

NATIONAL RETIRED MEMBERS CONFERENCE 2015

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Contents

Motions

- Pensions
- Health and Care
- Universal Benefits
- Communications and Internal Issues
- Other Campaigns and Issues

Motions not admitted to the agenda

MOTIONS

Pensions

1. PROTECTING PENSIONS

Conference asserts that the state pension is not a benefit but is ours by right.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to:

1. Develop a campaign involving all levels of the membership to ensure that the state pension is a living wage above the official poverty level.
2. Campaign for the National Insurance Fund to be ring-fenced.

Wigan Metropolitan

2. LIVING PENSIONS FOR THE ELDERLY AND RETIRED MEMBERS

Conference, elderly and retired people deserve to have a decent state pension.

A pension which for many on the 6th April, 2015 will be £115.95 (for a single person) is well below the poverty line and is hardly an adequate amount to live on, even in the most modest of households.

Britain in the *Daily Telegraph* was recorded as being one of the worst places in Europe for State Pension, countries like Austria, Finland and Belgium were rated above average, while maintaining relatively strong public finances. We are told we are recovering as a country financially, yet we live with this shame that our pensioners live well below the poverty line.

We have contributed and continue to contribute to a system which is grossly unfair. Britain is also reported to be at the bottom of the world league tables.

This Government has known we are an ageing population and there can be no excuse for paying one of the worst pensions in Europe, despite enjoying better economic growth than its European counterparts.

We need a decent state retirement pension that enables us to live rather than exist and is fair to all.

Conference calls upon National Retired Members Committee to continue to highlight this issue as a priority and to liaise with other organisations and groups to further promote and to campaign for a decent state retirement pension for elderly and retired members.

Durham

3. CAMPAIGN FOR A LIVING PENSION

This conference believes that older people are being hit particularly hard by current austerity measures.

1. The basic State Retirement Pension is currently £115.95 per week, yet the current poverty level is significantly above this level
2. The TUC assesses that pensioners need an amount that is higher still than this.
3. The UK State Retirement Pension is one of the lowest in Europe.
4. 31,000 pensioners died of hypothermia in 2012/13 (Daily Telegraph 16/11/13) despite the winter fuel allowance. The number had doubled in the previous five years.
5. The current system lets women down because their responsibilities in the home affect patterns of work and contributions towards pension.

Taking into account the cost of housing, fuel bills, food costs and health conditions, many older people are struggling to survive and to have the dignity and security they deserve in retirement.

Conference therefore agrees to support a campaign for a Living Pension which calls for:-

- a. A weekly State Retirement Pension which allows every pensioner who receives no other income to pay for necessities and enjoy social and leisure activity.
- b. A basic State Retirement Pension that is the same basic amount for every pensioner.
- c. Pension equality available to all age qualified citizens so that no one has to claim pension credit.
- d. Pension increases every year measured by average earnings increase, RPI, CPI or 2.5%, whichever is highest
- e. Dignity and security in retirement

Conference instructs the National Retired Members Committee and calls on the National Executive Council to liaise with the National Pensioners Convention and other appropriate bodies to campaign to achieve a Living Pension.

*Derbyshire County
East Midlands*

4. EQUAL OLD AGE PENSIONS FOR WOMEN

Conference notes that women who paid reduced National Insurance rates or 'married women's stamp' for some or all of their working lives, are disadvantaged as a result of lower NI payments, unable to receive a state pension in their own right at retirement age.

Conference are very concerned that most women were not told of the disadvantages of paying the 'married women's stamp' when introduced, and this has had an adverse effect on the state age pension for women today paying the 'married woman's stamp'. In fact women who currently pay the reduced rate of NI contributions will get a much lower pension, which will be based on 60% of their husband's contributions, but unable to receive this until their husband retires.

Women who pay or have paid the 'married women's stamp', are also not able to claim job seekers allowance and have no rights to sickness benefit. In addition women who stayed at home due to child care or caring needs, are also penalised financially as a result.

Conference notes that before legislation such as the Sex Equality Act, 1975, some employers had policies in place which saw women having their employment contracts terminated when they married or had children.

Therefore this National Retired Members' conference calls upon UNISON's National Retired Members' Committee and National Executive Committee to;

1. Campaign urgently on behalf of women who pay the 'married woman's stamp', to ensure that women are paid the same rate of state age pension as men with immediate effect.
2. Support one rate of pension for all, regardless of gender.
3. Campaign for the Government to make a one off top up payment for those women who have been receiving a lower pension, as a result in recognition of their contribution to Britain's society, using the individual's state pension date as the base date in calculating any amount due.
4. Take positive action to make UNISON's concerns known to the government through the Labourlink, national and regional branches of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), local Trades Councils, by lobbying MPs, and by supporting the National Pensioners Convention and the Scottish Pensioners' Forum in their campaigns.
5. Report back to the 2016 National Retired Members' Conference on action taken and actual achievements.

Portsmouth City

5. TWO TIER STATE PENSION

Conference notes that with the introduction of the new state pension from April 2016 there will exist a two tier system. Existing pensioners will not be entitled to receive the new level of basic state pension. Although the method of indexation will be the same for both old and new pensions i.e. the triple lock, the implementation will result in a widening of the gap in pension payments. This is because the higher amount under the triple lock will be applied to the whole of the new pension, whilst it will only apply to the basic element of the old and will not be payable on SERPS, S2P, Graduated etc. which make up the balance of the old pension.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee and calls upon the National Executive Council to campaign to right this injustice and to make sure that the application of the method of indexation applies equally to both old and new pensions.

National Retired Members' Committee

Health and Care

6. RAISING AWARENESS OF PROSTATE CANCER TREATMENT INEQUALITIES FOR OLDER MEN

Prostate Cancer UK has researched the way older men receive treatment for diagnosed prostate cancer. In their report '5 Inequalities/ 5 Solutions', the evidence produced reiterates the need that the action called for in Motion 16, UNISON National Retired Members Conference 2014, Southport, should be implemented urgently together with more specific action to further the campaign.

Although it is important that age should be considered when treating prostate cancer, other conditions should be included in the consideration. Men may have been exposed to different environmental conditions, levels of activity and lifestyles, all of which will affect their health. Therefore, at every stage of a man's prostate cancer journey, his personal circumstances, not just his age, must be taken into account.

It is recommended that men are provided with information about side effects of treatment. Even NICE (National Institute for Clinical Excellence) Guideline 175 Prostate Cancer states 'Adequately inform men with prostate cancer and their partners or carers about the effects of prostate cancer and the treatment options on their sexual function, physical appearance, continence and other aspects of masculinity. Support men and their partners or carers in making decisions, taking into account the effects on quality of life as well as survival.'

Despite this, only 53% of men aged 76 and over of prostate cancer patients were told about side effects that could affect them in the future and only 71% of men aged 51-65 were given the information. It is a concern that age alone may be considered when treatment and side effects are discussed and may limit the options for some men regardless of their physical fitness or preferences.

NHS England, the Department of Health and other relevant organisations are being pressured to monitor and investigate the cases of age related problems in treatment routes. The Department of Health has proposed wider societal benefit should be considered when assessing drugs for approval. This is a measure which takes account of the return society can get from treating an individual back to full health. For example, enabling an adult to return to work following illness, including return to employment as a societal benefit will effectively discriminate against cancer drugs as the majority of prostate cancer patients are either retired or in the later stages of their working career. This will discriminate on the course of treatment for older men.

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

1. campaign to stop discrimination in the treatment of prostate cancer for older men by NHS England and the Department of Health;
2. support the research and advice given by the Prostate Cancer UK charity by making the issues more widely known through UNISON publications / leaflets, National, Regional and Branch websites / newsletters;

3. report back to the UNISON National Retired Members Conference 2016 with actual evidence of campaigning and results.

South East

7. DEMENTIA RESEARCH

Conference notes that whilst dementia can apply to people of all ages it primarily affects older people.

Conference further notes that the level of funding for dementia research is considerably lower than that for other illnesses.

Conference believes that there is an urgent need to increase the amount of money needed for research into the cause and possible cure of dementia.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee and calls upon the National Executive Council to campaign for the allocation of additional resources for dementia research.

National Retired Members' Committee

8. NHS - OUT-OF-HOURS SERVICES

Conference is extremely alarmed at the confusing muddle and poor level of provision of out-of-hours services in the NHS. This particularly affects elderly and retired people trying to stay living in their own homes and not to burden the diminishing public services, and seeking not to lose all their means by being placed in a care home.

Over the last few years services such as minor injuries clinics, walk-in centres, telephone advice lines, GP out-of-hours access have come and gone with bewildering rapidity, leaving patients - especially elderly people who are more prone to confusion about where to go - bereft of services outside "normal" GP surgery hours, except for a taxi to the A&E which they are chastised in the media for over-using.

GPs are told that they must provide an alternative to A&E at the weekends, but not given sufficient resources to staff it properly. The "post-code lottery" is back with us with a vengeance, with the pattern of available services differing widely across England (the position is different in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland where health services are devolved).

This Conference calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to work with the National Executive Council and all other appropriate partners to ensure that better, more consistent and well-resourced provision of out-of-hours services, particularly for older people, is high on the list of NHS improvements to be delivered by the new Government, in whose hands the NHS is safe.

*Suffolk County
Ipswich*

9. OLDER PEOPLE AND THE NHS

Conference is concerned to note that, as a result of a United Nations Directive, services provided for older people within the National Health Service may have to be curtailed as more resources are given to people who are under 34 years of age. This will happen unless more resources are put into the NHS to enable it to both comply with the Directive and maintain or indeed enhance current services provided to older people.

Conference is further concerned to note that NHS Services are under threat as a result of more privatisation that will take place if the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is introduced in this country.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members Committee and requests the National Executive Council to:

1. Campaign for the allocation of more resources to the NHS to meet the United Nations Directive and to maintain/enhance current services provided to older people; and
2. Continue to campaign against TTIP

West Midlands

10. DELAYED DISCHARGE FROM HOSPITAL BY ELDERLY PATIENTS

Conference notes that delayed discharge from hospital by elderly patients, commonly known as bed blocking is a major problem in many hospitals.

Following admission to and treatment in hospital when elderly patients are well enough to be discharged they are frequently unable to do so for two main reasons:

1. some have been admitted from care homes who will not take them back as they cannot meet their needs;
2. others live alone and are not able to look after themselves without help and have to remain in hospital until a care package is put in place which can take a considerable amount of time particularly with the growing number of patients with dementia.

In some cases hospital admission could be avoided altogether for patients whose needs only require community support for everyday health issues which don't require hospitalisation.

Conference also notes that due to the Coalition government's cuts in resources to local authorities, likely to be continued more brutally by the new Tory government, many have had to close care and residential homes and respite beds which has exacerbated the problem of bed blocking.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to liaise with the National Executive Council to campaign for more respite beds to be made available

for elderly patients to be accommodated until care homes or care packages are put in place.

East Midlands

11. CARER'S ALLOWANCE

This Conference recognises that caring for a partner or loved one does not cease just because a carer reaches their state pension age. However, current legislation does not allow Carer's Allowance to be paid where the level of state pension at the time state pension age is reached is more than the level of the Carer's Allowance.

This is unfair in terms of natural justice as Carer's Allowance and State Pension are completely different payments. The reason why Carer's Allowance is paid is self-explanatory and State Pension is deferred pay that has been accrued over a working lifetime.

The rules and regulations surrounding the claiming of benefits and/or allowances are complicated to say the least. UNISON needs to ensure that pensioners who are also carers are treated fairly and that their role is acknowledged and respected.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members Committee and calls on the National Executive Council to liaise with the National Pensioners Convention, Trade Union Congress and all appropriate organisations to campaign for the right for carers to continue to receive Carer's Allowance beyond their State Pension age without any detriment to their payments of State Pension.

Leicestershire Healthcare

12. 117 AFTERCARE FOR THE ELDERLY AND RETIRED MEMBERS

Conference is concerned at the effects of Section 117 of the Mental Health Act especially as far as it affects elderly and retired people.

Section 117 of the Mental Health Act places a statutory duty of aftercare on Health (Health Authority delegated to Primary Care Trusts) and Local Social Services Authorities (LSSA) to provide aftercare services free of charge for all clients who have been detained in hospital under a qualifying Section of the Mental Health Act, 1983 (as amended by Mental Health Act 2007).

Currently Section 117 gives considerable discretion to Health and Local Authorities as to what they provide and therefore it is similar to a postcode lottery, where you live may determine what you pay for. With many cash strapped authorities looking at how to cut budgets on a regular basis, clients are being forced to pay for residential care. This results in them having to sell homes/property to fund this, when in fact it is the joint responsibility of Health and Social Services to provide for them under the 117 Aftercare.

117 Aftercare is aimed at reducing their chance of being readmitted to hospital for treatment for that mental disorder. It was stated by the Court of Appeal in *Clunis v Camden and Islington Health Authority* (1998) that they will normally include:-

1. Caring Residential Accommodation (e.g. residential, nursing,)
2. Domiciliary Services
3. Family Relationships
4. Social Work
5. Health Interventions
6. Employment and benefits advice
7. Psychological therapies

Conference believe Authorities are failing to fully inform elderly and retired people of their rights and with the ever increasing number of people suffering from Dementia related illnesses, perhaps entering hospital following an accident and then having to become Sectioned under the Mental Health Act. You are entitled to Section 117 Aftercare if you have been in hospital under Section 3, 37, 45A, 47 or 48 of the Mental Health Act 1983.

117 Continuing Care does not stop when a patient leaves hospital and has to enter Care and in cases of dementia continue for the duration of their lives, as the illness only progresses.

Conference we believe that there may be many elderly and retired people entitled to this service who are currently not receiving it and we call on the National Retired Members Committee to:

- a. Highlight to all branches the need for all Health and Local Authorities throughout the Country to operate and provide relatives with clear information.
- b. Raise the profile of 117 Aftercare with Branches to ensure that retired members in their Branch who are entitled to Aftercare under Section 117 of the Mental Health Act are aware of that entitlement.

Durham

13. DYING BEFORE OUR TIME

The UK Government has said that it will continue to look after pensioners through the so-called triple lock on state pensions. However, over the past five years austerity and budget cuts have had a devastating impact on older people and devolved budgets across the UK. Mortality rates, health inequalities and fuel poverty are increasing and life expectancy is falling, particularly in the most disadvantaged areas. In Northern Ireland, for example, nearly 70% of households headed by older people over 75 are living in fuel poverty. The corresponding figure is 52% for the 60 to 74 age group.

There are now millions fewer social care visits a year than took place five years ago. Between 2008 and 2013, cuts have led to nearly 500,000 older and disabled people in the UK either losing their care support or becoming no longer eligible to claim it. It is unacceptable that in order to 'balance the books', thousands of older people will have to shiver in the cold or receive increasingly inadequate care in their old age as budgets are slashed. As the 1 per cent become ever richer, the incomes of older

people are reducing and benefits are being cut. As always it is the poorest and those who live in the poorest areas who will be most affected.

Conference calls on the National Retired Members Committee to work with UNISON national structures:

1. to highlight the impact, on older people, of continued austerity and cuts to our essential public services;
2. to support UNISON in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales in their related campaigning work in the run up to the 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly, Scottish Parliament, and Wales Assembly elections.

Northern Ireland

14. DIGNITY IN LATER LIFE

Conference notes that later life is a time of significant change for retired people which provides challenges previously not encountered. These issues include bereavement, health, housing and mobility.

Conference believes that retired people are entitled to a dignified existence, which includes respect, recognition, autonomy, independence and identity.

Conference further notes the important role UNISON and its members can play in achieving these objectives.

Conference therefore calls upon the Retired Members National Committee to liaise with the National Executive Council:-

1. Issue guideline on the needs of the older person in palliative care;
2. Consider issues relating to supportive care;
3. Consider research into maintaining dignity in later life;
4. Consider issues raised by older people's experience to loss of independence and mobility;
5. Consider the opportunities for people in later life to live and die in dignity;
6. Seek the backing of the union and relevant bodies in mounting a major campaign on the subject in order to raise awareness and influence attitudes.

East Midlands

15. DIGNIFIED ENDINGS

Conference notes that the Pensioners Charter of the National Pensioners Convention refers to dignity, respect and fair treatment of older people in all aspects of their lives. Conference further notes that the Dignity Code also produced by the National Pensioners Convention calls for individuals to make up their own minds and

for personal wishes such as “living wills” to be implemented when they can no longer express themselves clearly.

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

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

Conference recognises the need to greatly improve end-of-life care and that at the same time there is a need to debate a change in the law on assisted dying for the small but significant number of 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 believes that Parliament should provide sufficient time to give full consideration to whether or not a law can be enacted which provides both transparency in decision making at the end of life and protection for vulnerable older people.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members Committee and calls upon the National Executive Council to campaign for Parliament to be allowed to debate a change in the law that would allow assisted dying, subject to full safeguards for vulnerable older people.

Shropshire General

16. END OF LIFE WITH DIGNITY

Conference notes recent media reports highlighting the issue of elderly patients who are approaching the end of their lives often being left on trolleys in hospital corridors with insufficient pain relief and left alone to die.

Conference agrees this demonstrates a total lack of dignity, care and respect and as such is totally unacceptable. Whilst it is not the case in all hospitals, it is not too much to ask that as we approach the end of our lives we are treated with all due care, attention and privacy and that we are given adequate medication to die with dignity. Even if this was just one incident with one elderly patient then, that is one too many.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to liaise with the National Executive Council to campaign for the right to die in hospital with dignity.

East Midlands

Universal Benefits

17. HANDS OFF 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.

Any reductions in these benefits will have an adverse effect 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.

Conference refutes the myths that:

1. 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. 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. 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. Older people have escaped the austerity measures. Over the past few years the Winter Fuel Payment has been frozen, 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.
 - a. Conference instructs the National Retired Members Committee and calls on the National Executive Council to work with the National Pensioners Convention on their 'Hands Off' campaign' in its struggle to defend universal benefits for older people.
 - b. This Conference further calls on the National Retired Members Committee to work with all relevant organisations to oppose any current and future attack on universal benefits and to ensure that this government is aware to keep their "hands off our universal benefits".

Leicestershire Healthcare

18. FUEL POVERTY: THE COLD TRUTH

In February this year research by the National Energy Action group warned that at least 100,000 householders could die needlessly across the UK between now and 2030 due to an inability to heat their homes properly. 75% of those affected will be pensioners which will include UNISON Retired Members.

The report from manifesto for Warmth and Fuel Poverty Awareness also claims the NHS could also be left with a £22 billion bill for treating cold related illnesses. Jenny Saunders chief executive of National Energy Action said Fuel Poverty Awareness is a wake up call on the need to end the cost and suffering caused by cold homes in the UK

This Conference urges the UNISON National Retired Members Committee and the National Executive Council to work with other unions to lobby this Government for an increase in the Winter Fuel Allowance in view of the now non-payment of Winter Fuel Allowance to certain EU countries, and ask what steps they are taking to end this suffering caused by fuel poverty once and for all.

Rochdale

19. FREE TRAVEL PASS FOR PENSIONERS

The bus pass providing pensioners for free off peak bus travel in England and Wales has helped their mobility largely on a local basis. However, many pensioners find the cost of high rail fares, even with the use of the Senior Rail Card, discourages them from visiting friends and relatives throughout the UK. It is time that a universal free travel pass is issued to all pensioners for off peak travel and for this to be available for use in all countries within the United Kingdom.

Conference calls upon the National Retired Members' Committee to work with other trades unions and appropriate bodies to lobby hard for the introduction of such a universal free travel pass for pensioners.

Devon County

20. A SINGLE COMBINED TRAVEL PASS FOR BUS AND RAIL FOR PENSIONERS AND THE DISABLED

Many pensioners find the cost of rail fares, even after using the 30% discount of a Senior Rail Card, an expensive hindrance to frequent visiting of friends and family across the UK as a whole. Unlike the Bus Pass, which provides free off peak travel on a local basis and has facilitated their movement, a combined Rail Pass should make the UK an area of free movement to older and disabled people who have contributed and continue to contribute so much to the economy. In addition to encouraging public transport, such a move would reduce the volume of private cars and lead to less congestion and lessen the risks from older drivers on our roads.

Conference therefore calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to investigate and lobby for the introduction of a unified Bus and Rail Pass to facilitate

travel and encourage older people to take advantage of public transport to fulfil their social, family and cultural aspirations to benefit the wider community in the UK.

Conference further calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to do everything possible to encourage the close working together of UNISON branches and other trade unions to achieve this outcome.

South West

Communications and Internal Issues

21. COMMUNICATIONS

Conference notes that communications between branch, regional and national levels remains unsatisfactory as far as UNISON retired members are concerned.

Conference is also concerned that there has been a failure to produce updated literature on retired members matters such as the Branch Retired Members Secretary's Handbook, the UNISON Code of Practice for Older People and various internal things such as a new recruitment form and associated material.

Conference is also reminded of a commitment made when *interactive* ceased publication that an electronic issue would be produced on a regular basis.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members Committee and requests the National Executive Council to get all outstanding items published as soon as possible and to produce an electronic version of *interactive*.

West Midlands

22. REVIEW COMMUNICATION WITH RETIRED MEMBERS

UNISON faces a dilemma in communicating with its retired members.

Traditional forms of communication, via the post, are far more expensive and consume far more resources than communication via email and the internet. Not surprisingly, therefore there is a move towards the latter.

However, a recent survey suggests that up to 50% of retired members do not have the skills and facilities to communicate electronically with their union.

It should be borne in mind that most people learn their IT skills in the workplace and that:

1. PCs have only been commonplace in the workplace since the late 1990s;
2. the first Blackberry Smartphone was launched only 12 years ago and, initially, was used only by a managerial elite;
3. Facebook was first launched only 11 years ago and Twitter only 9 years ago.

Not surprisingly, therefore it is retired members and particularly older retired members who face difficulties in communicating in this way.

UNISON faces many challenges and must prioritise its resources. It must also adapt to the use of new technologies. However, there appears to be a risk that a minority of often vulnerable members may become isolated and disenfranchised by this change.

Technological change should not take place blindly without considering its impact and seeking ways to mitigate any negative effects. It is proposed therefore that UNISON establishes a working party, supported by a budget, to:

- a. review existing communications with retired members;
- b. review the likely impact on them of a move to electronic communications;
- c. investigate ways of mitigating the negative effects of such a move;
- d. produce a formal written report with costed recommendations for next year's Conference.

Conference, therefore, instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to set up a working party whose role is to carry out the actions described above. Conference also calls on the National Executive Committee to adequately fund the activities of this working party.

South East

23. SOME DAY MY PRINTS WILL COME

Conference notes that, despite numerous protests including references to the National Retired Members' Committee and motions to the National Retired Members' Conference, the Conference Bulletin containing all the vital administrative information about this year's Conference was made available on line only, with no paper notification.

Further, there was again no notification to Branches or Retired Members' Sections of the date when the Bulletin would be available.

Conference is concerned that this represents an obstacle to the ability of all Branches/Retired Members' Sections to play a full and active role in the work of Conference, including the submission of motions and amendments for inclusion in its Agenda, and even the timely notification of delegates' details for registration.

A simple remedy could go thus: a short email is sent from Head Office to Branch Secretaries and those Retired Members' Secretaries who have email addresses to the effect that the Retired Members' Conference Bulletin is now available on the national website. Branch Secretaries are asked to pass on this information (on paper) to their Retired Members' Secretaries where these do not have email, so that the RM Secretaries can get a paper copy from their Branch, or from the website if they can get access to a computer by other means.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to pursue this matter with the National Executive Council with urgency and vigour, with a view to resolving it in time for a workable solution to be in place for Conference 2016.

Eastern

24. IMPROVING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MOTIONS CARRIED BY THE RETIRED MEMBERS CONFERENCE

Each year, Conference carries many worthwhile motions and it is important that they are followed up and implemented to the best of UNISON's ability.

Unfortunately, much Conference time is also spent debating motions which, while not necessarily identical, are often very similar to those carried in previous years.

Whilst this is helpful in keeping issues alive, it is felt that the rather limited time available to Conference would be better spent in helping to move the original motions forward.

To this end, it is proposed:

1. that there be greater dialogue between the National Retired Members' Committee, Regional Retired Members' Committees and other retired members on progress in implementing motions; and
2. that, in turn, Conference, Regional Retired Members' Committees and other retired members provide greater support and assistance to the National Retired Members' Committee in implementing the actions required of them.

It is recommended that the role of the National Retired Members' Committee be to manage the implementation of actions. For example, to establish sub-committees or working parties to carry out the actions, to agree terms of reference for those sub-committees and working parties, to support and monitor their progress, collate their reports, etc.

It is also recommended that much of the detailed work be carried out not by the National Retired Members' Committee, unless they have a particular interest or area of expertise, but by the vast resource of other retired members, many of whom would welcome an opportunity to become involved and who often have enthusiasm and expertise to bring to the table.

To initiate greater dialogue, it is proposed that the National Retired Members' Committee prepare a quarterly report on progress against motions beginning with those passed at this Conference. It is proposed that the report be distributed to Regional Retired Members' Committees and Retired Members' Secretaries. The reports should include but not be limited to:

- a. requests for sub-committee or working party members;
- b. honest and frank descriptions of any obstacles to the implementation of actions required by motions, e.g. lack of time, funds, or other resources; and
- c. details of where to submit any comments, suggestions or offers of help.

In this way, Conference will be able to follow the progress of motions and there will be less likelihood of duplication. However, a healthy debate will continue around the issues and, also, around the practicalities of actions to address those issues.

Conference, therefore, instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to:

- i. prepare and distribute a quarterly written report on progress against all motions commencing with those passed at this Conference and to include the information described above;
- ii. focus on managing the implementation of actions required by motions and to seek assistance from the members in the form of sub-committees or working parties to implement those actions, as described above; and

- iii. carry out monitoring to assess whether the above actions have been successful.

South East

25. NEVER TOO OLD TO AGITATE, EDUCATE AND ORGANISE

Conference notes that over 65s are a growing proportion of society. This will have an impact on trades unions in a number of ways since:

1. The workforce will include a growing number of workers for whom retirement gets later and later and who make new organising demands;
2. Retired members will form a growing proportion of the membership of many unions; and,
3. Age predicts voting intention almost as strongly as does social class so how over-65s vote will influence, increasingly, what kind of government we have.

Conference therefore believes that trades unions must get better at engaging with older people. It further believes that UNISON, with the largest and best-organised trades union retired members' organisation in the United Kingdom is well placed to take a lead.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members' Committee, seeking the support as need be of the National Executive Council, to:

- a. Seek to ensure that the UNISON Charter for Older People, once reprinted, is kept up to date and made widely available as the key piece of material to promote UNISON to retired members, other older members and to older people more widely and to gain their confidence that UNISON has a strategy to help them achieve things that matter to them;
- b. Aim to produce a regular electronic bulletin to keep retired members informed of campaigns, resources, research etc which Branch Retired Members' Groups can include in their programmes and members can take to pensioners' organisations;
- c. Develop strategies to promote retired membership to UNISON members and to promote UNISON to older people and seek to ensure that resources are available to do so;
- d. Approach the Labour Link National Committee to discuss whether issues affecting older people get enough of its attention and, if there appears to be a problem, how to overcome it;
- e. As far as possible and appropriate, share information with other trades unions, seek opportunities to work together, raise appropriate matters with the Trades Union Congress (TUC) from time to time and re-raise the need for the TUC to develop a stronger pensioners' organisation; and,

- f. Consult the Regional Retired Members' Committees in Cymru/Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland to discuss how their circumstances differ from those in England and how the above points need to be adapted in their respective regions.

Wolverhampton General

26. SELF ORGANISED GROUPS CONFERENCES - RETIRED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVES

Conference notes the review of arrangements for the National Retired Members Conference which is being carried out by the National Retired Members Committee (NRMC) following the carrying of Motion 19 (and the remittal of Motion 20) at the 2014 Retired Members Conference.

Conference also notes the change to National Rule D.6.8 passed at the 2014 National Delegate Conference which now reads as follows:

“The National Executive Council shall establish a Retired Members National Committee composed of representatives of Regional Retired Members organisations which may hold an annual conference of retired members and may elect two representatives to attend the National delegate conference. The National Retired Members Organisation may submit two motions to the National delegate Conference. The National Retired Members Organisation may send two representatives of relevant retired members to each National Self-Organised Group Conference, with the right to speak but not vote.”

Conference notes that it is for the National Retired Members Organisation to appoint two representatives to each of the four Self Organised Group (SOG) Conferences.

Conference notes that the provisions put in place at short notice by the NRMC to comply with the rule change in time for the 2014/15 cycle of SOG conferences were essentially a “top down” method of selection, whereby representatives were selected first from amongst those on the NRMC who identified with the relevant SOG, then, if there were still vacancies, expressions of interest were asked from the Regional Retired Members Committees. This meant that for some conferences places were filled without any retired members at Branch level having the opportunity to put themselves forward.

It has been stated that the current process to be a “temporary arrangement” which will be looked at as part of the overall review occasioned by Motion 19 of NMRC 2014, however Conference is concerned that the longer arrangements are temporary the more permanent they become, the more so since it appears that the same selection process is being used for the selection of Retired Members Representatives to SOG Conferences in 2015/16.

Conference is concerned this system not only lacks transparency in selection, but restricts the candidates for selection as representatives to a tiny minority of members of the Retired members' organisation. Further Conference notes that there is no mechanism by which the representatives to the SOG conferences are accountable to the Retired Members Organisation.

Conference therefore instructs the NRMC, subject as need be, to the National Executive Council's (NEC) authority, to:

1. Seek to ensure that the selection of representatives to SOG conferences is transparent and open to all retired members who identify with each group.
2. Make efforts to achieve a system with protocols whereby representatives to SOG conferences are accountable to NRMC and this Conference as the Retired Members Organisation.
3. Take steps to define the role of the SOG caucuses at National Retired Members Conference, acting within the any guidelines established by the NEC under National Rule D 4.4.1, including providing them with input into the transparency of selection and accountability of representatives to SOG conferences
4. Seek to ensure that the National Retired Members Organisation has a consistent approach to the appointment of representatives each and every SOG Conference.
5. Report back on action taken to comply with this motion to 2016 Conference.

Islington

27. CONSIDERATION OF A RULE CHANGE

The region notes that under Section C no.2.6.3 it specifies that 'Retired Members shall be entitled to attend branch meetings and to vote on issues not relating to the pay and conditions of members in employment. They will be entitled to stand for office and vote only for the positions in the Retired Members' organisation unless otherwise determined by the National Executive Council or as otherwise provided for in these rules'.

The Wales Retired Members Committee believes that this rule is unduly prescriptive and shows no appreciation of the situation a number of branches currently face.

Clearly whilst it is reasonable that retired members should have no part in the discussion on pay and conditions of working members, it is unreasonable to prevent them from providing much needed services to the branch by standing for election as Treasurer, Welfare Officer or Sports and Social Officer.

This proposed rule change does not inhibit employed and younger members from standing but the UNISON Cymru/Wales Retired Members Committee believes it important that Branches should have the opportunity to use the experience and knowledge of the many well-equipped retired members in the wider number of positions available rather than limiting their involvement in the work of the branch to that of Retired Members' Officer.

The Committee therefore proposes a review of Rule C.2.6.3 with a view to creating opportunities for Retired Members to put themselves forward for election to those offices of the branch which are not involved in pay and conditions of working members.

Conference therefore calls on the National Retired Members Committee to propose a review of the above rule by the National Executive Council.

Cymru/Wales

28. ORGANISING RETIRED MEMBERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Conference notes that the majority of UNISON members work in the public sector, but that after more than 20 years of privatisation and outsourcing, a growing number of our members are employed by private sector organisations. More than 67,000 of our members now work for private companies that deliver public services.

Our private contractor members include hospital cleaners, environmental health officers, school meals workers and call centre workers. These members are difficult to organise due to the large number of different employers in the private sector.

Conference believes that these difficulties also apply to the recruitment and retention of retired members in the private sector. As more and more of our working members are employed in the private sector, it follows that in the future, increasing numbers of retired members will come from the private sector.

Therefore, Conference calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to work with UNISON's private contractors unit to provide a co-ordinated approach to organising retired members in the private contractors' sector and consider how to provide advice and support to regions and branches with regard to recruiting and retaining retired members.

National Retired Members' Committee

29. RECRUITING AND RETAINING RETIRED MEMBERS IN THE NEW WORKING WORLD

Conference notes that over the past few decades the world of work has changed significantly. Within the public sector many staff are now employed by private companies in contracted out services, and that under the new Tory government this is likely to increase in the future. Similarly many people find that the only way to secure employment is to become self-employed, a phenomenon that is growing exponentially.

Such a scenario has an impact on trade unions in the public sector, significantly on their ability to recruit and retain members and to try to ensure that they remain members into retirement. It seems clear that UNISON may not be retaining as many members into retirement as previously and that this issue needs to be addressed.

Conference accepts there is a dichotomy for any trade union between working and retired members, if the latter were to represent a significant percentage of the

membership, given that trade unions are primarily organisations for working people. However Conference believes that UNISON could recruit more retired members if it embraced the reality of current employment practice.

Whereas work in the public sector used to be secure employment into the indefinite future, privatisation has seen this seriously eroded in a number of ways most notably in interrupted work patterns, redundancy and having to find work wherever it might be, often outside the public sector. As a result many workers with years of service and UNISON membership are unable to become retired members as they fall outside the time limited rule (C 2.6.1) of at least 2 years continuous membership immediately prior to retirement.

Conference notes that Unite has made some strides in addressing this issue with the establishment of its Community Membership, which includes retired people, and UNISON may wish to consider doing something similar.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members Committee to liaise with the National Executive Council to look into the overly prescriptive rules which preclude retired membership for anyone regardless of previous long term UNISON membership if that membership is not within the 2 years immediately prior to retirement.

East Midlands

Other Campaigns and Issues

30. CHALLENGING THE MASS MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF OLDER PEOPLE

Conference notes with concern the negative and profoundly damaging images of older people, both as individuals and collectively, that are continually and consistently put out by the mass media in Britain. This includes portrayal of the age group as having access to large pensions, doing little that is worthwhile and at the same time being a drain on society's resources and a burden on younger generations. Older people are characterised as being "behind the times", unable and unwilling to communicate through modern technologies and hence as being in a large measure responsible for their own isolation. They are disproportionately depicted as victims and objects of pity. Their economic, social and cultural contribution to society, past and present, is largely ignored. They are under-represented as authors, experts and contributors to the public arena. Older women and black people are particularly vulnerable both to negative imagery and "invisibility".

Conference further notes that the truth is very different. For example, far from enjoying gold-plated pensions and untold wealth, millions are living in poverty or fear of poverty. Services on which the majority of older people disproportionately rely have been cut or are under threat. Pensions and benefits have so declined in value that even basic needs cannot be met and thousands die each winter from cold related causes. At the same time the contribution of unpaid labour by older people is a vital part of the bedrock of society without which families and communities could not survive.

Conference is alarmed at the impact of this coverage which creates discord between generations, builds resentment and hostility and promotes and supports discrimination against and exploitation of older people. It significantly increases their vulnerability, leaving them open to abuse by family and strangers. It derecognises the potential of their energy, knowledge, skills and wisdom from which society could so much benefit.

This is unacceptable and Conference therefore calls on UNISON's National Retired Members' Committee to:

1. Raise this issue with the National Executive Committee and the National Pensioners' Convention, seeking to ensure that positive images of older people are maintained and strengthened in our union, the wider labour movement and in society.
2. Raise the awareness of working and retired members of UNISON of the myths that are peddled by the media, their purpose and divisiveness and how to campaign against them.
3. Encourage and support all UNISON members and organisations, and particularly its Retired Members Sections, in countering local and national media on ageism and misrepresentation of older people and replacing it with positive coverage.

South West

31. AFFILIATION TO FERPA

Conference notes that the European Federation of Retired and Older Persons (FERPA) is a member of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and exists to represent the interests of pensioners within the European Union (EU).

Most recently FERPA drafted under the European Citizens Initiative, a process which is designed to allow EU citizens to propose new legislation to the European Commission, a proposal to do with the right to care. If successful the Initiative would have resulted in an improvement in European Law to protect the rights of older people requiring care, including long term care.

Unfortunately the Initiative was rejected by the Commission but an appeal has been lodged and another initiative is being drawn up should the appeal fail. The input of major British Trade Unions would be invaluable in the drafting of this and similar initiatives to further the interests of pensioners and older people and to give binding rights under European Law.

Under the rules of FERPA itself only members of the ETUC can affiliate directly. The TUC, Trades Union Congress, is itself affiliated to FERPA and through the TUC so are a number of Unions. The appointment of TUC representatives is made by the TUC's Trade Union Committee but both nominations and voting is restricted to those members whose Union pays an affiliation fee to the TUC.

Conference is concerned to note that UNISON is apparently not affiliated to FERPA and cannot therefore take part in this process.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members Committee and requests the National Executive Council to give urgent consideration to affiliating to FERPA in order that UNISON can work with FERPA to campaign for improvements in pensions and care of older people across the European Community.

South East

32. ACCESS TO TAX ALLOWANCES AND BENEFITS

This Conference notes with concern that at present applications for the Marriage Tax Allowance can only be made by those who have access to the internet.

Older people are likely to be disproportionately affected by this decision.

This Conference is concerned that in future this method may be used exclusively as the means of claiming other allowances and benefits as the government seeks further reductions in costs. This can only lead to further social exclusion and an increase in deprivation for the most vulnerable.

This Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members Committee, and calls upon the National Executive Council, to liaise with the National Pensioners' Convention, Age UK and other appropriate organisations, to monitor this situation,

raise awareness of the disadvantageous situation of many older people and campaign to retain a choice of methods of applying for allowances and benefits.

Derbyshire County

33. TAX HELP FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Conference notes that tax advice is provided to UNISON members through a private company that works on a “no win, no fee” basis. They guarantee their clients can keep 69p in the pound rebate they succeed in winning. A motion to the National Delegate Conference deplores this approach - the rebate is an entitlement and only corrects an error, it is not a bonus or windfall.

This Conference recognises the lower your income the more important it is to be correctly taxed and to keep 100% of any rebate awarded. Most UNISON employed members on PAYE rarely need tax advice as they have one income from one employer and their tax code changes automatically as a result of the Budget. However on retirement UNISON members frequently have at least two sources of income - an occupational pension and a state pension. This makes assessing correct taxable income problematic and therefore the need for advice more crucial.

Reduced income on retirement makes it essential the correct tax codes are applied.

The closure of local tax offices limits access to face to face tax advice and a significant number of older people do not have on-line access to information and advice from tax officials.

Tax Help for Older People - a charity comprising retired HMRC tax inspectors and retired tax accountants acting as volunteers was set up to provide free tax help for people over 60 or early retirees with an income of less than £20,000 in Scotland, England, Wales & Northern Ireland.

This Conference instructs the National Retired Members Committee to liaise with the National Members Services Committee to explore links with Tax Help for Older People with a view to promoting the services of the charity amongst UNISON retired members.

Scotland

34. FRAUD AGAINST OLDER PEOPLE

We have taken this heading from the title of an evidence review commissioned by Age UK, and published in April 2015. The review is seen as a way of bringing attention to this problem at a time of increasing risk and vulnerability. It is suggested that, among other things, the recent reforms to private pensions – allowing easier access to cash – will mean that higher proportions of older people will be targeted.

Fraud of all kinds: on-line, telephone, mail and ‘doorstep’ are targeted at people of all ages - and all levels of confidence and sophistication. However, this Age UK study of what is known about fraud asserts that older people are especially at risk of becoming victims because of personal circumstances such as social isolation,

bereavement and cognitive impairment. Additionally, while it can be argued that it is younger people who are more likely to encounter on-line fraud; older people are (rightly) being encouraged to take advantage of what the internet can bring. The risk of on-line fraud against older people can therefore be expected to grow. When any kind of fraud happens the consequences can be severe and long-lasting - affecting physical and mental health, and impacting on financial circumstances.

Age UK is calling for better focus and co-ordination at all levels of Government and by police and other agencies, to understand more accurately the prevalence and nature of national and international fraud, and how it can be tackled. A special task force is suggested, to be set up by the new Government.

This conference urges the UNISON Retired Members Committee and the NEC to liaise with other unions, and with Age UK and other older people's campaigning organisations, to develop a more comprehensive understanding of older people's experience of fraud and attempted fraud – and how perpetrators seem to change their tactics over time. The aim would be to ensure that all initiatives to tackle fraud address the particular vulnerabilities of older people.

York City

35. CAMPAIGN FOR A UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF OLDER PERSONS

Conference notes that ageism is rife across the world. Older people have few rights under international law and, in many countries, it is considered acceptable to deny people work, access to health care, education or the right to participate in government just because of their age.

Conference believes that a United Nations Convention on the Rights of Older Persons along the lines of, say, the Convention on the Rights of the Child would create a universal legal standard and a mechanism to protect older people's human rights and eradicate discrimination.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to discuss with the National Executive Council's International Committee:

1. How UNISON's influence can be brought to bear to support the campaign for a convention and to seek to put this in hand; and,
2. How the Retired Members' Organisation can support this campaign and how it can support UNISON's international work as a whole.

Wolverhampton General

36. AUSTERITY AND PENSIONERS

Conference recognises that the policy of austerity impacts disproportionately on the most vulnerable people in our society including pensioners, especially those with impairments or limiting health conditions. It recognises that adult social care budgets have already been cut by 31% over the past 5 years, that the UK state pension is

one of the lowest in Europe and that the number of winter deaths from hypothermia in the UK is one of the highest.

Conference expresses its opposition to the proposed £1.1 billion cut in adult care budgets for 2015/16. Cuts resulting from slashed Government grants to Local Authorities fall heavily on adult social care because it is not ring-fenced, including home services for elderly people as well as residential care. This also has a huge effect on the NHS - without help to keep them living in their own homes, people with care needs are turning up in hospitals where two-thirds of beds are already occupied by elderly patients.

Conference also opposes any cut to pensioners' disability living allowance or the extension of the Bedroom Tax to pensioners as a consequence of the Government's planned 12 billion cut in Welfare.

Conference believes that to achieve our objectives of dignity and security in retirement we need a living pension and that publicly funded ethical care should be provided to all who need it. The policy of austerity must be overturned and our alternative policies promoted. We believe that austerity is best challenged when we work together with other organisations who oppose austerity as public policy.

Conference therefore calls on the National Retired Members Committee to work with the National Executive Council, Labour Link, the National Pensioners' Convention and the Scottish Pensioners Network to actively promote an alliance against austerity. This includes the Trades Union Congress, campaign and voluntary organisations and political parties and ensures that within such an alliance pensioners' interests are integral to its campaigning.

Derbyshire County

37. RENEWING THE FIGHT AGAINST AUSTERITY

Conference notes with dismay the election of a Conservative Government for the United Kingdom in May this year, with its commitment to continued austerity, despite those measures failing to find a mandate outside of England.

Conference believes that, in its reckless worship of austerity, the Tory Government will, whilst pleading their so called "triple lock" to protect state pensions, continue to erode other benefits that have been hard won for pensioners over the past decades.

In particular Conference fears that the Tories avowed aims of privatisation and the "reduction of the State" will pose even greater threats to public services through cuts or outsourcing, in particular services relied on by older people such as homecare, libraries and concessionary travel.

Conference recalls the motions passed at the 2014 National Retired Members Conference which instructed or called upon the National Retired Members Committee (NRMC), working with other relevant bodies of the union or other organisations to campaign for the following:

1. The levelling up of the benefits of widowers and surviving same sex spouses or civil partners to the level of benefits received by widows in Occupational Pension Schemes.
2. An increase in the state pension to the poverty level (which in 2014, £175 a week for a single pensioner and £325 for couples)
3. Elimination of the disparity between payments of new State pensions under the 2014 Pensions Act and that received by existing pensioners.
4. Annual state pension increases to be based on the Retail Price index, the annual increase in average earnings or to remain above the poverty level (whichever is the greater)
5. The retention of universal benefits for older people such as the winter fuel payment, free bus passes, free prescriptions and free TV licences.
6. Reversal of the erosion of the winter fuel allowance that has occurred since 2008 and to campaign for an increase in the allowance to £700 for over 80's households and £500 for over 70's households
7. The extension of concessionary bus pass travel to include cross border travel in the UK including concessions for travel by ferry or train
8. The introduction of free social care for older people.
9. Support of UNISON's Ethical Care Charter, and to encourage its adoption by employers providing social care
10. The improvement of conditions of service for care staff working with the elderly.
11. Housing policies to ensure that there is adequate housing supply for older and disabled people and that such housing is safe, secure close to services and amenities needed by older people and that such housing is exempt from any "right to buy" legislation.

Conference notes the action taken on these matters by the NRMC in their Annual Report. Conference acknowledges the difficulties the NRMC may have had in pursuing these objectives at a time when there was not only a General Election but also election for members of UNISON's National Executive Council (NEC), however Conference believes that the conclusion of these two campaigns allows the NRMC to seize the opportunity to place campaigning on these vital issues further up UNISON's overall agenda.

Conference therefore affirms its support for the aims and actions stated above, and instructs the NRMC to renew its efforts to achieve the will of the 2014 Conference by:-

- a. Reminding the NEC, Labour Link and relevant National Committees of Self Organised Groups within UNISON of the aims listed above, and call upon them to continue campaigning for the same.

- b. Work with the NEC, Labour Link and other relevant bodies in UNISON to influence the government to adopt policies which will achieve these aims.
- c. Work with outside bodies such as the TUC, the National Pensioners Convention, the Scottish Pensioners Forum, Age UK and others to campaign for these objectives
- d. Report back to the 2016 National Retired Members Conference on the actions taken and progress made on implementing this motion.

Islington

MOTIONS RULED OUT OF ORDER

Not competent (no specific action called for)

WINTER DEATHS CAUSED BY COLD WEATHER

In a report from the Office for National Statistics, in a report it was revealed that there was a 29% increase in deaths linked to the cold weather. Excess winter deaths in England and Wales rose by almost a third compared with the previous year- a rise of 31,000 additional deaths. The increase level of excess winter mortality coincides with the decrease in the average temperatures, this suggests that the higher levels of winter mortality may be due to a particularly prolonged winter with temperatures lower than average temperatures in February and March.

Pensioners were worse affected by the 31,000 additional deaths, which are calculated by comparing the death rates from none winter months to those that occur between December and March. The 75 age group account for 25,000 winter related deaths.

Following recent price hikes from the energy companies many pensioners are forced to choose between heating and eating. This is a national disgrace. A third of these excess deaths are caused by people living in homes that are too cold. The government have failed to stand-up to the energy companies which have forced thousands of our retired members having to choose between heating and eating.

Excess winter deaths are preventable, and today's figures are a damning indictment of our failure to address the scandal of cold homes in this country. We believe that the only sustainable solution is investment to increase efficiency of our housing stock so cold homes become a thing of the past.

David Prentis our general secretary said: 'The government cannot cross its fingers and hope for milder winters, it must take action now. The big six energy companies need to be reined in. It's a national disgrace that elderly people are dying in this country because they are too frightened to put on their heating.'

Conference, this must be stopped now. Let's stop talking about it; let's do something about the plight of thousands of pensioners which includes our members.

This conference calls upon the National Retired Members' Committee through the National Executive Council to take whatever steps necessary to act with any other organisations to stop this tragic waste of human life.

North West

UNIVERSAL BENEFITS FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Conference realises that although the Conservatives gave some assurances before the election that things like bus-passes and TV licenses would be as safe in their hands as the NHS, there were also many elements in their party making increasingly loud noises about reducing, abolishing or means-testing some or all of them.

Now that the "Grey Vote" has been cast, and with the knowledge that some of us will never vote again, fears of damage to our special benefits have returned.

Conference believes that the principle of universality of these benefits is held very dear by our members, many of whom suffered through cruelly-applied means-testing in their childhood.

Conference is determined that those days and measures should not return, and calls on the National Retired Members' Committee in conjunction with the National Executive Council to hold firmly to these principles by all possible means.

*Suffolk County
Ipswich*

Action not specific to the conference

GRANDPARENTS CHILDCARE ROLE AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The amount of childcare grandparent/pensioners provide for their families has risen sharply in the last decade. Whichever measure you take - number of children looked after by grandparents, hours put in, or value to the economy, the trend is sharply upwards, and grandparents are now estimated to be saving Britain £17bn in childcare.

Pensioners who are grandparents do face financial hardships in terms of the cost to them of providing care and support for their grandchildren to enable their parents to engage in paid employment. They do this for free rather than being paid for taking on this role. The Government's push for full employment has left a gap in the provision for childcare – a gap which has historically been resourced from the active involvement of grandparents.

Pensioners who face the financial struggle with their day to day living expenses as a result of the reduced value of pensions, removal of the age related tax allowance and little or no return on investments, are increasingly financially constrained when supporting their grandchildren, in order that the Government's design for full employment might be achieved. Such support often includes drawing on the limited income of their declining pension.

The green paper produced in 1998 entitled 'Supporting Families: A consultation document' (see extract below), recognised the value of the support of grandparents and older people at that time. This need still exists today in 2015 even more so.

'Chapter 1

Better Services and Support for Parents

1.5 We also intend to:

help grandparents and older people offer more support to families.'

It is therefore clear there is a history of recognition for the need to support working families which is even more relevant today, when benefit support is being reduced for the low paid and pressure is being exerted for people to have to take low grade, low paid part time jobs which makes it impossible to be able to afford to pay childcare costs.

This conference urges the UNISON Retired Members Committee and the NEC to liaise with other unions, with Age UK, other older people's campaigning organisations and the government, to explore and implement ways to help to financially support those providing family childcare.

York City

GLOBAL WARMING

This conference deplores the fact that:

1. 97% of the world scientific community agrees that climate change is unequivocally caused by humans and a UN International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports that, unchecked, it poses a grave threat to people and it could lead to wars, of which older people in particular have seen sufficient, and mass migration.
2. The IPCC also 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, action can still limit the global warming to 2C, the internationally agreed safe limit, if low carbon energy triples or quadruples by 2050.
3. 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. We therefore ask for representation to be made to the Government to promote the use of public transport by continuing the senior citizens' entitlement to free travel on buses and also, to increase the provision of grants for installation and other energy saving measures to pensioners and the poorest members of society.
4. We therefore instruct the NRMC and request the NEC to use all means at their disposal to ensure that all parties of Government adhere to their commitment to cut down by all possible ways, on global warming.

North Yorkshire

EQUAL RIGHTS OVER INHERITANCE

Conference notes that for whatever reason, many people prefer to remain living together in long-term relationships without feeling the need to go through a ceremony of marriage – estimated at around 2.5 million.

There is no such thing as a Common-Law Partner and they cannot acquire any legal rights over property or assets owned by a partner simply by virtue of the fact that they have lived together for a period of time. For example, a married couple's house will be treated as a joint asset in the event of a spouse's death and exempt from death duties. In 2009 the Law Commission wanted to end rules dating back more than 80 years and give partners who did not marry the same rights as bereaved spouses. They admitted that the proposals were controversial but insisted that current laws "reflect some of the social conditions and attitudes of a different era" and needed to be in line with "modern families". They were particularly keen for a review of intestate rules which govern what happens if someone dies without a will. The Commission proposed bringing unmarried couples who had cohabited for a period of time – say five years – on a par with married ones. Since 2009, this issue has not been progressed by any government.

Conference therefore calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to pursue this matter rigorously by raising it with other appropriate bodies within UNISON, including the NEC, Labour Link and Self-Organised Groups, and the National Pensioners' Convention to consider mounting a campaign to seek the changes necessary in law for cohabiting couples to have the same equal rights as married couples or couples in civil partnerships and report back on progress to the 2016 Retired Members' Conference.

South West

CARE HOME VISITING SERVICE

Conference will recall that it has long been a concern to members that in too many of our Care Homes there still exists a culture of failure to appropriately care for and support the dignity, health and general well being of some of the most vulnerable residents. Especially those who are too frail or intimidated to defend themselves and who have no family or visitors to do that for them. This is despite the existence of The Care Commission and the Care Standards they seek to encourage and enforce.

Care provision, is too often referred to as the 'Care Industry'. Care is not an industry, it is a profession and should remain as such. Too often this attitude leads to an attitude of profit over provision and this quite simply cannot be right!

There is the Care Inspectorate in place, who have the official monitoring role, and indeed there are lay assessors included in some visiting teams, however it is acknowledged from within that organisation, that much of the regulation is self reported and while efforts are made to ensure that good care standards are maintained there are too many horror stories for us to be sure that some issues and incidents of poor care are still "slipping through the net".

Questions one could ask are; Are inspection visits done often enough? Are assessments carried out in sufficient depth? Are they people centred enough?

It is clear from research that the larger the home the higher is the percentage incidence of hospitalisation, infection levels, poor hygiene, pressure sores and earlier than expected or unexplained deaths, higher levels of depression and general failure to thrive.

Some years ago, there was included in a motion and since then, it has been repeated in a number of arenas, including dare it be said, on 19th April this year on Facebook! "that our old folk would be better off in prison, where at least they would be given 3 meals a day, a daily shower and ongoing observation to ensure any problems were dealt with promptly and that many Care Homes were more suitable places for those who had 'wronged' society in some way."

With the externalisation and privatisation of Care Homes where the profit motive clashes with the provision of a caring service perhaps the Facebook comment is not so strange.

Conference notes The Prison Visiting Service provides a back-up service to Offenders, where their views, emotional needs, general welfare and personal feelings are considered and appropriately raised and addressed with the correct authorities. This is in addition to the statutory quality standards arrangements in place within the Prison Service itself, and indeed the now enhanced service of a Prison Ombudsman!

The functions of The Prison Visiting Service could easily be replicated in Care Homes, recognising and utilising where and when appropriate the principles embedded in Health and Safety good Trade Union practice. The service would be provided by a well trained and properly recruited, supported and supervised body of Volunteers, whose work would be professionally directed and co-ordinated.

This Conference agrees that UNISON, in tandem with other appropriate bodies, becomes the catalyst for the establishment of a National Care Home Visiting Scheme - stand alone, independent but recognised, monitored, resourced and tasked with doing the much needed job of identification, prevention and reporting of some of the abusive situations we know exist and to generally enhance the care home experience of Residents.

This Conference recognises that "There for You" must restrict its activities to assist only UNISON Members. However, UNISON cannot work in isolation on such a big issue and co-operation of other bodies would be essential to achieve a Visiting Service Scheme.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Retired Members Committee to -

- a) ensure the possibilities are researched and explored with other Trade Unions and appropriate bodies and Organisations as to how and when such a service can be established, funded and organised. Justification of the need is unfortunately all too evident, and
- b) Report back to the 2016 National Retired Members Conference on their findings and a way forward help achieve dignity, health and general well being Care Home Residents through a Visiting Service.

Scotland Region

BUS PASS - UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO TRANSPORT

Conference notes that the 5 major political parties made promises that they would not get rid of the Bus Pass. However, every County Authority has a different way in which the benefits of the Bus Pass are used. Most importantly the time which a Bus Pass can be used should be reverted back to the original time of 9am, particularly for those people living in Rural areas.

The Bus Pass should be made universal, so that people living on the borders with England, i.e. Wales and Scotland, should be allowed to continue to have access to public transport, and those residents of Northern Ireland should be allowed to use the Bus Pass in mainland U.K.

Conference calls on the National Retired Members Committee, to work with the National Executive, National Pensioners' Convention, and the Scottish Pensioners Network, to press the government to mandate the Local Authorities, allowing access for Bus Pass holders on all forms of transport; trams, trains, and buses, and should not allow the present discrimination of the use of a Bus Pass, which varies dependent on where a Bus Pass holder lives.

Derbyshire County

FREE ACCESS TO HEARING AIDS

Conference notes with great concern the discrimination directed at the hearing impaired, metered out by different Clinical Commissioning Groups who administer the funding of NHS service provision on behalf of the Government. In particular North Staffordshire CCG, who intend to charge £3000 for hearing aids, and Leicester CCG who only provide one hearing aid in the first instance, insisting that a the second one will only be provided at a later date, whenever the patients hearing deteriorates.

The government should mandate every CCG to ensure that the provision of hearing aids should not be charged for where patients are eligible to receive FREE hearing aids and other equipment.

Failure to do so puts those patients with hearing impairments into social deprivation, because without being able to hear, how can they communicate and actively participate socially.

Conference therefore calls on the National Retired Members Committee, to work with the National Executive, National Pensioners' Convention and the Scottish Pensioners Network to press the government into taking action to end such acts of discrimination immediately.

Derbyshire County

DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY SAFEGUARDS

Conference notes the appearance of Motion 103 to National Delegate Conference earlier this year regarding Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

This motion was tabled following publication of the Hardie Report [the Select Committee on the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (report of session 2013-14 – HL paper 139)] into the implementation of the Mental Capacity Act 2005,

The intention of the safeguards is to provide legal protection for persons who are being deprived of their liberty for their own safety, however the Report stated that the provisions around DoLS [inserted by the Mental Health Act 2007] were “poorly drafted, overly complex and bear no relationship to the language or ethos of the Mental Capacity Act. The safeguards are not well understood and are poorly implemented. The evidence suggests that thousands...of individuals are being deprived of their liberty without the protection of the law and without the safeguards that Parliament intended.”

Conference notes that in the Government's response to the Report (Valuing every voice, respecting every right; making the case for the Mental Capacity Act (June 2014 Cm 8884)) stated that in 2012/13 "nearly 12,000 DoLS applications were made."

Conference believes and is concerned that the majority of DoLS applications were made in respect of older people particularly those suffering from mental decline or those in residential care.

Conference notes with approval the recommendations made by Lord Hardie in his report and included in Motion 103 to 2015 NDC to the effect that:

- The Government works with regulators and professional bodies to ensure the Mental Capacity Act is given a higher profile in training, standard setting and inspections.
- The Government increases staff resources at the Court of Protection to speed up hearing of non-controversial cases.
- The Government reconsiders the provision of non means tested legal aid to those who lack mental 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, similar to the Prison Visitor system.
- The Government addresses the poor levels of awareness and understanding of Lasting Powers of Attorney and Advanced decision to refuse treatment, among professionals in the Health and Social Care sectors.
- The Government reviews the criminal law provisions for ill treatment or neglect of persons lacking capacity to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

Motion 103 states that there is a need for transparency about the numbers of Deprivation of Liberty Orders being issued by local authorities and enquires whether Deprivation of Liberty Orders are being used disproportionately against older people and instructs the National Executive Council (NEC) to:

1. Undertake research into the numbers of Deprivation of Liberty Orders issued under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 by Local Authorities during 2014 (with breakdown by age groups) using Freedom of Information requests.
2. Campaign vigorously for the implementation of the recommendations of the Hardie report.
3. Disseminate and publicise the issues highlighted by the Hardie report in UNISON publications
4. Report back on the progress achieved in implementing the points detailed in sub-paragraphs 1 to 3 above to the 2016 National Delegate Conference.

Providing or insofar as Motion 103 has become UNISON policy (i.e. either it has been carried at National Delegate Conference or is being auctioned by the National Executive Council under Standing Order P 18) this Conference endorses the sentiments expressed in Motion 103 and instructs the National Retired Members Committee (NRMC) to:

- i. Liaise with the National Executive Council over the implementation of action points in Motion 103.
- ii. Analyse the information obtained to see if there is a disproportionate use of the legislation against older people
- iii. Share this information with Retired Members Groups in the Regions and Branches
- iv. Work with the NEC, Labour Link the TUC and the National Pensioners Convention to campaign for the implementation of the recommendations of the Hardie Report.
- v. Report back to 2016 National Retired Members Conference, making any recommendation for action in the light of information obtained.

Islington UNISON (M)

Beyond remit of the conference

WALKING FOR PENSIONERS

It is widely recognised that walking is an activity that has great health benefits for pensioners. It is free, available to everyone and can be a pleasant social recreation. Medical advice is that walking can improve balance, strengthen muscles and reduce the risk of falls. Living Streets is the national charity that stands up for pedestrians and works to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets. It has recently published a booklet aimed directly at pensioners encouraging more people to use walking as part of their routine. However there are barriers to walking especially for older people who are more likely to have health problems. Prominent amongst these are the low priority given by many Highway Authorities to the maintenance and resurfacing of footways, their obstruction by street furniture and overgrown vegetation and the lack of Police enforcement of the laws relating to cycling on footways and their obstruction by parked vehicles. Those who use mobility scooters or wheelchairs also suffer from these apparent low priorities as their efforts to be independent can also be thwarted.

Unison's retired members can be a powerful voice in seeking change for the better, by encouraging their retired members in Local Authority and Police branches to bring these issues to the notice of local decision makers and at a National Level the National Retired Members Committee and the National Executive Committee could seek to persuade the Government of the health benefits that could occur if greater priority were given to better management of footways.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members Committee and the National Executive Committee to consult with the National Pensioners Convention, other Trade Union retired members sections and other relevant organisations to bring pressure on Government to issue appropriate advice to Local Highway Authorities and Police forces to achieve these objectives.

Lancashire

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST RETIRED PEOPLE

Our 2014 Conference instructed the National Retired Members Committee and the National Executive Committee to resist moves to make access for retired people to goods, services benefits and social communications available only via the internet. Sadly this process continues with many service providers such as banks, building societies, energy providers and travel companies only offering their best deals to on line subscribers. Of even greater concern is the trend for many Government, Local Authority and Health organisations to increasingly turn to on line communication as their preferred means of contact. In the vast majority of cases the alternative means of contact is via a call centre which introduces a different set of hurdles for retired people. For example callers can be faced with complex menus, sometimes requiring spoken requests to a voice analyser, and dealing with people who are not familiar with their local accents. Rarely is there an option for a written response. In addition calls to call centres often take a long time to answer with a proportionately high cost

to the caller. As noted in 2014 such practices are a form of discrimination that disproportionately affects older people who are more likely to suffer age related disabilities and have a lower income.

The ideal would be for much greater availability of face to face advice for retired people but this is unlikely to happen in the present economic climate. An alternative would be to raise the standard of call centre operations by means of a "Quality Mark" to those meeting defined criteria such as a maximum time for response, staff with clear diction, seamless transfer to "expert" staff for complex enquiries and a commitment to confirm advice in writing. Such a Quality Mark could be instituted by a coalition of retired people's organisations including Unison.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members Committee and the National Executive Committee to consult with the National Pensioners Convention, other Trade Union retired members sections and other relevant organisations to bring pressure on Government to develop and institute Codes of Practice reflecting these objectives.

Lancashire

UNISON COMMUNICATIONS TO NEWLY RETIRED MEMBERS

Conference is concerned that many newly retired members are paying £15 for their life membership but that clarification on the exact meaning of 'retired' in Unison is necessary.

The rules about working when retired should be made clearer before the £15 Life Membership fee is paid. A 'welcome' pack should be prepared by Unison National Retired Members Committee containing all the information a newly retired member needs. This pack should include the rules of retired membership, how to contact their local Branch Retired Members' Secretary, Regional information, details of the National Retired Members Conference, a list of Branch Offices which retired members are permitted to hold and information on Unison Welfare.

Therefore, this Conference instructs Unison National Retired Members Committee together with Membership Services, and urges the National Executive Council to:

1. prepare a 'welcome' pack for newly retired members detailing the status of retired members within Unison containing all the information as detailed above.
2. report progress on a regular basis to the National Retired Members Committee meetings; the information must also be circulated to Regions and Branches and progress must be publicised in Unison magazines and on the National Retired Members Committee website on a regular basis;
3. the National Retired Members Committee to report back to the 2016 National Retired Members Conference on action taken and actual achievements.

Hampshire (L)

COMMERCIALISATION AND COMPETITION IN THE CARE SERVICES

The commercialisation of care services and increasing competition for profit is leading many care companies to cut staffing to the limit and beyond the limit for safe and legal working. The staff cuts both reduce the numbers of staff and the training of staff, and lead to an unsustainably high staff turnover. UNISON Retired Members are in a very good position to identify these cuts, and see how vulnerable people are suffering, as we may be receiving these services ourselves or visiting friends and relatives receiving care.

UNISON members who are working in such should-be caring establishments are often too afraid of losing their livelihood to blow the whistle, and Stewards in the workplace will probably share their fear of being sacked and blacklisted, and therefore these events are under-reported.

UNISON Retired Members often feel that we have skills and knowledge that is under-valued, and want to be more actively involved in supporting working members, exercising our right to remain active citizens who participate in the democratic process, fighting spreading commercialisation, which is leading to the diminution of services and reduced working conditions. Retired members can't be sacked for talking.

Conference calls on the Retired Members' Committee to liaise with the National Executive Council:

(1) To establish a clear policy on support for whistle-blowers and to make sure that this policy is fully understood by all UNISON members, both working and retired, and by the public and by politicians.

(2) To run training courses for both working and retired members together, on how we can identify the staffing cuts that are leading to suffering, and the action we can take to prevent it.

Cambridgeshire County Unison

LIVING WAGE FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE WORKERS

Conference notes:

The huge growth of private sector involvement in the provision of care services for vulnerable older people. Nearly 90% of residential care home now in the for profit or 'third' sector, marking a nine-fold increase since the late 1980s

With outsourcing of services has come a sharp decline in staff pay, terms and conditions, with a very high proportion of careworkers now paid rates well below the Living Wage (currently £9.15 an hour in Greater London and £7.85 elsewhere in Britain)

Many of our retired members already require or will eventually require some form of 'social care'

The welcome progress in persuading local authorities to adopt the Ethical Care Charter for home care provision.

Conference believes:

Poverty pay along with generally poor conditions of service and inadequate training have multiple damaging effects on the quality of care provided, not least in residential care facilities for vulnerable older people

It is essential that UNISON develops an expanded version of the Ethical Care Charter for the social care sector as a whole and residential care homes in particular

Conference resolves:

To call on relevant UNISON bodies to further develop and actively campaign for the Ethical Care Charter, with a particular emphasis on securing the relevant Living Wage as the basic minimum wage for all workers in residential care facilities.

Camden UNISON

FACILITY TIME

This Retired Members' Conference notes with concern government plans to restrict facility time for union reps.

In anticipation of this, conference calls upon the National Retired Members' Committee to liaise with the National Executive Council of the union to explore ways by which retired members could help fill the possible gaps.

East Sussex Area

Can be dealt with in other ways

RULE C 2.6.3

Conference notes that:

1. Rule C.2.6.3 states that “Retired Members ... will be entitled to stand for office and vote only for positions in the Retired Members’ Organisation unless otherwise determined by the National Executive Council or as otherwise provided for in these Rules”.
2. Motion 4 submitted to last year’s conference urged retired members to seek election as Member Nominated Representatives on Local Government Pension Boards;
3. An amendment was submitted to this motion seeking to change the rule to enable retired members to stand in such elections but the amendment was ruled out of order as the rule only applies to elections for positions within UNISON so no such change was necessary.

Conference welcomes this clarification on the scope of the rule but remains concerned that inconsistent practice persists, say in relation to elections to TUC bodies and trades union councils among others.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members’ Committee to ask the National Executive Council to re-issue guidance on the subject and to seek to bring about greater consistency.

Wolverhampton General Branch

Could place the union in legal jeopardy

LEEDS TEACHING HOSPITAL PROPOSED MOTION FOR R.M. CONFERENCE.

[Not printed on the advice of the legal officer]

Leeds Teaching Hospitals

In breach of rule D.2.10 (employment of staff)

"BED-BLOCKING"

Conference notes that the ugly and offensive term "bed-blocking" has crept back into commonplace usage, particularly in the less salubrious media. It is most often applied to elderly people, especially those needing care but not necessarily hospital care, and who cannot be moved into the community because of the lack of social care resources. The blame is being put on the service-users themselves, and then on to social workers and carers who are allegedly not doing their jobs properly.

Savage cuts have been made to social care services as part of Cameron/Osborne's manic pressure to reduce the national deficit. More cuts were promised as part of their election campaign. This will inevitably mean that more care homes - most of which are now run by private companies who want to widen their profit margins - will close.

Conference calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to work with the National Executive Council to establish a "rebuttal unit" whose remit will be to issue prompt, factual, evidence-based rebuttals to the lies in the media about this issue and others closely affecting our retired members and their families, and to work closely with our researchers and policy staff to identify those issues which would justify a sustained publicity effort. [It would be for the National Executive Council to determine whether the Unit should have a wider remit].

*Suffolk County
Ipswich*

Not sufficiently clear

RETIRED MEMBERS' SUBSCRIPTIONS

Conference notes that, given current life expectancy, the Retired Members' lifelong subscription of £15 is equivalent, on average, to less than £1.00 a year.

Conference wonders whether this is sustainable in the long run and whether it is in the best interest of Retired Members.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to consult widely within the Retired Members' Organisation on future subscriptions, report to next year's conference and, if there appears to be support for change, submit one or more proposals for debate.

Wolverhampton General

SCHEDULE B

Conference notes that Schedule B of the UNISON National Rules provides benefits for working members who suffer an accident or a fatal injury whilst on UNISON business but disqualifies retired members from receiving these benefits.

Conference considers that in such circumstances all members should be treated equally without distinction of membership category.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members Committee to approach the National Executive Council to obtain a change in the Schedule, by taking it to National Delegate Conference, so that retired members are also covered by the provisions set out in the Schedule.

West Midlands

ELECTION OF RETIRED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVES TO SELF-ORGANISED GROUP CONFERENCES

Conference welcomes the decision of National Delegate Conference 2014 to amend Rule D.6.8 to allow the National Retired Members Organisation to send two representatives of relevant retired members to each of the National Self-Organised Group (SOG) Conference.

Conference congratulates the National Retired Members Committee on its speed to implement this so that, as a result of decisions it took on 6th August 2014, representatives of the relevant retired members have attended SOG Conferences from October 2014.

However, conference notes that:

A NRMC adopted a procedure for election without consulting the Self- Organised Groups or the relevant retired members;

B The procedure means relevant retired members do not elect their own representatives to SOG Conferences, rather NRMC elects them; and

C Although this procedure was adopted in the first place only for 2014/15 and was subject to review, NRMC confirmed it at a meeting held on 21st January 2015 still without consulting SOGs or relevant retired members.

Conference instructs the NRMC to seek the views of relevant retired members, SOGs and, if need be, the National Executive Council on:

1 Whether direct election by and from relevant retired members would be more appropriate, whether this would be practicable and to whom and how representatives thus elected would be accountable;

Or, if the present indirect procedure remains, how to make it more transparent so that:

2 Relevant retired members are informed that there is to be an election and can make or seek nomination;

3 They know who is standing and can indicate who they support; and

4 Candidates know who each other are so that any who wishes to do so can withdraw in another's favour;

And in either case:

5 Whether the caucuses at Retired Members Conferences have a role.

West Midlands Region