

# **NATIONAL RETIRED MEMBERS' CONFERENCE 2017**

## **PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

# MOTIONS ADMITTED TO THE AGENDA

1	Combating Loneliness in Old Age	Dumfries & Galloway Local Authority
2	Advocacy Support Services for Retirement Home Residents	Dumfries & Galloway Local Authority
3	Social Care	North West Region
4	Dignity in social care, people before profit, building for the future	North West Region
5	What Happens When Action on a Resolution Takes More than Twelve Months?	Wolverhampton General Branch
6	Housing for Older People	Wolverhampton General Branch
7	Annual increases for pensions in countries where this applies now	Devon County
8	Equal rights for cohabitants – “dementia tax”	South West Region
9	“Frozen” pensions for overseas residents	South West Region
10	Retired Members "Human Library" recognising experience and realising potential	Poole L G
11	Retaining Members When They Retire Won't Just Happen, It Needs Organising and That Means Strategy and Resources	West Midlands Region
12	Celebrate the Bus! Defend Universal Benefits!	West Midlands Region
13	Equal Pensions	West Midlands Region
14	Retired Members' Conference - Fair Representation	West Midlands Region
15	Trades Union Congress	West Midlands Region
16	Schedule B	West Midlands Region
17	The Impact of Sustainability and Transformation Plans on Older People	Derbyshire County
18	Older People's Commission	Derbyshire County
19	Winter Fuel Allowance	Derbyshire County
20	Winter fuel allowance	Leicestershire Healthcare
21	Hands off universal benefits	Leicestershire Healthcare
22	UNISON's links to the CGT Union	South East Region
23	Funeral Poverty	Scotland Region
24	The Mistaken Perception of Rich Pensioners	Scotland Region
25	Foot Care for Older People	Scotland Region
26	R.O.A.R. - Regenerate Our Ailing Resorts Campaign	Bassetlaw
27	Triple-lock on state pensions	UNISON Northern Ireland
28	The Impact of Sustainability and Transformation Plans on Older People	East Midlands Region
29	Fermenting discord between young and old	Barnet Local Government
30	Universal benefits	East Midlands Region
31	Bus passes	Norfolk County UNISON
32	Pensions post-Brexit	Norfolk County UNISON

# MOTIONS RULED OUT OF ORDER

## NOT IN LINE WITH SOC PROCEDURES

Standing Orders Amendment	Wolverhampton General Branch
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## REQUIRES A RULE CHANGE

Retired Members' Representatives at Self Organised Group Conference	Wolverhampton General Branch
Rule C2.6.3	West Midlands Region

## NOT SPECIFIC TO THE CONFERENCE

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) : Continuing coverage	Devon County
European Health Insurance Card – continuing coverage	South West Region
National campaign	UNISON Hertfordshire
Private medicine - time for it to go?	Hampshire
Hospital Car Parking	Yorkshire - Humberside Region

## SUPERFLUOUS

Shared Delegates Attending National Retired Members' Conferences	Wigan Metropolitan
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## NOT COMPETENT

Rule D6.5	West Midlands Region
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## CONFLICTS WITH AN EXISTING RULE

Code of Good Branch Practice	West Midlands Region
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## BEYOND REMIT OF THE CONFERENCE

Conference facilities	Scotland Region
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## NOT INTERNALLY CONSISTENT

Retired members ought not to be put at risk	Islington UNISON (M)
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## COULD PLACE THE UNION IN LEGAL JEOPARDY

Not printed on the advice of the legal officer

UNISON funding of retired members	Cambridgeshire County UNISON
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# **PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

## **1 COMBATING LONELINESS IN OLD AGE**

This conference notes that research has proved that loneliness is a major contributory factor in serious health issues such as depression, dementia and heart problems in older people. Loneliness itself is distressing enough but the physical and mental illnesses which can result are devastating. The illnesses affect not only the older person, but also their families and it has serious knock-on resource implications for Health & Social Services at national and local levels.

Several national older peoples' organisations such as Age UK and Silver Line are actively campaigning to offer simple solutions to end loneliness, with many of these solutions being in the hands of older people themselves through activities such as befriending services. However these activities need financial input to enable them to function safely and effectively.

This conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee and calls on the NEC to put the importance of combating loneliness in later life on national and local public service agendas with the aim of securing appropriate resources to enable the initiatives to continue.

***Dumfries & Galloway Local Authority***

## **2 ADVOCACY SUPPORT SERVICES FOR RETIREMENT HOME RESIDENTS**

Conference has frequently questioned the quality of care given to vulnerable elderly residents in some care homes for older people. The need to treat older people with dignity, to provide a caring environment to support a healthy lifestyle and to promote general well-being is not always being achieved. Residents of such homes are often too frail or intimidated to defend or speak for themselves.

The Care Inspectorate has drastically reduced its inspection visits and much of the regulation is self reported. In an ideal world this would be sufficient. However, as a substantial part of care home provision has been externalised and privatised the profit motive may clash with the provision of a caring service. We applaud the many examples of caring best practice, but it is a sad fact that not all homes achieve high quality provision of care.

Older care home residents may not feel able to report their aspirations, concerns and fears to home management. It is appropriate therefore to consider the establishment of a nationwide system - similar to the former Scottish Prison Visiting Committees - where appropriately selected and trained volunteers are available to carry out advocacy functions for residents and to speak on their behalf if residents so wish.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to:-

- a. Research with other trade unions and appropriate national organisations as to how and when a National Advocacy Support Service could be established to provide an national independent but recognised, adequately monitored and resourced organisation - with responsibility to provide advocacy support, advice and assistance to enhance the care home experience of elderly residents, and
- b. Report back to the 2019 National Retired Members Conference on their findings and the way forward to secure and protect dignity, health and general well being for elderly care home residents through the establishment of an Advocacy Support Service

***Dumfries & Galloway Local Authority***

### **3 SOCIAL CARE**

This conference notes the growing crisis of underfunding of care. Local authorities have undergone average cuts to their budgets of 37% up to 2015/2016. A further £6.1 billion will be taken from local authorities. Whilst at the same time inflationary pressures have increased and spending on the NHS is projected to drop from 8.8% of GDP in 2009 to 6.6% in 2020. The lack of funding makes it difficult for local authorities and provider organisations to offer quality services and secure, well paid jobs.

The crisis in funding looks set to continue. It doesn't just mean that operations are delayed because hospital beds are not available. People are dying earlier. Providers are withdrawing from the sectors because of the problem of underfunding. Thousands of care staff are not paid for their travel time and don't get the national minimum wage.

UNISON's ethical and residential care charters provide a minimum set of standards for care and the employment of staff.

This conference welcomes the North West Region Care Workers for Change campaign. It recognises that good quality care needs staff with secure employment, a liveable wage and good terms and conditions. Retired members could be a valuable resource for the campaign. Retired members have the time to contact a group of workers who work irregular hours.

Conference calls upon the National Retired Members' Committee

- to invite representatives from the Care Workers for Change campaign to formulate an action plan
- the action plan to have details of how retired members can campaign to recruit this group of workers to join UNISON

- the action plan to be sent to all Regional Retired Members' Committees
- each Regional Retired Members' Committee to report back to the next conference on the success of their campaigns.

### ***North West Region***

## **4 DIGNITY IN SOCIAL CARE, PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT, BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE**

Conference notes that over recent years governmental change in regulations regarding Local Authority Respite and Elderly Peoples Care Homes (EPHs) has led to a large number of these facilities being closed throughout the country. This is mainly due to the lack of Central Government funding required to implement these changes.

In many areas this has resulted in both the staff providing care being made redundant and the service users being forced into more expensive private care.

In more recent years there has emerged a plethora of private care homes, most of which charge exorbitant fees for the minimum amount of care. Many of these provide below minimum conditions both in terms of pay and conditions for their staff and the duty of care to the service users.

The cost of many of these private care home services is prohibitive and many exist only to produce profits for huge multi-national conglomerates. The cost for their services are charged not only to the service users but also to their families, the Local Authorities and Government.

Conference believes that in order to alleviate the challenges currently facing the NHS in both 'bed-blocking' and the resulting cancellation of thousands of planned operations, there needs to be an immediate investment in the creation of new, purpose built Respite and Elderly Peoples' Homes within Local Authorities. These establishments should be under Local Authority control and their staff employed under UNISON national agreed pay and conditions of service.

Therefore conference resolves that: as the present Government requires that public sector pension funds are to invest in pool funding, then, as a priority pool funding should be used initially to provide ethical investment for the purpose of building Respite and Elderly Peoples' Care Homes, which should be run and controlled by Local Authorities. This resolution also includes investment in both Respite and Elderly Care Homes which could be made directly by local pension funds.

Conference calls upon the National Retired Members' Committee through the National Executive Council to urge that nominated UNISON representation on pension committees, local pension boards and pool funding groups across the country propose such investment as a matter of urgency.

### ***North West Region***

## **5 WHAT HAPPENS WHEN ACTION ON A RESOLUTION TAKES MORE THAN TWELVE MONTHS?**

Conference recalls:

1. The resolution of the 2013 conference, One in Eight – Make it Count! (Motion 29);
2. The resolution of the 2014 conference, Ageing Well in UNISON (Motion 26); and,
3. That, in each case, the National Committee's annual report in the following year said that not all their actions had been carried out and that the committee would continue to attend to them.

Conference notes that:

- A. The committee's subsequent annual reports have included no reference to further action on either of these resolutions;
- B. In the lead-up to the 2016 conference the committee declined to answer questions on these subjects as part of the questions-on-the-annual-report procedure saying it would reply to the branch concerned after conference; but,
- C. It has not done so nor said when it will.

Conference accepts that many matters cannot be disposed of in less than one year but it does not accept that, where the committee needs longer, its accountability should lapse.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members' Committee:

- a. To return to the action points in these two resolutions, seek to complete them in the next twelve months and to report fully to next year's conference; and,
- b. In future, where not all the action points of a resolution have been carried out in time for the report to the following year's conference, to make further report(s) to subsequent conference(s) until they have been.

***Wolverhampton General Branch***

## **6 HOUSING FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

Conference recalls the resolutions of the 2014 and 2016 UNISON Retired Members' Conferences on housing for older people (motions 31 and 20 respectively, each as amended).

Conference welcomes the resolution of UNISON National Delegate Conference 2016 on the housing crisis (Composite B) but regrets that this resolution made no reference to older people's housing issues or to how addressing these can contribute to solving the overall crisis.

Conference notes that the main single factor leading to the growing number of households and, in turn, the demand for more homes, is that people are living longer. However, the former government's housing policy concentrated not on this but, almost exclusively, on the needs of first-time buyers. As a result, the policy failed to tackle the distortion in the housing market so supply remains poorly matched to demand with impacts upon older people including that:

1. Although a majority of over-60s say, in surveys, that they want to move, only 3% do so each year;
2. A quarter of over-60s have expressed an interest in buying some form of retirement property but such property only amounts to 2% of the housing stock, mainly in the social-rented sector; and,
3. Most 'non-decent' homes are occupied by older owner-occupiers many of whom find it hard to afford to maintain their property let alone bring it to 'decency' standards or adapt it to meet their changing needs.

Conference therefore believes that, as part of a new housing strategy, there is a need for a greatly increased supply of new-build housing, across all tenures, appropriate to the needs and preferences of older people in order to:

- A. Keep older people healthy and help them maintain their independence which will, in the long run, relieve pressure on health and social care services;
- B. Release larger homes for use by larger, generally younger, households; and,
- C. Release equity for more productive use elsewhere in the economy.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to:

- i. Raise these points with the National Executive Council in an effort to ensure that UNISON's campaign on housing has regard to older people's housing issues; and,
- ii. Raise them also with the range of organisations in the 2014 and 2016 resolutions and continue to work with them to win their support for UNISON's policies on housing.

***Wolverhampton General Branch***

## **7 ANNUAL INCREASES FOR PENSIONS IN COUNTRIES WHERE THIS APPLIES NOW**

The UK currently pays pensioners residing in a number of countries annual cost of living top-ups. This arrangement may be compromised by a hard Brexit and pensioners in these countries are at risk of losing entitlements to annual increases leaving them on frozen pensions while costs, inflation and the value of sterling make it more difficult to make ends meet.



We have noted how the Gurkhas who had retired from the British Army, and living in Nepal on fixed pensions, had the cost of living element added through the pressure of strong public opinion.

On behalf of all such pensioners we oppose the withdrawal of any cost of living additions to those currently benefitting from them.

Conference therefore calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to work with other trades unions and appropriate bodies to lobby hard to achieve this end.

## ***Devon County***

### **8 EQUAL RIGHTS FOR COHABITEES – “DEMENTIA TAX”**

In 2016 the National Retired Members' Conference carried overwhelmingly a motion seeking to guarantee equal rights for all cohabiting partners with regard to inheritance tax. Conference was mindful that over 50% of retired couples cohabit.

The Conservative Government's proposals with regards to social care seek to recover any cost involved in care for the elderly after the death of both partners in a marriage. For unmarried partners the situation is different. The “Dementia Tax”, as it has become known, could leave a surviving partner who is not married to the deceased, homeless at a time when they are grieving and need support not persecution.

This Conference urges the National Retired Members' Committee to support and campaign for equal rights for cohabitees who have not entered into either a civil partnership or marriage for whatever reason, or are not joint owners of the property.

This Conference also calls upon the National Retired Members' Committee to liaise with the National Executive Council, the National Pensioners' Convention, the Scottish Pensioners' Forum, Age UK, the TUC, the Scottish TUC and Labour Link to campaign for a change to the “Dementia Tax” giving unmarried partners the same rights as those who have chosen to marry.

## ***South West Region***

### **9 “FROZEN” PENSIONS FOR OVERSEAS RESIDENTS**

The Government currently pays UK pensioners living abroad in a number of countries annual cost of living top-ups. This arrangement may be compromised by a hard Brexit and pensioners in these countries are at risk of losing entitlements to annual increases. This would leave them on “frozen” pensions, making it more difficult to make ends meet.

Conference, therefore, calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to make representations to the National Executive Council urging it to campaign for the protection of existing arrangements and for the extension of this provision to all UK pensioners living abroad in any country.

### ***South West Region***

## **10 RETIRED MEMBERS "HUMAN LIBRARY" RECOGNISING EXPERIENCE AND REALISING POTENTIAL**

Conference would like UNISON to begin discussions at a local, regional and national level within the context of recognising the experience, knowledge and skills of retired members. To then agree on the best ways to realise and unlock this potential, with a view to adding value to UNISON's learning offer.

This motion recognises that within the rules retired members cannot fulfil branch officer roles and this motion is not about changing that. It is about unlocking energy and potential to best use the experience, expertise and wisdom of retired members.

Therefore, conference calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to make representations to the National Executive Council to work towards achieving this. This work to include:-

1. Mapping out retired members in terms of numbers of members and locations.
2. Mapping out skill sets and identifying retired members who would want to engage and help develop the concept.
3. Consulting with branches to ascertain what they would like to see developed.
4. Working with UNISON learning to develop the concept of a "Human Library".
5. Exploring the potential for mentoring and memory sharing.
6. Encouraging life long learning, skill exchange and transference in relation to UNISON roles

***Poole LG***

## **11 RETAINING MEMBERS WHEN THEY RETIRE WON'T JUST HAPPEN, IT NEEDS ORGANISING AND THAT MEANS STRATEGY AND RESOURCES**

Conference notes that UNISON has over 172,000 retired members, about one UNISON member in eight, a number and proportion that continues to grow, but conference regrets to note that the rate of growth has declined from nearly 4% in 2010/11 to less than 1% in 2015/16.

Conference recognises that:

1. Retaining members when they retire is not automatic. Nearly everybody experiences retirement as a major change, so trades unionism may no longer appear relevant and the case for remaining a member may need to be made anew; and,

2. Factors which lead, generally to inclusion or exclusion, will apply here too. For example, the National Executive Council (NEC) has reported that, whereas women account for 77% of full members, they account for only 61% of retired members which may imply UNISON is less successful at retaining women members when they retire than at retaining men. The same may be true of others who are under-represented in trade unions including Black members, disabled members, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) members and members with low-paid, part-time and precarious jobs.

Conference believes that an approach which professes to make retired membership available to nearly all members when they retire but lacks an aim of retaining them all is likely to lead to:

- A. Loss of an organising resource that would otherwise be available to support the work of the union;
- B. Loss of political support since the ageing ex-members we exclude will tend to drift right not left; and,
- C. A disproportionate impact on under-represented members of some of whom there is also evidence of greater incidence of isolation and loneliness in old age.

Conference therefore believes that UNISON should adopt a strategy to retain all those who qualify for retired membership, supported by appropriate resources and targeted, especially, at those members UNISON may, currently, be less successful at retaining.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to raise this question with the NEC and with the Self-Organised Group National Committees, with a view to UNISON developing such a strategy and producing the resources to support it.

In particular, conference instructs National Retired Members' Committee, seeking the support of the NEC as needs be, to seek early action to produce the following resources which have been unavailable for several years:

- i. A replacement for the UNISON Charter for Older People

Conference recalls the resolution of the 2013 Retired Members' Conference (Motion 30) which sought a revision and replacement of the Charter and the resolution of the 2015 Conference, Never too Old to Agitate, Educate, Organise (Motion 25) with a similar objective. It also recalls that, in 2014 and 2016, National Retired Members' Committee's annual reports confirmed its intention to put this in hand. Conference regrets the lack of progress and repeats and confirms the instructions in these earlier resolutions;

- ii. Means of regular communication between the national retired members' organisation and its members

Conference recalls that Interactive ceased to be published in 2012 and that year's annual report expressed National Retired Members' Committee's hope "that there will be an electronic version" and that, by 2014's report, hopes had become "plans". It further recalls a resolution, that year, which instructed the National Retired Members' Committee "to look at how communications can be made more effective" and included "producing an electronic copy of Interactive" among other things (Motion 21) and two resolutions in 2015 on Communications (Composite C) and Never too Old to Agitate, Educate, Organise (Motion 25) which both repeated the instruction to produce a regular electronic bulletin. Conference confirms and repeats these instructions;

- iii. Collecting and sharing examples of good practice in retaining members when they retire and involving and activating retired members

Conference recalls the resolution of the 2013 Conference, Retaining Members when they Retire (Motion 26) which called for such sharing of good practice and that, in 2014, National Retired Members' Committee's Annual Report said the committee collected such examples but conference notes that, asked for these using the questions on the annual report procedure in both 2015 and 2016, the committee did not provide a single example. Conference instructs National Retired Members' Committee to continue to collect examples and to make them available, including in the electronic replacement for Interactive, so branches and regions can learn from each other;

- iv. Branch Retired Members' Secretary's handbook

Conference recalls the resolution of the 2013 Retired Members' Conference on this subject (Motion 31) which instructed the National Retired Members' Committee to seek a reprint as soon as possible and National Retired Members' Committee's annual report in 2014 which stated that it is now being updated and will be reprinted in due course. Conference regrets that 'due course', has lasted three years and the handbook has been out of print for over seven years. Conference confirms and repeats its earlier instruction; and

- v. Training materials

Conference recalls the resolution of the 2012 Conference, "Training Opportunities for UNISON Members" (Motion 32 as amended) which sought access to training for office-bearers of branch retired members' sections and National Retired Members' Committee's report in 2013 that "this has been delayed". Conference notes that there has been no further report on the matter. Conference also recalls the resolution of the 2014 conference, "Retired Members Organising in UNISON" (Motion 25) which called for "a training programme that will encourage UNISON members to play a more active role in the wider community" and National Retired Members' Committee's report in 2015 that it was "working with (others) to develop ... materials" but regrets to note there appears to have been no further progress. Conference confirms and repeats these earlier instructions and further instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to add a guide to relevant training and training materials to the Branch Retired Members' Secretary's Handbook and to publicise relevant training opportunities to retired members, including in the electronic replacement for Interactive.

***West Midlands Region***

## **12 CELEBRATE THE BUS! DEFEND UNIVERSAL BENEFITS!**

Conference notes that the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme was introduced on 1st April 2008 and there are proposals to mark its tenth anniversary as a way to celebrate and defend the scheme.

Conference recognises that the scheme brings financial, social and health benefits to older people and disabled people and economic, social and environmental benefits to the whole community so it believes that this anniversary is a significant opportunity to:

1. Defend this universal non-means-tested benefit; and,
2. Promote public transport, especially buses, as an important but neglected public service.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to work with appropriate partners to promote this celebration and, in particular, to:

- A. Raise it with the National Executive Council, the Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive and the National Disabled Members' Committee to win the broadest possible support from UNISON;
- B. Publicise it to Branch Retired Members' Sections and Regional Retired Members' Committees in England by all appropriate means, including the electronic replacement for Interactive and, if possible, putting it on the retired members' page of the UNISON website; and,
- C. Approach the Regional Retired Members' Committees in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Cymru/Wales with a view to extending the initiative to those regions and/or supporting them to take initiatives to celebrate and defend their own schemes.

***West Midlands Region***

## **13 EQUAL PENSIONS**

Conference notes that:

1. The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 required the United Kingdom (UK) government to review surviving partners' benefits in occupational pension schemes; and
2. The UK government published its review on 26th June 2014 estimating the cost of equalisation, but making no recommendations nor indicating any process or timescale to lead to deciding what to do.

Conference also notes that government inaction, at the time and since, appears to stem from reluctance to impose on pension schemes costs it has described as 'retrospective'.

Conference rejects this approach. Rather, conference considers that to introduce equal survivors' pensions will be to correct an historic injustice.

Besides, conference observes that couples' mutual support in old age is a feature of their relationship, which benefits not just themselves, but society as a whole, since such relationships promote good health and the unpaid care that partners provide each other relieves pressure on social care services. Conference therefore believes that such relationships deserve recognition without regard to the gender or sexual orientation of the partners.

Conference is disappointed to note that the Labour front bench in 2014 appeared to share the government's view about retrospection and that attempts by UNISON and other unions, working via the Trade Union and Labour Party Liaison Organisation (TULO) to win the Labour Party's commitment to equal survivors' pensions in manifestoes for the 2015 and 2017 general elections were both unsuccessful.

Conference confirms its aim to achieve equal surviving partners' pensions and to bring widowers' pensions and those for surviving same-sex spouses and civil partners into line with those for widows in all respects.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to:

- A. Approach the National Executive Council, the National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Committee and the National Labour Link Committee with a view to developing a broad-based and sustained campaign;
- B. Seek to ensure that the issue is widely understood by retired members and that they are kept up to date with the campaign by periodic coverage in the electronic replacement for Interactive;
- C. Seek to ensure that the Trades Union Congress Pensioners' Committee gives the campaign regular attention, raise it, if needs be, with the Scottish Trades Union Congress and the Irish Congress of Trade unions and raise it also with the National Pensioners' Convention and the Scottish Pensioners' Forum.

***West Midlands Region***

## **14 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***

## **15 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 add two retired members, elected by and from among the members of National Retired Members' Committee, to the UNISON Congress delegation.

***West Midlands Region***

## **16 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***

## **17 THE IMPACT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSFORMATION PLANS ON OLDER PEOPLE**

Retired Members Conference is deeply concerned that there were 30,000 excess deaths in 2015, representing the largest increase in deaths in the post-war period. The excess deaths, which included a large spike in January that year, were largely in the older population who are most dependent on health and social care. Researchers exploring why there has been a substantial increase in mortality in England and Wales in 2015 conclude that failures in the health and social care system linked to disinvestment are likely to be the main cause.

Reporting their analysis in the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, the researchers from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, University of Oxford and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, found that NHS performance data revealed clear evidence of health system failures. Almost all targets were missed including ambulance call-out times and A&E waiting times, despite unexceptional A&E attendances compared to the same month in previous years. Staff absence rates rose and more posts remained empty as staff had not been appointed.

Professor Martin McKee, from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, said: "The impact of cuts resulting from the imposition of austerity on the NHS has been profound. Expenditure has failed to keep pace with demand and the situation has been exacerbated by dramatic reductions in the welfare budget of £16.7 billion and in social care spending."

He added: "With an aging population, the NHS is ever more dependent on a well-functioning social care system. Yet social care has also faced severe cuts, with a 17% decrease in spending for older people since 2009, while the number of people aged 85 years and over has increased by 9%."

Given the situation described above conference is concerned that NHS England has asked for 44 Sustainability and Transformation Plans to be drawn up which aim to save a further £22 billion during their implementation and is alarmed at the potential impact on older people ..

Whilst in principle we are not opposed to better care closer to home, we are aware that older people have been increasingly turning to the health service because they cannot access social care. Plans to build health care around the home whilst closing hospitals, specialist centres, acute, rehabilitation and respite beds fails to take account of the scarcity and inadequacy of social care and staffing shortages in the NHS. We are concerned that failure to provide adequate rehabilitation and respite facilities will also impact on carers and force many older people into private care homes against their wishes and that there would be a cut in public beds whilst use of private beds increased.

Better Care Closer to home for older people requires a properly funded and staffed social care service and investment in local health services as well as provision for rehabilitation and respite. Until effective home based and local health and care services are available we are opposed to moves to close health facilities used by older people and which are a current necessity to them and their carers.



Conference calls on the National Retired Members Committee to work with the National Executive Council, National Pensioners Convention/ Scottish Pensioners Network to campaign nationally and locally with other organisations concerned about the impact of STPs to:-

- highlight their impact on older people,
- demand properly funded and staffed social care services
- demand investment in the necessary community health services before any hospitals/beds are closed.

***Derbyshire County***

## **18 OLDER PEOPLE'S COMMISSION**

Conference welcomes the establishment by the Labour party, under Jeremy Corbyn of an Older Peoples Commission. It further welcomes policy outcomes: contained in the party manifesto for the 2017 General Election on the triple lock, state pension age, protection of universal benefits, support for WASPI and sustainable funding of the NHS and Social Care. It supports the proposed measures to tackle loneliness which particularly affects older people

Conference calls on the National Retired Members Committee in consultation with the NEC and Labour Link to support the continuation of the Commission and its work with engagement from UNISON to press for:-

- A living state pension which takes every pensioner out of poverty and ends the daily struggle by millions of older people to afford basic essentials like food and fuel.`
- The housing needs of older people to be fully included in and integrated into the national plan to build new houses for social rent.

Should a Government introduce means testing of universal benefits such as the winter fuel allowance, abandon the triple lock and continue with a policy of cuts and privatisation of health and social care, Conference calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to work with the NEC and Labour Link to campaign against these policies. We should work in alliance with the NPC and SPF to secure a reversal of these policies and the implementation by Government of the policies outlined above.

***Derbyshire County***

## **19 WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE**

Conference is disappointed by the intention of the Conservative Party to means-test the Winter Fuel Allowance.

Means-tested benefits are notoriously under-claimed, and many of those who fail to claim for whatever reason are often those most in need. Some of those not claiming will be those who realise that they will not qualify, but other reasons for not claiming include shame, lack of information, inability to complete claim forms, access to the internet, difficulty in communicating, isolation, depression and a multitude of other reasons.

If this benefit becomes means-tested, conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to liaise with the NEC and acting in co-operation with the National Pensioners Convention, Age UK, Scottish Pensioners Forum and any other appropriate organisation to obtain and collate the following information, using the Freedom of Information Act if necessary:-

- The number of pensioner households receiving Winter Fuel Allowance prior to means-testing.
- The number of pensioner households receiving Winter Fuel Allowance after means-testing.
- The number of pensioner households where one or more members is below the income tax threshold (a measure, though not infallible, of disadvantage) receiving Winter Fuel Allowance before means-testing.
- The number of pensioner households where one or more members is below the tax threshold in receipt of Winter Fuel Allowance after means-testing.
- The number of excess winter deaths before means-testing of the Winter Fuel Allowance.
- The number of excess winter deaths after means-testing of the Winter Fuel Allowance.

Conference further instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to liaise with the NEC, National Pensioners Convention, Age UK, Scottish Pensioners Forum and other relevant organisations in order to issue press releases and give publicity to the findings, and report back to future Retired Member Conferences.

***Derbyshire County***

## **20 WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE**

In the Government's budget on 23rd March 2011 they reduced the Winter Fuel Allowance (WFA) by £100 down from £400 to £300 for the over 80's households and by £50 down from £250 to £200 for the under 80's household.

In view of the horrendous rise in fuel costs and the death of 25,000 elderly people last year from the cold we need the Government to reconsider their policy on means testing the winter fuel Allowance and to show some respect and dignity for the elderly for whom warmth in the winter months is vital.

The eligibility for Winter Fuel Allowance depends on the claimant reaching state retirement age by the last week in September. Those who reach this milestone in subsequent winter months do not receive their WFA until the following winter. This rule is unfair to those whose fall between October and February and who still have to pay their fuel bills but do not receive any WFA in their first winter in retirement.

Many of these pensioners will be living on subsistence incomes or may be on Pension Credit and may not be able to afford to heat their homes. This Government needs to address this anomaly as a matter of urgency with a new eligibility scheme to allow this group of pensioners to claim WFA so that every pensioner benefits from this payment.

The government is now proposing to means test winter fuel allowance which will affect many pensioners. This means many pensioners will have their winter fuel payments taken away from them.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee and calls on the National Executive Council to work with the National Pensioners Convention and other unions to defend the winter fuel allowance for older people.

Conference further calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to work with all relevant organisations to oppose any current and future attack on winter fuel allowance and to ensure that all pensioners keep their winter fuel allowance.

***Leicestershire Healthcare***

## **21 HANDS OFF UNIVERSAL BENEFITS**

Conference opposes any attempts by Governments across the UK to cut universal benefits for older people such as the winter fuel payment, free bus pass, free prescriptions and free TV licences.

These benefits are essential to ensuring a decent standard of living and social inclusion for millions of pensioners who face daily poverty, fuel poverty and discrimination due to inadequate occupational and state pensions, as well as unequal access to public services including health and social care. They are essential to help keep older people independent and active.

Any reductions in these benefits will have an adverse effect on pensioners especially those who are already on the breadline. Pensioners need the bus pass, free health prescriptions and winter fuel payment, why because the state pension is nowhere near a living income.

Conference refutes the myths that:

1. All pensioners are wealthy. The reality is that the UK is ranked fourth out of 27 EU countries in relation to the risk of poverty amongst older people;
2. Pensioners are a burden on society. Research shows that the overall net contribution by older people to the UK economy is almost £40bn a year;
3. Means testing will help the neediest. All the evidence shows that means testing does not work for older people with over £5billion a year of means tested benefits going unclaimed, mostly by those who need them the most;
4. Older people have escaped the austerity measures. Over the past few years the Winter Fuel Payment has been frozen, personal tax allowances have been frozen; pensions have been indexed to a lower CPI measure of inflation (CPI); and the increase in the state pension age for women has been brought forward.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members Committee and calls on the National Executive Council to work with the National Pensioners Convention and other organisations to defend universal benefits for older people.

Conference further calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to work with all relevant organisations to oppose any current and future attack on universal benefits and to ensure that this government is aware to keep their "hands off our universal benefits".

***Leicestershire Healthcare***

## **22 UNISON'S LINKS TO THE CGT UNION**

Conference notes the setting up of a regional twinning between retired members of the South East Region of UNISON and the Nord Pas de Calais/Picardie region of the French Public Services union La CGT. Conference notes also the work that has been done in creating and developing this link which is based upon an understanding that pensioners in the UK and France face similar challenges in the future such as the erosion of pensions and public services. This project provides opportunities to learn from each other, express our solidarity, exchange news and information and meet our French counterparts face to face to counter the divide and rule approach of the current Government. It also explores topics such as social care and the contribution of retired members within our respective unions and is likely to be of benefit to colleagues on both sides of the Channel. Conference therefore encourages further development of this initiative and calls upon the National Retired Members' Committee to:

1. Encourage other regions to undertake similar initiatives and look at ways to develop relationships with retired union members in their corresponding regions in France.
2. Receive reports back from South East Region on the development of the project, including a day on intergenerational issues to which French speakers have been invited, and consider how best to disseminate the ideas and information gained.
3. Forward the information to UNISON's International Relations Department to investigate how this initiative might be extended at national level.
4. Promote the idea that international solidarity is as relevant and beneficial to retired UNISON members as it is to working members.

***South East Region***

## **23 FUNERAL POVERTY**

Perhaps more than ever, the cost of a “proper send off” is a perennial worry for older people.

In February 2016, “A Review for Scottish Government – Funeral Poverty in Scotland” was produced jointly by the Scottish Working Group on Funeral Poverty and Citizens Advice Scotland.

This highlighted the growing gap between the cost of funerals and the Social Fund Funeral Payment (SFFP). Since the SFFP was capped at £700 in 2003, when it was intended to cover the funeral director cost, the average cost of a funeral in Scotland has risen to £3,550 (2015 figures).

The Scottish Government appears to be responding positively to the review by seeking to simplify and shorten the process for application for SFFP and proposed regulation of the funeral industry. But this is a national issue and should be tackled on a national basis.

This Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to

- organise the production of a guide to organising simple funerals
- explore inclusion of preferential funeral plans in the package of members' benefits

and to

- support campaigns for the reduction in funeral costs run by other older peoples' organisations and
- support proposals for the national regulation of the funeral industry.

***Scotland Region***

## 24 THE MISTAKEN PERCEPTION OF RICH PENSIONERS

This Conference deplores the manner in which people in receipt of pensions, many of them our own members, are portrayed and thereafter perceived by the public as “rich” or “well off” or “expensive” pensioners”, who are milking the system to live a comfortable life, whereas a national newspaper on 13 February 2017 informed its readers and was subsequently echoed in other publications that:

“Property, private pensions and higher benefits have pushed the incomes of retirees above working families for the first time” and “Pensioners are now £20.00 a week better off than working households - reversing the situation of 15 years ago.”

Further down in the article it clarifies it a little, but needless to say that bit wasn’t reproduced so widely, and says:

“This reversal of fortunes is not true of all retirees but relates to those who have an occupational pension, own their own home, and may also still be earning.”

To be clear, we have worked all our lives and paid the sums set by Government into the National Insurance System to provide an income for ourselves in later life, ie the State Pension and the NHS, to be there for us when and if we need it.

Some of us also paid into occupational pension schemes.

We retired, some of us with tiny pensions...if you earned tiny wages, your pension reflects that tininess!... and some with pensions that are somewhat better. But again, to be clear, we paid for them, we deserve them and in many cases pensioners are supporting family members who are themselves in difficulty, due to today’s less than sensitive and supporting society!

But regardless of pension size, we are all effectively living on half the income we previously had, and that in an ever more expensive world!

This Conference instructs the National Retired Members’ Committee to;

- 1) Facilitate research on the impact on our members of the real effects of living on the pension.
- 2) Clarify ill founded perceptions with appropriate publicity as to the reality of living on the pension in a world where pensions fail to match the increasing cost of living.
- 3) Work with other relevant organisations e.g. National Pensioners Convention and Scottish Pensioners Forum to promote the TRUTH about pensioners’ income.

***Scotland Region***

## **25 FOOT CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

This conference recognises that mobility is one of the most important factors in keeping healthy both physically and mentally in older age.

Regrettably the NHS has axed foot care by qualified podiatrists for otherwise healthy older people. This is counter productive.

An older person whose apparent only health concern is “uncomfortable” feet due to corns, calluses or a need for toe nail cutting is being put in a very vulnerable position regarding their future physical and/or mental health which will cost far more than the employment of qualified podiatrists

This conference expresses extreme concern regarding the selection/employment of volunteers to act as unqualified podiatrists in some areas to carry out toe nail cutting. These unqualified practitioners may inadvertently compromise the health of an older person, for example, by being unable to identify a symptom of disease or inadvertently injure a diagnosed or undiagnosed diabetic.

Foot care is too important to be left to well meaning volunteers.

This Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to urge the NEC to clearly identify foot care as an essential preventative professional podiatry service when negotiating to defend services in the NHS.

***Scotland Region***

## **26 R.O.A.R. - REGENERATE OUR AILING RESORTS CAMPAIGN**

A recent report by The Centre for Social Justice entitled 'Turning The Tide' looked at and highlighted social deprivation in seaside resorts throughout the United Kingdom.. It concluded that 'poverty was attracting poverty' as cheaper foreign travel took seasonal trade away from established seaside towns, thus leading to high levels of unemployment and failure of small businesses.

This conference notes that a similar situation existed in Spain during the 1980's and the government of the day brought in a national scheme called 'Imerso', which allows retirees, and other qualifying persons paid holidays at the expense of the state. The idea was to regenerate employment and infrastructure in the ailing Spanish resorts at the time.

By all accounts the scheme has proved extremely successful, and is now well embedded in governmental economic planning.

During the 'off-peak season', ie from October to June, holidays are made available to all pensioners resident in Spain. Moreover, the 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

It is further noted that holidays can be between 8 and 29 days long, and any applicant can take a companion with them.

In 2016, research by the Transamerica Centre for Retirement Studies revealed that "Vacations can decrease a person's risk of heart attack and depression as well as improving the health of their brain."

Conference therefore believes that an economic and health case can be made to the British Government to institute a scheme which will both benefit ailing seaside resorts and at the same time provide subsidised holidays for retirees. Therefore, it calls upon the National Retired Members' Committee to work alongside the National Executive Council and any other relevant bodies in order to progress this proposal.

***Bassetlaw LG***

## **27 TRIPLE-LOCK ON STATE PENSIONS**

Conference calls on the National Retired Member's Committee to work with the National Executive Council on a union-wide campaign to protect the 'triple-lock' on our state pensions and to preserve the universal benefits which the Tories have indicated they intend to scrap.

***UNISON Northern Ireland***

## **28 THE IMPACT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSFORMATION PLANS ON OLDER PEOPLE**

Retired Members' Conference is deeply concerned that there were 30,000 excess deaths in 2015, representing the largest increase in deaths in the post-war period. The excess deaths, which included a large spike in January that year, were largely in the older population who are most dependent on health and social care. Researchers exploring why there has been a substantial increase in mortality in England and Wales in 2015 conclude that failures in the health and social care system linked to disinvestment are likely to be the main cause.



Reporting their analysis in the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, the researchers from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, University of Oxford and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, found that NHS performance data revealed clear evidence of health system failures. Almost all targets were missed including ambulance call-out times and A&E waiting times, despite unexceptional A&E attendances compared to the same month in previous years. Staff absence rates rose and more posts remained empty as staff had not been appointed.

Professor Martin McKee, from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, said: "The impact of cuts resulting from the imposition of austerity on the NHS has been profound. Expenditure has failed to keep pace with demand and the situation has been exacerbated by dramatic reductions in the welfare budget of £16.7 billion and in social care spending."

He added: "With an aging population, the NHS is ever more dependent on a well-functioning social care system. Yet social care has also faced severe cuts, with a 17% decrease in spending for older people since 2009, while the number of people aged 85 years and over has increased by 9%."

Given the situation described above conference is concerned that NHS England has asked for 44 Sustainability and Transformation Plans to be drawn up which aim to save a further £22 billion during their implementation and is alarmed at the potential impact on older people.

Whilst in principle we are not opposed to improved care closer to home, we are aware that older people have been increasingly turning to the health service because they cannot access social care. Plans to build health care around the home whilst closing hospitals, specialist centres and acute, rehabilitation and respite beds fail to take account of the scarcity and inadequacy of social care and staffing shortages in the NHS. We are concerned that failure to provide adequate rehabilitation and respite facilities will also impact on carers and force many older people into private care homes against their wishes and that there would be a cut in public beds whilst use of private beds increased.

Improved care closer to home for older people requires a properly funded and staffed social care service and investment in local health services as well as provision for rehabilitation and respite. Until effective home based and local health and care services are available we are opposed to moves to close health facilities used by older people and which are a current necessity to them and their carers.

We call on the National Retired Members' Committee to work with the National Executive, National Pensioners Convention/ Scottish Pensioners Network to campaign nationally and locally with other organisations concerned about the impact of STPs to:-

- Highlight their impact on older people,
- Demand properly funded and staffed social care services
- Demand investment in the necessary community health services before any hospitals/beds are closed.

## **29 FERMENTING DISCORD BETWEEN YOUNG AND OLD**

Conference notes with concern the spread of misleading and mischievous information that fuels antagonistic and bad feelings between the young and senior citizens. The young are fed misleading and distorted misinformation by political parties and the media blame the pensioners and older citizens for having access to more resources because of the apparent favourable treatment of senior citizens.

Conference sympathetically notes the plight of the younger people experiencing massive difficulties in getting on the housing ladder. This is due to government policy of not building enough affordable houses and the starvation of social house building. Additionally, the young have to cope with job insecurity and difficulty in being able to get a mortgage.

The debate about state pension increases in recent times has unfortunately attracted much attention as the increases have been better than the wage increases particularly in the public sector. However, it must be emphasised that our pensions remain one of the lowest in Europe.

It is also suggested that pensioners should not be occupying larger properties. For most pensioners, their present home has been a family home and is a safeguard for social care that might be needed in future. It is also full of emotional memories on which the pensioners thrive. Any suggestion that pensioners should dispose of their properties creates great uncertainty and a sense of inadequacy and helplessness.

The political parties through their election manifestoes and other utterings have attacked pensioner benefits which the pensioners have earned through their working lives. The fact that all the benefits have been earned through working days or through the taxes, must be explained to general population.

Conference instructs National Retired Members' Committee to liaise with National Executive Council and other relevant organisations to:

- a) campaign for balanced and accurate positive information to increase better understanding of pensioner aspirations including an adequate state pension;
- b) liaise with our political links and pensioner friendly organisations and media to encourage the dissemination of accurate information about pensioners without the negative spin;
- c) and report back the actions and progress achieved to the UNISON National Retired Members' Conference 2018.

***Barnet Local Government***

### **30 UNIVERSAL BENEFITS**

Conference views with concern the growing attack on the principle of universal benefits. We confirm the need to maintain universal benefits for all older people regardless of their background or circumstances.

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 these universal benefits are not means tested.

#### ***East Midlands Region***

### **31 BUS PASSES**

This National Retired Members' Conference notes that the Government purports to adhere to the concept of "fairness" and to support the notion of a genuinely United Kingdom.

Conference further notes that the qualifying age for application for an older person's bus pass in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is 60 as it is for those living in London Boroughs. In the rest of England the qualifying age is the New State Pension Age (NSPA) which, for men is those born on or after 6 April 1951 and for women, those born on or after 6 April 1953. This is clearly anomalous and is neither fair nor contributing to a sense of unity.

Conference therefore resolves to

- i) Instruct the National Retired Members' Committee, in conjunction with the NPC, to make representations to government to resolve this anomaly in England and to bring the qualifying date into line with Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and London
- ii) To make representations through other appropriate organisations (eg. Age UK) to seek to resolve this issue
- iii) To make representations through pensioner organisations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to assist in bringing pressure to bear on the UK Government to seek to resolve this issue

Conference further resolves to instruct the National Retired Members' Committee to work with all pensioner organisations throughout the UK to make representations to all four Governments to have bus passes validated throughout the UK regardless of the country in which they are issued and to publicise their efforts as widely as possible.

#### ***Norfolk County UNISON***

## **32 PENSIONS POST BREXIT**

This National Retired Members' Conference notes that Brexit negotiations will be detailed and complex. It also notes that currently the state pension is uprated annually for those pensioners living within the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland where reciprocal arrangements exist with those countries and also with other countries (eg USA) with similar arrangements. The pension is not uprated in countries where those arrangements are not in place.

Following Brexit it is entirely possible that we will lose those arrangements in some or all of the countries within the EEA. This may well prompt the government to take the opportunity of not uprating state pension for pensioners living in those countries. Given that many of those affected will be UNISON retired members, it is essential that we work to ensure that this does not happen and, although it is current policy, to reiterate our intention to ensure that uprating takes place for state pensioners wherever they may live in the world.

Conference further notes that sterling has become more volatile following the Brexit decision and that the value of the state pension will be vulnerable to that volatility as negotiations continue and after they are concluded. Annual uprating of the state pension in those circumstances becomes even more vital.

Conference therefore resolves to

- i) Instruct the National Retired Members' Committee to campaign with the NEC and subsequently the TUC and with pensioner organisations in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to seek to ensure that the government continues to uprate state pension within the EEA.
- ii) To make contact, as far as is possible, with retired members living within the EEA to publicise our efforts on their behalf and to involve them in representations which we are able to make
- iii) To redouble our efforts along with all partner organisations to persuade the government that uprating of state pension should apply to all those eligible, wherever they may live in the world.

***Norfolk County UNISON***

# **MOTIONS NOT ADMITTED TO THE AGENDA**

## **NOT IN LINE WITH SOC PROCEDURES**

### **STANDING ORDERS AMENDMENT**

Delete Standing Order 8.1 and substitute:

- 8.1 A body submitting more than one motion shall indicate, when it does so, in what order it wants them to be debated. If any of its motions (except its last-placed) is not admitted to the agenda, its lower-placed motions, if any, shall be moved up to fill the vacant place in the order.
- 8.2 The Standing Orders Committee shall prepare an order of business so that, generally, every submitting body's first-placed (or only) motion is heard before any body's second, every second before any third and so on but subject to standing orders 8.3, and 8.5 below.
- 8.3 Where the Standing Orders Committee considers that certain motions should be debated together or where it has prepared a composite motion (pursuant to standing orders 2.3.4(2) or 2.3.4(3) respectively) this debate shall take the place in the order of business that would otherwise have been taken by the debate on the highest placed motion concerned.

Re-number standing orders 8.2 to 8.7 as 8.4 to 8.9

***Wolverhampton General Branch***

## **REQUIRES A RULE CHANGE**

### **RETIRED MEMBERS' REPRESENTATIVES AT SELF ORGANISED GROUP CONFERENCE**

Conference notes that:

1. Rule D5.3 provides that self-organised groups elect their own representatives to other levels of self-organisation;
2. Rule D7.8 provides that the National Retired Members' Organisation may send two representatives of relevant retired members to each National Self-Organised Group Conference; and,

3. The National Executive Council's guidelines on self-organisation, Organising for Equality, make clear delegates attend such events as representatives of their nominating body and should provide reports to the nominating body.

However, conference also notes that, instead of empowering relevant retired members, that is to say retired Black members, retired disabled members, retired lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender members and retired women members to elect their own representatives to the respective Self-Organised Group Conference and hold them to account, the National Retired Members' Committee has substituted itself for these members and taken upon itself to elect their representatives.

Conference wishes to move towards greater conformity with the principle that self-organised groups elect their own representatives to other levels of self-organisation and to adopt a procedure so that relevant retired members elect their own representatives to the respective National Self-Organised Group Conference.

It therefore instructs the National Retired Members Committee to consult relevant retired members and the Self-Organised Group National Committees how best to do so and bring proposals in the form of a motion to National Retired Members' Conference 2018 which takes due account of:

- A. The capacity of this conference's caucuses to conduct elections, any additional resources the caucuses may require to do so and/or alternative ways to conduct any of these elections;
- B. The need for a widely publicised nomination process, for the circulation of candidates' election statements in advance, say with the Conference Agenda and Guide, so that relevant members can make an informed choice among candidates, and for an arrangement so that any candidate wishing to withdraw may do so;
- C. The timing of conferences; and,
- D. Arrangements for representatives to be accountable and the need for timely reports to relevant members, say by means of the electronic replacement for Interactive.

***Wolverhampton General Branch***

### **RULE C2.6.3**

Conference notes that:

1. Rule C2.6.3 provides that retired members are entitled to stand for office and vote only for positions in the Retired Members' Organisation unless otherwise determined by the National Executive Council (NEC), or as otherwise provided for in (the) rules;
2. Rule Q does not define 'office'; and,

3. The NEC's protocol, Retired Members Seeking Permission from the NEC to Hold Office per Rule C2.6.3, deals only with holding office at branch level but still does not define 'office'.

Conference considers that this leaves certain matters unclear and notes that it gives rise to varying and possibly inconsistent practices including:

- A. The rule has sometimes been taken to apply only to positions within UNISON so that it does not prevent retired members standing for election as UNISON representatives to certain outside bodies for example, Local Government Pension Boards;
- B. Certain branches appear to understand 'office' not to include representative positions within the branch, for example, self-organised group representatives on branch committees (Rule G2.2.2);
- C. In certain branches, retired members have cast votes for branch officers in elections held at annual general meetings; and,
- D. Some branches permit retired members to stand for election as delegates to trades union councils, but it is uncertain whether all do so. On the other hand, UNISON, at regional and national levels, does not generally permit retired members to seek election as UNISON delegates to Trades Union Congress (TUC) bodies. This leads to the position that some retired members of UNISON (depending on the practice of their branch) may serve on TUC Regional Councils and attend TUC equality conferences on behalf of their trades union council but may not do so on UNISON's behalf.

Conference finds this confusing, disempowering and, in some respects, anomalous.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to seek from the NEC a comprehensive interpretation of the rule and to make it widely known, say by including it in the revised Branch Retired Members' Secretary's Handbook, so retired members know where they stand.

***West Midlands Region***

## **NOT SPECIFIC TO THE CONFERENCE**

### **EUROPEAN HEALTH INSURANCE CARD (EHIC) : CONTINUING COVERAGE**

One of the consequences of the withdrawal of the UK from the EU may lead to the withdrawal of the European Insurance Health Card (EHIC) which enables access to emergency medical help in most other European Countries while travelling, or staying there for short periods, such as visiting relatives, friends or just holidaying.

Any withdrawal from this benefit will particularly discriminate against retired members who currently and routinely travel outside the UK to destinations that are in countries participating in mutual health arrangements.

While EHIC card cover is currently available for persons of all ages who qualify, and while alternative cover through travel insurance is normally available, all persons above retirement age are subject to increasingly higher premiums as they age and health factors can, and do, lead to escalating premiums or cover being refused.

Currently health charges in some countries, such as the USA, that are not covered by the EHIC, can leave members unfortunate enough to need hospital treatment with crippling charges to pay.

We are asking for this mutual system of assistance to be continued, after any Brexit arrangements are made, to enable older persons to be able to travel without being penalized by a possible withdrawal of the EHIC.

Conference therefore calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to work with other trades unions and appropriate bodies to lobby hard to achieve this end.

***Devon County***

## **EUROPEAN HEALTH INSURANCE CARD – CONTINUING COVERAGE**

One of the consequences of the withdrawal of the UK from the EU may be the removal of the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) which enables access to emergency medical help in most other European countries while travelling, or staying for short periods.

Any withdrawal of this benefit will disproportionately affect retired members who currently and routinely travel outside the UK to destinations that are in countries participating in mutual health arrangements. Retired people are statistically more prone to accidents and ill-health. EHIC cover is currently available for persons of all ages who qualify. While alternative cover through travel insurance is normally available, all persons above retirement age are subject to increasingly higher premiums as they age and health factors. This can and does lead to escalating premiums or cover being refused.

We believe that this mutual system of assistance should be continued after any Brexit arrangements are made, to enable retired people to travel without being penalised.

Conference, therefore, calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to make representation to the National Executive Council, to campaign to achieve this, and liaise with the National Pensioners' Convention, the Scottish Pensioners' Forum, Age UK, the TUC, the Scottish TUC and Labour Link on this issue.

***South West Region***



## **NATIONAL CAMPAIGN**

The UNISON Retired Members Section of the Hertfordshire Branch call upon the National Executive Committee, through a national campaign, to encourage current UNISON members to join their local retired members section on retiring from employment.

We call upon the NEC to introduce a national campaign to highlight not only the benefits of joining the retired members section but to also encourage members to remain politically active upon retirement.

***UNISON Hertfordshire***

## **PRIVATE MEDICINE – TIME FOR IT TO GO?**

We live primarily in a capitalist society.

This system produces very wealthy individuals, institutions and companies.

Broadly as a society we accept and applaud this system because wealth generation produces amongst other things, employment and high tax returns which can be distributed for the greater good of all of us.

Tolerance of capitalism is further enhanced in this country by the fact that at certain levels we all share equal rights, one of which is the certainty, when needed, of health care provided by the NHS.

Is it right that wealth produces immediate treatment for ailments or if necessary an operation?

Most of society has to queue for such treatments, in some cases with those people waiting suffering discomfort or pain.

Privately the treatments are provided by people who have learnt their undoubted skills practising mainly on NHS patients. One wonders what is their motivation. Often they are already well rewarded by the NHS and they know that in many cases their skills are desperately needed by the NHS. Could their driving force be simple greed?

In 1948 the NHS was formed, private medicine was tolerated to clear the obstruction of the fear expressed by some doctors that it would reduce their incomes. Seventy years later such argument does not stand examination.

We believe health care should not be available to purchase like a bag of potatoes, the time is overdue for the phased withdrawal of private medicine from our health system.

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

1. urgently initiate a campaign to return the NHS to its original status, free at the point of need from the cradle to the grave;

2. ensure all MPs know that if they continue with selling off sections of the NHS, their names and any profits they make will be published;
3. work closely with the National Pensioners Convention, Trades Union Congress, Scottish Pensioners Forum, other trades unions and relevant organisations to gain support for this campaign;
4. report progress on a regular basis in UNISON publications and at all National Retired Members Committee meetings for circulation to regions and branches;
5. report back to the 2018 UNISON National Retired Members Conference with the progress made.

***Hampshire***

## **HOSPITAL CAR PARKING**

This conference calls upon the National Executive Council and National Retired Members' Committee to use all means in their power to enable older people the ability to access free parking at hospitals and other health care premises.

Older people are high users of health services and are therefore more likely to need to access car parking facilities. The cost of this can be exorbitant, and a drain on pensioners often meagre incomes.

Conference further notes that an excessive proportion of the charges ends up in the hands of private companies rather than benefitting the NHS.

***Yorkshire - Humberside Region***

## **SUPERFLUOUS**

### **SHARED DELEGATES ATTENDING NATIONAL RETIRED MEMBERS' CONFERENCES**

Conference notes that currently, it is not possible for branches or grouped branches to send 2 elected members to share one delegate seat to our conference as is allowed at National Delegate Conference.

In order to promote proportionality and/or fair representation and/or equal opportunities, conference asks the National Retired Members' Committee to take whatever steps are necessary to enable branches or grouped branches to send one 'shared delegation', if they so wish, to future National Retired Members' Conferences. Conference notes that in-line with current rule book arrangements for shared delegates at National Delegate Conference, the branch or grouped branches will be responsible for any extra costs incurred.

***Wigan Metropolitan***

## **NOT COMPETENT**

### **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***

## **CONFLICTS WITH AN EXISTING RULE**

### **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***

# **BEYOND REMIT OF THE CONFERENCE**

## **CONFERENCE FACILITIES**

This conference recognises the efforts being made to restructure the National Retired Members' Conference to enable the most productive use of time.

However there are other factors which mitigate against the ability of delegates to contribute and gain the most possible from conference. Conference recognises the work undertaken by staff in arranging conference. However, the following facilities would help delegates concentrate and therefore assist in meeting their entire responsibilities as delegates

1. A screen above the platform showing the speaker. Not all delegates who have some hearing loss can interpret sign language. Most gain more from lip-reading so need to have a close up view of the speaker.
2. Continue the use of sub-titles. Not all accents are easy to understand if you are not familiar with them.
3. Comfortable seating. Delegates with medical reasons may request suitable chairs. The remaining delegates should be seated in chairs with supportive backs and with adequate leg room to enable access and egress without the need to stand up every time a fellow delegate needs to get past. Older people are frequently not flexible enough to stand and resume their seat quickly thereby disturbing neighbouring delegates.
4. As far as is possible within the constraints of the conference premises, minimise noise distractions both in the conference hall and rooms for workshops and regional meetings.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to ensure the above facilities are provided for the 2018 National Retired Members' Conference onwards.

*Scotland Region*

## **NOT INTERNALLY CONSISTENT**

### **RETIRED MEMBERS OUGHT NOT TO BE PUT AT RISK**

Conference has long recognised that retired members are a resource to their branches, and there have been frequent calls at this conference to allow retired members' knowledge and experience to be called upon within the framework of UNISON national rules.

One way this has been achieved is through the continued training and accreditation of retired members as representatives at disciplinary and grievance hearings in

accordance with section 10 of the Employment Relations Act 1999 (section 10). Retired members can thus use their knowledge, training and experience to assist branches, with permission of course, in representing individuals, which can assist branches facing assaults on their hard won facility time.

However, conference is concerned that, despite UNISON accrediting and training retired members for section 10 representation since 2002, the UNISON national rules do not adequately protect certain section 10 accredited members, which includes most accredited retired members, by indemnification by the union from legal claims arising from representation.

Conference notes that Rule M5 states the National Executive Committee (NEC) may indemnify the following classes in respect of their representation:

- (a) any member of the NEC
- (b) any member of a national committee
- (c) any Trustee
- (d) any regional official
- (e) any branch official
- (f) any member of staff

Conference further notes that, under Rule D.7.2, a retired member would only be covered for their section 10 representation if they also happened to be the Branch Retired Members Secretary, under point (e) above, or a member of the National Retired Members Committee (NRMCC), per point (b).

Islington Retired Members submitted a rule change to the Islington Branch Committee which would have created a further category to Rule M5 to add "(g) any members who have been trained and accredited by the union to act as representatives in disciplinarys and grievances for the purposes of section 10 of the Employment Relations Act 1999". This was approved by the Islington Branch Committee and duly submitted, but was ruled out of order by the Standing Orders Committee (SOC) of National Delegate Conference (NDC), the reason being given that, in the opinion of that SOC, members acting as section 10 representatives were adequately covered by the existing rule.

Islington retired members are concerned about this ruling on two grounds:

Firstly, members, including retired members, who have taken the time to be trained and do section 10 representation, appear to have no indemnification unless they are Branch Retired Members Secretary or a member of the National Retired Members' Committee and,

Secondly, having regard to National Rule A.2.2, it appeared that the SOC of NDC may have acted in breach of Rule A.2.2.

Conference is concerned that without clarification of the position on indemnification of retired members undertaking section 10 representation, retired members may be at risk from unscrupulous employers and lawyers seeking to compromise the representation by intimation or threat of, or actual litigation.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to:

1. recognise that a question has arisen as to the interpretation of Rule M5, in relation to whether section 10 accredited representatives who do not hold national committee or branch officer post are indemnified under that Rule;
2. make an urgent referral of that question to the NEC under Rule A.2.2, for interpretation, and;
3. inform regional and branch Retired Members Secretaries of the NEC's conclusive and binding decision as soon as possible.

*Islington UNISON*

## **COULD PLACE THE UNION IN LEGAL JEOPARDY**

### **UNISON FUNDING OF RETIRED MEMBERS**

Text not printed on the advice of the legal officer.

*Cambridgeshire County UNISON*