



Service Group Conference 2020

Preliminary Agenda

14 - 15 June 2020

Brighton Centre

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Pay

1. UNISON – the union for low paid women

Conference recognises that local government employers continue to undervalue the work of our low paid women members in councils and in the privatised services. No service can exist without the cleaners, caterers, clerical and care workers that are predominately women.

Conference notes the progress in some councils of securing the Living Wage which benefits low paid women most. However, there is still much to be done.

Conference recognises that organising in the sectors that are predominately low paid and female is challenging, that there remain barriers to low paid women's involvement and that more work is needed to involve more low paid women in the union.

Conference believes that the views of and active involvement of low paid women in developing our bargaining and campaigning priorities is essential to ensure they are relevant and that they inspire these members to get active and to increase recruitment.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Develop a strategy to recruit and organise low paid women in local government and contracted out cleaning, catering, clerical and care jobs;
- 2) Ensure all pay claims and bargaining agendas recognise the needs of low paid women;
- 3) Ensure that campaigning on pay or other issues is relevant to low paid women.

South Lanarkshire

2. The ethnicity pay gap

Conference notes the report by the Office for National Statistics on "Ethnicity Pay Gaps in Great Britain: 2018" produced for the first time in July 2019.

Conference notes that earlier research, e.g. by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in 2017 and by the Resolution Foundation in 2018 shows that the ethnicity pay gap is long standing, and that while some progress has been made to close these gaps many ethnic groups still experience lower pay than white British workers, with workers in Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic groups receiving the lowest median hourly pay.

In London, the percentage difference in median hourly pay between people of a white ethnicity and all those who belong to an ethnic minority group stands at 21.7%, the highest in the country.

In 2018 the government began a consultation on whether they should legislate to compel individual employers to report their ethnicity pay gap as is now done for the gender pay gap, however the results of this consultation have not yet been published.

Conference calls upon the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Explore with the National Black Members Committee how we might approach the National Executive Committee to campaign for the ethnicity pay gap to be subject to similar reporting requirements as the gender pay gap in local government authorities;
- 2) Research how the ethnicity pay gap affects local government workers, e.g. by surveying members and branches;
- 3) Consider producing bargaining guidance for branches and regions to address ethnicity pay gap in individual employers;
- 4) Work with the National Black Members Committee and National Young Members Forum to campaign against this issue and promote the campaign among young Black workers.

National Black Members' Committee

3. Developing and expanding social partnership and fair work in Wales and across the UK

UNISON Cymru/Wales supports the principle of a “Fair Work Nation”. As the largest trade union in Wales, we speak on behalf of around 100,000 members and their families and work with 49 affiliated unions through the Wales TUC

We strongly support the Welsh government’s Social Partnership Bill, currently progressing through the Senedd, which aims to strengthen social partnership arrangements by putting them on a statutory footing. Wales faces severe long term economic and public service challenges which have been significantly worsened by the UK government’s austerity agenda. Despite unemployment levels in Wales falling back to pre-financial crisis levels of below 5% there has been no corresponding rise in pay. Instead there has been a decline in real terms pay since 2008. In many low-paid sectors casualised employment, low hours and zero hours contracts have become the norm.

In this context, UNISON Cymru/Wales supports the Welsh government’s strengthening of social dialogue and social partnership as an essential democratic and constitutional function. By underpinning, enhancing and consolidating our social partnership the Welsh government is setting an example for the whole of the UK on how to deliver a more equal society.

Partnership is crucial to maintaining and building employment in Wales and the UK as a whole.

A Welsh government committed to making Wales a Fair Work Nation must take responsibility for ensuring that every policy, financial and legislative lever at its

disposal are fully utilised in enforcing the delivery of Fair Work outcomes and that it provides suitable resource to that delivery.

There needs to be a fundamental shift in the perception and treatment of workers' rights, the democratic representative role of unions and the legitimacy of tripartite social partnership. The proposed social partnership legislation is an opportunity to ensure that, wherever decisions are made about working people's lives, that their democratic trade unions are active participants.

The definition of Welsh social partnership is that it is:

- 1) Tripartite: Consisting of government, trade unions and public/private sector employers;
- 2) Representative: Involving organisations providing the collective voice of workers and employers;
- 3) Accountable: Able to speak on behalf of their sectors/members by being fully accountable to them.

On the basis that the Welsh government's proposals meet that definition, UNISON fully supports this initiative which includes the creation of a new Social Partnership Council.

Social Partnership Council's role should be to:

- a) Reach agreements on workforce issues within the devolved public sector for the purpose of improving public services.
- b) Reach agreements on what is expected of organisations and businesses receiving public support in so far as workforce issues are concerned;
- c) Consider generally how social partnership and Fair Work can improve efficiency and effectiveness so as to achieve a prosperous Wales and improve people's wellbeing;
- d) Consider how government policy, expenditure and legislation can best contribute to a prosperous Wales and improve people's wellbeing.

UNISON is calling for a clear statement of intent saying:

The expected outcomes of a Social Partnership approach are to prioritise delivery of long term social and economic equality for Wales; and, through grants and procurement processes we will:

- i) Significantly increase collective bargaining coverage;
- ii) Increase trade union access to and presence in workplaces.

Which will:

- A) Address in-work poverty.
- B) Reduce gender pay gap across all sectors

C) Ensure ethical standards of employment across all sectors

The development of this social partnership and fair work agenda will provide the positive potential to progress a common NJC grading structure and terms and conditions in all 22 local authorities within Wales.

At present the 22 local authorities in Wales manage 22 different versions of job evaluation processes, giving 22 different grading profiles and differing terms and conditions.

This is ludicrous and makes recruitment and retention of staff problematic with local government workers continuously migrating around the 22 local authorities.

The NHS in Wales has shown a different approach can work, operating an all Wales agenda for change policy with every Health Trust in Wales operating one job evaluation scheme, one set of terms and conditions and identical posts in all Trusts.

In the light of the above developments Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- I) Work with the Cymru/Wales region to review the additional resources which will be required to positively engage with the developing Welsh Government social partnership and fair work agenda;
- II) Review the potential of the Welsh Social Partnership Bill and the Fair Work programme in Wales and how this could be developed across the nations and regions of the UK;
- III) Support and work with the UNISON Cymru/Wales Local Government committee in maximising the positive potential of these developments to develop a strategy to create common NJC grading structure and terms and conditions within Wales;
- IV) To look at how a strategy for a common NJC grading structure in Wales could be rolled out across nations and regions of the UK, taking due note of the wishes and objectives set by the respective Devolved Nations and Regions within UNISON;
- V) Share information on the development the Social Partnership Bill and Wales Fair Work Programme with all nations and regions' Local Government Committees;
- VI) To work with the Labour Link committee in developing and advancing these strategies.

Cymru/Wales Region

4. Food Standards Agency – pay, terms and conditions

Conference notes that our members employed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) work tirelessly to make sure the public eat safe and clean meat, dairy and seafood. Their pay, terms and conditions need urgent improvement to reward that

commitment. Environmental health and trading standards officers working in food also deserve a decent pay rise.

Conference further notes that the FSA's 'Regulating Our Future' proposals are nothing more than an attempt to shift responsibility to the private sector to devalue the role of regulation in the food industry. UNISON in response, has launched the Protect Our Food Campaign to support the public servants working in the human food chain.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to continue to defend our members' terms and conditions, negotiated with the FSA. It also calls for the protection of the FSA, environmental health and trading standards as an independent regulatory function by:

- 1) Continuing to robustly negotiate for higher wages for our members through collective bargaining at the FSA;
- 2) Opposing privatisation and deregulation of meat hygiene inspection, environmental health, and trading standards;
- 3) Opposing Regulating Our Future and promoting the Protect Our Food Campaign;
- 4) Opposing any attempt to reduce environmental, regulation and standards in the meat, dairy, and seafood industries now we have left the European Union;
- 5) Campaigning against trade deals that lessen our high environmental and hygiene standards;
- 6) Raising the profile of all our members who work in food by promoting fair regulation and in-house service delivery by the FSA and local authorities.

Food Standards Agency Committee

5. Local government funding and pay

Conference notes that UNISON members in local government provide vital preventative services. Those providing social care play a key role in preventing the public from needing to rely on the NHS. Those providing youth services help prevent the need for the intervention of police and justice services. In these and many other cases, investment in local government services and workers saves the government far more money down the line.

Local services also play a crucial positive role in building and developing positive communities – for example schools, public health, housing and libraries.

Conference believes that in making huge cuts in local government funding, and persistently refusing to address the problems caused, the Westminster government has failed these services. In doing so it is damaging the health and well-being of people who rely on those services, as well as those providing them.

UNISON members in local government have borne the brunt of these funding cuts. Since 2010, local government workers covered by the NJC have seen the value of their pay fall by more than 22% on average; hundreds of thousands of jobs have been lost; and there has been a big increase in workplace mental health problems as workers struggled to provide vital services, under increasing demand, with fewer resources. The decade of austerity has had a particularly harsh impact on low-paid and part-time workers, the majority of whom are women.

Across the UK, local authorities are struggling even to meet their statutory duties - failing to provide some services they are legally obliged to provide. In Cymru/Wales, the Well-being of Future Generations Act gives public bodies including local authorities a legal obligation to improve social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being. These obligations require proper resources and Conference is clear that the Westminster government has a responsibility to fund local authorities properly, both directly and through the Barnett Formula for the devolved nations.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Develop strong positive messages about the vital work local government workers do, building on the Local Service Champions campaign to raise awareness among the public and politicians and boost support for all of our pay campaigns;
- 2) Launch a vigorous campaign for fair funding for local government, to ensure our members receive the pay they deserve for delivering high quality services;
- 3) Campaign for NJC and other sector-wide pay systems to apply across privatised and outsourced services, to end the scandal whereby workers in services like social care are denied pay increases that UNISON has fought hard for;
- 4) Work with the NEC and devolved nations to develop policies and proposals for future local government funding, based on fair and decent pay for local government workers, provision of high-quality services, and local democracy.

NJC Local Government Committee

6. The future of the National Joint Council for England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Conference notes that the National Joint Council (NJC) structure and negotiations have formed the basis of pay determination for the majority of local workers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland since 1997. More than 400,000 UNISON members are covered by sector wide NJC pay negotiations. These negotiations cover pay increases, conditions of service, and equal pay and job evaluation exercises such as the major re-structure of the pay spine in 2018.

Conference believes that national or sector-wide collective bargaining remains and should remain the bedrock of our approach to pay negotiations. Trade unions are built on the principle of collectivism, and the bigger we are, the stronger we are. Conference also believes, given that local government workers covered by the NJC scheme have seen the value of their pay fall, that it is time to look seriously and

critically at the success and failures of this approach in relation to pay, conditions of service and job evaluation.

Conference also notes that despite the massive efforts of members, activists, branches, regions, the sector and the service group, in recent years we have struggled to negotiate pay increases that have kept up with the cost of living and the savings associated with low or no pay rises has not protected jobs and services. The external factors we have faced, such as the government's austerity factor and years and years of privatisation and outsourcing, have been huge. Faced with a newly elected Boris Johnson-led Conservative government, these challenges will continue.

Conference believes that it is important that we review our practices and experiences, to learn from mistakes and build on successes, so as to make best use of the union's resources and do the best for our members.

Conference therefore calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive, working with the NJC Committee, regions and branches, to conduct a review of the National Joint Council and how it functions, assessing all of its benefits, costs and drawbacks for members, and to report back to Local Government Conference on an interim basis to 2021 and in full in 2022.

NJC Local Government Committee

7. Multi-year pay claims

Conference notes that current Local Government Service Group policy stipulates that NJC pay claims must be one-year claims, with no flexibility to submit multi-year claims. In many of the pay negotiations in recent years, the NJC Employers' Side have made multi-year pay offers, which members are consulted on and can accept or reject, but our initial claims have to be limited to one year.

Conference believes that there are benefits and drawbacks to this approach. Sometimes, we would not want tie ourselves to a multi-year pay settlement which could end up having given members a worse deal, for example if inflation were to rise more than expected.

But multi-year settlements can bring benefits. Many members welcome the stability and certainty that multi-year settlements provide. A multi-year claim could strengthen our case for a better pay deal, as employers will be able to plan more effectively over the medium term. Furthermore, the longer period between negotiations would give UNISON the opportunity to build stronger, more effective campaigns and to build organisation locally, to help overcome some of the constraints put in place by the Trade Union Act.

The sector committees within the Local Government Service Group are responsible for proposing draft pay claims and consulting members on their content. Conference believes that these sector committees should have the flexibility to consider all relevant factors and propose a pay claim covering one or more years, as appropriate, and to consult members on that basis.

Conference instructs the Service Group Executive to permit all of the sector committees within the service group to submit pay claims of one or more years, providing they follow all existing procedures for consulting members, including consulting members explicitly on the length of the claim as well as the contents of the claim.

Eastern Region

8. Organising around pay and industrial action

Conference recognises the efforts made by the sector committees and branches in pursuing the union's 'Pay Up Now!' campaign.

Conference notes the Conservative government's promises around public sector pay. But conference does not accept that the Johnson government has any concern for public sector pay. It is clear that without concerted political, legal and industrial campaigning from UNISON and other trade unions, public sector pay will continue to fall behind.

Conference believes that organising and pay campaigning are intrinsically linked. The larger and more active our membership is, the stronger our pay campaigns will be. And with stronger pay campaigns, we will recruit more members and identify more active reps and local leaders.

Conference notes the success of the Scottish local government committee and branches' pay campaign over 2017 and 2018 which resulted in record levels of recruitment, member engagement and improved offers. Conference believes that while digital balloting is no substitute for face to face engagement with members, it is a vital complement to it, and if used appropriately can help strengthen the union's recruitment and organising.

Conference affirms that industrial action conducted within the law and UNISON's rule book is an important plank of our pay campaigns and must remain so. The Trade Union Act 2016 put in place unacceptable and stringent constraints on our members' right to take industrial action in defence of their pay, chiefly the 50% turnout threshold. But many UNISON campaigns at local level have shown that when the issue is deeply felt and the membership is organised, the threshold can be met, and successful action can take place. This in turn increases recruitment and organisation. It is vital that we learn the lessons from these campaigns.

This Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Work with sectors, regions and branches to develop a service group wide strategy that links pay and organising by responding to members' priorities and organising and building campaigns around them. This work must all be done while respecting and abiding by the democratic autonomy of the various sectors within the Service Group, and the union's devolution protocol;
- 2) Further explore a broad range of digital balloting and communicating, to help increase participation and engagement in pay ballots and campaigns;

- 3) Develop a comprehensive process to ensure that lessons are learnt from all ballots where the turnout is high and a vote for action is achieved, so that good practice can be applied across the service group;
- 4) Develop a more systematic process for co-ordination of local disputes, where possible.

Local Government Service Group Executive

Pensions

9. Local Government Pension Scheme pool representation

UNISON successfully campaigned for the statutory establishment of Pension Fund Boards to work within the LGPS to allow UNISON to seek to represent the interests of scheme members. UNISON believes that these interests include but are not exclusive to keeping down transaction costs and campaigning to ensure that investment activities of funds are in line with the aims, values and policy of scheme members.

Fund boards have been in operation since 2015 and UNISON currently has activists on most of the fund Boards. Government policy has been to seek economics of scale and increased investment leverage by instructing Funds to pool resources initially into the asset size of £25bn. However, since that time they have accepted scales under that figure and included two below, Wales and LLP.

UNISON has successfully campaigned within the funds to allow for scheme member representation within the pools on all but three (Access, LLP and Wales).

UNISON believes that the government should include the establishment of a minimum two scheme member representatives for each pool to ensure that the voice of the membership is heard.

Therefore, Conference instructs the Service Group Executive to campaign at branch, regionally and nationally to call upon the Scheme Advisory Board to join with UNISON in requesting that the government includes statutory for at least two scheme member representatives on each pool. Where they already have been appointed these should include a minimum two scheme members.

We believe that this will bring the pools in line with the representation levels of scheme members within the LGPS.

City of Wolverhampton

10. Local Government Pension Scheme pool representation

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UNISON has successfully campaigned within the funds to allow for scheme member representation within the pools on all but three (Access, LLP and Wales). UNISON believes that the government should intervene to ensure a minimum of two scheme member representatives for each pool so that the voice of the scheme membership is heard.

Local government Conference instructs the Service Group Executive to campaign at branch, regionally and nationally and call upon the Scheme Advisory Board to join with UNISON in requesting that the government instructs pools, by statute if necessary, that there are at least two scheme member representatives on each pool. Where scheme member representatives are already appointed these should be increased to a minimum two scheme members.

We believe that this will bring the pools in line with the representation levels of scheme members within the LGPS

West Midlands Region

11. Local Government Pension Scheme

Conference welcomes UNISON's plan to publish, with the support of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) and Palestinian Lawyers for Human Rights, a revised version of "Palestine: Is your pension fund investing in the occupation? A UNISON guide to engaging your pension fund."

UNISON has long supported Palestinian civil society's call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), a global citizens' response of solidarity with the Palestinian struggle and Conference believes that Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) members have as much right as anybody else to heed the Palestinian call and to demand their money be invested ethically.

In keeping with UNISON's support for BDS, the guide explains how to argue for pension funds to engage with the companies they invest in to demand they end their involvement in the occupied Palestinian territory and in the violation of Palestinian human rights. It sets out steps LGPS members can take to ensure their pensions are not invested in companies involved with the occupation.

Conference notes, however, these plans have been on hold since June 2018 when the Court of Appeal overturned an earlier High Court judgment and ruled that the government may reinstate regulations intended to stop local government pension funds deciding not to invest in companies complicit in Israel's breaches of international law and of Palestinian rights.

The position at the time of writing this motion is that the Supreme Court heard the case on 20th November 2019 and its decision is awaited. Meanwhile, the Conservative Party's manifesto for the 2019 general election promised to "ban public

bodies from imposing their own ... boycotts, divestment and sanctions campaigns" and the government has indicated there will be early legislation.

Conference instructs the Service Group Executive, at an appropriate time, having due regard to the legal position, and seeking the support of other Service Group Executives and of the National Executive Council as need be, to:

- 1) Circulate the guide widely;
- 2) Develop training and support to enable members to act, in an effective and sustained way, on its recommendations;
- 3) Collect from regions and branches, information about approaches to pension funds and the results of doing so; and,
- 4) Report and circulate this information appropriately.

City of Wolverhampton

Workplace terms and conditions

12. Reduction in the working week – campaigning across the sectors

Conference notes that workplace stress is a massive and growing concern in local government. As the Local Government Association states: "Research shows that work is the biggest cause of stress in people's lives, more so than debt or financial problems. Stress can stop people performing at their best and lead to physical illness and absence."

The austerity agenda imposed by successive Conservative governments since 2010 has had a huge impact on the workloads and mental health of local government workers. Hundreds of thousands of jobs have been lost, and those left in work have experienced huge increases in workloads, at a time when demand for services from the most vulnerable people in society has skyrocketed. We have seen huge increases in workplace stress and other sickness.

Workplace stress in local government is particularly acute among disabled members, Black members, LGBT+ members and women members, all of whom are more likely to suffer from stress.

Conference believes that in order for this situation to improve, we need an end to austerity and renewed investment in public services. But the situation could be mitigated if our members' work-life balance were improved.

UNISON members in local government have helped keep local services going by working over and above their hours, with increasing stress and mental health problems. The NJC Committee's proposal for a reduced working week as part of the 2020 pay claim won broad support from our membership. Conference believes that we need a broader campaign for a reduced working week across the sectors and employers covered by the Service Group, including private contractors and schools.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to launch a campaign for a reduced working week across local government, schools and associated employers, including:

- 1) Political lobbying and influencing, with practical ways for members to get involved;
- 2) Advice for the sectors, regions and branches to help them negotiate and campaign on this issue;
- 3) Electronic, social media and physical materials to promote support for the campaign to help the union recruit and organise around the issue;
- 4) A strong emphasis on the equalities issues relating to working hours.

Local Government Service Group Executive

13. Stress among housing workers

Conference notes that after a decade of austerity and the ongoing impact of welfare reform, the housing crisis is getting worse - not better.

UNISON members working in council housing departments and Arm's Length Management Organisations are on the frontlines of this crisis - managing an ever-decreasing supply of social housing resources and an ever-growing client group of high-needs, highly vulnerable people.

Ongoing UNISON research shows how cuts to local government services have impacted staff. A 2018 survey asked over 600 UNISON members working in housing how things had changed since 2015. More than 80% said that the quality of housing services delivered to the public had fallen, and around 70% said this was due to a lack of social housing and changes to welfare and benefits (including Universal Credit). The rise in homelessness and lack of frontline staff were also cited as factors.

Conference further notes that this perfect storm of job losses, lack of social housing, welfare/benefits changes and a rise in homelessness has created one of the most high-stress environments in local government – with only 24% of housing workers describing their workload as manageable, and 58% saying they regularly work over their contracted hours just to get the job done.

All of this has played out against a backdrop of local government workers losing around 22% of their pay in real terms pay since 2010 - with around a third of housing workers now saying they have to ask family or friends for financial support or use credit cards to pay bills/make ends meet.

Unsurprisingly, a staggering 45% of housing workers are now thinking about leaving their job for something less stressful.

Unless the levels of stress and hardship among housing workers are recognised and dealt with, we will see the loss of some of the longest-serving and most experienced staff in their profession. Staff whose dedication to helping the poorest and most

vulnerable in our community has kept them doing a difficult and important job in challenging times.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Work with UNISON's Health and Safety Unit to develop housing worker specific guidance on stress for employers;
- 2) Launch a campaign to raise awareness among politicians, the media and the public about stress among housing workers and its negative impact on both workers and service users;
- 3) Use UNISON's Local Government Housing Forum and housing seminar to encourage debate and sharing of ideas and good practice around tackling stress;
- 4) Undertake further research into the impacts of lone-working and the increased risk of violence at work among housing workers.

Local Government Service Group Executive

14. Workplace stress in the public sector

Conference notes the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) definition that 'Work-related stress is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work', recognises that stress is closely related to excessive anxiety and depression, that 600,000 workers suffer from these conditions due to work and, as a result, 15,400,000 working days were lost in 2017/2018.

Conference further notes that work-related stress is a major cause of occupational ill health which can cause severe physical and psychological problems in workers affected.

Conference agrees that work related stress should be treated in the same way as other work place hazards, that it should be subject to the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and should therefore be risk assessed to ensure that stress factors are removed or proper controls put in place to reduce them as far as possible.

Conference is concerned by research from the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development which identifies that long term absence due to stress is more likely in the public sector (71% compared to 45% in private sector services and 33% in manufacturing organisations), that stress is caused by excess workload, poor management and organisational change.

Conference is further concerned by research from the HSE which identified stress, depression or anxiety as more prevalent in public service industries, such as education; health and social care; and public administration and defence with the main causal factors being workload pressures, including tight deadlines, too much responsibility and a lack of managerial support.

Conference is also concerned that cuts to all areas of social care have demoralised staff, reduced levels of staffing and increased outsourcing, all of which have reduced the opportunities for staff privacy at their break time, such as access to a staff room or other private space, which has contributed to rising levels of work place stress.

Conference notes that since 2010, hundreds of thousands of jobs have been lost from local government due to the Westminster government's austerity agenda. These cuts have caused vastly increased workloads for those still in work, leading to immense stress. Conference further notes that UNISON research has shown that Black members, women members, disabled members and LGBT+ members are particularly likely to suffer from workplace stress.

Conference therefore calls on the Local Government Service Executive Committee:

- 1) To campaign for local authorities and private companies providing local government services to recognise their responsibility to identify excess stress as a workplace hazard and to support workers experiencing excess stress with free Mindfulness classes or counselling sessions in work time;
- 2) To campaign against employers who seek to make workers more 'resilient' in the face of excess workplace stress rather than tackle the underlying causes;
- 3) To develop a communications campaign that will encourage workers to speak out when they are experiencing excess workplace stress.

Eastern Region

15. Health and wellbeing/attendance management

The cuts to local government jobs following years of austerity from both Westminster and devolved governments have seen remaining staff increasingly expected to do more with less.

At the same time demand on services has increased as a result of pernicious government policies - from the cuts to benefits, the roll out of Universal Credit and the rise of in-work poverty. Our population is ageing and with it the demand for social care, and increasingly complex needs, has increased at the same time as budgets have been slashed.

Like the rest of the population the local government workforce is ageing - large cohort of staff will retire in the not too distant future. Few new staff are being recruited to replace those who leave through retirement or changing jobs.

In Scotland alone budget cuts have led to more than 40,000 local government jobs being lost and 61% of the local government settlement is now 'protected' to areas prioritised by the Scottish government. That means that local authorities have discretion over only 39% of their allocation and cuts arising from reductions to their budget have disproportionately fallen on the 'non-protected' areas – the road-sweepers, the classroom assistants, the environmental health officers and trading standards.

All of this creates the perfect storm - where staff struggle with increased workloads, are provided with insufficient time to complete it, have seen knowledge and experience lost through redundancies and retirements and are increasingly experiencing work related stress and related absences as a result. allowed and resulting in the inevitable increase in sickness absence and staff leaving again.

We have all seen attendance management procedures, capability, and ill health retirement being used to manage people out the door. This does not solve the problem and instead makes things worse - leaving remaining staff covering the resulting absence, terrified of being off work for any reason, an increase in presenteeism (putting service users at risk), working when at breaking point and when they are stressed and exhausted.

This vicious cycle that has to stop. It must stop, not only to protect the welfare of the staff affected but also for the councils and the people that rely on the vital services we provide.

In Scotland UNISON has taken the lead with COSLA (Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities) to work together with the employers through the SJC (Scottish Joint Council) to address these issues - to ensure that staff are and feel supported, that workload and stress is managed better and maybe, just maybe, we will stop this perfect storm.

We call on Conference to:

- 1) Acknowledge the work done thus far by the Scottish Local Government Committee through the SJC;
- 2) Encourage all local government branches to engage with their employers to move away from a penalising approach to one of support and encouragement;
- 3) Campaign through Westminster and our devolved governments to ensure adequate and appropriate funding is given to local government and the vital services that we provide;
- 4) Provide the support, guidance and training necessary to enable activists to tackle their employers and support our members.

Scotland Region

16. Standing up to violence, harassment and abuse of local government staff

Conference recognises that UNISON members in local government are dedicated to improving the quality of life for the communities they work in. Despite this, many of our members are subject to an alarming increase in violence, abuse and harassment at work.

After years of cuts to local government services and drastic reductions in staffing levels, instances of aggression and intimidating and threatening behaviour are increasing sharply - with the most recent data showing a 25% increase in recorded violent incidents against local government workers in the UK since 2015.

In addition to physical injuries caused by violence, many victims suffer from mental health issues following an attack such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The risk of violence, harassment and abuse is also higher for women, Black, disabled and LGBT+ members.

UNISON has conducted branch surveys and freedom of information requests which show that this problem is only getting worse and that many local government staff do not feel their employer is doing enough to tackle it.

In some local government services, the problem is particularly severe - a recent survey of library workers across the UK found that 85% of members reported an increase in violence and abuse towards the workforce and 92% reported an increase in difficult or challenging service users. Conference believes that the increase in violence at work is linked to both austerity and an increased climate of hate.

Conference believes that:

- 1) Violence, abuse and harassment are not part of the job. While some staff do work in extremely challenging situations, working closely with some very vulnerable people, all staff have a right to work free from fear and to feel secure that they are working in a safe, non-threatening environment;
- 2) Employers must do more to recognise that verbal abuse is also a form of workplace violence. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines work-related violence as: "Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work";
- 3) Steps should be taken to better protect lone workers who are at greater risk in their jobs than other workers;
- 4) Employers should regularly conduct risk assessments to ensure that risks from work carried out alone are eliminated, reduced or minimised.

Conference calls upon the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- a) Raise awareness of the issue of violence, harassment and abuse in local government services, including services commissioned by local government;
- b) Promote UNISON's End Violence at Work Charter widely, with a campaign calling on all local government and associated employers to sign up to the charter and put in place the charter's recommended prevention measures, monitoring processes, support for victims, safeguards and training;
- c) Campaign for employers to include signing UNISON's End Violence at Work Charter when commissioning services to outside contractors, building on successful campaigns in other parts of the public sector;
- d) Continue to call for a reversal of central government cuts to local authority funding to ensure staffing levels are sufficient to ensure a safe working environment.

17. Violence, harassment and abuse of local government staff at work

Conference is deeply concerned at the violence, including threats and physical violence, that is shown towards those working in local government.

The latest HSE statistics show that around 374,000 adults of working age in employment experienced violence at work, including threats and physical violence.

According to the Labour Force Survey latest estimates of workers who are injured at work as a result of physical acts of violence, show that on average around 43,000 workers in Great Britain sustained non-fatal injuries. This accounts for 7% of all workplace non-fatal injuries. Furthermore, the survey shows that around 9 out of 10 workers who sustain an injury resulting from violence at work are employed in public services with the social care sector showing a high proportion of those injuries.

Conference notes the work of UNISON's Community and Voluntary Sector in drafting and getting employers to sign up to UNISON's Violence at Work Charter. This provides clear standards that employers are expected to meet and provides a model for all UNISON branches to consider in their discussions with the employer.

Conference further notes the work being undertaken by UNISON in regard to violence shown towards those working in our libraries.

Yet despite all this good work, violence towards UNISON members working within local government continues to rise, with those working within the social care sector being most at risk.

This conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Review and amend UNISON's Violence at Work Charter to ensure that it is appropriate to be used in a local government environment;
- 2) Promote UNISON's Violence at Work Charter to all local government branches and members;
- 3) Extend the work currently being undertaken in regard to violence shown towards those working in our libraries to cover all local government workers;
- 4) Develop a national campaign to promote the work of those working in local government which encourages the public to value and respect those workers and shows that any violence shown against an individual will not be tolerated.

South West Region

18. Violence against workers in supported living accommodation

UNISON has many members working in the care system supporting vulnerable adults many with learning disabilities, autism and mental health issues. Many of our

members are employed to work in supported living accommodation whereby they support people living in a shared accommodation unit to live as independently as they can.

A UNISON survey in 2016 revealed that 50% of them had been physically assaulted; 61% had faced threatening behaviour; 56% had been verbally abused and 56% had faced a combination of all three. All these workers had reported at least one violent incident to their manager but only 56% said that this report had been followed up by their employer and only 44% felt the report was taken seriously. Although most said their employer did encourage the reporting of violent incidents 83% said that their employer regarded violence as “part of the job”.

Incidents reported to our branch include a member having deodorant sprayed directly into their face, a member being head-butted, an incident where a member had a glass fridge shelf thrown at them which resulted in a deep wound to their leg needing stitches. Two members were faced with a service user who was threatening to cause serious damage whilst holding a brick and members who are frequently scratched, slapped, punched and kicked. These employees often work in settings where they have to undertake ‘sleep in duties’ as a lone worker, which leaves them feeling more vulnerable if the service user becomes abusive or aggressive.

At a local level our experience confirms the national picture, with employers’ responses being dismissive indicating that this IS ‘part of the job’ often failing to acknowledge the emotional, psychological and physical impact this has on their workers. Whilst this can be challenged through UNISON representation this leaves many damaged workers in its wake.

It is our experience that the culture of accepting abuse has increased due to outsourcing of social care where profit comes before their duty of care to the worker leaving many members feeling that they have to put up with this abuse as they need to work to support their families.

A common theme from our members is a view that this low paid care work is the only employment they can take, as shift patterns fit around their family commitments. However, this leaves our members vulnerable, as they rely on this income and are often too afraid to complain as they don’t want to lose their job, and it is left to workplace discussion rather than action.

No care worker should expect to go to work to be threatened and assaulted and no employer should get away with making staff feel that this is just part of the job.

We call on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Ensure that UNISON’s national campaign against violence in the workplace continues to be given a high profile calling on branches to take up this campaign and lobby their employers in both the statutory and voluntary sector to sign the End Violence at Work Charter;
- 2) To issue guidance as to how existing health and safety legislation can be used to escalate issues of abuse in the workplace when the employer fails in their duty of care to address the issue of violence from service users.

19. Health & Safety motion

The coming years are likely to bring many challenges in the continued campaign for the safety and rights of workers across all sectors.

This Conference notes how attacks on workers' rights, cuts in public services and changes in work practices, have eroded the safety of workers.

Official figures show that violence, stress and musculoskeletal injuries alone account for over a million cases of ill health or injury each year, and that over 370,000 workers have experience of work-related violent assault. These figures are only the tip of the iceberg with many thousand more such cases going unreported.

In addition, the growth of the gig economy and of other forms of precarious working has led to millions working in unsafe conditions and being vulnerable to increasing levels of violence & exploitation. Many of these are UNISON members, such as cleaners, homecare and social care workers although the list is not exhaustive who are often isolated and alone without anyone to support them, and with little or no knowledge of what limited rights they have.

UNISON Scotland Health & Safety committee's latest workplace violence report notes that over 40,000 violent incidents were recorded in 2018/2019. Within local government 21,000 violent incidents were reported however as we know that many incidents go unreported, so the real figures are likely to be much higher. This is simply unacceptable - violence is not part of the job, never should be and never will be if UNISON has anything to do with it.

UNISON is proud of its record, working in partnership with its trade union partners both in the UK and abroad, of protecting and increasing health and safety standards both in the UK and globally. This has been in the face of the policies of this Tory government which has led a ten-year attack on workers' rights and starved public services and enforcement agencies of the resources they need to keep workers and the public safe. In the coming years the challenges UNISON face are only likely to increase.

This Conference notes the excellent guides UNISON has produced for its safety reps. In addition, work such as the "End Violence at work" Charter and "Care workers for change" project have shown that even in the current climate UNISON can make a difference and engage its members, the public and employers in improving workers' safety.

However, most important of all is the excellent work that UNISON's safety reps do every day on the ground. UNISON has the best, most comprehensive network of safety reps in the trade union movement. They are the eyes and ears of the workplace and are key to both workers' safety and UNISON's campaigning and organising strength. However, the fragmentation of public services has posed new challenges in how UNISON organises to protect its most vulnerable members.

Conference therefore calls on the Service Group Executive and Health and Safety Unit to:

- 1) Build on work such as the “End Violence at Work” Charter, to engage with members, the public and employers to protect the safety of workers;
- 2) Explore new ways of training and organising safety reps that responds to how workers and services are organised;
- 3) Continue to highlight the threat this government poses to the safety of workers and the public.
- 4) Continue to challenge employers across our bargaining groups; to ensure proper incident reporting procedures & robust health and safety management systems are in place.

Scotland Region

20. The challenges and opportunities for an ageing workforce in local government

Conference notes that older people make up a growing proportion of the population, and so make an increasing contribution to society. They are our members, volunteers, taxpayers and carers.

Over recent decades there has been a significant increase in the number of older workers, with over 50s now making up nearly a third (31%) of the entire UK workforce. By 2022 the number of people in the workforce aged 50 to state pension age will have risen to 13.8 million and the number aged 16-49 will have reduced by 700,000. Poor pension provision has meant that an increasing number of pension-age people are staying in work longer.

It is clear that as society ages, so too does the workforce. Older workers can bring institutional knowledge and perspective, social maturity and stability, and can pass on critical knowledge or business relationships to younger workers. An Age UK study showed that older workers are as productive and willing to work as flexibly as their younger counterparts and far from the scare stories that older workers crowd out younger workers. Contrary to popular myth, the evidence shows that keeping older people in work actually improves employment prospects for younger generations and has in some cases even increased their wages.

While age brings experience, it can also bring a number of challenges, and many people worry about their ability to work later in life. Many older workers report feeling undervalued and not respected by managers and their co-workers.

Conference notes with concern that outdated stereotypes, unconscious bias and age discrimination all contribute to preventing older people from staying in or returning to work. And all of this means is that age is one of the major challenges that hinders successful job search. Other challenges include low skills, lack of confidence, inadequate up to date qualifications, long-term health conditions, disabilities and the difficulty of combining work with caring.

Around half of older workers leave the labour market prematurely - often because of a lack of support from their employer. In a survey of 500 UK employers it found that just one in five employers (20%) have faced challenges with managing age-diversity

at work. Only a third (33%) of employers said they provide support, training or guidance for managers on managing age diversity.

It is not unreasonable, and in some instances, it is a legal requirement, for employers to support older workers by offering altered working arrangements and/or development opportunities. According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), employers need to consider: Carrying out risk assessments routinely, not just when an employee reaches a certain age; making adjustments on the basis of individual and business needs, not age; modifying tasks to help people stay in work longer; and allowing staff to change work hours and content; and assessing the activities involved in jobs and modifying workplace design if necessary. Adjustments to workplace design should take account of all genders and their differing requirements as they grow older.

It is vital that we work with Local Government employers to ensure they adopt and improve policy and practice, tackle age bias and create an age-friendly workplace culture to ensure that people can work for as long as they want to. Age friendly policies such as flexible working, phased retirement, family care leave and even gap breaks can facilitate a new type of retirement, where people cut down rather than suddenly stop working, where health and wellbeing policies take account of older workers' needs (including support for women through the menopause) and where employers enable staff to combine work with caring responsibilities. Without all of this, more and more of our members will face worse working lives as they age.

Conference calls upon the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Raise awareness amongst local government branches about the challenges and opportunities for our members working longer and what the legal responsibilities are on employers;
- 2) Ask local government branches to provide examples of existing age friendly policies and practices on supporting older workers in their workplaces;
- 3) Produce and promote guidance for local government branches to use when representing and negotiating on behalf of older members and include other useful information and UNISON resources;
- 4) Work with regions, branches and members of the service group sector committees to ensure that local government employers meet their responsibilities in supporting the older workers in a fair and non-discriminatory manner;
- 5) Work with the National Executive Council and other service groups to continue to campaign to safeguard and improve equality and employment rights for older workers.

Local Government Service Group Executive

21. Accessibility Passports and access to work in local government

Conference notes that although disabled workers are legally entitled to reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010, some local government employers

continue to delay or seek to avoid implementing reasonable adjustments. In particular, adjustments agreed with one manager may disappear when staff move teams or change managers. Staff with non-apparent impairments often find it even more difficult to get the adjustments they are entitled to.

UNISON's disabled members self-organised group surveyed almost 3,000 members last autumn (nearly 40% from local government workplaces) and found that 67% of those who needed them had been turned down for reasonable adjustments. In many cases there was no reason given for the refusal and in other cases disabled staff simply received no response at all to their request – they were just ignored. Where adjustments were agreed workers often waited months or even years to have them implemented, with 23% waiting a year or more. Disability leave was virtually unheard of and most survey respondents did not know they could ask for it. As a result, many reported facing disciplinary and capability proceedings due to their sickness records.

Many of our members are also unaware that Access to Work funding may be available for the adjustments they need. Access to Work is often called "the government's best kept secret" and there are low levels of awareness from both staff and employers in local government.

Some employers have implemented workplace adjustment passports. This is an agreement between the staff member and their manager which outlines the barriers faced and the adjustments the employer has agreed to put in place, including but not necessarily limited to the legal requirement for "reasonable" adjustments. This passport approach allows the adjustments to follow the worker when they move teams or line management changes and minimises the need to renegotiate adjustments.

Conference notes that UNISON has recently produced a reasonable adjustment bargaining guide with a model policy and a template Accessibility Passport. This can be used to negotiate with local government employers and to agree a policy and a passport system. Key to UNISON's bargaining guide is that the employer should respond to requests for adjustments within a specified timescale and should also agree a timetable for implementing adjustments, overcoming the twin issues of our members receiving no response to their request or waiting years for agreed adjustments to be put in place.

Conference further notes that UNISON has also published a 'Quick Guide to Access to Work' which can be shared with local government members.

Conference therefore calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Encourage local government branches to negotiate for workplace adjustment agreements and accessibility passports with employers;
- 2) Publicise UNISON's new Reasonable Adjustments Bargaining Guide and Accessibility Passport to branches and regions;
- 3) Publicise UNISON's Quick Guide to Access to work to branches, regions and members;

- 4) Encourage branches to share successfully negotiated passport agreements with UNISON's bargaining support unit so that other branches can learn from them.

National Disabled Members Committee

22. Accessible public toilets in local government workplaces

Conference notes that for a range of reasons many disabled workers in local government face barriers to using a standard toilet. Whilst accessible toilets should now be provided as standard in local government workplaces and in public places, less than 10% of people who meet the Equality Act 2010 definition of being disabled actually use a wheelchair, which is the traditional symbol for an accessible toilet. As a result, disabled staff often feel as if they are being challenged when they use so called 'disabled toilets'" often experiencing abuse from colleagues because they "do not look disabled".

Conference welcomes the recent introduction of "Some Disabilities are Invisible" signs in local government workplaces and public buildings across the UK. This signage recognises that people with non-apparent impairments and long-term health conditions that are not physically obvious also face barriers to using standard toilets.

Research by Crohn's and Colitis UK has revealed that 61% of those affected by the condition, which is not always apparent, have experienced verbal or physical abuse simply for using an accessible toilet.

For other local government workers, even a standard accessible toilet does not meet their needs as they require greater space or additional equipment not otherwise provided. The 'Changing Places Campaign' has found that this affects about a quarter of a million people across the UK who are reliant on more specialist public toilet provision. However, there is no mandatory requirement for changing places toilets to be provided in workplaces or in public places. Conference believes that local authorities should seek to provide changing places toilets in addition to standard accessible toilets both for staff and local residents accessing council services.

Conference further notes that local authority spending cuts have led to the closure of many public toilets across the country and some rural locations, such as the Isle of Arran in Scotland, have no facilities at all. Many of our members, such as refuse, street cleansing, highways and parks staff, do not work in local government buildings and rely on public toilet provision when doing their job. Government cuts have made it more difficult for these members to access appropriate facilities, particularly if they are disabled.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Encourage branches to press their local government employers for toilet signage in their workplaces that is inclusive of members with non-apparent impairments;

- 2) Encourage branches to negotiate with their local government employers to provide changing places facilities in local authority workplaces and public places;
- 3) Continue to campaign against cuts to local government services, including cuts to the provision of public toilets.

National Disabled Members Committee

23. LGBT+ inclusive policies in local government

Conference welcomes the decision of 2019 National Delegate Conference to agree that the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) self-organised group should move to organise on an LGBT+ (plus) basis. By becoming more inclusive for our members we also become more inclusive to the people we work with.

It recognises that local government service group rules, language and practices that are inclusive of our LGBT+ members 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 LGBT+ workers.

Conference notes that trans staff experience disproportionate levels of harassment and discrimination. A 2017 TUC report showed that 48% of trans workers had experienced bullying and harassment, compared to a third of non-trans workers.

Conference also notes there is still a significant lack of knowledge and information about trans equality among many local government employer HR departments and leads. While there has been a welcome increase in local government branches being consulted on draft trans equality policies, many of these include mistakes in law, outdated language, ignore non-binary identities and are far from best practice. Conference welcomes the success of some local government branches in using the UNISON trans equality guide and model policy to negotiate agreements.

In addition, conference notes with concern that:

- 1) A number of groups that have campaigned against the proposed reform of the Gender Recognition Act and are seeking to roll back the existing rights of trans people have encouraged their supporters to lobby local authorities to replace 'gender' in their equality policies with 'sex' and claim that a number have agreed to do so.
- 2) According to a 2019 TUC report, nearly seven in ten LGBT+ people reported being sexually harassed at work, yet two thirds didn't report it to their employer. One in four of those who didn't report it said it was because they were afraid of being 'outed' at work

Conference recognises that the many barriers to challenging discriminatory behaviour often stem from a lack of information, education, support and firm policies in workplaces, and that it is essential that there are workplace allies for all LGBT+ identities. It welcomes the development of a UNISON LGBT+ Allies training programme, aimed at giving non-LGBT+ members the opportunity to explore what it

means to be an ally and to identify ways of creating an inclusive working environment for everyone.

Conference therefore calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- a) Continue to encourage the negotiation of inclusive language in local government agreements and policies, and of inclusive practices and procedures, across our local government workplaces;
- b) Urge all branches to review existing agreements using the UNISON trans equality guide and model policy, along with UNISON's Trans workers' rights factsheet, Guide for reps supporting trans members and guide to non-binary inclusion, which complement the model policy;
- c) Urge branches where employers have no trans equality policy to seek to negotiate the adoption of UNISON's model policy;
- d) Ask the sector committees to raise trans equality with employers and employer bodies and seek reviews of relevant equality guidance, in line with UNISON best practice;
- e) Urge branches with employers outside NJC or other national arrangements to check any trans equality policies against the model policy and negotiate for necessary improvements;
- f) Continue to gather and publicise good practice examples from branches organising in the service group of inclusive employer policies and practices;
- g) Promote the guide to being to be a good trans ally, and the new LGBT+ ally training programme, across the local government service group.

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender plus Committee

24. Local government is no place for a hostile environment

Post Brexit, conference notes continued UK government policies aimed at creating a hostile environment for asylum seekers and migrant workers. This includes using local government workers such as social workers, housing staff, early years and school staff to promote this policy.

Conference rejects such racist policies and believes that local government workers should not refuse services to people on the basis of their immigration status but should deliver services on the basis of need.

Conference notes that people who have had their application for asylum or applications for 'leave to remain' rejected are categorised as "No Recourse to Public Funds" (NRPF) and that a range of benefits and supports are withdrawn or denied. The consequence of this is that people, including children and individuals with health issues, lose housing and living expenses, are at risk of becoming, destitute, homeless, hungry and increasingly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

Conference is concerned that NRPF is used to deny people access to public support and notes that this is not accurate - with legislation in place which enables local government to support vulnerable people.

Conference recognises the work carried out by the UNISON Scotland Social Work Issues Group (SWIG) who have consistently and over a long period campaigned to raise awareness of how social work departments can support people in the NRPF category by using social work legislation designed to support children and vulnerable adults. In association with such activity, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) issued detailed useful guidance for local authority social workers in Scotland. The SWIG with CoSLA staff and asylum support organisations, held a successful seminar for frontline social work members to promote this guidance and have published a guidance briefing note for social work members. Discussions with partner organisations including SASW (part of BASW) have also taken place on a regular basis to promote such work.

This Scottish example demonstrates how UNISON members can actively resist the hostile environment through the promotion of professional and ethical practice allied to effective trade union campaigning and awareness raising within our membership.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Continue its opposition to the hostile environment;
- 2) Promote the relevant UNISON publications which have exposed and challenged the government's policy of the hostile environment;
- 3) Produce guidance for local government members in relation to NRPF.

Scottish Joint Council Committee

25. Health and safety testing - a world built for men

Conference, Caroline Criado Perez's recent book "Invisible Women" explains how men's dominance of the design industry has had a major impact on women's health and safety.

Conference is clear that this impact on women's health and safety includes women working for local authorities.

Fewer women than men work in the design industry, designs are generally created with men in mind, and more often than not, designs are tested on men. "Invisible Women" shows that the consequences of treating men as the default option, or women just as smaller men - if they get considered at all - has wide-reaching implications for everything (and everyone) from snow clearing to seat-belts and many branches of medicine. Some examples include:

- 1) 71% of women wear protective work clothing for their council jobs that isn't designed for women's bodies. Ill-fitting PPE can be dangerous and lead to injury as it simply isn't doing what it's designed for (for example police stab vests).

- 2) Tools used in local authority roles are usually designed for men, often making them more difficult for women to use. They are often heavy and cumbersome to hold.
- 3) Most offices are five degrees too cold for women, because the formula to determine their temperature was developed in the 1960s based on the metabolic resting rate of a 40-year-old, 70kg man. Women's metabolisms are slower.
- 4) Cars are designed around the body of "Reference Man", so although men are more likely to crash, women involved in collisions are nearly 50% more likely to be seriously hurt.
- 5) The average smartphone – 5.5 inches long – is too big for most women's hands, and it doesn't often fit in our pockets.
- 6) Speech recognition software is trained on recordings of male voices. Google's version is 70% more likely to understand men. One woman reported that her car's voice-command system only listened to her husband, even when he was sitting in the passenger seat.
- 7) Many women in UNISON are exposed to hazardous substances - at work and at home, for example when cleaning. Again, the risk assessment effect of this exposure is based on a man. Women have different hormones and immune systems together with thinner skin and therefore exposure to these chemicals affects women differently. Women also have a lower threshold to the level of toxins they can be exposed to before they are absorbed by the body. Despite women undertaking a disproportionate amount of domestic and workplace cleaning tasks, the majority of cleaning products are tested on men.

These are some examples of the shortcomings of a world designed by and for men, and in particular, the impact on women working in a range of local government roles.

Conference, it is a reminder of why we need women in the leadership of the institutions that shape every aspect of our lives, including local councils.

We ask the Service Group Executive to:

- a) Work with the national women's and national health and safety committee to build a campaign for testing and risk assessments to be gender specific;
- b) Work with employers to avoid suppliers who do not provide PPE that is purpose made for women;
- c) Work with LAOS to ensure that health and safety training recognises and raises awareness of this issue;
- d) Work with Labour Link to call for gender specific health and safety testing and risk assessments to be mandatory;
- e) Work with regions to encourage women to become safety reps.

National Women's Committee

26. Young workers in local government and the Young Workers Charter

Conference notes that according to UNISON data, less than 4% of UNISON members in local government are young members under 27 years of age.

The Local Government Workforce Survey in 2017/18, produced by the Local Government Association, found that median expenditure on training and development by local government employers was £143 per employee, down from £194 in 2010/11.

In 2019 a report by the Smith Institute found that 638,000 workers in local government were paid beneath the real Living Wage (as set by the Living Wage Foundation) - whether directly employed or through outsourced contracts.

Conference believes that to recruit, retain, engage and develop young members, it is important that their priorities are reflected in local and national bargaining across the local government service group.

UNISON's Young Workers Charter, launched in November 2019, sets out the priorities for young workers in UNISON, as identified by young members themselves. These are: real Living Wage, fair employment, equality, training and development, and quality apprenticeships.

Conference asks the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Promote the Young Workers' Charter to branches across the Local Government Service Group;
- 2) Support and encourage local government employers to sign up to the UNISON Young Workers Charter;
- 3) In bargaining with national local government employers, promote the five priorities as set out in the Young Workers Charter;
- 4) Work with the National Young Members Forum to promote UNISON membership among young local government workers.

National Young Members' Forum

27. #Ustoo - No place for sexual harassment in local government

Conference is clear - sexual harassment isn't just a problem for celebrities. It's happening in ordinary workplaces everywhere. It affects women who work in local government.

Conference notes that research shows half of women have been sexually harassed at work. Two thirds of LGBT+ people have experienced it too. And shockingly, 4 out of 5 people don't feel able to report it to their employer.

Generally, perpetrators are in positions of power. Sexual harassment leaves victims powerless, ashamed, hopeless and scared.

Conference notes the great work done by the National Women's Committee to fight sexual harassment through:

- 1) UNISON's #ustoo campaign;
- 2) Our call for a change to the law to make it mandatory for employers to evidence that they are proactively taking steps to stop sexual harassment taking place;
- 3) New bargaining guidance to ensure zero tolerance of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- a) Work with the national women's committee to build the campaign for zero tolerance of sexual harassment in local government;
- b) Work nationally and with regions to negotiate and implement UNISON's new model zero tolerance policy on sexual harassment;
- c) Encourage local government employers to support UNISON's campaign for changes to the law to make it mandatory for employers to evidence that they are taking steps to stop sexual harassment taking place and to address third party sexual harassment;
- d) Work with Labour Link to call for the changes to the law in c) above.

National Women's Committee

Local government funding and cuts

28. Fighting local authority cuts

This Conference believes that the funding crisis in local government, caused by the austerity policies of the conservative government, has reached a critical level. In towns and cities across the country vital services have been closed and cut back – with no end in sight.

This Conference notes with disappointment that it is not only Tory-controlled local authorities, but also those with Labour majorities, that are carrying out cuts. Often our union is the last line of defence for workers in local government services and for those who use council services.

We believe that councils, particularly Labour councils where UNISON may have some influence, should do everything within their power and within the law to avoid making cuts, whilst promoting their actions in the community and building a local campaign. They should also link up with others to develop a national strategy to fight the cuts.

This Conference believes that UNISON must be seen to actively oppose austerity-driven cuts to services – through public campaigning, lobbying, petitions and through

supporting our members who work in these services – whoever is running the council.

This Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Call on all councils to look at what options they have to generate resources and avoid making cuts – including the use of reserves, capitalising eligible general fund expenditure and using prudential borrowing to generate revenue (such as in those councils which have borrowed to invest in property, using the returns in rents etc. to supplement their revenue budgets);
- 2) Support those councils who take up this option, in developing local campaigns in defence of local authority services;
- 3) Support and promote efforts to link up those councils across the countries of the UK.

Surrey County

29. Fighting local authority cuts

This Conference recognises that there were many factors which led to Labour's defeat in the recent general election. One significant factor may have been the role played by Labour councils carrying out austerity-driven cuts to services.

This Conference believes that the funding crisis in local government, caused by the austerity policies of the conservative government, has now reached a critical level. In towns and cities across the country vital services have been closed and cut back – with no end in sight.

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- 2) Support those councils who take up this option, in developing local campaigns in defence of local authority services;
- 3) Support and promote efforts to link up those councils across the countries of the UK;
- 4) Promote this position at all levels of the union, including within the Labour Link.

Southwark

30. Fully fund council budgets by reinstating revenue support grants to 2010 levels

Since 2010 the revenue support grant to English councils has been savagely cut by the UK government and this in turn has led to a drastic reduction in the block grant to the Welsh government. Councils have lost 60p in every £1 they previously received (England). According to the National Audit Office there has been a reduction of 28.6% in real terms spending power since 2010-2011 (England). These brutal cuts have in large part been passed on by devolved governments and implemented by councils resulting in severe cuts to jobs, outsourcing and devastating reductions in vital services.

It is local government workers and the communities we serve and live in that have borne the brunt of Tory austerity. Both the previous and current Tory governments claim austerity is over but apart from the increased funding for the NHS and schools, as an election bribe, the Tories will continue to under-fund local government in the future with serious consequences for jobs and services with some councils teetering on the brink of bankruptcy.

We need fully funded councils that are able to meet the needs of the communities they serve and the employees who work for them

Conference therefore calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Continue to highlight the damage cuts are causing to council services and local communities;
- 2) Demand central government fully fund council budgets by reinstating revenue support grant to 2010 levels;
- 3) Demand that central government reimburse any council that has, since 2010, used borrowing and or spent reserves to maintain jobs and services or has implemented a legal no cuts budget to do likewise.

Cymru/Wales Region

31. The Future of local government

Local councils across the UK have suffered huge funding cuts over the last decade. We have seen significant changes to the funding mechanism for local government, the functions councils carry out and thanks to devolution the actual make-up of local government. Throughout this time UNISON has sought to stop these cuts and highlighted the resulting impacts on the public and staff. The Local Government Service Group has compiled a comprehensive dataset of the range of services that have been lost since 2010 as well as the impact that these cuts have had on our members and the wider community.

However, rather than just calling for a reversal of these funding cuts the time has come for UNISON to set out a new bold vision for how local government should operate and be funded across the UK. UNISON Scotland, in tandem with the Jimmy Reid Foundation, has begun to explore alternative ways in which councils could be funded more fairly. And through their social partnership and fair work agenda UNISON Cymru/Wales have set out a positive vision where workers are fairly rewarded, heard and represented, secure and able to progress in a healthy, inclusive setting. These initiatives should be incorporated into UNISON's new vision of local government.

Through the wider devolution agenda, we have seen significant changes to how local government operates throughout the UK, such as through directly elected mayors and combined authorities. Rather than simply reacting to these changes, UNISON, as the main trade union for local government workers, should set out a proactive view of how we believe local government should operate, drawing upon the experiences of UNISON members, branches and regions.

Conference calls upon the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Use the UK wide information gathered about the impact of the funding cuts to councils to continue to lobby parliamentarians and councillors across the UK to call for an end to the austerity politics which cause cuts to services, job and pay, and local government funding to be restored to 2010 levels;
- 2) Work through the SGE's Service Delivery Working Group, UNISON regions and other relevant bodies within UNISON to develop a positive vision for the future of local government, drawing on the experience and expertise of our members, and working with outside bodies when appropriate;
- 3) Replicate the excellent work in Cymru/Wales where UNISON local government activists together with councillors explored the future of local government funding;
- 4) Work with the National Executive Council, UNISON regions and national and regional TUCs to explore the creation of Fair Work Commissions in nations, regions or combined authority areas;
- 5) Working with UNISON's devolved nations, educate MPs, MSPs, AMs, MLAs and London Assembly members on the work in Cymru/Wales with a simple request to invite them to support setting-up a Fair Work Commission in their nations, regions or combined authority areas;

- 6) Working with UNISON Scotland, call upon the Scottish Government to enhance the Fair Work Framework in Scotland by assessing and reviewing the progress year of the Fair Work Convention which ends in 2025;
- 7) Work with UNISON Northern Ireland and the re-instituted Northern Irish Assembly to help develop a positive vision for local government services;
- 8) Ensure that the vision incorporates and reflects the changing regional make-up of local government structures throughout England;
- 9) Work with Labour Link to support councillors campaigning against cuts.

Local Government Service Group Executive

32. Better funding for local government

Over the years there has been a significant shift in the way funding for public services provided by local government has been generated with councils increasingly restricted in their ability to generate sufficient levels of funding to provide good quality public services.

Reductions in funding, during the period of austerity, has resulted in financial pressures which have impacted negatively on the quality and delivery of local public services resulting in cuts to jobs and services.

At the first reading of the Scottish government budget for 2020/21 the Scottish government announced that it was increasing the local government settlement by £495million it went on to set commitments of £590million resulting in a real-terms cut to Local Government core budgets of £95 million. This is £95 million in hard cash that will need to be taken out of front-line services for communities. We campaigned hard to ensure that this position did not happen – it is disappointing our message has not been listened to.

When you add in a £117million cut to capital funding (which equates to a 17% cash cut) - a hit to both communities and growing the economy - you are left with a crisis for local government which is a long way from the picture being painted. This is even worse when seen in the context of an increasing budget for the Scottish government.

Cuts to local government budgets in other UK countries have been similarly brutal. The Local Government Association has stated that since 2010 councils in England will have lost 60p out of every £1 they had from central government to run their services between 2010 and 2020. Councils in Wales lost over £1bn in funding between 2010 and 2020 according to the Welsh Local Government Association. Whilst public services in Northern Ireland have also experienced significant funding cuts. Recent very modest increases in funding to council services in these countries have not been enough to reverse the damage brought by years of spending reductions and means councils are still cutting services.

The Service Group Executive is asked to adopt the following recommendations for campaigning for better public service local government funding:

- 1) Recruitment of additional council, government and government agency staff to ensure that registration, regulation and collection of revenues is undertaken in order to identify where loopholes, avoidance and coverage has allowed some to escape making their fair contribution;
- 2) Call for an examination on whether the Small Business Bonus Scheme and other reliefs from non-domestic rates are fit for purpose and determine what alternatives could support private and social enterprises and other bodies more effectively;
- 3) Fair work should underpin any reviews of income streams and/or taxation. Making reliefs, subsidies and tenders dependent on good practices at the local level should raise revenues indirectly for council budgets;
- 4) Governments, councils, trade unions and communities should explore how new taxes and levies can be introduced to support inclusive growth and the foundational economy. Attention should be paid to the opportunity for such initiatives to change behaviours and overcome negative externalities and market failures;
- 5) Consideration should be given to how municipalisation of buses, energy and other public services could be appropriately pursued. Local government should lead the way in the Green Economy by creating green jobs that put de-carbonisation at its core;
- 6) Explore how local authority debts and PFI/PPP contracts can be taken over by the Treasury, saving local government many billions in interest charges each year and so releasing tax revenues for investment in local economies and communities;
- 7) Consideration should be given to establishing a wide network of academics, stakeholders and interested parties in order to improve research and policy creation.

Scottish Joint Council Committee

33. The effects of austerity on Black members in local government

Conference notes the findings of the Labour Research Department report commissioned by UNISON into the impact of austerity measures on staffing levels and services within local government between 2010 and 2019.

This report was based on a Freedom of Information (FOI) request sent to all 411 United Kingdom local authorities in January 2019. The FOI request asked about staffing levels in 2010 and 2019, redundancies from 2010-2018 and TUPE transfers from 2010-2018. As a principal aim of the request was to gather more information about the equality impacts on the workforce of the cuts to local authority spending, councils were asked to provide data for both staffing and redundancies by gender, ethnicity and disability status.

Despite some respondents using differing date periods, it was still possible to identify that there have been particular equality impacts on local authority staffing during the last nine years.

The result of this exercise demonstrated what we already know – that the impact of austerity has been significant not just on the services we provide but on staffing levels and in particular on the number of workers with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

In particular, in relation to Black workers the report identified that “overall. . .the percentage of Black staff redundancies was higher than the percentage of Black staff” demonstrating that Black workers are more likely to be made redundant and, due to the manner in which local authorities responded to the questions, this is likely to be under-reported.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Continue to highlight the effects of austerity measures on Black workers and, in particular, the fact that Black workers have been disproportionately impacted through redundancy from local authorities across UNISON's nations/regions;
- 2) Work with the National Black Members Committee (NBMC), National Executive Committee (NEC) to acquire statistical data from each region on the numbers of Black members who are being made redundant;
- 3) Work with the NBMC and National Executive Council to seek a response from those local authorities where the disproportionate impact has been greater;
- 4) Discuss with the NBMC and National Executive Council how Regional Black Members' Committees can be supported, to also monitor their own Regional Local Government Committees' statistics on Black members' redundancy figures based on overall branch membership figures and local government employer total staffing numbers.

National Black Members' Committee

34. Impact of Fair Funding in the north east of England

Conference notes that austerity has caused considerable upheaval in local authority funding. Since 2010, Central government grants to north east local authorities have been slashed by 79% and even commentators such as the National Audit Office have supported the argument that this region has been disproportionately affected.

All parts of England have been hit hard over the last decade by cuts as have Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The reduction in funding has resulted in cuts to vital services relied upon by local communities across the north east, together with tens of thousands of jobs lost within the sector.

The delayed Fair Funding Review provides further uncertainty for local government finances, making it exceptionally difficult for councils to plan for the long term.

UNISON has consistently argued that the removal of deprivation as a factor will severely impact the ability of councils to meet the needs of their residents. The leader of the LGA Labour group, Nick Forbes, has also criticised the government's plans on the basis that "these changes will force further cuts and further hardship, and once again the most vulnerable in society will lose out."

A recent analysis commissioned by the Local Government Association has now revealed that from 2021 communities in the north of England will see millions of pounds of funding taken away and given to more affluent areas. This ironically includes constituencies in the north east now Tory-held, such as Bishop Auckland, Durham North West and Sedgefield where Durham Council will have to contend with a funding reduction of 6.71%.

This is far from the regional 'levelling up' promised by the Prime Minister and demonstrates the need for UNISON to continue to call out the government's disingenuous claim that austerity is over.

Conference therefore calls upon the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Further strengthen the fight against cuts to local government funding and the campaign for sufficient funding across the UK;
- 2) Develop more effective alliances with a range of outside organisations, such as the various local government associations, service user groups and political parties, to help secure equitable funding for local government;
- 3) Continue to raise support amongst the general public by putting across the damaging human consequences of the cuts to services alongside demonstrating the value of all local government services;
- 4) Support and involve all regions and branches and help them to recruit, organise and involve members in the campaign;
- 5) Work with politicians at all levels, including councillors, metro mayors, MPs, AMs, MSPs to get them to take effective action to end the cuts to local government services;
- 6) Campaign to ensure the Fair Funding Review in England results in positive meaningful change for the allocation of local government funding;
- 7) Continue to call for unallocated business rate surpluses to be given back to local government by Westminster;
- 8) Continue to work with regions and branches to raise awareness of council income generation and the expansion of trading to offset the loss of income from central government grants;
- 9) Develop guidance on income generation, the expansion of trading, and develop a strategy to utilise social value, build relationships with and promote a constructive dialogue with national and regional employer groupings,

councillors and senior local government officers and also work with UNISON's Labour Link and campaign fund to promote this initiative;

- 10) Carry out a targeted piece of work across UNISON regions to highlight the damaging impact of council funding cuts to services in the constituencies of all MPs, but in particular high-profile Westminster government ministers, and request additional funding ahead of the comprehensive spending review.

Northern Region

Service delivery

35. The future of youth services

Conference notes that youth services play crucial positive and preventative roles across the UK, and the work youth workers and youth support workers do provides huge value to the lives of young people. Youth services help young people into employment, training or education; they help with potential mental health issues; and they help prevent alcohol, substance abuse, crime and anti-social behaviour.

Conference notes that since 2010, youth services have suffered huge cuts. Research published by UNISON in 2019 revealed that since 2010, 940 youth centres had been cut. We know from previous UNISON research that between 2010 and 2019, £400m was cut from youth service spending, and 4,500 youth work jobs were lost between 2012 and 2019. A generation of young people are already suffering as a result.

The Conservative government is to blame for these cuts, and we now need a strong campaign to force them to give us back our youth services. Along with the lost jobs and youth centres, there are significant obstacles to reintroducing youth services. Many local authorities have re-structured and no longer employ specialist youth workers; and some universities have stopped providing the JNC youth work qualification. Retiring youth workers are therefore not being replaced. The youth work workforce needs to be re-built.

Conference believes that the future of youth services must lie in universal, open access services. Within this, specialist provision and access should be ensured for particular groups – for example girls and young women, young LGBT+ people, young Black men and women, and young disabled people. These services should be provided within a universal service and monitoring of uptake will be essential.

Major reinvestment will be needed to reintroduce and reinvigorate youth services.

Any local partnership delivery bodies that are created must be properly representative, with strong voices for trade unions and young people.

It is vital that the JNC youth work professional qualification is protected, respected and valued by employers. Further and broader pathways to that qualification should be developed, including apprenticeships, to ensure that people from all walks of life can become qualified youth workers.

This conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Launch a high profile political, media and social campaign for youth services to be re-built, based on reinvestment, universal services and promoting the youth work professional qualification;
- 2) Work with UNISON's Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland regions to campaign for a statutory duty for local authorities to provide youth services, backed up by sufficient funding, working with appropriate political parties where possible;
- 3) Continue to campaign for services that have strong focus on the needs of young people covered by the equalities groups.

Youth & Community Workers Committee

36. Gypsies and travellers

Conference notes that while local authorities are required to address the housing and development needs of Gypsies and Travellers, they are under no legal duty to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers. This is true for councils across all four nations of the UK. In England, it has been the case since the Caravan Sites Act of 1968 was effectively repealed by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

Conference further notes that as a result of this, UNISON members are forced into impossible positions, having to carry out work related to evictions. Members do not want to be in this position, but they are left with little choice.

Conference believes that a joined-up approach is needed to providing sites for Gypsies and Travellers, encompassing central government, national governments and local authorities.

Conference affirms that discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers is racism. Gypsies and Travellers are subject to massive amounts of discrimination and prejudice. While the Equality Act 2010 (covering Great Britain) does not define race, case law has established that Gypsies and Travellers are covered by the protected characteristic of race for the Act.

Conference condemns all racism and is clear that we must campaign against discrimination and prejudice aimed at Gypsies and Travellers. Conference condemns the suggestion, made by the Home Secretary Priti Patel, that Travellers' homes could be confiscated if they are suspected of trespassing with "intent to reside".

Conference notes the UNISON Scotland booklet 'Make a Difference!', designed to help members fulfil their obligations in relation to English Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers, Scottish Gypsy Travellers, Roma and Welsh Kale. Conference welcomes the joint commitment made by UNISON Scotland, the STUC and others to tackling issues concerning Gypsy Travellers and in particular Scottish Gypsy Travellers and Roma.

Conference welcomes the Scottish government's 2019 action plan to "improve Gypsy/Traveller lives" and reduce inequality.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Work with the National Executive Council to campaign for the restoration of the 1968 Act, or equivalent legislation to introduce a duty for relevant local authorities to provide economically, socially and environmentally sustainable sites for Travellers and Gypsies;
- 2) Provide guidance and support for members who are forced to carry out work connected with evictions;
- 3) Work with the National Executive Council and the National Black Members' Committee to raise awareness of racism against Travellers and Gypsies and to campaign against it, drawing on the work previously done by UNISON Scotland;
- 4) Lobby councils that have responsibility for housing to seek to ensure that they address the housing and development needs of Gypsies and Travellers through Housing Needs Assessments and Local Plans;
- 5) Lobby central government on the need for a joined-up approach to the provision of housing and sites for Gypsies and Travellers.

Local Government Service Group Executive

37. Use of private consultants in local government

Our Local Government Service Group conference meets at a time when we are seeing the continued growth in the use of private consultants by local authorities throughout the UK. This is money which should be spent on services for those communities and not being spent acquiring the services of private consultants. Our members are best placed to know where services need to be, as they work in them and use them. Any service redesign should be carried out in-house. We need to call a stop to the gravy train. A study is needed to highlight the amount of money which has been taken out of local government budgets to fund private consultants.

This Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to commission a study into the use of private consultants in local government.

Renfrewshire

38. Crisis in children's social care

It is without doubt that children's social care is in crisis – whether we look at the figures for looked after children, which January 2020 figures have increased by 4% to 78,150 or we consider the LGA's call for £2 billion to plug the funding gap.

The LGA reported that the number of councils spending more than they budgeted for indicates the huge pressure they are under to support vulnerable children and young people and emphasises that this is an issue affecting all areas of the country.

On average a child is referred to children's services every 49 seconds.

Massively underfunded councils are redirecting their resources to statutory services, this then undercuts early intervention work, early intervention grants given to councils has been cut by almost £600 million since 2013.

We know and all research back this – that early intervention is key, yet 1000 children's centre have closed under the Tory government.

We are aware nationally of children being placed outside of their area and therefore not able to keep in contact with their families, friends and siblings and of course the cost of this financially to local authorities.

It has been reported that thousands of children in care were increasingly placed in illegal or unregulated homes, this has been labelled a national scandal.

A lack of places to house vulnerable children in the UK is prompting a surge in placements that are less safe. These include those that are unregulated or not registered with Ofsted. MPs, police, charities and the children's commissioner warn that children accommodated in these homes are at risk of exploitation from sexual predators and drug gangs.

Councils were forced to overspend on their children's social care budgets by almost £800 million last year in order to try and keep children safe, the LGA has said.

Data shows that councils have experienced a 53% increase in children on child protection plan – an additional 18,160 children in the last decade.

There has been a 139% increase in serious cases where the local authority believes a child may be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, to 201,170 cases.

The age of children in care has been steadily increasing over the last 5 years according to the LGA, over 10's account for 63% of all young people in care, with teenagers six times more likely than younger children to be living in residential or secure children's homes, which are much more expensive than foster care.

The extra £1 billion a year pledged by government covered the entire social care system, including adult care and therefore falls short of what is needed to address this.

It has been reported that 58 children were placed in homes run by 78 providers that Ofsted listed as being inadequate or in need of improvements at the end of March 2019 by 23 authorities – this handed more than £2.3 million to failing providers (this was sourced through freedom of information and analysis of councils published expenditure).

We also need to consider how all of this effects the role of children's residential care workers the lack of early intervention, the increase in mental health issues and the sometimes inadequate placement of children and therefore the lack of opportunity to establish therapeutic work has led to an increase in assaults on staff, some of which have been recorded and put onto social media.

Investment is key – investment in early intervention, investment in children centres and investment in social care as a whole in order to support our vulnerable children, protecting children from abuse and neglect is one of the most important responsibilities we have and we cannot afford to allow this government to get it wrong.

In addition, more needs to be done to protect members who work in this sector, and that it is clear that the lack of early intervention and investment is having a catastrophic impact both on those who use the services and those who provide them.

Therefore, we call on the Service Group Executive to establish a national project on the current state of the crisis in children's social care services which would include:

- 1) Working with regions and branches to collate information on what services have been privatised/outsourced and assess how many homes have been closed;
- 2) Collating information nationally regarding how many cuts there have been made to early intervention services;
- 3) Providing guidance to members regarding support available to them both in terms of work, branch support and to feel able to report incidents at work.

Northern Region

39. LGBT+ workers and social care

Conference notes with alarm that the crisis in social care continues to grow. The 2019 Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) annual budget survey stated that the £7billion reduction in adult social care funding in England since 2010 had resulted “in less spending on those with all levels of care needs and on services that prevent further care need”.

Conference also notes that the outsourcing and privatisation of social care has led to deteriorating services and the widespread exploitation of workers through low pay, zero hours contracts and attacks on our members' pay, terms and conditions while generating profits for hedge funds and shareholders

Conference acknowledges that while this impacts negatively on our members working in social care in innumerable ways, the cuts affect different groups of members in different ways, with disproportionate impact on members of disadvantaged groups. Conference further acknowledges that there is substantial evidence that many social care providers lack understanding of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBT+) issues and that local authorities in England are doing little or no work directed at LGBT+ equality. This clearly has implications for LGBT+ workers.

Conference welcomes UNISON's continuing Save Care Now campaign. Evidence has clearly shown the multiple benefits to local authorities that have signed up to UNISON's Ethical Care Charter, including fair pay and conditions for workers and

improvements in the quality and equality of services. Similar work is now being done to promote our Residential Care Charter.

Conference also welcomes the work of the Northern Ireland region in working with statutory and voluntary organisations to develop 'Guidelines to support the needs of older LGBT people in nursing, residential, and day care settings and those who live at home and receive domiciliary care' and a training programme to support the implementation of these guidelines. This has been aimed at ensuring that staff working in these settings, many of whom are UNISON members, are aware of the particular needs of older LGBT+ service users and implement their right to be treated with dignity and respect. This also contributes to the development of a more inclusive working environment for LGBT+ workers.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Work with the national LGBT+ committee to promote the Ethical and Residential Care Charters, emphasising the importance for LGBT+ members;
- 2) Urge branches to use the updated LGBT+ bargaining fact sheets to review employer policies and agreements with employers with a view to achieving best practice;
- 3) Work in conjunction with the National LGBT+ Committee and other relevant parts of the union to develop a campaign to promote good practice on supporting LGBT+ workers and LGBT+ service users in social care settings to bodies responsible for the delivery and regulation of social care, drawing on the work already done by the Northern Ireland region;
- 4) Continue to campaign against the privatisation of social care and for services to be brought back in house.

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender plus Committee

Education

40. Sure Start and public sector childcare delivery

Conference notes, that according to a March 2019, Child Poverty Action Group report:

- 1) There were 4.1 million children living in poverty in the UK in 2017-18. That's 30 per cent of children;
- 2) There are expected to be 5.2 million children living in poverty in the UK by 2022;
- 3) 47% of children living in lone-parent families are in poverty;

- 4) Children from Black and minority ethnic groups are more likely to be in poverty: 45 per cent are now in poverty, compared with 26 per cent of children in White British families;
- 5) Child poverty reduced dramatically between 1998 and 2012 when 800,000 children were lifted out of poverty;
- 6) 70 per cent of children growing up in poverty live in a household where at least one person works;
- 7) Childcare and housing are two of the costs that take the biggest toll on families' budgets. When you account for childcare costs, an extra 130,000 children are pushed into poverty;

Significantly, the report also points out that child poverty reduced dramatically between 1998 and 2012 when 800,000 children were lifted out of poverty. It is widely acknowledged that Sure Start played a significant role in that reduction.

When the Labour government announced Sure Start in 1998, the programme was targeted at the poorest 20% of wards in England. From there it grew into a network of 4,000 children's centres across the country, each dedicated to improving the life chances of young children and the wellbeing of families.

Children's centres offered employment support, health advice, childcare, parenting help – unified service delivery designed to prevent isolation and, ultimately, to reduce the gaps between rich and poor children which, as a growing body of evidence shows, often go on to define lives.

However, since Labour left power in 2010, Sure Start has been abandoned.

According to a 2019 Action for Children report, local authority spending cuts had driven a 20% fall in the number of children and young people using Sure Start centres in the preceding four-year period.

Numbers of children using Start Start in the 30 most deprived authorities were down by 22%, compared with 12% in the 30 least deprived councils.

Conference believes that Sure Start was the single greatest achievement of the 1997-2010 Labour governments.

Conference further believes that it is not safe in Tory hands.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

- a) Promote the benefits of Sure Start and local government childcare delivery.
- b) Support branches to defend such provision by coordinating campaigns and disputes, and promoting success stories, such as the Salford "Fight for the Five" campaign.
- c) Work with Labour Link to demand that councils refuse to make further cuts to Sure Start services and instead work with UNISON and local campaigns to defend them.

41. Facility time in schools

Conference notes that many branches are struggling to represent members in schools, particularly in those schools which have become academies. Both local authorities and the academy chains are putting restrictions on local authority employed staff representing members employed in academies.

This has resulted in many reps using their own time to represent members, sometimes even using their annual leave to do this.

Conference recognises the need to organise our members in schools effectively and to ensure that stewards in schools are able to participate fully in union activities.

We need to ensure that all stand-alone academies and Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) are covered by and have a functioning trade union facilities agreement that provides sufficient facility time for school-based reps.

Conference notes that the Service Group Executive has recently undertaken a survey of facility time in local authorities. The results of this survey can be used to develop a strategy to improve facility time arrangements in schools.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Provide guidance to branches on negotiating adequate facility time in schools;
- 2) Re-circulate the model recognition agreements for academies;
- 3) Encourage regions to ensure that arrangements are in place to represent all members working in schools;
- 4) Work with the other education unions to ensure that all academies are covered by a relevant facilities agreement.

Local Government Service Group Executive

42. Education support staff and the need for comprehensive state education

UNISON believes in integrated free comprehensive education, which provides lifelong learning for all across the UK. Everyone should have access to an education system that best fits their own unique talents and abilities.

Diversity is a strength and should be celebrated. UNISON will continue to fight for equity and equality of opportunity for people to have the resources and funding needed to realise their potential.

In recent decades we have seen the comprehensive system weakened as funding cuts hit education across the UK. In addition, the dogma of the 'market' has undermined equality and co-operation, particularly (though not exclusively) in England.

Education support staff have been at the forefront of change, which has hit jobs, pay and significantly increased workloads. UNISON members in the Local Government Service Group are central to education and we call on the government to end the low pay, low status culture, which support staff endure.

Matters have been made worse - to different degrees in different countries - by moves to business style governance; centralised structures; the reduction in democratic accountability; weakened staff and public engagement; academies; and student fees. These policies have wasted billions of pounds and have not delivered the improved education outcomes promised, nor made the lives of disadvantaged or SEND students easier.

In England government moves to a 'hard' national funding formula will allocate money directly to schools. This will remove the chance for local authorities to direct some of the schools funding to areas of greatest need within their boundaries and could lead to further job losses.

UNISON believes it is time for re-invigorated comprehensive education systems across the UK - where appropriate run by a National Education Service(s) - supported by a well-trained and well-paid workforce.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to campaign:

- 1) For all age comprehensive education with embedded equal opportunities and an end to the loophole that allows wealthy parents to buy advantage, working with the NEC as appropriate;
- 2) For long term funding plans for education across all UK countries, based on:
 - a) A stable and well-paid workforce in the future;
 - b) The same level of funding per child in early years and post-16 students as schools;
 - c) A huge investment in early years to allow access to high quality, affordable nursery education and integrated children's centres;
 - d) Increased funding for children and young people with SEND, to enable an educational and social environment which allows them to thrive.
- 3) Against funding cuts to education; working with sister unions, communities, parents and other progressive education campaigning organisations;
- 4) For the establishment of new School Support Staff Negotiating Bodies, as appropriate/necessary for the UK nations;
- 5) For proper collective bargaining in Further Education colleges in England to deliver improvements in pay, grading and terms and conditions;
- 6) For a return to full term contracts for school staff in line with teachers, with equitable treatment for staff on term-time only contracts in the interim;

- 7) For guaranteed paid professional development for education support staff with set time to do it;
- 8) For national pay scales for staff allied to schools, such as careers professionals;
- 9) For academies and free schools to become maintained schools, working with their local authorities, and against forced academisation, producing new campaign materials and resources.

Conference instructs the Local Government Service Group Executive to work with the NJC committee to investigate the possibility of a national trade dispute, within the rules of the union and relevant legislation, to seek to secure an adequate funding formula for all schools that will protect education and therefore the jobs of school workers, if possible co-ordinated with other relevant unions.

Local Government Service Group Executive

43. Adult education needs investment

This Conference knows the importance of lifelong learning. Education does not end once we hit 18, in fact learning has barely begun. Further education colleges, at the heart of their local community, are the key to ensuring that adults have opportunities to learn and develop throughout their lives.

The UK faces many challenges in the coming years. The UK is facing skills shortages already in many important areas, such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) industries and will face more as new technologies, new industries and new ways of working continue to emerge.

Yet adult education is in a worse state than we have seen for many years. In January 2010 the Learning and Work Institute released data showing that the number of adult learners has plummeted by nearly 4 million since 2010.

Conference notes the reasons for this decline. Investment in adult education excluding apprenticeships has been cut by 47% since 2010. Outreach centres have been lost, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) funding has been slashed by over 60% and life chances curtailed. Reversing this will be the key to boosting productivity and enabling people to adapt to economic change. Current government policy suggests that colleges will become focused on providing for the skills needs of local business. But lifelong learning is not just important to the economy, adults who take part in learning are likely to have better health and wellbeing and to be more active in their local communities. Our country is divided and adult education can help to heal these divisions.

In addition to the decline, the Learning and Work Institute survey shows deep inequalities in accessing learning. Adults who are unemployed or work in lower paid, lower skills jobs are half as likely to take part in learning as those in professional occupations. Adults who left school at 16 are half as likely to take part in learning as those who left at 21.

Whilst calls to improve funding levels in further education have had some success, with the announcement of £400million in extra funding in England for example, none of this funding has been allocated to adult learning.

This Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Promote the importance of adult learning with our partners;
- 2) Campaign to promote adult learning using examples of successful people who engaged with learning as an adult;
- 3) Work with politicians locally and nationally to raise the profile of adult learning;
- 4) Work with the equalities team to promote awareness of the importance of adult learning;
- 5) Influence the National Retraining Scheme through the TUC;
- 6) Promote the offer from UNISON's Learning and Organisation Services team to support UNISON members in their learning.

National FE & 6th Form Colleges Committee

44. Reduce agency working in Further Education colleges

Conference notes the increasing reliance on agency workers in Further Education colleges in the UK and calls for this situation to be reversed as a matter of urgency.

A Freedom of Information request conducted by UNISON in 2018 revealed the extent to which some colleges are relying on expensive agency workers. Of the 163 colleges that provided data in response to the FOI, 24 had spent over £1 million on agency staff, 7 had spent over £2 million and the worst offender declared a spend of £3.6 million.

Based on staffing numbers at each college we found out that 48 colleges spent over £1000 per staff member (excluding casuals) on agency staff. 12 of these colleges spent over £3000 per staff member and at the most extreme, two colleges were spending over £7000 per staff member on agency staff.

All this at a time when support staff have been targeted for redundancies as colleges seek to reduce costs across the sector.

The Further Education sector had seen funding cut by over 30% in the past decade and staffing numbers have been slashed as a result. It is neither desirable nor sustainable for the sector to be spending vast sums on hiring workers through agencies.

The issue is not just a financial one. Directly employed staff benefit the college in so many ways that an agency-employed person cannot. Building relationships is vital in the education sector and this cannot be achieved with staff who come and go in short spaces of time. Directly employed staff can receive better training, training specific to the needs of the college, and this will lead to an improvement in the services the college offers.

A permanent employment contract has many benefits for the individual. They will have certainty of employment and income and access to career progression. Staff want to feel part of a team and a permanent contract of employment, as opposed to insecure agency working, will help to improve the mental health of college workers.

This Conference wants to see any temporary employees given a permanent contract of employment after no more than two years, in line with the legal entitlement to equal terms and conditions of employment that any worker receives after two years with the same employer.

This Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Conduct a nationwide Freedom of Information request to find out the current extent of agency spend in colleges in the UK;
- 2) Publicise the results of the FOI through media outlets and campaign work;
- 3) Develop a recruitment campaign for agency workers in FE;
- 4) Work with external stakeholders and other unions to promote the reduction in the use of agency staff.

National FE & 6th Form Colleges Committee

45. Sustainable funding for education in Northern Ireland

Conference notes the years of cuts to education services in Northern Ireland that have left almost half of our schools in budget deficit. A recent report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies found that Northern Ireland has faced the highest spending cuts across the UK per pupil over the last decade, with an 11% real-terms cut in spending per pupil since 2009. These cuts have already, and will continue to have, major negative effects including the sustainability of schools under the area planning process, as well as potential implications for contracted hours, terms and conditions of employment and job levels across the system.

Fundamentally, cuts to the education budget have harmed the education of our children and young people, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable.

Conference notes that the extent of the crisis has been laid bare by reports of parents being asked to contribute to the cost of school stationery or donate toilet roll due to budget cuts.

Conference notes that UNISON NI and our allies have campaigned to resist the cuts, including reversing cuts to school uniform grants, a vital support for low-income families. However children with special educational needs have found their classroom assistance being slashed, at a time when demand for assistance is only growing, negatively impacting both on the children who rely on this service to vindicate their right to an education, and on our members terms and conditions of employment.

Conference notes the recent reports suggesting that Northern Ireland could receive £500 million in additional funding over 3 years from 2020 as a consequence of promised additional funding for schools in England. However, conference is mindful

that there is no requirement that such additional funding, if it is forthcoming, be spent on education services.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to support the region's campaign for a properly resourced education system, which provides a high-quality education for our children and protects and strengthens the role of all staff.

UNISON Northern Ireland

46. Keep special needs transport in-house in Northern Ireland

Conference notes with concern that our members fear the Northern Ireland Education Authority may be pressed to privatise the special needs transport section. Conference notes that the education authority has already increased pupil sizes on these buses, increasing the travel time for our most vulnerable children. Constant changing of drivers causes distress and upsets the children's routine. Conference further notes the increasing use of temporary/agency drivers and is alarmed by the lack of women drivers being recruited.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to support the region's campaign to keep special needs transport within the public sector. This campaign includes calls to recruit more drivers, particularly women, who are significantly under-represented. Our branches started the ball rolling and have pushed the education authority to include in its 2020 recruitment campaign a call for women drivers.

UNISON Northern Ireland

47. Protection of school support staff from pupils and parents who use social media in a negative way

Conference notes that school staff can be regularly mentioned on social media by students and parents in a negative way.

Although there are policies in place in many schools, such as e-safety, it still doesn't guarantee protection from abuse and possibly hate crimes online.

School support staff can suffer great stress and anxiety, which could also lead to absence from work. School support staff are left vulnerable, open to abuse and it can also put a staff member's reputation at risk.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Provide information for UNISON school support staff members via booklets, flyers and national website on e-safety policies and the procedures on how to make complaints regarding abuse from pupils or parents on social media;
- 2) Campaign for UNISON branches to consult with their local authority on updating an e-safety or equivalent policy;
- 3) Provide training/workshops for UNISON activists on consulting with academy trusts for an updated e-safety policy or equivalent policy;

- 4) Provide training/workshops for UNISON activists on representing members who are victims and how to keep safe online;
- 5) Campaign for managing attendance policies to be updated with reference to abuse from pupils or parents and how this can impact mental health.

Birmingham

48. Violence and assaults against school support staff

Conference notes that school support staff can at times work with very vulnerable and unpredictable pupils. Some of these pupils can have behaviour issues.

School staff are at times subject to all manner of violence towards them. This can include, but not limited to spitting, biting, hitting, scratching, abusive and threatening language. These issues can lead to staff being in fear of attending work every day and school staff should not feel threatened or afraid to enter their place of work.

Sometimes school staff are expected to carry on and work with the same pupils that have been violent towards them, sometimes with no consequences for the pupils but school staff are penalised for being off work with stress or refusing to work with a particular pupil.

The Department for Education said in a statement “Teachers and school staff have a right to feel safe while doing their jobs and violence towards them is completely unacceptable” This is not being reflected within schools.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Campaign for a specific, ‘violence and assaults against school staff policy’, to be drafted and adopted by all schools;
- 2) Campaign to ensure all schools log every incident and near miss incidents including verbal incidents to their health and safety service provider;
- 3) Offer UNISON support staff members workshops and training on how to keep themselves safe;
- 4) Keep UNISON support staff members updated on how to keep themselves safe in their workplace and procedures that should be in place in schools;
- 5) Gather statistics regarding violence and assaults of UNISON school support staff members.

Birmingham

49. Supporting school-based counselling in England

In November 2018, UNISON surveyed its school support staff members across the UK who are represented by UNISON, and whose roles typically involve supporting teaching, learning and pupil welfare.

Of those completing the survey, the majority (78%) work in primary schools and 13% in secondary schools. The rest are in special schools and pupil referral units, which provide for children with more complex needs.

The majority are employed as teaching, classroom or learning support assistants (89%), or pastoral support workers, learning mentors and behaviour officers (5%).

The survey's findings included:

- 1) Most respondents (88%) said their role includes supporting children's social and emotional needs by having one to one conversation about pastoral, welfare, and emotional issues;
- 2) More than half (55%) said dealing with pupils' emotional issues was one of their job responsibilities, a third (33%) said it wasn't, but that pupils talk to them about such issues anyway.

This finding demonstrates the positive, trusting relationships often built up between pupils and support staff. It also highlights a frustration for some of these staff that they do not have capacity in their role to support the children more fully.

The survey demonstrated the range of issues that pupils share with support staff. Respondents said pupils had opened about school issues directly affecting them such as bullying, anxiety, stress and panic, loneliness, mental health issues, cyber bullying, pressure from parents to succeed, eating problems, racism and sexual and gender identity.

Beyond school, support staff also spoke of pupils confiding about home and life issues, such as a parental separation, bereavement, family illness - physical or mental and caring responsibilities.

Conference notes that, in England, one in four referrals to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) in 2017/18 were rejected, with the most common reason given that the child's mental health conditions were not serious enough to meet the eligibility criteria for treatment.

Conference further notes that school-based counselling is a proven intervention for children and young people experiencing psychological distress and has also been shown to minimise pressure on CAMHS services. Unlike in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, there is no statutory requirement for, or provision of, schools-based counselling in England. As a result, provision in England is inconsistent and leaves some children and young people with no access to a counsellor in their school.

Conference further notes that the national community organising alliance Citizen UK is currently working in partnership with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy to call for a change in the law to secure the statutory provision of schools-based counselling in every primary and secondary school in England. Citizens UK's campaign has emerged from listening to the testimonies of school

pupils, parents, teachers and school counsellors. Citizens UK estimates that this provision will cost £128 million per year.

Clearly the introduction of a statutory counselling provision within school's would alleviate the burden placed on our school support staff and allow them to focus on their educational role in school, rather than a quasi-pastoral role.

Conference calls on the local government service group executive to support Citizens UK's school-based counselling campaign by:

- a) Publicly endorsing and promoting Citizens UK's campaign at the national level;
- b) Encouraging branches to work with regional chapters of Citizens UK on this campaign;
- c) Working with Labour Link to build parliamentary support for this proposal to change the law.

Newcastle City

Climate crisis

50. Responding to the climate emergency

Conference notes, in line with the findings of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), that the following are statements of fact:

- 1) Climate change is real and human activities are the main cause.
- 2) The concentration of greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere is directly linked to the average global temperature on Earth.
- 3) The concentration has been rising steadily, and mean global temperatures along with it, since the time of the Industrial Revolution.
- 4) The most abundant greenhouse gas, accounting for about two-thirds of greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide (CO₂), is largely the product of burning fossil fuels.
- 5) Impacts of a 1.1-degree increase are here today in the increased frequency and magnitude of extreme weather events from heatwaves, droughts, flooding, winter storms, hurricanes and wildfires.

We further note, in line with the findings of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) that the following are also statements of fact:

- a) The global average temperature in 2019 was 1.1 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial period.

- b) 2019 concluded a decade of exceptional global heat, retreating ice and record sea levels driven by greenhouse gases produced by human activities.
- c) Average temperatures for the five-year (2015-2019) and ten-year (2010-2019) periods are the highest on record.
- d) 2019 was the second hottest year on record.

Additionally, we note the following findings in the most recent UN Emissions Gap Report (EMG):

- i) To prevent warming beyond 1.5°C, we need to reduce emissions by 7.6% every year from this year to 2030.
- ii) 10 years ago, if countries had acted on this science, governments would have needed to reduce emissions by 3.3% each year. Every year we fail to act, the level of difficulty and cost to reduce emissions goes up.
- iii) Nations agreed to a legally binding commitment in Paris to limit global temperature rise to no more than 2oC above pre-industrial levels, but also offered national pledges to cut or curb their greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. This is known as the Paris Agreement. The initial pledges of 2015 are insufficient to meet the target, and governments are expected to review and increase these pledges as a key objective this year, 2020.
- iv) This review of the Paris Agreement commitments will take place at the 2020 climate change conference known at COP26 in Glasgow, UK in November 2020. This conference will be the most important inter-governmental meeting on the climate crisis since the Paris agreement was passed in 2015.
- v) The success or otherwise of this conference will have stark consequences for the world. If countries cannot agree on sufficient pledges, in another 5 years, the emissions reduction necessary will leap to a near-impossible -15.5% every year. The unlikelihood of achieving this far steeper rate of decarbonization, means the world faces a global temperature increase that will rise above 1.5oC. Every fraction of additional warming above 1.5oC will bring worsening impacts, threatening lives, food sources, livelihoods and economies worldwide.

The Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) has identified that just 100 companies have been the source of more than 70% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions since 1988.

Conference believes therefore, that the global capitalist system that allows for this, must end if we are to genuinely tackle the Climate Emergency.

However, we further believe that local government has a significant role to play and we call upon the Service Group Executive to develop strategies and to work with branches and the Labour Link to demand that local authorities take the following steps:

- A) Support UNISON's call for the divestment of Local Government Pensions Scheme funds from fossil fuels, and for reinvestment in renewable energy projects.
- B) Pass motions calling for the banning of fracking and biomass incineration and take all possible steps to prevent these activities in their locality.
- C) Expand Carbon Literacy training to their workforce and maintained schools.
- D) Ensure that policies on special framework and development do not allow for the disruption of moss-land vital to carbon capture.
- E) Use council land to drawdown carbon (e.g. tree planting and rewilding).
- F) Integrate the need to reduce car use into local plans.
- G) Invest in travel infrastructure and low-emissions public transport.
- H) Enforce minimum energy efficiency standards in private rented sector and retrofit council-owned buildings.
- I) Use powers to require higher standards than current national standards for new build, and lobby for government to allow councils to demand that new homes are carbon neutral.
- J) Explore forming non-profit green energy companies.
- K) Support initiatives such as school student strikes and climate walkouts and help bring together organisations working to tackle the Climate Emergency.

Salford City

51. COP26 and climate change

Local Government Service Group Conference notes that the next meeting of the United Nations Conference of the Parties on Climate Change (COP26) is taking place in Glasgow in November 2020. This could be the last chance for world leaders and states to put in place effective measures to ensure that the pace of global warming and climate change is slowed down to keep below the disastrous levels that our current economic and political systems are heading.

Conference notes that climate change is already happening and that councils are already dealing with the consequences in flooding defences and responding to severe weather events.

We recognise that local government is a significant user of carbon. We therefore recognise the urgent need for the de-carbonisation of council buildings and services as part of the response to the climate emergency. However, as well as being part of the problem, local government can be part of the solution through:

- 1) Utilising planning powers to ensure future housing and construction is to the highest environmental standards;

- 2) Using the skills and knowledge of our environmental health, building control, planning, sustainability and other members to protect the existing environment and to ensure future development is in line with a zero-carbon future;
- 3) Using local government's role in the Community Planning process to develop partnerships with communities and industry to plan for a carbon zero future.

UNISON in local government bargaining must have climate change on the agenda to ensure that changes to our jobs, terms and conditions and how we deliver services contributes to the zero carbon future but at the same time protects jobs and does not shift the cost of transformation on to the workers in local government. This is in line with the principle of a Just Transition. To promote this, we need to develop a clear bargaining strategy for a zero-carbon future for local government.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- a) Mobilise for a significant UNISON local government engagement at COP26 to ensure the needs of workers and public services are central to the outcomes. This includes encouraging members to participate in preparations for and in activities in Glasgow during COP26;
- b) Calls on the government to invest in local authorities and environmental protection agencies to enable them to meet the immediate impacts of global warming and climate change and improve public sector resilience in the face of this emergency;
- c) Develop a bargaining agenda which can be used in all national and local bargaining agendas to transform local government in a Just Transition to support, secure and enhance jobs, services and terms and conditions.

South Lanarkshire

52. Local government and climate breakdown

Conference recognises that:

- 1) The impacts of the climate emergency are already evident and have profoundly altered human and natural systems;
- 2) In the UK, we are witnessing more frequent and extreme weather events. In 2019, our communities experienced flooding and also summer heatwaves that resulted in nearly 900 excess deaths. There were more UK wildfires last year than for any year on record across Cornwall, Dorset, Derbyshire, Northern Ireland, the Peak District, Rotherham, the Scottish Highlands, Wiltshire and Wales;
- 3) The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has established that for the world to avoid catastrophic climate breakdown, emissions must be slashed worldwide by 45% in the next ten years;

- 4) Over 265 UK councils have declared a climate emergency but have no access to long-term funding from central government to help drive the action needed to protect our communities, our members and their families;
- 5) Local government is on the frontline of the climate emergency, needing to reduce local emissions and those from its own operations. Our members play a fundamental role in mitigating climate change and adapting infrastructure to climate change. This covers areas like land use, planning, transport, waste, purchasing and commissioning goods, pollution control, energy use and production, public health, social care, education and civil contingencies;
- 6) UNISON members across local government, including those in the Fire and Rescue Service, face massive increases in workload, pressure and stress along with future changes to workplace practices and procedures as temperatures rise. They have a right to be consulted on environmental issues that affect them.
- 7) Large corporations have been a major contributor towards the climate emergency and have a huge responsibility to mitigate it. Many of these companies provide local government services through outsourcing;
- 8) Climate change affects lower paid workers disproportionately.

Conference applauds the striking school children, UNISON's National Young Members Forum and those UNISON members and branches who supported climate strikes, protests, and last year's UNISON Green Week. Conference also applauds UNISON Scotland for leading the way in campaigning and organising on workplace climate issues.

Conference also congratulates branches like UNISON Stockport who have negotiated facilities agreements for environment reps. Such steps are crucial if reps are to successfully carry out their role, attend meetings with management, undertake workplace environmental audits and negotiate for a just transition to a zero-carbon working environment.

This November, world leaders will gather in Glasgow for the next global climate summit and UNISON will continue to advocate for strong action on the climate emergency. Conference therefore calls upon the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- a) Raise awareness that climate change is a trade union issue that needs to be formally recognised as part of a modern, negotiating and bargaining agenda;
- b) Encourage all branches to appoint an environment rep;
- c) Organise and promote regional and local events to raise awareness of the climate emergency among members, and learning events for existing and new reps;
- d) Encourage branches to campaign for their employers to declare a climate emergency and draft action plans;

- e) Work with those local authorities that have declared a climate emergency, to enable members to attend the 26th Conference of the Parties UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) in Glasgow;
- f) Continue to campaign for a reversal of cuts to funding from central government for local government services, vital in building resilience to the climate breakdown.

Local Government Service Group Executive

53. Councils and the climate emergency

Local government conference notes:

- 1) The Climate crisis is an existential threat that requires us to change the way we invest in, grow and sustain our cities and regions.
- 2) The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report published in October 2018 set out the devastating consequences for the planet if it warmed more than 1.5C – with increased extreme weather with heatwaves and floods driving mass migration and global insecurity; the catastrophic social and ecological impacts worsening for every degree of warming.
- 3) The impact of climate change will not just be felt in far-away lands. The impact of increased extreme weather events, including flooding, droughts and heatwave is likely to be profound, with increasing risks to both life and property.
- 4) Given the planet is currently heading for 3-4C warming, keeping to 1.5C requires a radical shift across energy, land, industrial, urban and other systems to reduce emissions, unprecedented in history for the breadth, depth and speed of change required.
- 5) All governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to limit the negative impacts of climate breakdown and in recognising this local government should not wait for national government to change their polices. It is important for the UK that all Local Authorities commit to zero carbon as quickly as possible.
- 6) The UK, as the birthplace of the industrial revolution, has a moral responsibility to lead a new Green industrial revolution that delivers clean and inclusive growth.
- 7) That far-right politicians such as Trump continue to deny the reality of climate crisis, whilst Bolsonaro in Brazil encourages the burning of the Amazon.

Local government conference believes that:

- a) Councils are uniquely placed to not only lead by example on the changes needed to prevent climate breakdown but are key to establishing the environment where businesses and residents can make changes to their carbon footprint;

- b) Councils can take practical measures to reduce their carbon footprint; including:
 - i) Investing in zero emission vehicles in their fleet of vehicles;
 - ii) Installing charging points for zero emission vehicles;
 - iii) Encouraging the private purchase of zero emission vehicles by introducing free parking and charging for them;
 - iv) Installing solar panels on council buildings and council homes;
 - v) Encouraging all forms of renewable energy wherever possible and appropriate;
 - vi) Ensuring all council properties are fully insulated to minimise energy usage.

Local Government Conference instructs the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- A) Encourage every local government UNISON branch to call upon their council to declare a climate emergency;
- B) Encourage local government branches to call upon their council to have the aspiration of becoming net zero carbon by 2030, or as soon after as a just transition permits – making sure we take communities with us, protecting employment and without impoverishing deprived communities;
- C) Establish a ‘Green List’ of councils that declare a climate emergency, publicising the list;
- D) Encourage participation in events such as the Global Climate Action Day where such actions are within the law.

West Midlands Region

54. Tree management

Conference is concerned about the ongoing impact of budgetary cuts on services provided by local councils. This affects all aspects of council provision; all services are valuable and there are no easy or safe areas where cuts can be made with impunity.

Conference notes with sorrow, the tragic death in November 2016 of an unborn baby, when a car driven by a woman 36 weeks pregnant was hit by a falling bough from a roadside tree. Conference notes that the Coroner in 2019 found that:

- 1) At the time, Wirral did not have a robust tree management system;
- 2) That there had been no formal inspection of trees in the area for 13 years;

- 3) That there was inadequate training of parks and countryside staff with regards to tree management and identifying tree hazards;
- 4) That there was no Arboricultural Officer employed by the council;
- 5) That despite staff concerns and a previous near miss, appropriate investigation and action had not been undertaken.

Conference further notes that in September 2019 the Coroner issued a ‘Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Deaths’ to the Secretary of State and the Local Government Association. Within this report it states, “the court heard that following restructuring and staff reductions in the last decade that regular inspection, condition survey and tree maintenance work on parks and countryside trees in the Wirral was affected”. The report that Wirral only took action following the tragic death, and poses the question, how many public authorities are in a similar plight?

The Coroner’s report calls for national learning from this tragic and avoidable death. At the inquest it is recorded that “expert evidence was given that there needs to be a strategic management of tree policy, with a written policy system to ensure all trees are checked. There also needs to be effective staff training. The purpose of the policy is to detect trees before they fail, so as to keep the public safe, having regard to the location and occupancy of each tree”. However, without appropriate resources invested into the service, there is the danger that either the policy will not be implemented in practice, or other important areas of the service will be deprived of crucial resources as they are redirected.

This Conference notes that our members in Parks and Countryside Services are doing exceptional work in increasingly difficult circumstances but the cuts are having an overwhelming impact. Further to these cuts, staffing reductions, difficulty in accessing training, lack of suitable equipment, increased risk from biohazards and a rise in violence and aggression are all further impacting members. Our members are under immense pressure and yet often, as in Wirral, when members raise concerns they are not acted upon. Whilst the cuts in parks and countryside affect all areas of the service this conference recognises the importance of effective tree management systems.

This Conference therefore calls upon UNISON to:

- a) Press for every local authority to publish a fully resourced tree action plan;
- b) Campaign for every Council to have at least one Arboricultural Officer;
- c) Highlight the devastating effect that cuts in tree management can have for our members and the public;
- d) Call for investment across parks and countryside services.

Wirral

55. Facilities for collective representation

Conference notes that accredited recognised trade union representatives are legally entitled to time off for the following duties:

- 1) Negotiating with employers
- 2) Representing members individually and collectively
- 3) Performing health and safety functions
- 4) Performing union learning functions
- 5) Attending union training courses

Further to this, we believe that any employer who is genuinely committed to a constructive relationship with its recognised trade unions, should guarantee facilities time for the following activities:

- a) Attending internal union meetings
- b) Attending union policy making meetings and conferences
- c) Organising activities and union elections
- d) Meeting with union officers
- e) Accessing services of union learning representatives

Data revealed by UNISON in 2019 showed that a quarter of local government jobs have been cut over the last decade.

Some local authorities have taken advantage of increased government hostility towards trade unions to clamp down on trade union facilities time.

Even those authorities who are not as openly hostile to trade unions have used austerity and job losses as a pretext for either formally reducing facilities time or simply making it more difficult for representatives to access facilities time.

This motion seeks to highlight one particularly damaging effect of this erosion of facilities time.

As stated earlier in the motion, recognised trade union representatives are legally entitled to time off to represent members, not only individually, but also collectively.

Conference believes that collective representation is the most effective form of representation.

In order to effectively represent the collective views of members, trade union representatives must be given the opportunity to gather those views. It is necessary therefore that representatives are provided with opportunities, within work time, to discuss with members in a collective setting.

In our experience, team meetings, where representatives are given the opportunity to spend time with members, once management and non-members have left the room, have been a casualty of austerity.

Conference therefore reaffirms the importance of allowing trade union representatives to carry out their legal right to represent members' collective interests; and to do so, by meeting with members to discover their collective views.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to provide further guidance to branches on effective ways to engage in collective representation, as part of UNISON's Organising agenda.

We further call upon the Service Group Executive to support branches to defend and where necessary, expand the right to the facilities required for collective representation and to work with Labour Link to ensure that Labour councils in particular are upholding such rights.

Salford City

Motions Ruled Out of Order

Action not specific to the Conference

Organising to End the Crisis in Social Care

Conference notes the launch of the All-Party Parliamentary Group Inquiry into the Professionalisation of Social Care Workers and the publication in July 2019 of the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee report on Social Care Funding “Time to end a national scandal” which highlighted that adult social care in England continues to be inadequately funded.

The report noted that 1.4 million older people had an unmet care need in 2018; that the number of older people and working-age adults requiring care is increasing rapidly, and public funding is not only not keeping pace, but has declined in real terms by 13% between 2009/10 and 2015/16.

The Lords Economic Affairs Committee’s report importantly also urged the government to provide an immediate £8bn cash injection and reform the provision of care, including by giving free personal care to people who need it.

Conference further notes that in its November 2019 report entitled “Ethical Care: A Bold Reform Agenda for Adult Social Care”, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) described social care as “the ultimate Cinderella service”.

The report identifies that since 2008/09, there has been a 5% reduction in the number of people receiving publicly funded social care per year. Over the period since then, this equates to around 600,000 people. This has occurred despite a significant increase in the number of people in need of care.

Again, according to a 2018 Age UK report, there were 1.4m people over the age of 65 who had unmet social care needs. More than double the number in 2010.

More than one in five care providers – looking after over 200,000 people – are currently failing to meet the Care Quality Commission’s quality and safety standards. This grows to one in three when we consider nursing homes.

Additionally, according to the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), two-thirds of councils reported that they had at least one care provider that had closed, ceased trading or ‘handed back’ contracts in their area within a six-month period in 2019.

The IPPR’s report highlights that the “the impact of the cuts to social care are felt particularly strongly among the workforce. Nearly half the staff in the sector are paid below the living wage – with large numbers also paid below the minimum wage.” The report goes on to say that staff “retention is poor and turnover is high, with around one-third of the workforce leaving in any one year. This is leading to significant unfilled staffing gaps, which are due to grow from 78,000 today (November 2019) to 350,000 by 2028 – or 400,000 if freedom of movement comes to an end.”

Conference welcomes the fact that these reports shares many of UNISON’s concerns and reflects our union’s national policy and campaigning agenda. In

particular, that increased funding for adult social care should provide for a higher paid workforce and one that benefits from investment in development and training and ultimately effective collective sectoral bargaining machinery.

In his first speech as Prime Minister, Boris Johnson promised to “fix this crisis in social care once and for all.” We are yet to see any significant action taken to fulfil this commitment.

Conference further welcomes notes the work being undertaken within and by UNISON to tackle this problem.

In May 2019, UNISON was granted permission by the Supreme Court to appeal the Court of Appeal ruling in the Royal Mencap Society v Tomlinson-Blake case, which had declared that care workers were not entitled to the National Living Wage for so-called “sleep-in” shifts.

On the political front, UNISON contributed to the Labour Party manifesto for the December 2019 General Election, which contained the promise of free personal care for older people.

Beyond this, we have seen tremendous organising drives such as UNISON North West’s “Care Workers for Change” campaign, which was not only successful in preventing a number of local authorities from taking advantage of the Court of Appeal’s Tomlinson-Blake judgement to reduce sleep-in payments, but also led to a growth in social care membership and the securing of recognition and collective bargaining agreements with a number of employers.

Conference believes that we need to build on the work undertaken by UNISON North West and ensure that our legal and political efforts are combined with an effective national organising strategy for social care.

We believe that the single most effective way for our union to ensure sustainable improvements in social care, both for those who deliver and receive it, is to build workplace organisation across the sector.

Only an organised social care workforce can deliver sustainable change regardless of who is in power at a local and national level.

Only an organised social care workforce can ensure compliance with any improvements in commissioning and procurement.

Only an organised social care workforce can challenge poor practice without fear of reprisals.

Only an organised social care workforce can stand proudly and openly alongside others campaigning for dignity.

Only an organised social care workforce can enforce sectoral collective bargaining.

Only with an organised social care workforce can we provide the ground troops necessary for the fight for public ownership and delivery of social care.

Conference therefore calls upon the Service Group Executive to work with other service groups to:

Work with the NEC, Service Groups, Labour Link and other stakeholders to campaign for a social care system that is publicly delivered, free at the point of need and payed for by universal progressive taxation.

Work with the NEC, Service Groups, Labour Link and other stakeholders to demand the requisite resources to properly resource a national social care organising campaign aimed at not only recruiting social care workers into UNISON, but doing so in way designed to empower those workers to realise their collective strength.

Work with the NEC, Service Groups, Labour Link and other stakeholders including lobbying political parties in positions of power and influence in Scotland, Cymru/Wales and Northern Ireland to continue to highlight the gross under-funding of adult social care and the impact this has on society.

Salford City

Encouraging Members to Become Activists

Conference notes the general decline in members wishing to take a more active role in UNISON.

For branches to recruit members into activist roles we must increase members understanding of these roles.

It is therefore important that current activists encourage fellow members to become our next generation of activists and help UNISON to grow stronger year by year.

Some members may feel that they could take the next step towards becoming an activist but may not be confident enough to do this because they are not sure what these roles entail.

Members tend to become more involved with their local branch when they have had cause to call on UNISON for help.

But what about the members out there who never need UNISON'S help, the members who may have skills to help a branch grow or maybe not even realise yet that they have these skills.

How many of our low paid members feel that they are just a cleaner, caterer, librarian or clerical worker and do not realise that they may have so many other skills to bring to their Branch and may be our next generation of activists.

Conference calls on the SGE: -

- a) To develop courses that give members an insight into what being an activist involves
- b) To help members understand that being an activist is not just about possible industrial action, it's about support in the workplace Health and Safety, Mental Health and so much more

- c) To provide the materials to help, and to encourage, branches to organise open days that give members a chance to see all the courses and online training that is available to activists and hopefully encourage them to take the next step to becoming more active in their branch.

City of Wolverhampton

Organising to End the Crisis in Social Care

Conference notes the launch of the All-Party Parliamentary Group Inquiry into the Professionalisation of Social Care Workers and the publication in July 2019 of the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee report on Social Care Funding “Time to end a national scandal” which highlighted that adult social care in England continues to be inadequately funded.

Key findings from the Report included that 1.4 million older people had an unmet care need in 2018; that the number of older people and working-age adults requiring care is increasing rapidly; and that public funding is not keeping pace with this increasing demand and actually declined by 13% in real terms in the period between 2009/10 and 2015/16.

The Lords Economic Affairs Committee’s Report, importantly, also urged the government to provide an immediate £8 billion cash injection and reform the provision of care, including by giving free personal care to people who need it.

Conference further notes that in its November 2019 report entitled “Ethical Care: A Bold Reform Agenda for Adult Social Care”, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) described social care as “the ultimate Cinderella service”.

The report identifies that since 2008/09 there has been a 5% reduction in the number of people receiving publicly funded social care per year. Over the period since then this equates to around 600,000 people. This has occurred despite a significant increase in the number of people in need of care.

Again, according to a 2018 Age UK report, there were 1.4m people over the age of 65 who had unmet social care needs. More than double the number in 2010. More than one in five care providers – looking after over 200,000 people – are currently failing to meet the Care Quality Commission’s quality and safety standards. This grows to one in three when including nursing homes.

Additionally, according to the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), two-thirds of councils reported that they had at least one care provider that had closed, ceased trading or ‘handed back’ contracts in their area within a six-month period in 2019.

The IPPR’s report highlights that “the impact of the cuts to social care are felt particularly strongly among the workforce. Nearly half the staff in the sector are paid below the living wage – with large numbers also paid below the minimum wage.”

The report goes on to say that “staff retention is poor and turnover is high, with around one-third of the workforce leaving in any one year. This is leading to

significant unfilled staffing gaps, which are due to grow from 78,000 today (November 2019) to 350,000 by 2028 – or 400,000 if freedom of movement comes to an end.”

Conference welcomes the fact that these independent reports highlight many of UNISON’s long-held concerns and provide qualitative data that supports our policy and campaigning agenda. In particular, that increased funding for adult social care should provide for a higher paid workforce and one that benefits from investment in development and training and ultimately effective collective sectoral bargaining machinery.

In his first speech as Prime Minister, Boris Johnson promised to “fix this crisis in social care once and for all.” We are yet to see any significant action taken to fulfil this commitment.

Conference further welcomes the work being undertaken within and by UNISON to tackle this problem.

In May 2019, UNISON was granted permission by the Supreme Court to appeal the Court of Appeal ruling in the Royal Mencap Society v Tomlinson-Blake case, which had declared that care workers were not entitled to the National Living Wage for so-called “sleep-in” shifts.

On the political front, UNISON contributed to the Labour Party manifesto for the December 2019 General Election, which contained the promise of free personal care for older people.

Beyond this, we have seen tremendous organising drives such as UNISON North West’s “Care Workers for Change” campaign, which was not only successful in preventing a number of local authorities from taking advantage of the Court of Appeal’s Tomlinson-Blake judgement to reduce sleep-in payments, but also led to a growth in social care membership and from this organising base instilled confidence in members and activists leading to the securing of recognition and collective bargaining agreements with a number of employers.

Conference agrees that we need to prioritise and build on work such as that undertaken by UNISON North West and ensure that our legal and political efforts are combined with an effective union-wide organising and industrial strategy for social care.

We believe that the single most effective starting point for sustainable improvements in social care - both for those who receive it and those who deliver it - is to build unionised workplace organisation across the sector.

An organised unionised social care workforce, working with progressive service user representative bodies and advocates, can provide the underpinning to drive sustainable change regardless of who is in power at the local and national level; to pursue and ensure compliance with the necessary improvements in service design, commissioning and procurement processes; to challenge poor practice wherever it arises and without fear of detriment or reprisals; to stand proudly and openly alongside others campaigning for dignity and fairness.

And only an organised unionised social care workforce can provide the critical mass necessary to deliver sectoral collective bargaining and lead the fight for public ownership and public delivery of social care.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to work with other Service Groups, the NEC, Labour Link and other stakeholders:

- 1) To campaign for a social care system that is publicly owned, publicly delivered and free for all at the point of need.
- 2) To secure the resources necessary to properly plan, resource and deliver a union-wide social care organising campaign aimed not simply at recruiting social care workers into UNISON as 'numbers' but doing so in ways designed to organise and unionise workplaces and employers across the sector, to empower those workers to realise their collective strength and to position UNISON as the natural home for all social care workers.
- 3) To lobby politicians, political parties and others of 'power and influence' across all regions and nations to continue to highlight the gross under-funding of adult social care and the impact this has on individuals in need, their families and carers, and wider society.

North West Region

Not sufficiently clear

Climate Change and Local Councils

Conference notes and applaud that at least 265 Councils (65%) have declared a climate emergency. A number of Councils have also appointed a Lead for Climate change issues. These steps are to be welcomed but we recognise that these announcements must be backed up with action.

However we note that in a recent survey of Councils (by Electrical Contractors' Association) that 93 out of 214 local authorities (43 per cent) say that they don't measure all energy use in relation to their built assets, which include housing, facilities, offices and other council-owned buildings and therefore do not know their own carbon footprint. While 47 per cent of councils say they do not have a plan in place for reducing the carbon emissions resulting from their built assets.

More positively, 166 councils (78 per cent) say they are planning towards net zero operation by 2050. Furthermore, 49 local authorities (23 per cent) stated that they would be carbon neutral by 2030. However, even 11 of these 49 councils do not currently know their own carbon footprint.

Conference believes that Councils need to take a lead in identifying their carbon footprint and developing an action to be carbon neutral by 2030

- Conference believes that all Councils should
- Declare a climate emergency
- Identify a Lead Councillor for Climate Emergency

Develop in conjunction with trade unions, a robust action plan for identifying their carbon footprint and developing measures to reduce their carbon emissions to neutral by 2030

This Conference believes that UNISON has a key role to play in achieving these aims. Conference therefore encourages Branches to engage with Councils to ensure a robust action plan is developed in all areas. Conference further instructs the SGE to produce and publish guidance as a matter of urgency to ensure that action plans are developed swiftly.

Wirral

Withdrawn by submitting body

Impact of Fair Funding in the North East of England

Conference notes that austerity has caused considerable upheaval in local authority funding. Since 2010, Central government grants to north east local authorities have been slashed by 79% and even commentators such as the National Audit Office have supported the argument that the North East has been disproportionately affected.

The reduction in funding has resulted in cuts to vital services relied upon by local communities across the north east, together with tens of thousands of jobs lost within the sector.

The delayed Fair Funding Review provides further uncertainty for local government finances, making it exceptionally difficult for Councils to plan for the long term.

UNISON has consistently argued that the removal of deprivation as a factor will severely impact the ability of Councils to meet the needs of their residents. The Leader of the LGA Labour Group, Nick Forbes, has also criticised the government's plans on the basis that "these changes will force further cuts and further hardship, and once again the most vulnerable in society will lose out."

A recent analysis commissioned by the Local Government Association has now revealed that from 2021 communities in the north of England will see millions of pounds of funding taken away and given to more affluent areas. This ironically includes constituencies in the north east now Tory-held, such as Bishop Auckland, Durham North West and Sedgefield where Durham Council will have to contend with a funding reduction of 6.71%.

This is far from the 'levelling up' promised by the Prime Minister and demonstrates the need for UNISON to continue to call out the government's disingenuous claim that austerity is over.

Conference therefore calls upon the local government Service Group Executive to:

- a) further strengthen the fight against cuts to local government funding and the campaign for sufficient funding;

- b) Develop more effective alliances with a range of outside organisations, such as the various local government associations, service user groups and political parties, to help secure equitable funding for local government;
- c) Continue to raise support amongst the general public by putting across the damaging human consequences of the cuts to services alongside demonstrating the value of all local government services;
- d) Support and involve all regions and branches and help them to recruit, organise and involve members in the campaign;
- e) Work with politicians at all levels, including councillors, metro mayors, MPs, AMs, MSPs to get them to take effective action to end the cuts to local government services;
- f) Campaign to ensure the Fair Funding Review in England results in positive meaningful change for the allocation of local government funding;
- g) Continue to call for unallocated business rates to be given back to local government by Westminster;
- h) Continue to work with regions and branches to raise awareness of council income generation and the expansion of trading to offset the loss of income from central government grants;
- i) Develop guidance on income generation, the expansion of trading, and develop a strategy to utilise social value, build relationships with and promote a constructive dialogue with national and regional employer groupings, councillors and senior local government officers and also work with UNISON's Labour Link and campaign fund to promote this initiative;
- j) Carry out a targeted piece of work across UNISON regions to highlight the damaging impact of council funding cuts to services in the constituencies of all MPs, but in particular high-profile Westminster government ministers and request additional funding ahead of the comprehensive spending review.

Northern Region