**Southport Theatre and Convention Centre**

**4/5 October 2016**

**Section 1 : Pensions**

**Section 2 : Health and care**

**Section 3 : Other campaigns and issues**

**Section 4 : Communications and internal issues**

***Section 1 : Pensions***

**1. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSIONS - GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

Conference notes that the government is proposing new Local Government Pension Scheme investment regulations and asset pooling. Whilst there could be advantages in the pooling of LGPS funds, should this go forward, the proposal also gives new power to the government to decide where council pension funds make investments.

As such, Conference fully endorses UNISON's national campaigning activities calling for it to be written into UK law that council pension funds, not the government, decide where to make investments.

Conference also welcomes UNISON's position that union representatives should be included in any new governance arrangement.

However, as many of our retired members are current beneficiaries of local government pension schemes, Conference believes that any union representation at the governance table needs to include retired members.

Conference therefore calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to make representations to the National Executive Council to work towards achieving this.

***Wigan Metropolitan***

**2. RETIRED MEMBERS AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSIONS SCHEME**

Since the implementation of the proposals of the 2011 Lord Hutton enquiry the significant changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme have produced a knock on effect that affects existing pensioners and those with deferred benefits as well as our current serving colleagues. Putting to one side the imposition of higher contributions and later retirement date for our serving colleagues the implications of a career average calculation rather than a final salary basis means that the future financing of the scheme is on an ‘equally shared basis’ with the pension being funded two thirds by the employer and one third by the members. If a fund is determined not to be self-financing the implications are either higher contributions by both employer and member or the reduction of benefits payable. Also under consideration (and of much greater concern to retired members) could be the annual inflation-linking of existing pension payments.

Independent Local Pensions Boards have been introduced which unlike the existing Local Pension Committees are not committees of the Local Authority and are made up of an equal number of employer and member representatives. The new bodies are tasked with the role of securing the effective and efficient governance and administration of the scheme and this includes how employers comply with written policies on discretionary practice i.e. flexible retirement and overseeing the process and operation of the Internal Disputes Resolution. Most Boards have one membership seat reserved for a retired member and therefore involvement in this revised strand of governance is essential.

Training is provided and expenses paid but the elected representatives must display the ability and capacity to carry out their role on the Board which is ultimately responsible to the Pensions Regulator and of course the members that they are elected to represent.

So now it is not wholly appropriate to take your LGPS pension and just forget about the governance. If you have not already done so, now is the time to be prepared to stand forward to represent your fellow pensioners.

Conference calls upon the National Retired Members Committee to liaise with the National Executive Council to ensure that this state of affairs is widely publicised so that the Local Pensions Boards are supported by membership representation (both retired and ‘live’) to ensure that the best interests of all members are served.

***National Retired Members' Committee***

**3. A TAX FREE STATE PENSION**

This Conference regrets that there is no automatic notification to HMRC to adjust tax codes to account for the receipt of State Pension. Despite low occupational pensions, the receipt of State Pension frequently puts retired members above the level of personal allowance (£11,000 for 2016/17) and therefore liable for payment of tax. It is everyone's personal responsibility to inform the tax authorities of the change in their circumstances. Frequently, retired members are not aware of this personal responsibility and by the time HMRC are aware of the circumstances a substantial amount of tax may be owing.

Retired members on limited incomes can ill afford to accrue a tax liability, an unnecessary stress for potentially vulnerable people. It is at the discretion of HMRC whether the payback can be made over a period of time or by lump sum. Additionally, the withdrawal of the age related Tax Allowance only further compounds the issue.

Most UNISON members come under the PAYE system and rarely, if ever, have dealings with the tax office during their working life. Indeed many have never needed to fill in a tax return. It is unlikely that unless their increased tax liability is triggered by other means, new State Pensioners may well not think about advising the tax office of the changes.

In order to protect retired members from accruing a tax liability over a period of time, this Conference

1. instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to ask all UNISON members occupational pension providers to advise their pension scheme members of the State Pension tax liability when they first receive their occupational pension; and
2. to seek the co-operation and agreement of the Department of Work and Pensions to automatically advise HMRC when State Pension is first paid so the tax code can be automatically adjusted to include the increased income, thereby removing the danger of underpaid tax.

***Scotland Region***

**4. A LIVING PENSION**

Conference notes that many older people are living well below the poverty level, which at present is £178 per week.

The UK State Pension is rated as one of the worst in Europe.

Pensions are not benefits but are in fact deferred wages from previous National Insurance payments and deductions from work and taxable income.

Older people have been greatly affected by austerity. Increases in the cost of living, low interest rates and a loss of facilities through cuts, have hit them hard. Research from TUC has revealed that pensioners' families will suffer cuts of £6-38bn under the government’s welfare reform.

It is crucial that older people continue to receive their universal benefits. Means testing is neither effective or efficient. Elderly people do not want the indignity and humiliation of having to prove their entitlement to assistance, consequently each year benefits to the equivalent of £3bn go unclaimed.

The government is spending less by increasing the state pension age. They claim we are all living much longer but, The International Longevity Institute UK found that in 2013 there were 30,000 fewer people in their nineties than previously projected and latest official figures show that life expectancy has now started to fall.

Now is the time to accept that there is an urgent need to substantially strengthen and reform a pension scheme that is over 100 years old and no longer fit for the purpose.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members Committee to campaign for

1. A weekly state pension that allows every pensioner without any other income, to not only exist and pay for the essentials but, which gives them the ability to lead an active life.
2. A single tier pension, which is the basic amount for every pensioner linked to average male earnings.
3. Equally available to all age qualified citizens irrespective of gender, so that no one is obliged to claim pension credit.
4. Increase each year by inflation (RPI or CPI) but preferably RPI, average earnings or 2.5% whichever is the higher.
5. Report back on activity and its success levels to National Retired Members Conference 2017.

***Scotland Region***

**5. TWO TIER PENSION SYSTEM**

Conference notes the two tier pension system that came into effect in April 2016 following the introduction of the new state pension (as discussed at Conference 2015 and embodied in Motion 5 as passed). Conference 2015 instructed the National Retired Members Committee, and called on the National Executive Council, to campaign to right this injustice.

Our retired members section has seen no evidence of this campaign and we call again on the National Retired Members Committee to initiate this campaign, linking with AGE UK, National Pensioners Convention and other organisations who are working to try to get this anomaly in pensions righted.

***Rotherham Metropolitan Borough***

**6. PENSIONS LAW - DAYLIGHT ROBBERY**

Conference believes that the most iniquitous aspect of the Government’s “Agenda for Public Service Pensions” [as far as our retired members are concerned] is its intention to grasp control of, and undermine the security of, pensions already in payment.

At a stroke, their intended legislation on the Local Government Pension Scheme

1. removes any effective influence from the new bodies and Boards set up only recently with improved union representation
2. removes any benign influence possibly stemming from good relationships developed locally between employers and employees
3. removes the requirement for future changes to be subject to Parliamentary scrutiny and legislation
4. removes the requirement for pension funds to be invested in the best interests of the beneficiaries
5. gives Government the power to control the funds by insisting that they are used for Government infrastructure projects, whether or not such investments are deemed to be sound
6. funds referred to in (e) above to include the whole funds without regard to preservation of adequate sums for the payment of existing pensions.

In other words, the Government intends to grab hold of OUR money without our consent – not just our savings but our actual everyday income – and use it as it likes. New roads and hospitals sound very nice: but who builds them, often at extortionate cost? Couldn’t possibly be all those lovely contractors who donate so much to the Tories? And if the hospitals fall down and the roads get holes in them, who pays for the repairs? Well no, not those lovely contractors. We pay, and we pay, and we pay – until our pension funds disappear and we the retired members are left destitute.

Conference believes that this is not widely known – even amongst our own members – and calls on the National Retired Members’ Committee to work with the National Executive Council and other appropriate bodies to:

1. mount as quickly as possible an information/publicity campaign aimed not just at our members but at the public, to destroy the myth of “gold-plated pensions”
2. create public petitions on the various internet petition-circulating bodies
3. encourage branches and members - especially retired ones – to contact their MPs and Councillors, to make sure that this latest piece of robbery is known as such – this to be part of an overall campaign involving retired members supported by working members, especially young members demonstrating inter-age solidarity.

TODAY LOCAL GOVERNMENT : TOMORROW THE REST

***Eastern Region***

**7. PENSION AGE**

People born in the early 1950s who expect to draw their State Pension at age 60 are now concerned that they will have to wait until they are 65 or 66 to get their pension.

The last Labour Government began equalising State Pension age between men and women from 60 for women and 65 for men. They also sought to increase the new equalised pensionable age to 66 over two years starting from April 2024 to 67, over two years starting in April 2034 and to 68 over two years starting April 2044.

The problem arose when the coalition government decided to accelerate this time table by 4 years.

Speeding up this process by 4 years is unequal and unfair due to lack of appropriate notification given to those affected. This means that some pensioners will have lost significant sums while missing out on opportunities to make contingency plans for their retirement.

Conference, this shows a lack of care from the government towards a group of women who have worked all their lives and who have been abandoned by the Government, just when they should be free to enjoy their retirement.

Women born in certain years, for example – a woman born 28/4/1953 retires July 2016, but a woman born 28/4/1954 has to work to November 2019, 3 years and 4 months later to receive her pension.

It’s the 2011 accelerated time table which needs to be reversed thus knocking off the up to 18 months extra for women to work and up to 1 year for men.

Conference, pensioners should not be struggling to make ends meet when they retire.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members Committee :

1. To liaise with Labour Link to bring this situation to the notice of MPs of all parties.
2. To campaign for all women born in the early 1950s affected by this and to urge the government to look at their time table. It is too short notice and unfair and discriminates against some pensioners.
3. To work closely with the National Pensioners Convention, Trade Union Congress, Scottish Pensioners Forum, other Trade Unions and other relevant Organisations to gain support for this campaign.
4. To publicise and campaign widely to regions and branches for their support in a change in Pension Age.
5. To report back at the 2017 National Retired Members Conference on actions taken and actual achievements.

***Leicestershire Healthcare***

**8. TOO LATE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

Many of us have heard of it, some of us are affected by it and most of us are really angry about it!

We refer of course to the changes to the State Pension Scheme and the impact of them on women UNISON retired members born in the 50s and who are now in their 60s, now currently or becoming our retired members.

For background, in recent years, when people became eligible to claim State Pension men claimed at 65 and women at 60.

Government decided in 1995 that over the course of this decade, the age at which women could claim their State Pension should change from age 60 to age 65, in order to equalise the claiming age for men and women.

Equality is a good thing and UNISON has always fought for equality and fair treatment for its members, both working and retired.

But there lies the rub…. fairness!

What would have been fair would have been to drop the men’s claiming age to 60 and thereby achieve equality, but no!

Up it went for all to 65 and then it was decided, in 2011, by the then coalition government, to accelerate the pension age for both men and women to 66 by 2020 and to 67 by 2028. But faster for women than for men, so men have longer to prepare for the change than women!

What they failed to do was adequately inform women clearly as to the true impact it would have on them AND in sufficient time to allow them to make alternative saving and / or pension arrangements to allow them to retire as they expected all their lives to do, at age 60.

Add to that the fact that many of those members also were due to get an even lower pension due to having paid the ’small stamp”, made the whole business doubly unfair.

Even during Government debates on this, it was acknowledged that the issue had been badly handled.

The impact, mostly on low paid women, many of whom are or are about to be our retired members is immense in financial, health and stress terms.

As an example, one woman, who worked in the health service came to us angry and heartbroken that the life she had hoped to live after a lifetime of hard work was not to be and that the pension to which she had contracted and regularly paid into as required, thus keeping her part of the contract would, by the calculations she was given deny her some £36,000 in pension payments. The then Government broke the contract! This did not happen to men!! Not equal and not fair!

This Conference calls upon the National Retired Members' Committee to

1. Look into this matter fully on an equality and fair treatment basis
2. Work with any other appropriate bodies to carry out an impact and outcomes assessment of the matter
3. Work with appropriate bodies and using all influence at its disposal to negotiate a fairer, more equal outcome for our women retired members.
4. Report back on its actions and finding to members, with updates in UNISON publications and to Conference next year.

***Scotland Region***

**9. INDEXATION OF PENSIONS**

The cost of all utilities, council tax and Insurance Premium Tax has gone up with above inflation increases, despite a Consumer Price Index (CPI) showing a negative, i.e. decrease in the cost of living.

Conference notes with grave concern the negative impact this will have upon those receiving meagre pensions and the announcement that current public sector pensioners will not receive any increase this year, as this is based on the link with the CPI. It further notes that many private sector pensions are still linked to the Retail Price Index (RPI) rather than the CPI and pensioners received increases this year of between 1% and 2%.

We must fight to change the link between CPI and pension increases. Conference therefore calls upon the National Retired Members’ Committee to liaise with the National Executive Council, Labour Link, the National Pensioners’ Convention and the Scottish Pensioners’ Forum to campaign with renewed vigour to reinstate the RPI as the index used to determine pension increases.

***South West Region***

**10. CPI AND IMPACT ON PENSION**

Conference notes that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is currently used for measuring the rate of inflation. This is in turn used to determine the size of any pension increase for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

Conference believes the elements used to calculate the CPI rate should be relevant to the actual cost of living as it affects LGPS pensioners. We therefore call on the National Retired Members' Committee to pursue this issue within UNISON and the wider trade union movement, with the aim of achieving a fairer method of calculating the CPI index.

***Kensington & Chelsea UNISON***

**11. FAIR DEAL FOR PENSIONERS**

The cost of all utilities, council tax, water rates, National Insurance, Insurance Premium Tax (from 6.5% to 9%) with increased insurance excesses due to the high claims from flooding etc., have all gone up with above inflation increases despite a CPI showing a negative, i.e. decrease in the cost of living.

This conference notes with grave concern the negative impact this will have upon those receiving meagre pensions and the announcement that unlike the rest of the Public Sector pay increase offers, current LGPS pensioners will not receive any increase this year as this is based on the link with the CPI. It further notes that many private sector pensions are linked to the RPI rather than the CPI and received pension increases this year of between 1% and 2%.

Whilst not truly reflecting the actual increased costs associated with taxes that have to be paid regardless it is at least a step in the right direction.

We must fight to change this link between CPI and pension increases and Conference therefore calls upon the National Retired Members Committee to liaise with the National Executive Council, Labour Link and National Pensioners Convention to effect a change to the RPI, which more closely reflects an actual increase.

***Plymouth in UNISON***

***Section 2 : Health and Care***

**12. FIGHT AGAINST THE ABOLITION OF ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE**

Conference will doubtless be aware of the proposals by the government to devolve Attendance Allowance (AA) to local authorities. This would shift the responsibility for welfare policy from central to local government, representing one of the biggest shifts of resources within the welfare state for 25 years.

At present AA is paid to 1.5 million people over 65 whose ability to keep safe or look after their own personal care is affected by physical or mental illness or disability, regardless of their personal means. This is seen as a vital support for people who live independently, but who might otherwise need to go into residential care. In fact, evidence shows that just one in seven AA recipients also gets funding for social care, so whilst the two are linked into wider questions regarding the care of older people in the community, this shows that AA plays a specific and distinctive role in enabling individuals to maintain their independence within their homes rather than experiencing unnecessary or early entry into the residential/nursing home sector.

Local authorities are already cash strapped. There are dangers that different councils will ration benefits and create widespread variation between areas of the country but also that the money will not be set aside to pay this essential allowance but used to fund other badly funded council services. Another postcode lottery is likely to emerge.

Attendance Allowance is a vital support for those who want to continue to live and be cared for in their own homes. Unless this is made a statutory service, with clear and explicit criteria for payment and eligibility, there is a strong possibility that AA could be subject to rationing similarly to present social care. Vicky McDermott, the disabled chief executive of Papworth Trust, described AA as “a lifeline which allows many of our older disabled customers the opportunity to live independently… with low level practical support in their homes”. She said: “Many of our older disabled people who are eligible for attendance allowance are not eligible for social care…… Attendance Allowance is for early intervention and prevents disabled older people from requiring higher level social care needs…..We would have significant concerns about a merger of social care and AA budgets as the applicants to these two funding streams have very different care needs. Monies that are currently allocated to disabled older people who are in receipt of Attendance Allowance must not be diverted into social care at the expense of these individuals.”

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members’ Committee to:

1. Liaise with the National Executive Council (NEC), National Pensioners’ Convention, Scottish Pensioners’ Forum and other relevant bodies and campaign vigorously to ensure that Attendance Allowance remains accessible to those who need it;

2. Liaise with the NEC to bring this matter and its possible consequences to the attention of all UNISON members, retired and otherwise and encourage them to sign the online petition;

3. Ask retired members and their working counterparts to write to their MPs opposing this potentially disastrous move;

4. Liaise with the NEC to work with Labour Link to oppose the government and to seek to ensure that Labour Party policy reflects retired members’ concerns about the future of Attendance Allowance;

5. Keep up to date with developments on the issue and ensure retired members remain informed.

***National Retired Members' Committee***

**13. WALKING FOR PENSIONERS**

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

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

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

***Lancashire UNISON***

**14. CARE IN THE HOME**

Conference deplores the continued use of the 15 minute slots used by social care providers and others who provide care in the home for elderly and vulnerable people.

The 15 minutes is cut down by travel time of the persons delivering the care and the minutes left (often paid for by individuals) are so eroded that there is little time for the actual caring let alone any conversation with the sometimes very lonely and ill people. It is insufficient and the practice should be discontinued and thought given by those concerned to a fairer system.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to liaise with the NEC and all other agencies involved with care in the home with a view to bringing about a change to the current system.

***Yorkshire - Humberside Region***

**15. CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE LONELINESS IN OLDER PERSONS**

Conference notes that there is growing evidence of elderly people suffering from loneliness. By deduction, this will include a large number of UNISON retired members.

Recent research has found:-

• 17% of older people are in contact with family, friends and neighbours less than once a week and 11% are in contact less than once a month.

• Over 51% of all people 75 and over, live alone.

• 3.9 million older people say television is their main means of company.

• 63% of adults aged 52 or over, who have been widowed and 51% of the same group who are separated or divorced, report feeling lonely often or some of the time.

• A higher percentage of women than men report feeling lonely often or some of the time.

• Impact of loss of meals on wheels to the recipients often meant that they were deprived of the only face they saw that day.

Conference further notes that loneliness is a bigger problem than simply an emotional experience, as research shows an increase in health risk factors in persons experiencing loneliness.

Conference believes that UNISON, made up of members from a wide spectrum of social and health practitioners, is in an ideal position to offer solutions and take a lead in the problem of loneliness in older persons.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members’ Committee to liaise with the National Executive Council to campaign for :-

1. Foundation services, such as understanding and support, to be put in place by Local Authorities.
2. Direct Interventions, such as psychological approaches, group based projects and one to one visits, are adopted by Local Authorities.
3. Gateway services, such as transport and technology are made available locally.
4. Liaison takes place with interested campaign groups, such as Age Concern.
5. A conference of the various practitioners within UNISON to discuss the problem of loneliness in older persons with an aim of putting forward best practice.

Conference further instructs the National Retired Members Committee to report back to the National Retired Members Conference 2017.

***East Midlands Region***

**16. ELDERLY CARERS**

Conference is concerned that hundreds of thousands of carers over retirement age receive no Carers Allowance in recognition of their efforts in caring for their sick, frail or disabled family members, friends or neighbours. In a press release of May 2016, Age UK estimates that carers aged over 80 now number 417,000, most of them unpaid.

According to Carers UK there are 6.5 million in total in the UK, and 1.4 million of these provide 50 hours or more of unpaid care per week. Carers UK estimates that carers save the UK economy £116 billion per year.

Carers Allowance is currently paid at the miserly rate of £62.10p per week if the carer supplies at least 35 hours of care per week. But this is only paid if the carer earns less than £110 per week and it may affect other benefits. For carers in receipt of the State Retirement Pension the bar is set even higher. Claimants can only qualify for Carers Allowance if the State Retirement Pension they receive is less than £62.10p per week. Claimants can then have their State Retirement Pension "topped up" to that amount by Carers Premium or Carers Allowance.

The reason given for this is that the State Retirement Pension and Carers Allowance are "overlapping benefits". However we all earn our pensions via our taxes and National Insurance contributions, not to mention all our years of contributing our skills and hard work to the wealth and social wellbeing of this country. The State Retirement Pension is earned, not "a benefit". To have a family member, friend or neighbour who needs care is a chance misfortune, an extra responsibility. The fact that carers are prepared to devote themselves to looking after others is to be lauded, not cynically exploited.

Conference believes that if the job is being done it deserves to be recognised financially, not just with words, regardless of age or means.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members Committee to liaise with National Executive Council, National Pensioners Committer, Scottish Pensioners Forum, Age UK, Carers UK and all appropriate organisations to campaign for the right of all carers in receipt of State Retirement Pension to receive Carers Allowance without detriment to their pension. Conference further instructs the National Retired Members Committee to report back to the National Retired Members Conference 2017.

***East Midlands Region***

**17. DON'T CUT CARE**

Day to day tasks that many of us take for granted - like getting dressed, using the toilet, washing, making a meal, or getting out to the shops - can be almost impossible for many of our members without help. Older people should be able to live well, not just survive and the right care and support can help them do this.

But spending on services such as home carers, meals on wheels and day care has dropped by more than £1billion in the past 5 years. This is having a massive knock on effect on the NHS, where each year £669million is being spent because older people are finding themselves trapped in hospital for days or even weeks, despite being well enough to leave, simply because the appropriate support cannot be made available to them within their community.

UNISON believes that the Government urgently needs to invest in the care system to help meet the growing demands of the millions of elderly people who are struggling. This is something that will not go away we need a definite commitment from this Government and future Governments to protect the support to the growing numbers of the elderly.

Therefore, this Conference calls upon the National Retired Members' Committee along with the support of the TUC and other unions to urgently call on the Government to urgently invest in care for older people. There needs to be enough funding for vital services, so that millions of older people including UNISON retired members who need care get the care and help they deserve.

***Rochdale***

**18. SAVE CARE NOW**

Conference welcomes the continuing progress being made with UNISON’s Ethical Care Charter and the broader campaign rebranded ‘Save Care Now’.

Social care budgets in England have been slashed by £2.68 billion in the last three years. The government claims the 2% precept English councils have been permitted to add to Council Tax will raise £2 billion to replace part of this but many think this is an over-estimate. Besides, raising money this way is regressive and unfair to areas with a low council tax base.

Despite this unprecedented financial crisis, a stream of councils continues to sign up to the Ethical Care Charter with its linked aims of decent pay and conditions for home care workers and a dignified service for users.

Up to 220,000 home care workers are paid below the National Minimum Wage mainly because they are not paid for travel time between calls and/or not paid for training. Nearly a million are paid below the Living Wage which is UNISON’s benchmark. The introduction of the so-called National Living Wage without government funding is likely to make matters worse as companies seek savings in order to pay the higher hourly rate.

In a report in 2015, UNISON highlighted inadequate levels of training and support throughout the mainly privatised service and how this impacts on quality of service. This report recognised the skill and commitment of the great majority of home care workers in spite of this.

Conference recognises how much remains to be done to improve the pay and conditions, recruitment and organisation of home care workers, to tackle issues of service quality and resolve the financial crisis threatening social care.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members’ Committee to work with the Local Government Service Group Executive, the National Home Care Forum, and other UNISON bodies as appropriate to enable retired members to contribute to this campaign. This should, among other things, include:

1. Using the electronic replacement of Interactive to promote the campaign and keep retired members up to date;

2. Promoting to retired members the e-tool which generates emails to councillors so there can be sustained local lobbying; and,

3. Promoting joint working at branch and regional level including with UNISON Labour Link.

***Wolverhampton General Branch***

***Section 3 : Other Campaigns and Issues***

**19. FRAUD AGAINST OLDER PEOPLE**

We have taken this heading from the title of an evidence review commissioned by Age UK, and published in April 2015. The review is seen as a way of bringing attention to this problem at a time of increasing risk and vulnerability. It is suggested that, among other things, the recent reforms to private pensions and annuities – allowing easier access to cash – will mean that higher proportions of older people will be targeted. This motion was on the agenda for last year’s Conference but had not been discussed by the time the Conference ended. We are therefore submitting it again because it is still relevant.

Fraud of all kinds: on-line, telephone, mail and ‘doorstep’ are targeted at people of all ages - and all levels of confidence and sophistication. However, this Age UK study of what is known about fraud asserts that older people are especially at risk of becoming victims because of personal circumstances such as social isolation, bereavement and cognitive impairment. Additionally, while it can be argued that it is younger people who are more likely to encounter on-line fraud; older people are (rightly) being encouraged to take advantage of what the internet can bring. The risk of on-line fraud against older people can therefore be expected to grow. When any kind of fraud happens the consequences can be severe and long-lasting - affecting physical and mental health, and impacting on financial circumstances.

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

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

***York City Branch***

**20. HOUSING FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

Conference notes that according to a report published by the Building Research Establishment “Homes and Ageing in England” more than 2 million older people live in homes that fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard, with 1.3 million in homes with a serious hazard resulting in additional and unnecessary costs to the NHS, particularly from cold related health problems and falls. The report also highlights the lack of properties amongst the existing stock that fail to meet the needs of an ageing population.

We are currently facing the worst housing and care crisis for generations with rising house prices, fewer affordable homes and many older people facing poverty, insecurity and an uncertain future in sub-standard private rented accommodation. The need for affordable homes to rent within mixed sustainable communities has never been greater. Yet the Housing Bill, which will force registered social landlords to sell their housing stock under the right to buy, will further reduce the number of houses available to rent and reduce the amount of suitable accommodation available for older people. Many who want to remain in their own homes are faced with inadequate home care and the lack of suitable accommodation contributes to delayed discharge of older patients from hospital.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Retired Members’ Committee to liaise with the National Executive Council, Labour Link, the National Pensioners’ Convention and the Scottish Pensioners’ Forum, to campaign for improved housing for older people.

***South West Region***

**21. EQUAL RIGHTS OVER INHERITANCE**

Conference notes that in a recent survey, 51% of the population prefer to remain living together in long-term relationships without feeling the need to go through a ceremony of marriage. If UNISON members reflect society, then this would mean over half a million members, including retired members, will find themselves in this position.

There is no such thing as a common law partner and such “partners” in long term relationships cannot acquire any legal rights over property or assets owned by either partner simply by virtue of the fact that they have lived together as a couple for a period of time. For example, a civil partnership or married couple’s house will be treated as a joint asset in the event of a partner’s death and exempt from Inheritance Tax. In 2009 the Law Commission wanted to end rules dating back more than 80 years and give partners who did not marry or enter into a civil partnership the same rights. They admitted that the proposals were controversial but insisted that current laws “reflect some of the social conditions and attitudes of a different era” and needed to be brought into line with “modern families”. They were particularly keen for a review of intestacy rules which govern what happens if someone dies without a will.

The Commission proposed placing unmarried couples who had co-habited for a period of time on a par with married couples and those in civil partnerships. Since 2009, this issue has not been progressed by any Government. These changes to the law are especially important to UNISON retired members, particularly those who have been retired some time and have been home owners for a number of years and have decided for whatever reason not to enter into a civil partnership or marriage.

Some of the problems can be overcome by willing property and chattels to each other but this does not exempt anyone from Inheritance Tax and could result in a former shared home being sold to meet the cost. This is especially difficult for retired members who have been in a long-term relationship only to discover, on the death of a partner, that they are facing financial discrimination when they are at their most vulnerable and unable to cope with this additional burden. This can result in their being forced to move home at a time in their lives when they would find this an impossible challenge and unwanted burden.

Conference calls upon the National Retired Members’ Committee to liaise with the National Executive Council, National Pensioners’ Convention and Scottish Pensioners’ Forum to campaign for a change to the law.

***South West Region***

**22. TICKETLESS TRAIN TRAVEL**

Conference is concerned to learn that the rail industry is planning to replace paper train tickets with smartphone technology within three years and the impact this will have on older/elderly travellers who it is feared will be subsidising younger generations. Campaign group Railfuture has warned that elderly people who do not have smartphones and will still buy tickets face paying higher fares than those who have adopted the new technology as anyone still wanting a paper train ticket will be charged more than those using the new contactless method.

Conference agrees this will be discriminatory and will adversely affect a demographic, older/elderly people, who are least likely to have/use smartphones, and despite having senior railcards, will be paying more than their younger counterparts for the same journeys.

It is understood that the proposed technology, known as m-tickets, will also be available with contactless bank cards so the affects may be mitigated given that more older/elderly people may have these, nevertheless it is important that the rail industry takes account of its older travellers and does not introduce initiatives which will disadvantage them financially in any way.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members’ Committee to liaise with the National Executive Council, National Pensioners’ Convention, Scottish Pensioners’ Forum and other relevant bodies to ensure that the impact of ticketless travel on all sectors of the travelling public is taken into account and that elderly travellers are not financially disadvantaged by this proposal and report back to Retired Members' Conference 2017.

***National Retired Members' Committee***

**23. RURAL BUS SERVICES**

Conference is concerned at the government cuts to councils for bus services, £27m in the current year and the impact this will have on rural communities who depend on bus services to get around. Rural bus services are being wiped out in many areas of England and Wales due to cuts in subsidies. Described by Campaign for Better Transport as on a par with the Beeching plans of the 60s to scale down the rail network, government spending on buses has been slashed by £78m since 2010.

Conference recognises that the groups most affected by these cuts are those entitled to concessionary travel ie retired and disabled people and that it could leave already remote communities effectively cut off and already isolated retired people totally isolated removing their ability to get out and about and meet people, engage in activities, visit relatives/friends etc.

Conference believes this is yet another invidious way in which the government is targeting elderly/retired people in its obsession with cuts to public services. Whilst so far it has not targeted universal benefits directly, and it promotes a narrative that young people are the most affected by the current economic climate, it is simultaneously cutting most of the services upon which retired people rely. The Shadow Transport minister stated "David Cameron promised to keep the free bus pass but he cut the buses instead". Clearly a free bus pass is only useful where there's a bus service on which it can be used.

Furthermore the Local Government Association is concerned at the increasing cuts to concessionary travel services believing the way the scheme is currently funded has long been unfit for purpose and has not kept up with growing demand and cost. It concludes: "unless the government commits to fully funding concessionary fares, vital bus services that support the most vulnerable in our society will continue to come under pressure."

Conference believes that this situation must be addressed as a matter of urgency and the disingenuous approach of the government publicised as widely as possible so that retired people are aware that whilst they may currently continue to "enjoy" their universal benefits, the services upon which they depend are being systematically cut thus reducing the benefit they confer.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members’ Committee to:

1. Liaise with the National Executive Council (NEC), National Pensioners’ Convention and other relevant bodies to address this issue and consider a campaign to bring it to wider public knowledge;
2. Ask retired members to write to their MPs on this issue and seek the support of working members to do the same;
3. Liaise with Labour Link through the NEC to seek their support for proper funding of concessionary travel;
4. Report back to Retired Members' Conference 2017

***National Retired Members' Committee***

**24. DISCRIMINATION AGAINST RETIRED PEOPLE**

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

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

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

***Lancashire UNISON***

**25. END OF LIFE WITH DIGNITY**

Conference notes that retired people in later life face challenges not previously encountered due to longer life expectancy enabled by medical advances. The Dignified Code produced by National Pensioners Convention calls for individuals to have freedom and choice for personal wishes to be implemented when individuals are no longer able to express themselves.

Conference recognises that some terminally ill older people suffer against their wishes at the end of their lives and that some older people take matters in their own hands including travelling if they are able to afford to another country away from their loved ones and their home to end their lives.

Conference also notes that while prosecution guidelines endorsed by Parliament in recent times can be interpreted so that friends and family can assist someone to take their own life without medical advice, there remains the possibility of a prosecution.

Conference recognises that there are concerns that a change in law may create a sense of insecurity amongst vulnerable people. Proper and widespread consultations should be conducted so that suitable and tight safeguards are developed to protect vulnerable old people.

Conference instructs National Retired Members’ Committee to liaise with National Executive Council to:

a) campaign for a change in law to allow for individuals particularly older people to have a choice after careful consideration of medical advice and the discussion with loved ones, to end their life with physician assistance at the place of their choice;

b) report back the actions and progress to the UNISON National Retired Members’ Conference 2017.

***Barnet Local Government***

**26. POWER FOR OLDER AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

Conference welcomes the initiative of Northern Powergrid, EON and others in setting up a Priority Service Register of elderly, infirm or disabled people who require extra support during power cuts.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members’ Committee, to publicise this service and requests the NEC and other relevant bodies to encourage all other utility providers to take the same action.

***Yorkshire - Humberside Region***

**27. P.H.E.W. CAMPAIGN - PENSIONERS HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT WANTED**

Conference notes that the Spanish Government brought in a scheme called 'Imerso' a few years ago, that has proved to be extremely successful. This allows retirees a paid holiday at the expense of the state.

During the 'off-peak' season, i.e. from October to June, cheaper holidays are made available to all pensioners resident in Spain. This scheme is available to those who are:

Over the age of 65

Aged 55 or over and receiving a Widows Pension

Aged 60 or over and receiving a Government Invalidity or Early Retirement Pension

Holidays can be between 8 and 29 days long

Any applicant can include a companion

Conference further notes that, by any standard economic measurement the UK economy is well in advance of that of Spain. If they can afford it, why can't we?

It is also noted that there is growing evidence of elderly persons in the UK suffering from loneliness and ill-health.

Conference believes that a 'Pensioners Holiday Entitlement', on similar lines to the Spanish model, will go some way to alleviating these problems. Therefore, it calls upon the National Retired Members Committee to work with the National Executive Council and other relevant bodies in order to campaign for this proposal.

***Bassetlaw (Loc Gov)***

**28. CONCESSIONARY RAIL FARES**

For many pensioners, the concessionary bus pass has been a lifeline, giving them greater independence in their daily lives and access to social and volunteering opportunities. It is a concession greatly appreciated by many of us.

Rail travel is expensive and beyond the means of many pensioners. Although concessions are available giving as much as 1/3rd off the cost of a journey, to qualify for the discount a pensioner must pay for a Senior Rail Card costing £30 per year at present. This is probably a good deal for regular travellers but not for occasional users. It would be reasonable that the restriction of not being allowed to travel during peak hours should remain in order that rail companies can avoid congestion.

Recent governments have advocated integrated transport systems to help solve road congestion and environmental damage. Pensioners would be able to assist with this concept by using bus and train travel more often rather than their cars. In addition, many of us have contributed taxes which have paid for substantial subsidies to train companies.

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

1. campaign urgently for this concession to be implemented;
2. work closely with relevant organisations to promote this campaign;
3. report on progress to the National Retired Members Committee meetings; and put on the website, the information must also be circulated to Regions and Branches;
4. publicise progress in UNISON magazines on a regular basis and report back to the 2017 National Retired Members Conference on action taken and actual achievements.

***Hampshire (L)***

**29. INSURANCE PREMIUM TAX ON TRAVEL INSURANCE**

The Government introduced Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) in 1994 at a rate of 2.5% and this has been raised at an ever faster rate to 10%. However IPT on travel insurance, introduced in 1997, has a higher rate, currently 20%.

The adoption of the higher rate for travel insurance discriminates against pensioners whose health problems associated with ageing already command higher premiums and to add 20% tax on top of higher premiums is an insult to injury.

Conference calls upon the National Retired Members’ Committee to work with other trades unions and appropriate bodies to lobby hard for the elimination of this unfair tax on pensioners.

***Devon County***

**30. FIGHT AGAINST FUEL POVERTY**

Conference notes that many pensioners in the UK are losing their lives through cold.

It has recently been revealed that 43,000 pensioners lost their lives last year, largely assumed to the bad weather. Yet not one politician from any party uttered a word about this national disgrace. We repeat not one of our so called caring politicians commented on this sad news.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to liaise with the National Executive Council to campaign to publicise this very sad news and urge this uncaring government to provide greater care and assistance to our more vulnerable pensioners. Conference further instructs the National Retired Members Committee to report back to the National Retired Members Conference 2017.

***East Midlands Region***

**31. THE STATE PENSION IS NOT A BENEFIT**

Comparing a pension to a benefit drives retirees 'up the wall' as they have worked all their life for it, said Steve Webb when he was the Pensions Minister in 2014. He also said that people earn their state pension throughout their working lives by paying their national insurance contributions and feel "stigmatised" by the idea they are claiming benefits. In 2016 nothing has changed much, where both the government and news media still fail to recognise the fact that most of today’s pensioners are receiving a return on their investment in the state and not some form of hand-out, and continue to portray those in receipt of pensioner entitlements in much the same way as other traditional benefits. Quite often the media seeks to draw an unfair comparison between pensioner entitlements and the wider working community, failing to recognise the many years of hard work put in by most of today’s pensioners to earn the right to receive a decent pension, concessionary travel and free prescriptions.

This conference urges the National Retired Members Committee and the NEC to campaign vigorously with the government and news media to change the way pensions and other entitlements are promoted and reported to the general public.

***York City Branch***

**32. CHALLENGING THE MASS MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF OLDER PEOPLE**

Conference notes with concern the negative and profoundly damaging images of older people, both as individuals and collectively, that are continually and consistently put out by the mass media in Britain. This includes portrayal of the age group as having access to large pensions, doing little that is worthwhile and at the same time being a drain on society’s resources and a burden on younger generations.

Older people are characterised as being “behind the times”, unable and unwilling to communicate through modern technologies and hence as being in a large measure responsible for their own isolation. They are disproportionately depicted as victims and objects of pity. Their economic, social and cultural contribution to society, past and present, is largely ignored. They are under-represented as authors, experts and contributors to the public arena. Older women and Black people are particularly vulnerable both to negative imagery and “invisibility”.

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

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

This is unacceptable and Conference therefore calls on the National Retired Members’ Committee to:

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

***South West Region***

**33. WEALTHY PENSIONERS – COMBATTING THE MYTH**

The media and politicians have whipped up a “phoney war” between young and old implying that pensioners have escaped the worst impacts of the austerity measures at the expense of the younger generation.

This attitude is illustrated by the following statement issued by the Work and Pensions Select Committee to launch its inquiry into intergenerational fairness:

“the current generation of people in or approaching retirement will over the course of their lifetimes have enjoyed and accumulated much more housing and financial wealth, public service usage, and welfare and pension entitlements than more recent generations can hope to receive”.

Conference does not believe that pensioners have escaped austerity and notes the following facts:

1. Almost 40% of those aged 65 and over in the UK experienced poverty at least once between 2010 and 2013, compared with around 30% of those under 65;
2. 42% of older people in the UK said they have struggled to afford essential items such as food, gas, electricity;
3. Cuts to adult social care budgets mean that 1.5 million older people in England have care and support needs that the state does not meet and either have to fund themselves or go without;
4. Meals on wheels services have been reduced over the last five years from 300,000 to just 109,000. At the same time, the average price of a meal has increased by 22% and malnutrition among older people costs the NHS an estimated £13 billion a year.

Conference is further concerned that the myths about wealthy pensioners immune to the effects of the austerity measures will be used to attack the universal benefits which improve the quality of life for many older people.

Conference believes that the myths must be challenged at every opportunity. In reality, means-testing the winter fuel allowance would have little impact on intergenerational inequality; and there has never been any data to show that 18 year olds are demanding that their grandparents’ bus passes or winter fuel allowances should be taken away.

Conference therefore calls on the National Retired Members’ Committee to work with UNISON’s National Young Members’ Forum to dispel the myths outlined above and to promote intergenerational fairness.

***National Retired Members' Committee***

**34. MEDIA PENSIONER BASHING!**

During the past year, elements of the media seem aggressively intent on portraying older people in a negative manner, claiming that hard-won benefits such as free prescriptions, winter fuel allowance and bus passes give pensioners an undeserved privileged position in society. The implication is that some of them should be withdrawn. In truth we know that for many, such benefits make the difference between a frugal lifestyle and one of poverty.

Maligning pensioners has become a media habit and Conference needs to combat this attitude urgently. We are in a difficult position in that we can’t withdraw our labour to make the point but we can counter the attacks by stating the truth. Many of us have been in paid employment for many years, perhaps raised a family and maybe engaged in house purchase. During this time, we have fully met our obligations to the tax system and indeed continue to do so. Who are these people supposedly deprived by us avaricious pensioners? Is it our families, those we most value and support? Are they complaining about us being given more than our share? Of course they are not. They, like us, know it for the nonsense it is.

The truth as stated earlier this year in the excellent National Pensioners Convention submission to the Works and Pensions Select Committee is that the contribution made by pensioners to our society every year vastly exceeds the cost of pensioner benefits by billions of pounds.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members Committee and calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. urgently initiate a campaign to inform all media sources that negative and untrue facts about pensioners must stop;
2. work closely with the National Pensioners Convention, Trades Union Congress, Scottish Trades Union Congress, Scottish Pensioners Forum, other trades unions and relevant organisations to gain support for the campaign;
3. urgently organise a campaign strategy to make our concerns known to the relevant media sources;
4. report progress on a regular basis in UNISON publications and at all the National Retired Members Committee meetings for circulation to regions and branches.
5. report back to the 2017 UNISON National Retired Members Conference progress made in stopping the negative attitude towards older people.

***Hampshire (L)***

**Section 4 : Communications and Internal Issues**

**35. RETIRED MEMBERS AT SOG CONFERENCES**

Following the rule change at National Delegate Conference 2014 Conference appreciates the inclusion of retired members at self-organised group (SOG) conferences and our involvement in this important aspect of UNISON's structure.

However Conference is concerned that, unlike all other groups attending SOG conferences, retired members are the only group not entitled to submit motions and amendments therefore we do not have the same means of ensuring that issues of particular relevance to retired members are included on their agendas. Conference believes that this places retired members at a disadvantage to all other groups at SOG conferences.

Conference further believes that this anomaly needs to be addressed and retired members given the same rights to submit motions and amendments as all these other groups.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members’ Committee to liaise with the National Executive Council about submitting a relevant rule change to National Delegate Conference to allow retired members to have equal rights to submit motions and amendments to SOG conferences, and report back to Retired Members' Conference 2017.

***National Retired Members' Committee***

**36. RETIRED MEMBERS’ CONFERENCE – FAIR REPRESENTATION**

Conference notes that Conference Bulletin, UNISON Retired Members Conference 2016, dated April 2016, included the following paragraph:

Proportionality and Fair Representation

The principles of proportionality and fair representation contained in the NEC’s Scheme of Branch Representation must be strictly maintained. Specifically for Retired members Conference … the gender make-up of (a branch) delegation is based on the gender make-up of the retired members of the branch.

Conference observes that although the paragraph purports to deal with both proportionality and fair representation, its only specific requirement concerns proportionality and there is none concerning fair representation as defined in Rule Q.

Conference considers that the Retired Members’ Conference should, as far as practical and appropriate and with due alteration of details, be brought into line with other UNISON conferences in this respect.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members’ Committee to consult branch retired members’ sections with a view to developing a proposed amendment to the Scheme of Branch Representation to submit to the National Executive Council.

***West Midlands Region***

**37. TRADES UNION CONGRESS**

Conference notes that UNISON affiliates to the Trades Union Congress on the basis of its total membership, including retired members, and this determines the number of votes UNISON may cast at Congress.

But conference also notes that there are no places for retired members, as such, on the UNISON Congress delegation.

Conference finds it anomalous that the UNISON delegation takes part in debates at congress on matters of specific concern to retired members but does so in the absence of retired members there as delegates to speak for themselves.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members’ Committee to propose to the National Executive Council that it adds two retired members, elected by and from among the members of National Retired Members’ Committee, to the UNISON Congress delegation.

***West Midlands Region***

**38. SCHEDULE B**

Conference notes that paragraph 2.2 of Schedule B excludes retired members from benefits under paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8 of the schedule. In other words, where an accident or a fatal accident befalls a retired member whilst upon union business, there is no rulebook benefit though there would be one for a full member in the same circumstances.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members’ Committee to raise this with the National Executive Council with a view to amending the schedule to bring retired members into line with full members in this respect.

***West Midlands Region***

**39. RULE D6.5**

Conference notes that Rule D6.5 does not describe the Branch Retired Members’ Secretary as a member of the Branch Committee, rather it says she/he “may attend and speak at all (its) meetings … and may vote on (certain matters)”. This appears to leave unclear whether she/he counts towards the quorum or has the same right as others to submit business.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members’ Committee to raise this with the National Executive Council (NEC) with a view either to amending the rule or the NEC exercising its power under Rule A2.2 to make clear that the Branch Retired Members’ Secretary and any other retired members’ representatives have, generally, the same rights and duties as the others listed in rule G2.1 to take part at Branch Committee except where the rules provide otherwise and to seek a corresponding alteration to the Code of Good Branch Practice.

***West Midlands Region***

**40. CODE OF GOOD BRANCH PRACTICE**

Conference instructs the National Retired Members’ Committee to seek the following alterations to the Code of Good Branch Practice:

1. Remove the word, “normal” from the first paragraph of 11.3.1.1;
2. Amend 11.3.14 to require the Branch Retired Members’ Secretary to be a retired member;
3. Make clear that the power of branches at annual meetings (in rule G3.4.2) to “(confirm) the election of Branch Officers” may not be used to overturn the result of a properly conducted election of a Branch Retired Members’ Secretary by the retired members of the branch; and,
4. Bring together the references in the code to the election of Branch Retired Members’ Secretaries (now in 11.3.1.1, 11.3.1.2 and 11.3.14) so they may all be found in one place.

***West Midlands Region***

**41. RETIRED MEMBERS - A VALUABLE RESOURCE**

Conference notes that under National Rule C.2.6.3 retired members are excluded from holding office within a branch, other than within the retired members’ organisation.

When branch officers retire, at present, their “stewardship” retires with them. Many retired members have a wealth of information and experience and, in this age when people are living longer, branches should be utilising retired members’ expertise in order to service their membership fully. Retired members are usually readily available, often have the necessary experience and, above all, do not require facility time. And of course, YOU CAN’T SACK A RETIRED MEMBER FOR SPEAKING OUT.

UNISON is a progressive union and it is time for this rule to be amended in order that as a union we move with the times. We are assured that retired members are important to UNISON: indeed, on our own national website under the “retired members” heading it states that retired members are “a valuable part of UNISON campaigns” and help to provide “that solidarity between generations which is so important to everyone” and “we value your experience”.

Conference, therefore, calls on the National Retired Members’ Committee to work with the National Executive Council to bring forward to the 2017 National Delegate Conference an amendment to this rule (to allow retired members to hold office within a branch) in order that UNISON may remain an efficient union with its members’ interests at the forefront.

***Eastern Region***

**42. STATUS OF RETIRED UNISON MEMBERS**

This union is under attack by the present government and many employers. These attacks include limitations on facility time and delegates having to take holidays in order to attend meetings or conferences. As a consequence, many branches have difficulty in finding delegates to represent them.

Furthermore, with the ongoing moves to outsource public services, more contracts are being taken up by private sector employers who have limited or no union recognition agreements, making it difficult for branches to support members who are in need.

Retired members can support their employed colleagues in their fight for improved facility time and UNISON reps duties and they also have much to offer their branches including, with the right training, short educational courses in branch. Retired members often have considerable experience and do not have to take time off work for union duties and can represent members without the fear of putting their employment in jeopardy.

This conference calls, therefore, on the National Retired Members Committee to find ways of encouraging retired members to become more involved in union activities and to support their working colleagues.

Conference also instructs the National Retired Members Committee to put to the 2017 National Delegate Conference a proposal for rule changes which will allow branches to nominate retired members to:

1. receive the necessary training and represent and support members at grievance and disciplinary hearings;
2. attend and vote at all meetings and conferences;
3. act as substitutes at all meetings or conferences;
4. take up any branch officer post;
5. represent their branches at self organised group conferences and meetings;

providing always that:

1. retired members may only represent their branches at meetings or conferences where no working member has applied to do so;
2. except for the post of Retired Members Secretary, retired members can only hold a post in their branch where no working member has applied to do so;
3. if a working member applies for a post in the branch which at the time is held by a retired member then the change of post holder will normally take place at the next AGM;
4. if retired members vote on matters affecting the employment terms and conditions of working members they must, if challenged, be able to demonstrate that they are voting in accordance with the written instructions of their branch;
5. before retired members can represent their branch on self organised groups they must have declared themselves qualifying members of the relevant group at least three years before retirement;
6. the branch may exercise these powers without regional or national approval but must, if challenged, be able to demonstrate that they have acted in accordance with UNISON’s Rules.

***South East Region***

**Motions Ruled Out of Order**

***Beyond remit of the Conference***

**Motion Care Staff**

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

A study by Baroness Kingsmill an employment lawer stated that frail elderly people are being exposed to neglect and abuse because caring and compassionate workers are leaving the care industry by low pay and poor conditions of service.

The study further states that in all her years as an employment lawyer she had never seen so many under-qualified, undertrained and underpaid staff in any sector of the economy. The Carers are low paid, forced to accept zero-hours contracts, have few if any qualifications and even fewer opportunities for training.

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

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

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

1] campaign vigorously for the improvement of conditions of service of caring staff particularly those working with the elderly;

2] high-light the scandal of poor services being given to the elderly and frail at present and seek in partnership with other agencies for improvements for decent care and compassion for the elderly;

3] report to next year’s National Conference 2017 the progress made to address the outrageous and appalling situation.

***Barnet Local Government***

**Motion Older Person's Care Home Visiting Service**

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

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

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

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

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

Some years ago, there was included in a motion and since then, it has been repeated in a number of arenas, including dare it be said, on Facebook, often repeated because some people actually think it’s funny!!!! “that our old folk would be better off in prison, where at least they would be given 3 meals a day, a daily shower and ongoing observation to ensure any problems were dealt with promptly and that many Older Persons Care Homes were more suitable places for those who had 'wronged' society in some way.”

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

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

The functions of The Prison Visiting Service could easily be replicated in Older Peoples Care Homes, recognising and utilising where and when appropriate the principles embedded in Health and Safety and good Trade Union practice.

The service would be provided by a well trained and properly recruited, supported and supervised body of Volunteers, whose work would be professionally directed and co-ordinated.

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

2)This Conference recognises that “There for You” must restrict its activities to assist only UNISON Members.

However, UNISON cannot work in isolation on such a big issue and co-operation of other bodies would be essential to achieve such a Visiting Service Scheme.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Retired Members Committee to:-

1. Ensure the possibilities are researched and explored with other Trade Unions and appropriate bodies and Organisations as to how and when such a service can be established, funded and organised.

Justification of the need is unfortunately all too evident, and

1. Report back to the 2017 National Retired Members Conference on their findings and a way forward help achieve dignity, health and general well being for Elderly Care Home Residents through the establishment of a Visiting Service.

***Scotland Region***

**Motion A Wider Voice for Conference**

This Conference notes that Standing Orders only allow citizenship issues to be debated at NDC. Whilst it is essential that UNISON has clear and decisive policies on all issues, it would seem appropriate that Retired members are given the opportunity to discuss such issues at our National Conference.

Our National Retired Members Conference includes time allocated to “Panel Debate”. Whilst this has been well received over the past few years, it is not a debate. The format ensures there are knowledgeable speakers to address the meeting and to then take questions.

This Conference agrees to

1. forego the panel debate on the Tuesday of Conference;
2. substitute a session with speakers from Conference delegates;
3. seek suggestions from Branches Retired Members Sections on the subjects to be discussed; and
4. acknowledge it is not appropriate for votes to be taken at the session.

***Scotland Region***

**Motion Pension Tax Relief**

Conference notes that:

1. Tax relief on pension contributions costs the United Kingdom government £48 billion a year in income tax foregone;
2. Tax relief is at the individual’s marginal rate so it is worth more to Higher and Additional Rate taxpayers than others; besides, these higher earners are more likely to save for a pension and can afford to save more; as a result, although they only amount to 8% of the working-age population, they get 63% of the tax relief; and,
3. The Trades Union Congress (TUC) has supported proposals for a fiscally neutral change to a single rate of pension tax relief for all savers; there have also been more radical proposals but, as things stand, there seems little prospect of progress.

Conference considers that the present massive subsidy to the rich should stop and that UNISON should develop an alternative to promote to the TUC and via Labour Link .

Conference, however, recognises that:

1. There is currently little consensus how this large sum of public money could be used more equitably and efficiently; and,
2. The effects of any change would be very long-term so, in order for UNISON to adopt any policy, it needs to ensure it reflects the views and interests of members of all ages and all membership categories.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members’ Committee to:

1. Prepare and circulate a briefing paper and seek the views of Regional Retired Members’ Committees and Branch Retired Members’ Sections; and,
2. Raise the issue with the National Executive Council with a view to UNISON as a whole developing a position on the question and campaigning on it.

***Wolverhampton General Branch***

**Motion Women and Pensions**

Women are already at a disadvantage with regard to state pensions and are more likely to face pensioner poverty than men. Nearly two thirds of women pensioners rely on Pensions Credit.

State pension age for women was due to rise gradually from 60 to 65 by 2020. The Government then announced in 2011 that it would rise more rapidly, reaching 65 by November 2018 and 66 by April 2020, bringing it in line with men. Under this proposal, by 2020 the state pension age would be 66 for both women and men. This was six years earlier than planned, which many campaigners thought did not leave those affected with enough time to plan for their financial futures.

Further promises were made by Government but on phasing in timescale and relationship with public sector pensions they have been broken.

Conference calls for a renewed UNISON campaign to identify the adverse impact on the women effected and to develop a high profile campaign along side our allies to bring pressure to bear on the current Government to mitigate any adverse impact experienced by women.

***UNISON Northern Ireland***

**Motion Two Tier state pension**

conference notes that with the introduction of the new state pension as of 6 april 2016 there is in effect a 2 tier state pension system in place.

Conference calls upon the NEC to ensure that information is made available to all our members and to campaign to address this injustice and to attempt to ensure that parity is established between both old and new pension schemes

***Bridgend County Branch***

**Motion End the extra Financial Burden placed on the Visually Impaired Person**

This conference instructs the NRMC and calls upon the NEC to use any means at their disposal to ensure that the unfavourable situation that exists against blind and partially Sighted people who use a Tablet or similar device to access “text to speech” is ended.

The market has spotted a gap in the service and publishers of popular authors are blocking this facility unless customers are willing to pay an extra £4.00 per book for the use of this Service.

It is impossible for people with sight loss to enjoy a book without the “text to speech” facility Unless they are fortunate to have:

a person to read to them, they are trained in the use of Braille, or have access to talking books, all of which depend on the service of others.

Conference therefore seeks representation be made to the Disabilities Minister and all other relevant bodies to ensure that this situation, which adds an extra financial burden on the visually impaired retired is ended”

***Leeds Teaching Hospitals***

***Beyond the remit of the Committee***

**Motion Is the care in nursing, residential and EMI homes adequate**

There is an ever increasing demand for care as longevity increases, the proportion of our elderly people requiring specialist twenty-four hour support within a residential setting will put even more demands on a care service that is currently struggling.

The demand for residential care in the private setting will see increased growth as the public sector becomes less involved in the provision of care, due to all the Government cuts now having to be made within our Local Authorities.

The staffing levels in these private residential homes is totally inadequate, there is at times in some establishments only two carers looking after up to twenty residents. Although there are many very good and caring staff working in this field, they are amongst the lowest paid, often have limited amount of training and there is a high turnover of staff. Dealing with an elderly resident who has dementia and other complex medical needs may at times require two carers to deal with the personal hygiene and toileting. This can then leave other residents without the support they need.

Residents are often taken to dining-rooms and seated for meals long before the meal is ready, others have to wait for toileting as there are not enough staff to be able to adequately treat the residents with the care, respect and dignity that should be afforded them.

Although most homes will display menus with choices, there is often little choice, food is scarce and we all hear the horror stories of homes saving money at the cost of its residents.

We need to bring in new legislation to monitor care and to safeguard residents and stop the abuse. There is a need for higher staffing levels and ongoing training leading to more highly qualified carers.

Conference calls upon the National Retired Members Committee to work with the National Executive Council and all other appropriate partners to ensure that major changes within our Residential homes are made and any legislation is adhered to.

***Durham***

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

**Motion Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI)**

Not printed on the advice of the legal officer

***National Retired Members' Committee***

***Not sufficiently clear***

**Motion Local Government Pension Scheme Pool Funding**

UNISON notes that it is the Government's intention to ensure that Local Government Pensions Schemes are to arrange to pool their assets into much larger pooled groupings nationally.

We believe that these organisations must be run similarly to the arrangements which currently exist nationally within both the local authority administrational Pension Committees, as well as the more recently formed Local Pension Boards, in order to prove good governance, transparency and democracy.

UNISON therefore requires that the same governance arrangements are put in place for all future pooled invest organisations and that this also must include the involvement and participation of employer, employee and pensioner representation.

***Knowsley***

**Motion Where will it end**

Conference - GP’s have voted to stop looking after thousands of care home residents. Fear remains that if it is allowed elderly patients will be left with impersonal or inferior care.

Residents could also face fees as care homes pass on the cost of payment to bring in private doctors. GPs also want the right to opt out of being responsible for frail patients.

According to a report in a national newspaper on Monday 1st February, Doctors are refusing to attend calls to some care homes to deal with elderly residents and just give medication over the telephone for the home to collect. Some managers are being asked for a payment to attend. Most GPs surgeries charge a substantial retainer fee to treat care home residents. Conference we are under the impression that in this country the NHS and GP service are free, but it appears that care homes are something different and therefore are to be treated differently. As the GPs are being paid is this too much to ask that when a home asks for a visit to see a resident who is ill.

Conference we don’t need this sort of threat within any area which is aimed at the very people who need the confidence to know that they are in safe hands. Nobody should hold anybody to ransom, particularly those who cannot defend themselves. If this is allowed to happen, like the title of this motion where will it end, and what will be next.

Conference we need to stop this discrimination and this conference calls upon the National Retired Members Committee to take what steps along with any other organisations to act swiftly to stop this practise.

***Rochdale***

**Motion The Urgent Need to Enhance Health & Social Services for Older People**

Social Care services predominantly serve the elderly but under-funding of these services prevents the NHS from working effectively - principally due to bed-blocking.

This continuing occupation of hospital beds after treatment has ended is expensive and wasteful. It is well known that elderly patients are often unable to leave hospital in good time due to shortages of residential or other care services in the community that are ready and able to address their needs after discharge.

Often such care services can even help to keep elderly people out of hospital in the first place.

But, clearly, better support for community services - and their staff - means hospitals can also be much more efficient and cost effective.

We call on Unison Retired Members National Committee to press the Government to improve and increase provision of care home and other health and social services in consultation with hospital discharge co-ordinators and related stakeholders.

The UK is lagging behind in health and well-being standards compared with its often better-resourced European counterparts. The NHS and Social Care services need the Government to prioritise and realistically finance that sector to enable a return to its previously high standards of quality and efficiency.

A once proud health and social care sector needs real government backing to regain the confidence and trust of the public.

***Camden UNISON***

**Motion Rule C2.6.3**

Conference notes that Rule C2.6.3 states that:

Retired members … will be entitled to stand for office and vote only for positions in the Retired Members Organisation unless otherwise determined by the National Executive Council or as otherwise provided for in the Rules.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members’ Committee to seek from the National Executive Council a definitive list of the positions it has determined as open, generally, to candidates who are Retired Members and to propose this list be printed in the Branch Retired Members’ Secretary Handbook for ease of reference.

In particular, conference seeks to have resolved apparent misunderstandings with respect to the Trades Union Congress, its regional bodies and equalities bodies, and trades union councils.

***West Midlands Region***

***Received twice*** *(Text not reprinted as appears elsewhere on the agenda)*

Motion Housing for Older People : *South West Region*

Motion Challenging the Mass Media Portrayal of Older People : *South West Region*

Motion Indexation of Pensions : *South West Region*

Motion Equal Rights Over Inheritance : *South West Region*

Motion fight Against Fuel Poverty : *East Midlands Region*