

UNISON Water, Environment and Transport Conference

Conference agenda and guide

18 June 2017

Brighton Centre, Brighton



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Introduction by the General Secretary



Welcome to UNISON's Water, Environment and Transport (WET) Service Group Conference 2017

Dear Delegate,

I wish you a very warm welcome to UNISON's 2017 annual Water, Environment and Transport Conference, especially if you are attending for the first time.

UNISON is proud to be a democratic union and our WET Conference is the time when you, the members, set the policies and priorities of UNISON covering the service group.

Through collective strength in UNISON our members are defending themselves against attacks by employers and making a positive case for fair pay and working conditions. The power of the union depends on the numbers of our members and the work of our activists. Without your commitment we could achieve nothing.

This booklet contains the WET Conference papers, including the timetable, motions and amendments and conference standing orders.

I hope you will participate fully in all aspects of the conference and I wish you an enjoyable and productive time in Brighton.

Best wishes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Prentis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dave Prentis
General Secretary

Order of Business

Morning Session10.00 am to 12.30 pm
Afternoon Session 2 .00 pm to 5 pm

- 1 Opening remarks by Margaret Mckee, UNISON Vice President and Chair of the conference
 - 2 Appointment of tellers
 - Tony Short.....Transport for Greater Manchester
 - Ian Monks..... United Utilities Branch
 - 3 Report by the Standing Orders Committee
 - 4 Address by Ruth Davies, Chair of the WET Service Group Executive
 - 5 Final Agenda
 - Water, Environment and Transport Annual Report 2017 (**in a separate booklet**)
 - Motions and Amendments
 - 6 UNISON Rules and Standing Orders
 - 7 Quick Guide to Jargon
 - 8 Close of Conference
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Motions and Amendments

Section 1: Organising and Recruiting

Motion 1 **The Importance of Branch Magazines in Water, Environment & Transport Branches**

Submitted by United Utilities

Motion 2 **Pension Trustee Training in Water, Environment & Transport Service Group**

Submitted by United Utilities

Motion 3 **Contracting out of services in the Water Industry**

Submitted by Southern Counties Water

Motion 4 **Environment Agency UNISON Members transferring to Defra**

Submitted by Environment Agency NW Unison

Motion 5 **Under Representation of Bus Sector**

Submitted by National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Committee

Amendment 5.1

Submitted by Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive

Section 2: Negotiating and Bargaining
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Motion 6 **Protecting National Collective Bargaining through the PTF**

Submitted by West Yorkshire Transport

Amendment 6.1

Submitted by Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive

Motion 7 **Equality in WET Companies – National Equality Standard**

Submitted by Yorkshire Water

Motion 8 **Race Inequality in the Workplace**

Submitted by National Black Members' Committee

Section 3: Campaigning
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Motion 9 **Water, Environment & Transport Conference Health and Safety Event 2018**

Submitted by United Utilities

Motion 10 **The Water Framework Directive and UNISON members**

Submitted by National Young Members' Forum

Amendment 10.1

Submitted by Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive

Motion 11 **Canal and River Trust – Sink or Swim**

Submitted by Canal and River Trust

Amendment 11.1

Submitted by Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive

Motion 12 **Bus services in crisis**

Submitted by National Womens' Committee

Motion 13 **Maintaining environmental protections following the UK' s departure from the European Union.**

Submitted by Yorkshire Water

Motion 14 **Tackling Health and Safety from the Inside**

Submitted by Yorkshire Water

Amendment 14.1

Submitted by Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive

Motion 15 **Competition in the Water Industry**

Submitted by Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive

Motion 16 **Ensuring strong environmental protections for the UK following exit from the European Union (Brexit)**

Submitted by Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive

Motion 17 **Call Centre Charter – how far have we come?**

Submitted by National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Committee

Motion 18 **Wheelchair Access on Buses**

Submitted by West Yorkshire Transport

Motion 19 **Defending the safety of our members in Transport**

Submitted by National Young Members' Forum

Motion 20 **UNISON Activists on the boards of Water Companies**

Submitted by United Utilities

Section 1:

Section 1: *Organising and Recruitment*

1. The Importance of Branch Magazines in Water, Environment & Transport Branches

This WET Conference, 2017 notes that the United Utilities branch produces a regular magazine entitled U3 which assists the visibility of UNISON in the many geographically spread workplaces and in turn, the retention of existing and recruitment of current non-members.

Other branches in the WET Service Group could benefit from producing their own versions specific to their own employers either in a satirical fashion such as U3 or in a format that suits their own circumstances.

Conference therefore urges all branches to consider producing branch magazines and calls on the Service Group Executive to consider inviting the joint editors of U3 to the 2017 WET Seminar to outline a presentation on best practice which will benefit the wider Service Group in respect of recruitment, retention and workforce visibility of UNISON.

Submitted by United Utilities

2. Pension Trustee Training in Water, Environment & Transport Service Group

2017 Water, Environment and Transport Conference notes the lack of UNISON Pension Trustees within the WET Service Group membership.

Pensions is the one area UNISON can use influence probably more than any other in the current hostile political climate by using trained Trustees to ensure branches covered by our Service Group retain the best possible pension schemes.

One area that could be improved to encourage more WET UNISON members and activists to get more involved in pensions at Trustee level is basic training to cut through some of the myths that pensions belongs in the too hard to do box many believe is the case.

We therefore call on the WET Executive in conjunction with UNISON's pensions section to consider organising basic pensions training for those aspiring to become Trustees which may in turn assist recruitment of existing non-members with appropriate publicity around the training.

Submitted by United Utilities

3. Contracting out of services in the Water Industry

Much of the water industry does not directly deliver key services, but instead contract them out to private sector organisations. The kinds of services contracted out include meter reading, water pipe maintenance, water testing and facilities services. For those employees who are transferred to a new employer this can mean huge uncertainty over their jobs and almost inevitable moves to degrade their terms and conditions of employment. For those people who are directly employed by the contractor after the point of transfer it can mean working alongside people doing the same job, but on worse terms and conditions – the two-tier workforce.

UNISON has consistently opposed the practice of fragmenting service delivery both because of the impact it has on workers and the long-term impact on service quality. Performance league tables on issues such as leakages consistently show that those in the water industry who directly deliver services outperforming those that contract out.

Conference believes that UNISON branches organising in the Water Industry should take a two-pronged approach to this issue: both encouraging the water industry to insource their services and recruiting and organising more effectively with private contractors operating within the industry.

Conference calls on the WET Service Group Executive to:

1. Issue a briefing to all WET branches on the topic of outsourcing in the water industry, referencing the relevant UNISON guidance and training to support branches dealing with fragmentation.
2. Raise the issue of outsourcing with the water industry via the consultative forums which OFWAT organise with Water UK and to which the trade unions are invited.
3. Include how to organise within private sector contractors as a topic within the recruitment and organising training provided to branches.
4. Highlight this crucial issue in UNISON's 'Network' Magazine, the dedicated UNISON magazine for WET members.

Submitted by Southern Counties Water

4. Environment Agency UNISON Members transferring to Defra

This Conference recognises that on 2 February 2017, an announcement was made by Sir James Bevan, (Chief Executive, Environment Agency) that the Environment Agency's Corporate Services teams will transfer to Defra and that this transfer is expected to be completed by the end of September 2017.

Many of the employees involved in this transfer are currently UNISON members, across a range of Environment Agency branches.

At the time of writing, UNISON has no formal trade union recognition within Defra. We have members who have expressed their wish to retain their UNISON membership and UNISON representation beyond this transfer.

We therefore call upon the Service Group Executive to take the appropriate steps to seek that UNISON members are supported by UNISON into this transfer and that all options available are explored in order to seek that UNISON is formally recognised by Defra for the purposes of bargaining, negotiation and representation.

Submitted by Environment Agency NW Unison

5. Under-Representation of Bus Sector

This Conference notes:

- a. The decline in UNISON membership in the Bus Sector.
- b. The difficulty in recruiting activists and forming viable Bus Sector branches.
- c. That to address the above, UNISON has increasingly moved members who work for bus operators into larger employer-led branches.
- d. That these decisions are determined locally based on the best solution for serving the interests of the members involved.
- e. That the organising arrangements that members face in the Bus Sector vary and can include
 - i. Single Bus Sector employer branches;
 - ii. Bus Sector members within a larger W.E.T. branch; and
 - iii. Bus Sector members within larger branch including none W.E.T. employers e.g. Local Government.

This conference believes:

- A. That Bus Operators are likely to have the smaller membership within a multi-employer branch, which can present a barrier to members in the sector becoming a delegate.
- B. That it is important for the integrity of the service group that all sectors represented are able to participate in policy making decisions for the service group and that representatives for the sector are available to speak and inform debate at decision making forums.
- C. That a review is necessary to ensure that new ways of organising strengthen the voice of the sector, rather than remove its voice from national decision making.

This conference resolves:

1. To mandate the service group executive to undertake analysis of UNISON membership in the sector to determine the number of members, number employers, and branch set up.
2. To use this information to come up with proposals to 2018 WET and/or National delegate conference, in consultation with affected branches, to ensure there is sufficient participation from the bus industry in the service group national conference.

Submitted by Transport for Greater Manchester

5.1

The section "This conference believes" in (a) after "delegate" insert "at appropriate events"

Next section "This conference resolves", point (1) delete the word "number" before employers

Submitted by Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive

6. Protecting National Collective Bargaining through the PTF

Conference notes that in recent months the employers at Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) have made clear their intention to serve notice to withdraw from the Passenger Transport Forum (PTF). This is a consultative body for the Combined Authorities and PTE's and also the venue for our national pay negotiations, involving TfGM, WMCA, and WYCA – recognising both UNISON and Unite.

In 2015 the TfGM employers attempted to leave the negotiating element of the PTF. This was resisted with a well organised and vigorous campaign led by the local Branch with the help of the National Organiser. It convinced the employers to stay within the PTF.

Now all three employers are going to attempt to move to local bargaining and it is obvious that the employers are determined to divide and conquer. This will inevitably lead to member's Terms and Conditions being degraded.

Conference calls on the WET Service Group Executive to:

Give all the assistance it can to local and national campaigns to preserve national bargaining through the PTF by

- a) Working with Labour Link to preserve and promote the PTF and national bargaining amongst the local Labour councillors who hold power and influence within the CA's to stop the employers withdrawing from the PTF.

b) To communicate directly with those local Labour Councillors, who directly manage and oversee the Combined Authorities, and ask them to preserve the rights of the hardworking staff in the CA branches affected and ensure the continuation of collective bargaining at a national level through the PTF.

Submitted by West Yorkshire Transport

6.1

3rd paragraph, second sentence delete “enviously” and replace it with the word “inevitably”.

Submitted by Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive

Motion 7 Equality in WET Companies – National Equality Standard

Trade unions and employers are dealing with an increasingly diverse workforce. There are higher proportions of women and people from black and minority ethnic communities in the workforce than ever before. The population is aging, with many people intending to stay in work for longer and many trying to juggle work with caring responsibilities. There is greater recognition that the barriers that disabled people have faced in accessing work should be broken down and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and the issues they face at work have become more visible

Conference believes as well as WET employers abiding by employment law they can do more to promote equality in the workplace.

Yorkshire water is the first water company to commit to the National Equality standard, which sets clear equality, diversity and inclusion criteria against which companies are independently assessed and it has set up work streams on equality issues for example - gender, ethnicity and ability and has invited TU reps to be active members of each stream. This enables the branch reps to challenge and encourage good equality practice in the workplace.

Conference calls on the SGE to make WET branches aware of the National Equality Standard (or similar schemes which are supported by the Equality and Human Rights Commission) and provide branches with basic information on these schemes which can be used to promote equality with their employers during formal discussion.

Submitted by Yorkshire Water

8. Race Inequality in the Workplace

Conference notes that despite efforts to bring further equality into society, evidence shows that Black workers are still being held back in the job market. The amount of Black members holding senior posts in the Water, Environment and Transport (WET) employers still remains

low, unemployment amongst Black people remains high - particularly amongst young Black people - and Black workers are also more likely to be in less secure forms of employment than White workers.

In a recent report published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission titled, 'Healing a divided Britain: the need for a comprehensive race equality strategy', it is stated that a failure to tackle deep-rooted race inequality will exacerbate division in our society unless urgent action is taken. Hailed as the biggest ever review into race equality, the 73 page report looks at a number of aspects of everyday life including education, employment, housing, pay and living standards, health, criminal justice, and participation.

For our union, clearly it is important that we support our members both in and outside of the workplace, and how we respond to tackling widespread inequality must remain a priority.

In workplaces that inequality is still prevalent, Black workers with degrees earn 23.1% less on average than White workers, and a significantly lower percentage of Black members (8.8%) work as managers, directors and senior officers. Black workers are also in insecure forms of employment such as temporary contracts or working for an agency – this increased in the last 5 years by nearly 40% compared with a 16% rise for White workers.

Unemployment is also a huge challenge. The unemployment rate amongst Black people is at 12.9%, and for young Black people in particular there has been a significant increase of unemployment. Apprenticeship opportunities are significantly lower for Black people, and Black men and women experienced some of the largest falls in full-time employment since the recession began and as the austerity programme continues.

It is sometimes difficult in workplaces for Black members to feel able to challenge this ongoing inequality. Some members have advised that they will not challenge or seek recourse if they feel they have been passed over for promotion. In addition, as there is now no legal requirement to carry out an Equality Impact Needs Assessment when reorganising services, being able to challenge where and why changes are made and the impact these have on Black workers can often feel overwhelming.

Conference notes that Branches and Regions continue to challenge employers when reorganisations are proposed; however, it is clear that inequality exists in many walks of life, particularly in employment. As a union we have a proud tradition of supporting Black members, this is particularly seen in our Black members Self Organised Group.

Conference calls on the Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive to work with the National Black Members Committee (NBMC) to:

- 1) Produce material for Branches and Regions to use to highlight the continued gap between Black workers who hold senior positions compared to White workers, with keys points on how to tackle this in the workplace;
- 2) Encourage Regions to work with Branches to ensure that all employers complete Equality Impact Needs Assessments when carrying out reorganisations and to ensure Black members take a lead role in scrutinising these assessments together with representatives from other SOGs; and

- 3) Encourage Branches to work with Employers to seek to ensure more apprenticeship opportunities are open to Black people

Submitted by National Black Members' Committee

9. Water, Environment & Transport Conference Health & Safety Event 2018

This Water, Environment & Transport Conference notes the success of the WET H&S event of 2016 and past events and calls on the WET Executive in conjunction with UNISON's H&S unit to organise a similar event in 2018, noting that our Service Group has some of the riskiest occupations within our membership of the whole of our union.

Submitted by United Utilities

10. The Water Framework Directive and UNISON members

This Conference notes that the EU Water Framework Directive was adopted by the EU on 23 October 2000 and came into force in December 2000. The Directive established a framework for the protection of inland surface waters (rivers and lakes), transitional waters (estuaries), coastal waters and groundwater. It sought to ensure that all aquatic ecosystems and, with regard to their water needs, terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands met 'good status' by 2015.

This Conference also notes that the responsibilities conferred on water companies by the Directive are directly linked to jobs in various departments.

This Conference further notes that decision to exit the EU could impact on the commitment of the UK to abide by the Directive, and it could even be abolished and/or replaced as a result.

This Conference believes that it is vital that workers in the water industry are heard in any discussions on this matter during the exiting the EU negotiations, especially any implications for our members jobs, pay, and terms and conditions.

This Conference calls on the Water, Environment, and Transport service group executive to

- (i) monitor developments as regards any proposed changes to, or abolition of, the Water Framework Directive, and implications for our members jobs, pay, and terms and conditions;
- (ii) to report as appropriate to members in the water industry, and in particular those whose jobs might be directly affected;
- (iii) to call for UNISON members in the water industry to be consulted on any proposed changes, and respond to any Government consultations on this matter, or to be proactive if necessary in making our members views known via the relevant channels.

Submitted by National Young Members' Forum

10.1

2nd paragraph after ...water companies insert “and Environment Agencies”

4th paragraph, delete “water industry” and replace with “Water, Environment and Transport Service Group”.

In point (ii) after “water industry” insert “and Environment Agencies;”

In point (iii) delete “water industry” and insert “Water, Environment and Transport Service Group”

Submitted by Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive

11. Canal and River Trust - Sink or Swim

Conference welcomes and commends the work done by the Service Group Executive and UNISON members over recent years to support the transition of the organisation formally known as British Waterways into the Canal and River Trust.

Conference notes that the Canal and River Trust is now a charity trust and in order to support the organisational transition it is now heavily reliant on a grant from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). DEFRA have guaranteed this grant until the financial year 2026/27, with no guarantee of continued DEFRA grant funding after this period or if the period of the grant is extended there may be a substantial grant reduction.

Conference, under this backdrop of uncertainty with Canal and River Trust’s future funding it is our members that have taken the hit, with cuts to their pension scheme and terms and conditions in order to guarantee the stability of the Trust going forward. A 2017 UNISON survey highlighted that these changes have all contributed to the morale of staff at the Canal and River Trust being at an all time low and identified high levels of stress amongst the workforce. Management at the Trust have already signalled further reviews to terms and conditions and have embarked on a review of our ‘on-call allowances’ as well as a review of the nationally negotiated ‘people policies’, which may mean our members have to make difficult decisions once again.

Conference recognises that where members have campaigned they have been successful and Conference welcomes the Trust’s commitment to pay the Living Wage Foundation’s Living Wage rates to in-house staff, but the campaign continues to ensure that outsourced staff are also paid the Living Wage in the future.

Conference calls on the Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive to:

- 1) work with the Community Service Group Executive to launch a campaign to defend and protect member’s terms and conditions;

- 2) work with the Strategic Organising Unit to run a recruitment campaign at the Canal and River's Trust, targeting specific workplaces supported by branch resources. This campaign will include a comprehensive mapping exercise of the Canal and River Trust members and workplaces;
- 3) work with Learning and Organising Services to develop new and existing reps within the Trust;
- 4) work with Labour Link and other sections of the union to petition ministers to secure stable funding for the Canal and River Trust going forward;
- 5) work with the Living Wage Foundation and the Trust to achieve Living Wage accreditation;
- 6) work with the Trust to determine some of the causes of the high levels of stress at the Trust and look at ways stress in the workplace can be reduced.

Submitted by Canal and River Trust

11.1

3rd paragraph before the full stop delete "going forward"; and delete same from point 4 after "Canal and River Trust".

Submitted by Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive

12. Bus services in crisis

Conference is concerned at the continued depletion of our bus services and welcomes UNISON's support for the Campaign for Better Transport and applauds the support from the General Political Fund for research into defending and improving our bus services.

Conference notes that although buses are the most flexible form of public transport, they receive far lower subsidies than rail services do; are being cut at an alarming rate and are not afforded the importance that they should be.

The impact on our members is twofold.

Clearly there is a significant impact on our members who work to provide the bus service, who find themselves under increased pressure to deliver a decent service with ever decreasing funding, job losses and insecurity.

But there is also an impact on our members – not least those who work in the transport sector – who are service users as well as service providers, and who rely on the bus service for their transport to work. Statistically women are more likely to be bus users, and to have fewer alternative means of travel, particularly older women and those with young children.

Conference is disappointed that the Buses Bill, due to be passed February 2017 does nothing definite to halt these service cuts.

Conference believes that transport should be under public control to provide a sustainable, green, integrated affordable service for all, and that bus services should not be the Cinderella service of transport at the mercy of local authority spending decisions.

Further, Job security, decent pay, terms and conditions and adequate staffing levels are essential to meet the demands of the service.

Conference calls on the service group executive to work with all appropriate bodies within and outside UNISON to campaign for decent bus services, and for adequate government funding (to the equivalent spent on rail travel) to protect our members jobs and the services they provide.

Submitted by National Women's Committee

13. Maintaining environmental protections following the UK's departure from the European Union

This conference notes that a great deal of current UK environmental law has been derived from EU legislation over several decades, which in turn has ensured that the WET sector is good for the environment.

Yorkshire Water branch would like the WET sector to support the adoption of 'the Norwegian model' by our government, so that the UK would have to retain or re-enact most EU environmental legislation, to both protect the environment and ensure the safety of our members. This would include areas such as integrated environmental permitting, water and air quality, waste management and the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals Regulations 2006.

This conference calls upon the service group executive to;

1. Work with UNISON Labour Link to lobby government to adopt the Norwegian Model
2. Draw up a charter based on the principles determined above
3. Launch an action plan for branches to follow in promoting and embedding these principles in the work place.

Submitted by Yorkshire Water

14. Tackling Health and Safety from the Inside

This conference notes the ever increasing need for safety improvements in the WET sector and especially in the light of the ever decreasing enforcement from HSE and government cuts.

Yorkshire Water Branch would like the sector to adopt the approach being taking at Kelda where we have two Health and safety reps seconded into the company health and safety team ie tackling safety issues from the inside.

This conference calls upon the service group executive to:

- 1 Consult with YW branch to determine best practice
- 2 Draw up a charter based on the principles in 1
- 3 Launch an action plan to assist branches in adopting similar principles

Submitted by Yorkshire Water

14.1

1st paragraph, delete the word “sector” and replace with the words “Service Group”.

Submitted by Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive

15. Competition in the Water Industry

Over the last thirty years, the regulated market in water supply has enabled steady investment, predictable price increases enabling water customers to budget, steady improvements in water quality and low levels of customer complaint and dissatisfaction. Now, though, Ministers have expressed a wish to introduce competition for households, following the introduction of competition for commercial users in April 2017. OFWAT has published an analytical paper showing that in only two of four scenarios, would the average customer see any price benefit, and that this benefit would be very small. The introduction of competition for large users is already leading to chaotic reorganisation within the industry as companies separate themselves into retailing and operational arms, as required by the regulator.

Terms and conditions are already coming under attack as a result, as the new entities that are being created for large-user competition seek to deny union recognition, employ new starters on worse terms than existing employees and deny access to company pension schemes. These trends would be accentuated by the greater market and customer volatility that household competition would entail, as new entrant retailers, whose “innovation” consists of paying employees less and paring pension provision to the minimum, would arise.

We fear that Ministers intend that water should follow the same failed model of the electricity and gas markets, where competition has led to:

- a. Recurrent mis-selling scandals in energy markets, resulting in fines and penalties of over £200m paid by energy firms since 2010

- b. 5 million complaints by customers to energy firms in 2015, and over 6 million in 2014
- c. An increase of customers on pre-payment meters since 1992 of more than 100% for electricity, and more than 300% for gas. These mean that poorer customers “self-disconnect” and prevent reliable figures for households without energy
- d. So many households in fuel poverty that the Coalition Government changed the definition of fuel poverty rather than dealing with the poverty itself

Conference calls upon the WET Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Meet with OFWAT and the Consumer Council for Water, to press the arguments for understanding the impact of competition for commercial users fully before any consideration is given to the case for extending this to the household sector;
- 2) Through Labour Link, work with shadow ministers to make the political case for maintaining the existing market arrangements for households;
- 3) Use all available campaigning methods to promote the effectiveness of existing arrangements and raise awareness of the risks to service quality represented by household competition, to Government, in Parliament, and through the media;
- 4) Work with branches to protect the terms and conditions of our members and meet the challenges created by increased competition.

Submitted by Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive

16. Ensuring strong environmental protections for the UK following exit from the European Union (Brexit)

Regulations deriving from European Union (EU) legislation underpin the statutory environmental regulatory regime which safeguards the public and workers in all sectors in which UNISON organises. This particularly affects the Water, Environment and Transport Service Group - especially the water sector, where it drives activity and investment. The stability of the regulatory regime is clearly threatened by the UK's exit from the European Union. UK Government Ministers have said that existing regulations deriving from EU law will all be incorporated into UK law in the future. However, they have also signalled that all such legislation will be reviewed which may have adverse consequence for our members.

In January 2017, the Chair of the Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee expressed concerns that protections currently guaranteed under European Law have the potential to become ‘zombie legislation’ if the UK doesn't meet or exceed the minimum standards applied across the EU after leaving the EU, irrespective of the aims to enshrine current environmental protection as part of the planned Great Repeal Bill.

Members in the WET Service Group are particularly affected by any uncertainty. Water companies unsure of the future requirements for regulatory compliance will slow investment until they have clarity - threatening the jobs of members.

Within the Environment Agency, the inspection regime is based around legislation deriving from EU directives and regulations. Uncertainty caused by the impending EU exit is likely to have two impacts. Firstly, it will increase job stress and work levels as more businesses and individuals are likely to flout existing law (believing that it will be weakened in the near future). Secondly, it will impede effective long-term planning by the Agency (which provides members with security as to the location and nature of their work).

Recognising the need for clarity, conference accordingly calls upon the WET Service Group Executive to:

1. Through Labour Link, work with shadow ministers to make the political case for preserving existing environmental regulatory requirements, safeguarding those protections into the medium term and seeking to ensure that future UK legislation maintains a position in line with EU environmental regulatory standards into the future;
2. Through Labour Link, work with shadow ministers to make the political case that a vibrant and thriving environment, protected by meaningful legislation delivers significant societal, economic and health benefits;
3. Work with environmental and other stakeholders to raise awareness of the importance of positive environmental regulation, and to make a united case for Ministers announcing that there will be no changes made to regulations which would lead to deterioration of environmental conditions or prevent much needed enhancements;
4. Work with branches to secure our members' jobs and improve their work-life balance.

Submitted by Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive

17. Call Centre Charter – how far have we come?

Conference notes the increasing numbers of our water, environment and transport members working in call centres. Call centres can leave workers chained to their workstations under extreme pressure to provide faster responses to more and more callers.

Conference welcomes UNISON's Call Centre Charter, launched in 2012, to seek to establish a decency agenda for these members, allowing them to work effectively and efficiently in safe work environments. This followed research for UNISON into call centre work which found high levels of workplace stress, bullying and harassment, leading to higher than average levels of sickness absence.

Conference notes that while any worker can be subject to bullying and harassment, it disproportionately affects certain groups of workers including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) workers. UNISON's first annual equality survey, conducted over the summer of 2016, found that LGBT members faced particularly high levels of discrimination even amongst these survey respondents, most of whom were from disadvantaged groups. Two thirds of trans workers and a third of LGB members had experienced or witnessed

workplace discrimination in the past year. This compares to a quarter of all members responding.

Our water, environment and transport members working in call centres report a range of issues including anti-LGBT abuse from callers. This is made worse by not being taken seriously by managers. Our LGBT members have little confidence in their managers' willingness or ability to address such abuse.

Conference believes it is time to review and refresh our work on the Call Centre Charter. Conference calls on the water, environment and transport service group executive, working with the business and environment equal opportunities working group, to:

- 1) Survey water, environment and transport branches on whether their employer has signed up to the charter;
- 2) If so, investigate:
 - a) how it is being implemented and
 - b) Whether it makes specific reference to tackling anti-LGBT abuse;
3. Urge training for managers and staff on LGBT equality issues and combating harassment and bullying;
4. Work with branches where the employer has not adopted the charter to negotiate its implementation.

Submitted by National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Committee

18. Wheelchair Access on Buses

Conference notes the Supreme Court ruling in January 2017 on the FirstGroup V Pauley case, and the issue raised under the Equality Act 2010 for "reasonable adjustment" and whether a bus companies policy or "provision criterion or practice" (PCP) was been met in relation to wheelchair users. In particular, whether a bus driver should compel other passengers, disabled or non-disabled, to vacate the area dedicated for wheelchairs if it is required by a wheelchair user.

Whilst the judgement does not state that it is an absolute rule or that drivers must enforce the vacating of a wheelchair space by a non- wheelchair user, the judges felt it would not be unreasonable for the driver to be expected to ask it to be more than a "favour", one even going as far to state that to coerce passengers it may not be unreasonable to refuse to move the vehicle for a short period of time.

UNISON is a proud and active supporter of disability rights, however, we feel that the Supreme Court ruling places too much pressure on drivers and other staff associated with passenger transport to deal with the issue with no actual legal support. This in its self is likely to increase the likelihood of conflict. Furthermore there is concern that the ruling may

be used by employers to discipline staff for not been robust enough should they receive a complaint, in this regard.

Conference calls on the WET SGE to

1. Initiate a consultation with members from the areas of concern within the Bus and Passenger Transport Executive/Combined Authority branches, on the impact of this ruling.
2. Share the findings of the consultation with management of the bus companies, Combined Authorities and the Department of Transport with the aim to finding a workable solution to the issues raised.
3. To work with the bus companies, Campaign for Better Transport, disabled groups and sister trade unions via the TUC to draft a Code of Practice to protect frontline staff.

Submitted by West Yorkshire Transport

19. Defending the safety of our members in Transport

This Conference believes that the failure to develop a safe, affordable and reliable integrated transport system means that not only is the UK adversely affected economically, but it also leads to unsafe working conditions for our members.

This Conference believes that as well as commercial pressures to cut costs, the customer experience is often extremely poor as services are either over-crowded, delayed, or cancelled. Frustration at poor service levels can be manifested in violent language or behaviour being directed at staff. Transport staff may be especially susceptible to experiencing such anti-social and criminal behaviour, particularly where they are in a lone-working situation. Anecdotal evidence suggests that young workers are also disproportionately likely to be subject to such behaviours.

This Conference believes that negotiating for and winning a safe workplace is an essential demand and that our members in the transport industry deserve the protection of the union.

This Conference calls on the service group executive to conduct a health and safety survey of all transport members to identify key issues for a campaign to support this issue as a priority through the relevant bargaining arrangements.

Submitted by National Young Members' Forum

20. UNISON Activists on the boards of Water Companies

This 2017 WET Conference notes that the Tories as usual have backtracked on a pledge which may have assisted ordinary workers via a seat on the Boards of Companies.

We believe that through our engagement with the Water Industry regulator OFWAT however that this initiative may not necessarily be dead in the water to excuse the pun as they are

calling for wider engagement between employers and employee representatives to increase accountability amongst other things.

Conference asks the WET Executive to raise this issue with OFWAT as part of our shopping list agenda through periodic meetings with their Chief Executive or her direct reports which if it becomes reality will have a beneficial effect for members.

Submitted by United Utilities

UNISON Rules and Standing Orders

RULE D – SERVICE GROUP CONFERENCE (See section D of UNISON Rules)

- 3.4.1 Each Service Group shall hold a Conference annually, for a period not exceeding three days.
- 3.4.2 The policies of a Service Group shall be determined by the Group's Conference.
- 3.4.3 Arrangements for the Conference shall be made by the Group's Executive in accordance with the Standing Orders.
- 3.4.4 Each Service Group shall have a Standing Orders Committee comprising either a panel of members of the Standing Orders Committee of the National Delegate Conference or two representatives from and nominated by the members of the Standing Orders Committee of the National Delegate Conference, together with representatives from the Service Group.
- 3.4.5 Delegates to the Conference shall be elected annually in accordance with a scheme to be drawn up by the Group's Executive and approved by the Group Conference.
- 3.4.6 The following members shall have the right to attend the Conference and to speak, but not to vote:
 - .1 All members of the Group's Executive (subject, in the case of the members who are also members of the Standing Orders Committee, to the rules of that committee).
 - .2 The General Secretary, head of group and such other staff as the National Executive Council, General Secretary, Group Executive, or head of group may determine.
 - .3 One representative from each professional and sectional body.
 - .4 The chairperson of the Group's Standing Orders Committee.
 - .5 Two representatives of each Service Group Regional Committee.
 - .6 Two representatives (being members of branches in the relevant Service Group) of each Self-Organised Group at national level.

- .7 Two representatives (being members of branches in the relevant Service Group) of the National Young Members' Forum.
- 3.4.7 The Group's Standing Orders Committee shall be present at the Conference but, except as provided for, shall take no part in the Conference proceedings.
- 3.4.8 In accordance with the rules of procedure each branch represented within the Service Group may submit motions and amendments to the Group's National Conference or any special conferences.
- 3.4.9 Each Self-Organised Group at the national level may submit a total of two motions and two amendments to the Group's National Conference.
- 3.4.10 The National Young Members' Forum may submit up to two motions and two amendments to the Group's National Conference.
- 3.4.11 A special service group conference shall be convened on receipt, by the head of the service group, within any two month period, of requisitions to that effect, stating the business to be transacted, from branches representing not less than 25% of the service group membership.
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RULE P of the UNISON Rulebook:

Standing Orders For Conferences

(See pages 54-59 of UNISON Rules) NB: These rules have been amended to refer to service group conferences only.

1 APPLICATION OF STANDING ORDERS

- 1.1 These Standing Orders shall apply to all meetings of the Service Group Conferences held under Rule D.3.4.
- 1.2 In the case of a Service Group Conference, the appropriate Standing Orders Committee shall have power (but is not required) to decide at the request of the Service Group Executive that it is necessary that certain Standing Orders shall not be applicable to the Conference.
- 1.3 In application to Service Group Conferences, these Standing Orders shall apply, subject to the following modifications:

- .1 “the Standing Orders Committee” shall mean the Standing Orders Committee referred to in Rule D.3.4.4;
- .2 “the President” shall mean the Chairperson or Vice-chairperson of the Service Group Executive under Rule D.3.5.12 or such other person as the Service Group Executive or the Service Group Conference may have appointed to preside at the Conference;
- .3 “the National Executive Council” shall mean the Service Group Executive;
- .4 “the General Secretary” shall mean the Head of the Group;
- .5 Rule P.3.1 shall not apply. The bodies who may propose motions and amendments for the Conference shall be: each branch represented within the Service Group; the Service Group Executive; Service Group Regional Committees and (where these are established) Sector Committees. Self-Organised Groups at the national level and the National Young Members’ Forum may submit a total of two motions and two amendments to the Conference.
- .6 Standing Orders Committees for Service Group Conferences, in exercising powers in accordance with Rule P.2.3, shall have regard to the national negotiating machinery in devolved administrations. The Standing Orders Committee may make recommendations to restrict voting to representatives of members covered by that machinery which shall be subject to ratification by Conference in accordance with Rule P.2.4.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

- 2.1 The members of the Standing Orders Committee shall hold office from the end of one Conference until the end of the next Conference.
- 2.2 At its first meeting after it takes office, the Committee shall elect a Chairperson and a Deputy Chairperson from amongst its members.
- 2.3 The functions of the Committee shall, subject to these Standing Orders, be to:
 - 2.3.1 Ensure that the Union’s Rules and Standing Orders relating to the business of Conferences are observed, and notify the Chairperson of any violation that may be brought to the Committee’s notice.

- 2.3.2 Draw up the preliminary agenda and final agenda of Conference business, and the proposed hours of business, to be circulated in accordance with the timetable stated in Rule D.1.9.
- 2.3.3 Determine the order in which the business of Conference shall be conducted, subject to the approval of Conference.
- 2.3.4 Consider all motions and amendments submitted for consideration by Conference and, for the purpose of enabling Conference to transact its business effectively the Committee shall:
- .1 decide whether such motions and amendments have been submitted in accordance with the Rules.
 - .2 group together motions and amendments relating to the same subject, decide the order in which they should be considered and whether they should be debated and voted on separately or debated together and voted on sequentially.
 - .3 prepare and revise, in consultation with the movers of motions and amendments, composite motions in terms which in the opinion of the Committee best express the subject of such motions and amendments.
 - .4 refer to another representative body within the Union a motion or amendment which in the opinion of the Committee should properly be considered there; the mover shall be informed of the reason for so doing.
 - .5 have power to do all such other things as may be necessary to give effect to these Standing Orders.
- 2.4 Any decisions of the Committee which are to be reported to Conference shall be announced by the Chairperson of the Committee and shall be subject to ratification by Conference.

3 MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS PRE-CONFERENCE PROCEDURE

- 3.1 Motions, amendments and other appropriate business may be proposed for the Conference by the bodies set out in Rules D.1.10.3 and D.1.10.4.
- 3.2 Motions and amendments shall be sent to the National Secretary in order that the Standing Orders Committee may consider them for inclusion in the preliminary agenda.

- 3.3 The date and time by which motions and amendments to be considered for the Conference shall be received by the National Secretary shall be stated in the timetable to be published under Rule D.1.9.

4-7 CONDUCT OF CONFERENCES

- 4.1 The Service Group Conference shall meet in public session, except that by direction of the Service Group Executive or by resolution of the Conference the whole or any part of a Conference may be held in private. In addition to the elected delegates and those who under Rule D.3.4.6 have the right to attend and speak at Conference, the only persons permitted to attend a private session of a Conference shall be

4.1.1 Such members of the staff as have been authorised by the Service Group Executive or the Head of Group to attend Conference.

4.1.2 Such other persons as the Chairperson may determine.

- 4.2 The agenda for the Service Group Conference shall be arranged so that the first session of the Conference shall be in public, subject to Rule P.4.1 above.

- 5 Apart from the elected delegates and those persons who have the right to speak at the Service Group Conference under Rule D.3.4.6, no other person shall speak except by permission of the Standing Orders Committee.

- 6 Any questions of procedure or order raised during a Conference shall be decided by the Chairperson whose ruling shall be final and binding.

- 7.1 Upon the Chairperson rising during a Conference session, any person then addressing Conference shall resume her/his seat and no other person shall rise to speak until the Chairperson authorises proceedings to continue.

- 7.2 The Chairperson may call attention to continued irrelevance, tedious repetition, unbecoming language, or any breach of order on the part of a member and may direct such a member to discontinue his or her speech.

- 7.3 The Chairperson shall have power to call any person to order who is causing a disturbance in any session of Conference and if that person refuses to obey the Chairperson, she/he shall be named by the Chairperson, shall forthwith leave the Conference Hall, and shall take no further part in the proceedings of that Conference.

8 VOTING

- 8.1 The method of voting shall be by a show of hands of the delegates present, unless a card vote is called by the Chairperson or immediately after the result of the show of hands has been declared by at least 10 per cent of the delegates registered at the Conference.
- 8.2 On a card vote, the delegate or delegates of a branch or group of branches shall be entitled to cast a total number of votes in accordance with the card issued to them in respect of their branch membership as at 30 September in the year preceding the conference and such votes will be cast as a single block or may be divided in line with a branch mandate.
- 8.3 In the event of a card vote being called or demanded, the card vote shall be taken immediately after it has been demanded, but no business shall be suspended pending the declaration of the result of the vote except that which in the Chairperson's opinion may be directly affected by that result.

9 TELLERS

- 9.1 Conference shall appoint delegates to act as tellers for the duration of the Conference.

10 WITHDRAWAL OF MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

- 10.1 A motion or amendment which is shown on the final agenda may not be withdrawn without the consent of the Standing Orders Committee, whose decision shall be reported to Conference.

11 MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS NOT ON AGENDA

- 11.1 A motion or amendment which is not shown on the final agenda may not be considered by Conference without the prior approval of the Standing Orders Committee and the consent of Conference, which shall be governed by the following rules:
- 11.2 Such motion or amendment shall be in writing, signed by the Secretary and Chairperson of the branch or branches on whose behalf it is submitted and shall be sent to the Standing Orders Committee at least five working days before the commencement of Conference, except if it

relates to events which take place thereafter. It will state at which meeting it was debated and adopted.

- 11.3 For Service Group Conferences, the Service Group Regional Committee may submit 'Emergency Motions' in writing, signed by the Secretary and Chairperson and sent to the Standing Orders Committee at least five working days before the commencement of the Conference, except if it relates to events which take place thereafter. It will state at which meeting it was debated and adopted.
- 11.4 If the Standing Orders Committee gives its approval to the motion or amendment being considered, copies of the motion or amendment shall be made available for delegates at least one hour before Conference is asked to decide whether to consent to the matter being considered.
- 11.5 An emergency motion will not be given priority over other motions and amendments on the agenda except where the Standing Orders Committee decide that the purpose of the motion in question would be frustrated if it were not dealt with at an earlier session of the Conference.

12 PROCEDURAL MOTIONS

The following procedural motions may be moved at any time without previous notice on the agenda:

- 12.1 That the question be now put provided that:
 - .1 The Chairperson may advise Conference not to accept this motion if in her/his opinion the matter has not been sufficiently discussed.
 - .2 If the motion is carried, it shall take effect at once subject only to any right of reply under these Standing Orders.
- 12.2 That the Conference proceed to the next business.
- 12.3 That the debate be adjourned.
- 12.4 That the Conference (or any part thereof) be held in private session provided that:
- 12.5 A motion under Rules P.12.1, P.12. 2, and P.12.3 shall be immediately put to the vote without discussion and no amendment shall be allowed.

- 12.6 The Chairperson may at her/his discretion permit a motion under Rule P.12.4 to be discussed and amendments moved.
- 12.7 No motion under Rules P.12.2 or P.12.3 shall be moved by a person who has spoken on the motion or amendment in question.

13 AMENDMENTS TO A MOTION

- 13.1 When an amendment to a motion is moved, no further amendment may be moved until the first one is disposed of, subject to Rule P.16.
- 13.2 When an amendment is defeated, a further amendment may be moved to the original motion.
- 13.3 When an amendment to a motion is carried, the motion, as so amended, shall become the substantive motion, to which a further amendment may be moved.
- 13.4 A delegate shall not move more than one amendment to any one motion, nor shall the mover of a motion move any amendment to such motion.

14 LIMIT OF SPEECHES

- 14.1 The mover of a motion or an amendment shall not be allowed to speak for more than five minutes and each succeeding speaker for not more than three minutes, except where the Standing Orders Committee have decided otherwise.
- 14.2 No person shall speak more than once on a question, except that the mover of the original motion may exercise a right of reply for not more than three minutes, introducing no new material.

15 POINTS OF ORDER

- 15.1 A delegate may at any stage in a Conference raise a point of order if she/he considers that the business is not being conducted in accordance with the Union's Rules and Standing Orders.
- 15.2 Such a point of order must be raised as soon as the alleged breach occurs or at the earliest practicable moment thereafter.
- 15.3 The Chairperson's ruling on the point of order is final.

16 GROUPED DEBATES AND SEQUENTIAL VOTING

16.1 Where, in the view of the Standing Orders Committee, separate debates on specified motions and/or amendments dealing with the same subject matter would lead to undue repetition in the debates, a grouped debate and/or sequential voting may be adopted by Conference.

16.2 The following procedure will be followed:

- .1 The Chairperson will advise Conference of the order of business and of the sequence in which motions and amendments will be moved and voted on following a general debate, and of the effect of certain proposals on others.
- .2 All motions and amendments included in the debate shall be moved.
- .3 The general debate shall take place.
- .4 The Chairperson shall again state the order of voting and shall advise Conference which, if any, motions or amendments will fall if others are carried.
- .5 Voting will take place on motions, preceded by relevant amendments, in the order in which they were moved.
- .6 A debate being conducted under this procedure may not be adjourned until after all the motions and amendments have been moved.

17 REPORTS BY NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

17.1 After the opening of Conference the Service Group Executive shall present its report for the past year.

17.2 If the Service Group Executive presents a report to Conference which contains proposals or recommendations requiring approval and adoption by Conference, the Executive shall submit it under a motion seeking such approval and adoption.

18 REFERENCE OF OUTSTANDING ITEMS TO THE SERVICE GROUP EXECUTIVE

18.1 If at the end of the Service Group Conference, the business of the Conference has not been concluded, all motions and amendments then outstanding shall stand referred to the Service Group Executive. The

Service Group Executive in turn shall then report back to the appropriate branch or body its decision on these matters. All such motions and amendments shall be responded to at least one month before the deadline for submission of motions and amendments to the following year's Conference.

19 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER

- 19.1 Any one or more of these Standing Orders may be suspended by a resolution of Conference in relation to a specific item of business properly before that Conference and to the proceedings thereon at that Conference, provided that at least two-thirds of the delegates present and voting shall vote for the resolution, or in the case of a card vote at least two-thirds of the votes cast are for the resolution.
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Quick Guide to Jargon

EU

European Union

Defra

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Fair representation

The broad balance of representation of members of the electorate, taking into account such factors as age and low pay, the balance between part-time and full-time workers, manual and non-manual workers, different occupations, skills, race, sexual orientation, disability and gender identity – UNISON has a rulebook commitment to fair representation.

GPF

General Political Fund: Fund from contributions from opted-in members used for non party political campaigning.

Labour Link

Fund from contributions from opted-in members used to support the Labour party via the UNISON Labour Link.

Lay Structure

A decision making body of UNISON members that does not include employees of the union.

National Delegate Conference

Supreme decision making body of UNISON – annual conference of branch delegates, at which the self-organised groups have representation.

National LGBT Committee

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Members Committee

NBMC

National Black Members Committee

NDMC

National Disabled Members Committee

NEC

National Executive Council - elected body of lay members.

NRMC

National Retired Members Committee

NWC

National Women's Committee

PTF

Passenger Transport Forum

Proportionality

The representation of women and men in fair proportion to the relevant number of female and male members – UNISON has a rulebook commitment to proportionality.

Sector

A sub-group of a service group e.g. the housing associations sector of the community service group.

Self-Organisation

Groups facing discrimination meeting and organising to determine their collective agenda and feeding it into the union's structure.

Service Groups

Employer-based structures in the union. UNISON organises members in the following services – community, energy, health care, higher education, local government, police staff, water, environment and transport. Each service group has autonomy to decide the group's general policy and negotiate on behalf of their members. Each service group has an annual conference of delegates which sets the group's agenda for the following year.

SOC

Standing Orders Committee

SOGs

The four self organised groups: currently defined by UNISON national rules as women members, Black members, disabled members and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members

TfGM

Transport for Greater Manchester

UNISON Parliamentary Group

A UNISON group of Labour MPs working closely with the union in the House of Commons.

WET

Water, Environment and Transport

WMCA

West Midlands Combined Authority

WYCA

West Yorkshire Combined Authority

