



Higher Education Service Group Conference

Final Agenda

Bradford

26 February 2015

**(Motions contained in this agenda will be debated on
Thursday 26 February 2015)**

**2015 Higher Education Service Group Conference
UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

Order of Business

- 10:00 – 12.30 Opening Remarks by the Chair of Conference
Welcome speech from Karen Jennings
Assistant General Secretary
Bargaining, Negotiating and Equalities
- Appointment of Tellers
- Standing Orders Committee Report Number 1
- Higher Education Service Group Executive
Annual Report 2015
- Motions and Amendments
- 12:00 – 12:30 Guest speaker- Liam Byrne,
Shadow Minister for Universities Science and Skills
- 12:30 – 14.00 Lunch
- 14:30 – 17:00 Motions and Amendments

Motions and amendments

These are the motions and amendments approved for the 2015 Higher Education Service Group Conference. Amendments ruled out of order are also included.

1.	University Governance - <i>National Black Members' Committee</i>
2.	Skills Shortages - <i>Higher Education Service Group Executive</i>
3.	Cuts to Access to Learning Fund (Student Opportunity Fund) - <i>Higher Education Service Group Executive</i>
4. *	Cuts to Disabled Students Allowance - <i>Staffordshire University Branch</i>
5.	For a Fair and Equal Higher Education Policy - <i>University Of Brighton</i>
6.	Zero Tolerance of Biphobia - <i>National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Committee</i>
7. *	Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) - <i>National Disabled Members Committee</i>
7.1 *	Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) – Manchester Metro University
8.	Student Union staff - <i>National Young Members' Forum</i>
9.	Treatment of Workers on Overseas Campuses - <i>University Of West Of England</i>
10.	Vice Chancellors Pay and Key Performance Indicators - <i>South West Region</i>
11.	HE Pay 2015-16 - Higher Education Workers Need a Pay Rise - <i>Higher Education Service Group Executive</i>
11.1	HE Pay 2015-16 - Higher Education Workers Need a Pay Rise - Manchester Metro University
11.2	HE Pay 2015-16 - Higher Education Workers Need a Pay Rise - Manchester Metro University
11.3	HE Pay 2015-16 - Higher Education Workers Need a Pay Rise – <i>Eastern Region</i>
12.	The Living Wage - <i>National Young Members' Forum</i>
12.1	The Living Wage – <i>University of Brighton</i>
12.2	The Living Wage – <i>University of Brighton</i>

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13.	Equal pay in Higher Education - <i>National Women's Committee</i>
13.1	Equal pay in Higher Education - <i>Higher Education Service Group Executive</i>
14.	Austerity and the Living Wage - <i>National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Committee</i>
15.	Fair Annual Leave - <i>Staffordshire University Branch</i>
16.	Scottish JNCHES - <i>Scotland HE Committee</i>
17.	All University Staff are Important - <i>Scotland HE Committee</i>
18.	Disability Leave Policies - <i>National Disabled Members Committee</i>
19. *	Higher Education Branch Seminar - <i>Manchester Metro University</i>
20. *	Putting members at the heart of the UNISON Higher Education Branch Seminar - <i>Birmingham University UNISON</i>
21.	Improving engagement with branches and communication with our members - <i>Eastern Region</i>

*The following have been identified as possible composites:

Composite A: Motion 4 and 7 Amendment 7.1

Composite B: Motion 19 and 20

Cedar Court Hotel - Bradford

26 Feb 2015

Campaigning

1. University Governance

Conference notes the increasing concentration of power in the hands of a few appointed executives on bodies such as pre 92 University Court (e.g. Oxford, Cambridge, Kings etc.) and Post 92 Board of Governors (e.g. Greenwich, Hertfordshire, Sunderland etc.).

The main focus of these bodies is on commercial interests (potentially at the expense of educational values), academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

Conference believes governing boards do not reflect the constituency they serve especially in terms of race. A survey of 188 Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) by Carter et al found only 16% of institutions had Black representation on their governing bodies. Crucially, institutions with higher proportions of Black staff are also more likely to have higher percentages of Black staff on their governing bodies. Diverse governing bodies are more likely to appoint a diverse workforce and operate an equal opportunity recruitment process that does not disproportionately disadvantage Black workers.

We already know that according to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) that race inequality exists throughout the Higher Education Cycle. In 2012 – 13, only 38 out of 129 Higher Education Institutions monitored ethnic diversity of their governing bodies and Black staff were under-represented compared to the Black student population. Further as an outcome Black students were significantly below the sector-adjusted average for both attainment and employment.

Equality legislation is now extensive and imposes specific responsibilities on governing bodies in terms of equality and diversity standards but governing bodies must now consider moving beyond just compliance. The benefits for Black pupils and staff could be substantial. Governors have a significant role to play in promoting an inclusive institutional culture, supporting equal opportunities and not reinforcing negative stereotypes.

Conference believes that:

- 1) University executive bodies need to be more democratic, collegiate and transparent in the way they run Higher Education Institutions.
- 2) That all paid roles should be on the national pay spine to ensure pay equality and transparency at all times.

Conference therefore calls on the Higher Education Service Group Executive to seek to work with the National Black Members Committee to Campaign for:

- a) All governing bodies to be more democratic and accountable
- b) Executive bodies meetings to be held in open session

- c) Transparent and fair appointment processes, including staff representation, better balance in terms of gender and Black representation, and an elected Chair of the Governing body.
- d) To produce a list of governing bodies of all HEIs and a breakdown of members in terms of ethnicity, gender, disability and LGBT, and any other relevant information.

National Black Members' Committee

2. Skills Shortages

Conference acknowledges the serious skills shortage in our workforce that has continued to be a growing problem for several years. These skill shortages are now beginning to be reflected in higher education in IT and engineering. Skilled technicians and associated technical staff form an integral part of the higher education system. Yet there is now a shortage so severe that it is impairing the ability of some universities to function properly.

The University of Sheffield, are leading a £400,000 scheme to tackle a deep decline in universities technical expertise and train the workforce needed to ensure the country is at the forefront of international research and development.

A study by Dr Paul Lewis as part of a Gatsby Foundation funded project showed 1.5 million Science, Engineering and Technology job opportunities will be created across the country by 2020, with nearly a third of these in the higher skilled technician roles needed by employers to compete on a global scale.

However, separate research by the Technician Council found the UK must educate another 450,000 technicians across all sectors by 2020 to address a massive skills shortage.

On average, UK Higher Education institutions will lose between 25-35 per cent of its highly skilled professional technicians in the next three to five years as many reach retirement age. This will be damaging to the sector and will take decades to repair. The knock on effect to the economy will be massive. Yet, universities have vacancies that they cannot fill because the workforce is not skilled to do the jobs that require doing.

Conference calls upon to the HESGE and branches to:

- 1) Promote the need for increased resources for training and development aimed at ALL ages to aid attracting young people into the sector and retaining those that cannot afford to retire, but need to be skilled sufficiently to do their job professionally.
- 2) Raise with employers the issue of skills shortage and training in the sector and ask them what they are planning to do to address the issues around skills shortages.
- 3) Ensure that there is involvement with union learning reps and that funding allocation is where there is severe skill shortage.

Higher Education Service Group Executive

3. Cuts to Access to Learning Fund (Student Opportunity Fund)

Conference notes with alarm the Government's revelation in January 2014 that it was seeking to cut £200m from the Student Opportunity Fund. Run by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The Student Opportunity Fund is open to undergraduates and taught postgraduates and provides non-repayable grants of between £100 and £1,000 for disadvantaged students.

The proposed cut is in addition to minister's further announcement that public funding for universities is to be reduced by a further £125m this year.

Conference condemns this practice of systematic attacks, which not only has a negative impact for universities that attract high numbers of students from disadvantaged background but the economic future of this country.

The truth is that with all these cuts universities will have to review spending in the organisation as a whole, which could lead to redundancies and decreased investment in research. As a direct result of this, the UK will be unable to compete in the highly competitive economy.

Conference believes that only by standing together can we fight these cuts and defend the vital service we provide.

Conference calls on the HESGE to:

- 1) Ensure cuts in the Student Opportunity Fund are a key part of the Service Groups campaigning against Governments cuts in Higher Education.
- 2) To work with other unions and the NUS to highlight the importance of the Student Opportunity Fund.

Higher Education Service Group Executive

4. Cuts to Disabled Students Allowance

Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) is an essential provision that allows disabled students to enter into higher education. Disabled Students Allowances have been in place for the past 25 years. Their function is to provide study-related support to disabled people on most Higher Education courses and are split into three sections;

- 1) Equipment
- 2) Non-medical helper support
- 3) General Allowance.

DSAs are non-returnable and are not means tested.

This year 2014, the Government announced proposals to modernise the DSAs scheme to bring it into line with the Equality Act (2010) definition of disability and to "rebalance" the financial contribution made by the Government, moving the vast majority of spend onto Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and justifying this under

the legal duty to make anticipatory and reasonable adjustments that HEIs are required to make.

Effectively, the proposed changes would shift around 70% of the cost from the Government onto HEIs (around £87,500,000), mainly to maintain the status quo and provide equivalent levels of support for new disabled students. A shift of this magnitude would significantly impact those HEIs with limited funding and also hit those HEIs with a good reputation for supporting disabled people the hardest.

Initially, the changes were proposed to be introduced for the Academic Year 2015-16 but this has now been put back to Academic Year 2016-17 with a caveat that new starters should contribute £200 towards the cost of any computer recommendations from 2015-16.

These changes will impact on UNISON members in at least two ways. Firstly, any UNISON members who access HE courses from 2016-17 are likely to be disadvantaged compared with their peers if the HEI cannot afford to make the adjustments required. This will impact on their experience and, potentially, the outcome of their choice of study. Secondly, this will impact on job security and career progression opportunities for many support staff in HEIs who work directly with disabled students.

We therefore call upon the Higher Education Service Group Executive to;

- a) Raise awareness of these changes and the impact it will have on staff working in student support services and produce a fact sheet for branches
- b) Lobby the government to reverse the decision
- c) Work with Labour Link to seek assurances that a future Labour government would abolish any proposals to axe or change the current provision of DSA.

Staffordshire University Branch

5. For a Fair and Equal Higher Education Policy

Conference notes that:

Higher education enriches society through the pursuit of knowledge, understanding and learning and research.

Universities are places where knowledge is shared and passed on, by bringing together academics, students and our members and working towards a common aim.

All our members contribute towards society's greater understanding and appreciation of the world.

Under the present economic system, the idea of knowledge for the sake of it is under attack with Vice-Chancellors looking for a 'business case' in every decision.

Trade unions can do more to communicate the positive ideas and values that they stand for, and the principles of socialism and democracy have always been at the heart of trade unionism.

Conference instructs the service group executive to:

- 1) Develop, produce and promote a policy for a fair and equal higher education based on the principles of human cooperation for the pursuit of knowledge for the benefit of everyone.
- 2) State clearly in that policy that UNISON stands for a fully-funded education system with decent pay and conditions for all, with participation based on academic merit.
- 3) Reaffirm UNISON's demand for an end to all tuition fees and for the reintroduction of student grants.
- 4) Produce material clearly demanding a fair, fully-funded education system with decent pay and conditions for all, for the enrichment of society and the benefit of all.

University Of Brighton

6. Zero Tolerance of Biphobia

Conference notes the continuing high levels of biphobia at work and in society. Research published in 2013, which many UNISON members participated in, showed that bisexual people experience even higher levels of discrimination at work than gay men. Bisexual people are much more likely to feel they have to hide their sexual orientation at work than lesbians and gay men (very few heterosexual people hide their sexual orientation). Bisexual women were the least likely to report discrimination, believing it would not be taken seriously as it 'happens all the time'.

Research by The Manchester Business School published in January 2014 backed up The Bisexuality Report 2012 by the Open University which showed that of all the larger sexual orientation groups, bisexual people have the worst mental health, including higher rates of depression, anxiety, self-harm and suicide. This is directly linked to the high levels of biphobic prejudice and discrimination.

The Equality Challenge Unit research on the experience of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans staff and students in higher education found that 34% of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) staff in higher education in the UK report negative treatment on the grounds of their sexual orientation or gender identity from colleagues and that 32% had received homophobic/biphobic comments. It also revealed that over 64% of LGB university workers are not 'out' in their workplaces.

Conference notes with regret that bisexual workers can experience prejudice and discrimination not only from colleagues and managers who are heterosexual but also from those who are lesbian or gay. Biphobia feeds off myths and stereotypes which range from bisexual people being untrustworthy, greedy and promiscuous to bisexuality being 'just a phase' or not really existing at all. Bisexual people have to repeatedly 'come out' to avoid people making wrong assumptions about their sexual orientation.

Although many workplace equality policies refer to lesbian, gay and bisexual people, few do more than pay lip service to the existence and rights of bisexual workers. Organisations need to separate biphobia from homophobia, recognising that there are specific issues facing bisexual people.

Conference calls on the Higher Education Service Group Executive, regional higher education committees and branches to recognise that this is an issue that deserves attention at every level. Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- a) Maintain a high profile commitment to equality in all negotiating, organising and campaigning;
- b) Promote the use of UNISON's 'Bisexuality; a Trade Union Issue' Factsheet and other LGB bargaining factsheets and materials;
- c) Encourage branches to equality proof their institutions policies to ensure that they specifically challenge biphobia in the workplace;
- d) Publicise UNISON's 'Tackling bullying at work' guidance.

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Committee

7. Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)

Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) is an important provision in enabling disabled people to enter into higher education. It provides funding for the study-related access and support needs of disabled students, covering equipment, 'non-medical' support workers and travel costs.

Part of this government's attacks on disabled people is to restrict DSA funding. Although now mostly on hold until 2016/17 it is still very much on their agenda. Effectively the government wants to shift around 70% of the cost onto Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). To provide the same level of support students currently receive, the cost for universities would be over £87m.

The impact of a major cut back of this allowance will have a detrimental effect on UNISON members who work in student support services and related areas. If the planned attacks take place the outcome will be devastating.

Some universities would have to come up with £1m, which will only be achieved by huge job losses across the sector.

We therefore call upon the Higher Education Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Raise awareness of these changes and the impact it will have on staff working in student support services and related areas;
- 2) Lobby the government to reverse the decision;
- 3) Work with Labour Link to seek assurances that a future Labour government would abolish any proposals to axe or change the current provision of DSA.

National Disabled Members Committee

7.1

Delete point 3) and replace with:-

3) To actively work with Labour Link well before the next election, with the goal of obtaining a commitment that a future Labour government would maintain the provision of DSA at its current form and level.

Manchester Metro University

8. Student Union staff

This Conference recognises that for many staff, employment in Student Unions can be an isolated and difficult experience, with a range of terms and conditions applied between different Student Unions.

This Conference believes that it is time to establish a charter of employment rights for Student Union staff, which includes the right to earn a living wage.

This Conference calls on the Higher Education Service Group Executive to:

- i) Survey staff working in Student Unions to identify the key issues facing them at work;
- ii) Use the findings to create a draft charter of employment rights for these staff;
- iii) Consult with the staff on the charter;
- iv) Launch a campaign to promote and win the demands of the charter.

National Young Members' Forum

9. Treatment of Workers on Overseas Campuses

In 2010 the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) awarded Qatar the 2022 World Cup causing surprise in many quarters as Qatar is not a traditional 'footballing nation' and experiences soaring temperatures during the summer months which could have dreadful consequences for both players and fans.

Qatar is possibly the richest country in the world per capita. It has a population of 1.8m but only 278k are Qatari citizens: the remainder are 'expatriates' or migrant workers: none of whom can become citizens.

Because of the unprecedented construction programmes planned, 500k additional workers will be required to ensure the infrastructure is completed by 2022. Many of the construction workers will come from Nepal, India, Bangladesh and the Philippines as well as countries dependant on remittances from their migrant populations. Since Qatar won the right to stage the World Cup 1,400 of these workers have already died. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) estimates that another 2,500 workers will die before a game is played.

This World Cup provides an opportunity for trade unions to shine a light on treatment of local and migrant workers who are employed not only in the construction industry but across all other sectors including health and higher education.

Employment contracts in Qatar are based on the Kafala system of sponsorship, which effectively ties a worker to the employer. Should workers experience problems, they could find themselves being unable to leave the country if the employer refuses to sign their exit papers. The ITUC has called for the system to be abolished. The government of Qatar has introduced some reforms but they are not being rigorously enforced, meaning thousands of workers have no protection against unscrupulous employers.

UNISON is aware of the subcontracting of services in Hamad bin Khalifa University in 'Education City', Doha, where University College London (UCL) has a campus. The ITUC has said there are signs of the use of forced labour, and that migrant workers employed as cleaners, gardeners and admin staff endured horrendous living conditions, withholding of passports, lower than promised wages and the imposition of huge agency fees.

This conference believes that British Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) who have overseas campuses should be the leading light, not just in education, but in the way they engage their local communities. They should foster an attitude towards their workforce of dignity and respect. There should be fair recruitment practices and overseas workforces should be paid a fair wage for their labour, free from the tyranny of gang masters and agents.

Conference therefore calls upon the Higher Education Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Seek Affiliation to Anti Slavery International;
- 2) Raise awareness with Higher Education Branches, of the plight of workers in Qatar and other overseas campus locations; and produce guidance on how branches can approach their employers on this issue;
- 3) Work with the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU), other campus trades unions and the National Union of Students (NUS) to call on UCL and any other British HEI's, to ensure that contractors providing services on their campuses include contracts that respect workers' rights;
- 4) Work with UNISON National Executive Council International Committee, seeking a vigorous campaign for the abolition of the Kafala system and the ratification of International Labour Organisation conventions protecting workers' rights in Qatar.

University Of West Of England

10. Vice Chancellors Pay and Key Performance Indicators

"This Conference notes the eye-watering increases in pay that have been awarded to most Vice Chancellors, Principals and other members of the senior management team of universities and colleges. These increases have even been recently condemned by David Willets and Vince Cable in their BIS HEFCE grant allocation letter to Universities. However when awarding bodies and committees who decide the pay of those at the top are questioned as to the reasons for such largesse, we are told that pay rises are linked to performance.

In the absence of the employee voice on remuneration committees, this Conference instructs UNISON to request through the national bargaining machinery that institutions publish exact details of the Key Performance Indicators used by such awarding bodies and committees when measuring performance. Further, this information should explicitly explain the link between performance and reward in a way that is understandable to staff, students and the UK tax-payer."

South West Region

Negotiating and Bargaining

11. HE Pay 2015-16 - Higher Education Workers Need a Pay Rise

UNISON, the largest trade union for support staff in higher education, improves the lives of our members, both at work and at home.

- i) UNISON members demanded and obtained a pay rise above the government imposed 1% pay limit and we were successful, securing at least double that for all members.
- ii) UNISON campaigned that those on the lowest pay should see their pay enhanced and thousands of workers are now earning the Living Wage for the first time.
- iii) UNISON is working to put an end to casualisation and zero hours contracts that add to the uncertainty and insecurity of staff.

Conference notes that this year UNISON members in higher education were offered a 2% pay rise by their employers following industrial action. This was in excess of the insulting 1% that employers' constantly offer to colleagues working across the public sector workforce and thanks to the hard work of members across the sector.

Incomes have been squeezed over the last 5 years and this is having a devastating impact on workers in higher education.

Since 2010 essential living costs have increased drastically. Electricity prices have jumped by 22-39%, Gas by 17 to 45%, Food by 19%, Water by 20% and Transport by over 19%.

The cost of many goods and services still continue to rise, which means that although HE employees got a 2% pay increase, our salaries have still fallen behind the cost of living, and this trend looks set to continue. The only way we will catch up is with a decent pay award.

A 10% pay increase comparable to that offered to several executive heads at numerous universities would go a long way to closing the gap. The numbers of working poor are increasing, and the queues at our food banks are getting longer.

Conference notes that many colleagues working full time in higher education cannot afford the basic essentials for a decent standard of living, because they are earning less than a Living Wage.

UNISON continues to campaign to secure better terms and conditions and a living wage for members.

This conference recognises university employers like to give the impression that they cannot pay a decent salary to it's staff despite the highly inflated salaries that VCs can enjoy. What about the surpluses that are made? They sit comfortably in the employer's bank accounts.

The disparity between pay and the real cost of inflation has had huge detrimental impact on our members' living standards.

We need to continue to expose as a myth the government's claim that the country is in deficit and we all have to tighten our belts as untrue. The income of the richest 1% continues to rise at obscene levels.

Any increase needs to take account of the scheduled increase in NI contribution in that timeframe.

This Conference recognises that there has never been so much funding pouring into higher education. We have seen the vast amounts spent on buildings and other facilities, inflation busting pay increases for the ever increasing numbers of senior managers and the headline grabbing pay awards, many in double figures, for Vice Chancellors who hypocritically then tell support staff that a decent pay claim is unaffordable. The disparity between pay and the real cost of inflation has had huge detrimental impact on our members' living standards.

UNISON continues to campaign for decent pay and a living wage for members and has had many successes.

- 1) This conference calls on the higher education service group executive to:
Submit the following to the HE joint union pay claim for 2015/16:
 - a) A one year settlement which provides a substantial increase that recognises the impact on our members of the increases in the cost(s)of living and the effects of the Retail Price Index (RPI) plus an additional percentage to begin the catch up necessary to make up for real terms losses.
 - b) To make sure the lowest point always meets or exceeds the Living Wage (based on a 37 hour week).
 - c) To campaign for the harmonisation across the sector to 35 hours per week with no loss of pay.
- 2) Provide easy-to-understand on the impact of austerity on higher education workers and why members need a pay rise.
- 3) Seek widespread coverage of higher education pay issues in the women's and black press as well as the mainstream press and media.
- 4) Work with UNISON Labour Link to encourage the Shadow front bench in Westminster and sympathetic MPs, AMs and MSPs to develop support for our pay claim.

Higher Education Service Group Executive

11.1

Delete all of point a) and replace with:-

a) A one year settlement which provides a 10% increase that starts to reverse the effect of years of below-inflation pay deals and helps members to keep up with the continuing rise in the cost of living.

Manchester Metro University

11.2

Insert new point 5:

5) In the event that the pay claim is not met by the employers, seek to coordinate lawful industrial action in conjunction with fellow Higher Education trade unions, with a clear plan for escalating lawful industrial action to strengthen the campaign, in accordance with UNISON rules relating to industrial action.

Manchester Metro University

11.3

Amended 1b) and c) and propose a new 1d) as below

b) To ensure that the lowest point always meets or exceeds the Living Wage (based on a 37 hour week).

c) To achieve harmonisation of working hours across the sector at 35 hours per week with no loss of pay. Such harmonisation to be achieved by all HEIs covered by JNCHES by 2020 at the latest.

d) To campaign for the harmonisation of Annual Leave allowances in line with our Academic colleagues as the current disparity results in unequal hourly rates. Such increases to be phased in until harmonisation is achieved but to be achieved by 2020 at the latest

Eastern Region

12. The Living Wage

This Conference believes that a Living Wage is a vital part of a decent economy, and is the right of every worker as a pay safety net.

This Conference commends the significant gains made in encouraging Higher Education employers to pay the Living Wage, and especially those few institutions which have become accredited as Living Wage employers i.e. those who require sub-contractors etc to pay the Living Wage, or who commit to requiring such when contracts are renewed.

This Conference notes that many services in Higher Education institutions are now provided by private companies, and the trend suggests this will continue to grow. This will mean an increasing number of Higher Education workers not directly employed, many of whose private employers do not pay the Living Wage.

This Conference believes it is important to keep the campaigning pressure up, and extend the campaigning to non-directly employed workers.

This Conference calls on the Higher Education Service Group Executive to:

- i) continue its campaigning to keep services 'in-house', and in cases where this does not succeed call for contracts only to be awarded to living wage employers;
- ii) seek to win more Higher Education employers to becoming Living Wage employers for all directly-employed staff;
- iii) encourage those paying the Living Wage to commit to seeking accreditation.

National Young Members' Forum

13. Equal Pay in Higher Education

Conference notes that the gender pay gap in higher education persists at all levels throughout the structures.

Occupational segregation plays a significant part in this, with women dominating those services which are most likely to be low paid and outsourced – cleaning and catering, working in halls of residence etc. These staff are the least likely to be paid the living wage.

At the other end of the scale, the glass ceiling remains firmly in place for women working in academic and professional support roles. Women are notably absent from senior roles such as principals, professors and senior managers, whilst those who do progress still experience a gender pay gap (according to the Equality and Human Rights Commission) of around 17%.

Conference believes that pay must be both fair and transparent in order to change this situation, and therefore calls upon the service group executive to:

- 1) Campaign for all Higher Education institutions to become accredited living wage employers; include HEI equal pay audits as part of the 2015/16 pay claim.

National Women's Committee

14. Austerity and the Living Wage

Conference notes that tens of thousands of us took to the streets of London, Glasgow and Belfast in October 2014 to protest against the Government's continued programme of austerity and to call for an economic recovery that works for all Britons, not just those right at the top. People are currently facing the biggest squeeze on their incomes since Victorian times, and wages have fallen in real terms every year since 2010. As growth returns to the UK economy, everyone should get a fairer share in the recovery.

Conference notes with concern the increasing numbers of higher education workers who are struggling to make ends meet, with the massive increase in the cost of living

and years of zero or below inflation pay rises. Many seek second jobs or are faced with the decision to “heat or eat?”.

Conference further notes the NatCen research commissioned by UNISON which showed the real impact of austerity on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. This included:

- 1) greater financial hardship from redundancies and real term pay cuts;
- 2) a fear that progress on challenging heterosexism and discrimination was being reversed and that homophobia, biphobia and transphobia were on the rise again;
- 3) de-prioritisation of LGBT services - LGBT issues and concerns are treated as less important than other concerns; as a ‘nice thing to do’ that could be dropped in harder times;

It revealed devastating cuts to public services but also showed that austerity has had a negative impact on job security, terms and conditions and the mental well being and morale of LGBT workers, including those employed to deliver specialist services to LGBT people.

Despite the successful campaigns that have seen the Living Wage implemented at universities such as Loughborough and Exeter, there remain a large number of institutions that refuse to introduce it.

Conference believes that these campaigns work best when they involve developing alliances with community and equality groups. Conference notes that the self-organised groups are well placed to assist with such links. Additionally, the LGBT self organised group has had some success with using social media to assist in its recruiting and organising objectives.

Conference calls on the higher education service group executive to:

- a) encourage regional higher education committees and HE branches to engage with self organised groups in the fight for justice for low paid workers in higher education
- b) raise awareness of the findings from the NatCen LGBT Austerity research amongst members
- c) seek to engage with and include LGBT activists and members as it continues to actively campaign for the Living Wage
- d) utilise UNISON’s guidance ‘using social media in campaigning’.

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Committee

15. Fair Annual Leave

Conference notes that many support staff have holiday based on grade and significantly shorter holiday entitlements than our academic colleagues. Yet, support staff work as hard and get equally as tired as all other members of staff. Holiday entitlement should not depend on job grade but be recognised as part of the overall pay and benefits package which should be available to all staff.

Conference therefore calls on our Higher Education Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Investigate the differences in annual leave across the sector.
- 2) Make Regional Higher Education Committees and Branches aware of the issues.
- 3) Find examples of where branches and regions have successfully negotiated changes to annual leave, and disseminate this 'good practice' to the membership.
- 4) Campaign for harmonisation of annual leave across the sector, by uplifting annual leave to the same level as academic staff.

Staffordshire University Branch

16. Scottish JNCHES

The Scottish Higher Education Service Group Committee strongly endorse National Pay Bargaining at a UK level. However, we also recognise that in Scotland we face a different situation from the rest of the UK. Higher Education is devolved to the Scottish Government and further powers will be devolved to Scotland via the Smith Review. We have different funding issues and different political pressure placed on our employers. This conference supports the Scottish Higher Education Committee in seeking a meeting of the Scottish New Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES) sub-committee and welcomes any progress that can be made through this committee. In order to ensure that any meeting of the sub-committee is successful, this conference wishes to ensure that sufficient resources are provided.

- 1) Conference also calls on the higher education service group executive to raise this issue with other trade unions and subsequently the employers side of JNCHES as soon as possible.

Scotland HE Committee

17. All University Staff are Important

Conference believes that the biggest asset a University has is its staff – all of its staff. It is therefore important that all Universities invest in this resource as simply put; without its staff there would be no University.

Furthermore, Conference fully believes that the quality of the student experience is strongly linked not just to the teaching, but the positive input that support staff provide. As such, Conference notes with extreme concern that support staff are often treated as second-class workers who are deemed inferior to their academic colleagues. Too often, support staff have substantially poorer terms and conditions and less recognition for their work than academic colleagues. During local consultations, it is not uncommon for the voices of the support staff to be ignored while their academic colleagues are given platforms from which to influence the direction of the consultation.

Conference instructs the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Work with the regional HE committees to investigate the differences in treatment between the different groups of workers within Universities.

- 2) Work with the NUS and other relevant representative organisations to encourage them to talk about the whole University community and not just academics when they are running campaigns.
- 3) Run a campaign emphasising the essential role that support staff play and the added value they bring to students and universities as a whole.
- 4) Produce associated advice and organising materials to help negotiate, campaign and recruit around these issues.
- 5) Consult branches on the viability of running a training course designed to support members in responding to formal University consultation exercises.

Scotland HE Committee

18. Disability Leave Policies

Conference is concerned that some Higher Education (HE) institutions are still failing to implement Disability leave Policies, despite this being offered as an example of a reasonable adjustment in the Code of Practice relating to the employment provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Redundancies and cuts in the Higher Education sector are at an all time high, with no end in sight. Disabled HE workers are constantly under pressure with the fear of losing their jobs.

We know that in these harsh times HE institutions considering cuts and redundancies will look to sickness levels, which often means that disabled HE workers are targeted and sent off to occupational health. This then usually results in redundancy or even more worrying dismissal using disciplinary and capability policies.

The purpose of a disability leave policy is to create a level playing field with non disabled colleagues; absence due to someone's disability should not be used when monitoring sickness absence. However we know that managers in some HE institutions continue to do so.

Conference views this as unfair discrimination against disabled HE workers.

This Conference calls on the Higher Education Service Group Executive to work with the National Disabled Members Committee to:

- 1) Collect examples of negotiated disability related good practice from HE branches, especially disability leave agreements;
- 2) Issue UNISON's model agreement on disability leave to HE branches, reminding them of the employers' obligations to discount disability related absence as criteria in the redundancy selection process;

National Disabled Members Committee

Efficient and Effective Union

19. Higher Education Branch Seminar

Conference notes the feeling of many activists who attended the Branch Seminar in Glasgow, October 2014, that not enough opportunity was given for branches and activists to share experiences and build strategies together. Keynote speakers included several members of UNISON staff, but none of our elected representatives on the Service Group Executive. Additionally, many of the workshops were informative presentations, but failed to offer much branch interaction.

Conference calls on the Higher Education Service Group Executive to;

- 1) Explore ways branches can be more involved in organising sessions at Seminar.
- 2) Set aside time for our elected members of the Service Group Executive to speak and contribute to the Seminar.
- 3) Hold a branch-led discussion at the 2015 Seminar, hearing from the six branches referred to at the 2014 Seminar as having 40%+ density.

Manchester Metro University

20. Putting members at the heart of the UNISON Higher Education Branch Seminar

UNISON is a lay member led union. One of the most positive aspects of the Branch Seminar is the opportunity to learn from, and discuss issues with, other members. We believe branch seminar can be further improved by increasing the emphasis on lay members and fully utilising the many talents of UNISON activists. Branch seminar can be a focus for helping branches and regions develop effective organising campaigns. Branch seminar is at its best when it uses a wide range of formats including a mixture of presentations, debates, workshops and plenary sessions. Traditionally workshops have been led by UNISON staff members. Having workshops led by staff members has strong benefits especially when there is a need for expert advice, for example in pensions. We also believe there is a role for some workshops to be lay member led or led jointly between staff and lay members. Utilising lay members who have for example led successful Living Wage campaigns would enable up to date case studies to be used from real world examples and enable important lessons to be learned and shared. It is important that where it is practicable workshops have a hands on approach that utilises the experience and knowledge that many delegates have.

This conference calls on the Higher Education Service Group Executive (HE SGE) to:

- 1) Consider having at least one elected representative on any opening panel discussion.
- 2) Consider having an elected HE SGE or Higher Education National Executive Council (NEC) member set out the strategic priorities and challenges facing UNISON members in Higher Education.
- 3) Consider having a display area where branch delegates can bring examples of UNISON branch newsletters and other UNISON branch materials they may have produced, for example work place bulletins.

- 4) Consider introducing a mechanism for members to opt in to having their emails published in the delegate pack sent to delegates prior to branch seminar.
- 5) To consider having some workshops led by lay members who have appropriate skills and experience. For example the Higher Education Service Group Executive should look at ways a branch who had a successful Living Wage campaign could use this as a case study for organising.
- 6) To consider having longer workshops of 1 ½ hours to help enable more hands on approaches to be taken.
- 7) To aim to publish workshop topics in the delegate packs in advance of branch seminar.

Birmingham University UNISON

21. Improving engagement with branches and communication with our members

UNISON and our Service Group Conference have rightly raised the need to improve engagement with HE branches and our membership. As HE branches and officers, we share this objective and support it. Alongside this, UNISON must also support this objective by improving the communication and visibility of our activities and our achievements.

Branches are encouraged to engage with our HE conference and to submit motions for debate. This happens but if a motion is debated and approved there appears to be a gap in communication and updates on what is happening. Branches recognise and value the efforts made by Service Group Executive members to report back to Regional Committees and to branches but this needs to be improved.

Conference instructs the Service Group Executive to report back to Branches and / or Branch Officers progress made on the implementation of approved Conference motions on a quarterly basis. Such reporting should make use of the most appropriate and effective method whether this is direct emails, newsletters, briefings etc. but regular updates on the progression and implementation of conference decisions must be delivered back to the Region, branches or branch officers which proposed the motion.

Improving the communication back to local branches will help improve engagement and highlight how issues raised by our members are taken forward by our union.

Eastern Region

Amendments Ruled Out of Order

Could place the union in legal jeopardy

Motion 11 - HE Pay 2015-16 - Higher Education Workers Need a Pay Rise

Not printed on the advice of the legal officer

University Of Brighton

Not competent

Motion 12 - The Living Wage

after paragraph 3, insert a fourth paragraph:

However, we should not approach this problem with a resigned attitude to our members' jobs being outsourced without a fight and we should do everything we can to make sure that our members are directly employed by universities on the agreed pay scales.

All the available evidence shows that where a fighting strategy is proposed and acted upon, privatisation can be defeated, but that an approach which tries to negotiate rights with no threat of action to back it up will lead to failure and a subsequent loss of members.

After point iii) add:

iv) publicise a list of institutions refusing to become living wage employers with as wide a circulation as possible.

v) campaign for a post May 2015 government to make the living wage legally enforceable, ie to raise the minimum wage to living wage levels and abolish any variations based on age.

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Not sufficiently clear

Motion 1 - University Governance

Delete "That all paid roles should be on the national pay spine to ensure pay equality and transparency at all times."

replace with:

"Conference therefore calls on the Higher Education Service Group Executive to seek to work with the National Black Members Committee to Campaign for:"

a) All governing bodies to be more democratic and accountable (insert after accountable)

b) "That all governing bodies have elected TU representatives.

c) Worker representation on remuneration committees."

- d) Executive bodies meetings to be held in open session (insert after session) and minutes to be published in a timely fashion.
- e) Transparent and fair appointment processes, including staff representation, better balance in terms of gender and Black representation, and an elected Chair of the Governing body
- f) Insert “To seek information from all HEIs and a breakdown of members in terms of ethnicity, gender, disability and LGBT, and any other relevant information”.

Higher Education Service Group Executive

Motion 4 - Cuts to Disabled Students Allowance

We therefore call upon the Higher Education Service Group Executive to;

- a) Raise awareness of these changes and the impact it will have on staff working in student support services and produce a fact sheet for branches (Insert new b)
- b) Lobby the government and launch national campaign and work with NUS to reverse the decision
- c) Work with Labour Link to seek (insert after seek) “strong” assurances that a future Labour government would abolish any proposals to axe or change the current provision of DSA.

Higher Education Service Group Executive

Motion 5 - For a Fair and Equal Higher Education Policy

Conference instructs the service group executive to:

- 1) Develop, produce and promote a policy for a fair and equal higher education based on the principles of human cooperation for the pursuit of knowledge for the benefit of everyone (insert after everyone) across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- 2) State clearly in that policy that UNISON stands for a fully-funded education system with decent pay and conditions for all, (insert after all) with participation based on academic merit and not seen as students or clients.
- 3) Reaffirm UNISON's demand for an end to all tuition fees and for the reintroduction of student grants and encourage branches to campaign alongside NUS.
- 4) Produce material clearly demanding a fair, fully-funded education system with decent pay and conditions for all, for the enrichment of society and the benefit of all.

Higher Education Service Group Executive

Motion 13 - Equal pay in higher education

Conference believes that pay must be both fair and transparent in order to change this situation, and therefore calls upon the service group executive to:

1) Campaign for all Higher Education institutions to become accredited living wage employers;

New Point 2

2.) Use the information from Include HEI equal pay audits as part of the 2015/16 pay claim to eliminate the gender pay gap and to continue and reaffirm our commitment for equal pay of equal value.

Higher Education Service Group Executive

Statement not a motion

Amendment 20 - Putting members at the heart of the UNISON Higher Education Branch Seminar

after 'that many delegates have' add:

An important aspect of lay members meeting together is to have debates on national strategy and tactics, what worked well, what didn't and where the Service Group is going. Whilst we recognise that no binding decisions could or should be made at this event, all delegates would potentially benefit from being allowed to fully debate issues such as the 2013/14 pay dispute so that genuine lessons can be drawn from the experience across the service group.

This would allow all to have their say, rather than limiting representation to a small group of conference delegates at a time-restricted one day conference. It might also encourage activists to develop their skills and make members more inclined to put themselves forward for vacant SGE posts.

There is clearly a significant difference in membership density across the service group, but we should use the event to allow representatives from the higher density branches to explain what they have done to be in that position with a view to delegates learning from each others' successes.

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Superfluous

Motion 12 - The Living Wage

Paragraph 2, after 'following industrial action', replace the rest of the paragraph with:

The 2% award for 2014/15 was the end product of the dispute over the 2013/14 award, and it was clear that the employers were willing to offer a more substantial settlement in order to end the strikes.

Whilst there are many lessons to be drawn in terms of dispute strategy, it is important to remember that this and other cases elsewhere, demonstrate that a united, fighting strategy, fundamentally based on the tactic of withdrawing labour can and does bring results, and although the scenario (mixing up the two years) might be more complicated than we'd like, we can legitimately say to members that UNISON delivered a better pay deal than we'd have got without a fight.

The fact that we won more than other UNISON members across service groups are currently being offered should, however, not be a cause for celebration but used as an example to arm other workers with the correct strategy to win meaningful pay rises, and we should do all we can to support them.

Paragraph 9, after 'VCs can enjoy' replace the rest of the paragraph with:

Whilst we recognise that universities require some level of surplus to reinvest in capital projects, many institutions made substantial surpluses in recent years as the £9,000 fee rolled out over three years and graduates (or workers of the future) were engulfed by massive debts.

Given the further introduction of competition and fragmentation, some universities will not be able to afford significant pay increases to our members without raising tuition fees or imposing cuts elsewhere, which in turn would impact on jobs, terms and conditions. We therefore recognise that massive funding has to come from central government to fund higher education properly.

Paragraph 11, after 'obscene levels' add:

This myth will still be a myth under any future government that retains austerity as a concept and does nothing meaningful to deal with the colossal gap between rich and poor.

After point 4 add:

5) campaign to link the issues of decent pay for our members to government funding of higher education as a public service, which is fully funded and free to all.

6) Do everything possible to link up with other service groups and trade unions to develop a strategy to defeat austerity using the tactic of legal, coordinated industrial action.

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**2015 Higher Education Service Group Conference
UNISON FINAL AGENDA**