**2016 National Delegate Conference**

**Decisions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **M1** | **An Organising Response To The Trade Union Bill** |
| **M2** | **Organising for Growth in the Community and Voluntary Sector** |
| **M4** | **Supporting our activists who have to deal with stressful situations** |
| **M5** | **Bullying and Young Members** |
| **M6** | **Strengthening Our Union: Supporting and Developing Our Stewards** |
| **M16** | **Trade Union Facilities** |
| **M19** | **Health and Safety of Public Service Staff** |
| **M22** | **Living Standards Pay Justice and the Living Wage** |
| **M25** | **Funding for National Minimum Wage** |
| **M26** | **New Local Government Pensions Scheme Investment Regulations and Asset Pooling** |
| **M28** | **Public Service Campaigning - Stop Outsourcing and Protect Members** |
| **M31** | **Public Service Workers under Pressure** |
| **M45** | **Public Ownership of Energy utilities** |
| **M46** | **Trade Union Bill** |
| **M47** | **Attacks on Democracy** |
| **M48** | **Women, the refugee crisis and trafficking** |
| **M50** | **Fuel Poverty - The Cold Truth** |
| **M63** | **Fairer Taxation and the Future Funding of our Public Services** |
| **M64** | **Austerity and Our Local Economies** |
| **M65** | **Austerity – How much worse will it get for Black members?** |
| **M66** | **Challenging Poverty** |
| **M73** | **Campaign for a Living Pension** |
| **M74** | **Women and the State Pension** |
| **M75** | **Opposing DFID'S Privatisation Agenda** |
| **M79** | **Support Peace Negotiations in Turkey** |
| **M82** | **Don't Silence the Occupation of Palestine** |
| **M83** | **Oppose the ongoing repression of the Palestinian People** |
| **M100** | **Defending Our Human Rights and Equality Protections** |
| **M101** | **Immigration, Detention and Deportation** |
| **M121** | **Gateway to the Future: Stable and Sustainable Branch Resources** |
| **M123** | **Branch Funding** |
| **M124** | **Branch Funding** |
| **M125** | **Branch Directory** |
| **M127** | **No to Tax Avoidance and Debt Encouragement Schemes from our Employers** |
| **M128** | **No to Tax Avoidance and Debt Encouragement Schemes from our Employers** |
| **CA** | **Branch Self Organised Groups** |
| **CB** | **Housing Crisis** |
| **CD** | **Social Care Crisis** |
| **CH** | **Colombia** |
| **CI** | **EU Trade Agreements** |
| **R1** | **Rule D National Delegate Conference** |
| **R2** | **Rule D The right to attend and speak** |
| **R3** | **Rule D Conference quorom and procedure** |
| **R4** | **Rule D Functions and Authority** |
| **R5** | **Rule D Service Group Conference** |
| **R6** | **Rule D Service Group Conference** |
| **R7** | **Rule D Service Group Conference** |
| **R8** | **Rule D Service Group Conference** |
| **R9** | **Rule D Regional Structure** |
| **R10** | **Rule D Rule D 4 Private Contractors National Forum** |
| **R11** | **Rule G The Branch Committee** |
| **R12** | **Rule G Branch Officers** |
| **R13** | **Rule J The Political Fund** |
| **R14** | **Rule P Application of Standing Orders** |
| **R15** | **Schedule A Retired Members** |
| **R16** | **Schedule C Elections** |

**Motions**

**1. An Organising Response To The Trade Union Bill**

**Carried as Amended: 1.2, 1.1**

Conference believes that the Trade Union Bill is best understood as a political attack on trade unionism. All unions will be affected by restrictions on their ability to undertake industrial action and political campaign activity, and will be subject to greater scrutiny by the Certification Officer. Public sector trade unionism will be especially hard hit by additional strike ballot thresholds, the DOCAS ban and likely attacks on facility time arrangements.

Conference believes that the government’s focus on attacking public sector trade unionism at the beginning of the Parliament constitutes an attempt to diminish opposition to their planned programme of cuts to public services, job cuts, worsening of terms and conditions and privatisation.

Conference believes that the Bill is designed to strike at UNISON’s central nervous system – making it much harder for us to operate as an organisation. The Bill attacks our main source of income (DOCAS), our main means of supporting members (facility time), and our ability to be a campaigning union (political fund restrictions) and as such constitutes an existential threat to our union.

Conference acknowledges the success, in which UNISON has played a leading part, in weakening some of the worst excesses of the bill, and in particular the victory on preserving the ability to deduct contributions at source (DOCAS). Whilst it may have been regarded as a prudent precaution to favour Direct Debit (DD) for new members and to trial transferring members from DOCAS to DD we recognise that there are significant organising advantages to DOCAS. These victories have been achieved by the creation of coalitions across Trade Unions and beyond that recognise the provisions of the Bill as an attack on fundamental civil liberties. The successes in no way diminish our overall opposition to the bill but rather increase our determination to work with all those who have supported campaigning against the bill to make it unworkable (within UNISON’s rules and procedures).

Conference believes that it is essential that UNISON responds to this threat through face to face workplace organising supported by a range of innovative campaign methods. In the coming months, the provisions in the Bill will require us to:

1. Re-double efforts to build strong workplace organisation across the union;
2. Get existing members in all employers to consent to supporting our union’s campaign work;
3. Make the case that facility time in the public sector is invaluable to the well-being of employees, employers and the wider public.

Conference believes that these challenges will require an unprecedented mobilisation within workplaces. It will require a highly visible UNISON presence and effective face-to-face conversations with our members and potential members. It will require extensive planning, mapping and coordination. It will require existing activists and new activists to exhibit tremendous energy, discipline and perseverance. Conference believes that the Trade Union Bill necessitates an acceleration in UNISON’s ongoing journey towards becoming an organising union.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Ensure that branches and regions have the necessary resources and materials to enable a large-scale mobilisation:

i) Ensure that all members, however they initially join, have the ability to pay subs through whatever method is not only convenient for the member but maximises the organising ability of the union, recognising that this may vary according to particular employers and the circumstances of members and that where members have been automatically placed on DD, or have been switched from DOCAS, they are now given the opportunity to pay by DOCAS where appropriate.

1. Across all workplaces, to promote the UNISON political funds and the ability of the union to campaign effectively;
2. Assist branches and regions to make the case that facility time in the public sector is good value for employees, employers and the wider public;
3. Ensure that building stronger workplace organisation is a key component to all campaign activity;
4. Campaign for the repeal of the Trade Union Bill/Act.

**2. Organising for Growth in the Community and Voluntary Sector**

**Carried**

Conference notes that the Community and Voluntary sector is a growing a part of the delivery of public services.

Conference notes that many employers in this sector have little track record or culture in dealing with trade unions. As a consequence there are many instances where employees suffer from poor terms and conditions of employment as well as far from acceptable standards of dignity at work and enforcement of health and safety standards.

Conference notes UNISON Scotland’s Organising for Growth Strategy, which is informed by previous resolutions of National Delegate Conference and the experience of other regions, has delivered key gains in the Community and Voluntary sector including the living wage, and new recognition and procedural agreements, Working Time Directive arrangements and new employment contracts across a range of employers in the Community and Voluntary sector. This initiative has driven up levels of recruitment and organisation by taking up a number of campaigns on a range of issues of concern to members such as employer tolerance of violence towards staff by clients and provision of suitable clothing.

Conference also notes that the Community and Voluntary sector often involves dealing with smaller bargaining units than is the case in many other areas where UNISON organises and so initial efforts at creating or building organisation may need proportionately greater resources than some other areas.

Conference resolves to:

1. Make recruiting in, organising with, and delivering for workers in the Community and Voluntary sector a key priority for UNISON;
2. Examine the experience of UNISON Scotland’s Organising for Growth strategy with the aim of developing a UK wide approach to recruiting, organising and bargaining in the Community and Voluntary sector based on the successes of the Organising for Growth model applicable across UNISON.

**4. Supporting our activists who have to deal with stressful situations**

**Carried**

Conference notes that being a trade union activist has always been difficult and stressful as we regularly deal with members who face difficult and challenging situations.

Conference further notes things have got much tougher in recent times with the pressures of dealing with the impact of austerity on our members, service users and our union.

Sometimes we face members who are suicidal or suffering mental and emotional breakdown. We do our best to support them but we are then left with our own emotional scars and there is nowhere to go to. Regional Office staff often do their best to support us but we recognise they are not trained counsellors or trained in how with such issues.

Some employers offer an employee counselling service that some activists can access. However, not all employers do and sometimes it is not appropriate to use the employer’s counselling service.

The result of this lack of support for activists is, at best the mental and emotional health of our activists is being damaged, and at worst activists are suffering burnout and withdrawing from union activity.

There is a desperate need to improve the support the union provides our activists. Conference therefore instructs the National Executive Council to:

1. Investigate the possibility of setting up a telephone support service staffed by trained counsellors who can support activists who are facing pressure;
2. Develop and deliver a programme of resilience training for activists that can be delivered in regions;
3. Produce a handbook for activists on how to deal with stressful situations and how they can support branch colleagues.

**5. Bullying and Young Members**

**Carried as Amended: 5.1**

Conference notes with great concern the high number of our young members experiencing bullying and harassment within workplaces. In a recent survey conducted by the Scottish Young Members Committee it was found that 75% of our young members had experienced bullying and harassment of some variety. 7% of the 75% had experienced violence in the workplace.

Conference also notes that over 50% of these cases were not reported. The most common answer why was that our members did not know what was classed as bullying and harassment. Where cases were reported only 5% received any support.

The health implications for our young members experiencing bullying and harassment are wholly negative. They include mental health issues such as anxiety, stress, and depression as well as physical problems such as headaches, stomach and skin conditions. These lead to periods of long term sick and a number of our young members have even contemplated or attempted suicide.

The Scottish young members committee therefore recently launched their bullying and harassment campaign 'Gonnae No Dae That' and produced a guide for young workers to raise awareness of the issues and provide details of how UNISON can help and support them.

Our young members are just starting out in their career. They should be positive about their future and supported in the workplace. However in the midst of unprecedented cuts the likelihood of bullying of our young members is set to continue.

Conference therefore welcomes the awareness campaign by the Scottish young members committee and calls on the National Executive Council to support branches, regions and young members committees across the UK to develop materials to aid the recruitment of young workers and to highlight the support that UNISON can offer to those young people who are bullied in the workplace.

Conference also calls on the National Executive Council to call on all branches to work with their young members and regional young members forums to run a workplace event in Young Workers Month (November 2016) around the issue of bullying and harassment to:

1. Make young workers – members and non-members - aware of the issues and how it can be tackled through collective organisation and the union’s support;
2. Seek to recruit new members

**6. Strengthening Our Union: Supporting and Developing Our Stewards**

**Carried as Amended: 6.1,6.2**

Whilst UNISON can claim that we have an activist’s base of 50,000, all valuable roles and essential for creating a strong organised union, Conference notes that we have lost a significant number of experienced activists particularly our traditional steward’s as a consequence of the austerity agenda and the relentless privatisation of public services since 2010. Conference welcomes the fact that in 2015 there was an 18% increase in the number of new stewards recorded on RMS (UNISON's membership system) compared to 2014. Additionally the percentage of these new stewards that had attended the organising stewards course, and were therefore ERA (Employment Rights Act) accredited by the end of 2015 was also slightly up on 2014 figures. However the historical data for the last 5 years indicates that the percentage of new stewards attending training within 12 months of being entered on to the RMS on average is less than 30%.

RMS data reports that 68% of stewards are ERA accredited and that a sizable minority of stewards currently are untrained and remain so for a number of years. Additionally RMS reports that there are over 11,000 contacts, of which over 2,600 are based in schools.

UNISON's organising strategy recognises that the union organises in a rapidly changing environment of public service delivery, increased privatisation, fragmentation of services, continual public sector reform presented challenges in the ways that we traditionally recruited, trained and developed activists. A number of initiatives and developments aimed at recruiting and supporting new stewards have been successfully implemented including:

1. Modularising and flexible delivery of our organising stewards training and other core activists’ courses;
2. Extended provision of online and blended organising stewards training;
3. Flexible and tailored resources including short workshops, E-learning, and workplace contacts course;
4. Tailored projects to meet the challenges presented in recruiting and organising activists such as the national Housing Association project which established a developmental approach targeting support and encouragement from the point the potential activist expresses an interest;
5. Use of resources that acknowledge the occurrence of race discrimination in the workplace, e.g. Race Discrimination Claims Protocol and Challenging Racism in the Workplace.

There is no doubt that these initiatives are working, however year on year the union at regional and national level examine what other reasons sit behind the consistently high level of untrained stewards and workplace contacts, anecdotal evidence indicates that a significant number of these activists find the traditional forms of activism to be daunting, this is particularly so for the private sector, schools and C and VS sectors. Yet these activists do play a role and have a valuable contribution to make in supporting UNISONs recruitment and organising strategy.

Conference also notes other activist roles which may provide a stepping stone to becoming an accredited steward, as well as being important in their own right. Conference welcomes the steady increase in branch LGBT officers, with 200 now in place. More than half of these officers have now participated in annual training provided nationally and others` have been trained, along with branch LGBT group convenors, via regional training events. Conference notes that our LGBT and other self-organised groups can help give isolated members and potential members in fragmented workplaces a strong sense of collective union identity."

Conference notes that for UNISON to continue to meet the challenges of organising in an ever changing environment and be able to deal with further attacks on activist’s facility time, the TU Bill and reduction to trade union funding, then it is essential that the union continually review how we recruit, train and support stewards and other activists.

Conference is also concerned that many trade union studies departments in further education colleges, where we also have members, have either closed or are facing closure, further limiting training opportunities.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Encourage branches through the Joint Branch Assessment to dedicate resources, establish targets that embed within their branch development plans activity that will support other forms of activism to strengthen and grow the union in particularly these plans should:
2. Support and resource self organised and young member groups at branch and regional level recognising the valuable role they play in building confidence and developing skills amongst members thereby encouraging them to become activists and stewards;
3. Promote and support UNISONs member development programme alongside organising initiatives such as Team UNISON to build confidence and the skills base amongst members’ thereby creating a route into activism.
4. Recognise that UNISON's current systems and accreditation requirements for new stewards to become recognised by the union and therefore their employer is by attending the five day Organising Stewards course can act as a barrier for workplace contacts and untrained stewards participating more fully in UNISON. It also creates a situation where these activists cannot access training and support that would provide them with the skills to support their members in the workplace on recruitment, organising and campaigning issues.

In order to address this situation Conference agrees to:

1. Review the current Organising Stewards course, ensuring that the modules are more accessible in order to increase the number of trained activists;

Each module will be supported by “how to do” resources to build on skills acquired through training. These resources will be developed by Learning and Organising Services and will include e-notes / webinars as well as traditional resources.

1. Review the current National Executive Council scheme for the accreditation and training of UNISON Stewards / workplace reps, with a view to introducing a stage 1 accreditation upon completion of the appropriate modules of the Organising Stewards course;
2. Encourage and support branches to hold more branch based Organising Stewards’ courses to include modules which would enable attendees to receive stage 1 accreditation.

Upon completion of all modules, stewards would acquire the appropriate skills and training to represent members in accordance with the Employment Rights Act 1999.

1. Continue to extend e-learning to supplement and support face to face training for stewards, by introducing further blended face to face and distance learning;
2. Encourage regions and branches to establish mentoring systems to support and develop new activists.
3. publicise, promote and support branch equality roles and self-organisation, recognising how these strengthen our union.

**16. Trade Union Facilities**

**Carried as Amended: 16.1**

Conference notes that in a fair and democratic society workers have a fundamental right to form or join an independent trade union. These rights are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organisation convention, and the European Convention on Human Rights.

Conference notes that facility time for trade union representatives has been under pressure for some time, even before the current attack by this government. A combination of ideological opposition to trade unions in some areas, and massive cuts in public sector funding, have led employers to slash facility time, and to clamp down on the use of facility time in outsourced areas.

As the amount of facility time is reduced so the pressure on existing activists and branches increases, particularly at a time when the government’s austerity budget is putting even greater pressure on activists through yet more restructuring, redundancy and outsourcing. Conference congratulates those branches which have fought back against cuts in facility time, and welcomes the campaigning, research and political work carried out at all levels of the union on this issue.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Continue to campaign vigorously for facility time to be made available to elected representatives so that they can perform their duties;
2. Promote the benefits of facility time for workplace employment relations in the press and media and on social media;
3. Call on Service Groups to work with employers and employer umbrella groups at UK and national levels to promote the benefits of facility time, utilising model agreements where appropriate;
4. Ensure that best practice is promoted amongst UNISON branches in terms of agreements with employers for facility time.

Recognising that there is a clear and immediate problem as a result of the continuing assault on facility time Conference calls on the National Executive Council to urgently:

1. Promote the development of new activists, so that the burden on existing activists can be more evenly shared by:
2. Encouraging branches through the Joint Branch Assessment (JBA) to set realistic targets for the development of new activists;
3. Encouraging branches to promote the use the ‘Team UNISON’ facility in ‘My UNISON’ by members to volunteer their time and talents for UNISON;
4. Encouraging branches to have in place a mentoring system to support and develop new activists;
5. Further developing and extending the flexible training options available, including distance and e-learning short courses, so that more new activists can access steward training more easily.
6. Encourage branches to pool resources where appropriate in order to relieve the pressure on individual activists, either through sharing work or resources as in the case of joint branch shop front/resource centre or the employment or the joint employment of staff. And to support such initiatives by ensuring that there are in place appropriate processes to enable branches working with their region can access written guidelines about how this can best be done;
7. Provide advice and support to branches on best practice in terms of both facility time agreements, including model agreements, and the allocation of facility time, in those cases where the employer agrees to provide it;
8. Investigate the usefulness and costs of providing a helpline for activists who feel that they want to talk to someone about the pressure of their work on behalf of members;
9. Keep under review the provision and use of facility time with a view to showing the benefits as part of the campaign by UNISON for the provision of facility time. Looking not only at the pressure on individual activists but also the consequences for employment relations in the workplace including the negative effects on consultation and representation;
10. Work with Labour Link to campaign to defend facility time, briefing individual elected politicians at all levels, developing model motions for councils - making it clear that attacks on facility time are particularly unacceptable from Labour councils - and pushing for debates in the UK parliament and the parliaments and assemblies of the devolved nations;
11. Report progress in respect of facility time to next year’s National Delegate Conference.

**19. Health and Safety of Public Service Staff**

**Carried as Amended: 19.1**

Conference notes that when public services are under pressure from cuts and re-organisations that pressures increase on both staff and service users. Add those things to the Westminster government’s austerity agenda and we have a recipe for disaster.

Employee’s health, safety and well being in the workplace are bearing the brunt of a nation ready to explode.

Stress, bullying, harassment and violence are all reaching record levels and staff are struggling to cope.

Employers are failing in their duties or turning a blind eye whilst their staff suffer or worse still they offer “resilience” programmes to help staff cope better – whilst neglecting to manage the very things that are causing them stress at work. Staff cuts, casualisation, zero hour contracts, being expected to do more with less are all causes of stress to our members at work.

Conference believes that employers should – no – employers MUST – reduce the risks to health or harm for all employees. Telling them to toughen up is not good management.

Conference further believes that:

1. Managing excessive workloads is good management;
2. Tackling stress at work is good management;
3. Dealing with bullies in the workplace is good management.

But sometimes employers need some guidance on how to be good managers of health, safety and well being in the workplace. And no-one is better placed than UNISON to give some helpful direction.

With a network of over 6000 Safety Reps working tirelessly to support our members – we have the knowledge and expertise to advise of what good management practice is in the workplace around health and safety.

Conference believes our safety reps need to know how to confidently use the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act and other associated regulations, how to serve union improvement notices on poor practise and how to access and complain to the Health and Safety Executive should employers continually flout legislation.

With this in mind, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Formulate a Health and Safety Charter highlighting good employer health and safety, especially around the management of stress, bullying, harassment, violence and promoting positive well being in the workplace;
2. Provide guidance and training for branches to enable them to make full use of the Health and Safety Executive Management Standards approach to managing work-related stress. Full branch involvement can enable the issues to be tackled much more effectively, as demonstrated by the recent award-winning work of Gateshead Local Government Branch.
3. Lobby government to endorse the charter of good practice;
4. Encourage branches to promote the charter;
5. Expand the numbers of our health and safety reps;
6. Build confidence in our safety reps to use the existing legislation and regulations to hold employers to account for their plans and actions;
7. Put health and safety compliance in UNISON guidance on public procurement;
8. Encourage employers (especially national businesses and bodies) to adopt the charter.

**22. Living Standards Pay Justice and the Living Wage**

**Carried as Amended: 22.1, 22.2, 22.3**

Conference notes research by the House of Commons Library in January 2016, which showed that 2010-2020 will be the worst decade for pay growth in almost a century and the third worst since the 1860s.

Conference considers this a damning indictment of successive Coalition and Conservative government policies on public sector pay, social security and the wider economy that have led to an unprecedented reduction in living standards for people across the UK.

Conference is dismayed that the continuation of austerity throughout the current Parliament is to be accompanied by an ongoing public sector pay cap of 1% yearly increases.

Conference notes the attempt by the chancellor George Osborne to hijack the living wage idea with his plans for the “National Living Wage”.

Conference recognises that this may lead to some welcome increases in pay for some UNISON members, but at the same time emphasises that this is in reality merely a raising of the National Minimum Wage level, and even then only for the over-25s.

Conference resolves to continue campaigning for the real living wage to be applied across the UK.

Conference congratulates UNISON and others on the resolute campaigning against government changes to tax credits, which led to a climbdown by Osborne at the comprehensive spending review in December 2015.

However, Conference recognises that this represents merely a delaying of the pain that working families will experience, with the cuts to Universal Credit set to come in from April 2016.

Conference applauds the recent national industrial action over pay taken by members in further education and probation, but notes with regret that these actions failed to secure concessions from employers.

Conference welcomes the launch in Scotland by the Fair Work Convention of a framework which sets out that fair work is work that offers effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect; that balances the rights and responsibilities of employers and workers and that can generate benefits for individuals, organisations and society. The vision is that, by 2025, people in Scotland will have a world-leading working life where fair work drives success, wellbeing and prosperity for individuals, businesses, organisations and society. We note the contribution of UNISON Scotland and the STUC into the work of the convention and the ongoing efforts to ensure that the Scottish Government, local authorities and other employers in all sectors live up to the vision it sets out. In particular we urge all participants in the Convention to recognise that Fair Work must include fair remuneration and that the success of the vision will be judged, partly, on how it enables workers to improve their pay and terms and conditions.

Conference believes that widespread collective bargaining coverage is crucial to the achievement of decent pay and conditions. However, Conference notes with concern the failure of existing collective bargaining processes to deliver real terms pay rises for our members across the public sector.

Conference applauds the recent national industrial action over pay taken by members in further education and probation, but notes with regret that these actions failed to secure concessions from employers.

Conference believes that pay campaigning must be integral to the whole union at service group, national, regional and branch level, with the rejection of the Tory 1% pay cap being our default position.

Conference welcomes the National Executive Council review of pay campaigning agreed in December 2015 and notes as a result:

1. The union has begun a process of reviewing anniversary dates with a view to alignment (thus facilitating cross union action);
2. The union has taken steps towards a review of industrial action tactics in the light of the Trade Union Bill, and is reviewing how different national contexts affect it;
3. The relevance of a union wide campaign, building on the “Worth It” initiative, covering public, private and community and voluntary sectors based on the themes of pay justice and total pay, and incorporating campaigns on the living wage, equal pay, workplace issues such as zero hours and staff shortages.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

1. Continue to build a campaign for an end to the punitive public sector pay cap, and where necessary in line with industrial action guidelines build towards industrial action;
2. To continue to build pay campaigns across UNISON's bargaining structures where possible;
3. Continue to highlight falling living standards and the impact that government welfare policy is having on these;
4. Campaign for a proper living/minimum wage of £10/hour.
5. Ensure the campaign is linked in to UNISON’s wider anti-austerity campaigning for public services in a way understandable by members;
6. Produce activist and steward training to build member confidence when talking about pay issues in the workplace;
7. Pursue the introduction of collective bargaining structures at sectoral level as a means to improve wages for workers employed by private companies and community & voluntary organisations.

h) In the context of changes to the legalities of ballot and strike arrangements

contained in the Trade Union Bill/Act, call on the Industrial Action Committee to

review the effectiveness of the use of industrial action in national disputes since

2010, identify strengths and weaknesses of the tactics deployed, draw-up a

remedial plan to guide future effective actions and report back to the wider union.

i) Where possible to link and coordinate such campaigns across sectors and unions in line with TUC policy.

**25. Funding for National Minimum Wage**

**Carried**

On 8 July 2015, George Osborne stood up in Parliament at 12:30pm to deliver his Summer Budget speech. One of the announcements in that speech was: “I am today introducing a new National Living Wage. We’ve set it to reach £9 an hour by 2020. The new National Living Wage will be compulsory. Working people aged 25 and over will receive it starting next April, at the rate of £7.20”.

When tenders for contracts were submitted to local authorities and other funders, this increase never figured in any equation that was submitted by service providers and charities. From their perspective this is now a burden that they will have to shoulder and in some cases funding for the increase will come out of the organisations reserves, leaving them and the vulnerable individuals supported by the third sector even more vulnerable. In other organisations they are now targeting terms and conditions to reduce costs. There have been no funding increases from Westminster, devolved governments or local authorities to ease the burden of their financial commitment to pay the increase.

Social care is the one service that is feeling the strain through budget cuts that not only affects the service users but the staff that provide the care and support, terms and conditions are abysmal in many organisations, poor pay scales and no hope of improvement in the future. If additional funding is not available then they will only deteriorate further.

This announcement was received by those that would benefit with great thanks, raising the hourly rate of those that would qualify by 50p an hour, this for our members over 25 on minimum wage was brilliant, but at what cost? The young members of UNISON below the 25 age threshold will still be on minimum wage. Tax credits are also at risk as the increase in hourly rate will affect the threshold at which the Tax credits are payable, for members the increase could mean that the benefits of Tax credits will be reduced, so a no win situation.

The Third Sector is being hit the hardest with these changes, it has been stated by the Chancellor that local authorities in England can increase council tax by 2% to cover this increase, but we need to be assured that this additional funding with be cascaded to the Not for Profit Organisations and charities to offset the cost of implementing this mandatory wage increase otherwise the current poor terms & conditions will be further trimmed to the bone. Is it not a fair society that rewards those workers that are supporting the most vulnerable in society with equitable pay rates and decent terms and conditions?

The big question is: As the wage increases and there are no terms & conditions of employment left to cut, what is the next step in the decline of social care and the future of members that will be unable to sustain their own survival in a profession that has a poor understanding of the requirements of members roles in support of the vulnerable individuals the length and breadth of the United Kingdom. This is not only an issue for those who work in the community and voluntary sectors. All UNISON members will be part of families and communities who rely on well trained, committed and appropriately rewarded staff who provide social care and support.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Develop a national campaign to support the Community & Voluntary Sector to raise awareness of the funding issues in relation to meeting the legislated increase to salaries made law by Westminster and the detrimental effects this is having on workers, families and communities;
2. Work with Labour Link to lobby MPs, devolved governments and local authorities to establish additional funding to assist organisations in the Third Sector with the mandatory increase in their wage bills for the benefit of all those who give and receive social care and support.

**26. New Local Government Pensions Scheme Investment Regulations and Asset Pooling**

**Carried**

Conference welcomes the national UNISON briefing of January 2016 - New Local Government Pensions Scheme Investment Regulations and Asset Pooling.

In particular, Conference believes that local government pension funds must be able to decide where to invest their money in the best interests of present and future pensioners, and should not have their investment decisions dictated by the government.

It must be the combined funds - and not government ministers - that decide where to invest scheme member's future incomes, in ways that are in their best interests, and not that of the government.

Conference also believes union nominated representatives should be appointed to the new pool governance structures so that any investment works for the millions of teaching assistants, refuse workers, care workers and all other local government workers and scheme members whose pensions are held by the scheme.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council and Pensions Service Group Liaison Committee to work towards achieving these aims.

**28. Public Service Campaigning - Stop Outsourcing and Protect Members**

**Carried as Amended: 28.1, 28.2,**

The Private Finance Initiative continues to drain the public sector of funds with an estimated bill of £222 billion over the next 30 years to the taxpayer.

Conference believes that keeping existing public services in - house should be the default position for all public services on the grounds that public services offer better quality, accountability, efficiency and social value to citizens, workers and tax payers.

Any new forms of non public service delivery should not be considered until:

1. An in-house service improvement plan has been considered as a viable option at the options appraisal stage;
2. A ‘public interest test’ is met first before the decision to begin a commissioning process is made.

Conference notes however that public services are facing increasing attempts by the UK government to ‘open up’ public services to marketisation through privatisation, promoting public service mutual’s and social enterprise and opening up market access to UK public services from private oversees corporations through new global Trade Agreements.

The UK public sector outsourcing market was estimated to be over £100bn by the end of 2015. Public services globally are now being outsources at an unprecedented rate.

Conference remains opposed to privatisation, the growing use of Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) in alternative delivery models of payment by results and the ‘spinning-out’ of the public sector services to co-operatives, mutual’s and social enterprises.

Conference believes that attempts to open up public service to the not –for- profit sector and ‘social value led’ organisations, in the current climate of unprecedented public service budget cuts is an ill - judged attempt to try and run services on the cheap. The new ‘three year reservations’ allowed in outsourcing for mutual’s and social enterprises is not the answer to public service budget cuts and will likely be only an intermediate service delivery stop before the end destination of full privatisation.

This is delayed privatisation.

It is an in - direct route to privatisation and is not based on a sustainable strategy to support the not-for-profit in delivering quality public services without a race to the bottom. If the service is not sustainable in the public sector, Conference we would question how a co-op, mutual or social enterprise can be financially viable while retaining existing terms and conditions for the workforce.

Conference notes that on occasion it has been possible to take lawful industrial action in a transfer situation over the identity of the new employer.

Conference remains opposed to the ‘spinning-out’ of the public sector to co-operatives, mutuals and social enterprises for the following reasons:

1. The evidence is that with the lack of sustainable support for the not-for-profit sector, they will be forced to compete as private companies. Finding it difficult to compete charities and the voluntary community sector are being pushed out of public sector markets leading to private takeovers in the no-for-profit services;
2. Once a service is transferred out of the local authority or other public body, it becomes a private company. It will have to compete as a private company. The council or public body has lost control;
3. The unsustainability of public service mutuals means that workers can at any point be made redundant or transferred to another employer with loss of comparable pension rights and terms and conditions protection lost. All evidence shows that workers terms and conditions are eroded in nearly all outsourcing – there are very few examples of where they have been improved;

A recent survey of social enterprises in the UK ( January 2016) demonstrated that only 25% recognised trade unions and only 60% paid the Living Wage.

1. Little evidence exists that mutuals have delivered any better social or value added outcomes than a comparative public in-house provision or implemented true democratic control by staff, shareholders and stakeholders;
2. There is little evidence yet that the new’ price-quality ratio’ award criteria as set out in the new UK Public Contract Regulations 2015, has been used in the commissioning processes of not-for-profit outsourcing and spin offs instead of the old ‘price/cost only’ criteria to award contracts;
3. To deliver quality public services in Local Authorities, NHS, Police and Justice, Education and other state agencies we need better funding. Non public alternative delivery models will not address funding shortfalls or prove an in-house service improvement plan cannot deliver savings or be efficient;
4. These ‘public service mutuals’ are feeding the UK Government’s agenda of deceiving the public into thinking this form of ‘spinning out’ is not privatisation, but adding social value to public services. It is delayed privatisation with the service once retendered, years later, likely to be privatised changing the future balance of public services away from public to private delivery;
5. The cost of administering market processes and tenders takes funds from public services.

Conference, therefore, calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Continue to campaign for existing public services to remain in - house as a default position for all public services and to promote the use of a ‘public interest test’ when outsourcing is proposed;
2. Continue to work with the We Own It campaign for a Public Service Users Bill of Rights which calls for:
3. Transparency: We have the right to information about decisions made in our name;
4. Accountability: We have the right to a real say over our public services;
5. People before profit: We have the right to public services that put our needs above profit.
6. Continue to promote the new UNISON branch Guidance “How Your branch can stop outsourcing and protect members” (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and equivalent Scottish procurement regulations on the new web procurement information hub, work with LAOS, regions and Service Groups in training and joint information sharing for branch activists;
7. Include negotiating and organising case study examples of UNISON outsourcing and procurement campaigns, good practice contracts with social outcomes adopted (UNISON's Ethical Care charter, apprenticeships, the Living Wage, abolished zero hours contracts etc) and other social and employment benefits to ensure better terms and conditions for members and provide organising and recruitment opportunities;
8. Continue to work with public authorities to move outsourcing and privatisation contracts away from the ‘price or cost only’ award criteria, which has fuelled the race to the bottom on workforce pay and conditions and use the new ‘price-quality’ ratio criteria in public contract awards;
9. Continue to work with both the private sector and not for profit sector to promote social responsible procurement, the Living wage and trade union recognition;
10. Continue to promote alternative sustainable funding mechanisms, such as direct grants for the not-for profit sector to distinguish them from the private sector and enable the Voluntary and Community sector to continue to provide their niche valuable contribution to services in the public sector and maintain their social value ethos;
11. Continue to work with sister unions across the EU to press for Europe wide protection for public services.
12. Campaign for outsourced services to be brought back in-house.
13. As the first stage towards the renationalisation of the privatised public services and utilities, campaign for increased regulation and windfall taxes on the utility companies, outsourcing giants and PFI consortia which would return much needed resources directly back to our underfunded public services.

**31. Public Service Workers under Pressure**

**Carried as Amended: 31.1, 31.2**

Conference notes that as a consequence of the unprecedented job cuts introduced by the Conservative government, the workload pressure being faced by many people working in public services is reaching a critical level. The effects on the well-being of our members, as working life becomes ever more stressful, and on the quality and sustainability of the services that they provide, will be catastrophic unless addressed as a matter of urgency.

Since the Conservatives were first elected to office in 2010, close to one million jobs have gone from the public services across the UK. As the Institute for Fiscal Studies have shown, this is higher than the public service job cuts implemented by Thatcher and Major in the 1980s and 90s. And although a proportion of job losses recorded by the Office for National Statistics can be accounted for by reclassification (e.g. Further Education colleges being moved to the private sector), the vast majority are direct cuts that leave ever fewer staff to try to pick up the pieces and deliver the quality services that our communities rely upon and deserve.

From social care to planning, probation to parks maintenance and from the NHS to libraries, the story is the same. A dedicated but depleted staff trying to do more with less for those that rely on the services that they provide. As one recent survey of 3,700 people working across public service jobs shows, almost all now report working beyond their contracted hours (on average respondents put in an extra seven hours a week) Close on one in five say they don’t take any break during their working day, with less than a quarter (24%) enjoying a main break of at least 30 minutes.

To make matters worse, instead of showing sympathy and understanding to the public service workforce for the conditions under which they are expecting them to work, the government criticise and refuse to take account of the impact that their own policies have for the condition of services. As some commentators have pointed out in response to David Cameron’s speech criticising social services in December 2015, the government’s policies have a clear strategic direction of travel: cut- denigrate-privatise.

Unsurprisingly surveys show that morale across the public services is at an all time low and stress at an all time high. Most delegates to National Delegate Conference will have first-hand knowledge and experience of this growing crisis, and many will have had members coming to them suffering from stress and anxiety. Some 93% of respondents to the aforementioned survey say they are stressed at work either all, some, or a lot of the time.

The disproportionate impact on women is already well documented and understood. With the majority of public sector workers being women, and the majority of the privatised services being those where women are traditionally employed, it is our women members who are facing the worst cuts in terms and conditions, losing their ability to work flexibly and facing insecure futures. Further, it is the services primarily used by women that are most vulnerable to cuts and outsourcing, including those supporting carers and women escaping abuse and violence.

Conference believes that strong workplace organisation best equips public service workers to resist unreasonable increases in workloads.

Conference agrees that UNISON, as the leading public services union, has a responsibility to highlight the pressure being faced by those providing public services, to campaign for a change to current policies, and to show how this will be in the best interests of our members and for public service users. Conference notes that such a campaign will not be easy. The media, opinion formers and many politicians think that the public have accepted the need for cuts as a means of tackling the deficit and that the concerns of those working in public services is simply special pleading. However, as polls are beginning to show, the public are now growing concerned that the cuts are going too far and that services are being put at risk. This is a moment we must seize.

Conference notes UNISON support for the British Medical Association and how they have so far successfully linked junior doctor working hours to patient safety in their on-going dispute in England with Secretary of State Jeremy Hunt. Also the successful Northern TUC Public Services Alliance which has been an effective campaigning body.

In this context Conference calls on the National Executive Council to develop an ambitious campaign that:

1. Equips and emboldens public service workers to resist pressures on them to bear the burden of austerity through increased workloads.
2. Speaks to and builds support among a public who are increasingly concerned about cuts to public services, particularly using new media;
3. Makes common cause with service users and patient and public service user groups through participation in both national and local community activities on a common cause; including engaging with organisations in the ending violence against women sector, and those campaigning for improved care provision
4. Explains to the public the crisis facing public services, the difficulties and experiences our members face as a result of the crisis and ensures that blame for such deterioration is placed firmly with the Tory Government;
5. Develop credible policy alternatives that UNISON members and activists can advocate to politicians locally and at Westminster, Holyrood, Cardiff and Stormont.

**45. Public Ownership of Energy utilities**

**Carried as Amended: 45.1**

Conference believes:

1. The changes within the Labour Party since the leadership election in 2015 indicate a welcome move towards UNISON’s long-held view that the Energy Industry should be brought back into public ownership;
2. There is now a golden opportunity to provide support and information to help consolidate this view within the labour movement;
3. The research already commissioned by UNISON indicates the benefits which a publically owned Energy industry would bring in terms of:
4. Tackling the gross underinvestment in new generation capacity and infrastructure. In particular a nationally co-ordinated plan can drive the move to clean energy without the need to bribe private industry;
5. Introducing measures to tackle and eliminate the scandal of fuel poverty;
6. Eliminating the drive for profit which leads to excessive bonuses for senior executives, attacks on the employment contracts of ordinary employees and an ever increasing cost to the consumer.

4) Inadequate investment by the big private energy companies is a significant factor in the UK’s lack of progress in the transition to renewable energy.

Conference requests the National Executive Council:

1. Seek to ensure that through the appropriate resources and channels we promote our policy of bringing the energy industry back into public ownership with the aim that the next Labour government has this as one of its key commitments;
2. Provide supporting information as necessary based on current and existing research in support of this aim.
3. Campaign for the policy with the TUC, ICTU, STUC, WTUC and, working with Labour Link, the Labour Party.

**46. Trade Union Bill**

**Carried as Amended: 46.1**

Conference believes that the Trade Union Bill represents the biggest assault on working people’s rights in living memory, and an unashamed and deliberate attack on public sector trade unions in particular. The Bill affects almost every aspect of trade unionism in England, Wales and Scotland. It shifts the balance of power in workplaces further to the advantage of employers and away from workers, whether they are in a union or not. It is fundamentally an attack on core trade union activity: facility time, check-off of subs, and the ability of unions to underpin collective bargaining with a credible right to strike.

It subjects unions to unprecedented levels of civil and criminal penalties, red tape, and monitoring by the Certification Officer, paid for by a levy on trade unions. It curtails unions’ abilities to fund political activities and campaigns, within the Labour Party and wider civil alliances and groups. Conference notes that significant aspects of the Trade Union Bill’s reach remains yet to come, with government reserving large areas for secondary legislation.

Conference pays tributes to the efforts of UNISON members and branches who campaigned tirelessly to defeat the bill, delay its implementation, dilute its provisions and build a stronger union at every level. Conference notes the consistent and dedicated turnout by UNISON members at all levels of the campaign to defeat the bill, including the Manchester demo at Tory Party Conference as well as the mass lobby of Parliament where members made up over 1,000 of the 2,500 workers who took part. Effective pressure and compelling arguments made to employers and politicians were also vital in ensuring employers across the country speaking up against the Bill, including the Welsh and Scottish governments, local authorities across England, Wales and Scotland, NHS Human Resources directors and Police and Crime Commissioners. Effective pressure on Conservative MPs also forced the government to make key concessions. Without the work of members and the leadership shown by UNISON activists and representatives, the Bill/Act would undoubtedly have proven to be even more destructive than it is.

Conference believes that it now falls upon UNISON to lead the fight to challenge, resist and out-organise a hostile government at Westminster determined to use its new powers to prevent trade unions from fighting for the interests of working people.

Conference asserts that the right to strike is fundamental to a free and democratic society. The UK already has one of the most regulated systems of industrial action in the world, with unions having to comply with highly complex legal requirements. Conference believes that UNISON will have to organise, campaign and challenge the proposed new restrictions with all the resources of the union in our workplaces, in our communities and in the courts.

When the right to strike is undermined, so are the incentives for employers to listen to their workers, resolve disputes and engage in constructive relationships with workplace representatives. Conference believes that as a result of the Trade Union Bill industrial action will become more common, more heated, and more prolonged. Allowing employers to use agency workers to break strikes will not only further undermine workers rights and safety in the workplace, it will also damage working class solidarity. Conference calls on UNISON to campaign and organise to resist any such attempts by the government and employers to divide the workforce.

Conference notes that allowing union members to use secure electronic voting or workplace ballot boxes for industrial action ballots would increase participation in union democracy, particularly amongst younger members. Conference believes this exposes the government’s real agenda to disempower trade unions from fighting for decent pay and conditions for our members.

Conference notes that attacks on the deduction of trade union subs from wages in the public sector is an unconcealed attack on public sector trade unions. Conference notes that not a single public sector employer has spoken up in support of removing check-off.

Conference asserts that the government’s claims that check off is a burden on the public purse is similarly based on ideology rather than reality. Check-off is easy, efficient and very cheap to administer, and creates a transparent relationship between the employer and the union. Conference notes that UNISON further undermined this claim by showing that many branches already pay for the service and also by making an offer to ministers to pay for it in all remaining instances.

Similarly attacks are concealed by reserve powers to cap public sector facility time, in terms of hours and money spent as well as specific trade union activities. Facility time enables trade union representatives to carry out the vital role of representing individual union members, engaging in collective bargaining, working closely with employers to promote positive employment relations, keeping members informed, challenging discrimination, keeping workplaces safe and supporting workplace learning and education. UNISON must challenge any attempts by Ministers to cap facility time activities, but also to organise and campaign as never before to challenge discrimination and workplace injustice.

Conference notes that not content with attempting to weaken trade unions in the workplace, the government’s attack on trade union political funds attempts to weaken the political and campaigning voice of trade unions at local and national level. Conference believes this to be a blatant attempt to suppress democratic criticism.

Conference further notes that new powers given to the Certification Office will enable higher levels of scrutiny and interference in the work of trade unions, launched by complaints from third parties. Conference believes that this will leave trade unions highly vulnerable to political interference and represents a further attempt by the government to weaken any opposition within society to its anti-worker agenda.

Conference fundamentally believes that political attacks on trade union activities underlines the fundamental importance of strengthening the ability of trade unions to make employment rights and workplace justice a reality in workplaces across the country. If the damage sustained to workers rights is left unchallenged, poverty pay, workplace exploitation and job insecurity will simply become worse.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

1. Continue to oppose the Trade Union Bill and any provisions that make it on the statute books;
2. Continue to defend facility time for stewards and ‘check-off’ facilities for members and develop new organisational strategies during the next 3-6 months and to implement them by January 2017. to ensure that recruitment and representation continue to be as effective as possible for all members, and that the union can effectively continue to speak collectively for all our members:
3. Campaign to recruit more workplace stewards;
4. Strengthen workplace level bargaining and campaigning to tackle discrimination and workplace injustice;
5. Review existing arrangements for political campaigning to ensure that UNISON’s members’ voices are heard at local, regional and national level;
6. Continue to work with the TUC, Scottish TUC, Welsh TUC and Irish Congress of Trade Unions on building a workers’ movement for a just society;
7. Develop with the Institute of Employment Rights a positive charter of trade union and workers’ rights for the next government at Westminster.

**47. Attacks on Democracy**

**Carried as Amended: 47.1**

Conference notes that the current government have shown a disregard for democracy and civil society, including:

1. The introduction of individual voter registration and a subsequent decline in voter registration;
2. Boundary changes based on these lower levels of registration that disproportionately hit regions where the Conservative Party has few MPs;
3. The Lobbying Bill, which restricts the ability of voluntary organisations – including trade unions – from campaigning against government policies at election time;
4. The Trade Union Bill, which places restrictions on the ability of unions to run and support political campaigns, collect subscriptions through check off and take industrial action unless arbitrary turnout levels are met;
5. The reduction in the level of “Short Money” to opposition parties, which will made it harder for them to scrutinise a government that has the full weight of the civil service behind them;
6. The gagging of charities through “gagging clauses” attached to government grants, restricting the ability of vital campaigning organisations to speak out on government policy.

Conference believes:

1. That the government have a deliberate and co-ordinated strategy to restrict the voices of civil society in general and trade unions in particular;
2. That this government’s approach is a genuine and serious threat to democracy and scrutiny of their actions;
3. That the government’s aim for councils to raise more money through increasing business rates effectively discriminates against economically and socially-deprived areas, where unemployment is high and which are hard-pressed to attract new businesses;
4. that each combined authority proposal should be judged by all local branches effected with help from their Region, whilst noting the opposition to the ‘Northern Powerhouse’ from UNISON Northern Region.

Conference resolves:

1. To campaign against all anti-democratic changes introduced by this government;
2. To ensure that local alliances are built with other unions, local ward and constituency labour parties and community and voluntary groups to campaign for decisions to be taken by local people. [A useful model for this could be the Public Service Alliances established in the Northern Region];
3. To promote and encourage UNISON members and activists to willingly support UNISON’s policies on anti-austerity and local democracy by becoming more active in their communities.
4. For UNISON, in association with the TUC, the Workers’ Educational Association and other relevant partners, to initiate a programme for the training of all its Stewards in understanding, from a socialist perspective, basic ‘capitalist economics’, in order to better prepare them to argue the anti-austerity cause. This programme to be eventually developed to be part of the basic training for all Stewards.

**48. Women, the refugee crisis and trafficking**

**Carried as Amended: 48.1**

The government’s Immigration Bill is a draconian piece of legislation designed to criminalise and stigmatise immigrants and undocumented people. It is part of a wider, ongoing government attempt to appear tough on immigration to an increasingly sceptical public.

While millions of people were moved after seeing the washed up body of three year old Aylan Kurdi, the forces of reaction still remain – as angry and hostile as ever. Violent elements are feeling emboldened. European countries are putting up their borders while the EU is establishing a border force to expedite deportations and force/bribe middle-eastern and north African countries to establish huge refugee camps in their own countries.

In the UK, government proposals as part of their crackdown on immigrant workers hold yet more perils for women seeking refuge, including the possibility of undocumented workers receiving a 12 month prison sentence – potentially separating women from their children and making them even more vulnerable to exploitative employers and worse.

Further, the withdrawal of financial support to ‘failed’ asylum seeker families will leave families and children homeless and with no means of support or ability to feed themselves or to earn money. This is despite the poor quality of Home Office decision making, highlighted by UNISON and others. In just six months between 2014/15 in over 50% of cases on which the Asylum Tribunal made a decision, the case was either allowed or remitted. That women and children will suffer if this Bill is passed is beyond doubt.

Meanwhile proposals to restrict access to NHS care for migrant workers are in the process of being implemented. This creates huge potential for discrimination against the UK’s Black communities, and particularly women who may already struggle to access care because of cultural and language barriers.

Meanwhile the right wing media in the UK continue to focus on images of apparently healthy, fit young men fighting to board trains and smuggle themselves across the border from France – feeding the myth that migrants are primarily economic and seeing to take advantage of the UK welfare system

The prospect of a better life in Europe has driven many to make the treacherous journey across the Mediterranean. Thousands have died en route. Their misery, which makes them easy prey for people smugglers, is part of a global phenomenon that produces almost $26bn a year.

Charging an average of around $3,000 a person to reach Europe, the criminal gangs and the industry as a whole are flourishing.

Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, Afghanistan, and parts of sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia have all been affected. The British government’s decision to bomb Syria will worsen the refugee crisis, increase the Islamophobia that many refugees face, and solve none of the problems that refugees encounter.

The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reports that women and girls compromise about half of any refugee, internally displaced or stateless population. In shelters and camps these women are at greater risk of harm, due to traditional gender roles and women’s position in society, including the risk of sexual and gender-based violence. Unaccompanied women and girls, women heads of households and pregnant, disabled or older women face particular threats.

Never ending uncertainty, lack of privacy, lack of educational resources, violence, abject hunger and poverty, and the threat of being trafficked into slavery are everyday realities faced by many.

Save the Children warn “Unaccompanied children are at the greatest risk from people traffickers, some are being forced into manual labour, domestic work, drug smuggling and prostitution.”

It is estimated that there are up to 27 million people living in conditions of slavery, in forced labour or sexual exploitation around the globe today. The United Nations office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reports that global demand for prostitution and forced labour generates 32 billion dollars annually.

Trafficking women and children specifically for sexual exploitation is a high-profit and low risk endeavour for traffickers and the fastest growing criminal enterprise in the world. Despite the fact international law and the laws of 134 countries criminalise sex trafficking, human trafficking is the third largest international crime industry behind illegal drugs and arms trafficking. Nearly 100 000 people are trafficked across international borders every year of which more than 70% are women and half are children. Every 30 seconds, a child is trafficked, and the practice is often heightened in the wake of conflict or natural disaster.

The UK is a significant destination country for women, children and men to be trafficked. Women and girls make up 98% of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. A trafficker can earn between £26,000 and £52,000 per year from one victim. Furthermore, 11% of British business leaders polled through YouGov admitted that it was ‘likely’ modern slavery was playing a part in their supply chain. Britain has averaged one supply chain crisis per year in the last three years.

All sex trafficking violates basic human rights, including the rights to bodily integrity, equality, dignity, health, security, and freedom from violence and torture. Key international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), consider sex trafficking a form of sex discrimination and a human rights violation.

Despite these many challenges and threats to their freedom, safety and security, Conference believes that, with the appropriate support, refugee women can improve their lives and the lives of their children, families and communities

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

1. Strengthen our work advocating for evidence based, human rights centred policies around migration, which take account of the specific needs of women migrants and refugees;
2. Continue to challenge racist immigration policies and to support a wide range of anti-racist organisations at local and national level;
3. Lobby the UK government to use their influence to ensure that where refugee camps are in place, the safety and dignity of women is assured;
4. Consider how to support the International World Day against trafficking in human persons on 30 July;
5. Work with all appropriate UNISON committees to forge better links with international campaigns and solidarity initiatives and help raise awareness of the key issues in those countries identified as a priority for UNISON;
6. Encourage regions and branches to affiliate to those organisations that are a priority for UNISON;
7. Continue to work with those organisations that cross borders in their quest to eliminate violence against women.
8. And campaign to save public services and Local Authority funded services that contribute to the integration of asylum seekers and refugees into our communities
9. Issue guidance to branches on how to inform and educate our members about asylum seekers, refugees, immigration and human trafficking.

**50. Fuel Poverty - The Cold Truth**

**Carried**

Conference notes that in 2010 the winter fuel allowance was reduced by 25% for people for people aged over 80 and by 33% for people under 80 years of age. Furthermore the reduced payment has been frozen since that time.

Conference further notes that:

1. To mark Fuel Poverty Awareness Day (27 February) the National Energy Action group published a report “A Manifesto for Warmth” which warned that at least 100,000 householders could die needlessly across the UK by 2030 due to an inability to heat their homes adequately. 75% of those affected will be pensioners which will include UNISON Retired Members;
2. The report also claims the NHS could be left with a £22 billion bill for treating cold related illnesses. Jenny Saunders Chief Executive of National Energy Action stated that Fuel Poverty Awareness Day was a wake up call on the need to end the cost and suffering caused by cold homes in the UK;
3. In the recent spending review, the Chancellor cut the number of homes benefiting from subsidised insulation and more efficient boilers from 400,000 to 200,000;
4. The Treasury will receive an estimated £28 billion in taxation on energy bills over the next decade.

Conference believes that there should be more support for the Energy Bill Revolution Campaign to eradicate fuel poverty.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Work with other trade unions and other appropriate bodies and groups including the National Pensioners’ Convention to campaign for an increase in the winter fuel allowance;
2. Support the Energy Bill Revolution Campaign;
3. Raise awareness amongst UNISON members of the impact of fuel poverty.

**63. Fairer Taxation and the Future Funding of our Public Services**

**Carried as Amended: 63.1, 63.2, 63.4**

Conference is dismayed that nearly six years on from his promise to “fix” the economy and only one month after the 2015 Autumn Statement – in which he said that the government's job is no longer to "rescue Britain", but to "rebuild Britain" – George Osborne has again returned to the economic politics of austerity and the spectre of international economic problems as an excuse to further slash spending on public services. Conference is also angered by the arrogance of a Chancellor of the Exchequer who told the country in November 2015 that no economy in the G7 has grown faster than the UK in any year since 2010, that government spending will continue to rise and that more than a million extra jobs will be created over the next five years – only for him to say in January 2016 that he was confused why “people think that it’s ‘job done’”.

The last five years have seen massive cuts in public spending, huge public sector redundancies and pay restraint across the public services on an unprecedented scale. George Osborne has already let it slip that the Conservative Party’s plans are no longer about “balancing the books” but that they want to return the UK to the level of spending of the 1930’s – a time before the NHS and when young people left school at 14.

UNISON members have experienced the worst of the Conservative Party’s failure to create a fair and balanced economy. With rising prices and falling wages, working people across the UK are worse off than they were before the 2010 General Election because of the disastrous economic policies of David Cameron’s governments. These cuts were made on the backs of the poor and disadvantaged, whilst big businesses and wealthy individuals continue to get huge tax cuts. Most public sector workers haven’t had a pay rise in recent years – whilst the profits of big businesses continue to increase and the chief executives of Britain's largest companies earned more by 5 January 2016 than most people will earn in the entire year.

Conference rejects the Conservative Party’s ideology that economic prosperity will only be created by big businesses and the rich and that we must keep their taxes low to incentivise them to act benevolently. Conference also rejects the Conservative Party’s mantra that only reductions in public spending, the introduction of competition into public service provision and the privatisation of nationally provided collective public services will deliver a stable economy for the future. Instead, Conference believes that increasing the wages of the lowest paid members of society and implementing a progressive taxation system, based upon a principle that the more you earn the more you contribute, will provide a fairer balance for funding the public services that are accessed by everyone regardless of their incomes.

Conference continues to believe that investment in public services must be seen as a cornerstone of a fairer and just society.

Conference believes the UK deserves the best public services and that this can be funded by a permanent bankers’ bonus tax which could have raised around £2bn in 2015 alone, reversing the Conservative cuts to corporation tax (which by 2020 will mean big business pays £13bn less in taxes each year) and the reintroduction of a 50% rate of income tax for high earners – to ensure that those who can afford to contribute more to society do so. A fairer taxation system must also include efforts to tackle tax avoidance and evasion as well as the introduction of a financial transactions tax.

UNISON believes that a fairer system of taxation is not about punishing success – but instead is the basis for economic success and is also the key to achieving social reforms such as ending child and pensioner poverty, ending low pay and saving our natural resources. A modern taxation system for modern public services can ensure everyone can access high quality public services.

The Panama Papers scandal has laid bare the degree of tax dodging of the super-rich, corporations and the political elite. It has further deepened widespread anger at growing inequality across the globe which has fuelled popular mobilisations seeking an end to austerity and inequality.

Conference deplores the choices made by the Government in its 2016 Budget to redistribute income from those who have little to those who already have the most. The Chancellor’s Osborne’s ill-judged attack on the living standards of disabled people through cuts to Personal Independence Payments (PIPs) has been widely criticised – even by Conservatives. Osborne’s claims that it is necessary to make ‘tough choices’ that hurt disabled people are undermined by his reckless squandering of tax revenue through cuts to corporation tax, capital gains tax and business rates.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to support campaigns for the fair funding of public services through a fair system of taxation. Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to do this by:

1. Working with the TUC, Scottish TUC, Welsh TUC and Irish Congress of Trade Unions and partners across civil society and campaign groups including the National Pensioners’ Convention and the Scottish Pensioners’ Forum to establish a model for a fairer and more stable systems of taxation specifically to fund public services;
2. Commission research for a funding models for local government, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland which ensures that public services are properly funded but not at the expense of individual areas, regions or nations;
3. Continue to monitor and campaign around English devolution in particular, to ensure sufficient Central Government funding to meet local needs ;
4. Explore protecting access to certain public services in law to ensure their funding is protected appropriately;
5. Campaign to oppose the myth that higher taxes are a punishment and encourage people to view taxation as contributions towards the provision of excellent public services for everyone;
6. Continue to campaign for a ‘Robin Hood Tax’ on financial transactions;
7. In light of the above, amend and re-issue UNISON's alternative economic strategy and encourage its use as a campaigning and educational tool;
8. Working with the Labour Party, through Labour-Link, to develop an economic policy which rejects austerity, but ensures that a credible and robust plan for UK Government and the devolved institutions can be put in place to support fairly funded public services, public investment, job security and the raising of living standards.
9. Work with the People’s Assembly, community groups, Disabled People Against the Cuts, anti-racist groups, tax justice campaigners and others to build the biggest demonstration possible and other protests at the Tory Party Conference in Birmingham in October.

**64. Austerity and Our Local Economies**

**Carried as Amended: 64.1**

The North East is not alone in still feeling the increasing and cumulative effects of austerity since the financial crash of 2008 with continued cuts to public services and jobs. The cumulative effect of a lost decade of investment and wage growth across both public and private sectors is still being felt as the region struggles to revive and inequality grows at all levels, seen in high youth unemployment, food bank usage, museum closures, voluntary sector grant cuts, closing children’s centres and rising mental health referrals, to name but a few.

Where steel and public sector jobs have gone, their replacements are usually lower paid and casualised.

Public and civic investment is vital in our regions and has never been cheaper with low interest rates for public borrowing.

Local Government cuts are severe in the North East, forcing councils back to the mere statutory minimum of service delivery, and sometimes below. Business Rate retention in years to come will not offer much hope to our local authorities and services. The possible extra 2% on Council Tax for social care doesn’t raise much if you have a low local property tax base and low business start-ups.

The Northern Powerhouse must not be empty rhetoric linked to overall budget cuts and a few prestige projects. It needs grass roots investment in public services.

The make-up of Local Enterprise Partnership boards show too narrow a focus on partnerships between business representatives, higher education establishments and local authority leaders, which leads to the exclusion of other important social, economic and environmental partners including trade unions.

The so called ‘National Living Wage’ of £7.20 an hour for the over 25s will benefit the North East but it is not a real living wage, nor a panacea to tax credit cuts, rent rises and other pressures on the cost of living.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to campaign for:

1. An end to public sector job cuts and a genuine regional regeneration programme with public financial investment being used as the ‘seed corn’ to grow regional economies and provide jobs, based around a programme of supporting large and medium-scale infrastructure programmes (such as developing local rail and rapid-transit networks) and large-scale building of desperately-needed social housing by local authorities;
2. An end to the ‘right-to-buy’ provisions imposed upon local councils and housing associations;
3. Fairer funding formulas, property tax systems and a ‘Robin Hood Tax’, which represents a relatively small tax on the financial sector that could generate billions of pounds annually to fight poverty at home and abroad;
4. Support for the UK Steel industry and funded regional growth plans by calling for the nationalisation of the UK steel industry.

**65. Austerity – How much worse will it get for Black members?**

**Carried**

Since the disastrous election of a majority Tory Government in May 2015 the impact of public sector and welfare cuts has worsened for Black people.

The Tories first budget has deepened austerity with more than 1.25 million Black households and 4 million Black people worse off under the range of budget measures that will continue to have a negative and disproportionate impact on Black people.

Black households are more likely to be living in poverty with child poverty rates at nearly 50% for Pakistani children and over 40% for Bangladeshi children. Cuts to tax credits, part-time working changes, and benefit caps on households with more than two children will exacerbate the situation for Black families.

A report from Runnymede Trust ‘The 2015 Budget – Effects on Black and minority ethnic people’ found that:

1. Cuts and freezes in tax credits are up to five times more likely to adversely affect Black people than white people as more Black people work part time than white people;
2. Youth unemployment has risen by 49% over the past five years amongst Black people compared to a 2% fall among young white people;
3. Nearly half of all overcrowded households in Britain are among Black people but the government is now restricting housing benefit for people in their late teens and early twenties;
4. Among young Black people affected by this change, many will be living in overcrowded households, sharing bedrooms with younger siblings, and so these changes are more likely to negatively affect housing quality among Black families and young people;
5. Further reduction in the Benefit Cap will hit Black workers the hardest as 40% of those affected by the benefit cap are Black workers although Black people make up just 14% of the population;
6. Black people make up 16% of Jobseekers Allowance claimants, 16% of lone parents claiming income support and 9% of those on Employment and Support Allowance (ESA);
7. Cutting Child Tax Credits and housing benefit for families with more than 2 children will increase Black child poverty rates and racial inequalities as 24% of Black families have more than 2 children compared to 8% of white households.

The report concludes that 'the cumulative effect of the budget may become even more unfair over time'.

It is imperative that UNISON Black members be at the forefront of campaigns against the cuts and austerity. Therefore Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to work with the National Black members committee to:

1. Consider building for a national demonstration against austerity seeking to ensure strong UNISON representation;
2. Support and encourage UNISON Black members to stand as elected representatives as local councillors and MPs fighting against austerity and cuts;
3. Encourage members to step up the work with local community organisations fighting cuts and austerity;
4. Raise this as a priority issue with the TUC Race Relations Committee with the intention to step up the work with other trade union groups and local trade councils fighting the cuts;
5. Seek to work with service groups to incorporate the impact of cuts on Black members in those areas into relevant campaigns.

**66. Challenging Poverty**

**Carried**

Within recent months UNISON has highlighted growing inequality and deepening poverty across the UK. At the same time, UNISON at the centre and across our regions has been pursuing a range of demands aimed at reducing poverty in the face of mounting evidence that current UK and devolved government strategies to tackle poverty have failed.

This failure is evidenced by the most recent Joseph Rowntree Foundation report (Monitoring Poverty & Social Exclusion 2015) which shows that:

1. Over 13 million people in the UK (21%) continue to live in low-income households;
2. 3.7m children (28%) live in poverty;
3. 50%+ of those in poverty live in working families, a growing number of which are UNISON members.

To effectively tackle poverty it is essential that Governments put poverty reduction at the core of their economic and social policies and ensure that anti-poverty strategies are underpinned by an equality and human rights based approach. Such an approach goes much further than the usual self-contained set of actions and targets in traditional anti-poverty strategies. It requires that Governments:

1. Apply human rights laws and international obligations;
2. Empower poor people themselves;
3. Mainstream principles of universality, non-discrimination and equality, participatory decision-making, accountability and the recognition of the inter-dependence of rights;
4. Combine anti-poverty strategies with equality strategies that tie the allocation of resources to neutral ‘objective need’ criteria that measure deprivation irrespective of community background or other affiliation.

In pursuit of the above framework, Conference calls on the National Executive Council:

1. To continue to make anti-poverty work a UNISON priority;
2. To encourage and facilitate work between, and across, regions and the centre;
3. To share information on the strategies being adopted across the four Governments;
4. To promote and encourage collaborative work with our allies in anti-poverty, equality and human rights networks;
5. To highlight successful political and legal interventions to strengthen our campaign.

**73. Campaign for a Living Pension**

**Carried**

Elderly and retired people deserve to have a decent state pension.

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

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

The basic State Retirement Pension which for many from April, 2016 will be £119.30 (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. The TUC assesses that pensioners need an amount that is higher still than this.

Even the Daily Telegraph has reported Britain 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.

With an ageing population there can be no excuse for paying one of the worst pensions in Europe, despite Britain being the fifth wealthiest country in the world.

31,000 pensioners died of hypothermia in 2012/13 (Daily Telegraph 16 November 2013) despite the winter fuel allowance. The number was double that of five years previously.

The current system lets women down because care responsibilities have affected 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.

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

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to continue to highlight this issue as a priority.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to liaise with UNISON’s Retired Members’ Organisation, the National Pensioners Convention and other appropriate bodies and groups to campaign involving all levels of the membership to achieve a Living Pension which calls for:

1. A weekly State Retirement Pension which allows every pensioner to pay for necessities and enjoy social and leisure activity; with a top up for pensioners who receive no other income who would otherwise fall below the poverty line;
2. A State Retirement Pension equal to the full new state pension of £155.65 per week (rate at April 2016) for all pensioners so that no one has to claim pension credit;
3. Pension equality available to all age qualified citizens; by reducing the new 35 year qualifying period;
4. Pension increases every year measured by average earnings increase, Retail Price Index, Consumer Prices Index or 2.5%, whichever is highest;
5. Defence of the current triple lock from increasing attack;
6. Consideration to be given to replacing the RPI and CPI by an index that more accurately reflects the increase in costs for pensioners and for this to be applied to work place pensions as well as the State pension;
7. The National Insurance Fund to be ring fenced;
8. Intergenerational unfairness to be addressed by improving the pension prospects of the younger generations and oppose attempts to dumb down the rights of pensioners;
9. Dignity and security in retirement.

**74. Women and the State Pension**

**Carried**

Conference notes that the new single tier pension due to be introduced in April 2016 will fail to alleviate pensioner poverty not least because it is discriminatory against women.

It is generally impossible for women to accrue the same level of occupational and state pension as men because of low pay, part-time working, time off for childcare, caring for elderly relatives and poor long term health. Many low paid workers including some care workers, the majority of whom are women, are on zero-hours contracts and treated as self-employed, meaning their employer does not pay their National Insurance and most of these workers have no other form of pension.

This will be compounded as the number of contribution years will rise from 30 to 35 years and many more will be unable to accrue a full state pension.

Currently three quarters of all women pensioners live at or below the poverty line. The current basic state pension is £115. The proposed single tier pension is likely to be £150, well short of the £193 calculated by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation as necessary for a minimum standard of living.

Only 48% of women currently get a full state pension compared to 80% of men.

Furthermore, women born on or after 6 April 1953 will receive the new state pension but those born between 6 April 1951 and 6 April 1953 will not; despite men born within those dates being eligible. This discrimination is a result of earlier legislation to equalise the age at which men and women can draw the state pension.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to work with Labour Link, National Retired Members Committee and others including TUC National Pensioners Convention and Scottish Pensioners Forum to:

1. Raise awareness of the disparity between womens’ and mens’ pensions and the disproportionate impact on women of pensioner poverty;
2. Campaign to right this injustice.

**75. Opposing DFID'S Privatisation Agenda**

**Carried**

Conference is concerned that the UK government’s Department for International Development (DFID) is aggressively promoting the private sector as an alternative provider of public services globally.

Traditionally privatisation, driven by the international finance institutions, has been promoted in infrastructure projects, particularly water, sanitation and energy, often with terrible consequences, but increasingly DFID is promoting a stronger role for the private sector in education and health.

In education DFID has been promoting the role of private and low fee schools as an alternative to publically run schools, including through its investment arm, the CDC Group. One preferred model, which has striking similarities to the ‘school’s pence’ system, abolished in Britain in 1891, involves low daily fees, large classes and unqualified teachers with very little training, instructed to read a lesson from a hand-held computer.

Conference believes this investment in private and part-private education as an alternative to publically provided education, increases inequality, drives down standards and undermines publically provided education. It damages the opportunities of children from poorer backgrounds and is counter to the sustainable development goal on free, equitable and quality education.

In healthcare the privatisation agenda is far more advanced. Since the 1980s the international finance institutions have been encouraging low income countries to open up their health markets to foreign investors.

In recent years the UK government has been promoting various forms of private and part private healthcare provision in low income countries, particularly Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). These include promoting the UK as “world leader in healthcare PPPs” and DFID support for the establishment of a PPP advisory facility at the International Finance Corporation. The approval of the Sustainable Development Goal on universal access to healthcare is likely to be seen by the UK government and many multinational companies as an opportunity for massive expansion in private healthcare provision, to the detriment of public services.

Conference further believes that public healthcare systems produce efficiencies of scale, are better able to control costs and have lower administrative costs. They are more effective and efficient in meeting the health care needs of the whole population, lead to better health outcomes and help reduce inequality. Private and part private healthcare systems on the other hand are more expensive to run, are primarily accountable to shareholders, disadvantage the poorest and further erode public services.

Where healthcare is provided for free, it is much more likely to be accessed by the poorest. Where it is paid for, even at low cost, it can absorb a significant proportion of the income of the poorest in society, forcing women in particular to choose between education, health, shelter or food.

Conference recognises the work by education unions to highlight DFID’s privatisation agenda in education, but is concerned by the lack of focus on the privatisation of healthcare.

Conference welcomes UNISON’s work with the global union, Public Services International (PSI), to support health unions in Ebola-affected countries in West Africa to campaign for decent public health services.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Highlight and oppose DFID and the UK government’s aggressive promotion of private and part private healthcare and education provision in low income countries;
2. Promote the value of decent public health and education services;
3. Work with PSI, sister unions and progressive NGOs to achieve this.

**79. Support Peace Negotiations in Turkey**

**Withdrawn**

**82. Don't Silence the Occupation of Palestine**

**Carried as Amended: 82.1**

Conference is concerned at the introduction of new laws in Britain, the US and Israel, intended to silence those who campaign for the rights of the Palestinian people.

In October 2015 the Conservative government announced they would introduce new rules “to stop politically-motivated boycott and divestment campaigns by town halls against UK defence companies and against Israel.” The proposed rules will restrict the ability of local authorities to consider the risks of making pension investments in or procuring services from companies which are involved in the illegal occupation of Palestine.

In June 2015 the US government approved the “Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act” which sets out their principles for negotiating the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). The act includes provisions to actively discourage actions to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel and businesses in Israel or the occupied territories. This is a deliberate attempt to use TTIP negotiations to undermine international law and existing European Union measures on trade with the occupied territories.

The Israeli government is supporting a proposed new law prohibiting activists in the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement (BDS) from entering the country. They are also supporting a proposed law, seen as primarily targeting groups which campaign against the occupation, requiring organisations to provide details of the countries funding their activities in any communication with elected officials, and requiring employees to wear special tags when working in Israel’s parliament.

These new laws seek to undermine the growing success of the BDS movement and prevent or restrict divestment from companies that are involved in the illegal occupation. They attempt to delegitimise international law and several UN conventions, which confirm that the occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem is illegal.

The Israeli government has continued its programme of rapid settlement expansion in the West Bank, denying increasing numbers of Palestinians access to their land, and undermining prospects of a two state solution. Settler violence towards the Palestinian population has also increased dramatically, with limited, if any, sanctions for the perpetrators.

Conference recalls that, for eleven years now, the Palestinian people have been calling for BDS and that UNISON has supported this call at several previous conferences. Conference continues to believe that BDS is a legitimate and practical way to put pressure on the Israeli government to end its repression of the Palestinian people, contribute towards the building of peace, and secure the Palestinians’ right to self-determination. It is a rapidly growing movement, led worldwide by the Palestinians themselves through the BDS National Committee, which is beginning to be successful at persuading companies to end their involvement with the illegal occupation

As the BDS movement has grown, so has the campaign against it. Many local authorities and others have been threatened with legal action, seeking to reverse democratic decisions on ethical investments regarding Israel and the illegal occupation of Palestine. The Palestine Solidarity Campaign in particular has faced increasing attempts to delegitimise its work.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

1. Campaign for the repeal of restrictive laws which seek to silence those who campaign for Palestinian rights;
2. Continue to campaign for an end to the illegal occupation of East Jerusalem and the West Bank and the blockade of Gaza;
3. Defend the right of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign to support the rights of the Palestinian people without intimidation or harassment;
4. To encourage all UNISON branches to affiliate to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign;
5. Pursue the policies and strategy already decided upon at last year’s National Delegate Conference, with particular reference to positive BDS campaigning, and in supporting the continued struggle to secure the Rights and Aspirations of the Palestinian People.

Conference congratulates the National Executive Council on publishing its guidance, “Palestine: Is Your Pension Fund Investing in the Occupation?”. To build on the work many branches already have under way, conference also instructs the National Executive Council to develop practical arrangements in conjunction with regions to promote and sustain, fund by fund, the lines of action the guidance recommends and to monitor outcomes. Where practical, these initiatives should be developed jointly with other relevant trades unions, trades union councils, the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and others as appropriate.

**83. Oppose the ongoing repression of the Palestinian People**

**Fell**

**100. Defending Our Human Rights and Equality Protections**

**Carried**

Conference condemns the Tory Government’s sustained attack on the rights of public service unions and workers - rights guaranteed under International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions. The undermining of the rights of trade unionists violates civil liberties and human rights including the freedom of association and assembly.

Conference is therefore not surprised but is appalled that the Conservatives are intending to repeal the Human Rights Act (HRA) and replace it with a ‘British Bill of Rights’. This, like the Trade Union Bill, is an ideological attack on our rights and freedoms. Workers rights and human rights are inseparable. We had to fight to win them, and now we must fight to defend them.

Conference recognises the important role that the HRA plays in organising, bargaining and negotiating on behalf of trade union members, for example:

1. Article 8: right to respect for private and family life - has been used successfully to recognise rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people;
2. Article 11: freedom of assembly and association - this specifically states "Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests". This article has been used successfully in the past by trade unions to expel British National Party members. It also enables us to join peaceful protests and participate in pride marches.

The Tories argue that a British Bill of Rights will ensure that the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) will no longer be able to overrule judgements made in British courts and will make "the Supreme Court supreme". However, for LGBT people, it has been necessary to use the ECtHR to win equality including decriminalisation of homosexuality, the right to marry, gender recognition and the right to be treated equally at work.

Shami Chakrabarti, director of human rights group Liberty, told the Daily Mirror that the proposal to scrap the HRA "is the gravest threat to freedom in Britain since the Second World War." Some rights may be limited and could be overturned such as the right to privacy or family life and appealing to the ECtHR would be lengthy and difficult.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Continue to promote understanding and use of human rights as an essential principle in defending the rights of our members and a vital tool for trade unionists and groups facing discrimination to challenge inequality and injustice;
2. Work with appropriate structures of the union, including the self organised groups, General Political Fund and Labour Link, to campaign against the repeal of the HRA;
3. Support Liberty’s campaign to defend the HRA;
4. Publicise information on the relevance of the HRA to trade unions, employment and equality.

**101. Immigration, Detention and Deportation**

**Carried as Amended: 101.1**

Conference notes:

1. The rise in anti-immigrant rhetoric and legislation both in the UK and across Europe;
2. The high proportion of Black workers in the UK who are being treated unfavourably in their workplaces by immigration legislation and policy. This is likely to impact negatively on their mental health and their ability to carry out their work duties effectively;
3. The lack of support provisions available for Black people and communities;
4. All workers have an interest in resisting racism and anti-immigrant scaremongering;
5. Migrant workers are a valuable and welcome part of the workforce and trade union movement.
6. Conference believes current immigration practice leads to unfavourable treatment of Black workers who do not have full legal rights to reside in the UK. They face a number of issues including:
7. Deportation before appeal
8. No right to housing
9. No financial support from public funds
10. Detention (which divides families)

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to work with the National Black members committee to:

1. Request Labour Link informs the Labour Party of our opposition to anti-immigrant scapegoating and asks for their support to make changes to immigration legislation;
2. Continue to promote the UNISON affiliated 24 hour helpline with the Joint Council for Welfare of Immigrants and UNISON's migrant worker networks throughout the union, Black members' structures and in UNISON publications;
3. Work with organisations who have a record of best practice in supporting Black people on immigration issues;
4. Continue to work with anti-racist organisations – such as Hope not hate and Stand Up to Racism – to combat anti-migrant racism;
5. Work with organisations, which are delivering assistance in particular trade union solidarity such as Trade Unionist 4 Calais to the thousands of refugees stuck in camps in Northern France.
6. Raise awareness of the issues in UNISON publications.

**121. Gateway to the Future: Stable and Sustainable Branch Resources**

**Carried**

Conference welcomes the work of the Branch Resources Review and the National Executive Council report, Gateway to the Future: Stable and Sustainable Branch Resources. Conference agrees that the report and recommendations will secure the financial stability of the union, while giving immediate support to branches that are struggling to support members.

Our branches are the lifeblood of the union and UNISON is proud to have a tradition of strong, active branches that support local members, organise and mobilise, campaign for change and participate fully in the democracy of the union.

Since the election of the coalition government in 2010, UNISON has faced major challenges as a result of an intensifying austerity agenda based on deep cuts in public spending. These cuts have focused on a programme of nearly one million job losses in essential local and public services – overwhelmingly in the areas where UNISON organises and represents members. This will be compounded by a raft of new hostile legislation, including the Trade Union Bill.

The National Executive Council fully recognises that the government’s austerity agenda has put huge pressures on our branches. It was with this in mind that in 2010 the General Secretary made a commitment to national delegate conference to introduce a dedicated fund to directly support branches in their struggle against public sector cuts. The National Executive Council approved the creation of the Fighting Fund in December 2010.

In order to create this dedicated pool of money to directly support branches, budget reductions have been made year-on-year at the national centre with resources being focused on maintaining front line posts through regional budgets and the Fighting Fund.

All of this has been done against a background of falling income, from a peak of £173.4 in 2011 to £166.8m in 2015. This has led to national and regional expenditure cuts of £5m, managed through strict budgetary controls.

By the end of 2016, the Fighting Fund will have provided an extra £29.2m to directly support branches, creating some 100 extra posts for each year from 2011 onwards.

The evidence shows that overall, the current percentage of subscription income allocated to branch funding, 23.5 per cent, still delivers sufficient funds to cover all branch activities. Indeed, financial data shows that for those branches with reserves, the total amount held has increased from £37.8m in 2011 to £39.1m in 2014.

However, there is huge variation between branches in the level of funds and resources (including staffing, premises, IT and other support mechanisms), which is in danger of creating a two-tier union.

An across the board percentage increase would be likely to increase the amount of money held in branch reserves and would be unable to meet all the requirements of those branches in most need now.

The Branch Resources Review recognises that the union will continue to face major challenges which will have a changing impact on our branches and our union structures.

The work of the review is focused on the need to:

1. Ensure urgently that local branches are viable and serving the membership as prescribed by the rule book;
2. Develop longer term proposals to address inequalities identified through detailed analysis;
3. Ensure the whole union’s financial strength and sustainability for the future.

To meet these objectives, it was recognised that many branches need assistance now and this required short-term interim measures, but that such assistance must be tailored to branch needs rather than providing a one size fits all solution.

Conference recognises the significant work to develop the tools, training and support infrastructure to introduce the activity-based budgeting model. This enables and supports branch’s campaigning and organising and educational priorities. It has now been piloted with branches across all regions of the union, covering some 41.5% of the membership, and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

The process involves branch committees producing a work plan and a budget which reflects UNISON’s objectives. As a result, the specific needs for resources are identified as part of the joint branch assessment. This allows resources to be channelled to where they required most and where they can be used most effectively for the benefit of not just the branch but the whole union. More importantly, it identifies those branches struggling through lack of funds or in need of additional help, support and resources.

It is proposed that those branches that have insufficient funds to support their agreed work plans will in 2016 receive a top-up from the regional pool, providing immediate support to branches most in need.

In the longer term, the widespread adoption of activity-based budgeting will allow for a fundamental assessment of branch needs and how they can be met.

Conference therefore agrees that activity based budgeting should be rolled out to all branches. This process will be monitored and evaluated with a view to forming the basis of a future scheme for resourcing branches. The arrangements need to be fair and transparent and operate under the governance of lay members to ensure our funds are applied in the most equitable and effective way possible.

Conference agrees the following for resourcing our branches:

1. The following process will apply as from 1 January 2017;
2. All branches will continue to be funded in accordance with the provisions of the current branch funding formula;
3. There are no proposals to change branch reserves;
4. All branches are required to produce annual budgets under Rule G 2.2.9. It is proposed that these should be activity-based budgets, prepared by the branch committee and agreed as part of the regular joint branch assessment process;
5. All annual budgets should be consistent with the branch work plan, include appropriate cost estimates and reflect the union’s objectives and priorities;
6. The annual branch budget will be entered onto the online branch accounting system as part of the joint branch assessment. Training, help and support will be provided as needed;
7. Where a branch has agreed a work plan and budget as part of the joint branch assessment process, but does not have the resources to meet the work plan, there will be a provision for the branch budget to be automatically topped up from the regional pool;
8. Where a branch wants to fund activities that are not agreed as part of the joint branch assessment as meeting the union’s objectives, there will be an appeal process whereby the budget is referred to a joint regional council body for resolution;
9. During 2016, in consultation with regions, the regional pool structure and criteria will be revised to facilitate increased funding for branches whose reserves are insufficient to fund their activity-based budget work plan;
10. The National Executive Council will evaluate and appraise the implementation of activity-based budgeting to ensure that sufficient resources can be made available to meet the proper running, management, activity and other expenses of each branch;
11. Detailed advice, guidance, training and support will be provided to assist branches in maximising their entitlement under the existing formula, taking into account the results of the activity-based budgeting process and levels of reserves.

**123. Branch Funding**

**Fell**

**124. Branch Funding**

**Withdrawn**

**125. Branch Directory**

**Withdrawn**

**127. No to Tax Avoidance and Debt Encouragement Schemes from our Employers**

**Withdrawn**

**128. No to Tax Avoidance and Debt Encouragement Schemes from our Employers**

**Withdrawn**

**Composites**

**Composites**

**A. Branch Self Organised Groups**

**Carried**

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.

**B. Housing Crisis**

**Carried**

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.

**D. Social Care Crisis**

**Carried**

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 publicly-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.

**H. Colombia**

**Carried**

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.

**I. EU Trade Agreements**

**Carried**

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.

**Amendment to Rules**

**Amendment to Rules**

**1. Rule D National Delegate Conference**

**Lost**

**2. Rule D The right to attend and speak**

**Carried**

Add new rule D 1.7.6

"D 1.7.6 Two representatives of the Private Contractors National Forum at the national level."

Renumber current rules D 1.7.6.-1.7.9 accordingly.

**3. Rule D Conference quorom and procedure**

**Carried**

Amend Rule D 1.10.4

In the second sentence after "A Regional Council," insert the words: "the Private Contractors National Forum,"

In the third sentence after "A Regional Council" insert the words: "the Private Contractors National Forum,"

**4. Rule D Functions and Authority**

**Carried**

Rule D 2.1

After “national black members seats delete “and” and insert a comma, and after “ a young members seat” insert “ and two disabled members seats”.

Insert new rule D 2.6:

" D 2.6 Disabled Members' Seats

There will be an additional two representatives, reserved for disabled members, one female, and one general, elected from a national constituency of all regions. No member shall be a candidate for election to the disabled members' seats unless she/he has been nominated by at least two branches or a regional disabled members self organised group. The period of office will be two years."

**5. Rule D Service Group Conference**

**Lost**

**6. Rule D Service Group Conference**

**Lost**

**7. Rule D Service Group Conference**

**Carried**

Add new rule D 3.4.6.6

"D 3.4.6.6 Two representatives (being members of branches in the relevant

service group) of the Private Contractors National Forum at national level."

Renumber current rules D 3.4.6.6 and D 3.4.6.7 to D 3.4.6.7. and D 3.4.6.8

**8. Rule D Service Group Conference**

**Carried**

Add new rule D 3.4.9

"D 3.4.9 The Private Contractors National Forum may submit up to two motions and amendments to the Group’s National Conference."

Renumber current rules D 3.4.9-3.4.11 to D 3.4.10-3.4.12.

**9. Rule D Regional Structure**

**Carried**

Rule D 3.6.5

Add at the end: “(unless the Service Group Executive representatives are also branch delegates).”

**10. Rule D Rule D 4 Private Contractors National Forum**

**Carried**

Add new rule D 4

"D 4 Private Contractors National Forum

4.1 A Private Contractors National Forum shall be established consisting of up to two representatives from each of the Private Contractors National Company Forums.

.2 The Private Contractors National Forum may, subject to the Union’s rules, send up to two delegates and two motions to the National Delegate Conference, each National Service Group Conference.

.3 The activities of the Private Contractors National Forum will be reported to the NEC.

.4 The National Executive Council shall give the Private Contractors National Forum financial support within the union’s guidelines."

Renumber the following sections as follows: D4 Self Organised Groups to D5 Self Organised Groups; D5 Young Members’ Organisation to D6 Young Members’ Organisation; D6 Retired Members’ Organisation to D7 Retired Members’ Organisation.

**11. Rule G The Branch Committee**

**Lost**

**12. Rule G Branch Officers**

**Lost**

**13. Rule J The Political Fund**

**Withdrawn**

**14. Rule P Application of Standing Orders**

**Carried**

Amend Rule P 1.3.5

At the beginning of the third sentence insert the words: “The Private Contractors National Forum,”

**15. Schedule A Retired Members**

**Withdrawn**

**16. Schedule C Elections**

**Carried**

Schedule C 4

Add at end: “Where the law allows, the National Executive Council may determine that an election shall be by either postal ballot and/or electronic ballot."