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Approach the LGA and COSLA chairs and political groups for discussions on the role of the NJC and SJC in the changing local government landscape and for a more joined up approach to workforce issues across the LGA and COSLA including a strategy that:
 - a) Places high quality services, making the best possible use of public money at the heart of a new approach to pay, conditions and workforce development.

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- b) Confronts the reality of the NJC/SJC's bargain basement conditions and pays urgent attention to the deterioration in conditions for NJC/SJC staff relative to other public sector groups and the economy as a whole.
 - c) Recognises the highly gendered composition of the workforce and focuses on equality and workforce development.
 - d) Reflects the legal obligations placed on councils by equality and employment legislation and good employment practice generally.
 - e) Seeks to bring opted out councils back into the NJC.
 - f) Makes more resources available in the LGE to support negotiations and local employers.
 - g) Ensures these principles carry through to discussions within the Welsh and Northern Ireland LGAs.
- 2) To provide guidance on job evaluation and harmonisation issues for bargaining groups brought into the NJC.

NJC Local Government Committee

47. Improved and More Effective Health and Social Care Regulation

Conference welcomes the move from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to invest more resources into the regulation of health and social care services. It also welcomes the return to a specialist form of inspections which UNISON has long called for.

Although this change in inspection methodology is welcome it is vital that regulation of hospitals and GPs is not prioritised and results in the regulation of adult social care being neglected. It is also vital that the Care Quality Commission is able to highlight the links between working conditions for the adult social care workforce and the quality of care they can provide. The Ethical Care Campaign has highlighted how important good working conditions are linked to the provision of good quality care.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive (SGE) to campaign for the CQC to:

- 1) Ensure that the regulation of adult social care services across local government, the voluntary and private sectors is as well resourced and robust as possible.
- 2) Be given powers to regulate how local government commissions adult social care services.
- 3) Highlight the impact that poor working conditions have on the provision poor quality care within adult social care services.

Care Quality Commission Committee

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48. Ethical Care and a Living Wage

Conference welcomes the progress of the Ethical Care Campaign since its launch in 2012. The campaign highlights how low wages and poor terms and conditions for workers undermines the quality and safety of the service and the dignity of service users, and urges local authorities to sign up to UNISON's Ethical Care Charter. The Charter addresses issues such as pay, sick pay, travel time, zero hours contracts and training. It includes commitments to stop commissioning services on the basis of '15 minute' packages of care or at prices which are bound to lead to a poor quality of care and/or low wages and working conditions.

Conference reaffirms that the pay and working conditions of the local government care workforce – 80% of whom are outsourced - is a national scandal, and notes with alarm the growing use of zero hours contracts in the care sector. Care workers are predominantly women and include a high proportion of migrant workers and workers from across equalities groups, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) workers. Conference notes that part and parcel of this campaign is our campaign for a living wage.

Our concerns about pay and conditions for workers are matched by our concerns about the quality of the care they can provide: it is an issue of human rights.

The campaign has contributed significantly to a far higher political and media profile for the effects on service users of these commissioning practices, and the fact that up to 200,000 home care workers are being paid less than the national minimum wage (NMW), mainly because they are not paid for the time they spend travelling between the homes of the people they care for.

UNISON's work was a major factor in Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), the enforcement body for the national minimum wage, carrying out a special investigation into NMW compliance in the social care sector. It made inquiries into 224 employers in the sector for the period April 2011 – March 2013 and found non-compliance in 48% of those inquiries. Further, UNISON lobbying and campaigning has led to the government agreeing to issue statutory guidance for councils on travel time.

Conference particularly welcomes:

- 1) Islington and Southwark Councils signing up to UNISON's charter.
- 2) Northern Ireland region's project to recruit and organise homecare workers.
- 3) Lancashire Council's commitment to commission homecare in line with the principles in the Charter when re-tendering its home care contracts.
- 4) The support of other organisations, including the National Pensioners Convention, the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) and United for All Ages, for the Charter.
- 5) The "Guidance on human rights for commissioners of home care" issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in 2013.

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- 6) The new rules introduced on 1 October 2013 for 'naming and shaming' employers who do not pay the national minimum wage.

Conference further welcomes UNISON's 'Pay Up for Travel Time' campaign launched in September. Branches have been provided with information on every homecare provider their council commissions, and asked to use this to undertake recruitment and organising work around this issue. Conference notes that Hampshire branch found one provider paying workers as little as £3.50 an hour because they do not pay for travel time, and charging workers £7 for a £20 payday loan for one week to buy petrol for their company car, which equates to an annual percentage rate of more than 17,000%. Conference further notes that good work by the branch and the region has seen union density reaching 90%.

Conference congratulates those branches that have raised the Charter with their councils, taken up the Pay Up for Travel Time campaign and undertaken campaigns for the introduction of a living wage. It again calls on councils to commit to becoming Ethical Care Councils by signing up to our Ethical Care Charter.

Conference notes that these campaigns work best when they involve developing alliances with service user organisations, community and equality groups. Conference notes that the self-organised groups are well placed to assist with such links and with recruitment in the very large homecare workforce, estimated to be over 350,000 in England alone.

Conference therefore instructs the Service Group Executive, in liaison with the national self-organised groups, to continue to:

- a) Build the Ethical Care Campaign with a specific focus on councils adopting the Ethical Care Charter and the recruiting and organising of homecare workers.
- b) Work to build the coalition of organisations supporting the Charter and to develop alliances with service user organisations, community and equality groups, and others on these campaigns.
- c) Provide guidance and campaign materials to support local government branch and regional campaigns on the living wage and in recruitment and organising campaigns targeted at care workers.
- d) Seek to ensure that equality and diversity issues relating both to the workforce and to service users are addressed appropriately.
- e) Encourage regions and branches to develop alliances with local service user and community groups to build support for the adoption of the Charter, and to work with organisations such as the regional arms of Citizens UK to develop Living Wage campaigns targeted at home care.
- f) Work with Labour Link to encourage the Labour Party and Shadow Ministers to promote a sustainable funding regime for social care, including adequate funding to provide fair pay, conditions and training to the workforce, and to encourage Labour councils to adopt the Charter.

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Committee

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49. Fighting the Cuts, Protecting LGBT Local Government Workers and Services

Conference welcomes the groundbreaking report into the effects of austerity on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) workers and service users, including local government workers, commissioned by UNISON's National LGBT Committee and funded by the General Political Fund (GPF).

The research, carried out by the well respected independent social research organisation NatCen, includes evidence of how the Tory led government's austerity measures have affected LGBT workers in local government.

The report finds that reductions in funding of services due to austerity measures have led to:

- 1) Increased demand for services.
- 2) Worse pay.
- 3) Worse terms and conditions.
- 4) Increased workloads.
- 5) Low morale.
- 6) Increased stress.

Unprecedented job cuts in local government workplaces mean the loss of specialist staff trained in LGBT issues and ever smaller numbers of staff expected to maintain the same or similar workloads for less pay in real terms.

The research also found a strong sense that LGBT equality was seen as a luxury – a 'nice thing to do' that could be dropped when times were hard. LGBT staff felt more marginalised and isolated and felt guilty for asking that attention be paid to LGBT equality. Equality training is being cut and there was a sense that homophobia, biphobia and transphobia were on the rise again.

The report highlights how in some of the worst cases, the cuts have led to LGBT local government workers relying on pay day loans and food parcels.

Conference believes these findings are an important campaigning tool for the local government service group as we continue to make the argument to the public that the Tory cuts to local government are having a detrimental impact on LGBT workers.

Conference therefore calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive, working with the national LGBT committee, to:

- a) Disseminate the research findings as widely as possible.
- b) Use the report as a tool in local government pay negotiations and in defending local government services.

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- c) Continue to fight for the retention of properly trained staff delivering specialist LGBT local government services.

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Committee

50. Cuts in Local Government Funding

Conference condemns the continued attacks on the funding of Local Government services from the Tory led coalition government, and recognises them as the biggest threat ever made to the continued survival of the concept of locally provided services controlled by democratically elected councils. Conference further expresses opposition to statements from the Leader of the Labour Party, the Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer and other Labour Party spokespersons to the effect that public expenditure cuts would continue under a Labour Government, and to the fact that the small minority of Labour Councillors prepared to stick to their principles and oppose cuts are often subjected to disciplinary attacks. Conference calls for the closest possible working between UNISON and Councillors Against Cuts in order to build strengthen anti-cuts voices in local government.

Knowsley

51. Apprenticeship Schemes and Work Experience Programmes

Conference recognises that:

- 1) The economic and social value that high quality apprenticeships and work experience schemes can have and the role they can play in addressing the skills deficit and lack of work preparedness facing the UK.
- 2) Young people should be encouraged to take up apprenticeships where these have been properly-negotiated to secure high-quality training, which is effectively monitored, and where the basis for payment is 'the rate for the job'.
- 3) Apprentices under the age of 19, and those over 19 but in the first year of their apprenticeship are on a current minimum wage rate of £2.68 per hour. Apprentices aged 19 or over who have completed their first year must be paid at least the minimum wage rate for their age and this is significantly under the Living Wage.
- 4) There has been an increase in the use of unregulated apprenticeship schemes and providers. This has led to the exploitation of young people providing little in the way of transferrable skills or experience.
- 5) In further education there has been an increase in the use of unqualified and unaccredited employment and brokers to facilitate apprenticeship schemes between colleges and small, medium businesses and industry.

Conference believes that:

- a) Socio-economic inequalities are perpetuated by unregulated, unaccredited and low quality apprenticeships and work experience.

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- b) Quality apprenticeships should be brokered by independent, impartial and fully qualified careers professionals.
- c) Apprentices should be paid a wage that reflects the work that they do within an organisation and the value that they add.
- d) The quality of apprenticeship education and training should be consistently high and adequate to provide skills commensurate with continued employability.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- i) Campaign on the above.
- ii) Continue to work to ensure that the National Minimum Wage is the minimum paid to all apprentices and that Living Wage employers apply it to apprentices; while seeking to negotiate pay that is based on the 'rate for the job'.
- iii) Gather intelligence on apprenticeship brokerage and the number and financial size of contracts with employers held by colleges.
- iv) Call on branches to negotiate with employers to:
 - A) Provide tighter controls on the quality and consistency in the training and advice that is provided for apprentices and students engaging in work experience.
 - B) That these are provided by organisations that can provide fully accredited careers professionals.
- v) Call on branches to work with their local colleges and college members to ensure provision of quality education and training for apprentices.

National FE & 6th Form Colleges Committee

52. Challenging Discriminatory Practices, Defending Public Services

Conference as well as forming a significant part of the public sector workforce Black people are also primary users of public services. Cuts to funding are closing services while putting significant pressure on those remaining staff, as well as community and voluntary organisations supporting Black people and other vulnerable communities at a time when they are needed the most.

We know that:

- 1) Since the recession started in 2008 there has been a declining rate of employment for Black workers and clear evidence of an ethnic penalty on employment for most Black groups.
- 2) Workers in local government are facing local attacks on unsocial hours payments, overtime and car allowances or transfer to term time or zero hours contracts.

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- 3) The coalition government has undertaken a sustained attack on workers' rights and attacked legislation promoting equality and fairness. And that the introduction of fees to bring cases to Employment Tribunal will mean that many low paid Black workers will not be able to afford justice.
- 4) Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 most monitoring information can be made available. And that as part of UNISON's lead race equality work, Challenging Racism in the Workplace research in Local Authorities revealed that in 17 London councils. Black workers were disproportionately affected by redundancies. In one council, Black workers made up just 31% of the workforce but 63% of the redundancies. Additional research shows Black workers continue to experience discriminatory practices at various stages of employment from application to appointment, in promotions and with an over-representation in grievances and disciplinaries.
- 5) Challenging Racism in the Workplace must remain the focus on defending public services and fighting for Black members' jobs and conditions of service. Using cohesive strategies to utilise information collated can challenge discriminatory practices on behalf of Black members and fight cuts to services affecting Black communities and all public sector workers.
- 6) Challenging discrimination and winning equality needs to continue to be at the heart of trade union work, every trade unionist, every UNISON member or activist has a duty to challenge discrimination wherever they see it.

Conference therefore calls on the Local Government Service Group to work with the National Black Members' Committee to:

- a) Continue to highlight the impact of cuts on Black members in the Service group's anti-cuts campaign.
- b) Encourage local government branches to use the 'Challenging Racism in the Workplace' toolkit and work with Regional Black Members Committees to support implementation.
- c) Continue to use research as part of Challenging Racism in the workplace to monitor discriminatory employment practices in Local Government Service Group sectors/employers that disadvantage Black people and implement actions to redress these practices.
- d) And report back the findings through UNISON publications.

National Black Members' Committee

53. The Disproportionate Impact of Further Education Cuts on Disadvantaged Staff and Communities

The school system enjoys some measure of protection because of its compulsory nature and political interests. Over £1 billion has been spent on the establishment of academies, with little proven worth and sparse support outside of a doctrinaire cabal. Universities enjoy the respect generated by their hallowed halls and political alumni. Colleges have twice as many students ranging across the age spectrum from 14 years

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old and often pick up the pieces for young people who were failed by their schools and adults who have been failed by life. Sometimes called the place for a second educational chance, it is often the place for a first opportunity to gain qualifications and skills. Further education (FE) should be the last port of call for public expenditure cuts, but is often the first, given the lack of political awareness or willingness to appreciate its vital role in communities.

According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), education spending experienced relatively robust growth during the 2000s. By the end of the decade, education spending as a share of national income stood close to its highest level for at least fifty years. FE was one of the main beneficiaries with a 7.7% funding increase per year, but now colleges across the UK are facing disproportionately high cuts. By 2015, almost all of this growth will be reversed. IFS says of education funding that, "having grown historically quickly during the 2000s, it is now set to fall historically fast during the early 2010s". Government teeth get two bites of the FE cherry: education and training for adults and for 16 to 18 year olds, funded through two agencies in England and devolved bodies in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland. Both young people and adult skills budgets in England will have been cut by 25% by 2015-16, and for adults by over 35% in Wales. Scotland's colleges are facing substantial FE budget cuts of 13.5% over the next three years: a £70 million cut.

Cuts to the least advantaged sector in education impact on the most disadvantaged members of its workforce and student community. Redundancies, depreciation of the value of pay by about 10%, casualisation and zero-hour contracts affect women, young people, ethnic minorities and disabled staff disproportionately. Course or college closures, withdrawal of free education and the financial support of the EMA, can only penalise those with the least social bargaining power. This conference commits itself to the defence of FE, its workers and the communities that they serve.

It calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Lobby political parties in all UK countries on the need to restore funding to FE.
- 2) Call on branches to work with other unions, students and community groups to defend and promote FE.
- 3) Monitor the fight against redundancies and defence of pay and conditions of FE staff by branches.
- 4) Prioritise recruitment and organising in the FE sector.
- 5) Assess the impact of FE funding cuts on those with protected characteristics both in the workforce and in the community.
- 6) Publish the results and promote a campaign based on their findings.

National FE & 6th Form Colleges Committee

54. Mental Health in Children and Young People

Mental health problems affect about one in ten children and young people. Mental illness come in many forms including depression, anxiety and conduct disorder, and are

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often a direct response to what is happening in their lives at home and at school, college or university. It can lead to self harm and suicide - particularly if issues such as bullying are ignored and educational establishments don't have the proper procedures and support networks in place for our younger people. All too often the stigma surrounding mental health difficulties is likely to mean that students will feel anxious about disclosing a prior mental health issues.

Conference calls on the Local Government Committee to work with UNISON structures in a campaign to raise awareness of these issues, particularly the need for educational establishments:

- 1) To develop a clear and consistent approach to student mental health and well being.
- 2) To have clear policies in place to tackle related issues such as bullying.
- 3) To foster a climate where students will feel confident in discussing mental health issues.
- 4) To ensure that everyone who works in our schools have some basic awareness and training in mental health issues.

Rathgael

55. Zero Hours Contracts and Impact on Black Workers

Conference, since the coalition have taken power there has been mass redundancies, with many jobs being frozen and those who have survived are facing massive attacks on pay and conditions and threats of zero hours contracts. Black workers appear to be disproportionately affected by this.

Government figures suggest there are approximately 250,000 people on zero hours contracts. However the realistic figure suggested by The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development research shows there are approximately a million people working on zero hours contracts.

Those employed on Zero hours contracts in comparison to fixed contract employees receive lower gross weekly pay, can be called up for work at short notice which adds strain on family life and disrupts care arrangements, are more susceptible to unfair treatment as they have no employment rights and are made to work in unsafe conditions with constant fear of being sacked. This can also affect certain benefit entitlements, such as working tax credits.

There is a disproportionately high impact on Black women workers, who are more likely to work in local authorities, home care and other vulnerable employment. Additionally, they are also likely to have caring responsibilities that restrict their ability to be flexible which therefore jeopardises their already unequal relationship with the employer.

Conference, the prevalence of zero hours contracts is higher amongst young Black people than any other group with 37% of those employed on such contracts aged between 16 and 24 and 41% of Black people who are employed in the Homecare Sector are believed to be affected by Zero hours contracts. People are being forced to

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work on zero hours contracts because they have no choice and due to the present economic climate.

Conference therefore calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to work with the National Black members committee to seek to:

- 1) Have a strategy to promote an effective campaign to end zero hours contracts with the local government service group and its sectors alongside other self-organised groups, service groups and trade unions.
- 2) Work with Labour link and the General Political Fund to lobby MPs for safeguards to be introduced to improve the rights of workers on zero hours contracts.
- 3) Raise awareness of the disproportionate impact on Black women workers in particular of the increased use of zero hours contracts.

National Black Members' Committee

56. Local Government Cuts and Disabled Members

Conference is aware that local government cuts have been a threat to jobs since the Tory led coalition government came to power. While cuts affect everyone in the community the predicted devastating impact on disabled members' lives has become a harsh reality.

Local government traditionally benefits from a relatively high proportion of disabled employees, this is in part due to the obligations on it from current and past anti-discrimination legislation coupled with evidence of effective UNISON branch negotiation. But everything from the sheer scale of the imposed cuts to how funding arrangements are implemented locally is having a detrimental impact on our disabled members as both users and as providers of services.

Councils that are cutting jobs are mostly doing so by implementing redundancy selection processes and while many claim they try to be fair by putting reasonable adjustments in place and disregarding disability related absence some other don't. Some of our local government members have had to go through a staff reorganisation selection process every year for the last four years. The constant worry, stress and anxiety is having a detrimental impact on the physical and mental health of disabled members that doesn't stop when reorganisation selection is complete.

Disabled members who do manage to keep their job are in fear of job losses through reorganisation processes the following year and are expected to cope with an ever increasing workload with fewer resources available for support. UNISON branches are reporting that some local authority departments have not had the widely reported cuts of 30% but that the actual effect of public service cuts has been in the region of 60% to 70%, along with local authority expectations that the measurement of work output should remain at the same level as pre-cuts outcomes. Advice from some UNISON branches indicates an increase in disability related absence and that branch representatives are expected to negotiate on behalf of an increasing volume of disabled members who are seeking selection under voluntary redundancy policies that they would otherwise not chose, but feel they can no longer cope with the ever increasing workload or constant stress of the prospect of job loss.

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Another fear reported by disabled members relates to those employers who have a poorer record on understanding their legal obligations under disability and may not have applied resources to appropriate staff involved in managing disabled staff or their personnel requirements particularly in the case of redeployment procedures. Examples of flaws in redeployment procedures range from employers not understanding their basic legal obligations under the Equality Act to not recognising positive action measures that could be introduced to provide; guaranteed redeployment interviews, consider relevant experience instead of traditional qualification requirements or other measures that could be considered as a reasonable adjustment to staff policies.

Redundancy payment rates may be the same whether a person is disabled or not but decent prospects in the labour market are few and far between for disabled people. Where public services have been privatised there is the added disadvantage of employers valuing profit over disabled workers' rights to decent terms and conditions of service. There is the additional concern about employers' negligent attitude to meeting their legal obligations to make reasonable adjustments for interview and the potential for discrimination in declaring disability status to potential employers.

Local Government has suffered the highest possible levels of public sector cuts and we know more are to come, combined with the additional burden of cuts to benefits and services the effect on disabled employees is shocking.

Conference agrees that no matter what the outcome of a selection process is there is no relief of poverty, social dependence or indignity for disabled members in local government.

Conference instructs the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Raise awareness of the differential impact of local government cuts on disabled employees.
- 2) Campaign for cumulative impact assessments to be carried out on the affect of local government cuts on disabled employees.
- 3) Take appropriate action to make sure disabled members are involved in all campaigns against local government job cuts.

National Disabled Members Committee

57. Building Solidarity with Teaching Unions

Conference notes that UNISON Northern Ireland (NI) has to date successfully resisted the privatisation of Schools Workforce members. This has been achieved by consistent challenges to the current and previous Education Ministers, the Education Committee of the NI Assembly with the support of the Teaching Unions affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions Northern Ireland committee.

Conference notes the Teaching unions support for the UNISON led negotiations on extended pay protection, compensation and transfer redundancy terms for School Support staff facing school closures and amalgamations which are currently underway. These negotiations have been pursued on the basis of equality of opportunity and treatment similar to that already available to teachers.

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Conference calls on the Service Group Executive (SGE) to ensure regions seek the support and commitment of Teaching Unions to resist privatisation of support services where these are publicly provided.

Conference also calls on the SGE to urge Teaching Unions to support demands for the Living Wage within the National Joint Committee (NJC) pay system and across all employers with schools support service workers where privately provided.

UNISON Northern Ireland

58. The Care Bill

We condemn the failure of this government to find a long term solution to sustainable care. We are not only concerned about the detrimental impact the Care Bill will have on disabled service users but how it will be used to attack the terms and conditions of local government members.

By introducing a £72,000 cap on the amount individuals pay for social care in England and Wales may help individuals but it will not solve the underfunding of social care. The cap will increase the burden on Local Authorities who face nearly £3 billion of cuts to social care budgets.

The Bill reduces regulatory requirements on delivering these services. Councils who still need to provide these statutory services will have to find cheaper ways of delivery. Whether they chose outsourcing and commissioning or social enterprise and cooperative delivery, our members terms and conditions will be targeted as a way of saving money.

The UK care commissioning regime is weak. Without robust regulation and enforcement who will make sure care is delivered by high quality staff who receive pay that reflects their skills. Who will make sure workers receive appropriate training to deliver essential services. How will we make sure our members have the support and representation to negotiate on terms and conditions when they work for a multitude of employers who do not even have recognition agreements?

The Care Bill is not only detrimental to disabled people who will not receive the quality care they deserve but will also be devastating for our members who deliver these services.

Conference calls on Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Campaign for better regulation of care services.
- 2) Use Labour Link and the media to highlight the implications of reduced terms and conditions on service users, and
- 3) Work with Branches already working with multiple employers to identify new ways of organising to assist Local Government Branches with an increasingly dispersed membership.

National Disabled Members Committee

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59. Branch Facility Time

Conference notes with concern the continuing threat to facility time to Local Government Branches. Such Branches now work with a plethora of employers and are dealing with the consequences of huge and unprecedented cuts to local government funding.

Conference notes that a motion on Branch facility time was passed at the 2013 National Local Government Service Group conference. This motion called for “Working with Regional Local Government Service Group Committees to develop practical and immediate support measures for Branches facing cuts to facility time”.

However, no progress on what these practical and immediate support measures will be has been reported. Less still have these practical and immediate support measures been made available to Branches whose facility time has been cut or is in the process of being cut.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to urgently clarify what work has been undertaken, is being considered, or is planned to provide practical and immediate support measures to Branches whose facility time has been or is in the process of being cut.

South East Region

60. Attacks on Facility Time and Support to Branches

Conference notes with concern the continuing threat to facility time to Local Government Branches. Such Branches now work with a plethora of employers and are dealing with the consequences of huge and unprecedented cuts to local government funding.

Conference notes that a motion on Branch facility time was passed at National Local Government Service Group Conference in 2013. This motion called for “...working with Regional Local Government Service Group Committees to develop practical and immediate support measures for branches facing cuts to facility time”.

However, no progress on what these practical and immediate support measures will be has been reported. Less still have these practical and immediate support measures been made available to Branches whose facility time has been cut or is in the process of being cut.

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West Sussex

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Motions Ruled Out of Order

Beyond remit of the Conference

A Pay Claim 2014

This union notes:

- 1) That after 4 years of a pay freezes and restraint in local government, real pay has been reduced by 16%.
- 2) That after we accepted the 2012 pay increase of 1%, Eric Pickles almost immediately then announced additional 10% cuts on top of those already enacted and planned.
- 3) That the total pay for Britain's top bosses increased by an average of 14% last year.

This union believes:

- i) That paying public sector workers less means millions of people have less to spend, exacerbating problems from the government's austerity programme.
- ii) That by losing 16% in real terms, council workers have already 'paid' more than their fare share, in addition to the many thousands of job losses, to pay for the crisis caused by the Banks.
- iii) That it is morally unjustifiable to expect public sector workers to pay more whilst multinational companies, such as Starbucks, Amazon, Google and Vodaphone, continue to avoid paying their fair share of taxes on the profits they make in the UK. As well as wealthy individuals using legal tax evasion measures to reduce the money they should pay in tax.
- iv) That it would be unacceptable for the government to attack any terms and conditions, such as sick pay, on condition of offering their miserly pay cap of 1%.
- v) That it is unacceptable to exchange any detriment to terms and conditions in exchange for their miserly pay cap of 1%.
- vi) A clear strategy of leadership to win our pay claim will encourage members to fight over pay.

This union resolves to:

- I) Actively campaign for our national pay claim for the Living Wage and for an additional £1 per hour on each pay point.
- II) Urge members to vote for action in support of our pay claim in any consultative or formal legal industrial action ballot.
- III) Announce a proposed plan of legal industrial action to members in advance of any legal industrial action ballot to demonstrate to both our members and the government that we are serious in our fight to break their real pay cuts.

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IV) That such a proposed plan of action should:-

- a) Include dates of legal action beyond any initial action.
- b) Seek to co-ordinate any such legal industrial action ballots across sectors and with other trade unions in dispute. Where possible to legally co-ordinate any subsequent action if ballots vote for action.

V) To submit this motion to 2014 Local Government conference.

VI) To submit this motion to the next Regional Local Government Committee.

Sandwell General UNISON Branch

B Illegal Transportation of Service Users (Vulnerable Children)

Conference recognises that Public Service workers are being asked to carry out jobs of work that are in breach of policy, health and safety and, in some cases, adult and child protection legislation.

An example to outline the rationale of this Motion is that an Assistant Care Manager in Kent Social Services was constantly under pressure to escort children to appointments using their own car and doing so without someone with them. The Authority, we believe, has breached its own health and safety policy and Escorting and Driving Policy.

On the example given, this Motion asks the NEC to carry out the following:

- 1) For UNISON to carry out a survey of Branches to find out how widespread this is.
- 2) Ensure and initiate a legal challenge to be adopted against Local Authorities where members are made to breach legislation and policy. In doing so, they put themselves, service users and members of the public at risk.
- 3) Negotiate a National Policy which is legislated to cover all who escort service users, especially children.
- 4) To advocate that the Care Quality Commission and Ofsted have to ensure escorting is monitored to a national level and act if there is a breach.

Kent Local Government

C Pay Claim 2014

Conference notes:

- 1) That after 4 years of a pay freezes and restraint in local government, real pay has been reduced by 16%.
- 2) That after we accepted the 2012 pay increase of 1%, Eric Pickles almost immediately then announced additional 10% cuts on top of those already enacted and planned.
- 3) That the total pay for Britain's top bosses increased by an average of 14% last year.

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Conference believes:

- a) That paying public sector workers less means millions of people have less to spend, exacerbating problems from the government's austerity programme.
- b) That by losing 16% in real terms, council workers have already 'paid' more than their fare share, in addition to the many thousands of job losses, to pay for the crisis caused by the Banks.
- c) That it is morally unjustifiable to expect public sector workers to pay more whilst multinational companies, such as Starbucks, Amazon, Google and Vodaphone, continue to avoid paying their fair share of taxes on the profits they make in the UK. As well as wealthy individuals using legal tax evasion measures to reduce the money they should pay in tax.
- 4) That it is unacceptable to exchange any detriment to terms and conditions in exchange for their miserly pay cap of 1%.
- 5) A clear strategy of leadership to win our pay claim will encourage members to fight over pay.

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- iii) Announce a proposed plan of legal industrial action to members in advance of any legal industrial action ballot to demonstrate to both our members and the government that we are serious in our fight to break their real pay cuts.
- iv) That such a proposed plan of action should:-
 - A) Include dates of legal action beyond any initial action.
 - B) Seek to co-ordinate any such legal industrial action ballots across sectors and with other trade unions in dispute. Where possible to legally co-ordinate any subsequent action if ballots vote for action.

Portsmouth City

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Could place the union in legal jeopardy

D Council Reserves and Local Government Cuts

Not printed on the advice of the legal officer.

Bromley UNISON

E Council Reserves and Local Government Cuts

Not printed on the advice of the legal officer.

Lambeth

F Council Reserves and Local Government Cuts

Not printed on the advice of the legal officer.

Southwark

G Fighting the Cuts - What is the Union Strategy?

Not printed on the advice of the legal officer.

Southwark

Not sufficiently clear

H Council Budget Cuts

The Conference notes LG Circular (LG/41/2011) which sought to advise Branches with regards to budget setting by Local Authorities. In particular it stated the following "Advise branches against pursuing the 'tactic' of attempting to encourage councils to set 'needs based' budgets".

The circular concluded that "given the potential consequences for UNISON members, adopting this approach is not in their interest".

Conference notes that this advice is contrary to the policy on councillors against cuts passed last year and, as such, should be withdrawn amended and reissued.

This Conference recognises that:

- 1) The coalition's continued aim is to dismantle council services to a pre Second World War level.
- 2) It is estimated that there will have been a cut in real terms funding of 43% in the 5 years up to 2015. To date 400,000 Council jobs have been cut with another 500,000 predicted to go by 2018.
- 3) 28% of unitary authorities are in a state of 'high financial stress' with a number of councils raising the real prospect of insolvency.
- 4) The very existence of some local authorities is under threat due to the government's savage attacks along with our members' jobs and the services they provide to our communities.

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5) In the face of such a brutal attack only a radical plan of action can save local government.

Conference further notes that not a single Labour council has had the courage to stand and defend Local government by not implementing the Tory agenda.

This conference is also appalled at the recent comments of the Labour shadow local government minister that "The next Labour government will not be able to stop the cuts or turn back the clock".

This conference therefore believes that the alleged consequences of setting needs based budgets are nothing to the permanent damage being done to Local Government services and jobs and that only a national co-ordinated campaign to call on Councils to set needs led budgets will save Local Government services and jobs for the future.

Wolverhampton General Branch

I Local Government Pay Campaign - High Profile and Effective Media Strategy

This conference believes that a high profile and effective national media strategy is required to support and publicise the Local Government Pay Campaign. This would have the effect of putting the issue in the public mind, and it is intended that this would invoke public understanding and empathy. We note that the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) and the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA) made good use of the media in their recent effective industrial dispute with Transport for London and the Mayor of London.

We propose that an effective media strategy would compose of elements such as:

Adverts in the national newspapers and cinemas outlining the facts, and pay justice for local government workers.

The leadership touring national TV news studios.

Appearing on panel discussion programmes such as Question Time, Any Questions, etc.

Our demand for a pay increase of £1.20 an hour is just and fair, and we believe that if the general public were aware of our circumstances that they will react largely positively.

Southwark

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Referred to other bodies in the Union

J Retaining and Returning Adult Social Care Services under Local Authority Control

This branch believes that all aspects of Adult Social Care should be brought back in-house, to ensure that a dignified, skilled and first-rate service is delivered to our society's most vulnerable people.

The National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990 made Local Authorities introduce competition within the Home Care Service, whereby "Providers" would tender for contracts to deliver a Home Care Service on behalf of the Local Authority.

This outsourcing of Domiciliary Care is the wrong approach to take as we move forward with an aging population, that current research shows we face a resulting dementia time-bomb.

This is because many Private Sector providers lack the funds to invest in substantial training and education for its employees, training which should provide the staff with the skills and qualifications needed to support vulnerable adults, people with disabilities and older people.

Training and regular educational workshops would be available if the Adult Social Care sector was in-house because the intention would not be focussed on "profit", but rather the focus would be to ensure that a quality service is being delivered.

Improving the skill base of the employees within this sector will only raise the quality of care delivered to those who need it.

Any revenue from the Home Care Sector should be re-invested into training programmes and qualifications for its staff, so that high quality care giving can be maintained.

Paying the staff who work in the adult care sector will not only ensure that a quality service is given, it will also lead to more efficient services and also staff to be recognised for their hard work.

The private sector "providers" pay Adult Social Care staff the bare minimum wage, if they're lucky. The majority are also employed on Zero-hour contracts.

This poverty pay leads to a lack in moral and motivation which in turn leads to a poor quality service for the service users.

The poverty pay Adult Social Care staff receive also has a knock on effect to their families and local communities.

Predominantly, the employees in the Adult Social Care sector are female, who have to juggle family life and sometimes personal caring responsibilities with the flexible working hours which their work requires.

Unfortunately, due to continuing privatisation plans, many Local Authority controlled "residential care homes" have also been left in the hands of the private sector.

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Many privatised residential care homes offer inadequate training and extremely low pay to their staff.

For a company to make a profit out of those who are too vulnerable to reside at their own homes goes against the fabric of our society.

As many Local Authorities embark on budget cuts and privatisation, they must not automatically assume that a race to the bottom in the delivery of adult social care is the best possible solution.

We, as a trade union representing these workers, need to make the case that retaining services in-house and training those staff adequately is the best way to make savings.

Investing in Adult Social Care staff's pay will mean loyal workers that recognise they are getting a fair deal and will be motivated to take pride in their work.

Investing in sufficient training programmes will increase awareness of the service user needs and reduce the risks that poor quality services pose for the most vulnerable in our society.

This will lead to more improved outcomes for the service user.

We call on UNISON to lobby all interested parties and stakeholders within the Adult Social Care sector to:

- 1) Stop councils outsourcing its residential care homes and domiciliary services and bring currently outsourced Adult Social Care services back into Local Authority control.
- 2) Work with all interested parties to develop a comprehensive training programme that all workers in the Adult Social Care sector must complete as they develop their careers.
- 3) Increase the pay that Adult Social Care workers receive in line with the Living Wage.
- 4) Repeal the Act that actively seeks competition and outsourcing within Adult Social Care, so no vulnerable, elderly or disabled members of our society can be used for profitable gain. And amend the Health & Social Care Bill to ensure that vulnerable people are at the heart of the Bill, that only the highest quality care is delivered and that such care is actively monitored by independent agencies.
- 5) Fund the Adult Social Care in-house programme by:
 - a) Ending all contracts with private sector "providers" so that all payments being made go back into the Local Authorities account, which can be spent to improve the service.
 - b) Actively seek to claim the unpaid tax owed by the Multi-national corporations and individuals by closing all the legal loopholes that allow them to avoid tax receipts.

Kent Local Government