

2019 Water, Environment & Transport Conference

UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

ACC Liverpool

16 Jun 2019

Negotiating and Bargaining

Bargaining

1. Oppose the imposition of Pay Awards and protect Collective Bargaining in the Environment Agency

This Conference notes with alarm the stance that the Environment Agency took in imposing the 2018 Pay Award on its employees, following the announcement by all trade unions who consulted their members that there was overwhelming rejection of the 2018 Pay Award.

The employer took little time to consider the news of rejection and simply responded by announcing it intended to impose the offer and set out the timetable for this to be enacted.

UNISON members in the Environment Agency have worked for an employer that traditionally respected the voice of trade union members. The employer previously respected the benefits of collective bargaining arrangements, jointly supported by the National Negotiating Group. The imposition of a pay award that UNISON members overwhelmingly rejected, without any recourse to further meaningful joint discussions, is a deplorable move and one that does not bode well for the future of industrial relations within the Environment Agency. It has the potential to herald an era where the employer simply imposes further changes to members pay, terms and conditions when UNISON members have rejected them.

This Conference supports the work of all UNISON representatives in the Environment Agency and calls upon the Service Group Executive to support those representatives, via the appropriate channels with the employer at local and national level, in opposing the imposition of changes to employment and in support of maintaining the jointly agreed collective bargaining arrangements that the employer has signed up to. Conference calls for the use of all appropriate UNISON communication channels to highlight this departure from collective bargaining arrangements that the Environment Agency has taken.

Environment Agency Nw Unison

2. Imposed Pay in the Environment Agency

In December 2018, UNISON members voted by over 9 to 1 to reject the Environment Agency's 2018 pay offer which would give workers an average rise of less than 1.3%. This amounts to an overall erosion of pay in real terms of over 20% since 2009. The other recognised unions which balloted also rejected the offer by similar margins. In response, the EA moved to immediately impose the offer, entirely unchanged. Subsequent consultation with UNISON members showed clear support for industrial action aimed at persuading the Agency to reopen negotiations to enable a fair settlement to be reached.

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The EA's decision to totally ignore the views of union members is unprecedented. Failing to effectively challenge it will weaken UNISON's hand in future pay and other negotiations and consultations, and lead to members questioning what support they were getting from their union at a time of great need. It would also impact on UNISON's future ability to recruit non-members – a successful campaign could be used as a great recruitment example of what TU membership and solidarity can achieve. It is therefore imperative that all avenues to challenge this decision are employed.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Provide all practical support to Environment Agency branches as they take forward their campaign to persuade the Agency to think again;
- 2) Use Labour Link and all other mechanisms to build political support for workers at the Agency to receive fair pay reward;
- 3) Ensure that these actions also apply if needed to negotiations to secure a better offer in the 2019 pay round, which is likely to be equally challenging.

Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive

3. The continuing drift from RPI to CPI and the impact on pay.

This conference notes the continuing desire by employers in the water sector to move away from RPI and embrace CPI when negotiating pay.

Excuses abound, from the employers, to explain the reasoning to change to CPI. One of the main excuses being given, is the regulator Ofwat's changes to the method used to increase consumer bills. To provide context, historically increases to water utility bills have been linked to the Retail Prices Index (RPI). With effect from 2020 Ofwat have made the decision to move to using the Consumer Process Index (CPI).

As a result of the change by Ofwat, employers are using this as an opportunity to use CPI for pay rather than RPI. The impact on members is significant with CPI on average running at around 1% less than RPI. As is always the case, Senior Management and Director pay, and bonuses are seen as exempt and increase at rates our members can only dream about.

RPI reflects the cost of living and is an absolute minimum requirement for our members just to stand still. Anything less is a deterioration of living standards.

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The myth that pay can only increase in line with the method for increasing bills needs to be busted. Pay negotiations are between the collective bargaining team and the employer and not restricted to misinterpreting the regulator.

This conference calls upon the service group executive to:

- 1) Collate the trends in pay awards across all the water sector;
- 2) Work with Ofwat on clarifying that employee pay is for the employer and employees to agree;
- 3) Encourage all water branches too, as a minimum, push for RPI for pay awards.

Yorkshire Water

4. Training Mental Health First-Aiders in WET Workplaces

Conference notes that since 1981, workplaces have been required to provide adequate and appropriate first aid equipment, facilities and people, to ensure that employees can be given immediate help if they are injured or taken ill at work. Yet in 2019, there is still no statutory requirement for employers to provide mental health first aid assistance to employees.

Nonetheless, branches can still negotiate locally with WET employers to invest in mental health first aiders.

Since 2007, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England has trained over 300,000 people in Mental Health First Aid and aim to train 5 million. Scotland's Mental Health first Aid (SMHFA), MHFA Wales and Action Mental Health in Northern Ireland do similar work. Mental health first aid does not teach people to treat or diagnose mental health problems. Instead, the training teaches people how to offer initial support until appropriate professional help is received or until the crisis resolves – just like traditional first aid.

We know mental health first aiders are no substitute for professional support or adequate prevention of work-related stress. However encouraging employers to sign up to mental health first aid training for staff should form part of a wider strategy for addressing mental health in WET workplaces.

The Department of Health encourages all employers in England to provide mental health first aid training and has recently announced plans to train 15 million people in mental health first aid.

Conference calls on the SGE to:

- 1) Raise awareness of MHFA training with branches and regions, encouraging them to include this in their overall mental health bargaining with WET employers;

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- 2) Continue to publicise UNISON's mental health bargaining guide;
- 3) Support the campaign to require employers to provide mental health first aid as well as physical first aid.

National Disabled Members Committee

5. Fair representation of Black people in the recruitment process

In 2009, the Department for Work and Pensions embarked on an experiment to understand the scarcity of non-white faces in top managerial posts in UK organisations. 2,000 fake job applications were created in response to 1,000 real vacancies across multiple sectors, professions and pay grades. Similar CVs – one with a “traditional Anglo-Saxon” name and one with a name that appeared to come from a migrant community – were sent to employers.

This bold initiative was met with resistance from image conscious business leaders who labelled the experiment “unethical”.

“A waste of taxpayers’ cash” was the label given by Theresa May, who was the Conservative shadow minister for work and pensions at the time.

The results conclusively showed that applicants with British-sounding names were far more likely to be called to interview for a position than those whose names were of another heritage.

Ten years later, it perhaps comes as no surprise, that Black people in Britain's top managerial posts or positions of power are noticeable by their absence and this is no different within the WET sector, for example the executive team for Thames Water does not have a Black person.

Research conducted last year by the Guardian and Operation Black Vote found just 3.5 percent of non-white faces at the top of the UK's leading 1,000 plus organisations, compared with 12.9 percent in the general population. The lack of representation is much worse along gender lines, as it found Black women occupied less than a quarter of the 3.5 percent.

In her independent review of race in the workplace, Baroness McGregor-Smith found that Black people are much more likely to be found to be overqualified for their jobs than white colleagues, but white employees are more likely to be promoted than their Black counterparts. This is also reflected in the high number of Black applicants for STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) related studies, but these applicants are so very rarely seen in any senior position in the WET sector. This clearly shows that the credentials, experience or potential of those who identify as Black are there, the only issue is they don't receive the support to progress in their chosen careers.

Conference is clear that many of our Black members continue to experience unfair representation during recruitment, more so for senior roles. It is not a glass ceiling

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keeping them down but a concrete one. To compound the issue, there is also a lack of mentoring or career development. Black members who can and do develop their skills are being rebuffed in the recruitment for managerial roles but then are given more responsibilities, but still paid disproportionately less than their white counterpart doing the same if not similar role.

Conference calls on the WET Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Work with the National Black Members Committee to produce guidelines for regions and branches on how to negotiate inclusive and fairer recruitment and selection policies with employers;
- 2) Consider how to motivate those employed in the WET sector to improve career progression for Black staff;
- 3) Approach UNISON's Learning & Organising Services and discuss how best to support the initiative in point 2.

National Black Members' Committee

6. Raising the profile of Black activists

UNISON is committed to fair representation and proportionality (Rule D4.1). However, within the WET sector we do not see enough Black members represented at branch, regional and national committee level.

Raising the profile of Black activists within Water, Environment and Transport employers and increasing the number of Black members involved at branch, regional and national levels within the WET service group and wider union is critical in meeting UNISON's recruitment and organising objectives.

Conference also notes the Leadership School where activists can take steps to develop their leadership skills and take up positions of increased responsibility. Members who have attended this school have gone on to become branch secretaries and employed staff.

Black members play a valuable role in ensuring the union and branches identify and take up equality issues and actively challenge discrimination within the workplace. This is key in meeting the unions current challenges as no workplace where discrimination exists can be truly organised.

Conference asks that the WET Service Group Executive works across regions to encourage WET branches to do what they can to empower Black workers to become activists and to become involved with their self organised groups. Encouragement should be given to help Black workers become stewards and to increase participation in their Branch Committees with the view to becoming active in their regions and the wider union.

Conference asks that the WET Service Group Executive seek to:

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- 1) Conduct a survey of branches nationally to establish how many branches have Black self organised groups and how we can encourage this development in branches to support promotion of becoming active in WET and UNISON;
- 2) Work with the National Black Members Committee on joint initiatives that will encourage Black workers to join UNISON and become active within its structures;
- 3) Work with regions and branches to increase the number of Black activists in the WET sector;
- 4) Remind branches and members by circulating information of the support and guidance available to Black members to become activists;
- 5) Report on progress to the WET conference 2020 with a view to continuing the work and providing regular updates to the WET sector.

National Black Members' Committee

7. Making the LGBT group more inclusive – the + factor

Conference celebrates UNISON's work over the past 25 years to promote women's equality and participation and to tackle sexism and sex discrimination at work, in our union and across society. Like other service groups, the Water, Environment and Transport service group has a majority of women members and our rules and practices to encourage women's participation are vital to achieving our equality objectives. Likewise, in our negotiations, it is vital that we demand employers consider the impact of policies and practices on women workers and take active steps on equal pay and to tackle all forms of workplace discrimination. Considerations of gender and monitoring of women's progress or experiences are key to much of this.

Conference notes however that an overemphasis on gender where gender has no relevance can have the effect of reinforcing gender stereotypes, which can in turn reinforce gender job segregation and the glass ceiling and have no recognition for workers who do not identify as women or men.

Conference believes that workers should be able to attend work according to their gender identity, whether this is female, male or non-binary. This may mean small but important changes to systems and facilities so that they are inclusive, such as inclusive gender and title options in electronic records and non-gendered dress codes.

By becoming more inclusive for our members we also become more inclusive to the people we work with.

Conference notes that the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) self organised group (SOG) has always sought to be fully representative of its diverse membership, in line with UNISON's rules. It notes that the LGBT group works with inclusive, umbrella definitions of bisexual and transgender. Its bi network is for all

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members who feel attraction to more than one gender, and its trans network is for all types of self-identifying trans people; for people with trans backgrounds and members whose gender identity does not fit into the gender binary i.e. non-binary members.

However, despite these inclusive definitions some members who the LGBT group considers to be part of the group are put off. The LGBT group hears repeatedly that when members attend its meetings, they feel welcomed and included, but before they attend they had been unsure. This is particularly the case for members who do not personally use the label LGBT about themselves, for example members who identify as queer. It is clear that there must be many other members who are put off and never get over that barrier.

Conference notes that the national LGBT committee undertook consultation during 2018 on making the LGBT SOG fully inclusive. This followed a motion from the national young members' forum to 2017 LGBT conference highlighting the growth in the number of people, and young people in particular, identifying their sexual orientation and gender identity in many different ways beyond a binary definition, and expressing their preference to see the LGBT group move to organise on an LGBT + (plus) basis.

The overwhelming majority of the consultation responses were in favour of the proposal to change the group's name to LGBT plus (+).

Putting the + in the group's name would not change its existing remit of being a self-organised group for all members who experience prejudice because of their gender identity or sexual orientation, but would demonstrate an inclusiveness beyond that conveyed by the current name so that people who the group consider to be members are not put off from participating.

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

- 1) Gather good practice examples from branches organising in the WET service group of inclusive employer policies and practices, including in record-keeping, language, any dress codes and in the provision of safe and accessible gender-neutral facilities;
- 2) Continue to promote good practice across the service group;
- 3) Encourage support amongst WET members for the rule change from LGBT conference to national delegate conference on the LGBT group changing its name to LGBT+;
- 4) Circulate the national LGBT committee's briefing on the group's name becoming LGBT+, LGBT bargaining factsheets and how to be a good trans ally leaflet to branches organising in the service group.

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Committee

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8. Terms and Conditions eroded by stealth in the Water Industry

Conference notes with concern a trend within the water industry for workplace agreements to be circumvented by local managers. This is frequently done on a “trial basis”, in localised areas, without any systematic or meaningful consultation. Often the agreed communication and consultation channels between the companies and the unions are ignored on the pretext that the impact is small and only affects a few workers. Matters which are covered by agreements, including core terms and conditions such as hours of duty and spans of responsibility, are involved.

For employees in these circumstances there is often pressure to participate in these trials, to not be seen as being obstructive to progress, with no ability to retain established terms and conditions if the new ways of working do not suit them. Employees applying for or transferred to roles where such “trial” terms are in operation cannot know the permanent terms that will apply. At the same time the trial terms can become long-lasting or permanent without ever having been properly negotiated as set out in recognition agreements. There is often no clear criteria for success or failure of these trials, nor who or what body would determine what would happen after the trial period.

This is clearly unacceptable and means that changes to core terms and conditions are being made stealthily, inconsistently and without proper consultation involving UNISON and other trade unions.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Survey water branches to understand the prevalence of “trial basis” terms and conditions changes within the sector;
- 2) Share details of relevant developments among water branches through the Water Industry Sector Committee;
- 3) Circulate guidance to branches on how to respond proactively to proposals for “trial” alterations to key working practices; and
- 4) Support branches in resisting such practices wherever they come to light.

Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive

9. Feeling Good in the WET sector

Conference welcomes the fact that more conversations are being held around the issues of mental health, however, for many it is still a taboo subject and for others a painful subject. This however does not stop the effect it has on people, regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, beliefs. Mental health does not discriminate and can affect anyone of us.

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Conference also notes that employers are failing in their duty of care towards all staff with mental health issues, particularly when these issues are caused by the unrealistic demands placed on staff by employers. Call centres are a classic example, where employers not only expect members to deal with customer queries within specific timescales but also place restrictions on the number of comfort breaks allowed and the length of time they are allowed for said comfort breaks.

It is important to note however, that mental health issues can be caused by a range of factors both inside and outside of the workplace and can often be a combination of both, which means this issue is not exclusive to call centre workers and can affect other members within our Service Group, both those working in offices and out in the field.

There is a worrying increase in the number of members affected by mental health within the WET sector and to try and help deal with this, Our Occupational Health team within Yorkshire Water have been delivering Mental Health First Aid courses to help recognise the signs of mental health issues and to start conversations around mental health

These courses while primarily aimed at managers (and offered to the whole workforce) are followed up with refresher courses every two years. This is to ensure people are still aware of what signs to look for and to update them on any changes in the law which may impact / affect people suffering with mental health issues and managers who work with them.

Our Occupational Health team also offer other services to help deal with (life or day to day) issues which may affect our members such as counselling, CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy), physio sessions and stress management plans for members who are returning to work after time off with stress / anxiety. Also available are - Slimming world/Smoking cessation/Menopause group/New and Expectant Parent group/ Fertility Group/ Sleep/eating disorders/ and alcohol and substance abuse and dependence/ men's cancer / women's cancer, and they test new courses out on TU reps first for constructive feedback.

Yorkshire Water would welcome the opportunity to work with others in the WET sector to explore different training methods to see which work most effectively in helping to deal with mental health issues faced by our members.

To this end, we ask that the Executive organise a seminar for all WET branches around the subject of mental health, facilitated by those who deal with these issues on a regular basis to discuss best practices for dealing with these issues.

Yorkshire Water

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Health and Safety

10. Water, Environment & Transport Service Group Health and Safety Seminar 2020

Conference notes the success of WET specific Health and Safety seminars in 2016 and 2018.

Due to the ever-changing Health and Safety risks experienced by UNISON members employed within the Water, Environment and Transport Service Group, we call upon the Service Group Executive in conjunction with UNISON's Health and Safety Unit to convene a similar event as early as is reasonably practicable in 2020 for the benefit of members.

United Utilities

11. Support for UNISON Representatives in the WET Service Group

As staffing levels plummet in both the public and private sectors, UNISON representatives in the areas covered by the WET Service Group find themselves dealing with more and more cases including those of stress and mental health.

This in turn puts pressure on representatives themselves who get personally involved in some such cases and require more support than is currently available.

Conference calls on the WETSGE to work with all appropriate areas in UNISON and outside if necessary, to develop a package of assistance for representatives who may suffer ill health as a result of supporting members.

United Utilities

12. UNISON Activists and Mental Health

Conference is concerned to note that increasingly both branch activists and lay officials are finding themselves suffering extreme stress and anxiety when dealing with the levels of case load that they are presented with.

In some cases representatives in WET have been placed under extreme personal pressure by employers.

Conference notes that these pressures on activists are forcing them to think seriously about giving up being an activist. The fewer in number the WET activists, then the more caseload we have to do in branches. Attacks on facility time are reducing numbers even further.

We need to be fit and well in order to represent our members, particularly those who are also suffering from poor mental health.

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In the WET sector staff suffering poor mental health are increasingly being subjected by management to harsh sickness absence and performance procedures and policies. If or when these members get dismissed there should be no question that they will get the full support of our union by representatives who can think and work effectively on their behalf.

This is a major issue in our union. Activists in WET are asking what can we do when facing these challenges and where do we go as activists for support when we need it?

Conference therefore calls upon the WET service group executive to:

- 1) Work with the National Executive Committee to produce specific guidelines on dealing with support for stewards and activists dealing with workload pressures;
- 2) Look at providing resources to promote mental health first aid training to activists in UNISON and appointing mental health champions in branches.

National Women's Committee

13. LGBT Mental Health Workplace Initiatives

Conference notes that there have been some staff wellbeing initiatives by employers in the Water, Environment and Transport service group related to mental health support, these are not consistent and there is still further to go for employee wellbeing.

Conference recognises that at least one in four of us will experience mental health problems at some time in our lives. We believe that awareness needs to continue to be raised amongst WET employers about mental issues in the workplace, and recognises that this must be inclusive of mental health issues relating to LGBT (explain) staff.

Reports by Stonewall and Scottish Trans Alliance highlight that LGBT people are more likely to have mental health issues with 3% to 5% lesbian, gay and bisexual people attempting to take their own life. This increases to 16% for young lesbian and bisexual women and to 5% for Black gay and bisexual men. 84% of trans people had thought about ending their lives at some point, 35% overall had attempted suicide at least once and 25% had attempted suicide more than once.

Conference welcomes the UNISON branch guidance "Bargaining on mental health policies", which includes steps WET branches can take to raise mental health issues with their employers. The Guidance recommends that branches seek to work with employers to review the organisations policies to promote mental well being and to support staff with mental health problems.

We call upon the Water, Environment and Transport service group executive to:

- 1) Continue to promote the bargaining guidance to WET branches;

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- 2) Urge WET branches to revisit wellbeing, sickness, harassment and equalities policies and make sure that they inclusive and up to date;
- 3) Continue to campaign for better support for the mental health of staff and to consider using events such as world mental health day as a focus for raising mental health awareness within the service group and promoting good practice;
- 4) Promote the training of stewards and health and safety reps in WET branches on mental health awareness;
- 5) Encourage WET branches to urge their employers to provide training on workplace mental health issues and to ensure that this is inclusive of the equality dimensions.

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Committee

Campaigning

Campaigns

14. Dealing with High Temperatures in Workplaces Covered by the Water, Environment and Transport Service Group

In the unexpected heat of the long summer of 2018, workers employed in the Water, Environment and Transport Service Group experienced difficulties undertaking their normal roles with inadequate provision provided by employers.

Whilst mains fed water coolers are becoming more common in our workplaces following a long campaign by our Service Group within UNISON other areas can still be improved.

We call upon the Service Group Executive to work in conjunction with UNISON's Health and Safety Unit and other relevant parties both internally and externally to launch a campaign initially in our Service Group to benefit members by pointing out the risks associated with working in high temperatures until proper legislation in this regard is brought in by a future Government.

United Utilities

15. Annual hearing tests for contact centre workers in the WETSG

Conference notes the continual increase in the number of UNISON members working on phones in contact centres in employers covered by the Water, Environment & Transport Service Group.

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Currently, United Utilities only provides audio tests for employees reaching the upper noise limits as recommended by the HSE such as operational employees in hearing protection areas.

Conference however believes that continual phone headset use can have a detrimental effect on UNISON members' hearing.

We therefore call upon the Service Group Executive in conjunction with UNISON's Health and Safety Unit to undertake work to gauge the scale of the issue and consider launching a campaign within the Service Group for annual hearing tests to become standard practice to assist our members' health and safety whilst working in such environments.

United Utilities

16. Negotiating disability leave policies with WET employers

Disability leave is time off from work for a reason related to someone's disability. It is an example of a reasonable adjustment which WET employers have a duty to provide to disabled staff under the Equality Act 2010. It is different to sick leave – in many cases the worker is not actually sick – and it can be planned or un-planned.

Not all disabled workers need to take disability leave. However those that do often find that WET employers refuse to acknowledge their legal duty. These workers can find that what should be counted as disability leave is instead logged as sick leave and they end up on a capability, with the potential to lose their job.

However, if jointly negotiated workplace policies are in place, then these can overcome this reluctance to recognise the right to disability leave as a reasonable adjustment by some WET employers and managers. Some WET employers have already agreed a disability leave policy and where this is done jointly with the union it can give guidance to both managers and staff and ensure fairness and consistency.

UNISON has produced bargaining guidance for branches to help negotiate with employers and this includes a model policy that WET employers can agree with the union. The guide gives some examples of disability leave including:

- 1) Rehabilitation training for a newly disabled worker learning to manage a condition;
- 2) Cancer treatment and rehabilitation;
- 3) Waiting for the employer to make reasonable adjustments;
- 4) Assessment for conditions such as dyslexia;
- 5) Counselling for a mental health problem;
- 6) Period of sickness related to disability.

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UNISON's key bargaining aims when negotiating with WET employers are that disability leave should be:

- a) Paid leave;
- b) Counted separately to ordinary sick leave;
- c) Removed from trigger calculations in capability procedures etc;
- d) Of no maximum duration, the legal test is what is "reasonable"

Agreeing a disability leave policy with WET employers not only helps individual members and reduces the time our stewards spend on case work but it can also be a good news story about the benefits of collective bargaining to use in recruiting new members.

Conference therefore calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- i) Collect information from WET branches to identify existing policies on disability leave and share good practise;
- ii) Circulate the UNISON Disability Leave bargaining guide and model policy to WET branches and regions and urge them to raise and negotiate disability leave policies with their employers;
- iii) Support appropriate campaigns for disability leave to be a statutory requirement written into legislation.

National Disabled Members Committee

17. Waste Water Laundry Provision

Conference, the Water Industry has for some time turned a blind eye to the fact that waste water employees are taking work wear home to launder. It is understood the reason for this is that the waste water industry has not whole heartily been able to find a laundry provision that accommodates the ability to wash and dry all waste water work wear and PPE clothing.

The fact is that employees across the waste water sector are washing contaminated work wear in their own domestic washers which are also used to wash their families clothing. Many of these employees are not always in the knowledge of the risks it poses to their family's health, safety and well-being.

This motion is an important part of Central Water branch's strategy to put pressure on the employer. Central Water branch will be looking to use it in mobilising stakeholder pressure on the employer, and persuading non-members they are tackling this key workplace issue.

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What should be in place:

- 1) Information and guidance readily available for waste water employees, to further understand the risk of taking soiled/contaminated work wear home
- 2) Each employee to be issued enough work wear and PPE to enable a wear and wash rotation throughout the week
- 3) A fit for purpose laundry provision for all waste water employees. Depending on space and head count, the laundry provision at each operational site should include:
 - a) Category 5 Industrial washers and dryers for commercial use that can wash at higher temperatures that will kill any bacteria that gets into the fibres of the clothing;
 - b) Enzyme loaded washing detergents that target and kill the bacteria during the washing cycle.

Allow all waste employees the ability to wash and dry work wear and PPE at their workplace.

Remove the risk of cross contamination in the home environment on a daily basis.

This conference calls on the service group executive, to conduct a health and safety campaign for the provision of fit for purpose laundry provisions across the waste water industry.

Central Water

18. Bus services in crisis - a 21st century solution

2019 is yet another challenging year for bus services, with operators facing financial pressures and local authorities facing further budget cuts. Increased congestion and road closures due to roadworks mean that operators have to allocate additional resources to serve reducing demand. The result looks like further cuts to and withdrawal of bus services across the United Kingdom, which will affect the job security of our members working in transport and the erosion of their terms and conditions.

The lack of funding means that bus services often fail to meet the changing needs of customers. They often don't cater for continental shift patterns; there are fewer or no Saturday services or they start later and finish earlier, meaning that people cannot get to work; there are even greater reductions to Sunday services – even during shopping hours; and there is often little integration and connections with other modes of transport – especially during the evening. The increasing dependency on electronic journey planners means that there is little awareness of bus networks and the frequency of services amongst the population as they seldom see the whole timetable.

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As the United Kingdom struggles with the challenges of climate change, buses are seen as part of the problem, rather than part of the solution. There needs to be a coherent strategy on alternative technologies that deliver financially sustainable products. At present electric vehicles have a range of 150 – 200 miles per day, but the buses of an inter-urban operator typically cover between 250 and 300 miles per day. The additional costs of these vehicles means that operators look to reduce costs in other areas of their business, often support staff including UNISON transport members.

To safeguard jobs and protect transport member's terms and conditions, Conference calls on the Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive, working with the National Executive Council, Regions, Labour Link and other stakeholders, as appropriate, to:

- 1) Campaign for a fully funded, integrated, publicly owned public transport system committed to paying the Living Wage Foundation's living wage which meets the needs of society;
- 2) Work with the Campaign for Better Transport to promote awareness of and improve bus services throughout the United Kingdom;
- 3) Promote buses as part of the solution to meet climate change targets.

Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive

Motions Ruled Out of Order

Beyond remit of the Conference

New deal for buses

Conference notes with concern the impact the continued cuts to bus services across the UK is having on communities.

These cuts in services are leaving communities isolated and passengers dependent upon services that are often infrequent and unreliable.

Conference notes that although buses are the most flexible form of public transport, they receive even lower subsidies than rail services. They are being cut at an alarming rate and are not afforded the importance they should be given the traffic congestion and its alarming environmental impact in our towns and cities.

Conference believes that bus services should be reregulated as a minimum, to provide an accountable, sustainable, green, integrated and affordable service for all.

Conference calls on the Water, Environment and Transport Service Group Executive to work with Labour Link and all other appropriate bodies to campaign for decent bus services and for adequate government funding to halt these cuts as part of a new deal for public transport that recognises the vital role bus services can play in

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addressing social isolation, and tackling terrible effects of vehicle pollution in our communities.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Transport