

UNISON National Delegate Conference

Composites booklet

To be read in conjunction with Conference Documents

21 – 24 June 2016

Brighton Centre



UNISON

2016 National Delegate Conference

Composite Booklet

A	Branch Self Organised Groups
B	Housing Crisis
C	Housing Bill
D	Social Care Crisis
E	Ethical Procurement
F	Welfare and Work
H	Colombia
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Composite A

BRANCH SELF ORGANISED GROUPS

(Motions 13 and 14, Amendments 13.1 and 14.1)

Conference celebrates the fact the since the birth of UNISON self-organisation has had an essential and continuing role in the development and participation of Black, Women, Disabled people and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender members. However, many of UNISON branches do not have their own local Self Organised Group (SOGs).

One of the barriers to setting up a group can be that only one or two members from a particular branch may be interested in participating. In these circumstances it can be beneficial for a number of branches in geographic area to come together and support a “cluster” SOG open to any relevant member. Conference applauds the work of Black activists in both Suffolk and Norfolk who have established county wide SOGs open to any member regardless of service group.

Some branch SOG Officers are not given enough support and development and struggle with setting up and maintaining a branch group. Conference therefore applauds the Eastern Region for running a residential training weekend for SOG Officers.

UNISON's membership database does not have monitoring information on a large number of its members. UNISON's membership forms do not ask members to self-identify in these areas with the exception of ethnicity. However, this means that branches find it harder to send targeted information about self -organisation for any particular SOG and thus struggle to maintain SOGs or even set them up.

Conference also believes it is also important to examine alternative organising approaches for Young Members.

Conference therefore instructs the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Send every branch secretary and regional SOG Committee and Young Members Forum guidance on alternative ways to support branch self organisation;
- 2) Promote SOG and Young Member Officer training in each region;
- 3) Consider how branches can be supported to encourage more members' to declare their ethnicity and other SOG monitoring information, and use 'MyUNISON' to update the RMS;
- 4) Ensure that swift progress is made towards enabling members to identify whether they identify as disabled via 'MyUNISON' and for branches to register this through WARMS;
- 5) Work with each National SOG Committee and Young Members Forum, in partnership with Regional SOG Committees and Young Members Forums, to report annually on branch self-organisation within each region and report progress to branches.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary 13.1
National Executive Council 13.1
Bedfordshire Police 14
National Executive Council 14.1

Composite B

HOUSING CRISIS

(Motions 34 and 36, Amendments 34.1, 34.2, 34.3 and 34.4)

Conference notes that the UK faces an acute housing shortage, particularly in the South East of England, but also impacting in a significant way on many other parts of the country. This has led to rising housing costs which are unaffordable to many, leading to both housing and social problems:

- 1) House prices in the South East are the highest outside of London. Average homes cost £312,242, nearly 11 times the average salary;
- 2) Across the UK fewer affordable homes, such as social homes, are being built at a time when housing demand far outstrips supply; this is fuelling house prices which are set to rise by an average of 6% nationally;
- 3) There is a lack of genuinely affordable housing. Tens of thousands of households live in overcrowded accommodation. Thousands of families are housed in temporary accommodation;
- 4) It is estimated that there were 310,000 first-time buyers last year in England, down 0.5% on the previous year, and the average first-time buyers' deposit rose 13% to £32,929 in 2015. More people, particularly the young, are housed in the private rented sector, where rents have soared;
- 5) The supply shortage and housing demand have led to rising private rents. In 2015 rents increased by 4.9% to an average of £739 a month across the nation. The South East witnessed some of the biggest rent rises: the average cost of renting is now £864 a month in some parts of the region, this far outstrips local earnings. The alarming rise in rents shows how some private buy-to-let landlords are cashing in from rental properties at a time when social housing is in decline;
- 6) The sell off of council homes under the Right to Buy, the lack of new social homes being built to replace them; rising private rents; and cuts to welfare benefits have led to an increasing number of people on average incomes struggling to find a decent affordable home to live. This is resulting in increased rent arrears, overcrowding, financial hardship, social cleansing of families out of high value property areas into insecure private renting, and homelessness;
- 7) In the South East there are about 10,021 homeless households. In England thousands of new applications for homelessness were accepted last year than at any time since 2008;
- 8) Single women, particularly those from low and middle income brackets, are among the worst affected with many women being forced into shared accommodation. For women who are escaping abusive relationships this can be particularly traumatic, as they may feel unsafe sharing a property with strangers; at risk of further abuse if forced to share with people they do not know, or are housed where the partners of their house sharers are able to access the property.

- 9) Young people are most affected by the housing crisis; many of them have been pushed into private renting because of the shortage of housing, particularly social housing, the high costs of homeownership, housing benefit cuts and lack of employment opportunities. They are being robbed of a stable and secure home life due to the poor housing conditions of private accommodation and insecure tenancies.
- 10) The high cost of housing is contributing to public service staff shortages in key areas.

The Tory government's response to the housing crisis in England is to introduce a controversial Bill in parliament which focuses on boosting homeownership at the expense of providing genuinely affordable homes that the majority of people need. Measures include the Starter Homes for sale policy, which will be funded by cutting the provision of low cost social housing, and the extension of the Right to Buy to housing association tenants, which will be paid for by forcing councils to sell off high value vacant council homes.

The reforms, together with plans to end lifetime tenancies and force some social housing tenants to pay market rents, attacks social housing. They will take funding away from social housing and will result in even fewer affordable rented homes for people on average incomes, deepening the housing crisis across all regions of the country.

Conference welcomes the widespread opposition to the Housing and Planning Bill which has included two national demonstrations, lobbies of Parliament and many local activities. This opposition has helped create the atmosphere in which the Lords voted to amend many aspects of the Bill on for example Starter Homes and Pay To Stay and to bring together coalitions of tenants, housing campaigners and others determined to defeat the Bill and resist many of its' worst provisions should they be carried. Conference recognises that UNISON members are affected as tenants and as housing workers and that UNISON must be in the forefront of continuing to challenge and resist the provisions of the Bill whilst acting within UNISON's rules and procedures.

Conference believes that public policy should ensure that we all live in good quality and affordable homes. We note with concern the negative trends in the housing situation of people in England across the various forms of housing tenure:

- a) Social housing has been plunged into financial crisis by the Chancellor's change to funding arrangements announced in July 2015. Housing Associations and local authorities with retained council housing stand to lose some £9.7billion in rental income. At least 25,000 planned new-build social homes are now unlikely to be built with some commentators predicting the longer term consequences could be ten times that. Funding cuts will make it yet harder for local authorities to retain and add to their council house stock. Social landlords are cutting hundreds of jobs, losing the capacity for effective management and maintenance of a large-scale social housing stock;
- b) Osborne is making us more reliant on the private rented sector. There are now more people in private rented accommodation than in social housing and it is

private landlords who are the main recipients of housing benefit. The average private rent in England is now £816 per month, some 40% higher than the average social rent. The private rented sector is characterised by high rents, very variable quality and inadequate tenant rights;

- c) Mortgage-holders are generally nervous of job loss or interest rate increases. Persistently low wage levels mean that few households feel secure in their ability to pay mortgages, while many people in full-time work have insufficient income or savings to buy a home.

Conference believes that the solution to unaffordable housing is higher wages and more homes, not cheaper credit or selling off social housing stock. Conference therefore opposes the government's help-to-buy or right-to-buy schemes.

Conference calls on the UK Government to:

- i) Invest in a public sector led house building programme, which will create homes, jobs, lower housing costs and improve the availability, accessibility and affordability of housing;
- ii) Commit to the development of new social homes at below market rent which are affordable to people on average incomes;
- iii) Reform welfare benefits, including an end to the bedroom tax and the lifting of welfare caps;
- iv) Stop the Right to Buy across the whole of the UK in line with Scotland to safeguard social housing stock for current and future generations;
- v) Regulate the Private Rented Sector by introducing stronger rent controls and better regulation to drive up standards, strengthen tenants' rights and conditions by making private renting more accessible, affordable, decent and secure;
- vi) Provide adequate financial support for the young and vulnerable to help them with housing costs and to combat homelessness and social problems.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to oppose the Tory Government's Housing Bill in its entirety and work with service groups to establish ways for housing workers to influence and be involved with housing campaigns and policy between Conferences.

Conference further calls on the National Executive Council to work with campaigns opposing the Bill such as Defend Council Housing and Kill the Housing Bill as well as other trade unions.

Conference resolves to:

- A) Campaign for the following objectives in public policy around housing:
 - I) A large and well-funded stock of social housing that provides secure tenancies and good quality homes;

- II) Better regulation of the private rented sector;
 - III) Better and more secure jobs to allow people to be able to afford to rent or buy a good home;
 - IV) More affordable homes to be built;
 - V) More accessible housing for people with disabilities.
- B) Work to promote these objectives with organisations that seek to promote social and council housing provision and tenants' rights.

South East Region 34
National Women's Committee 34.1
National Executive Council 34.2
Tower Hamlets 34.3
Islington 34.4
London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority 34.4
Portsmouth City 34.4
Halton 36

Composite C

HOUSING BILL

(Motions 39 and 40, Amendment 40.1)

Conference notes:

- 1) The government's Housing and Planning Bill means higher rents, less security and less chance of a home you can afford. The Bill:
 - a) Will compel councils to sell off existing vacant 'high value' council homes on the open market;
 - b) Removes secure tenancies; meaning the breakup of stable and mixed communities;
 - c) Introduces a "pay to stay" scheme with means testing for social housing tenants if two household members income is more than £30k (£40k in London);
 - d) Means increased rents and longer waiting lists;
 - e) Reduces travellers' rights and permanent sites for gypsies;
 - f) Makes councils provide unaffordable "Starter Homes" instead of affordable housing for rent;
 - g) Effectively end direct investment in new social rented housing.
- 2) The Kill the Housing Bill Campaign has already organised protests, lobbies and meetings aimed at bringing the Bill down, or making it unworkable.

Conference believes that the Housing and Planning Bill will not solve the housing crisis. It will make it worse. It will force people from their homes, families and communities, into insecure private renting. The housing crisis is damaging the quality of life of our members. Many UNISON members will be directly affected by the government's proposals, whether they are tenants who will be forced to pay a market rate for rent and lose secure tenancies, or staff who will lose their jobs. Workers on low and moderate pay now find it almost impossible to afford a decent home close to where they work. An increasing number of our members are suffering high rents in sub-standard private renting or having to commute long distances because there's no alternative. Any improvements in pay and conditions won by unions are swallowed up by housing and travel costs. Housing is now a workplace issue and one that the whole labour movement needs to campaign around, starting with the Housing and Planning Bill.

Conference further believes that if the Bill is passed councils and other housing providers, tenants and residents organisations and housing campaigners and trade unions will need to explore every means of continuing to challenge and resist the provisions contained within it.

Furthermore the government's emergency budget in 2015 announced that council tenancy rents would be reduced by 1%. While reduction of housing costs is welcomed, the reduction of rental income to local authorities will in many cases have a major financial implication meaning that long-term plans for building council homes are reduced or cancelled, repair standards are cut, resulting in job losses.

Councils continue to be saddled with an extortionate level of debt imposed on housing revenue accounts in 2012 as part of the 'self-financing deal'. Despite their rental incomes being reduced, so far there is no compensation from government for these losses.

Conference resolves:

- i) That as UNISON members are affected as tenants and housing workers UNISON must be in the forefront of continuing to challenge and resist the provisions of the Bill, whilst acting within UNISON's rules and procedures;
- ii) To continue to work with the Kill the Housing Bill Campaign, Defend Council Housing and other housing campaigners opposing the provisions of the Bill;
- iii) Continue to lobby and work with politicians and decision-makers to influence and shape public housing policy to ensure that the government commits to the delivery of decent, affordable and secure housing for current and future generations, and to ensure that social housing jobs and services are protected.

Conference believes that social housing should be a resource for all and calls on the National Executive Council to:

- A) Continue to campaign with Defend Council Housing against the provisions of the Housing Bill and to raise the profile of social housing as a resource for all;
- B) Survey our members to find out the affect of the proposals in order to campaign against the Bill and its provision, and to support our members;
- C) Work with Labour Link and Labour councils to campaign for the 2012 housing settlement debt to be written off.

***Cambridge City and South 39
Tower Hamlets 40
National Executive Council 40.1***

Composite D

SOCIAL CARE CRISIS

(Motions 41 and 42, Amendments 41.1, 42.1 and 42.2)

Conference notes with concern the continuing pressures on council-funded social care services.

Conference believes there is a serious crisis in social care in the UK. This crisis has been developing for a few years and is reaching a critical point. We believe that this crisis is affecting all areas of social care, with children's social work frontline teams at the forefront.

Conference believes that the ability of the care system to cope with increased demand due to demographic change has been undermined by bad policy choices at national level. Over the past twenty years, local authorities have lost much of their capacity to provide care directly for elderly and vulnerable people in both residential and domiciliary settings. Councils have become reliant on a multitude of private and voluntary sector providers to discharge their duty of care.

Conference believes that the private and voluntary sectors typically offer only low-wage, poor quality employment in social care. The contrast between private and council employers was evident in research by the University of Manchester, which found nearly 70% of private home care providers offered only zero hours contracts to staff, while 90% of local authority providers did not use zero hours contracts at all.

Conference notes that the introduction of George Osborne's so-called National 'Living' Wage of £7.20 from April 2016 is anticipated to increase the care sector's funding gap by a half by 2020. Conference believes that this illustrates the extent to which this is a low-wage sector, where the statutory minimum rate is currently the basis for wage-setting.

Conference applauds the work around the Ethical Care Charter and welcomes the decisions of councils to sign up to it.

Conference notes that without adequate funding for councils, the private and voluntary organisations that are relied on to provide care services may choose to exit the care sector. It has been predicted that 37,000 residential beds could be lost by 2020 due to increasing costs for employers and ever-tighter contracts being offered by cash-strapped councils.

Conference believes that the funding crisis faced by our councils is such that the ability to introduce a 2% hypothecated council tax rise for social care will not produce sufficient revenue in England.

Though delivery of NHS and Council funded social care may vary in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, funding problems are shared.

Conference notes Composite A passed unanimously by Local Government Conference in June 2009, as amended by A.1 from Surrey County Branch. The amendment (now point 16 in the Composite) states clearly: [Conference calls upon

the Service Group Executive...] “To organise a one day conference on social care issues by the end of the year.” This special conference never actually took place.

Conference feels strongly that the crisis in social care has now gone beyond a service-group specific remit and is an issue that affects everyone. For many older people social care is vital in enabling them to have a decent quality of life, supporting their independence and encouraging them to remain active but the crisis in social care means that one in ten of people over the age of 50 are not having their care needs met. Most of frontline social care, home care, day care etc is now in the community or private sector. Mental health care is now more and more jointly delivered by ‘integrated’ health and social care teams.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign for better funding for social care services, highlighting the importance of looking after vulnerable people and the inadequacy of funding arrangements for our councils;
- 2) Campaign for better pay and employment conditions for social care workers, and to promote greater trade union organisation across the sector;
- 3) Campaign for a more resilient social care system, through promoting the importance of councils having the capacity to directly meet a substantial proportion of domiciliary and residential care needs in-house;
- 4) Promote initiatives that support better care services and employment, such as the Ethical Care Charter;
- 5) Organise a special one-day delegate conference on ‘the Crisis in Social Care’ as a major step towards developing a union-wide organising and publicity campaign in defence of publically-owned and democratically controlled, good quality social care and social work services;
- 6) Expand the current remit of the National Social Care Forum to include close working with, and involvement of, other appropriate service groups who deliver social care services, including the Health and Community service groups.

Sefton 41
National Executive Council 41.1
Surrey County 42
National Retired Members' Committee 42.1
South East Region 42.2

Composite E

ETHICAL PROCUREMENT

(Motions 51 and 52)

In February 2016, the UK Government issued "Procurement Policy Note: Ensuring Compliance with wider international obligations when letting Public Contracts".

This policy was widely reported as a ban on the ability of local authorities, student bodies and other UK public sector institutions from boycotting procurement bids from unethical sources.

This policy was implemented as part of a controversial crackdown that has been announced by the government without parliamentary debate or vote and indeed, challenges the ability of public sector bodies to make democratic decisions based on ethical principles.

Under the plan, publicly funded institutions will lose the freedom to refuse to buy goods and services from companies involved in, for example, the arms trade, fossil fuels or tobacco products. Any public body that continued to use boycotts would face severe penalties.

UNISON believes said that this amounts to a gross attack on democratic freedoms and that public bodies should have the right to make decisions on investment and procurement that includes withdrawal of investments based on ethical or human rights grounds, free of central government political control.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Oppose the government decision to ban ethical boycotting decision of public bodies;
- 2) Work with the Labour Link to ensure that under a future Labour government public bodies would have the right to choose to boycott unethical companies they did not wish to support;
- 3) Encourage and give support and guidance branches to raise the issue of ethical investment and procurement within their work places with their employers;
- 4) Further educate and enable activists to challenge on all matters regarding procurement.

**Somerset County 51
Police Staff Scotland 52**

Composite F

WELFARE AND WORK

(Motions 54 and 55, Amendments 54.1, 54.2 and 54.3)

Conference notes that since 2010 we have witnessed a systematic dismantling of the welfare and social security safety net through huge Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) budget cuts – £30bn in the last 5 yrs and another £12bn of cuts yet to come.

In 2015, UNISON in alliance with cross party peers and social security representative organisations won a good common sense victory for ordinary working people in getting George Osborne's planned cuts to working tax credits to be abandoned completely. It was clear to all that this tax credit cut would hit unfairly and disproportionately three million working families in the UK, resulting in the average loss of £1,350 per year.

Conference further notes the real credit for reversing the Chancellors decision goes to the many brave parents – including UNISON members - who used the UNISON online calculator (over 75,000 calculations) and were willing to talk publicly about their already stretched finances and the distress, anxiety and hardship the cuts would cause. Their stories convinced the government this unfair tax credits grab was clearly wrong.

Cuts and changes to peoples benefit entitlements which will only hurt low income families, the vulnerable, carers, disabled people, the working poor, children in poverty households and young people.

Conference believes that low income families are dependent on tax credits due to the real drop in household wages. The Labour market today does not offer decent wages or secure work. Instead over the last decade we have seen the continuous growth of a low paid economy, particularly in the retail, care, construction and catering hospitality sectors. Sectors blighted by zero hours and other precarious work practices. Job creation focused on part time work rather than full time decent skilled jobs.

We have seen wages in all sectors - private, voluntary and public - continuously decline. Since 2007 earnings alone in the UK have fallen by 8% and under austerity in the public sector workers are now an average £2,000 worse off.

Households and individuals have gone into record debt, rent arrears and poverty is rising. One million people use food banks, more than a quarter of children live in poverty, and five and a half million adults go without one or more basic clothing necessities, like a warm, waterproof coat.

Conference believes that the welfare state was created and exists to give working people the support and protection throughout the various stages of their lives. It represents our safety net from the cradle to the grave - family and child support, carers support, employment support, housing support, independent living support for disabled people, support for the vulnerable such as women fleeing domestic

violence, the homeless, households in poverty, support for veterans and retired and elderly people.

Conference further believes that fairly funding and administering efficiently a modern UK Welfare State and Social Security system fit for the future and fit to meet the needs of a growing diverse workforce is one of the most complex challenges that we face in UK modern society.

Conference notes that this government is failing to reform the welfare state in a fair, universal and just way that would make work pay for those in receipt of in-work top up benefits and its reforms are not providing adequate employment or benefit support for vulnerable benefit claimants.

Conference further notes that on top of the huge £30 billion welfare cuts (introducing the bedroom tax, housing benefit cap, freezing benefit annual up rating, benefits cap and disability benefit cuts) between 2010 and 2015, the roll out of Universal Credit and Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 will further erode the safety net for working families, unemployed and vulnerable people.

The impact of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 will impact further:

- 1) The devolving of DWP welfare functions to local authorities leading to a post code lottery, eroding the provisions of a universal welfare state and no longer offering a universal service for all;
- 2) The removal of the child poverty targets and duties set out in the Child Poverty Act removing the duty of the government to measure child poverty and work towards a target to reduce it;
- 3) The level of the Benefit Cap has been lowered further to £23,000 in London and £20,000 in the rest of the country. The cap breaks the link between need and entitlement. To date, more than twice as many children have been hit by the cap as adults, whilst rent arrears and homelessness have increased;
- 4) The extended freeze on working-age benefits from two years to four years will ensure that the lowest income households continue to get poorer;
- 5) The “second wave” of child tax credits and universal credit cuts from 2017, on top of the substantial cuts this year will:
 - a) Introduce a two child limit and abolish child tax credit and universal credit for any third or subsequent child born after 5 April 2017;
 - b) Remove the higher amount given for a first child, for new families with a child born after 5 April 2017.
- 6) The abolition of Employment and Support Allowance Work - Related Activity Component for people with disabilities will remove £1,500 a year (approximately £30 a week) off the employment and support allowance paid to claimants who are deemed temporarily unable to work because of illness or disability;

- 7) The removal of Housing Benefit for 18 - 21 year olds and freezing of Local Housing Allowance rates for four years will increase homelessness;
- 8) The implementation of the 1% rent reduction will put many supported housing projects in a position of unprecedented financial vulnerability. This is because supported housing projects do not run large rental surpluses or have substantial reserves. The income loss will lead to loss of provision for many disadvantaged groups such as homeless people, victims of domestic violence, vulnerable young people, ex-offenders and people with learning disabilities;
- 9) The new work conditionality under Universal Credit for parents of pre-school children require parents to start work preparation when their child is two and to fulfil all work related requirements when their child reaches three. It will impact 220,000 parents (75% are single parents) in the first year and will likely put parents under pressure, remove parental choice in caring for young children, create anxiety over problems relating to the funding, sufficiency and quality of the increased childcare needed whilst there is a lack of flexible and part-time jobs for these parents to move into;
- 10) The cumulative impact of these measures means many of them will be affected by a number of different measures concurrently, and as such can suffer a cumulative income shock or uncertainty of situation that has the potential to create a strongly detrimental set of circumstances.

Universal Credit will affect both in and out of work claimants. It will replace all benefits, including tax credits and housing benefit. The timetable for 2016 is that all new benefit claimants across the country will claim Universal Credit instead of the legacy benefits it replaces. Most existing benefit claimants will be moved over to Universal Credit during 2016 and 2017.

In 2018 new claims for tax credits will stop, and the families receiving them will start to be switched on to Universal Credit.

Conference notes that the respected Institute for Fiscal Studies estimated 2.6 million working families will be an average of £1,600 a year worse off under UC than they would have been under the current legacy system. The Labour Party has also calculated that 5.5 million working parents are set to be worse off by an average £950 a year because of Universal Credit tax benefit changes.

Conference notes that the majority of these cuts will fall onto the shoulders of women.

A detailed report (December 2015) on the roll out of Universal Credit (UC) further showed that in its current form Universal Credit is not fit for purpose due to:

- i) Claimant IT access difficulties and persistent technical problems;
- ii) Payments being made in arrears and failures to explain complex regulations;
- iii) Irregular employment patterns;
- iv) Failure to take in to account real employer payment systems.

This leads to real difficulties when assessments fail to take in to consideration all relevant circumstances leading to difficulties for those with dependents to rent and pay bills. UNISON members working in health, social care and social work see the victims of benefit sanctions and other cuts on a daily basis and can bear witness to their destructive effects.

At the same time access to welfare advice services have been slashed due to cuts in the local government and community and voluntary sectors.

Conference further notes that through the TUC Unemployed Workers Centres, a Welfare Charter has been established, which calls for:

- A) A political commitment to full employment achieved with decent jobs. People are entitled to decent, stable and secure jobs that provide regular, guaranteed hours that allows them to also meet any caring responsibilities; not zero hours contracts in precarious jobs;
- B) A wage you can live on for all and a social security system that works to end poverty. We need a National Living Wage that people can live on, not just survive on, that applies to all;
- C) No work conscription – keep volunteering voluntary. Forcing people to work for free on pain of losing benefits is simply providing free labour to organisations that should be paying workers proper wages;
- D) Representation for unemployed workers. Everyone should have access to an advocate to help them navigate the social security system and appeal adverse decisions;
- E) Appoint an Ombudsman for claimants. A claimants Ombudsman should be appointed to arbitrate on unresolved complaints, to ensure claimants are treated with respect and dignity;
- F) Equality in the labour market and workplace, equality in access to benefits. We need a labour market where structural inequalities are overturned and a benefit system that is accessible to people;
- G) An end to the sanctions regime and current Work Capability Assessment - full maintenance for the unemployed and underemployed. We need a non-means tested, non-discriminatory benefit payable to all, with housing costs met. This must be allied with the wide provision of low cost housing;
- H) State provision of high quality information, advice and guidance on employment, training and careers. There must be a supportive and independent careers and job-brokering service, not linked to conditionality or benefits, offering face to face advice.

Conference, therefore, calls on the National Executive Council to continue working across the union and with the alliance of campaign groups we have built to:

- I) Promote the Living Wage and pay campaigns to encourage employers to pay staff more - at least the real living wage of £8.25 an hour outside London and £9.40 in London currently;
- II) Campaigning on keeping working Tax Credits at the current rate of payments and making sure that the Chancellor does not use the changeover of Working Tax credits into Universal Credits as a way to revive his original plans to cut working tax credits and leave working families worse off in 2020 than today
- III) Campaign for extra welfare funding and more universal guidelines on devolved welfare functions to eradicate the emerging post code lottery;
- IV) Repeal the unfair bedroom tax, housing benefit cap and up rating freezes on the Local Housing Allowance and Housing Benefit to adequately meet market rents;
- V) For Universal Credit to be reviewed in terms of its process and structure and benefit entitlements. So that it is fit for purpose for both in work and out of work claimants in terms of easier access, claim navigation support, and fairer and better timed calculations and payments;
- VI) Highlight the growth in household poverty and call for the reinstatement of child poverty measurements and government targets to reduce child poverty;
- VII) Support welfare rights campaigns relating to equalities, fairness and human rights for women, children, young and elderly, single parents, LGBT people, migrant, black workers, disabled people and carers;
- VIII) Continue to promote the work of UNISON's charity 'There for You' on debt awareness and support for those in debt and promote our joint work with local Credit Unions to help manage debt and finances;
- IX) Highlight the real stories of UNISON members;
- X) Reverse the decision to remove the work-related activity component from XI) Employment and Support Allowance;
- XII) Sign up to and give support to the Welfare Charter and raise awareness amongst our membership of the issues raised and the demands made;
- XIII) Work with TUC Unemployed Workers' Centres and the wider Trade union movement to help realise the objectives of the Charter.

National Executive Council 54
Dundee City 54.1
Wolverhampton General 54.2
Kirklees 54.3
Salford City 55

Composite G

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Composite H

COLOMBIA

(Motions 84, 85 and 87, Amendments 84.1 and 84.2)

Conference notes that the peace talks between the government of Colombian and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) which began in 2012 are likely to be concluded in 2016.

Conference joins with the Colombian trade union movement and civil society in supporting the peace process. However, like them we share the concern that lasting peace can only be achieved through policies aimed at achieving real social and economic justice.

Conference notes that Colombia has the highest level of social inequality in the Andean region and a third of Colombians live in poverty. Colombia is the third most unequal country in Latin America and tenth in the world. Afro-Colombians are far likelier than other Colombian workers to earn less than the minimum wage and comprise more than 50 percent of the country's poor, although they are a quarter of Colombia's population. Poverty is higher amongst rural Colombians who also make up many of the 4.5 million internally displaced people.

Conference notes that this year also marks the fifteenth anniversary of 'Plan Colombia', the United States' multi-billion dollar military and police assistance package to Colombia. The Plan, initiated at a time when the Colombian government and FARC guerrillas were in peace talks, has been widely criticised for derailing those talks, setting back the peace process and escalating violence in the country. US military aid is part and parcel of an unjust economic strategy to further open up Colombia to multinational corporations, exploiting Colombian workers and the environment.

The armed conflict – which is the longest running in Latin America, having spanned over 60 years – must, therefore, be recognised as the product of political, social and economic inequality. A peace which seeks to end the armed conflict but does not address structural issues will not last. This is why UNISON actively support the work of human rights organisation NOMADESC and SINTRAUNICOL (an education union) in articulating a need for a 'transformative peace' consisting of a short, medium and long-term plan which includes the demilitarisation of Colombian territories; construction of alternative development plans; strengthening of communities; and the participation of the Colombian people, including peaceful actions and mobilisations, people's forums and popular education.

Practical UIDF solidarity projects with these organisations, coordinated by the Northern Region, have continued over several years in the Valle del Cauca area and seen the development of an alternative 'cultural university' that addresses the requirement for education strategies that meet the needs of communities facing human rights abuses. The success of this approach is demonstrated in the high levels of participation in the annual Women's Assembly (held in Cali), which consists of trade unions and social movement groups from across the region, many of whom have attended capacity building workshops as part of these projects.

Conference further notes that despite the peace talks, human rights abuses are rife in Colombia with human rights defenders, trade unionists, Afro-Colombians and indigenous people being the main victims. Conference notes that 17 trade unionists were murdered in Colombia in 2015. Of the more than 3,000 trade unionists killed over the past 20 years, 98% of cases had not been investigated by the Colombian authorities nor have the perpetrators been brought to justice. Human rights lawyers CCAJAR, thanks to funding from UNISON's International Development Fund (UIDF), have successfully brought several cases proving the complicity between employers and paramilitaries in the assassination of trade union leaders but much more needs to be done. The peace agreement must address this issue as well as collective reparations for the families of murdered trade unionists and communities that have been victims of the violence.

Conference expresses its concern that Colombia has over 5,000 political prisoners including many trade unionists. When a UNISON delegation visited the FENSUAGRO agricultural workers union leader Huber Ballesteros in La Picota prison in December 2015 he had been held for 28 months without trial. His case is not unusual. The peace agreement must lead to an amnesty and compensation for political prisoners.

Conference further notes that political prisoners have very poor access to healthcare provision and the limited care provided is not of the quality expected to meet the human rights of these prisoners, with examples of prisoners waiting weeks with life threatening conditions in severe pain for treatment.

Conference recognises the excellent work done by Justice for Colombia in raising these issues within the British and Irish trade union movements and with politicians and political parties. Justice for Colombia was set up by the TUC and its affiliates and is dependent upon funding from the trade union movement.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to provide support to the Colombian trade union movement and human rights organisations through the UIDF;
- 2) Develop further links with the ANTHOC the national trade union representing workers in the health sector;
- 3) Campaign with Justice for Colombia and Colombian civil society for any peace agreement to be accompanied by meaningful policy measures addressing social and economic injustice;
- 4) Lobby the UK and European Union to provide international development support for these measures;
- 5) Put pressure on the Colombian authorities to end the culture of impunity with regard to the assassination of trade unionists and human rights defenders and to provide effective protection to all individuals at risk;
- 6) Campaign for the release of all political prisoners;

- 7) Encourage regions and branches to affiliate and make donations to Justice for Colombia.

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Composite I

EUROPEAN UNION TRADE AGREEMENTS

(Motions 92 and 93, Amendment 92.1)

Conference notes that negotiations are continuing on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) whilst ratification process of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) is likely to start this year.

Conference notes that the trade agreements will have a huge impact on future global trade and investment rules, covering 53 countries, over 75% of the EU economy, 80% of the US economy and the majority of the global economy accounting for two thirds of global GDP.

Conference further notes that public services have been included in all three agreements despite an unprecedented European and US public and trade union campaign. Conference believes that it is a top priority for UNISON to continue to campaign against public services being included in these treaties. All public services should be exempted and protected from every single chapter provision in the Treaties. These new international trade treaties will harm existing EU and UK labour, social, environmental and consumer standards and regulations.

These agreements could drive down trade union and employment rights by failing to enforce compliance with International Labour Organisation (ILO) core conventions. TTIP would give unprecedented power and influence to transnational corporations at the cost of rights and protections for workers, consumers and the environment. It would potentially undermine labour standards, pay, conditions and trade union rights as the United States (US) has not even ratified core ILO conventions on fundamental labour rights, such as rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, and anti-union “right to work” policies operate in many states.

Conference notes that currently there is no enforcement mechanism agreed in the text if a corporation or country does not observe or breaches ILO conventions. Without an enforcement mechanism in place, companies will be able to infringe ILO conventions without fear of enforcement or disqualification from overseas investment. Global companies seeking to maximise profits may be encouraged to locate or secure public procurement contracts to countries with weaker labour and social rights enforcement creating global ‘social dumping’.

The treaties must not only require countries to respect the fundamental human rights set out in the eight core conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) but these rights must be binding and enforceable and not just rest on a weak framework of mutual compliance.

In the TTIP draft agreement threats to the environment include proposals for the removal of ‘trade barriers’. The barriers identified include: green or sustainable public procurement, energy efficiency labels, fuel efficiency standards for cars, regulation of unconventional fossil fuel extraction including shale gas (fracking) and tar sands

sustainability standards for bio energy and the banning of gases in appliances such as refrigerators and freezers.

Fundamental EU health and safety chemical practices such as Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) and the Precautionary Principle, which aims to protect public health and the environment when there is scientific uncertainty, are both at risk.

TTIP calls for the harmonisation of regulatory standards and proposes a Regulatory Cooperation Council (RCC) to oversee regulatory ‘coherence’. This will lead to the lowering of standards rather than raising standards up. Any proposed regulations, as well as being debated and discussed within a state’s own democratic structures, would have to go to the interested ‘parties’ first and then the RRC.

Conference further believes that the RCC currently described as “manned by senior level representatives from regulators and trade representatives at the EU Commission’s Secretariat General (SG) and the US Office for Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) who shall meet twice a year, organise the work and prepare a yearly regulatory programme.” is both undemocratic and unrepresentative.

Any ‘regulatory co-operation’ should respect the principles of transparency and democratic scrutiny and allow equal engagement of all stakeholders. Regulatory co-operation should not lead to any lowering or downward harmonisation of existing regulations and should not undermine the fundamental right of governments to regulate in the public interest.

Conference further notes that the European Commission has tabled a revised version of the much criticised Investor State Dispute Settlement Mechanism (ISDS) in TTIP to try and weaken public opposition. Conference believes that the new Investment Court proposals will still mean that multi-national corporations will be able to use a private court system to sue governments who pass policies that they feel will impact on their abilities to maximise their profits. Conference therefore opposes the new proposals and resolves to campaign against them.

Conference also notes that the EU has been negotiating the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) with 23 other World Trade Organization members since 2013 with the aim of further liberalising trade in services by the means of reaching an international agreement that goes far beyond the existing provisions of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).

Conference condemns the fact that as with TTIP these negotiations are conducted in total secrecy. However, in June and July 2015, WikiLeaks published the most comprehensive compendium of secret documents from the TiSA negotiations ever, revealing the full extent of the planned agreement for the first time.

TiSA contains no commitment to uphold core labour rights, and includes provisions that would allow companies to bring in workers without any requirement for core ILO labour standards or national employment rights to be respected. If these workers lose their employment, they must immediately leave the host country.

These make it apparent that TiSA might have significant detrimental implications on the working and living conditions of European workers.

They also show that the so-called 'ratchet and standstill' clauses are to be incorporated into TiSA with the effect of locking-in liberalisation and preventing the bringing back in-house of services.

TiSA also includes a so-called Most-favoured-nation (MFN) clause which could mean the investor-state-dispute-settlement (ISDS) mechanism applies to TiSA via the back door of other free trade agreements such as CETA or TTIP.

TiSA also contains necessity test for new regulations so that they are "no more burdensome than necessary". The objective here is to restrict a government's room for manoeuvre as far as regulations are concerned, thus potentially putting a downward pressure on labour, social, environmental and consumer standards.

Conference notes that negotiations on the EU-Canada Agreement, CETA, have concluded and the ratification process is due to begin in 2016. CETA poses all the threats to public services that TTIP poses, as well as the same secret courts and the ratchet clause. Although CETA commits the EU and Canada to uphold core ILO standards, there is no enforcement mechanism if labour rights are violated. Trade unions will only be able to raise concerns through 'advisory groups', which might lead to reports from experts, in stark contrast to the high levels of compensation potentially available to multi-nationals. (*amendment 92.1*) Conference further notes, that the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) are opposed to CETA ratification. Conference therefore resolves to step-up the campaign of awareness-raising around CETA and further resolves to call on Members of the European Parliament and Westminster MPs to oppose CETA.

CETA will likely allow global corporations to ignore or challenge environmental regulations and targets to cut emissions because again there is no enforcement mechanism. "Parties" are encouraged to engage in further discussions and identify appropriate measures to decide upon a "mutually satisfactory action plan" in the event of a dispute.

The treaties will also impede a government's ability to make new and better standards. This will drive down standards and de-regulate environmental and health and safety standards. TiSA for example says that any new regulation must meet a necessity test so that they are "no more burdensome than necessary".

Conference believes for consumers there are also real threats to the health and safety standards governing the farming and production of food involving regulation of chemically washed poultry, livestock treated with growth hormones, genetically modified seeds and fertilizers. Farmers are seeking to roll back regulations that hinder their scope for profits at the expense of food safety, local and organic farmers and animal welfare.

CETA is more likely to encourage global trade deals of increased agribusiness. The treaty will give biotech, pharmaceutical, pesticide, seed, and grain companies more rights to force farmers to buy gene patented seeds at high prices. It will almost entirely also eliminate the rights of farmers to save, re-use and sell seeds.

Corporations could even seize farmers' crops, equipment, and farms, and freeze their bank accounts if they are found with crops from patented seeds that they did not pay royalties on.

In addition, Conference reiterates its concern that the painstaking work over decades to build UK public services that are accessible to all and meet the needs of all will be unravelled if profit becomes the only driver. It notes that previous free trade agreements such as that between Mexico, Canada and the US have resulted in a rise in atypical employment, which translates as precarious jobs for workers in already marginalised sectors of the workforce, particularly those who work in public services. The most disadvantaged in society, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT), women, disabled, Black, young and older people, are the most reliant on public services and are most likely to be in precarious employment.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to inform UNISON members and the general public about the dangers of TTIP, TiSA and CETA;
- 2) To campaign for all public services, including all public environmental services such as the Environment Agency, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department of Energy and Climate Change and the Forestry Commission to be removed from all three trade agreements;
- 3) To campaign to make ILO conventions enforceable on all treaty 'parties' and make the case for strong social provisions in all the treaties to prevent global 'social dumping';
- 4) To continue to campaign to remove the role of the Regulatory Co-operation Council in TTIP and any similar regulatory governance structures in other treaties which seek to lower standards and drive deregulation in the name of 'harmonisation' or 'coherence';
- 5) To continue to campaign to remove the TISA proposal for new regulations to meet a necessity test so that they are "no more burdensome than necessary";
- 6) Oppose the new Investment Court system which still maintains a system of privileged private courts for multi-national corporations; to continue to campaign for the abolition and public service protections against the use of ISDS or ICS challenges to domestic environmental laws in CETA/TTIP/TISA;
- 7) To continue to specifically campaign and work with environmental, health and safety and global justice alliances, European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU), Public Services International (PSI) and sister unions in the USA, Canada and TISA countries in exposing the consequences of these agreements on public services and Labour, Social, Environmental and Consumer standards and regulations;

- 8) Encourage branches and regions to link up with organisations locally that are campaigning against TTIP and other free trade agreements such as War on Want, 38 Degrees and Global Justice Now.
- 9) To mount a major campaign calling on MEPs and MPs to oppose the ratification of CETA, TTIP and TISA.

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National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Committee 92.1

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