

# NATIONAL RETIRED MEMBERS CONFERENCE 2014

## FINAL AGENDA

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## **AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS**

### **AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS - STANDING ORDER 3**

Add at end of Standing Order 3.1

A regional delegate may move a motion or amendment submitted by a Branch within that Region if the Branch concerned is unable to be present at the Conference.

Delete existing 3.3

Renumber 3.4 as 3.3.

*National Retired Members' Committee*

### **AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS – STANDING ORDER 8**

Add new 8.8

8.8 The number of motions that any one retired members' group/section registered with regions or any one regional retired members' committee or the National Retired Members' Committee may submit is limited to not more than three

*Shropshire General*

## **MOTIONS**

### **Pensions**

#### **1. AN END TO DISCRIMINATION**

Conference notes that there continues to be discrimination in both the state and occupational pensions for many of our retired members. In particular, women pensioners continue to receive a much smaller pension, on average, than men. There is also discrimination in the benefits to partners of LGBT Elders.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to work with the relevant Self Organised Groups at National level to investigate these discriminatory practices and to report back with proposals on how best they can be overcome.

*West Midlands Region*

##### **1.1**

Delete the final sentence of the first paragraph.

Insert a new second paragraph as follows:

Conference also notes that the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013, which applies to England and Wales, required the United Kingdom government to review the differing treatment of widows, widowers, surviving same-sex spouses and surviving civil partners in occupational pension schemes. UNISON, other trades unions and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) made submissions to the review. They all called for equality among different groups of survivors based on levelling up benefits to those of widows. So far, the government has issued a report with estimated costs of equalisation but it has not said what it will do.

In the existing second paragraph after 'level to' insert:

:

1. Urge UNISON Retired Members to sign the TUC e-petition which calls for fair treatment for widowers, civil partners and same-sex spouses;
2. Approach, with urgency, the Affiliated Political Fund with a view to seeking from the Labour Party a commitment to legislate for equality and to produce briefing material so there can be similar approaches in regions and local campaigning; and,
- 3.'

*Wolverhampton General Branch*

## 2. INCREASE IN THE BASIC STATE PENSION

Conference is very concerned that the Basic State Pension (BSP) has remained below the poverty level for many years. In April 2014, it was increased to £113.10 per week for a single pensioner, a rise of £2.95 per week. The National Pensioners Convention statistic for the poverty level is £175. The deficit of £64.90 is appalling! The BSP in the UK is still one of the lowest in Europe (4th from bottom) although we are the 7th richest nation in the world!

If the Retail Price Index (RPI) had still been in place, the increase would have been 3.2% instead of the September 2013 Consumer Price Index (CPI) rise of 2.7% (£2.95). For the calculation of CPI, the 'basket' of goods and services used should be more appropriate to pensioners and should not be a calculation for general use. The measure of inflation should return to RPI for uprating all pensions.

Means-testing pensioners for the Pension Credit Guarantee is continuing and for a single pensioner it rose from £145.40 per week to £148.35, an increase of £2.95. This indicates that the Government thinks that £148.35 is the amount pensioners need to live on.

The new Pension Bill became law on 14 May 2014 and means that the new BSP will not be less than £148.40 per week, the actual amount will be set in the autumn of 2015 and will be paid to 'new' pensioners. The present BSP is £113.10 and is £35.30 below this amount and CPI will be based on September 2014 inflation for the rise in the present 2014 BSP to be paid in 2015, it probably won't be more than £3. Therefore, present pensioners will receive a BSP of, say, £116.10 but the 'new' pensioners will receive £148.40! How unfair is that?

Therefore, this UNISON National Retired Members Conference instructs the National Retired Members Committee and calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. campaign urgently for an increase in the Basic State Pension to at least the poverty level of £175 a week for a single pensioner and £325 for couples;
2. campaign for a return to annual increases in the Basic State Pension based on the Retail Price Index (RPI) or the annual increase in average earnings or an increase sufficient to ensure that the Basic State Pension is not lower than the poverty level, whichever is the greater.
3. take positive action to make our concerns known to the Government through LabourLink, national and regional branches of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), local Trades Councils, by lobbying MPs, and by supporting the National Pensioners Convention in their campaigns.
4. report regularly on progress to National Retired Members' Committee meetings and publicise on all appropriate communication channels, including the national UNISON website, U Magazine, In-Focus and E-Focus. The information must also be circulated to Regions and Branches.

5. report back to the 2015 National Retired Members Conference on action taken and actual achievements.

*South East Region*

2.1

In point 3 after "National Pensioners Convention" add "and the Scottish Pensioners' Forum"

*Scotland Region*

### 3. THE PENSIONS BILL - AND WHO PAYS IT

Conference notes that the proposals in the Government's Pensions Bill - self-praised by them as a way of making the state pensions system clearer and fairer - do neither of these things, do nothing for existing pensioners, and would result in a multi-tier pensions system so complicated that not only pensioners but probably even those administering it would struggle to understand it. The one clear thing is (as the Government's own figures show) that it is a way of saving money, as by 2050 the bill would be less than today's.

Conference calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to help regions and branches to support the National Pensioners' Convention in publicising the shortfalls of the Bill and campaigning amongst MPs to stop it (or repeal it if passed into law before Conference).

*Suffolk County Unison*

3.1

In para 2 line 2 after "National Pensioners Convention" add "and the Scottish Pensioners' Forum."

*Scotland Region*

### 4. YOUR PENSION FUND NEEDS YOU!

Conference fully supports the UNISON campaign for transparency and better governance with regard to the pension boards responsible for the pensions of our members, including retired members. It also supports the encouragement of UNISON members to become Member Nominated Representatives (MNRs) on those boards. It is vital to recognise the opportunity this presents to encourage much more representative boards, by ensuring that our MNRs reflect more closely the make-up of our membership, and encouraging more retired members to take up those roles.

Members of Pension Funds need a voice on these boards to fully represent and report on the viability of their schemes. Viable schemes are important not only for

future pensioners but equally so for those scheme members in receipt of a pension. That is why retired members must have the opportunity to be heard on pension boards. 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.

Conference notes that the Service Group Liaison Committee has an agreed implementation project to organise, recruit, train and support UNISON activists who want to become board members.

Conference therefore calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to work with appropriate bodies within UNISON with a view to encouraging the involvement of retired members as MNRs.

*National Retired Members' Committee*

#### 4.1

In the final sentence of the first paragraph after the words "the make-up of our membership" add "including beneficiaries' representatives".

*South West Region*

## **Benefits and Incomes**

### **5. HANDS OFF OUR BENEFITS**

Conference has on several occasions made policies regarding our determination to hang on to the small (but valuable and much valued) universal benefits elderly people have such as bus passes, free TV licenses etc. We must now recognise that there is yet another political threat to these: leading UKIP figures have made no secret of their desire to abolish or at least means-test these benefits should they ever have the political strength to do so. Whilst even a year or so ago that seemed a very remote possibility, their recent successes in the local and European elections, and the virtual demise of the Lib Dems, conjure a nightmare General Election result next year of a no overall control Government led by the Tories with the balance of power held by UKIP. We must recognise - and make our members, who proportionately turn out very well to vote - that UKIP are not our friends, whatever we feel about the EU.

Conference therefore calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to work with our NEC and both our Political Funds to make it very clear to our members and the public exactly how union-unfriendly UKIP's policies really are, and how negative their attitude towards elderly people (as well as women and gay people!) actually is.

*Suffolk County Unison*

#### **5.1**

In the sentence starting "We must recognise.."

Insert "aware" after "vote".

Insert a full stop after "friends" and delete ", whatever we feel about the EU."

*National Retired Members' Committee*

#### **5.2**

In the last sentence of the first paragraph delete "are not our friends" and substitute, "has aims largely opposed to those of UNISON, for example with respect to workers' rights, public services and equalities".

In the second paragraph after "are" delete "and" then delete all after "negative" and substitute:

"the impact UKIP's policies would have on retired people and the harm UKIP's policies on immigration and towards migrant workers would do to the United Kingdom economy especially to the services upon which many retired people rely."

*Wolverhampton General Branch*

#### **5.3**

In the last line after "as well as" add "disabled people"

*Scotland Region*

## 6. FIGHT REGARDING UNIVERSAL BENEFITS

Conference agrees that the obvious threat from all of the Political parties is to reduce or eliminate Pensioner State Benefits. This threat should be contested at every opportunity.

Any reductions in these benefits will have an adverse affect on pensioners especially those who are already on the breadline.

Pensioners need the bus pass, free health prescriptions and winter fuel payment, why because the state pension is nowhere near a living income.

Therefore, Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to liaise with the National Executive Committee and National Pensioners Convention to ensure that whichever government is in power is aware to keep their "hands off our Universal Benefits" and report back to 2015 Retired Members Conference.

*East Midlands Region*

### 6.1

Para 4 line 2 after "National Executive Committee" add "the Scottish Pensioners' Forum"

*Scotland Region*

## 7. UNIVERSAL BENEFITS

Conference opposes any attempts by Governments across the UK to cut universal benefits for older people such as the winter fuel payment, free bus pass, free prescriptions and free TV licences.

These benefits are essential to ensuring a decent standard of living and social inclusion for millions of pensioners who face daily poverty, fuel poverty and discrimination due to inadequate occupational and state pensions, as well as unequal access to public services including health and social care. They are essential to help keep older people independent and active.

Conference:

1. refutes the myth that all pensioners are wealthy. The reality is that the UK is ranked fourth out of 27 EU countries in relation to the risk of poverty amongst older people.
2. refutes the myth that pensioners are a burden on society. Research shows that the overall net contribution by older people to the UK economy is almost £40bn a year.
3. refutes the myth that means testing will help the neediest. All the evidence shows that means testing does not work for older people with over £5billion a year of means tested benefits going unclaimed, mostly by those who need them the most.
4. refutes the myth that older people have escaped the austerity measures. Over the past few years the Winter Fuel Payment has been reduced, personal tax allowances have been frozen; pensions have been indexed to a lower CPI measure of inflation (CPI); and the increase in the state pension age for women has been brought forward.

Conference calls on the National Retired Members Committee to work with the 'Hands Off' campaign' in its struggle to defend universal benefits for older people. The 'Hands Off' campaign is currently backed by the Age Sector Platform in Northern Ireland, the National Pensioners' Convention, the Welsh Senate of Older People and the Scottish Seniors Alliance.

Conference also calls on the National Retired Members Committee work with all relevant UNISON structures to oppose any current and future attack on universal benefits.

*UNISON Northern Ireland*

### 7.1

In the penultimate paragraph delete "Scottish Seniors Alliance" and add "Scottish Pensioners' Forum"

*Scotland Region*

## 8. WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE: TIME FOR AN INCREASE

In March this year a report by the energy regulator Ofgem criticised the effectiveness of competition in the UK energy market. Ofgem has called for an investigation by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) which could take 18 months to complete. The price of energy has become an important political issue, particularly after several of the 'big six' (accounting for 95% of the energy supply market) raised tariffs at the end of 2013. Although some suppliers have announced price freezes – and Ed Miliband has pledged to freeze energy prices for 20 months if Labour is elected in 2015 – even the most optimistic timescale for some improvement in market competition, perhaps bringing a halt to price rises, cannot change the burden of energy costs in the winter of 2014/15 and beyond.

Last winter, Age UK reported that more than a quarter of pensioners over the age of 65 were worried about staying warm at home; half of pensioners were concerned about the increasing costs of energy bills. The Government can do something to help. As called for by York Older People's Assembly: it is time the Government increased the value of the Winter Fuel Allowance. The allowances were the same in 2013 as they were in 2008. This is shameful. Average household bills have doubled in the past six years, so the proportion of energy costs covered by WFA has probably halved.

This Conference urges the UNISON National Retired Members Committee and the NEC to liaise with other unions, and with older people's campaigning organisations, to lobby the Government for an increase in Winter Fuel Allowance. Reforms to the energy market are still a long way in the future; pensioners need this help now.

*York City Branch*

## 9. WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE

Conference is very concerned that the Winter Fuel Allowance payments were included in the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne's Budget statement on 19 March 2014, when he stated that benefits will be capped in 2015/16.

The statistic (National Pensioners Convention) for the 2013/14 winter is that 31,000 pensioners died of cold-related diseases. The United Kingdom is the 7th richest country in the world and it allows people to die in situations which could be avoided if money was available to pay for gas, electricity etc. so that they could keep warm. What a shocking statistic!

If the basic state pension was raised to above the poverty level (£178 per week for a single pensioner) from £113.10 (April 2014), a deficit of £64.90, pensioners would be able to afford to heat their homes AND eat, whereas, at present, in many cases they have to make a choice between the two. While the basic state pension remains one of the worst in Europe, the Winter Fuel Allowance and other benefits are crucial to the survival of pensioners.

The Government has been unwilling or unable to curb the massive rises in energy prices and the large energy companies are continuing to make huge profits.

Therefore, this UNISON National Retired Members Conference instructs the National Retired Members Committee and calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. campaign urgently for an increase in the Winter Fuel Allowance to £700 for the over 80's households and £500 for the under 80's households in 2015;
2. build a campaign to encourage the major energy companies to curb their prices;
3. take positive action to make our concerns known to the Government through LabourLink, national and regional branches of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), local Trades Councils, by lobbying MPs, and by supporting the National Pensioners Convention in their campaigns.
4. report regularly on progress to National Retired Members Committee meetings and publicise on all appropriate communication channels, including the national UNISON website, U Magazine, In-Focus and E-Focus. The information must also be circulated to Regions and Branches.
5. report back to the 2015 National Retired Members Conference on action taken and actual achievements.

*South East Region*

9.1

In point 3 after "National Pensioners Convention" add "and the Scottish Pensioners' Forum"

*Scotland Region*

## 10. THREAT TO THE BUS PASS AND UNIVERSAL BENEFITS

This Conference calls upon the National Retired Members' Committee to continue to fight for the retention of the bus pass for all eligible older people and the retention of all universal benefits.

It notes that many buses rely heavily on older people to keep them running. Should the bus pass be withdrawn, many buses would have few passengers and this would seriously impact on the viability of service provision. This would have a particularly devastating impact on the elderly, leading to greater isolation and would be harmful to the local economy.

*South West Region*

## 11. CONCESSIONARY BUS PASS

Conference is very concerned that the concessionary bus pass for pensioners is being attacked and no political party has stated that it will be retained after the 2015 election.

Withdrawing the bus pass from pensioners will need another Act of Parliament (original Transport Act 2008) but that won't stop this Government or any other one from passing an Act to withdraw it after the 2015 General Election.

One of the main benefits of the bus pass is social inclusion which contributes to keeping well physically and mentally by allowing pensioners to travel in England without worrying about the cost. Contacts with families and friends, engaging with community related activities and reducing the likelihood of isolation contributes to supporting the Department of Health's goals of 'social inclusion' and 'better health through exercise and stimulation'.

The use of buses by older people has ensured, in some cases, that routes are retained for the fare paying public, particularly in rural areas. Bus services are run as commercial ventures and grants and subsidies to bus companies are crucial to their profits. Without them, more services will be cancelled.

Therefore, this UNISON National Retired Members Conference instructs the National Retired Members Committee and calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. campaign urgently to make our concerns known to the Government through LabourLink, national and regional branches of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), local Trades Councils, by lobbying MPs, and by supporting the National Pensioners Convention in their campaigns.
2. campaign to extend the concession to include cross border travel in the UK and to include ferry and train travel concessions;
3. report regularly on progress to National Retired Members' Committee meetings and publicise on all appropriate communication channels, including the national UNISON website, U Magazine, In-Focus and E-Focus. The information must also be circulated to Regions and Branches.
4. report back to the 2015 National Retired Members Conference on action taken and actual achievements.

*South East Region*

11.1

In point 1, after "(TUC)" add "the STUC" and after "National Pensioners Convention" add "and the Scottish Pensioners' Forum"

*Scotland Region*

## Care of Older People

### 12. FREE SOCIAL CARE IN ENGLAND

Conference supports integrating health and social care services providing the principal aim of doing so is to improve the quality of services particularly for older people. Conference believes that services can only be successfully integrated if social care is made, like health, free at the point of need.

Conference therefore welcomes:

1. The Labour Party's policy, 'Whole Person Care' to integrate the two services in England; and,
2. Reports that the Labour Party is considering making social care in England free at the point of need.

However, Conference remains concerned:

A. That the principal aim driving the present government's approach to integration is not service quality but that pooling budgets will save money and its analysis that integration is quite compatible with competition.

B. That Labour has not so far rejected this approach, rather it too appears more concerned with the integration of budgets and organisations than of services and committed to a model where its proposed Health and Wellbeing Boards will commission services not provide them.

Conference reiterates UNISON's view that public services are at their best when they are delivered directly by bodies which have been directly elected to do so and which remain accountable to the general public.

Conference therefore urges that integration be pursued as an anti-market measure and as an opportunity to:

- i. Introduce free social care for older people
- ii. Rebuild the public sector in social care and defend health from privatisation; and,
- iii. Defend and rebuild collective bargaining, level up terms and conditions and root out abusive employment practices like zero hours contracts.

Further, Conference believes it is vital that UNISON's strategy is based on uniting the aims and values of the workforce with those of older people and other service users.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to:

- a. Urge the National Executive Council to continue to bring together UNISON's campaigns on integration and on free social care for older people.

b. Raise this matter with the relevant UNISON Service Group Executives and seek to ensure that, in discussions about integration, UNISON reflects the views both of UNISON members employed in health and social care and UNISON retired members who use the services.

c. Raise the issue with the National Pensioners' Convention.

*West Midlands Region*

#### 12.1

After point c. last paragraph, add new point:

d. Publicise progress on the UNISON National Retired Members website and report results of discussions with UNISON Service Group Executives and the National Pensioners Convention to all UNISON National Retired Members Committee meetings in order to keep Regions/Branches informed.'

*South East Region*

#### 12.2

Insert after "other service users" and before "Conference instructs":

"In addition, Conference notes that millions of pounds annually are saved to the economy by the efforts of unpaid carers looking after parents or other relatives in their own homes, often on a 24/7 basis. The great majority of those receiving such care are elderly people, many with physical disabilities or mental illnesses such as dementia. The Carers' Allowance [paid only if the carer does 35 hours a week or more] is £61.35 a week. Attendance Allowance of £54 or £81 a week is paid to disabled people over 65 in need of 24/7 care. This is "Free Social Care" indeed!

Conference is appalled that what is a strenuous, physically and emotionally demanding job is not recognised as such and is rewarded at a level far below the National Minimum Wage."

Add at end of motion:

"d. Work with the National Executive Council to seek the backing of the whole union and other relevant bodies in mounting a major campaign aimed at improving payments and other help for carers so that our retired members and all other elderly people needing care can have their needs met without their carers being exploited."

*Eastern Region*

### 13. CARE HOME STAFF

Conference notes with concern that the conditions of service of Care Staff is a real scandal and as a result the frail, elderly people are not receiving the level of service they should.

A study by Baroness Kingsmill has stated that frail elderly people are being exposed to neglect and abuse because caring and compassionate workers are being “forced out” of their jobs by low pay and poor conditions of service. The care industry is now in a “vicious downward spiral”, staffed by “exhausted”, rushed and disillusioned workers, many of whom are determined to leave the care sector the study argues.

Baroness Kingsmill further states that in all her years as an employment lawyer she had never seen so many under-qualified, undertrained and underpaid staff in any sector of the economy. The Carers are paid below the minimum wage, forced to accept zero-hours contracts, have few if any qualifications and even fewer opportunity to be trained.

The Cavendish Review set up by the government recommended that care workers undergo training program with an accreditation before they are allowed to work alone unsupervised. The government has rejected it as being ‘too bureaucratic’.

Most elderly people will end their lives needing the compassion and tenderness of healthcare assistants, at home, in hospital or a care home.

Conference calls upon National Retired Members’ Committee to work with National Executive Council and other relevant organisations to:

1. campaign vigorously for the improvement of conditions of service of caring staff particularly those working with the elderly;
2. high-light the scandal of poor services being given to the elderly and frail at present and seek in partnership with other agencies for improvements for decent care and compassion for the elderly;
3. report to next year’s National Retired Members Conference 2015 the progress made to address the outrageous and appalling situation.

*Greater London Region*

### 14. ETHICAL CARE CHARTER

Homecare workers are personally propping up a deteriorating system of adult social care but are being pushed to breaking point. That they are still willing to deliver good levels of care in spite of the system is nothing short of heroic. For the system to work it needs to be underpinned by adequate funding and a workforce whose terms and conditions reflect the respect and value they deserve. Crucially they must be given the time to care.

The over-riding objective behind the Ethical Care Charter is to establish a minimum baseline for the safety, quality and dignity of care by ensuring employment conditions which (a) do not routinely short- change clients and (b) ensure the recruitment and retention of a more stable workforce through more sustainable pay conditions and training levels.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to:

1. publicise UNISON's Ethical Care Charter to all Retired Members' groups;
2. encourage groups to work with their branches to encourage employers to sign up to the Ethical Care Charter;
3. ensure that the National Retired Members' Committee liaises with the National Executive Committee and the National Committees of other self-organised groups to ensure there is a coherent and inclusive strategy for implementing the Ethical Care Charter at National, Regional and Branch levels.

*Islington UNISON (M)*

## 15. ETHICAL CARE CHARTER FOR COMMISSIONING HOME CARE

Conference welcomes the publication of Time to Care, UNISON's Report into home care and an Ethical Care Charter for commissioning home care which sets out the following principles:

1. Visits shall be based on client need and appropriate care will be provided. Time allocated will match need and 15 minutes will not generally be appropriate
2. Homecare workers will not be forced to rush their time with clients and will be paid for travel time, full travel costs and necessary expenses such as mobile phones,
3. Continuity of care will be provided wherever possible by staff who have been trained to provide a good standard of care in work time and at no expense to themselves
4. Homecare Workers will have the opportunity to meet regularly as co- workers to share best practice and limit isolation
5. Providers will have clear and accountable procedures to follow up staff concerns about the wellbeing of clients.
6. Staff will be paid a living wage, statutory sick pay and be enrolled in an occupational sick pay scheme so they do not feel pressured to work when ill and thus protect vulnerable clients
7. Zero hours contracts will not be used in place of permanent contracts

Conference calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to work with Labour Link to seek Labour Party support for the charter.

It further calls upon the Committee to work with the NEC, National Pensioners Convention and TUC Pensioners Networks to promote the Charter and seek its

adoption by Councils and other providers of home care, having regard to the guidance in the report.

*Derbyshire County*

15.1

In point 3 line 1 delete "wherever possible"

In point 3 line 2 delete "good" and add "recognised"

In the last paragraph after "National Pensioners Convention" add "and the Scottish Pensioners' Forum"

*Scotland Region*

## 16. PENSIONERS AND PROSTATE CANCER

At a previous National Retired Members Conference, the delegates noted a resolution high-lighting the fact that prostate cancer in men is a real matter of concern as the prostate cancer has overtaken lung cancer as the single most common cancer in all men in the UK and accounts for 24% of all new cancer diagnosis. Research has shown that 1 in every 8 and 1 in 4 black men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer at some point in their lives and that certain ethnic minority groups are more prone to it.

100 cases of prostate cancer are diagnosed every day. That is 1 every 15 minutes

Conference further notes that prostate cancer mainly affects men over the age of 50 and the risk increases with age. The average age for men to be diagnosed with prostate cancer is in their retirement years between 70 and 74 years.

There is a lot of myth and mis-information about the subject of prostate cancer and all pensioners will benefit from education about the symptoms and treatment available and that early diagnosis is important for successful treatment.

Men including the pensioners are reluctant to visit the doctor and many find it difficult to discuss or talk about prostate cancer.

Conference calls upon National Retired Members' Committee to work with National Executive Council and other relevant organisations to:

1. continue to campaign vigorously for greater understanding and factual awareness of prostate cancer, its treatment and the benefits of earliest screening for pensioners;
2. disseminate and publicise the research and other information about prostate cancer in UNISON publications and to local branches.

*Greater London Region*

16.1

In action point 2:

Insert a comma after “publications” and add “on the UNISON National Retired Members’ website, Regional websites” and delete “local” before “branches”.

*National Retired Members’ Committee*

## 17. DRUG MONITORING AND SUITABILITY FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Conference recognises that as we get older, medically more things are prone to go wrong. Fortunately, both well established and new drugs can be prescribed which assist in the management of acute and chronic conditions in older people. We can continue to lead active, useful and interesting lives long after our parents would have succumbed to unmanaged illness and disease.

Unfortunately the outcome of taking prescribed drugs is not always as intended. In pharmacological terms older people are not just older adults. It cannot be assumed that the understanding of how a drug works in an adult is automatically applicable to either children or older people. In older people kidney or liver function may have declined so how the body processes the drug or reacts to it will not replicate that of “adults”. This may lead to increased risk of accumulation and toxicity.

Older people are far more prone to having a range of medical problems each of which has a drug prescribed to alleviate symptoms etc. Even if appropriate “older person” medication is prescribed, the effects and side effects and interaction of one drug with another has not usually been researched. Few clinical trials deliberately include older people or those on multiple medications with several medical conditions. Age and assumed frailty are the predominant reasons for excluding older people from randomised clinical trials - a catch 22 situation.

Treatment guidelines for both General Practitioners and Hospital based prescribers appear to be more disease-driven than patient centred and specific guidance on drug treatment of older people is often lacking. This can lead to either over or under prescribing - both are harmful.

However, due to demographic changes pharmaceutical companies are beginning to see a profit in developing drugs safe for older people and with full guidance on which drugs are suitable to use together. Whilst welcoming this action, it is common knowledge that for very good reason, it takes many years for drug research, development, clinical trials and approval by the NHS before a new drug can be prescribed. In the meantime we have a potentially unsafe situation to manage.

Conference also recognises that the very convenient system of repeat prescriptions may be compounding the problem by lack of monitoring side effects of single or multiple medications. Some practices and individual GPs have a maximum time for a prescription to be repeated but there is no maximum time set down by regulation. It is generally accepted that older people “do not want to create a fuss” so will be the

least likely to question the repeat prescription and will wait until the GP recalls the patient rather than complain of side effects or ask for a review.

Conference instructs the NRMC to

1. ask the General Medical Council to

A. promote good medical practice by reminding Doctors of the need to ensure prescriptions for older people are suitable for them as far as is known;

B. promote good medical practice by ensuring Doctors recognise the possible hazards of prescribing multiple medications

C. ensure Doctors frequently monitor patients issued with repeat prescriptions as part of their good care responsibilities to the patient;

2. promote an information campaign amongst Members, the National Pensioners Convention and the Scottish Pensioners Forum aimed at advising older people that they are entitled to a review of their medication whenever they consider it necessary.

*Scotland Region*

17.1

In action point 2:

Delete “whenever they consider it necessary” and insert “on a regular basis and at least once every three months”.

*National Retired Members' Committee*

## 18. WIDER SOCIETAL BENEFITS OF TREATMENT

Conference notes that the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has rejected a proposal from the Department of Health that its assessment of new medicines should include the evaluation of wider societal benefit (WSB).

Wider Societal Benefit is a measure of the impact of a treatment on the extent to which people living with an illness or disease produce or consume resources. This means that for some patients they will receive more from society than they are able to give back. Inevitably this will take age into account to some degree.

The Institute has however put forward an alternative approach of wider societal impact (WSI). This does not rely on calculations of production and consumption but instead assesses the shortfall of people’s ability to contribute to society as a result of their disease or condition and takes into account the impact of a condition on people’s ability to interact in and contribute to wider society.

Conference further notes that a public consultation on this latter proposal has taken place.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to work with the National Health Committee to oppose any attempt to introduce WSB or WSI and to campaign for a return to the principle on which the National Health Service was founded, namely that all treatment, including medicines, should be free and available to all.

*National Retired Members' Committee*

## **Organisational and Internal**

### **19. RESTRUCTURING ANNUAL RETIRED MEMBERS CONFERENCE**

Conference acknowledges that after the narrow defeat on a card vote of motion 32 at last year's conference the issue of the structure of Retired Members Conference needs to be looked at in more depth.

In recent years Conference has allowed more time for debate of motions at the beginning of the agenda often to the detriment of those near the end. As a result at the last few Conferences the Standing Orders Committee have sought and been granted a reduction in speaking time for the afternoon session. This has significantly impacted those motions further down the agenda which includes those to do with arrangements for Conference as well as other retired members' issues and other important topics. This seems to be inherently inequitable and not give comparable debating time to later motions.

One way for Conference to address this imbalance would be for all delegates to be more disciplined and restrict seemingly endless debate on motions with no opposition, or for the President who chairs Conference, to do this on our behalf. But this latter option would probably be seen as too prescriptive and therefore not viable.

Either way Conference agrees that we need to deal with this matter as a priority and to try and come up with a way of allowing adequate debate on all the motions on the agenda rather than just those that heard in the morning session.

One obvious suggestion would be to rejig the first afternoon where currently we have workshop sessions and replace them with expert speakers on relevant topics and/or commence debate on motions at this time. Given that with the current arrangements all delegates cannot attend workshops as there are insufficient places, those who are denied attendance are effectively disenfranchised from this aspect of Conference. A new arrangement would address this inequity at the same as offering more debating time. Thus Conference would officially start after the Caucus meetings.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to:

1. Work with the NEC and other relevant bodies to explore ways of extending Conference business and debating time without extending the length of Conference so that delegate participation is fair and there is a balance between respecting all motions and focussing debate and further discussion on the issues of most concern to retired members, where action by the NRMC and members across the union is a priority;
2. Report back on progress to National Retired Members Conference 2015.

*East Midlands Region*

## 20. CONFERENCE CAUCUSES

Conference recalls that caucuses for black members, disabled members, lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender members and women members were introduced to the programme of this conference in 2009.

Conference confirms that the caucuses make a valuable contribution to the conference but believes their arrangements could be improved.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to:

1. Consider whether Tuesday could be re-arranged to give each caucus more than half an hour;
2. Consider how to publicise the caucuses and their purpose more effectively, promote participation and make clear they are an integral part of the conference; and,
3. Arrange for caucuses to make reports, for the committee to consider and respond to them and for the reports and responses to be available, say with the committee's annual report.

*Wolverhampton General Branch*

## 21. COMMUNICATIONS

Conference notes that since the untimely demise of "interactive" there has not been any direct means of communication with retired members except the "U" Magazine. Articles in this publication, whilst interesting and informative, seldom address any of the important issues of concern to retired members and seldom present positive image of older and/or retired members involved with UNISON's wider affairs.

Conference further notes that use of the national web site has not been as effective as it could be in reporting retired member activities.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee (NRMC) seeking the support of the National Executive Council as need be to look at how communications can be made more effective and by considering adopting the following:

1. Producing an electronic copy of "interactive" on a regular basis
2. Keeping the National Retired Members' web-site page up to date
3. Having regular communication between the National and Regional Retired Members' Committees
4. Encouraging Regions to produce retired members' newssheets on a regular basis
5. Encouraging Regions to have and maintain up to date retired members' page on their web-sites.

Conference further instructs the NRMC to seek to ensure that UNISON's publications consistently present images of older and/or retired members which recognise their diversity and appreciate their contribution.

*West Midlands Region*

## 22. COMMUNICATIONS

The National Retired Members' Committee continues to work to ensure that the UNISON website serves as an efficient means of communicating with over 166,000 Retired members. It is vital that members are provided with information about campaigns that they can get involved with and the activities being undertaken by UNISON.

However, the National Committee recognises that many members believe that the above aims could be best met by relaunching the Interactive retired members' newsletter in some electronic format. This is necessary as there is limited space in the current U magazine to provide sufficient coverage of retired members' issues.

Therefore, this Conference calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to work with UNISON's Communications to relaunch Interactive on the retired members' pages of the UNISON website.

In addition, Conference asks the National Retired Members' Committee to investigate the feasibility of establishing a database of retired member email addresses to which the electronic version of Interactive could be sent to directly.

*National Retired Members' Committee*

## 23. COCOA TINS AND STRING

Conference is very concerned that, as more and more important communications are made online solely, retired members who do not have computer access (except for the limited use available in public libraries – where they have not been closed) are being left out and left behind. Regions and large Branches, let alone UNISON Head Office, can only afford to communicate with retired members by post on very infrequent occasions; UNISON's all-member magazine is infrequent and rarely contains any reference to retired members. In addition, many elderly people have little knowledge of IT and feel uncomfortable asking for help with using it, especially if they have no grandchildren. However, they deserve better from their union than to be ignored.

Quite obviously UNISON cannot afford to buy every retired member a laptop and a week's intensive training in its use. However we do have a fair amount of expertise amongst us, both in paid officers and lay members, some of which might be pooled to address this problem, for instance looking at rather old technologies like "internet-through-the-telly", and developing newer ideas with similar "broadcast" effect. Also, at least one region (Greater London) has run IT classes for retired members – an idea which might be borrowed and used elsewhere.

Conference therefore calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to work with the National Executive Council to establish a network of people in UNISON with communications expertise (seeking volunteers from our lay organisation and requesting some staff resource) to address the matter of communications with and amongst our retired members who do not currently have IT access. Conference also calls on our National Retired Members' Committee to seek information about IT classes (eg as in Greater London) and to spread this experience to all regions to help them set up similar opportunities.

*Eastern Region*

## 24. INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION FOR OLDER PEOPLE

This Conference notes with concern that retired people who are not on line and are unable to access the internet can be significantly disadvantaged both economically and socially. They are unable to take advantage of deals on, for example, fuel and transport and are deprived of services that are accessible solely on line. They are also excluded from many social, educational and cultural communications. This can create and compound the isolation and vulnerability experienced by many older people.

Conference also notes with concern the stigmatisation in the mass media of older people who do not have access to the internet (often because they cannot afford to purchase and maintain a computer) as "incompetent" and "baffled" by technology, thus attempting to blame them for their own exclusion by others.

Conference believes that everyone has the right to participate fully in the life of their unions, their communities and in the wider society and to have access to all services and communications they need for their health, well-being and daily life through media channels that are available to them. It further believes that exclusion from access to communications is a form of discrimination that disproportionately affects older people and that this may be compounded by a number of factors, including disability and living in rural areas.

National Retired Members Conference therefore calls upon the National Retired Members' Committee to campaign to:

1. raise awareness of these issues within UNISON, the trade union movement and in the wider society
2. resist all moves to make access to goods, services, benefits and social communications available only via the internet
3. counter the stereotyping of older people as self-isolated and incompetent communicators
4. work with the National Pensioners Convention and other relevant bodies to further these ends.

*South West Region*

24.1

4th para: 1st line: after 'therefore' delete 'calls upon' insert 'instructs'

After 'Committee' insert 'and calls on the National Executive Council'

After point 4. insert new point '5. report progress on the UNISON National Retired Members website and report updates to the meetings of the UNISON National Retired Members Committee.'

*South East Region*

## 25. FUNDING FOR RETIRED MEMBER ACTIVITY

Conference notes that the National Executive Council has submitted several rule changes to National Delegate Conference including one on adequate and agreed funding for retired member activity.

Conference also notes the existence of Regional Pools. These Regional Pools are intended to be an additional source of branch funding for specific items where the branch could not otherwise afford them.

Clarification has been obtained that branches can make application to the Regional Pool in respect of retired member activity such as the cost of sending a retired member representative to the National Retired Members Conference. To qualify for a grant branches will have to demonstrate that they cannot afford the proposed expenditure. This will mean disclosure of branch finances to the Region.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to request the National Executive Council to issue detailed guidance to branches, including appropriate paragraphs in the Code of Good Branch Practice and other appropriate materials e.g. the Retired Members' Secretaries Handbook so that the cost of retired member activity, excluding social activities, can be met by the branch and that branches are further advised to make application to the Regional Pool if they have not got the financial resources to enable them to properly fund such retired member activity.

*National Retired Members' Committee*

## 26. AGEING WELL IN UNISON

Conference recognises that one of the factors to account for the growth of UNISON's Retired Members' Organisation is growing longevity. While this mainly consists of existing members growing older there are also instances of former members taking up retired membership many years after they left work.

Conference asserts that longevity is an asset not a liability and we must ensure the wellbeing of older people and enlist their participation in our union so we all benefit from their knowledge and ability.

Conference notes that:

1. Older pensioners tend to be less well off than younger pensioners;
2. Older pensioners are more likely to be disabled and/or to be caring for a disabled spouse or partner; and,
3. Older pensioners are more likely to have been widowed, to live alone, no longer to have friends or relations living nearby and to report sometimes feeling lonely which may be a risk factor for poor mental and physical health.

Conference is concerned that UNISON remains responsive to the needs and aspirations of all its members. It therefore instructs the National Retired Members' Committee, collaborating with the National Executive Council or others as need be, to investigate whether UNISON serves Retired Members of all ages equally well and to report to next year's conference with proposals and recommendations.

Its investigation should include but need not be restricted to as many as possible of the following:

- A. Take-up of learning services particularly computer skills;
- B. Applications to UNISON Welfare and their outcomes analysed by age;
- C. Take-up of UNISONPlus services, whether members continue to find these services relevant as they get older and, if appropriate, the scope to introduce new services;
- D. Whether UNISON should signpost members to services such as AgeUK's befriending services;
- E. How to seek to ensure that there are positive images of members of all ages in appropriate UNISON publicity and that of partner organisations;
- F. How to promote and share good practice in regions and branches; and,
- G. Considering whether UNISON's internal monitoring, at least for this conference and for the committee, should have an extra older age-band.

Conference urges UNISON Branch Retired Members' Groups to:

- I. Review their practices in the above respects with a view to sharing good practice via Regional Retired members' Committees, and,
- II. Consider surveying views of older members and sharing results so these can form part of the national review.

*Wolverhampton General Branch*

## **Other campaigns**

### **27. TRAVEL INSURANCE**

Conference notes with concern the lack of reviewing of the age of the older population when Travel Insurance is required. Insurance companies take no consideration for anyone becoming “over 70 years of age” and premiums are increased on age alone. Government policy on retirement age is to increase the age of retirement.

Therefore we instruct the National Retired Members Committee to seek ways to approach the Insurance industry to review the age of the insured to 80 years of age, in accordance with government policy.

*Derbyshire County*

### **28. NATIONAL PENSIONERS' CONVENTION**

The National Pensioners Convention (NPC) is Britain’s biggest independent campaigning organisation for older people representing 1.5 million pensioners from both Unions and Pensioners Groups nationwide. The NPC’s main objective is to promote the welfare and interests of today and future pensioners, as a way of securing dignity, respect and financial security for all pensioners.

Conference will be aware that many UNISON retired members are active in the campaigning activities of the NPC locally, throughout the United Kingdom and within the EU. This is advantageous to UNISON as it enables us to convey our message to a wider audience and potentially build links with other Pensioners’ Organisations. The NPC is the lead campaign group fighting for a fairer Pension for all, Dignity in Care, Defending Universal Benefits and committed to building solidarity between the generations and opposes attempts to divide the different age groups in society. Their activities include regular Rallies and the Lobbying of Parliament on issues that affect older people. It has a Parliamentary Support Group of Cross Party Politicians to support the work of the NPC.

Conference will be further aware that the National Pensioners Convention operates on very limited resources and is mainly dependent on the fees it receives from national affiliates such as UNISON and other trade unions. Further funding is necessary for the NPC not only to survive but to raise its profile and increase its efficiency in campaigning on behalf of older people. Their recently launched “Friends of the NPC” is open to anyone for a monthly donation starting from £1.00 or whatever can be afforded which would bring in much needed funding.

Conference notes that one recent initiative is “The Dignity Action Day 2014”. Fifty events took place nationally and the aim was to promote the Convention’s Dignity Code amongst the Public, Local officials and Health professionals.

Conference believes that the NPC is an important campaigning partner and therefore requests that the National Retired Members Committee:

1. Encourage English, Welsh and Northern Irish Branches to affiliate to the NPC Nationally and/or regionally and Scottish Branches to affiliate to NPC Scotland.
2. Promote amongst English, Welsh and Northern Irish members the Supporters card and- Friends of the NPC- to promote any similar initiative proposed by the Scottish Pensioners Forum amongst Scottish Members.
3. To support the NPC ongoing Rights in Retirement Campaign for a decent State Pension, proper care and an end to Fuel Poverty.

*Leicestershire Healthcare*

28.1

In point 1 delete all after "and/or regionally"

*Scotland Region*

## 29. FIGHT AGAINST PLANS TO MAKE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT FORMS ONLINE-ONLY

Conference is very concerned about government plans to make majority of public services only available online. Ministers are moving dozens of public services onto the internet, including carers' allowance. The government spokesman is quoted as saying "Our point is that everything that can be delivered online should be delivered online and only online". This proposal would have a particularly deleterious impact on pensioners.

It is estimated that more than five million pensioners have never been online. Many pensioners do not own computers or indeed have the money to purchase them let alone the cost of internet services. Many pensioners struggle to cover everyday costs i.e. heating, food etc. It is suggested that these internet services can be used at local libraries, but as we know many libraries are closing especially in rural areas. We are not all digital citizens and this would make many pensioners second class citizens as well as age related deterioration and mental abilities.

It has been reported in the media that "Help for those who did not know how to use the internet would be given through a 'assisted digital' service, provided by charities such as Alzheimer's Society. But the focus would be on showing them how to go online – not on helping them to access services if they do not wish to use the internet".

Therefore Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to liaise with the National Executive Committee and National Pensioners Convention to ensure that this government knows that this is detrimental to a vast majority of pensioners and consider a campaign on this issue, and report back to Retired Members Conference 2015.

*East Midlands Region*

29.1

In final paragraph line 2 after "National Pensioners Convention" add "and Scottish Pensioners' Forum"

*Scotland Region*

### 30. GENERATIONS UNITED

This Conference deplores the deliberate attacks made to create a division in society between older people and the young generation. In particular, Conference condemns the attacks made upon the “baby boomer” generation.

Conference notes that other organisations such as the National Pensioners Convention are attempting to bridge any divisions with a “Generations United” Campaign.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members Committee to consult with the National Young Members Forum on this issue and to bring forward a report to Conference on how best to combat these attacks.

*West Midlands Region*

30.1

Delete the final paragraph and insert "Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to work with both the National Pensioners' Convention and UNISON's National Young Members' Forum on this issue and bring forward a report to the next National Retired Members' Conference on the progress achieved in combating these attacks."

*South West Region*

### 31. HOUSING FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Conference recognises present policies do not meet the needs of the increasing number of older people.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee and calls upon the National Executive Council to make representations to the Government that: appropriate housing policies should be promoted that ensure the provision of adequate housing supply for older and disabled people, that such housing be exempt from “right to buy” legislation, close to community services and amenities needed by older people and, wherever possible, on “brown field” sites.

*Shropshire General*

31.1

In the last line after "older people" add ", safety and security features incorporated at design stage"

*Scotland Region*

## **AMENDMENTS RULED OUT OF ORDER**

### **Beyond remit of the conference**

#### *Amendment to motion 4*

Add at the end of the final paragraph:

“and to seek to amend UNISON Rule C.2.6.3 to permit Retired Members to stand for office and vote in elections conducted by UNISON for such positions”

*Wolverhampton General Branch*

#### *Amendment to motion 27*

In para 2 delete all after "Insurance industry to" and add "promote consideration of insurance cover not on age alone but to include the health and fitness of the applicant"

*Scotland Region*

### **Not competent**

#### *Amendment to motion 19*

After point 1, insert new points 2 and 3:

2. Ensure that the Annual Report deals efficiently with the previous year's motions thus preventing repetitive motions at each year's UNISON National Retired Members Conference.'

3. Ensure that any restructure of the UNISON National Retired Members Conference goes out to consultation with all regions.

Change existing point '2' to '4'.

*South East Region*

## **MOTIONS RULED OUT OF ORDER**

### ***Action not specific to the conference***

#### **GLOBAL WARMING AND THE CONSEQUENCES**

This North Yorkshire Branch Retired Members; committee notes and deplors that:

(i) 97% of the world scientific community agrees that climate change is unequivocally caused by humans, and a UN International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report advises that, unchecked, it poses a grave threat to people (old and young) and could lead to wars and mass migration, and

(ii) the IPCC warns that carbon emissions have soared in the last decade and are now growing at almost double the previous rate, but the IPCC analysis found rapid action can still limit global warming to 2C, the internationally agreed safe limit, if low-carbon energy triples or quadruples by 2050.

(iii) The IPCC advises that catastrophic climate change can be averted without sacrificing living standards, and the transformation required to a world of clean energy is eminently affordable. Furthermore, it is evident that the cheapest and least risky route to dealing with global warming is to abandon all dirty fossil fuel.

Accordingly, it is important to promote the conservation of energy and fuel, and we call on the government to promote the use of public transport by continuing the senior citizens' entitlement to free travel on buses, and to increase the provision of grants for installation and other energy-saving measures to pensioners and the poorest members of society.

We therefore call upon the NRMCA to use all means at its disposal to ensure that all parties of Government adhere to their commitment to cut down by all possible means, on global warming.

*North Yorkshire Br. of Unison*

#### **OPPOSING THE ATTACK ON LEGAL AID PROVISION**

Conference in conjunction with the NEC agrees to campaign to halt or repeal the proposals to change Legal Aid which have no mandate since the Liberal Democrat motion which opposed them in September 2013. Many of the changes have been criticised by Parliament's Joint Human Rights Committee. We believe these changes to civil and criminal Legal Aid undermine the rule of law (fairness) and access to justice. Older people are less likely to be able to access justice because of reduced means. The changes create an unequal society where those with wealth and power have an unfair advantage before the law.

*Camden UNISON*

## ASSISTED DYING

Conference recognises that some terminally ill people suffer against their wishes at the end of life and that some people take matters into their own hands, including travelling at great emotional and financial cost to die in another country.

Conference recognises that the law, as it stands, means that doctors cannot help a patient to die. However it notes that prosecution guidance, endorsed by Parliament, can be interpreted such that friends or family may help someone to die without medical advice, but ultimately, the risk of being prosecuted cannot be ruled out..

Conference recognises the need to further improve access to end-of-life care, but believes there is also a need to debate a change in the law on assisted dying for the small but significant number of dying people who will suffer, even with the best care.

Conference recognises that there are concerns that a change in the law might threaten potentially vulnerable people and therefore believes that Parliament should provide sufficient time to debate whether a law can be enacted which provides both transparency in decision making at the end of life and protection for vulnerable people

In light of the ongoing public debate on assisted dying:

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee and calls upon the National Executive Council to make representations to the Government to allow Parliament to debate a change in the law that would allow assisted dying, subject to safeguards for vulnerable people.

*Shropshire General*

### ***Beyond remit of the committee***

## CARE OF THE ELDERLY

Conference calls on the National Retired Members Committee and requests the NEC to organise a campaign to ensure that 'Care For The Elderly' becomes fully part of the remit of the NHS, and that proper funding and resources are provided for all elderly people.

To that end, the Care Commission must also be fully funded and staffed to ensure elderly people receive proper care from the providers.

Failure to implement any measures necessary by any suppliers of care, or any failure of the Care Commission, to be liable for prosecution and if found guilty to be either dealt with by severe financial penalties or where appropriate by custodial sentences.

*Slough Borough (L)*

## WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE

Conference again condemns this Governments' failure in dealing with the Winter Fuel Allowance and the continued increases in the cost of energy. The energy companies make hundreds of thousands of pounds per week and it is going out of this country to the parent companies abroad, while spiralling costs are put onto the consumer.

Each year over 20,000 elderly people die due to them not being able to sustain the right amount of warmth in their home. During the winters of 2012 and 2013 we saw an increase of 29% of deaths compared with 2011. The majority of deaths occurred among those aged 75 and over. There were 25,000 excess winter deaths in this age group. The excess winter mortality index has shown the highest in the North West in 2012 and 2013, and London was the lowest.

We need to see more action by the Right to fuel Campaign and the End Fuel Poverty Coalition. Therefore this UNISON National Retired Members' Conference Instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to request the National Executive Council and all other unions to campaign to stop these spiralling costs which not only put pressure on users but would stop the increasing Winter deaths among the elderly.

*North West Region*

### ***Beyond remit of the conference***

## CARE IN THE COMMUNITY FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Conference believes that Elderly People deserve the best possible care in their later life. Presently, we hear of many cases where elderly people are having their care withdrawn sometimes with little or no notice from their Care Providers.

Concerns have risen about the level of care elderly people receive in the Community particularly where this service has been outsourced to Private companies.

Private Homecare companies are exploiting their staff and leaving elderly people without the care and support they need. They routinely employ staff on zero hours contracts which often mean huge swings in paid hours for staff and refusing to pay for travel time between visits, which effectively result in carers being paid below the minimum wage.

Out of their low wages, many care workers have to find the money to pay for their own transport, mobile phones for use by the companies and uniforms.

Some companies providing 15minutes Care to their clients often book back- to- back calls with no travel time at all. This forces Carers to shave minutes off their already packed care slots resulting in many elderly people being short- changed and missing out on vital support.

Many carers are not offered even basic care training, including how to administer medicines, despite having to administer drugs as part of their job.

There is no substitute for human contact for elderly people requiring care and not just the 15 minutes or so currently provided for many vulnerable elderly people.

Conference therefore-

- 1) Instructs the National Retired Members' Committee and call on the National Executive Council to campaign with other relevant organisations such as the NPC and Age UK, to ensure that Government, Local Authorities and Care Agencies responsible for Adult Social Care in the Community provide the best possible Care.
- 2) UNISON continues to campaign for older people to be provided with the appropriate personal care to enable them to continue to live in their own homes.
- 3) To support the NPC in their "Fair Care Campaign" for improved standards, better training and pay for Care staff and the introduction of a Dignity Code to give the rights to all elderly people in receipt of care.
- 4) Continue to promote Unison Ethical Care Charter.

*Leicestershire Healthcare*

## FUNDING RETIRED MEMBERS BRANCHES

A) Many members are disenfranchised from the activities provided and enjoyed by "Retired Members Branches". Small Unison branches (where working membership is in the hundreds) cannot muster enough retired members to set up a viable Retired Members branch. Some Unison branches cover such vast areas that it becomes impractical to have a central location for a Retired Members branch. For this purpose it would be more inclusive if the member could choose the Retired members branch they wish to join. Retiring members should have this point made to them before they retire from work.

B) If retiring members are to cross over from their Unison branch to a retired member's branch closer to where they live there will inevitably be financial pressures on the receiving branch. The £15 paid by the member or Unison Branch upon retirement is always supplemented by the Unison branch to make up an annual budget for the activities of the retired members activities. The total costs need to be shared by all the Unison Branches who feed into the active retired members branch. Therefore we ask that?

"Conference instructs the National Retired Members Committee to look at ways of better including more Unison retired members in the activities of the retired members section. It also calls upon the National Retired Members Committee to suggest better and fairer ways of funding "Retired Members Branches".

Conference also instructs the National Retired Members Committee to put forward their proposals to Unison National Conference in 2015 for ratification and approval”.

*Cardiff County Branch*

## HELP FOR CARERS

Conference notes that millions of pounds annually are saved to the economy by the efforts of unpaid carers looking after parents or other relatives in their own homes, often on a 24/7 basis. Although this does apply to many people of a younger age, the great majority of those receiving such care are elderly people, many with physical disabilities, problems of frailty or mental illnesses such as dementia. At the moment the Carers' Allowance - paid to the carer if [s]he does 35 hours a week - is £61.35 a week, and you have to be over 16 to get it. Additionally, there is an Attendance Allowance of £54 or £81 a week paid to disabled people over 65 if they need 24/7 care because of physical or mental disability. This may or may not be given to the carer.

Conference is appalled that what is a strenuous, physically and emotionally demanding job is not recognised as such and is rewarded at a level far below the National Minimum Wage, let alone any level of Living Wage.

Conference resolves to seek the backing of the whole union and other bodies including the National Pensioners' Convention, the TUC [and the other national and provincial TUCs in the UK] in mounting a major campaign aimed at improving payments and other help for carers so that our retired members and all other elderly people needing care can have their needs met without their carers being exploited.

*Suffolk County Unison*

## POLICIES ON PENSIONER CARE AND BENEFITS

This conference welcomes Unison's Ethical Care Charter and its support for a Living Pension and pensioner benefits such as the winter fuel allowance, the bus pass, free prescriptions, free TV licence for the over 75's, etc.

This is the final Retired Members Conference before the next general election.

This conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members Committee to call upon the NEC and Unison to ascertain the policies of all the main political parties (Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, Green Party, UKIP) towards Unisons policies on these issues.

Conference further calls upon the NEC and Unison to publish the results of this survey in U Magazine or another appropriate union publication, to enable Unison members to make an informed choice on how to use their vote.

*Derbyshire County*

## CHANGES TO OCCUPATIONAL PENSION SCHEMES

Conference notes the changes to occupational pension schemes in recent years.

Pension schemes related to salaries provide the best pensions but note that more and more schemes are based on the Defined Contribution model. All pension schemes, irrespective of design, need to be affordable to its members, robust and capable of delivering a living income.

A number of factors are contributing to the uncertainty in pension provision, for example

- The continuing closure of Defined Benefit Schemes
- Increased use of Defined Contribution Schemes
- Annuity performance and the low return on investments
- The many new proposals relating to pensions including annuity purchase.

With the continuing transfer of employees in public service to private employers, we must recognise that many Unison members will find themselves in less advantageous pension schemes. Provision of a living income after retirement is essential for health and well-being and increases contributions to the economy. In the long term this supports independent living and places less burden on the Health and Care System.

This Conference instructs Unison to carry out research and prepare a report on:

- 1 Robust regulation of the annuities market,
2. Research into the different models of pension schemes to provide Unison with information to enable the National Executive Committee to lobby for changes to legislation so that members are not required to buy into poor financial products.
3. To provide branches with advice when they are negotiating changes to pension provision.
4. to consider the options that should be available for members of Defined Contribution Schemes.

The report to be presented to the Retired Members Conference in 2016.

A.Q.A.

## MAKING ANNUAL RETIRED MEMBERS' CONFERENCE MORE EFFECTIVE

Conference notes that major part of the business very rightly at Annual Retired Members' Conference is spent debating and discussing resolutions on matters of interest to retired members over long periods during a day and half of conference time. This can be tiring and demanding on elderly delegates.

The Conference business can be modified utilizing the free morning period on the first day to commence the business of the Conference. This extra time could be used to break the conference time into chunks to offer opportunities for delegates to make contribution in a participative manner.

It is accepted that there will be resource implications. However, the matter of extra resources should be addressed in the spirit of inconclusiveness that the retired members are equal partners within Unison and that the funding should reflect in a similar fashion to other SOG conferences.

Conference instructs National Retired Members' Committee to work with National Executive Council and other relevant bodies and individuals to:

a] investigate re-structuring the conference business including the possible inclusion of speakers to put forward UNION'S Objectives and Priorities and those of Trades Union Movement and/or those with expert knowledge, power and influence on matters that affect pensioners

b] report back with possible proposals for consideration at the 2015 National Retired Members' Conference.

*Greater London Region*

### ***Can be dealt with in other ways***

#### **RULE 2.6.2 CLARIFICATION**

Conference will be aware that under Rule 2.6.2 no retired member is permitted to vote at their Branch AGM in support of Branch Officers. This motion is not seeking a rule change, but clarification.

When we looked into this rule, it does not make it clear why this rule was made. We are told that it is because of Terms and Conditions of Service which effect working members. But only the Branch Secretary is involved in discussions with the employer over Terms and Pay and the final decision is left with the working members.

Conference we are fully aware that the Retired Members representatives on the Branch Committee would not vote at any meeting where this matter was being discussed. However, the question of who holds the other posts on the Branch Committee has no bearing on this issue and ALL members should have the right to vote. We are also aware that many branch AGM's rely on retired members attending to make the meeting quorate but under this rule cannot vote.

Retired members can vote for who will be the union's General Secretary who is the person who talks to the employers about Terms and Conditions of Service – not the Branch Secretary.

The UNISON Code of Good Branch Practice states on page 64 'The Branch Officers must ensure that ALL members are equally able to cast their vote', but according to the rule book retired members are excluded from this.

Therefore Conference are we, once becoming retired members, no longer looked upon as members of the Branch. Conference retired members play a very important role within the Branch and are often called upon for their support.

Conference we request that the National Retired Members Committee seeks clarification on both Rule 2.6.2 and page 64 of the Code of Good Branch Practice.

*North West Region*

### ***Could place the union in legal jeopardy***

BUS TRAVEL - SAFE JOURNEY CARD

*Not printed on the advice of the legal officer*

### ***Not competent***

AGEISM AND DISCRIMINATION IN HOLIDAY INSURANCE PRICING

Currently providers of travel insurance are raising annual premiums by up to 100% or sometimes more as soon as their customers reach their 70th birthday.

This hike is unacceptably high and unfair considering that our elder population in general remain valuable contributors to our society, and are - by and large - considered to be physically, emotionally and intellectually healthy beyond the age of 70.

Older people should not be discriminated against when it comes to the enjoyment of life in its many aspects including foreign travel. In general senior citizens pose a significantly lower risk in terms of their choice of leisure activities than the younger generation. It is observed that younger people throw caution to the wind and party to excess when on holiday, and yet they are not penalised with higher holiday insurance rates. High rates for insurance cover for 70 and over could exclude an older person on limited income from being able to afford a holiday in a healthier climate.

All travellers are already required to disclose to insurance companies any pre-existing medical conditions. These when assessed influence the cost of the cover. This assessment alone should be the criteria on which the premium is changed not a person's age.

This conference urges the UNISON Retired Members Committee and the NEC to lobby all political parties with a view to seeking new legislation to be included in their 2015 Election manifestos - against discriminatory travel insurance premium rates for older people.

***Not submitted in line with the rules***

**EROSION OF INCOME OF OLDER PEOPLE**

This retired members' committee of the North Yorkshire branch deplores the suggestion by the Government to abolish free bus passes, free prescriptions and free TV licences (for the over 75s) and the winter fuel payments for pensioners. If the free bus passes and free prescriptions were to be abolished for those persons receiving state pension and not for other persons who are in receipt of state funded benefits, this would be discriminatory.

We therefore call upon the National Retired Members Committee to use any means in its power to stop this proposed further erosion of the income of older people.

*North Yorkshire Br. of Unison*

***Not sufficiently clear***

**DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY SAFEGUARDING ORDERS**

Following publication of the Hardie report into the implementation of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, conference notes the concerns that the report's findings have highlighted. We particularly note the concerns expressed in regards to the Deprivation Of Liberty Safeguards (DOLs) orders. The intention of the safeguards is to provide legal protection for people who are deprived of their liberty for their own safety particularly the confused elderly. Evidence suggests that tens of thousands of people are being deprived of their liberty without the protection the Parliament intended this particularly applies to the vulnerable elderly.

This Conference supports the recommendations made in a report by Lord Hardie which include that:

- a) the Government works with regulatory & professional bodies to ensure the act is given a higher profile in training, standard setting & inspections.
- b) Government increases staff resources at the Court of Protection to speed up handling of non-controversial cases;
- c) Government reconsiders the provision of non means tested Legal Aid to those who lack capacity, especially in cases of deprivation of liberty.
- d) Local Authorities & other bodies use their discretionary powers to appoint wholly independent Mental Capacity Advocates more widely than is currently the case, similar to the Board of Prison Visitors;
- e) Government addresses the poor levels of awareness & understanding of Lasting Powers of Attorney & advanced decision to refuse treatment, among professionals in the health & Social Care sectors.

f) Government reviews the criminal law provisions for ill treatment or neglect of a person lacking capacity including the elderly to ensure that it is fit for

Conference calls upon National Retired Members' Committee to work with National Executive Council and other relevant organisations and individuals to:

- 1] campaign rigorously for the implementation of Hardie recommendations;
- 2] disseminate and publicise the findings of Hardie Recommendations in Unison publications.
- 3] report the progress to next year's National Conference 2015..

*Greater London Region*

### ***Received twice***

#### **FUNDING RETIRED MEMBER BRANCHES**

A) Many members are disenfranchised from the activities provided and enjoyed by "Retired Members Branches". Small Unison branches (where working membership is in the hundreds) cannot muster enough retired members to set up a viable Retired Members branch. Some Unison branches cover such vast areas that it becomes impractical to have a central location for a Retired Members branch. For this purpose it would be more inclusive if the member could choose the Retired members branch they wish to join. Retiring members should have this point made to them before they retire from work.

B) If retiring members are to cross over from their Unison branch to a retired member's branch closer to where they live there will inevitably be financial pressures on the receiving branch. The £15 paid by the member or Unison Branch upon retirement is always supplemented by the Unison branch to make up an annual budget for the activities of the retired members activities. The total costs need to be shared by all the Unison Branches who feed into the active retired members branch. Therefore we ask that?

"Conference instructs the National Retired Members Committee to look at ways of better including more Unison retired members in the activities of the retired members section. It also calls upon the National Retired Members Committee to suggest better and fairer ways of funding "Retired Members Branches".

Conference also instructs the National Retired Members Committee to put forward their proposals to Unison National Conference in 2015 for ratification and approval".

*Cardiff County Branch*

### ***Statement not a motion***

#### **TRAINING IN COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

Conference is very concerned that, although many retired members use information technology and social media to communicate their ideas, support UNISON and the causes in which UNISON members believe, UNISON does not provide training for retired members in communication skills and the laws which limit our right to communicate. This is wasting a valuable resource, for many retired members have physical limitations such as deafness, arthritis and reduced memory capacity that limit their usefulness in demonstrations, marches and public meetings, but leave them with the ability to use a keyboard, even if they are not touch-typists.

The need for training has become urgently necessary because the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014, restricts the freedom of Trade Unionists to campaign in the name of their union for social causes that are deemed political by those who wish to silence us. Though it is unlikely that individuals will be punished, we can expect that there will be attempts to waste union resources and finances on answering unjustifiable complaints that legal restrictions have been ignored, for the clue is in the title of the act.

Of course the Act does not affect individuals with less than £20,000 to spend, which gives even wealthy persons who are acting alone the right to share their opinions, but members of pressure groups will feel themselves to be tied down by red tape, and though red tape is gentler than iron chains, uncertainty and apprehension will secure their silence. If that sounds over-dramatic, consider the effect of the libel laws and the use that is made of them: very few cases go to court but many solicitors' letters of advice frighten campaigners into silence.

At the time of writing this motion the Electoral Commission has not issued its advice on the use of social media, but retired members will need clear legal guidance from UNISON to campaign effectively and without detriment to UNISON, but most of all we need the opportunities to get-together in person to talk about experiences and successes.

*Cambridgeshire County Unison*

## OUTRAGEOUS AND UNACCEPTABLE HAPPENINGS IN CARE HOMES

Three years ago when this Conference was held at Chester, I spoke about the outrageous happenings which were taking place in some care homes in this country. You may remember that I suggested that we removed clients out of these homes and put them into prison where they would receive better care than they are getting in these homes which have been highlighted.

At that Conference the meeting moved the motion to fully support action to stop these outrageous and unacceptable happenings, yet we are still seeing and hearing about elderly people being left in worse conditions than animals. Many of you will have seen the BBC Panorama programme earlier this year in which we saw elderly people being struck, abused and left crying out for help. Conference how much longer are we going to allow this continue. If this was taking place in another country we would be outraged and demanding action to stop it. So Conference what has happened in this country to allow it to continue? When will we decide that CARE is not a money making industry, and bring back the the Care that we all remembered when it was run and controlled by the Local Authority.

Conference I would ask that we again challenge this Government and any other Government to stop these outrageous happenings with any means possible. Conference remember you or I could find ourselves in one of these disgusting homes.

I would therefore ask that the National Retired Members Committee and all unions to take what ever action is needed to stop these outrageous happenings. Conference please support this motion.

*Rochdale*

## DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY SAFEGUARDING ORDERS

Following publication of the Hardie Report into the implementation of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 Conference notes the concerns that the report findings have had. We particularly note the concern expressed in regard to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. (DOLs) The intention of the safeguards is to provide legal protection for people who are being deprived of their liberty for their own safety. The evidence suggests that tens of thousands of people are being deprived of their liberty without the protection of the law, and without the protection that Parliament intended. This Conference supports the recommendations made by Lord Hardie which include;-

- Government works with regulators and professional bodies to ensure the Act is given a higher profile in training, standard setting and inspections;
- Government increases the staff resources at the Court of Protection to speed up handling of non-controversial cases;
- Government reconsiders the provision of non-means tested legal aid to those who lack capacity, especially in cases of deprivation of liberty;
- Local Authorities and other bodies use their discretionary powers to appoint wholly Independent Mental Capacity Advocates more widely than is currently the case; (for example Members of the Board of Prison Visitors).
- Government addresses the poor levels of awareness and understanding of Lasting Powers of Attorney and advance decisions to refuse treatment among professionals in the health and social care sectors;
- Government review the criminal law provision for ill-treatment or neglect of a person lacking capacity to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

*Croydon UNISON Branch*