

# **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

## **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

**UNISON Preliminary Agenda**  
**Special Delegate Conference**  
**Online**  
**15 - 17 June 2021**

---

**This publication contains the motions for the Special Delegate Conference followed by motions ruled out of order by the standing orders committee and the reason for the ruling. The deadline for amendments to motions is 12 noon Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021.**

**Items in this agenda are not UNISON policy until they have been debated and passed at conference.**

---

### **Organising and Recruitment**

---

Recruitment and Organising

---

#### **1. Growing UNISON, Learning the Good Lessons**

Conference is extremely proud of the growth in membership across the regions over the past year. This includes not only the high recruitment rate but importantly the strong retention rate as well.

Whilst a significant number of these new members have joined because of the tireless work of our activists throughout the past year; while they themselves have been on the frontline getting the UK through the pandemic. It is clear that a number of these members have found their own way to the union because they were scared and worried about their jobs and employment, because of the incompetent handling of the pandemic by this government and its weak leadership.

Due to the impact of the pandemic on our branches and activists, UNISON introduced directly contacting new members, to welcome them into the union and directing them to useful information. In addition, our communications have become more targeted to both members and activists, engaging with them throughout.

Therefore, Conference agrees that we should learn the positive lessons from the pandemic and continue with the initiatives that assist new members and take some of the pressure off of branches and activists including:

- 1) Continue with the use of social media targeted at members and activists to share and signpost guidance and key information;
- 2) Hold regular webinars, on key topics that will inform and reassure our members – engaging them with their union;

# **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

## **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 3) Contacting new members as soon as possible to welcome them and learn the key issues affecting them at work.

### ***Greater London Region***

---

#### Organisation and Development

---

#### **2. Facilities and Expectations for Workplace Representatives**

Conference welcomes the National Executive Council's recognition that "well organised workplaces, a fairer labour market and overhaul of employment and trade union rights" is an important matter for consideration, within the theme of "Securing an equal and sustainable post pandemic settlement."

Conference notes that accredited, recognised and trained 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, Conference believes 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.

Many employers have taken advantage of increased government hostility towards trade unions to clamp down on trade union facilities time.

Even those 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.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

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, during the working day, once management and non members have left the room, have been a casualty of austerity. The pandemic has provided opportunities for engagement with members over virtual platforms, but this has not resolved the problem of securing adequate collective engagement during work time.

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 National Executive Council to work with the Service Groups to provide further guidance to branches on effective ways to engage in collective representation, as part of UNISON's Organising agenda.

Conference further call upon the National Executive Council to support branches to defend and where necessary, expand the right to the facilities required for collective representation.

**Knowsley  
Salford City**

---

### **3. Covid 19 Wellbeing Programme for UNISON Activists**

The purpose.

This motion calls upon UNISON and the National Executive Council to establish a support network for UNISON stewards and activists particularly in wake of the Covid 19 pandemic.

This network would include counselling, mentoring and a point of contact for support for those who are helping our members. The programme will require appointed councillors in each region who can provide emotional and practical support for the army of selfless stewards and representatives who are under immense pressure due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

The reasoning.

At present there is no UNISON Wellbeing Programme for our activists. These volunteers give their time and emotional support to our members. Stewards often do this where the member is under huge emotional distress which affects those who are trying to help them. In empathising with their members they then carry the psychological issues home and find it almost impossible to turn off, and as such this

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

impacts on their work life balance. Lockdown regulations and working from home has exacerbated this problem.

It is above and beyond all reasonable expectation of our union that our activists do this without the necessary emotional and wellbeing support.

Conclusion.

We ask Conference to support our motion and to instruct the National Executive Council to treat this motion with the utmost urgency by commencing a feasibility study at the earliest opportunity with a view to implementing a suitable Wellbeing Programme for UNISON Activists scheme before next year's National Delegate Conference.

#### ***Yorkshire and Humberside Gas***

#### **4. Union Cooperatives: a New Organising Opportunity**

One of the main challenges facing our union is organising effectively in the face of growing numbers of workers located in precarious, low-paid sectors of the economy. UNISON increasingly recognises that we are now often organising in the private and voluntary sectors as much as in our public sector heartlands. Indeed, neoliberal political and economic forces have driven some of our core employment out of the public and into the private sector in recent decades. UNISON branches with members working for private and independent sector employers, such as in the care sector, know how hard it is to respond to the numerous and serious demands made upon branch activist resources because of the shameful and shabby ways many of these workers are treated by managers who can act with impunity in the absence of recognition or effective representation. We have implemented a series of organising campaigns over the years to meet these challenges and build density, and have welcomed exchanges of knowledge and support to build our organising from sister unions such as the SEIU in the US.

This year saw the launch of a manifesto for decent work written by a coalition of activists from the trade union and cooperative movements including activists from UNISON. This manifesto draws upon successful international organising campaigns to argue the case for a new form of workplace governance – the union cooperative. In a fully realised union cooperative all workers are members of both the union and the cooperative and a union committee is a central part of the democratic governance of the cooperative, placing the workforce at the centre of decisions about how their work is organised, flattening status and pay differentials between managers and workers, and ensuring that any profit accrues to the cooperative and the workers within it, rather than being leached out of the business, as is the case under financialised capitalistic systems as we now know them. Broader approaches to making local economies fairer, such as the Preston Model of community wealth building have been enthusiastic supporters of the potential of the union cooperative approach. The union cooperative approach to securing decent work and industrial democracy is well suited to the task of building back following the Covid 19 pandemic and is also likely to be congruent with efforts to secure a green new deal.

The union cooperative model offers unions like UNISON an opportunity to pin aspects of organising campaigns on the establishment of union cooperatives. In

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

doing so, we can grow our membership and reduce the demands upon branches because the union cooperative will deliver decent work and workplace democracy. Our US allies in SEIU and 1Worker1Vote have shown how this can be achieved at scale with hugely beneficial impact for the union and its members.

The place for successful union cooperatives is in the current private sector. We do see opportunities to organise for union cooperatives as an alternative to the current financialised and largely bankrupt capitalistic dominance of care sector work. Support for union cooperatives is compatible with our overarching aim of insourcing care sector work within a national care service. Union cooperatives substitute for private not public employers. Successful union cooperatives will be better placed to be part of a national care service should it be established, as our union is likely to be core to their governance.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to ensure that UNISON:

- 1) Position itself as an ally and supporter of union cooperatives and potentially the prime union for union cooperatives;
- 2) Builds the union cooperative option into broadly based union organising and political campaigns, especially in conjunction with new municipal efforts to build decent work and fairer local economies;
- 3) Provides appropriate support to members and activists seeking to establish a union cooperative;
- 4) Lobbies government and the Labour Party to seek future legislation to improve the legal and taxation operating environment of union cooperatives;
- 5) Forms strategic alliances with union Co-ops UK and key supportive international partners to promote union cooperatives.

### ***Liverpool Community and Hospitals Health***

---

#### **Negotiating and Bargaining**

---

##### Bargaining

---

#### **5. Burned Out: Young Workers and Mentally Healthy Workplaces**

Conference recognises that the pandemic has taken a toll on mental health across the board. Fear and anxiety, created by uncertainty about the disease and how it is transmitted, is understandable and unavoidable, but confusing and misleading government guidance has worsened the situation.

For frontline staff, particularly staff in health and social care, the experience of 'burn out' has been widespread after a year of working in crisis conditions. For some workers on the frontline, the level of pressure may have led to PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder).

Others have experienced isolation caused by lack of support, and distance from their social support groups due to lockdown. Widespread home working has blurred the distinction between personal and working lives, meaning that pressure at work may

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

have a worse impact on home life than it did pre-pandemic. Juggling caring and work responsibilities has also become more difficult for many, creating additional pressure.

Conference notes that while the mental health impact of the pandemic has been widespread, in UNISON surveys young, LGBT+ and Black workers have consistently reported worse impacts on their mental health than other members. In a UNISON survey of young members in November 2020, 85 percent of respondents said that their mental health had been seriously affected or slightly affected by lockdown measures and the pandemic.

Mentally healthy workplaces and the importance of mental health support have been important concerns for young workers over the last few years; the pandemic has amplified and exacerbated these issues.

Even before the pandemic NHS mental health services were strained and underfunded, with a particular pressure point for young people moving from childrens' to adult mental health services.

Conference believes that employers have a duty to ensure that workplaces are mentally as well as physically healthy and safe, and that everyone should have access to effective and adequate mental health support.

Conference asks the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Promote UNISON's existing advice, guidance and education programmes related to mental health and mentally healthy workplaces;
- 2) Review UNISON's training and guidance for health and safety representatives and consider developing further training and guidance to emphasise mental health in the workplace;
- 3) Consider developing a union wide campaign on the importance of mentally healthy workplaces;
- 4) Work with the National Young Members Forum to promote UNISON's work on improving mental health in the workplace to younger workers;
- 5) Work with other campaigns, in line with UNISON's values, to campaign for better funded mental health provision in the NHS.

#### ***National Young Members' Forum***

---

#### **6. Trade Union recognition for outsourced workers delivering public services.**

Conference recognises the lack of trade union recognition with private contractors and independent companies prevents collective bargaining on issues including pay, terms and condition and securing an equal and sustainable post pandemic settlement for workers delivering public services.

This is known to be a contributory factor in the perpetuation of low wages and poor conditions of service for private contractor workers. This situation also mitigates

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

against stewards, health and safety reps and union learning reps playing an active role in defending members and participating actively at all levels of the union.

Increasing use of 'fire and rehire' tactics in some areas that has emerged since the start of the pandemic has been used to further drive down terms and conditions of outsourced workers in order to make savings for multinational corporations.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Issue guidance to branches on how to secure trade union recognition for outsourced workers delivering public services;
- 2) Promote the need for ethical procurement ensuring trade union recognition is incorporated into any tendering process.

### ***Private Contractors National Forum***

#### **7. Creating Fairer Workplaces**

Conference notes that poor quality jobs, lack of respect for the workforce, attacks on employment and trade union rights, unfairness and discrimination are all too familiar features of the world of work across the UK. These problems have been both highlighted and added to by Covid 19.

The pandemic has shown the need for fairer workplaces and the role that decent terms and conditions such as proper sick pay can play in protecting both workers and the public. Any real recovery from the pandemic will involve creating fairer workplaces

Conference notes that there is progress being made in parts of the UK and that important lessons can be learnt from, for example, the Fair Work Framework in Scotland. The Fair Work Framework is defined as offering all individuals an effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect.

UNISON Scotland participation in the Fair Work Convention has helped expose poor practice, particularly in social care, and help deliver improvements, although many problems have still to be addressed.

The Covid pandemic has highlighted how much society relies on previously unsung roles in the public and private sector. Alongside this has come a greater public awareness of poor terms and conditions endured in these roles. With this in mind conference believes that an approach similar to that embodied in the Scotland's Fair Work Convention can play a useful role in improving the quality of jobs.

Conference therefore calls on UNISON to work through the Labour Link, the TUC, STUC, WTUC and ICTU to develop a progressive vision for fairer workplaces across the UK. Added to this UNISON should:

- 1) Campaign to protect hard-won employment protections and seek to ensure that the any future Tory Employment Bill includes measures that lead to:
  - a) The effective abolition of zero hours contracts by giving workers the right to a contract that reflects their regular hours;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- b) Workers having the right to challenge their parent employer over minimum wage, sick pay and holiday pay abuses;
  - c) Genuine two-way flexibility by giving workers a default right to work flexibly from the first day in the job, and all jobs to be advertised as flexible;
- 2) Continue to campaign on employment protections and enhancing worker and trade union rights regardless of the outcome of the Tory Employment Bill;
  - 3) Support service groups and branches to bargain for employment protections that will improve working life for members and potential members;
  - 4) Work with Branches and across service groups and SOGs to continue to develop appropriate workforce planning strategies to address barriers to fairness and in-work progression;
  - 5) Work across the union to continue to develop strategies to tackle institutional racism in the workplace;
  - 6) Work across the union to continue to tackle disability discrimination in the workplace;
  - 7) Continue to campaign for further action to narrow the gender pay gap, to promote the use of UNISON's 'Bridge the Gap' materials and to call for mandatory reporting of ethnicity and disability pay gaps, along with robust and enforceable action plans to tackle the causes.

#### ***Scotland Region***

---

#### **8. Creating Fairer Workplaces for the Post Lockdown World**

Conference notes that poor quality jobs, lack of respect for the workforce, attacks on employment and trade union rights, unfairness and discrimination are all too familiar features of the world of work in the UK and that a post Covid settlement must address this.

Covid has highlighted how much society relies on previously unsung roles in the public and private sector.

As we look ahead to life after Covid, it is crucial that UNISON and other trade unions use this moment of sorrow and reflection to lead the fight for a fairer world of work. Conference agrees that this would be a fitting tribute to the sacrifice that many of our members and those of other unions have made during the pandemic.

Conference agrees that UNISON has a vital contribution to make to this endeavour. As a union of over one million women members we know only too well that the majority of the undervalued and low paid sectors in the labour market are in roles predominantly performed by women.

While the pandemic has made heroes of social care workers and rightly recognised them as 'key' and 'essential' workers, this is not reflected in pay, conditions or respect.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference notes that more than half of social care workers earn less than the real living wage set by the Living Wage Foundation, and thousands still do not even receive the lower National Minimum Wage. A third of social care staff leave their roles each year and a quarter are employed on zero-hours contracts. Training and development opportunities are virtually non-existent.

The same can be seen in other low pay sectors such as cleaning and early years and for occupations such as teaching assistant.

The common theme is a fundamental undervaluing of 'caring' roles in our society and a lack of workforce planning, training and progression opportunities which must be addressed.

But discrimination and unfairness of the labour market does not end there. For example, the devastating impact of the pandemic on Black workers has highlighted the way systemic racism has led to occupational segregation and an over concentration of Black workers exposed on the low-paid front line.

Many disabled workers are frustrated at the failure to provide reasonable adjustments, often very simple and at no or little cost, that would enable them to be more productive. Where some progress has been made, including being able to work from home during the pandemic, fears remain that employer attitudes will result in gains being removed at the earliest opportunity.

More broadly the coronavirus outbreak has revealed the horrendous insecurity faced by the millions who find themselves unable to find anything beyond casual work - often on zero hours contracts or working through employment agencies.

Conference further notes that just when we should hope that the pandemic has shone a light on the huge contribution of working people there is a very real risk that the world of work could be about to become worse in the period ahead. This is because post Brexit, the Tory party will almost certainly try and make the UK's flexible labour market its competitive advantage in attracting investment and strip back employment protections and workplace rights.

Conference notes that there is progress being made in parts of the UK and that important lessons can be learnt from, for example, the Fair Work Framework in Scotland and Social Partnership Bill in Wales.

In this context conference calls on UNISON to work through the Labour Link, the TUC, STUC, WTUC and ICTU to develop a progressive vision for fairer workplaces for the wider UK, which address the deep dysfunctions outlined in this motion and which results in a newfound dignity for all workers. Added to this UNISON should:

- 1) Campaign to protect hard-won employment protections and ensure that the Tory Employment Bill includes measures that lead to:
  - a) The effective abolition of zero hours contracts by giving workers the right to a contract that reflects their regular hours;
  - b) Workers having the right to challenge their parent employer over minimum wage, sick pay and holiday pay abuses;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- c) Genuine two-way flexibility by giving workers a default right to work flexibly from the first day in the job, and all jobs to be advertised as flexible.
- 2) Continue to campaign on employment protections and enhancing worker and trade union rights regardless of the outcome of the Tory Employment Bill;
- 3) Support service groups and branches to bargain for employment protections that will improve working life for members and potential members;
- 4) Work with branches and across service groups, self-organised groups and young members organisation to continue to develop appropriate workforce planning strategies to address barriers to fairness and in-work progression;
- 5) Work across the union to continue to develop strategies to tackle institutional racism, disability discrimination and other workplace discrimination and inequality;
- 6) Continue to campaign for further action to narrow discriminatory pay gaps, promoting the use of UNISON's 'Bridge the Gap' materials to tackle gender pay, calling for mandatory reporting of ethnicity and disability pay gaps, and for robust and enforceable action plans to tackle the causes of all pay gaps.

### **Newcastle Hospitals**

---

#### **9. Mandatory Vaccinations in Public Sector Workplaces**

Conference recognises the dangers posed by Covid, flu, and other viral infection with an average of 8,000 people in England killed by flu every year and Covid taking over 130,000 lives across the whole of the UK.

Conference believes that it is appropriate for public sector staff, particularly those working in communities or providing care within a variety of settings, to have the opportunity to have a free Covid and flu jab, and that staff who are offered free vaccinations should, as appropriate, be encouraged to take this up by both employers and unions. It should be noted that this approach is generally reflected in jointly agreed national statements and within the campaigns supporting the vaccination programmes within workplaces and national press.

However, it is of concern that some employers are looking to make Covid vaccinations mandatory, alongside employers who have already mandated flu vaccination, we also note that numerous research and guidance, including that from National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), does not recommend mandatory flu vaccination for some public sector workers, for example healthcare workers, with Covid vaccinations being challenged with supply chain issues which would challenge employers delivering these vaccinations.

Conference believes that the decision to have a vaccination should be a matter of personal choice and that the decision of a worker or potential new recruit to decline a vaccination should be respected. Workers should face no sanction or detriment if they choose to decline any vaccination; no national vaccination programme is mandated under law and no worker should be forced to have any vaccination by their employer.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference** **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference calls on the National Executive Committee to:

- 1) Continue to work with employers nationally to promote the voluntary take-up of free vaccinations by workers;
- 2) Reject any move by employers nationally or locally to adopt a policy of mandating any vaccination(s) for workers;
- 3) Provide support for branches facing initiatives by their local employers to impose any mandatory vaccinations.

### ***Lancashire Police***

---

#### **10. Mandatory Vaccinations in Public Service Workplaces**

Conference recognises the dangers posed by Covid, flu, and other viral infection with an average of 8,000 people in England killed by flu every year and Covid taking over 130,000 lives across the whole of the UK.

Conference believes that it is appropriate for public service staff, in particular those providing care within a variety of settings, including care homes, to have the opportunity to have a free Covid and flu jab, and that staff who are offered free vaccinations should, as appropriate, be encouraged to take this up by both employers and unions. Conference notes that this approach is generally reflected in jointly agreed national statements and within the campaigns supporting the vaccination programmes within workplaces and national press.

However, Conference notes with concern that some employers are looking to make Covid vaccinations mandatory, alongside employers who have already mandated flu vaccination. Conference also notes that numerous research and guidance, including that from NICE, does not recommend mandatory flu vaccination for healthcare workers, with Covid vaccinations being challenged with supply chain issues which would challenge employers delivering these vaccinations.

Conference believes that the decision to have a vaccination should be a matter of personal choice and that the decision of a worker or potential new recruit to decline a vaccination should be respected. Workers should face no sanction or detriment if they choose to decline any vaccination; no national vaccination programme is mandated under law and no worker should be forced to have any vaccination by their employer.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to work with employers nationally to promote the voluntary take-up of free vaccinations by workers;
- 2) Reject any move by employers nationally or locally to adopt a policy of mandating any vaccination(s) for workers;
- 3) Support individual workers facing sanctions as a result of choosing not to be vaccinated;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 4) Provide support for branches facing initiatives by their local employers to impose any mandatory vaccinations.

***Manchester***

---

#### **11. Mandatory Vaccinations in Workplaces**

Conference recognises the dangers posed by Covid, flu, and other viral infections. An average of 8,000 people in England are killed by flu every year and Covid has taken over 150,000 lives across the whole of the UK.

Conference believes that it is appropriate for staff, particular those providing care within a variety of settings, to have the opportunity to receive a free Covid and flu jab, and that staff who are offered free vaccinations should be encouraged to take this up by both employers and unions. Conference notes that this approach is generally reflected in jointly agreed national statements and within the campaigns supporting the associated vaccination programmes within workplaces and national press.

Conference notes that:

- 1) The flu vaccine efficacy rate can be as low as 12% in some years;
- 2) Numerous articles of research, along with guidance (including that from the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence), does not recommend mandatory flu vaccination for healthcare workers;
- 3) Covid vaccinations have already seen challenging supply chain issues which would challenge employers delivering these vaccinations.

However, Conference notes with concern that some employers have suggested that they are looking to mandate some vaccinations including those with poor or unproven results (such as flu) or unknown long-term effects (such as Covid). Conference believes that the decision to have a vaccination should be a matter of personal choice and that the decision of a worker or potential new recruit to decline a vaccination should be respected, without the need for justification. Mandating a vaccination should be on proven results, showing effective prevention in the control of the associated infection. Workers should face no sanction or detriment if they choose to decline these vaccinations. No national vaccination programme is mandated under law and no worker should be forced to have unproven or ineffective vaccination by their employer.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Continue to work with employers nationally to promote the voluntary take-up of free vaccinations by workers;
- b) Reject any move by employers nationally or locally to adopt a policy of mandating ineffectual or unproven vaccination(s) for workers;
- c) Provide support for branches facing initiatives by their local employers to impose mandatory vaccinations which are not supported by clear scientific research which shows high rates of efficacy.

# **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

## **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

**Pennine Acute Health**

---

### **12. Post Covid 19 Syndrome and Disability Employment Protection**

Conference notes that for those who experience Covid 19 and survive the initial illness, Covid 19 can be life changing. Some people will suffer chronic damage to their lungs, heart, kidneys, or brain and some will develop Post Covid 19 Syndrome.

Post Covid-19 Syndrome is a chronic illness, possibly similar to Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS). We know the symptoms are varied and can fluctuate. Among the most commonly reported are fatigue, lack of energy, breathlessness, anxiety and depression, palpitations, chest pains, joint or muscle pain, headache, lack of concentration and focus, and insomnia.

In December 2020 the health watchdog, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published guidelines on identifying, assessing, and managing the long term effects of Covid 19. NICE defines Post Covid 19 Syndrome as signs and symptoms lasting for more than 12 weeks after the start of acute symptoms that cannot be explained by an alternative diagnosis.

In 2020, a survey by Office for National Statistics noted that one in five people contracting Covid 19 experience symptoms for five weeks or more, and one in ten experience symptoms lasting for 12 weeks or more. As of 23 March 2021, there had been approximately 4.31 million confirmed Covid 19 cases in the UK, and 124 million cases worldwide. In the UK, that translates into 431,000 people who will potentially experience Post Covid 19 Syndrome, or 1,181 new cases per day. By comparison, in 2020 Cancer Research UK reported an incidence of 367,000 new cancer cases in the UK every year. Post Covid 19 Syndrome is clearly a major emerging health concern.

Conference, employees experiencing Post Covid 19 Syndrome are not afforded disability protections in law until they have had a condition that has or is likely to have lasted for 12 months or longer. Yet, the Syndrome itself is so new that there is insufficient scientific evidence yet to determine the longer-term effects.

This leaves employees experiencing Post Covid 19 Syndrome particularly vulnerable to management processes including attendance management, health capability and performance capability, and ultimately dismissal at a time when the global scientific and clinical understanding and research evidence of Post Covid 19 Syndrome is new and emerging.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council:

- 1) To promote ongoing research into Post Covid 19 Syndrome;
- 2) To call for the creation of a formal definition of Post Covid 19 Syndrome;
- 3) To call on UK employers to treat Post Covid 19 Syndrome as a disability in terms of the Equality Act 2010, applying the same provisions and protections to those experiencing Post Covid-19 Syndrome as are applied to their disabled employees while an understanding of the Syndrome is developing;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 4) To call for the formal recognition of Post Covid 19 Syndrome as a disability where future scientific evidence supports;
- 5) To develop guidance to branches on best practice for supporting employees who develop Post Covid 19 Syndrome, to best protect employees from formal management processes and ultimately dismissal, while an understanding of the Syndrome is developing.

#### ***South Lanarkshire***

---

### **13. Post Covid 19 Syndrome and Disability Employment Protection**

Conference notes that for those who experience Covid 19 and survive the initial illness, Covid 19 can be life-changing. Some people will suffer chronic damage to their lungs, heart, kidneys, or brain, and some will develop Post Covid 19 syndrome.

Post Covid 19 syndrome is a chronic illness, possibly similar to Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS). We know the symptoms are varied and can fluctuate. Among the most commonly reported are fatigue, lack of energy, breathlessness, anxiety and depression, palpitations, chest pains, joint or muscle pain, headache, lack of concentration and focus, and insomnia.

In December 2020 the health watchdog, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published guidelines on identifying, assessing, and managing the long term effects of Covid 19. NICE defines Post Covid 19 Syndrome as signs and symptoms lasting for more than 12 weeks after the start of acute symptoms that cannot be explained by an alternative diagnosis.

In 2020, a survey by Office for National Statistics noted that one in five people contracting Covid 19 experience symptoms for five weeks or more, and one in ten experience symptoms lasting for 12 weeks or more. As of 23 March 2021, there had been approximately 4.31 million confirmed Covid 19 cases in the UK, and 124 million cases worldwide. In the UK, that translates into 431,000 people who will potentially experience Post Covid 19 syndrome, or 1,181 new cases per day. By comparison, in 2020 Cancer Research UK reported an incidence of 367,000 new cancer cases in the UK every year. Post Covid 19 syndrome is clearly a major emerging health concern.

Conference, employees experiencing Post Covid 19 syndrome are not afforded disability protections in law until they have had a condition that has or is likely to have lasted for 12 months or longer. Yet, the syndrome itself is so new that there is insufficient scientific evidence yet to determine the longer-term effects.

This leaves employees experiencing Post Covid 19 syndrome particularly vulnerable to management processes including attendance management, health capability and performance capability, and ultimately dismissal at a time when the global scientific and clinical understanding and research evidence of Post Covid 19 syndrome is new and emerging.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council:

- 1) To promote ongoing research into Post Covid 19 syndrome;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference** **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 2) To call for the creation of a formal definition of Post Covid 19 syndrome;
- 3) To call on UK employers to treat staff experiencing Post Covid 19 syndrome in the same manner as they would a staff member with a condition that constitutes a disability in terms of the Equality Act 2010, applying the same provisions and protections while an understanding of the syndrome is developing;
- 4) To call for the formal recognition of Post Covid 19 syndrome as a recognised health condition where future scientific evidence supports;
- 5) To develop guidance to branches on best practice for supporting employees who develop Post Covid 19 Syndrome, so that we can use this to best protect employees from formal management processes and ultimately dismissal, while an understanding of the Syndrome is developing.

### ***South Lanarkshire***

---

#### **14. Support for Members with Caring Responsibilities**

Conference notes that the Covid 19 pandemic has considerably increased the numbers of unpaid carers; which compounds pressures on them caused by inadequate funding for both health and social care.

Conference recognises that increasing numbers of members are forced to provide caring support for family members and they deserve support from employers in recognition of the additional stresses and strains that this imposes.

Conference recognises that some employers have already introduced carer friendly policies and welcomes the publication of the guide "Bargaining on Carers' Policies". Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to refresh the data in this and re-energise a campaign around this.

Conference further resolves to campaign to give carers more rights to flexible working, helping them balance employment with caring responsibilities. The Equality Act 2010 currently requires employers to make 'reasonable adjustments' for people with disabilities to help them work and access public spaces and services. This should be extended so that requirements clearly include carers who are looking after disabled people.

Conference further agrees that this issue must be a priority and calls for it to be brought forward to the TUC for cross union support.

### ***Surrey County***

---

#### **Pay**

---

#### **15. Smash the Tory Pay Freeze**

Conference notes with deep concern the government's imposition of a one percent pay rise for NHS workers and a pay freeze for other public sector workers. The Tories want to create division between public and private sector workers and between NHS workers covered by pay review bodies and other public sector workers.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference notes the thousands of public sector workers who are paid even worse terms and conditions because they have been outsourced.

Conference believes that the pay freeze is a kick in the teeth for workers who have been in the front line throughout the pandemic. All public sector workers continue to support our communities through the pandemic and will be vital to the recovery from it. We reject any attempts at divide and rule.

Conference does not believe that public sector workers should have to pay for the Covid pandemic. The government has found billions to support business during the pandemic and has awarded huge contracts to private companies without considering their effectiveness, such as the contracts for the failed test and trace system awarded to Serco and Deloitte.

Conference believes that a decent pay rise for all public sector workers can be paid for through increasing taxation of the wealthy and big business and by serious action to stop tax evasion and avoidance by the super rich.

Conference calls on the National Executive Committee to launch a campaign against the pay freeze. The campaign will include production of campaign materials, social media activity and online meetings for members that stress the unity of workers.

Conference further calls on the National Executive Council to seek the maximum possible unity with other public sector trade unions and within UNISON, including, where possible, coordinated lawful industrial action. Conference calls on the General Secretary to ask for an emergency meeting of the TUC with a view to organising a cross union campaign to defeat the attack.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to encourage and support all current disputes taking place across the union, including in outsourced areas to look to coordinate their efforts with the campaign to win decent pay rises and terms and conditions for all workers.

**Barnet**

---

#### **16. Smash the "Nasty Party's" Pay Freeze**

Conference notes with deep concern the government's imposition of a one year pay freeze on 1.3 million workers in the public sector. The Tories want to create division between public and private sector workers and between NHS workers covered by pay review bodies and other public sector workers.

We believe that the pay freeze is a kick in the teeth for workers who have been in the front line throughout the pandemic. All public sector workers continue to support our communities through the pandemic and will be vital to the recovery from it. We reject any attempts at divide and rule.

We do not believe that public sector workers should have to pay for the Covid pandemic. The government has found billions to support business during the pandemic and has awarded huge contracts to private companies and cronies without considering their effectiveness, such as the contracts for the failed test and trace system awarded to Serco and Deloitte and substandard PPE

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference believes that a decent pay rise for all public sector workers can be paid for through increasing taxation of the wealthy and big business and by serious action to stop tax evasion and avoidance by the super rich.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to launch an active campaign against the pay freeze. The campaign will include production of campaign materials, social media activity and online meetings for members that stress the unity of workers.

Conference further calls on the National Executive Council to seek the maximum possible unity with other public sector trade unions and within UNISON, including, where possible, coordinated lawful industrial action. We call on the General Secretary to actively promote the campaign and ask for an emergency meeting of the TUC with a view to organising a cross union campaign to defeat the attack.

#### ***Doncaster***

---

### **17. Smash the Tory Pay Freeze**

Conference notes with deep concern the government's imposition of a one year pay freeze on 1.3 million workers in the public sector. The Tories want to create division between public and private sector workers and between NHS workers covered by pay review bodies and other public sector workers.

Conference believes that the pay freeze is a kick in the teeth for workers who have been in the front line throughout the pandemic. All public sector workers continue to support our communities through the pandemic and will be vital to the recovery from it. We reject any attempts at divide and rule.

Conference does not believe that public sector workers should have to pay for the Covid pandemic. The government has found billions to support business during the pandemic and has awarded huge contracts to private companies without considering their effectiveness, such as the contracts for the failed test and trace system awarded to Serco and Deloitte.

Conference believes that a decent pay rise for all public sector workers can be paid for through increasing taxation of the wealthy and big business and by serious action to stop tax evasion and avoidance by the super rich.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to launch a campaign against the pay freeze. The campaign will include production of campaign materials, social media activity and online meetings for members that stress the unity of workers.

Conference further calls on the National Executive Council to seek the maximum possible unity with other public sector trade unions and within UNISON, including, where possible, coordinated lawful industrial action within UNISON rules.

Conference calls on the General Secretary to ask for an emergency meeting of the TUC with a view to organising a cross union campaign to defeat the attack.

#### ***London Fire Brigade***

---

### **18. Coordinate Action on Pay**

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference notes the government's announcement on 4 March to recommend a one percent pay increase for all NHS staff to the Pay Review Body (PRB). This quite rightly set off a whirlwind of protest and anger. It was immediately clear that once again the Tories had underestimated the public mood.

The one percent 'offer' was and remains a disgrace. It would ensure that NHS pay continued to lag behind the cost of living. Over the last decade of wage restraint, pay for NHS staff has fallen in real terms by 15 to 20 percent, despite the obvious lies being repeated by government spokespeople. Yet MPs have had eight pay rises over the same period taking their pay from £66,396 to £81,932.

Many public servants, across multiple service groups, had already been told in November 2020, not to even expect one percent, but rather a further pay freeze as thanks for their contribution to battling the pandemic.

These pay cuts, as that is what they are in real terms, were announced by the same politicians who hypocritically stood on their doorsteps applauding key workers during the first lockdown, including NHS staff who saved the Prime Minister's life! The widespread disgust with the government's intention to make public servants pay for the pandemic, has brought all the anger and frustration of the last twelve months to the surface. However, it has also increased the likelihood of staff leaving vital public services, as a result of exhaustion and demoralisation. There is for example, already a developing and escalating shortage of NHS frontline staff, which we feel can begin to be arrested if the trade unions take a decisive lead in coordinating the fightback and resistance.

Resistance should also include those social care staff who find themselves in an even more difficult situation, often existing on the minimum wage, and facing private owners of care homes and companies.

Indicators such as the increased call on the third sector services, charity provision such as There For You and local authority discretionary housing and welfare payments by UNISON members during the pandemic clearly demonstrates that this position is untenable and leads directly to in-work poverty.

Throughout the pandemic, Johnson has been forced into humiliating U turns when confronted with large scale opposition such as free school meals, A Levels or the forced return to schools in January. In the latter case, it was the brave actions of educators, mobilised by the education unions, including UNISON, who refused to go into unsafe working environments. We believe the lessons of the battles in education should be used to support members in the fight for fair pay.

Conference therefore calls for an escalation of the fightback, and calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with the different service groups to seek to coordinate resistance to this attack on UNISON members;
- 2) Build mass support with effective public campaigning and union recruitment and organising drives;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 3) Work with like-minded campaigns and active social media groups to build up the support;
- 4) Prioritise the training and recruitment workplace reps with a view to establishing workplace action committees;
- 5) Organise huge days of action in the build up to strike action;
- 6) Organise a national demonstration, when circumstances allow to fight both the pay freeze, miserable pay increases and the poverty pay faced by other key workers, such as those in social care;
- 7) Write to other public sector unions, without unnecessary delay, stating UNISON's support for an emergency summit of all such unions, in order to coordinate such resistance and to seek their support for this programme of action, including through the coordination of lawful strike action.

***Medway Health  
Salford City***

---

#### **19. Local Government and Other Public Sector Workers Should Not Have to Pay for the Coronavirus Crisis!**

Conference notes with deep concern the government's intention to impose some form of pay freeze or pay restraint on public sector workers. We note that the government has signalled its intention to seek to create division, not only between public and private sector workers, but also between "deserving" public sector workers, such as NHS workers, and other public sector workers. Local Government includes many workers who have been in the front line throughout the pandemic, in social care, schools and elsewhere. More broadly we believe that all public sector workers continue to support our communities through the pandemic and will be vital to enabling the recovery from it. We reject any attempts at division, and therefore welcome the fact that the Local Government Service Group Executive has endorsed a policy in line with the points listed below.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to launch a campaign against government attempts to restrict pay rises for public sector workers.

Conference calls on the General Secretary to ask for an emergency meeting of the Public Services Committee of the TUC with a view to organising a cross union campaign to defeat the attack. The campaign will include production of campaign materials, social media activity and online meetings for members that stress the unity of workers. The campaign should include the following points:

- 1) The amount that public sector workers have lost in real terms since austerity was imposed in 2010;
- 2) There is no justification in expecting public sector workers to pay for the Covid pandemic. The government has found £billions to support big business and has shown a cavalier attitude to awarding huge contracts during the Covid pandemic without proper consideration of their effectiveness, such as the contracts for test

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

and trace with Serco and Deloitte. This shows that money can be found for pay rises;

- 3) Increased taxation of the wealthy, big business and those that evade or avoid tax should be used to provide funding to invest in public services, including local government workers' pay and for full income protection for any workers who cannot work because they need to self-isolate or because of lockdown restrictions;
- 4) The distinction between public and private sector workers is arbitrary and should not be used to divide workers. For example, the health and social care system is made up of workers across all sectors. We want pay rises for workers across all sectors;
- 5) While some NHS workers may not face the same degree of pay restraint as other;
- 6) Public Sector workers, we reject divide and rule tactics and point out that NHS;
- 7) Workers are likely to be offered pay rises well below their aspirations. We are in favour of unity between workers in the NHS, local government, and the private and voluntary sector;
- 8) For the same reason we reject arbitrary definitions of who are front line workers and which workers are deserving of pay rises. This includes attempts to divide workers on the basis of those who work from home and those who work in workplaces. The stress, strain and health and safety issues for both home workers and those in work places must be highlighted;
- 9) We also note that in Local Government pay restraint goes hand in glove with continued underfunding of Local Government services including not adequately compensating Local Authorities for the additional costs associated with Covid. In many areas members face the prospect of both job losses and pay restraint. We therefore call on Local Government Branches to organise rallies and protests, virtually, or physically, with suitable social distancing and other Covid safe measures when possible, that bring these elements together. seek the maximum possible unity with other public sector trade unions (and within UNISON) including, where possible, coordinated lawful industrial action.

Therefore in addition to the above Conference calls for:

- a) Local protests (in line with Covid regulations);
- b) Begin a consultation with members to seek to win support for a ballot for industrial action;
- c) Approach other service groups affected through the Service Group Liaison committee for a joint campaign on these lines.

***Knowsley***

---

Health and Safety

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

---

#### **20. Learning the lessons from the pandemic for safer workplaces (Theme 1)**

Everyone should have the right and expectation to a safe and healthy working environment. Unfortunately, in too many workplaces throughout this pandemic this has not been the case – either because of conditions and lack of appropriate equipment in physical workplaces or because of the need to work at home without a proper workstation and/or office facilities.

Although there have been examples of good practice, where UNISON has been able to work in partnership with employers, we have seen too many examples of where employers have failed in their basic duties to keep staff safe and healthy. These have included failures to:

- 1) Carry out full and sufficient risk assessments;
- 2) Enforce social distancing;
- 3) Adequately limit the size of social bubbles;
- 4) Provide adequate cleaning;
- 5) Provide adequate PPE;
- 6) Protect the general well-being of staff.

This has particularly been the case in sectors such as care homes and domiciliary care, where the zero hours and casualised working culture has further undermined safe working practices.

In addition, we believe that efforts to combat the virus have been undermined by the numerous failures to ensure an adequate supply of PPE and to provide strong and consistent guidance. In Wales public services have delivered the track and trace systems efficiently and effectively and provided value for money. Reports have concluded that this has not been the case in England, where the Tory government have outsourced contracts to the private sector, with the outcomes being less successful.

Alongside the problems faced by members on the front line, many have found themselves working for prolonged periods at home which has brought its own challenges including inadequate workspaces and work equipment, social isolation, difficulty separating home from work life and the danger from overwork and working unsociable hours.

During a period of upheaval and increased risk at work we have to look to the enforcement authorities such as the Health and Safety Executive to hold employers to account. Sadly, this has not been the case. Starved of funding it has failed to carry out sufficient inspections. In addition, its guidance on issues such as RIDDOR have often been watered down at the behest of employers undermining the trust of workers in the regulatory process.

UNISON recognises that the HSE remains the only regulatory body that has trade union representation on its governing body. However, over the last ten years, the

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Tory government has sought to undermine the role of unions in keeping workplaces safe. It is therefore vital that UNISON works with the Labour Party and TUC to not only maintain but to strengthen these structures.

Conference notes that the last 18 months have shown the importance of trade unions and safety reps in keeping workplaces safe and highlighting important issues around the exponential increase in home working. This role will be vitally important in the months ahead, as more people return to their workplaces, or continue with blended home/office work patterns.

UNISON knows that a workplace with safety rep is a safer workplace, and that is why through the 'Be on the Safe Side' Campaign, UNISON has brought together all the parts of the union to increase the number of safety reps.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to campaign for:

- a) The strengthening of the regulatory structures to ensure that employers do more to keep workers safe through regular inspections and strong enforcement actions on the issues that concern our members such as robust risk assessments, social distancing and adequate PPE;
- b) Action to highlight the hazards of home working and for measures to support those working in this way;
- c) The need to have proper negotiated home working and agile working policies in workplaces;
- d) Targeted enforcement where health and safety is currently weak in sectors such as nursing/residential homes and domiciliary care;
- e) Appropriate equality structures within health and safety procedures to protect those with protected characteristics who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic;
- f) Strengthening of the tripartite structures and political independence of the Health and Safety Executive;
- g) Highlight the failures of this government in tackling the Covid 19 pandemic and ensure systems are in place to strengthen the response to this, and any future pandemics;
- h) Continue to make workplaces safer by supporting the work of the 'Be on the Safe Side Campaign', and increase the number of safety reps;
- i) A nationally recognised mandatory minimum standard for health and well-being for all health and social care employers.

#### **Cymru/Wales Region**

---

#### **21. Mental Health and Covid**

Conference notes that the total number of Covid 19 deaths reported in London is now over 18,000, with the national death toll in excess of 125,000.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference also notes that all public services were under immense pressure and had been since the pandemic began (and in many cases long before that).

Whilst the NHS across the country, but particularly in London, was under severe strain with the Mayor of London calling a major incident in London, all public services have been on the front line throughout the pandemic regardless of their role or the service they provide.

One benefit of Covid has seen the public perception of public sector workers increase and Conference notes the importance of continuing to promote and support the union's No Going Back to Normal campaign.

The word 'unprecedented' has been regularly used throughout the pandemic and the efforts of our branches and activists since March 2020 have truly been unprecedented and cannot be understated. Branches and activists have worked tirelessly to support members with individual and collective issues such as lack of PPE, furlough, shielding, challenging health and safety concerns with employers, digesting and raising with employers regularly changing government guidance often on issues that previously they were not familiar with. In many cases there has been no training or how to guide for the issues reps have faced.

The long term impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on branch officers and activists cannot be under-estimated. In many cases branch officers and activists are under severe stress doing their day job and the pandemic has resulted in them working in services, stretched and under pressure before the pandemic, now even more under pressure as a result of absence/sickness of colleagues and increased demand for services. Others have seen first-hand the death of patients or colleagues, members who parents at breaking point worrying about childcare or juggling home schooling and working from home.

In many cases branch officers have become health and safety experts, counselling/wellbeing support as well as their usual role of providing representation in the workplace. All alongside doing their day job, working in the NHS, in schools, working in care homes or providing care services, providing essential council services as well as in higher education, utilities and the community sector.

Conference notes that some public sector employers are providing counselling and mental health support to their workforce, but by no means all, and that where counselling is provided workers are often expected to attend in their own time.

Conference agrees to call on the government to ensure that all public sector employers provide support to their employees as the pandemic is ongoing and afterwards, prioritising mental and health and wellbeing with time off provided for individuals to attend.

Furthermore, Conference agrees to ask the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Consider appropriate national mental health help lines that can be promoted to members to signpost them to services as needed;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 2) Recognise and validate the strain and impact of the pandemic, promote the importance of both physical and mental wellbeing and signposting to support, through the union's various communication channels both to members and activists.

#### ***Greater London Region***

---

##### **Pensions**

---

##### **22. Widowers' Pension**

Conference notes that:

- 1) Public service pension schemes pay pensions to widows of male scheme members in respect of contributions since 1972;
- 2) As a result of a Supreme Court decision in 2017, scheme members' surviving same sex spouses and civil partners irrespective of gender are now treated the same as widows but widowers of female scheme members continue to be paid pensions only in respect of contributions from 1988.

Conference understands there has been a recent court decision affecting the unequal treatment of widowers in public service pension schemes but is concerned that schemes appear to be slow to amend their regulations and members have not been alerted to any new entitlements.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council, collaborating with Service Group Executives as need be to:

- a) Seek to secure the equal treatment of widowers by public service pension schemes as soon as possible;
- b) Issue appropriate advice to UNISON members on their entitlement and how to claim it.

#### ***City of Wolverhampton***

---

##### **Campaigning**

---

##### **Employment Rights**

---

##### **23. Organise to Defend Workers' Rights post Brexit, post Covid**

Conference notes that a range of employment rights for UK workers originally derived from European Union legislation or judgements of the Court of Justice of the European Union. This includes rights relating to paid leave entitlement, maternity and pregnancy, working time, transfer of undertakings and equal pay. Indeed many EU member states have labour standards that exceed the EU minimum.

The EU withdrawal agreement proposed by Theresa May's government referenced workers' rights. However, the legally binding withdrawal agreement negotiated by Boris Johnson's government was completely silent on workers' rights. Consequently, Conference does not believe government promises that are not seeking to lower the standards of workers' rights.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference believes that if the government was committed to preserve workers' rights, it would have accepted the EU's proposals for enforceable non-regression provisions of individual rights and protections. Instead the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement explicitly affirms the rights of both the UK and EU to set their own priorities in labour law.

It is an irrefutable fact the workers' rights are not secure while the Conservative are in power. Attacking workers' rights would inevitably lower living standards as employers will seek to save money by paying their employees less. Removing limits on working hours not only endangers workers but threatens public safety.

Conference believes that existing workers' rights should not only be protected, they should be advanced. For example, there should be more statutory protection for workers with dependant responsibilities and both "fire-and-rehire" tactics should be outlawed.

The only way for workers to protect their existing rights and secure new ones is to organise.

Strong workplace organisation in every workplace is essential if we are to retain the members we gained in 2020 and if we are to continue to meet our members aspirations, win our members campaigns and grow. A key aspect of this workplace organisation is the identification of new stewards, the continuing support of their role and encouraging more members to engage in their union's organising agenda. These are both central to the future of the union. As the nature of workplaces rapidly change, so must the way in which we organise.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to

- 1) Resource and coordinate campaigns to resist any move by the Conservatives to dilute workers' rights;
- 2) Continue to support regions and branches to develop and implement strategic responses to the organising and recruitment challenges faced by the union;
- 3) Promote education activities that raise our members' consciousness that rights have to be fought for, and that the exercise of collective power has achieved so much throughout history.

#### ***Eastern Region***

---

#### Campaigns

---

#### **24. The Impact of Covid 19 on UNISON Members, Public Services and Working Life**

Conference notes the immense contribution that UNISON members across the UK have made - ensuring that the most vulnerable were cared for and making sure that our communities continued to function throughout the dark days of the pandemic.

Conference places on the record its profound thanks for their bravery and sacrifice during this period and its deep sorrow at the loss of life that will have impacted in some way on all of us.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

In honouring the contribution made by UNISON members, Conference calls on the union to do everything within its power to push for a full public inquiry into the pandemic. This must have the authority to subpoena witnesses, compel disclosure of evidence and hear testimony under oath. Conference agrees that the process must enable the voices of members to be heard, ensure that lessons are learned and hold to account those responsible for failings and negligence.

Conference bitterly regrets that the UK has suffered worse health and economic outcomes than most other countries and the disproportionate impact that the pandemic has had upon Black workers.

Conference asserts that a major reason for these failings is the fact that the UK has been hamstrung by a decade of damaging austerity, deeply ingrained structural inequality and exploitative labour market policies that leave many, including a significant number of young workers, in precarious jobs.

Conference notes, for example, the views of eminent epidemiologist Professor Sir Michael Marmot that the UK suffered particularly badly from coronavirus due to the disinvestment from public services prior to the pandemic and the accompanying growth of economic and social inequality.

Conference believes that such underlying problems created by the Tories were compounded by the UK government's mishandling of many aspects of the response to the pandemic.

This included the decision in England to hand responsibility for the crucial Test and Trace system to private companies – along with billions of pounds – rather than trusting the NHS and public health services to run it.

Conference notes that this was part of a wider pattern in which billions were spent on contracts with private operators during the pandemic, many of which were awarded without competition and without any contract details being published.

Conference notes with concern the UK government's dogmatic adherence to free market ideology and its failure to pay sufficient heed to the advice of scientists and experts at various points during the pandemic, and that such failings have contributed to the high number of excess deaths, which includes UNISON members.

A further example of the UK's government's careless and inadequate response to the pandemic has been the refusal to listen the calls for proper sick pay provision from UNISON, the TUC and other trade unions. This has resulted in low paid workers not being able to afford to take time off when unwell or when needing to self-isolate.

Mass vaccination means that there is light at the end of the tunnel, but Conference notes that the default position of the UK government is still to do the minimum, which will have dire consequences for public services and those that rely on them.

Conference notes that this will be made even more challenging because of the added strain being placed on health and social care services by the backlog of delayed hospital treatments and the growing issue of long Covid, which will leave

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

many people disabled in the years ahead. Conference notes that 60 percent of people who have died from Covid are disabled people despite only around 20 percent of the population being disabled

With this in mind, Conference is particularly concerned by the UK government's November 2020 Spending Review and the budget in March 2021 which failed to deliver the sustained investment needed in our public services or provide longer term security to those facing economic hardship because of the pandemic, preferring instead to focus on damaging pay freezes and sowing divisions between workers in different sectors.

Conference notes that at the same time as this damaging continuation of austerity, privatisation and division, the UK government has brought in a Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, which as well as increasing racism and discrimination through increased use of stop and search and criminalisation of trespass laws, will severely limit the right to peaceful protest.

In addition to the call for a public inquiry set out above, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to campaign to:

- 1) Ensure our public services are future proofed against any further waves of coronavirus;
- 2) To provide economic security to those whose livelihoods have been upended by the crisis. This should include working in coalition with other organisations across the trade union movement and wider civil society to:
  - a) Campaign vigorously for austerity to be consigned to the dustbin of history, with vastly improved investment in our public services – both for the remainder of the pandemic and for the years ahead;
  - b) Campaign for an end to the destructive Tory ideology of “private good, public bad” and the cronyism that has beset government procurement during the pandemic and for outsourced and privatised public services to be brought back in-house;
  - c) Campaign for a comprehensive range of support measures to address the immediate challenges and insecurity faced by those facing economic hardship, including: comprehensive sick pay provision, making the temporary £20 per week uplift in Universal Credit payments permanent, increasing furlough payments to 100 per cent of an employee's wage and pension contribution up to the current job retention scheme limit of £2,500 and preventing evictions by providing a financial package (grants/loans) for struggling renters to help them pay off rent arrears and allow them to stay in their homes;
  - d) Campaign against the Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Bill to ensure that people can continue to peacefully demonstrate and mobilise against injustice and discriminatory policies.

Recruitment and organising

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference also notes that Covid 19 has had significant consequences for recruitment and organising.

In the most extraordinary circumstances presented by the global pandemic UNISON has continued to attract the confidence of public service workers who have chosen to join our union during 2020/21.

Conference congratulates all activists and staff who have contributed towards more than 190,000 public service workers, from all parts of the country, and all sectors choosing to join the union. This is a remarkable success given the unprecedented pressure on our activists and staff and the restrictions of accessing many workplaces.

Conference also notes that this level of recruitment has been achieved at a time when some employers have, even during this pandemic crisis, continued to attack our members including disgracefully dismissing our members and re-engaging them on poorer terms and conditions and employment.

A key lesson of the pandemic is that continued public service cuts and more aggressive employers means it has never been more important to be a member of UNISON if you work in public services.

Conference believes that all of the current circumstances faced by our members pose fresh challenges for recruiting new members to the union and for retaining them in membership.

Conference recognises the need to ensure that recruitment goes alongside building a strong union. Without strong organisation and visibility of the union strong recruitment of the sort we achieved during this period we will be vulnerable to short and medium term attacks by employers and the government.

Conference notes that in this context the union needs more members playing an active role in the union to enable us to be even more effective and to ensure that strong membership growth makes a real difference for our members. Lessons learned from how the union delivered activist training during the pandemic is instructive about how we achieve this goal. At the start of the pandemic we knew that activist education had to continue. Never had there been such a need to upskill and train activists to deal with the issues that members were facing.

UNISON coordinated at all levels, making sure our health and safety reps and other activists had the briefings and training to develop their skills and knowledge to empower them to deal with these issues. The “Be on the Safe Side” campaign launched a drive to recruit and train new health and safety reps and has been an overwhelming success, with more new health and safety reps recruited and trained in 2020 than in either 2019 or 2018.

UNISON Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) and regions quickly adapted and introduced online and virtual learning. By the end of 2020 nearly one thousand new stewards had been trained, and over 2,500 activists had attended a training course on topics ranging from dealing with representing members online to advanced disability discrimination law.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference believes that the pandemic demonstrates that a strong recruitment strategy across all sectors of the union must go hand in hand with a robust organising strategy. Recruitment and organising are two-sides of the same coin and are the cornerstone of building a strong union.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- i) Develop a national recruitment and organising strategy that takes into account the new challenges posed by the Covid 19 pandemic;
- ii) Build on the suite of strategies designed to retain members;
- iii) Carry out a review of activities across the union with the aim of identifying and developing more activity from new and existing members;
- iv) More closely align recruitment and organising strategies;
- v) Continue to develop and expand UNISON's virtual learning resources for delivery to members and activists, thereby increasing access for members and activists to training;
- vi) Continually review UNISON's member learning programmes to mitigate the loss of government funding for union learning, ensuring that the member learning offer remains relevant to meet the needs of members while simultaneously remaining an integral part of UNISON's recruitment and organising agenda;
- vii) Make appropriate learning resources available to work with the regions, to review and refresh the current suite of organising courses that support UNISON campaigns combating discrimination and ensure organising around equality is embedded in these materials.

#### **International**

Conference further notes the international dimension of the crisis. Once the World Health Organisation classified Covid as a global pandemic, a competitive scramble to secure enough PPE for medical and other front-line staff globally led to severe pressure on an industry dependent on low cost global supply chain production models already notorious for Forced Labour. Whilst PPE suppliers saw profits increase as much as 400% Malaysia's migrant workers were forced to work and sleep in unsafe, abusive conditions with poverty pay and Uyghur labourers in forced detention made rubber gloves for free.

Austerity, Structural Adjustment Programmes, loan conditionalities and other policies promoted by the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and others have contributed to a reduction in health spending in the global south, whilst the lack of progressive taxation, tax evasion and unfair trade systems have limited governments' ability to fund public services. This underfunding significantly undermined the ability of health systems to respond to the pandemic.

As governments have reorganised health systems to respond to the pandemic, other essential health services have been deprioritised, particularly where health systems

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

are already weak. This is leading to significant additional health challenges and pressure on health systems and disproportionately affecting women.

In this context, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- A) Campaign for companies and the public sector to act to prevent abuse to people and the planet or face meaningful consequences;
- B) Demand that any public inquiry's terms of reference include a full investigation into the market engagement, procurement and contract management practices applied to the sourcing of high risk products compared to the UK's international obligations at the International Labour Organisation, the OECD Multinational Company Guidelines and the United Nations Guiding Principles and global best practice;
- C) Equip members with the knowledge and skills necessary to work with their employer to help ensure public sector global supply chains are free from modern slavery and products made by union busting employers;
- D) Work with employers, global union federations representing workers in producing countries supplying to the public sector and others to leverage space for workers to organise and claim their human rights;
- E) Campaign to waive intellectual property rights on Covid 19 vaccines to allow all countries to be able to access them;
- F) Demand that loans provided to countries (from the World Bank, the IMF, regional development banks or private creditors) do not contain liberalising conditionalities such as labour market liberalisation, privatisation or tax breaks for the most wealthy;
- G) Campaign for the government to support the development of more resilient supply chains including domestic production to protect against shortages in any future pandemics;
- H) Campaign for equitable access to gender responsive, quality public health services;
- I) Campaign to ensure that any public inquiry includes the UK's international response to the pandemic, including its development priorities and policy positions at the UN and other international institutions.

#### ***National Executive Council***

---

#### **25. Securing an Equal and Sustainable Post Pandemic Settlement**

Conference notes that at the end of the second world war the entire labour and trade union movement and the majority of society more widely coalesced around calls for a new social and economic settlement. This was based on the creation of the NHS, the welfare state and full employment policies that would address the economic calamity and deprivation of the 1930s. It also recognised, to a greater extent than ever before, the important role of trade unions and collective bargaining in delivering fair pay and decent standards in the workplace.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference notes that as the UK begins to emerge from the pandemic it faces a comparable choice about whether to go back to how things were before or create a better future. Conference agrees that choice is clear and the moment must be seized as an opportunity to tackle the deep fault lines so cruelly exposed by the pandemic.

Conference notes that nowhere have these fault lines been more evident than in the huge variations in how people were able to weather threats to livelihoods, make educational progress, and to maintain physical and mental health during the pandemic. Put simply, those who were already at the sharp end of pre-existing inequalities related to class, educational outcomes, income, geography and ethnicity have suffered most.

Conference agrees that UNISON has an important and unique role in shaping and leading the struggle for an equal and sustainable post Covid settlement. We are the largest union in the UK with more than a million women members working across public services and utilities. We are an organisation that provides a powerful platform to the low paid and self-organised groups. We are a leading advocate for public services and rights for working people and we have a proud tradition and reputation for international solidarity. Conference therefore calls on the union to develop an ambitious campaign over the coming period that draws on UNISON's strengths to call for a post Covid world built around the following pillars:

- 1) Sustainable long term investment in all of our public services. This should ensure that the NHS, local government, schools, further education, higher education, police and justice and transport are able to properly serve the entire population and no longer subject to austerity and the short term politically driven stop go spending decisions that have characterised the last decade. Long term investment is not only necessary for public services to operate effectively and address backlogs in the NHS and the growing challenge of long Covid. It is also essential to economic recovery. This policy goal is closely linked with the need to ensure that public services are publicly provided, so that investment is devoted to constantly improving services rather than providing profits to private companies. Public services that have been outsourced or privatised should be brought back in house. This includes social care, which should be brought into a new National Care Service. Proper payment for sleep-ins should be a feature of the new service;
- 2) Decent pay and reward for our members and all working people. This must include an immediate end to this government's disastrous public sector pay policies. It must also mean an end to the divisive tactic of playing off the public and private sector against each other, which is bad for all workers and damaging to the economy. For the longer term we need to see negotiated settlements for our members, policies to promote collective bargaining across the economy and increase the wage share of national income, reversing the trend of wage decline started during the 1980s. Zero hours should be banned and the formula for the National Minimum Wage should be set at a level of at least two thirds of male median earning (currently more than £15) for all in order to help tackle the gender pay gap. There should not be an age differential. One wage at any age should be a guiding principle;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 3) The creation of a fair and equal society. Serious structural inequalities have been exposed by the pandemic. The extent to which these inequalities are addressed and discrimination is tackled should be a measure of the UK's recovery from Covid 19. A human rights focussed agenda, which includes all manifestations of discrimination and which challenges the racism, Islamophobia, Anti-Semitism, anti-Gypsy, Roma and Traveller discrimination, sexism, disability and age discrimination, homophobia, transphobia and biphobia - and which recognises intersectionality - should be at the heart of this work. A fair and equal society should also guarantee the right for those unhappy with the current society to peacefully protest and be characterised by decent and safe workplaces. The flexible labour market policies that have held sway since the 80s and which have made low pay and insecurity endemic need to be replaced by new employment protections, enhanced trade union rights, strengthened health and safety structures and measures to tackle discrimination in the workplace;
- 4) Economic policies that create a greener and more sustainable economy. Such policies must achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030 and work hand in hand with the goal of securing decent green jobs with fair pay and a just transition for all across the regions and nations of the UK. The policy priority must be to solve the climate emergency. In this regard conference notes the importance of COP 26 in Glasgow in November and encourages branches to actively participate in demonstrations and related events, in line with UK governments' guidelines in place at the time.

#### **International**

Conference also notes that securing an equal and sustainable post Covid settlement for the UK can't happen in isolation. The pandemic has exposed what happens when 70% of the world has no access to social protection. Making progress in the UK must be linked with a new global Social Contract establishing social protection floors for all. To these ends, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to campaign for:

- a) The Introduction of debt relief and debt restructuring for the most vulnerable economies so that they are not forced to face currency and repayment crises at the same time as they are trying to deal with the health and economic crisis;
- b) Changes to the global debt bailout system to ensure that orderly debt restructuring can occur, when necessary, that shares the burden between the creditors and debtors and does not undermine economic growth or exacerbate social crises;
- c) Reform and strengthen international bodies such as the World Health Organisation, to champion and strengthen quality public health services globally, including reducing corporate influence on public policy and governance and ensuring that it is no longer reliant on corporate sponsorship or donations from philanthropic foundations;
- d) Campaign for governments to take responsibility for providing care as a public service, including rewarding and recognising the value of care and reducing the burden of unpaid care on women;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- e) Campaign to reform international tax rules to end corporate tax dodging, providing essential funding for quality public services and reducing inequality;
- f) End the aggressive promotion of Public Private Partnerships and other forms of privatization by the UK government, World Bank, regional development banks, IMF and other international institutions.
- g) Campaign for the UK governments to establish a centre for quality public services to promote and support the development of health and other public services globally.

#### ***National Executive Council***

---

#### **26. Public Inquiry into Government Response to Covid 19**

Conference supports the public call made by the General Secretary for a full public inquiry into the UK government's handling of the Covid 19 pandemic, so that the voices of frontline staff can be heard, lessons learnt and those responsible for any failings be held to account.

Conference further notes the public call made by the Northern Ireland region, in conjunction with the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ), and Amnesty International for a full, independent public inquiry into the handling of Covid 19 in care homes in Northern Ireland, given the very high number of deaths that have occurred. Conference agrees that an independent, effective and prompt investigation in conformity with Article 2 of the European Convention of Human Rights is required.

Conference notes that any public inquiry must consider not only the decisions or actions taken by the UK government and devolved governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland from the time the first cases of Covid 19 were reported within China at the end of 2019; but must also consider how years of sustained under investment and austerity in the NHS and the privatisation and fragmentation of social care services left staff and the public exposed when the Covid-19 pandemic arrived.

Conference notes that the issues that any public inquiry would have to consider could include, but would not be limited to:

- 1) The provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for frontline workers and guidance and training on its use;
- 2) The effectiveness of testing, contact tracing, and measures to support workers who tested positive and had to self-isolate, or who had to self-isolate as a close contact, including financial supports available;
- 3) The use of funding provided to employers in the social care sector for infection prevention and control, including funding that was available to increase low levels of sick pay;
- 4) The disproportionate impact that Covid 19 had on Black, Asian and minority ethnic workers;
- 5) The disproportionate impact of Covid 19 on women;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 6) Policies and practices in relation to discharges or admissions into care homes;
- 7) Policies and practices for visiting residents in care homes or other supported living arrangements;
- 8) The inspection and regulation arrangements in place across social care.

Conference recognises that responsibility for the response to Covid 19 is shared between the UK government and the devolved governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Noting the effects of devolution, Conference recognises that responsibility for policies and decisions taken in response to the pandemic will therefore differ between the different jurisdictions across the UK.

In recognition of this, Conference calls on the National Executive Council, in conjunction with the devolved regions and nations, to develop union wide, complimentary campaigns for a public inquiry, or public inquiries, into the response of both the UK government at Westminster and the devolved governments, to Covid 19.

#### ***Northern Ireland Region***

---

### **27. No back to normal for disabled workers**

Conference notes that the Covid 19 pandemic has revealed the structural inequality disabled people face but has also created a once in a lifetime opportunity to confront discrimination and inequality and to rebuild society and our workplaces in a way that allows the talent and potential of disabled workers to flourish.

Prior to Covid 19 our disabled members were constantly told by employers that working from home was not a reasonable adjustment, was not financially viable or practical, or was simply “not policy”. But a survey of 5,000 UNISON disabled workers in June 2020 found:

- 1) 50% of UNISON disabled members were working from home, compared to 5% before the pandemic;
- 2) 73% said they were more productive or as productive compared to being in the workplace;
- 3) Reasons for being more productive included being able to manage pain better, ability to take short breaks or work a more flexible day, less impact of commute on energy limiting conditions and easier access to a toilet;
- 4) Many members said they hadn't needed to call in sick as much because they could manage their impairment better at home.

Nonetheless, it should not be over-looked that some disabled members reported facing significant problems working from home, including the effect of caring responsibilities.

Almost 20% of respondents said that the impact on their mental health and feelings of isolation were an issue. There have also been reports of increased bullying of disabled members in the new virtual world where there are often no witnesses.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference notes that UNISON has produced a number of resources that can be used to support disabled members in branches including:

- a) UNISON's Homeworking Bargaining Guide which includes a model policy;
- b) Our two new 'Stewards Guides' to representing Deaf and disabled members that local branches and stewards can use to support disabled members who are being unfairly treated while working from home or in the workplace;
- c) UNISON bargaining guides on Reasonable Adjustment Passports and on Disability Leave;
- d) Our Bargaining on Mental Health Policies guide.

Conference believes that Covid 19 has proved that home working is a reasonable adjustment for disabled members who want it. There must be no going back to 'normal' with workers having to fight to get home working agreed as a reasonable adjustment.

However, Conference is also aware that some unscrupulous employers may try to use home working as a way of cutting costs and of getting away with not providing accessible workplaces. We strongly believe that home working should be a choice for disabled workers who want it but there must also be enforcement action against employers who try to use home working as a way of getting off the hook for providing reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

Reasonable adjustments must also be provided for disabled home workers just as they would be in the workplace, including mental health related adjustments.

However, UNISON's home working survey found that 53% of disabled members received no reasonable adjustments to support them to work from home.

Only 5% had support from the government's flagship Access to Work scheme which contributes to the cost of adjustments. UNISON successfully lobbied government to extend Access to Work to homeworking as a result of our survey but the scheme is still used by far too few disabled workers and remains "government's best kept secret". In particular, many employers and workers are unaware of the mental health support the scheme offers, which includes ideas for workplace adjustments and up to nine months tailored work-focused mental health support.

UNISON's 2019 report 'Let's be Reasonable', based on a survey of 3,000 disabled workers, found that over two thirds of those who requested reasonable adjustments were turned down or faced employers who just never responded to them. Even where reasonable adjustments were agreed, 23% waited a year or more for them to be put in place.

As a result, many of our disabled members end up being hounded out of their jobs on capability grounds, often due to sickness absence that could have been avoided with the right adjustments.

Conference notes that according to TUC data the 2020 disability pay gap stands at 19.6%, with disabled workers paid £3,800 less than non-disabled workers. Lack of

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

reasonable adjustments is a key reason for the pay gap, with disabled members unable to progress their career internally alongside their colleagues and instead forced to move to lower paid jobs in other organisations or reduce their hours.

Part-time working is another driver of the disability pay gap, with disabled workers more likely to be in part-time employment which is predominantly available in lower skilled and/or lower paid jobs. Discrimination and bias are also key factors in the disability pay gap.

Over 75% of employers say equality and diversity is a priority for their organisation but less than 3% measure the disability pay gap. And there are few consequences for an employer when a disabled person is disadvantaged in the recruitment process, overlooked for promotion or refused training.

It is now more important than ever to support the recruitment and retention of disabled people as we try to undo the damage the pandemic has done to our economy. Leonard Cheshire recently found that a quarter of disabled people worked reduced hours and a quarter were placed on furlough during the Covid crisis, indicating the disproportionate impact the pandemic has had on disabled people. A Citizens' Advice survey found one in four disabled workers were facing redundancy, a warning that disabled people are likely to be badly hit by any post-pandemic recession.

'Long Covid or post Covid 19 syndrome is also affecting disabled workers who are being unfairly chased through punitive sickness absence procedures by their employers. Some previously non-disabled workers may now be covered by the Equality Act 2010 which gives a right to reasonable adjustments to people whose symptoms have a significant impact on normal daily activities and have lasted or are likely to last 12 months or more. However, Conference does not have confidence that all employers will accept this duty.'

Going back to 'normal' should not mean going back to disabled workers waiting years for the reasonable adjustments they need, being stuck on the lowest rung of the pay ladder but first in line for redundancies, and struggling to get home working agreed.

Conference believes that now is the time to fight for a comprehensive post-pandemic settlement for disabled workers.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to work with the National Disabled Members Committee to:

- i) Campaign for a stronger right to home working as a reasonable adjustment for disabled workers who want it;
- ii) Lobby government for the introduction of mandatory monitoring and reporting of the disability pay gap, along with robust action to tackle the gap and lack of enforcement of reasonable adjustments;
- iii) Produce guidance including a model action plan to reduce the disability pay gap that branches can use in negotiations with employers;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- iv) Publicise UNISON's Reasonable Adjustments bargaining guide, which includes a model policy and Accessibility Passport that can be used to negotiate locally, and our Disability Leave bargaining guide;
- v) Publicise UNISON's homeworking bargaining guide and the two Stewards Guides to representing disabled and Deaf members;
- vi) Lobby government to extend and increase publicity for the Access to Work scheme, including the mental health support it offers;
- vii) Campaign for increased government investment in mental health and for clearer Government guidance that the employer's duty of care extends to staff mental health, including while working from home;
- viii) Call for employers to discount sickness absence "triggers" for workers with 'Long Covid' and for recognition of 'Long Covid' as an occupational disease, with compensation for front line workers affected;
- ix) Develop recruitment materials targeted at disabled workers highlighting UNISON's achievements and continuing work to reduce the disability pay gap.

#### ***National Disabled Members Committee***

---

#### **28. Secure Futures: Young Workers and the Post Covid Recovery**

Conference notes the recent (March 2021) figures from the Office of National Statistics which show that almost two-thirds of those who have lost their jobs in the pandemic were aged under 25.

Conference further notes the widespread evidence that young workers have experienced economic disadvantage as a result of the pandemic. According to an LSE study in August 2020, workers aged 18-24 were almost 18 percentage points more likely than those aged 35-54 to have had their hours cut by at least half or to have been furloughed.

Widespread youth unemployment has an impact reaching beyond those who have lost their jobs, exerting a downward pressure on pay, terms and conditions for other workers, and leading to job insecurity and loss of development opportunities.

Unemployment and insecure and precarious work can also lead to a number of other problems for young workers, including insecure housing, mental health problems, and difficulties in their personal and family lives. A UNISON survey in August 2020 found that almost 15% of young members had experienced problems with their housing as a result of the pandemic. Early unemployment also leads to long term poor health outcomes and can lead to lifelong economic disadvantage.

Conference welcomes government initiatives such as the Kickstarter programme which subsidises employers to create jobs for young workers, but believes that such programmes must lead to high quality, secure jobs, and not be used by employers to replace existing staff with subsidised young workers. Although Kickstarter has created nearly 150,000 jobs as of March 2021, this is not sufficient to address the numbers of young workers who have lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference believes that young workers must not pay the price for the pandemic and that any Covid recovery plan must ensure that young workers can find secure jobs with development and training opportunities.

Conference asks the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with UNISON's Service Groups to campaign against job losses in the public sector and against cuts to trainee, apprenticeship and development programmes for young workers;
- 2) Promote UNISON's Young Workers Charter and consider producing further guidance on bargaining for secure, high quality jobs for young workers;
- 3) Work with the National Young Members Forum to promote the importance of joining UNISON to young workers in the public sector who are concerned about their futures;
- 4) Work with the TUC and other relevant organisations to campaign for a Covid recovery plan which does not leave young workers behind.

#### ***National Young Members' Forum***

---

#### **29. A deplorable lack of PPE for NHS staff**

Conference notes that at the start of the Covid pandemic this country was not prepared. The government did not have a plan to deal with a global pandemic. It did not have stocks of adequate PPE either locally or nationally despite the previous warning that it had from Ebola, Sars, Mers and Swine Flu outbreaks. This government failed to heed the warning and lessons identified from Operation Cygnus in 2016.

Conference recalls the shameful images of nursing staff wearing bin bags due to the lack of gowns and aprons. When Covid hit this country, many ambulance staff had not been fit tested for FFP3 face masks for several years. Many of those staff continued to lack basic protection for several weeks and months as fit testing programmes were rolled out.

For several months following the outbreak, ambulance trusts across the country received so called "push stock" of PPE that was not suitable or fit for purpose and had to be returned, often on several occasions. Trusts received FFP3 face masks that were a decade out of date but had a new date sticker placed over the top and staff were assured that these were safe to use.

Conference notes that due to the lack of suitable and effective PPE, ambulance staff have been unnecessarily exposed to Covid infection rates several times higher than the general population. This has often led to staff being off work due to Covid on multiple occasions placing additional burden on already stretched ambulance trusts.

Conference recognises the major challenges that branches had in ensuring that their members had suitable personal protective equipment, such as face shields and other items, often providing such out of branch finances.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference believes that all front line staff should have the highest quality and most up to date PPE, in sufficient quantities, both now and in the future.

The army has a saying, failure to prepare then you prepare for failure. Successive governments have failed to prepare for a global pandemic, and this can not, and will not, be allowed to happen again.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign for Judicial Review into the government's lack of preparedness for a pandemic;
- 2) Campaign to ensure that sufficient stocks of PPE are held at nationally and regionally in readiness for any future pandemic;
- 3) Ensure that the NHS has PPE that is fit for purpose and is of the best quality available and in line with HSE guidelines.

### ***North West Ambulance Service***

---

#### **30. Vaccines for all!**

It's taken a huge range of public service workers to keep the country going during Covid 19 and a series of lockdowns. Many of UNISON members have risked their lives to keep others safe.

Vaccine roll out is now bringing protection to many of our members.

As mistrust and misinformation remains prevalent, access to accurate information on the Covid 19 vaccine is crucial. We will provide members with information and encourage them to take the vaccine to protect themselves and others.

The speed of developing the vaccine, is not because corners were cut but because resources were focused on defeating the pandemic.

Ensuring widespread global access to Covid 19 vaccines, which is necessary for preventing cases and deaths and contributing to global population immunity, is a critical challenge and one that could threaten the ability to control the pandemic. The minority of high-income countries already own more than half of all global doses purchased, and it is estimated that there will not be enough vaccine doses to cover the world's population until at least 2023.

We call for pharmaceutical companies and research institutes to be forced to release the intellectual property and information required to make the Covid vaccines (and all other treatments useful against Covid) freely available to the world, allowing other drug makers to manufacture them.

And we call for public ownership of the pharmaceutical companies: public requisitioning to mobilise available pharmaceutical industry resources, and new production lines, to make vaccines freely available worldwide.

### ***Lambeth***

## 2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference

### UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

---

#### **31. Sick Pay**

Conference believes that it is fundamentally wrong that so many private contractor employers offer very restrictive sick pay schemes or have no scheme at all. If employers do not pay occupational sick pay for the first 2 days of sickness for staff that work 12 hour shifts this can mean a significant financial detriment even if they need to take a short period of time off work.

The Covid 19 pandemic has highlighted the structural inequalities for outsourced workers delivering public services, especially in regards to access to occupational sick pay. The pandemic brought in to focus the disparity between workers directly employed delivering public services across local government and the health service and those workers that have been outsourced to private sector employers.

In the modern era, a period off sick or told to isolate from a workplace to ensure diseases are not transmitted to service users or colleagues with full pay should be a basic right to which all workers are entitled.

Conference notes that many staff have been compelled to attend work whilst sick or when they should have been self-isolating during the pandemic as they are unable to live on statutory sick pay alone. This is compounded by the lengthy process of claiming universal credit that leads to many workers reliant on food banks to support themselves and their families.

Conference notes that failure to offer an adequate sick pay scheme is not only wrong, but also counterproductive. There is strong evidence to show that people who must rush back to work are more likely to become ill again or spread disease in the workplace. Rushing people back causes stress, anxiety, and illness for the worker, but also has the potential to lead to higher long-term absentee and high turnover rates for the employer and in recent times spreading the Covid-19 virus.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Plan and deliver a campaign to name and shame major private contractor employers who offer either highly restrictive or no sick pay schemes to their employees;
- 2) Write to the relevant employers, informing them that UNISON intends to name them, and encourage them to work with us to implement an adequate scheme;
- 3) Work with UNISON Labour Link and other stakeholders to highlight this issue. This includes lobbying political parties in positions of power and influence in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland;
- 4) Continue to campaign against austerity and cuts to public spending which are exacerbating problems with low pay for outsourced workers delivering public services.

#### *Private Contractors National Forum*

---

#### **32. Covid 19 and Domestic Abuse – a Perfect Storm**

Conference is concerned about the surge in domestic abuse during lockdown.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference notes research from the Centre for Women's Justice which found that in the first month after restrictions were introduced across the UK in March 2020, there was a rise of 49% in the number of calls to domestic abuse services and around 380 weekly calls to police. The number of deaths related to domestic abuse was the highest in at least 11 years.

Conference also notes the views of experts that the actual increase in domestic abuse is likely to be much higher than reports show due mainly to under-reporting but also, the additional hurdles created by lockdown.

Even in the most harmonious of relationships, living together in a confined space can cause every-day tensions between partners. Add working in the same confined space to the mix, together with severely limited opportunities to leave the home and tensions are likely to be even greater. For couples with children, the closure of schools is an added stress-factor. Restrictions also mean that victims are cut off from usual support networks, friends and or family.

The measures put in place to deal with the coronavirus crisis mean that home continues to be the new workplace for many. Abuse impacts on the ability to work, keep a job and economic independence. When employers spot signs and offer appropriate support, for example, paid leave providing time to take legal advice or arrange childcare, it can make a huge difference – even save lives.

While controlling and abusive behaviour can occur in mixed and same sex relationships, the vast majority of those experiencing domestic abuse are women and children. Women are also considerably more likely to experience repeated and severe forms of violence, and sexual abuse. Domestic abuse is most commonly perpetrated by men.

A report by Women's Aid in August 2020 revealed how abusers used the pandemic as a tool for abuse to increase fear and anxiety. Survivors talked about perpetrators disregarding concerns about the virus, ignoring restrictions and exploiting the lack of available support to increase control.

Conference notes that from 23 March to 31 May 2020 there was 40.6% reduction in the number of refuge vacancies in England, compared to the same period in 2019.

Conference is concerned that at a time when survivors and their children are facing escalating abuse, barriers to support are increasing. The need for specialist domestic abuse services has never been more critical. This is particularly true of the specialist services provided by and for marginalised Black, LGBT+, migrant and disabled women who face additional stereotyping and barriers to support.

The Domestic Abuse Bill is an opportunity for positive changes for those experiencing abuse and Conference is delighted to note the role of UNISON women in a successful amendment to the Bill, which will result in better protection from perpetrators in the workplace.

However, Conference is concerned that although some additional government funding is being provided to encourage reporting, and measures that facilitate

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

women moving out to a safer space, this is no-where near enough to address the spiralling levels of violence against women and girls.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work with the National Women's Committee to:

- 1) Lobby the governments of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to create long-term funding solutions to secure a sustainable refuge sector and community-based support available and accessible to all women experiencing domestic abuse;
- 2) Continue to campaign for the introduction of paid leave for those experiencing domestic abuse;
- 3) Campaign nationally together with women's organisations, charities and Non Governmental Organisations for research to better understand and for measures to address the causes of and prevent domestic violence;
- 4) Review UNISON's guidance – Domestic violence and abuse: a trade union issue to take account of developments during the pandemic, including increased working from home.

#### ***National Women's Committee***

---

### **33. Domestic Abuse Crisis and the Pandemic**

Conference notes that an unfortunate and unwelcome result of the national lockdown has been a reported increase in domestic abuse and domestic violence. Often isolated and shut off from previous support networks, victims can struggle to access support or alert others to their situation. Perpetrators of domestic abuse have been able to use the restrictions to create real barriers and increase their control over their victims. In the first three months of the pandemic, figures show that one fifth of offences recorded by police officers were related to domestic abuse.

Conference notes a Women's Aid report from 2020 which found that a staggering 91 percent of respondents that had experienced domestic abuse found that the pandemic had negatively affected them and that during the first national lockdown, 78% had found it more difficult to leave their abusive relationship. Additionally, the report suggested that there would be a surge in women escaping their abuse after the end of each national lockdown yet warned that this was the moment victims were most vulnerable and cautioned that chronic underfunding of services could lead to support available being limited or overwhelmed.

Conference believes that the move to working from home for a large number of public sector workers, whilst necessary to prevent the spread of Covid 19, has unfortunately created an additional barrier to those who need to seek support to escape their abuser. The workplace had previously offered both a moment of respite as well as an opportunity for co-workers or employers to become aware of potential abuse and for victims to reach out for support.

Conference welcomes the 'Ask for ANI' (Assistance Needed Immediately) initiative that is being rolled out across the UK in pharmacies. The initiative is a codeword

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

scheme that allows victims to discreetly ask for help and be taken into a consultation room where staff can help offer support in contacting the police and other services. However, Women's aid has reported concerns that the scheme may not be accessible to all marginalised groups including migrants, LGBT+ and disabled people who, for example, may not be able to access a pharmacy.

Conference recognises the value and importance of UNISON's Domestic Violence and Abuse: a trade union issue guide as a useful negotiating tool as well as the model policy for employers to adopt. The guidance makes clear the role employers can play in identifying and supporting the victims of domestic abuse as well as their responsibility to do so. However, many employers have yet to introduce a policy to support victims and managers or signpost staff to where they can get help and support. Additionally, the model policy and guidance does not consider how staff working at home, often in the same room as their abuser, can access support and reach out to their employer. A codeword workplace scheme, including training and support for managers and inclusion in a wider policy, would support both those still entering the workplace as well as provide a vital lifeline for those working from home who would be able to alert their employer easily and confidentially.

In order to take this work forwards, conference calls on the NEC to work with the National Women's Committee to:

- 1) Continue to promote UNISON Guidance and other resources through social media, bulletins to activists and members, and other media including highlighting the support There For You can offer;
- 2) Conduct a survey of branches to understand if there has been an increase in requests for support on domestic abuse related cases and how employers have responded in order to identify additional support, training and resources branches and activists may need;
- 3) An updated guide and model policy to include consideration of those who work from home, such as disabled workers;
- 4) Work with branches to identify employers that have adopted domestic abuse policies and highlight best practise as well as use information to promote benefits of doing so to other employers.

#### ***South East Region***

---

### **34. Migrant Workers on the Covid 19 Frontline**

Conference expresses its gratitude and appreciation for the work of migrant workers on the Covid 19 frontline during the pandemic, noting that they did so while struggling under the unjust financial and bureaucratic burden of the UK's immigration laws.

Conference notes with deep concern that migrant worker members in the health and social care sector were reporting to the union that they experienced administrative delays in renewing visas, thousands of pounds of fees and charges and the threat of deportation all while providing life saving treatment to Covid 19 patients.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference** **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference believes that it is shameful that policies such as “no recourse to public funds” (NRPF) meant that migrant workers on the Covid 19 frontline felt under constant financial pressure to work or be left unable to feed their families. It made no moral or practical sense even before a pandemic hit. In addition, the Immigration Health surcharge is an unfair double tax on migrant workers who already contribute to the NHS through general taxation. Conference welcomes the hard-won exemption of workers on a “NHS visa” from paying the surcharge. However, Conference notes that the lowest paid and most vulnerable migrant workers in the NHS and nearly all migrant social care workers still have to pay thousands of pounds upfront to access the very healthcare they help provide, and have to reclaim their money in instalments every six months.

Conference calls upon all migrant workers who worked on the Covid 19 frontline, in both public and private sectors be granted “Indefinite Leave to Remain” as a gesture of gratitude by the UK.

Conference welcomes the work by UNISON’s “There for you” charity which gave vital, life saving grants to many migrant worker families during the pandemic enabling members left destitute by immigration fees to feed their children.

Conference also welcomes the provision of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants immigration advice helpline which provided practical, free support to many of our migrant worker members during a time when navigating fast changing immigration rules became vital to retaining jobs and keeping essential services running.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue UNISON’s campaign to dismantle the Hostile Environment, end NRPF and scrap the Immigration Health Surcharge;
- 2) Campaign for ILR for all migrant workers who worked on the Covid 19 frontline;
- 3) Support the work of branches and regions in organising migrant workers with resources and advice, including continuing support for the JCWI helpline;
- 4) Campaign to support the rights of migrant workers, working with the union’s migrant worker networks.

### ***North Wales Health***

---

#### **35. The Right to Protest Post Covid**

Conference opposes the further restrictions imposed on the right to protest and the severity of sentences and penalties included in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill 2021.

The origins of the Bill are an attempt by Priti Patel and the Tory government to quell a groundswell of protest, particularly in relation to inequality and racism highlighted by the Black Lives Matter movement, and the future of our planet in environmental protests.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

The restrictions would impact on all forms of protest, including many involving trade unions, and place further barriers on our ability to organise for change.

Protest has been and remains a core component of every movement for justice, democracy, equality, rights for working people, and increasingly for the future of our planet.

Each of those movements has faced attack from those in power who have always sought to criminalise them and to accuse those protesting of being the cause of nuisance, disorder, and violence.

It is often the denial of democratic rights and social justice and the attempt to suppress those who stand out against this that causes violence. As Martin Luther King famously said, “A riot is the language of the unheard”.

Priti Patel, Donald Trump and the Chinese government share the same hostility to the right to protest wherever it challenges the powerful interests that they seek to defend.

It is abundantly clear that protest will form an intrinsic part of securing a post Covid settlement that calls to account those responsible for a level of death that could have been avoided, and for real action to deal with the massive structural inequalities in our society which have been so glaringly exposed by the disproportionate impact on black and working class communities.

In the UK we already have extremely restrictive limits on the right to protest after more than 40 years of legislation to that effect by a series of Tory governments, including explicit limitations on trade union rights.

Elements of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill 2021 would restrict these even further.

For example, measures around “protests that are noisy enough to cause intimidation or harassment” or “serious unease, alarm or distress” to bystanders” could be used to further restrict picketing rights, lobbying and other protests, particularly where public services are increasingly located on private land, and public spaces are increasingly privatised.

Conference resolves to oppose the Bill in total and calls on the National Executive Council to work with the TUC and broader trade union and labour movement and all appropriate campaigns consistent with UNISON principles and policies to build a broad coalition in opposition to it, and should it become law, to continue to defend the right to protest.

***Tower Hamlets***

---

#### **36. Black Voices Matter**

Conference notes that the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill has now passed its second reading in the House of Commons. The anti-protest measures described in the Bill are an attack on marginalised groups who protest for justice, equality and access to human rights.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Racial profiling is a serious concern within the police and justice systems. The Home Office reports Black people are nine times more likely to be subjected to Stop and Search and five times more likely to be physically restrained than white people (31 March 2020 statistics).

If the Bill becomes law, the police will have more powers to impose restrictions on the length and noise levels of a protest, as well as to ascribe 'serious annoyance' status to protestors. There is a real concern that the penalties will be disproportionately meted out, with Black protestors receiving the harshest punishments for perceived 'serious annoyance'.

Protests, such as the Black Lives Matter demonstrations, have been effectively used for decades to draw attention to issues of inequality and social injustice. Eyes across the world were on Bristol in June 2020, the toppling of a slave-trader statue, the subsequent displays on the plinths and the removal of the name 'Colston' from public buildings, streets and venues. Almost overnight, a protest achieved what numerous campaigns had failed to do in years.

Without the ability to protest safely, Black and marginalised communities will become voiceless and invisible in the post pandemic world.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to publicly oppose the Bill via blogs and newsletters;
- 2) Work with Labour Link and appropriate partners to report how the implementation of the Bill will negatively impact Black communities;
- 3) Produce guidance for members on how to organise and protest, within the parameters of the proposed changes.

***University of South Wales***

---

### **37. Subsidising the Employers and Paying for the Privilege to Work.**

At the start of lockdown many employers who refused homeworking, as incompatible with their business needs, have had a road to Damascus moments. Suddenly the impossible became possible as the government instructed those who could work from home to do so.

After over a year of enforced homeworking who is really paying for home working? Who is really reaping the benefits? Employers may say that their staff are lucky that they no longer face the daily commute but fail to mention new arrangements have benefited themselves far more than they ever dreamed. The burden of providing electricity, insurance and consumables such as paper and printer ink and space have fallen on the shoulders of our members.

Therefore, it is no surprise that many employers are now planning for a future where our members will be expected to work from home some in not all of the time, yet still refuse to contribute towards utility bills and insurance costs. At the same time many members had to work throughout the winter, unable to turn on the heating during the day to keep their bills down.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference notes that many members who bent over backwards to work under difficult circumstances are now being taken advantage of by employers who see homeworking as an easy way to offset costs, from themselves to their staff.

Conference asks the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Undertake a survey across all service groups to ascertain the extent of problems being faced by members across the entire union. Are there any examples of employers doing the right thing?;
- 2) Based on the results of this survey, develop a national campaign to get proper financial and material support for staff who in the 'new normal' will be expected to work from home;
- 3) Work with other trade unions and the TUC to coordinate a wider union campaign to get a better deal for our members;
- 4) Work with Labour Link to promote this issue within the Labour Party.

### ***West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Transport***

#### **38. Decriminalise Abortion - a Woman's Right to Choose**

Conference applauds the landmark vote to legalise abortion in Argentina, a beacon of hope to pro-choice activists across Latin America fighting for abortion rights and at the same time sends solidarity to pro-choice demonstrators in Poland on the streets in unprecedented numbers against the almost complete ban on abortion that became law on 27 January 2021.

Conference notes:

- 1) In Britain the 1967 Abortion Act gave women and people access to abortion but only under specific grounds and if signed off by two doctors, and that the Offences against the Person Act 1861 which made abortion a criminal offense is still on the statute book. The situation in the North of Ireland since changes in the law there is now quite different. They do not have the 1861 Act anymore and they never had 1967 Act so abortion is effectively decriminalised in the North but women face an appalling lack of access to abortion services;
- 2) Today medical advancements mean that women and people can safely access abortion by taking two pills. This regimen is now on the World Health Organisation Essential medicines list for safe abortion. Abortion care therefore no longer needs to be carried out in a clinical setting and this is reflected in home becoming the place the second abortion pill can be taken under the Abortion Act in Scotland, Wales and England;
- 3) The temporary measure during the pandemic to allow both abortion pills to be taken at home has been a great success. Covid 19 shows there is no legitimate or medical reason to deny the use of telemedicine in abortion services going forward;
- 4) However whilst the way women and people can access abortion has changed, the criminal law remains. Within the current criminal law women and people in

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Britain could face 12 years in prison for using abortion pills purchased online. A doctor could face 12 years in prison for providing safe abortion care without a second doctor's approval. A nurse could face 12 years in prison for providing medical abortion on their best clinical judgement without the legal grounds first being signed off by two doctors. These criminal sanctions are completely unnecessary for highly regulated UK healthcare such as abortion. Trapped within the legal framework of criminal law, abortion care is being regarded unlike any other medical procedure available in the UK today. By situating abortion in criminal law with the need for two doctors to sign off legal grounds, rather than being situated wholly within medical regulation, we are saying to abortion care professionals - particularly to nursing staff - that we don't trust their individual clinical judgement or competence. No other healthcare professionals are made to work within these limits;

- 5) Medical organisations in favour of decriminalisation include: Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Royal College of Midwives, Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare, British Medical Association and the Royal College of Nursing;
- 6) Parliamentary groups are also in favour of decriminalisation of abortion. The All Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development has called for the complete decriminalisation throughout the UK;
- 7) In 2017 a majority in the House of Commons were in favour of decriminalising abortion in England and Wales with MP's across all political parties voting to pass Diana Johnson MP's Reproductive Health Access to Termination bill through its first reading.

Conference believes:

- a) There is a solution to all the issues highlighted above, which is to decriminalise abortion. Healthcare regulation will always and should always stand. But the only thing being achieved by the current law is to restrict and stigmatise both women and people who request an abortion and the healthcare professionals who provide that care in good faith;
- b) Decriminalisation would mean that abortion services are regulated in the same way as other medical practices. We need to allow doctors and nurses to deliver best practice without fear of being criminalised. For women and people decriminalisation would mean empowering them to make their own informed healthcare choices. Women and people would no longer have their bodies ruled over by a law enacted when Queen Victoria was on the throne;
- c) There is already a wide consensus on this issue. Now we all need to come together to decriminalise abortion for women in the UK.

Conference resolves:

- i) That the National Executive Council use the structures within our union to ensure members are kept up to date with the campaign for decriminalisation;

## 2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference

### UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- ii) To publicise the Abortion Rights Campaign and encourage branches to affiliate, in line with national policy;
- iii) To encourage members to write to their MPs in support of decriminalisation of abortion.

*Camden*

---

### **39. Fighting Unemployment Together**

Conference notes

- 1) Unemployment is a blight on working people who are often forced to live in poverty because of problems inflicted by capitalism;
- 2) Unemployment has risen through the pandemic and the OECD predicts unemployment to average 7.4 percent in 2021. When the furlough scheme ends, many may find themselves without a job to return to;
- 3) Universal Credit is causing extreme hardship, throwing families into unsustainable debt and is set to fall by £20 in the autumn.

Conferences believes

- a) Rising unemployment disproportionately hits the most precarious and oppressed sections of the working class, but affects all workers as employers use it to drive down wages and contractual rights, hike workloads and cut hours;
- b) The TUC should oppose any scapegoating of minorities and migrants for unemployment and the lack of access to public services;
- c) Unemployment leaves millions idle while we need hospitals, schools, houses and a green new deal;
- d) Unemployment benefits should be set at the full rate of pay of the job the individual has lost or at the Real Living Wage set by the Living Wage Foundation, which ever is higher.

UNISON will work alongside others campaigning around this issue to:

- i) Organise a national protest against unemployment, for Universal Credit to be set at full pay or the Real Living Wage and for a programme of public works to provide employment and improve public services;
- ii) Help organise branches and regions to establish local labour movement campaigns and protests around the issues outlined above and provide resources and premises for the unemployed to self-organise.

*Lambeth*

---

### **40. People Before Profit Emergency Programme**

Conference notes the launch of the People Before Profit Emergency Programme for Jobs, Services and Safety.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference believe that this programme can help to shape the resistance we need to prevent workers and the poorest and most vulnerable bearing the brunt of a health emergency and economic crisis not of their making.

Conference call on the National Executive Council to resolve to adopt this programme and to consider ways we can take up its demands in the interests of our members and publicise them.

#### **An Emergency Programme for Jobs, Services and Safety**

Tens of thousands have unnecessarily died from the Covid pandemic thanks to a government that was ill prepared and put profit ahead of peoples' safety. Now, alongside a Covid pandemic that is far from over, we face an avalanche of job losses, more austerity and more attacks on pay and conditions.

We need a fightback across workplaces and communities to demand that ordinary people won't pay for the crisis.

**Extend the Furlough scheme – Defend Jobs:** The withdrawal of the government's Furlough scheme will have a devastating impact on jobs: it must be kept in place for at least the next 12 months and be extended to cover all workers regardless of what type of contract they are on – no worker should be left behind. Government should take an ownership stake in firms in return for such support. We demand a 35 hour week for workers with no loss of pay. Firms making profits must be barred from making mass redundancies and shareholder dividend payments should be frozen. Major firms that go bankrupt should be nationalised without compensation with workers provided with a job guarantee. We will support any group of workers that strikes or occupies their workplace to defend jobs.

**Safe workplaces:** Both government and employers are pressing to drive ever more people back to work despite the real dangers of a second Covid wave and the utter failure to put a credible test and trace system in place. Unions must sign off any agreements over what constitutes safe working conditions and the right to refuse to work in unsafe workplaces must be strengthened. High quality PPE must be provided. In workplaces without unions, the democratic election of workers' reps should be legally provided for, with a right to involve a trade union if requested. We support any group of workers that refuse to work in unsafe workplaces.

**Tax the wealthy – don't make workers pay for the crisis:** The richest 1,000 people in UK have an estimated combined wealth of £743 billion alone! We need a massive transfer of resources from the rich to protect jobs, services and living standards. The top rate of income tax was 83 percent until 1980 – this should be reinstated. An immediate wealth tax should be imposed on all those with wealth of £1 million and over. We need a Living Wage for all workers of at least £15 per hour and this must be extended to cover those working in the "gig economy". We support all workers fighting for better pay. We reject any argument that pay freezes will save jobs – we need to fight on every front.

**Public ownership of services and end outsourcing:** Services like Royal Mail, rail, energy and water must be brought back into public ownership. The outsourcing of services to private firms across the health service, civil service, local government

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

and elsewhere must be reversed – no more two tier workforces, one with less pay, security and poorer sickness entitlement.

For an immediate massive programme of green investment: We need to “re-purpose” industries like aviation, car production, engineering to urgently address the climate crisis, end dependency on fossil fuels and to provide a million climate jobs. We need a massive programme of investment in council housing and in public transport.

A welfare system that provides real social security and dignity: Universal Credit and the Bedroom Tax must both be scrapped and benefit sanctions halted. Benefit payments should be massively increased and the moratorium on housing evictions must be maintained.

Get organised!

Build fighting unions and solidarity with every fightback: to defend the interests of workers we need to rebuild the trade union movement. We need to draw millions of workers facing job losses, low pay, lack of safety at work into the unions – and we need tens of thousands of new reps and activists who can help organise campaigns, strikes and protest to defend workers. Unions that fightback can recruit members and enthuse a new generation of activists. Every group of workers that fights back should be flooded with messages of support, donations to their strike fund and invites to address union and labour movement meetings. We demand the repeal of all the anti-trade union laws.

Equality and unity - do not let them divide us: Governments that want to shift the burden of a crisis onto the shoulders of workers and the poor will also turn to more scapegoating, division and racism to help push their attacks through. We will organise to challenge and oppose all forms of racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia and discrimination against disabled people. Only though unity based on equality can we fight back effectively.

#### ***Doncaster***

---

#### **Public Services**

---

##### **41. A New Model for Social Care**

Conference applauds the work of social care staff. These members have always made a huge difference in the lives of the most vulnerable in our society. However, since the onset of the Covid pandemic, the significance of this work has become even more obvious.

Conference condemns employers, both residential homes and providers of domiciliary care, who failed to provide adequate PPE to their staff, pressured employees to attend work despite the fact that they or their loved ones were clinically vulnerable and/or continue to withhold full pay for workers who are required to self-isolate or are sick.

The campaigning zeal of UNISON led to the government introducing the Infection Control Fund in 2020. It is shocking that some employers refused to access money in this fund to give full pay to social care staff who needed to stay away from work for

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

infection control purposes. The sad reality is that throughout the pandemic, there are still social care employers who do not pay full pay unless their employee or a member of their household tests positive or they receive instruction from Test and Trace. This means that staff who are symptomatic but without a diagnosis are faced with incredibly tough choices about whether to attend work or not. Forced to make the choice between feeding their family or paying bills, and protecting the people they care for, many carers are still being forced to go into work.

Poor employment practice in the social care sector did not begin when Covid started to spread. Social care has become one of the lowest paid sectors in the UK economy. The sector is rife with poverty pay, inadequate training and development and unsatisfactory health and safety practices. Three out of four care workers do not earn the living wage. It is no surprise that many social care employers experience an annual turnover of staff of over 30%.

The problems in social care workforce disproportionately affect Black workers. A 2019 Skills For Care report demonstrates that “BAME” staff comprise 21 percent of the social care workforce compared to 14 percent of the adult population.

Poor employment practices are often the inevitable consequence of poor commissioning practices and the ongoing effects of a decade of austerity. Per capita spending on adult social care has reduced by seven percent since 2010. As a result, price is by far the most dominant factor in decisions around care commissioning, with most councils failing to pay the minimum amount considered necessary to provide safe levels of care.

Instead of local authorities assessing the scale of unmet need in their communities and delivering a strategic plan to address it, there is an unstable market based system and a postcode lottery of entitlements. In recent years several providers have collapsed – many after being bought by venture capitalists who are concerned about maximising profit.

The current system is bad for workers and service users alike.

As the largest union of social care staff, it is right that UNISON is leading the debate both for more ethical care commissioning in the short term and a fundamentally new model of social care delivery – a national social care service.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Support recruitment and organising strategies in social care employers that will increase density, identify and develop new activists and achieve fairer workplaces;
- 2) Campaign for all social care staff to be paid the real living wage or £10 per hour – which ever is the greater;
- 3) Develop strategies that will embed minimum employment standards in all social care commissioning;
- 4) Successfully campaign for the end of the fragmented market based system and the introduction of an integrated, publicly delivered care system. Such a system

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

must also have improved working with NHS providers and deliver better outcomes in areas such as patient discharge;

- 5) Continue to campaign for a significant and urgent increase in funding to local government generally, and social care specifically.

#### ***Eastern Region***

#### **42. Health and Social Care Provision for Older People Post Covid**

Conference has always recognised that health and social care workers are dedicated and hard working but lowly paid with poor terms and conditions. They do their best to provide quality care but against a background of crisis within health and social care services.

Even prior to the Covid crisis, research had confirmed that care for residents in privately run homes for the elderly could be inadequate due to poor terms and conditions and lack of training. This resulted in large numbers of vacancies and staff shortages which further affected the quality of care. Care Inspectors had highlighted examples of abuse to residents and inadequate care while the private providers continued to make a substantial profit.

In 2019 the largest commercial provider of residential care went into administration, and many others were struggling as cash strapped local authorities could not fund adult care adequately, resulting in it not being an economically viable proposition for providers in the private sector. It has become increasingly difficult to find residential care for those suffering from even mild dementia or from more challenging conditions.

In a report for the Centre for Policy Studies, Damien Green MP recognised the crisis situation ahead of the government's Green Paper on the Future Funding of Care, which was due out in June 2019. His proposals were said to include that about half the cost of domiciliary and nursing care could be met by the state.

Also, a report from the County Councils Network (CCN) had predicted that English councils risk insolvency if government does not move rapidly to fill a £50bn funding black hole opening up in local authority budgets. Without extra funding, the CCN said rising demand for social care would see council finances plunged into disarray and services cut to legal minimum levels. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, spending on adult social care had already fallen by 5 percent in real terms between 2009 and 2018.

But these events have been overtaken by the Covid crisis. The impact of Covid on older people in care homes has been devastating, this can be illustrated by the fact that between March and June 2020 there were 19,394 deaths involving Covid 19, which is 29.3 percent of all deaths in care homes.

This is why we need a national care service as outlined in UNISON's report "Care After Covid: A UNISON vision for social care". The current fragmented, crisis-riven sector could be transformed into a national care system. One that could cope with the day-to-day challenges of caring for vulnerable and be better prepared for a future health emergency of the same severity as the current pandemic.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

People requiring social care will benefit from staff being properly paid and trained to provide that care. In future, social care must become an important economic sector providing high-quality, well-paid jobs and no longer seen as a drain on the public purse. It has the potential to be part of the solution for local economies that have lost jobs because of the virus.

Due to the tens of thousands of unnecessary deaths, there must be a full public inquiry into the government's handling of the Covid crisis as soon as the worst of the pandemic is over. The inquiry should look at why lockdowns have come too late, leaving NHS employees to deal with the terrible consequences, and why social care was effectively abandoned at a terrible cost to residents and staff. It should also look at why in more than 500 cases, "do not resuscitate" decisions were made but not agreed in discussion with the person or their family.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign for a full public inquiry into the government's handling of the Covid crisis, having first consulted with members on issues to be addressed within such an inquiry;
- 2) Campaign for a national care service as outlined in Care After Covid: A UNISON vision for social care.

#### ***National Retired Members Organisation***

---

#### **43. Organising to End the Crisis in Social Care**

Conference notes the judgement issued by the Supreme Court on 19 March 2021 in the case of Royal Mencap Society v Tomlinson-Blake, which found that care workers employed on sleepover shifts with injured or disabled people were not entitled to the minimum wage.

Conference congratulates UNISON on pursuing this case to the Supreme Court and believes this devastating outcome is the latest indictment of the scandalous state of social care and a further example of the complete disregard shown to those who deliver social care services, and those they support.

Conference notes 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, urged the government to provide an immediate £8 billion cash injection and to 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 identified that since 2008/09, there had been a five percent reduction in the number of people receiving publicly funded social care per year. Between 2008-

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

09 and 2019, this equated to around 600,000 people. This had occurred despite a significant increase in the number of people in need of care.

Conference further notes a 2018 Age UK report, there were 1.4 million people over the age of 65 who had unmet social care needs. More than double the number in 2010.

The IPPR's 2019 report highlighted 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 went 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."

In July 2019, in his first speech as Prime Minister, Boris Johnson promised to "fix this crisis in social care once and for all."

Conference believes that the onslaught of the coronavirus pandemic exposed the consequences of the failure of successive governments to tackle the crisis in social care.

In September 2020, the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) produced a report entitled "Beyond Covid: New thinking on the future of adult social care", in which they highlighted the negative impacts of Covid 19 on social care and offered reasons for that impact.

Based on conversations with commissioners and staff employed in the sector, SCIE reported" that:

- 1) The sector was "poorly prepared for the pandemic" and that "the years of underfunding had left the sector without the equipment and estates necessary to manage the crisis. Examples offered, included that "many care homes had insufficient space to safely isolate people who had caught Covid19 and contain the spread. Local supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) were low, or non-existent in some places as late as the end of March, which left many care workers exposed to the virus.";
- 2) The pandemic had exposed inequalities within social care, with "Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities, adults with learning disabilities, and those on the lowest incomes disproportionately affected.";
- 3) Social care was "a fragmented and disconnected sector" of "around 18,500 organisations working in 39,000 locations" across England alone. Many of those they engaged with told them that "the scale and complexity of the sector posed significant practical and logistical challenges in organising effective responses. For example, in ensuring that providers have access to sufficient PPE, coordinating safe hospital discharges, and testing staff and residents in a timely manner.";

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 4) “Despite many in the workforce showing immense resilience overall, morale is low in adult social care, and care staff have felt undervalued compared with their healthcare counterparts. This has also played out in practical terms, for example, in care workers not having priority access when shopping for their clients.” SCIE “were told about registered managers of adult social care services suffering from burn out and extreme anxiety.”

Conference believes this picture will be immediately recognisable to our members in social care and the officers and reps who have supported them over the last twelve months.

Conference believes that the crisis in social care is not simply a crisis of underfunding, but a systemic crisis of fragmentation and exploitation arising from the dominance of the market.

In 2020, it was revealed that more than one in five care providers – looking after over 200,000 people – were currently failing to meet the Care Quality Commission’s quality and safety standards. This grew 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.

Despite regular pleas of poverty from the market, In 2017 a detailed financial analysis of care homes undertaken by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) found that £200 million a year was flowing directly to private equity operators and other institutions that played no role in providing any form of care.

In addition, providers were paying a total of £390 million each year in rent to landlords and yearly payments of £177 million were going to bond holders, banks and other financial institutions to pay off debts.

According to an article in the “New Statesman” examining the report, “even before the big 26 care home operators account for their profits, which range between £60 million and £80 million in a good year, nearly £760 million a year has already leaked out of the social care sector and into the pockets of those who never meet care workers or care home residents as part of their job... Injecting the care home industry with more cash while failing to address its underlying financial structure will merely line the already well-stuffed pockets of off-shore investors.”

We should bear in mind that care homes only make up one part of the social care sector. The labyrinthine nature of many providers’ financial structures, make finding similar information from providers of other forms of care very difficult. We can state though that, according to Skills for Care, the adult social care sector in the UK is worth £46.2 billion.

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

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

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.

Since “Care Workers for Change” was launched, UNISON North West has further invested resources into campaigns such as “Care Workers v Covid 19”, which has secured commitments from 18 of the region’s 23 commissioning authorities to ensure care workers would not suffer financially if they could not attend work for reasons relating to the Coronavirus.

Through the “Stand Up for Social Care” campaign, UNISON North West has launched a successful network of more than a hundred councillors and a worker led organising committee. Crucially, this involves a clear focus on insourcing social care provision and ending the dominance of the market.

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.

Conference believes 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.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- a) Work with 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 paid for by universal progressive taxation. Such a system should ensure proper methods of accountability to the workforce and those in receipt of care and support, with the principle of co-design at its heart, so that we do not repeat past injustices, where recipients have been denied their right to control over their own lives;
- b) Work with 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;
- c) Work with service groups, Labour Link and other stakeholders including by 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.

#### ***Knowsley***

---

#### **44. Organising to End the Crisis in Social Care**

Conference notes 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, urged the government to provide an immediate £8 billion cash injection and to 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 identified that since 2008/09, there had been a five percent reduction in the number of people receiving publicly funded social care per year. Between 2008-09 and 2019, this equated to around 600,000 people. This had occurred despite a significant increase in the number of people in need of care.

Conference further notes a 2018 Age UK report, there were 1.4 million people over the age of 65 who had unmet social care needs. More than double the number in 2010.

The IPPR’s 2019 report highlighted 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 went 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

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

(November 2019) to 350,000 by 2028 or 400,000 if freedom of movement comes to an end.”

In July 2019, in his first speech as Prime Minister, Boris Johnson promised to “fix this crisis in social care once and for all.”

Conference believes that the onslaught of the Coronavirus pandemic exposed the consequences of the failure of successive governments to tackle the crisis in social care.

In September 2020, the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) produced a report entitled “Beyond Covid: New thinking on the future of adult social care”, in which they highlighted the negative impacts of Covid 19 on social care and offered reasons for that impact.

Based on conversations with commissioners and staff employed in the sector, SCIE reported” that:

- 1) The sector was “poorly prepared for the pandemic” and that “the years of underfunding had left the sector without the equipment and estates necessary to manage the crisis. Examples offered, included that “many care homes had insufficient space to safely isolate people who had caught Covid 19 and contain the spread. Local supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) were low, or non-existent in some places as late as the end of March, which left many care workers exposed to the virus.”;
- 2) The pandemic had exposed inequalities within social care, with “Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities, adults with learning disabilities, and those on the lowest incomes disproportionately affected.”;
- 3) Social care was “a fragmented and disconnected sector” of “around 18,500 organisations working in 39,000 locations” across England alone. Many of those they engaged with told them that “the scale and complexity of the sector posed significant practical and logistical challenges in organising effective responses. For example, in ensuring that providers have access to sufficient PPE, coordinating safe hospital discharges, and testing staff and residents in a timely manner.”;
- 4) “Despite many in the workforce showing immense resilience overall, morale is low in adult social care, and care staff have felt undervalued compared with their healthcare counterparts. This has also played out in practical terms, for example, in care workers not having priority access when shopping for their clients.” SCIE “were told about registered managers of adult social care services suffering from burn out and extreme anxiety.”;

Conference believes this picture will be immediately recognisable to our members in social care and the officers and reps who have supported them over the last twelve months.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference believes that the crisis in social care is not simply a crisis of underfunding, but a systemic crisis of fragmentation and exploitation arising from the dominance of the market.

In 2020, it was revealed that more than one in five care providers – looking after over 200,000 people – were currently failing to meet the Care Quality Commission's quality and safety standards. This grew 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.

Despite regular pleas of poverty from the market, In 2017 a detailed financial analysis of care homes undertaken by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) found that £200 million a year was flowing directly to private equity operators and other institutions that played no role in providing any form of care.

In addition, providers were paying a total of £390 million each year in rent to landlords and yearly payments of £177 million were going to bond holders, banks and other financial institutions to pay off debts.

According to an article in the "New Statesman" examining the report, "even before the big 26 care home operators account for their profits, which range between £60 million and £80 million in a good year, nearly £760 million a year has already leaked out of the social care sector and into the pockets of those who never meet care workers or care home residents as part of their job... Injecting the care home industry with more cash while failing to address its underlying financial structure will merely line the already well-stuffed pockets of off-shore investors."

We should bear in mind that care homes only make up one part of the social care sector. The labyrinthine nature of many providers' financial structures, make finding similar information from providers of other forms of care very difficult. We can state though that, according to Skills for Care, the adult social care sector in the UK is worth £46.2 billion.

Conference 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. Unfortunately this case was lost, but the backlash has reinforced the need for proper funding of social care and fair treatment of care workers.

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.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

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.

Since "Care Workers for Change" was launched, UNISON North West has further invested resources into campaigns such as "Care Workers v Covid 19", which has secured commitments from 18 of the region's 23 commissioning authorities to ensure care workers would not suffer financially if they could not attend work for reasons relating to the coronavirus.

Through the "Stand Up for Social Care" campaign, UNISON North West has launched a successful network of more than a hundred councillors and a worker led organising committee. Crucially, this involves a clear focus on insourcing social care provision and ending the dominance of the market.

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 National Executive Council to:

- a) Work with 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 paid for by universal progressive taxation. Such a system should ensure proper methods of accountability to the workforce and those in receipt of care and support, with the principle of co-design at its heart, so that we do not repeat past injustices, where recipients have been denied their right to control over their own lives;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- b) Work with 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;
- c) Work with service groups, Labour Link and other stakeholders including by 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**

---

#### **45. Coronavirus Pandemic - the Case for Public Services**

It is true to say that a government could not be faced with a much more serious situation than a global pandemic. But it is clear that the UK government could not have played its difficult hand any worse than it has done. When assessing the efficacy of the government's response to the pandemic, Conference notes that the UK failed dramatically by every measure.

Announcing a lockdown in March 2020, Boris Johnson announced that "many more families are going to lose loved ones before their time". This statement was a preview of what was to come- the UK suffered one of the worst mortality rates in the developed world. Conference believes that the number of deaths, numbering more than 125,000 so far including thousands of public service workers, is unforgivable. Conference notes that many other countries have suppressed the virus more effectively than the UK. And even in countries where the virus was not completely contained, there are very few who have experienced both the appalling loss of life and economic hardship which the UK has suffered since March 2020. Conference believes that we must understand the incompetence and structural issues which have led to the UK government's abysmal failure to respond effectively to the pandemic.

Conference believes that the UK government's pandemic response has been distinctively inadequate as a result of: the consequences of a decades long break-up of public services; a secretive and corrupt contract culture; lack of long-term planning and most notably the damaging prevalence of the market within the NHS.

Conference notes with alarm that the core of the government's response to this unprecedented public health crisis seems to further cement the position of private sector companies within the public sector supply chain. Conference notes the many and various examples of services that would ordinarily be run by the NHS being handed to private companies over the course of the last year. Conference further notes the meagre results this outsourcing has produced at significant cost (both economic and social) to the British public.

The most high profile instance of outsourcing the government's coronavirus response is the catastrophic Serco test and trace system, which will cost the tax-payers £37 billion. Conference believes that given the huge outlay, Serco should have been expected to produce outstanding results, regrettably this has not been the case. We have been told by Conservative politicians for many years that the public

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

sector is inefficient whilst the private sector is lean and effective- the pandemic has proven the opposite. The test and trace system reaches just 62.6% of contacts, whilst local authorities are reaching 97%. This is despite the fact that local authority teams have been denied access to government data, and were given just £300m, in contrast with the £37bn budget for national test and trace.

The test and trace system has repeatedly failed to reach its own targets on contract tracing, with staff who had been scarcely trained sat idle for months on end.

Meanwhile, members of the public who needed Covid tests have been directed to non-existent testing centres or sent to the other end of the country. In addition, tens of thousands of test results were simply lost due to a shockingly basic spreadsheet error. This left thousands of people, including UNISON members, unable to work because they could not get tests or the results of tests.

This failure has ultimately cost thousands of lives, millions of jobs and played a part in a growing national mental health crisis. Conference believes that this failure was not inevitable, better performance can be found in countries where a substantial public health service has remained at the core of the process. Germany's well established public health network was able to manage the efforts of thousands of extra tracers expertly.

Serco is the most well-known example of wasteful government outsourcing but there are many others. One global healthcare firm won a £133 million government contract to supply testing kits. The government did not advertise the deal competitively. In July 2020, following a series of errors, the government withdrew these testing kits, on the grounds that they might be unsafe.

Conference further notes that contracts for managing the procurement of ventilators, PPE and even the job of keeping tabs on all these contracts have been awarded to management consultants for hundreds of millions of pounds. Even the process of managing NHS outsourcing has been outsourced, with some consultants reportedly earning a staggering £6000 per day.

Conference notes with alarm the shocking figures released by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) which show that black people are dying at an alarming rate from Covid 19. African Caribbeans in Britain have been killed by Covid 19 at a rate that is four times more than white people. And Bangladeshis and Pakistanis are more than 50 per cent more likely to die from the virus as white people, with people of Indian and mixed heritage also more at risk, according to the ONS.

Of equal concern is the impact of Covid 19 on the elderly and persons with disabilities who have been most at risk of becoming infected with an exceptionally high incidence of deaths.

Conference notes that the only part of the government's pandemic response which can objectively be described as a success is the national vaccination programme. Conference further notes that the vaccination programme is one of the few areas of the pandemic response which has remained relatively untouched by privatisation, having been delivered entirely within the National Health Service. Conference believes that this proves that testing, tracing and procuring could all have been more effectively delivered within the public sector.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference is extremely worried by the emerging pattern of secrecy regarding government health contracts. The Financial Times wrote that: “most Covid 19 contracts were awarded without a competitive tendering process under emergency procurement measures that were put in place in March.” It has been the mantra of privateers for decades that competition breeds efficiency. Yet the pandemic appears to have brought on a health service oligarchy which now enjoys unprecedented influence within the NHS.

Conference believes that the unaccountable, inefficient and perhaps even corrupt method of awarding contracts during the pandemic must be investigated.

Conference is concerned not only about the underhand privatisation and outsourcing which has taken place during the pandemic, but also that the direction of travel appears to be to undermine our entire National Health Service.

But whilst the scale of privatisation and the lack of transparency in the last year has been shocking, this is not an entirely new phenomenon. The government’s reliance on private contractors during the pandemic comes after a decade of public sector reorganisation, marketisation and deep cuts to services and local government in England. An infrastructure that was once in place to respond to public health crises has been destroyed by policies introduced by recent Conservative governments, with some changes going as far back as Labour’s years in power.

A professor of public health at the University of Bristol and a former regional director of public health in the NHS for almost 20 years said: “The undermining of our responsiveness to a pandemic was one of my major concerns. There has been a destruction of the infrastructure that stops England coping with major emergencies. It absolutely explains why you are now seeing private companies being brought into these functions.”

Approximately 32,000 overnight beds have been lost from hospitals in England in just over a decade. Conference notes that the number of beds lost is roughly the same as the number of beds the NHS had to scramble to free up for Covid 19 patients during the first wave. When the coronavirus spread to Europe last year, the UK ranked 24th among European countries for its numbers of critical care beds, with 6.6 per 100,000 population, compared with Germany, which topped the league with 29.2 per 100,000. This can hardly be defined as “world-beating”.

The privatisation and cuts have impacted upon local government just as severely as within the health service, with £850 million cut from the government public health grant to local authorities since 2015. A director of public health for one North West council said: “People like environmental health officers, community and neighbourhood teams, youth services workers – the people who you could deploy in a crisis, who already know where the vulnerable are and how to reach them – those were the kind of staff they used during 2009 swine flu to work closely with the NHS, but they have been lost.”

The consequences for public service workers of the government’s malfeasance could not be graver, with thousands losing their lives and more losing their livelihoods. Conference notes that the public sector has been left on the brink of collapse.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference believes that there can be no return to the policy decisions which destroyed our pandemic preparedness over recent years. Conference further believes that public services require a significant increase in funding to cope with the strains of recent years, but that without in-sourcing services, this public money would be wasted. Conference believes that contract culture and marketisation within the NHS must come to end. Conference further believes that the pandemic has evidenced the necessity of stronger health and safety organisation and legislation.

Conference calls on:

- 1) The National Executive Council to produce a report outlining the systemic failures of recent Government policy on public services with specific reference to funding wasted on political vanity projects to Tory donors and the consequences for the public sector which have been highlighted by the pandemic, in order to make the case for in-sourcing services;
- 2) UNISON to seek a TUC wide campaign to raise the results of this report and create co-ordinated activity and events across the trade union movement;
- 3) UNISON to build on the current campaigns to increase health and safety union organisation and lobby for stronger health and safety legislation;
- 4) UNISON to campaign for a fair funding settlement for public services.

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

---

#### **46. Reshaping Local and Regional Economies**

Conference notes that a new post Covid settlement for the UK must recognise the importance of devolution, and that this is important for both the nations of the UK and the English regions.

The pandemic has shown that in many respects devolution worked for the nations, but that the centralised top down model for England was dysfunctional. And the government failed to deliver on its promise to deliver “whatever it takes”. At key moments during the crisis, local expertise and community based solutions were disregarded in favour of top down diktats from Westminster and Whitehall. This left our members delivering the protection our communities needed in the face of central government failure. That failure carries the same hallmarks as their botched post Brexit infrastructure plans, with ministers bypassing democracy to play off council against council, city against city, town against town and mayor against mayor.

This problem has grown from austerity and the UK government’s failure to properly fund public services. Rather than invest what is needed, we are left with a competition for scarce resources. But, whilst addressing the funding shortfall is a priority, this crisis needs to be accompanied by a new democratic settlement and debate around the placement of vital local government services such as economic recovery plans, skills and housing.

Conference believes that public services and local and regional economies need to be shaped by the people in the communities they serve. In some places this will involve councils collaborating through combined authorities, where this makes sense

## 2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference

### UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

economically and where it is supported by the people. In cases where there is to be reorganisation, this should be driven by democratic impetus and follow cultural change rather than be top down, and it should not be used to cut jobs or services.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to develop a programme with regions to take this work forward.

#### *Northern Region*

---

##### **47. Putting social partnership at the heart of a post Covid settlement (theme 2)**

Conference notes the importance of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Bill in Wales for working people across the UK.

Whilst not perfect in every way, this landmark legislation recognises the centrality of the workers voice to making a fairer and more equal world, which has to be the number one priority for the trade union and labour movement after the pandemic.

Conference agrees that workers, through their unions, should be at the table when policy decisions are being made that are going to affect them.

This is the way to deliver fairer work and tackle the inequality that the pandemic has both exposed and made worse. Conference notes that over the last two decades the Welsh government has sought to revive and rebuild social partnership in Wales.

Now, in line with the recommendations of the Fair Work Commission, it is looking to strengthen those arrangements by putting them into law.

Conference notes that the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Bill will:

- 1) Place a duty on public bodies to work in social partnership and promote Fair Work;
- 2) Require public bodies to produce a procurement strategy with Fair Work at its heart which. This will leverage the £6.3 billion that the Welsh Government spends each year on products and services in order to drive change in the private sector.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to ensure that the union learns the lessons from the Bill, and related developments in Scotland, and explores how the union can campaign to introduce similar legislation at the UK level.

#### *Cymru/Wales Region*

---

##### **48. Covid**

The UK has had the highest reported excess death rate in Europe and the largest fall in GDP among G7 countries. The UK government has been incompetent in its response through its delay in locking down; the inadequate supply of PPE; the lack of mass testing; and the dysfunctional contact tracing system.

However, austerity had stretched the NHS to breaking point even before the pandemic, while outsourcing had reduced the state's capacity to function. The shredding of the UK's social safety net, combined with the spread of low-paid, insecure work, led to thousands of people being unable to self-isolate and unable to

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

absorb sudden losses of income. The country's dysfunctional housing market left entire communities trapped in overcrowded housing.

"This is not a time for ideology or orthodoxy," Rishi Sunak declared in his first Covid press conference in March 2020. Yet ideological opposition to public services has been a recurring theme running through nearly all of the government's actions. Sunak's July mini-budget claimed to be "unencumbered by dogma", yet it rejected large-scale public job creation in favour of wasteful subsidies to private companies protecting their profits.

Rejecting the obvious need to increase state capacity, the government instead poured billions into disastrous private companies and even resisted using existing public laboratories for testing.

Sunak promised to do "whatever it takes to support our economy through this crisis". Johnson said that the government would "put its arms "around every single worker". They have been back-pedalling ever since. A temporary life-raft was one thing, but as the crisis drags on, they fear a permanent shift in people's expectations of government – perhaps even a reinforcement of the need for social provision and public services.

The government is determined to squash the notion that the state has a duty to ensure universal access to the basics of a decent life illustrated by their attitude to free school meals for vulnerable children.

Underlying the chaos of the government's U-turns, contradictory signals and constantly changing rules, there is one consistency in terms of whose interests are protected and prioritised. Johnson's primary constituency is not working-class voters in the "red wall"; it is private capital – those who make money by owning and speculating on assets.

In housing, private renters have been thrown under the bus, government refusing to extend the ban on evictions, or even to implement its manifesto promise to end "no fault" evictions. However private landlords have been almost uniquely shielded from the effects of the pandemic and still have the right to recoup any unpaid rent in its entirety.

The government's premature attempts rush people back to the office in August was widely mocked as an effort to "save Pret". But it was really about protecting city centres built on inflated commercial property values – and the corporate landlords who benefit from them.

The government's complete failure to deal with Covid effectively is not only a question of individual error, of amateurism or ineptitude. It is also the consequence of decades of undermining public services, the privatisation of our NHS, the casualisation of labour with insecure employment and an epidemic of low pay and poor living standards.

Contracts were dished out corruptly to the private sector without any tendering process for PPE that did not work, nightingale hospitals to be run by private sector companies with abysmal past records using tens of billions of public monies. A stark

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

contrast can be made between the utter failure of discredited private companies paying consultants a million pounds a day only to fail to deliver any effective track and trace organisation and the success of the vaccine roll out being delivered successfully by our NHS and local councils.

And now the Government have the gall to declare an investigation into this horrendous failure ‘would not be in the public interest’! At some point in the future Covid will be managed if not eradicated. But if the slogan ‘build back better’ is to mean anything it must be better for the vast majority of people not the already super rich whose wealth has only increased during the pandemic.

As part of the recovery process UNISON needs to campaign with others to secure:

- 1) An end to privatisation of our NHS;
- 2) A cessation of cuts to local government and instead real investment in local services which have been so vital in this crisis;
- 3) Opposition to further proposed public sector pay freezes and significant pay increases to restore living standards;
- 4) Investment in decent affordable social housing;
- 5) Increased devolution with the resources needed to deliver key services and develop local and regional economies;
- 6) An end to the financial exploitation of students;
- 7) A radical increase in investment in public infrastructures to deliver well paid employment and a greener environment.

***Manchester***

---

#### **49. Fighting Local Authority Cuts**

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.

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.

Conference believes 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.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

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.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council:

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

#### ***South East Region***

---

### **50. Fighting Local Authority Cuts**

Conference notes that the funding crisis in local government, caused by more than a decade of austerity from the conservative government, had already reached a critical level prior to the Covid pandemic. In towns and cities across the country vital services were closed and cut back. This left local councils trying to combat the pandemic on shoestring budgets and inadequate resources. Current government policies offer no solution and promise yet more austerity, as the Tories aim to make the majority of working people pay for the Covid crisis.

Conference notes with disappointment that it was not only Tory controlled local authorities, but also those with Labour majorities, that carried out cuts and continue to do so. Often our union has been the last line of defence for workers in those 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 and to reverse the cuts already made, 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.

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.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council:

- 1) To 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

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

(such as in those councils which have borrowed to invest in property, using the returns in rents etc. to supplement their revenue budgets);

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

#### ***Surrey County***

### **51. Engaging with Alternative Private Sector Business Models**

Conference notes that a common theme arising from the Covid 19 pandemic has been a desire amongst many workers not to return to business as it were pre-pandemic. This has been an unprecedented period in recent history and all workers deserve far better than the preservation of a status quo that often treated them with contempt; and dismissed their legitimate concerns about working terms and conditions.

When we consider that status quo we should reflect on the difficulties our union experiences in developing effective private sector bargaining and organising strategies. Workers not covered by collective bargaining agreements, often employed by businesses contemptuous of trade unions, are workers that are readily exploited, marginalised, and subject to the damaging effects of workplace precarity. They desperately need trade unions to fight for them.

As we progress into a post-pandemic economy governed by the Tories there is little hope of action that will improve the situation for many of these workers. The private sector isn't going away, and increasingly it is driving our membership growth. Therefore, trade unions such as ours need alternative organising strategies and approaches in order to effect positive changes for these workers.

Conference notes the burgeoning picture in the North West of England centred on Preston, commonly known as the Preston Model, that seeks amongst other aims to develop alternative business models such as worker co-operatives that place workplace decision making directly in the hands of workers. The Preston Model experience has been noted elsewhere and there are similar initiatives underway in places as diverse as Manchester and Plymouth.

The Preston model is influenced and inspired by efforts in the United States that seeks to democratise and localise economic spending by large anchor institutions such as local authorities, hospitals and universities. Crucially, trade unions are regarded by the Preston Model and its American counterparts as often being fundamental to the development of their agendas.

Case in point in the United States is the example of our sister union the SEIU (Service Employees International Union) which is involved in the development of a new form of private sector business called the Union Co-op model. The model is

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

based on worker co-operative businesses, and guarantees trade union recognition, bargaining, and organising as an integral element of representing the workers interests as workers. Other structures represent their interests as owners and operators of the business.

The Union Co-op model actively promotes trade union membership within the workforce. To put it simply, trade union involvement and a high level of membership is baked into the business model cake. In this respect the model represents a win win situation for trade unions organising in the private sector.

Conference are advised that efforts are underway with the active involvement of a number of trade unions to establish a UK Union Co-op model. An organisation called union-coops:uk are leading with these efforts and have produced a manifesto to help develop and shape a UK model.

Conference believes that with the prospect of several more years at least of Tory government ahead of us, that it is imperative that alternative business models in the private sector are developed. In doing so they can challenge the consensus that only the interests of private capital should dictate how private sector businesses operate within the market. The status quo is not going to change under the Tories so our union needs alternative strategies to demonstrate that there are realistic alternatives to the business as usual narrative.

Conference believes that our members in the private sector have the ideas, skills and drive collectively to make the Union Co-op model work, and that UNISON should have a role in enabling this where practical. In doing so our union would benefit from day 1 recognition, and our members would benefit from the influence the union would bring to the representation of our members collective and individual interests.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to ensure that UNISON actively explores efforts to establish alternative private sector business models such as those being developed under the Preston Model. This should have a particular emphasis on efforts to promote awareness of, and engagement with unionised worker co-operatives in the UK private sector, especially those doing so using a Union Co-op model.

#### ***Leicestershire County***

---

#### **Economy**

---

##### **52. Ensuring that the Living Standards of Older People are not the Price Paid for the Cost of the Pandemic**

Conference will recall that prior to the Covid crisis there had been a series of attacks on older people's entitlements and standards of living including:

- 1) The Taxpayers' Alliance's report, Pensions Inequality, issued in August 2018 calling for an end to defined benefit pensions for public service workers; the Taxpayers' Alliance has since called for the freezing of state pensions;
- 2) The BBC's scrapping of free TV licences for over 75s;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 3) The Intergenerational Foundation's report, "Baby-boomers' concessions: How ticket discounts for a wealthier generation reinforce unfairness", issued on 17 September 2018, attacking senior discounts at visitor attractions and proposing, instead, free entry for people on Pension Credit and 'Bring a Granny' schemes;
- 4) The 'Toyboy Tax', announced on 14 January 2019. From 15 May this has started to deprive couples of Pension Credit and Housing Benefit if one partner is over state pension age and the other under that age. They must apply for Universal Credit instead, typically making a couple £7,000 a year worse off;
- 5) The House of Lords report, "Tackling intergenerational unfairness" released on 25 April 2019 which recommends:
  - a) Scrapping the Triple Lock mechanism for raising the State Retirement Pension;
  - b) Abolishing the free TV licence for over 75 year olds;
  - c) Delaying the Winter Fuel Allowance and Bus Pass until five years after Retirement Age;
  - d) Regarding the Winter Fuel Allowance and Bus Pass as taxable income;
  - e) Subjecting people over the State Retirement Pension age to National Insurance payments.

Before the Covid crisis, the most costly expense experienced by the country was the 2008 crash. Conference will recall that the cost of bailing out the financial system was eventually borne overwhelmingly by those least responsible for it and least able to pay. UNISON's retired members are concerned that the proposal by the Social Market Foundation to scrap the triple lock on pensions is a foretaste of policies to come. To ask the older generation to face cuts in their income, before making proposals to limit higher pay or imposing taxes on extreme wealth.

Such proposals take no account of the fact that the old are already paying disproportionately with their lives, as the Covid mortality rate is significantly higher in the over 70s. UNISON's retired members believe that this is a thinly disguised attempt to force those who have already contributed throughout their younger lives to pay twice.

Conference rejects this attempt to divide generations, by setting younger people against retired people.

Instead we should be opposed to any attempts to introduce a new era of austerity and be committed to introducing measures to bring about a fair and equal society in the post Covid world.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work with all appropriate bodies to:

- i) To defend all members, including retired members from attacks on their standard of living;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- ii) To promote the key importance of public services and public service workers to stimulate and ensure a healthy economy.

#### ***National Retired Members Organisation***

---

#### **53. Resisting Freeports and Pirate Economies**

Conference notes that the UK Tory government has been pitching a kind of pirate island version of Brexit as a key to the UK's economic future. Scotland's ruling SNP have also long admired the 'Celtic Tiger' model, once touted by the Irish government, of a low wage/low regulation environment that supposedly leads to a trickle down of wealth accrued by those companies that take advantage of it. That was before the Irish economy tanked on the back of the 2008 economic crash.

Despite the clear evidence that very little of the profits accrued by companies in such environments are ever recovered at tax, this myth persists in government circles around Chancellor Rishi Sunak.

In Dundee and elsewhere we have seen local authorities engage in lobbying with port companies (such as Forth Ports) to become sites of Free Ports, with February 2021 seeing the closure of a bidding process for the first UK Free Ports.

A Guardian article on 4 February 2021 said: "Proponents say free ports can attract investment to areas that have been left woefully short, bringing jobs and prosperity to deprived regions as part of the "levelling up" agenda, helping prioritise greener industry and breathing new life into, say, the former Redcar steelworks or the Grimsby docks. But others fear the move signals the creation of "mini tax havens" and a race to the bottom on regulation keeping revenues from councils and the Treasury to line the pockets of business and landowners, with profits sent offshore rather than invested in the UK".

Areas of deprivation have been targeted for preferential sites, under the auspices of regeneration, but it is fair to ask if there is a much more sinister reason for targeting such areas. Surely there is a thought that these will provide a more compliant workforce and local authorities desperate to accede any conditions to win jobs in these zones.

Research suggests they become areas of criminality and far from generating additional wealth and employment, simply suck it from surrounding areas. Many jobs generated are often low skilled, low wage warehousing type work. Free Ports can include surrounding areas up to 25 miles radius.

Conference believes such disguise should not let us be fooled into believing there is anything progressive about these proposals.

We need to see proper investment in the infrastructure needed to move to a sustainable low-carbon future funded by progressive taxation that cracks down on avoidance, not wild-west zones where anything goes, including tax avoidance and criminal activity.

Free Ports should be opposed as a general idea and where specific proposals for local Free Ports are being developed.

## 2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Conference resolves:

- 1) To make clear its opposition to the idea of Free Ports and other low tax, deregulated zones;
- 2) To demand that the UK and devolved governments and local authorities re-commit to building for just transition to a sustainable low-carbon future and to demand the kind of progressive tax and investment strategy to make that possible;
- 3) To support lobbying of COP 26 against deregulation and in support of transition to sustainable development and moving to a target of net-zero by 2030;
- 4) To support those engaged in legal protest against Free Ports and similar deregulation in general and opposing the implementation of specific Free Port developments;
- 5) To campaign for the democratic public ownership of all ports and other major transport industries.

### *Dundee City*

---

#### **54. Resisting Free Ports and Pirate Economies**

Conference notes that the UK Tory government has been pitching a kind of pirate island version of Brexit as a key to the UK's economic future. Scotland's ruling SNP have also long admired the 'Celtic Tiger' model - once touted by the Irish Government - of a low wage/low regulation environment that supposedly leads to a trickle down of wealth accrued by those companies that take advantage of it. That was before the Irish economy tanked on the back of the 2008 economic crash.

Despite the clear evidence that very little of the profits accrued by companies in such environments are ever recovered at tax, this myth persists in government circles around Chancellor Rishi Sunak.

In Dundee and elsewhere we have seen local authorities engage in lobbying with port companies (such as Forth Ports) to become sites of Free Ports, with February 2021 seeing the closure of a bidding process for the first UK Free Ports.

A Guardian article on 4 February 2021 said:

"Proponents say free ports can attract investment to areas that have been left woefully short, bringing jobs and prosperity to deprived regions as part of the "levelling up" agenda, helping prioritise greener industry and breathing new life into, say, the former Redcar steelworks or the Grimsby docks."

But others fear the move signals the creation of "mini tax havens" and a race to the bottom on regulation keeping revenues from councils and the Treasury to line the pockets of business and landowners, with profits sent offshore rather than invested in the UK"

Areas of deprivation have been targeted for preferential sites, under the auspices of regeneration, but it is fair to ask if there is a much more sinister reason for targeting

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

such areas. Surely there is a thought that these will provide a more compliant workforce and local authorities desperate to accede any conditions to win jobs in these zones.

Research suggests they become areas of criminality and far from generating additional wealth and employment, simply suck it from surrounding areas. Many jobs generated are often low skilled, low wage warehousing type work. Free Ports can include surrounding areas up to 25 miles radius.

Most of the supporters are right wing Brexiteers who support low regulation cut throat capitalism but the SNP have decided to help window dress the idea by referring to use the zones for renewables expansion and labelling them "Green Ports".

Conference believes such disguise should not let us be fooled into believing there is anything progressive about these proposals.

We need to see proper investment in the infrastructure needed to move to a sustainable low-carbon future funded by progressive taxation that cracks down on avoidance, not wild-west zones where anything goes, including tax avoidance and criminal activity.

Free Ports should be opposed as a general idea and where specific proposals for local Free Ports are being developed.

Conference resolves:

- 1) To make clear its opposition to the idea of Free Ports and other low tax, deregulated zones;
- 2) To demand that the UK and devolved governments and local authorities re-commit to building for just transition to a sustainable low-carbon future and to demand the kind of progressive tax and investment strategy to make that possible;
- 3) To support lobbying of COP 26 against deregulation and in support of transition to sustainable development and moving to a target of net zero by 2030;
- 4) To support those engaged in legal protest against Free Ports and similar deregulation in general and opposing the implementation of specific Free Port developments;
- 5) To campaign for the democratic public ownership of all ports and other major transport industries.

***Dundee City***

---

Health

---

### **55. The NHS After the Pandemic**

Conference recognises the extraordinary sacrifices made by our NHS staff throughout the Covid 19 pandemic.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference salutes our healthcare workforce who have played a crucial role in saving lives, providing support and reassurance, keeping patients safe, and providing the essential services that help keep our hospitals running at a time of maximum pressure. Covid has demonstrated very clearly the importance of the One Team approach in the NHS.

Conference supports all efforts of UNISON and our sister unions to demand that healthcare staff are properly rewarded for their work during the pandemic and more generally this is an essential part of ensuring the NHS remains at its best to deliver for the citizens of the UK.

Conference also believes that as we rebuild after the pandemic, it is essential that the impact on staff mental health and wellbeing is properly taken into account, as many workers struggle to cope with exhaustion, stress and even Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Conference recognises that there is now a huge backlog of operations and procedures waiting for the NHS, as well as mounting unmet mental health needs exacerbated by the pandemic, along with the need to rebuild investment in public health provision after a decade of cuts. So there is unlikely to be any let-up in the pressure placed on the service.

Conference therefore asserts the importance of the NHS receiving a much more generous funding settlement than the relative austerity it has experienced since 2010.

Conference notes that the pandemic has also demonstrated the ongoing failure of privatisation. This could be seen very clearly with the experience of Test and Trace in England, with the Public Accounts Committee finding that despite a cost of £37 billion there was no evidence that it had reduced infection levels.

Conference notes that the English experience of Test and Trace contrasts sharply with the in-house systems used in the devolved nations and also with the vaccines roll-out that has been run by the NHS across the UK.

Conference welcomes the fact that the era of the Lansley NHS reforms enshrined in the Health and Social Care Act 2012 is finally coming to an end, with the recent Integration and Innovation white paper confirming that there will be a move away from the current competition regime in England that assumes competitive tendering for services as the default position.

Conference congratulates the union for its strong opposition to the Lansley regime from day one and believes that it is down to the work of our regions, branches and the centre that we have managed to resist so many privatisation initiatives over the past decade.

Conference notes, however, that there are aspects of the white paper that UNISON will need to oppose when these reach Parliament in the shape of the Health and Care Bill, particularly the idea that private companies could potentially join the new Health and Care Partnerships of Integrated Care Systems.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference continues to be frustrated by the failure to bring about meaningful integration between health and social care in most areas, with the pandemic demonstrating yet again that social care remains the poor relation of the NHS when it comes to funding, profile and status.

Conference asserts that integration will continue to remain a niche pursuit as long as social care continues to be chronically underfunded as part of an unreformed, dysfunctional market.

As we emerge from the pandemic, Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign for substantial extra funding for the NHS and public health to help the service deal with the after effects of Covid and to make up for a decade of underfunding;
- 2) Continue campaigning for an end to privatisation and for healthcare services to be brought back in-house;
- 3) Support moves to end the competition regime of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, but resist any parts of the government's proposals that would give the private sector new opportunities;
- 4) Continue to support the principles of health and social care integration, but on the basis that social care needs a massive funding boost and major reform to make this a more widespread possibility.

#### ***Northern Region***

---

#### **56. Ensuring our Public Health Services are fit for purpose in a Post-Pandemic future**

When Covid 19 happened in March 2020 we entered a period of rapid change across the public sector in which many of the previously insurmountable barriers to change appeared to fall away. This was nowhere more evident than in the case of the National Health Service. Our healthcare system, faced with transforming almost overnight to cope with unprecedented demands. Especially in the immediate, crisis response, there was a clear message about how much could be achieved at pace when people were united by a common purpose. But we also need to recognise that this was only possible because the NHS paused a number of services.

To cope with the demands of this world wide pandemic public health departments became the centre for expert advice and support in managing through these uncharted waters. A public health system that over a number of years had seen cuts to budgets, reduction in staffing numbers with little or no capacity to deal with a public health crisis that would soon be overwhelming and sent the whole nation into lockdown.

There is no doubt the UK has experienced one of the most prolonged and acute sets of Covid 19 restrictions in the world. This was not only avoidable at the outset but the ideological zeal to privatise has literally cost lives and livelihoods.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Introducing a track and trace system where multi-nationals such as Serco rely on contact centre staff on minimum wage repeatedly try and individuals who have been exposed to the virus to answer the phone had minimal effect on controlling the virus and where local public health teams were involved in contact tracing, there was a more positive impact on controlling the virus spread.

However, simply operating Track and Trace within the NHS will not solve all of the issues within the service. There needs to be a public health service which has the expertise to work across the public sector to identify, isolate and ultimately prevent spread of disease. This requires services which have local knowledge and credibility. The pandemic has proven that across the country, public health has been understaffed and underfunded.

Conference fundamentally believes that public health services with the appropriately qualified clinical and analytical staff at the heart of the public sector are necessary to prevent another pandemic putting the NHS under pressure to the extent that Covid has again.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to establish a communication and engagement campaign to:

- 1) Highlight the work of members within public health in all four countries in the UK to show the importance of their work within the context of public safety;
- 2) Establish that to better understand the epidemiology for all cases of Covid 19 public health teams need investment and a move away from years of cuts through the UK government's austerity agenda. This will be vital to ensure that any pandemic in the future will be managed in a better way;
- 3) There is a need to link cases to the vaccination data to establish if any have had the vaccine;
- 4) Genomic sequencing needs to happen to understand the mutation of the virus to better mitigate the impact on the NHS.

#### ***Lanarkshire Health***

---

#### Pensions

---

##### **57. Gender Pension Gap**

Conference notes that, in 2018/19, the United Kingdom's gender pension gap - the percentage difference in average gross pension income of women pensioners compared to men – stood at 40.3%.

Conference also notes this was the second year running the gap had widened. An earlier trend of gradually diminishing pension inequality appears to have ended.

Conference believes that the main causes of the gender pension gap are:

- 1) The UK's inadequate state pension and over reliance on occupational and private pension saving which disadvantage women owing to:

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference** **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- a) The cumulative lifetime impact of the gender pay gap;
- b) Parental and caring responsibilities which lead many women to take time off work, reduce their hours and/or retire early;
- 2) The concentration of women in jobs paying under £10,000 a year, excluding them from automatic enrolment in a pension scheme;
- 3) Gender inequality embedded in the state pension which, although addressed in the Pension Act 2014, will only come fully into effect for those reaching state pension age from the 2040s.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to campaign for:

- i) An increase in the state pension great enough to remove the need for pension credit;
- ii) Early reform of automatic enrolment, in particular, to reduce the earnings trigger and the age threshold, to increase employers' contributions and to set up an independent commission to keep these under review;
- iii) A review of National Insurance Credits with a view to extending credits to everybody who is not working but who is undertaking a parental or caring responsibility;
- iv) Steps to ensure that everybody whose income is too low to pay income tax nevertheless gets a government contribution to their pension saving.

### ***City of Wolverhampton***

---

#### **58. State Pension Age**

Conference notes that:

- 1) State Pension Age (SPA) reached 66 last autumn, it will now stand still for a few years but is due to rise to 67 between 2026 and 2028 and, as the law now stands, to 68 between 2044 and 2046;
- 2) The Pension Act 2014 requires a five-yearly review of SPA. The first such review in 2017 (the Cridland Review) recommended bringing forward the rise to 68 to 2037-39, the government accepted this recommendation but, lacking a Parliamentary majority at the time, promised a further review before legislating.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- a) Campaign urgently to stop any more SPA rises;
- b) Work with other trades unions towards co-ordinated submissions to the SPA review due to report in 2022, linked to a campaign to reduce SPA and to provide flexible early access to the State Pension in appropriate circumstances.

### ***City of Wolverhampton***

# **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

## **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

---

Environment

---

### **59. Tackling Climate Change and COP 26**

Conference notes that the next meeting of the United Nations Conference of the Parties on Climate Change (COP 26) is scheduled to take place in Glasgow in November 2021.

Conference notes that we are already experiencing climate change and that public bodies are already dealing with the consequences, having to divert budgets to respond to severe weather events, investing in stronger flood defences and deal with the impact on health of higher temperatures and polluted air.

There can be no going back to the normal that views economic policy and environmental action as separate things. Covid 19 was and is an emergency requiring instant action, Conference accepts that there are related lessons for the immediate bold, far ranging actions needed to tackle climate change. Any real recovery from the pandemic must involve the creation of a green and sustainable economy.

Conference accepts that to address this crisis will include significant reductions in the use of carbon fossil fuels and that current government targets are not sufficiently ambitious.

Conference recognises the success of the Green UNISON Week in the run up to the global climate strike in September 2019. This demonstrated UNISON's leading role and commitment to tackling climate change and built on our campaigns for pension funds to divest from fossil fuels and to promote non-carbon alternatives to transform our gas supply.

As both a public sector and energy union, Conference recognises the critical role UNISON has in taking a lead within the trade union movement in pushing forward this agenda. We recognise that the public sector is a significant user of carbon and that thousands of members are employed in the carbon fossil fuel sector. We recognise the urgent need for the de-carbonisation of the public sector and energy industry. However this transformation needs to be one that protects both jobs and services. This is the basis of the Just Transition campaigns in which UNISON has taken a leading role in alongside other unions and environmental groups.

Conference also recognises that Just Transition must include those people in the global south who have benefitted least from the exploitation of fossil fuels in the last 200 years but who are the first victims of global warming, and now in many places suffering the worst effects of the global pandemic. Governments of the industrialised world must provide support, resources and technology to the global south to ameliorate the immediate impacts of rising sea-levels, loss of arable land and failure of water supplies in rivers and lakes.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Conduct a full review of our own use of carbon at national, regional and branch level, by the organisation, staff and lay members, and issue guidance to enable

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference** **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

all levels of the union to contribute to UNISON becoming carbon neutral at the earliest opportunity;

- 2) Mobilise for a significant UNISON engagement at COP 26 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 COP 26;
- 3) Work with international trade union partners to assist in ensuring that the international trade union movement, particularly from the global south, are represented at COP 26;
- 4) Demand that the UK government adopts policies that will allow the UK to be leading by example at COP 26. These policies would include, banning fracking, investing in research and infra-structure to move away from fossil fuels in electricity generation, gas supply and transport, and invests in a programme to insulate all homes and public buildings and enact a legal framework to ensure all new buildings are constructed to the highest zero-carbon standards;
- 5) Continue to support the creation of a UK Just Transition Commission to develop the new industries and jobs needed in a zero carbon economy;
- 6) Call on the government to invest in public bodies 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.

### ***Scotland Region***

---

#### **60. Political Settlement on Climate Change**

Conference notes with grave concern the overwhelming scientific evidence that demonstrates the world has warmed by one percent since the pre-industrial era with two thirds of that rise happening since 1986. Conference supports the overwhelming scientific evidence demonstrating the near linear relationship between global warming and greenhouse gas emissions caused by over 42 billion tons of greenhouse pollution being dumped worldwide into the atmosphere every year.

Despite the 2016 Paris Agreement reached at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change global consumption of oil continues to increase adding a further 2.7 percent of greenhouse pollution annually.

The 2017 report “Climate Science Special Report” concluded “there is no climate analogue for this century anytime in the last 50 million years”. Unless significant change is achieved, worldwide concentrations of carbon in the atmosphere will rise to nearly 800 ppm (parts per million) and temperatures will rise by four percent by the end of this century.

Conference notes the increase in carbon emissions and the attendant increase in temperatures represents a major risk to human health, an intractable consequence to our natural environment and an existential threat to millions of species facing extinction. We can already see the immediate impact global warming is having in

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

countries across the globe through severe storms, rising seas, higher temperatures, drought and fire.

Major industrial nations have been the biggest contributor to global warming and now carry the greatest responsibility to reduce emissions. Conference welcomes the decision of President Biden to immediately reinstate US support for the Paris Agreement. Conference also notes with concern that while the UK government has adopted challenging targets to reach net zero by 2050 the recent decision by Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick, not to challenge the planning application for a new coal mine in Cumbria, shows jaw dropping inconsistency.

Global warming is already with us, extreme weather events cause havoc to communities in the UK and elsewhere, threatening public services and putting significant pressure on government and council budgets.

Conference recognises the transition to a zero-carbon economy has the potential to impact adversely on some communities ending jobs in certain sectors of the economy. The impact must therefore be managed through an effective strategy of industrial transition ensuring workers displaced have the necessary skills and opportunities to take advantage of jobs in new emerging industries including the UK's renewable sector.

Conference notes that, as the UK's largest trade union, UNISON has a duty to adopt its own strategy to reduce the organisation's environmental impact. UNISON needs to set an example for other organisations with practical measures required to reduce carbon emissions and a clear carbon neutrality target.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign for greater awareness amongst UNISON members of the threat posed by climate change;
- 2) Develop an environmental strategy to be implemented by all levels of the organisation with a clear carbon neutral target;
- 3) Lobby the UK government to set challenging but achievable targets for reducing emissions;
- 4) Help to develop an international coalition of support from trade unions across the globe to secure political a new political settlement at COP 26;
- 5) Develop a campaign toolkit for branches to encourage all public sector employers to adopt carbon neutral targets with the necessary protections for employment, pay and conditions.

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

---

#### **61. UNISON and COP 26**

Conference notes that:

- 1) The climate crisis is a social justice issue, with those who have done least to cause the crisis and who are least able to address it facing the worst impacts. We

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

need to mobilise for a just transition which protects and improves workers' livelihoods, creates a more inclusive society and stops greenhouse gas emissions;

- 2) We also face a global and UK crisis of unemployment; that tackling the Covid 19 pandemic represents an ideal opportunity to invest in climate jobs, in a just transition and a fairer society; and that the global response to this opportunity has been wholly inadequate;
- 3) The UN COP 26 negotiations in Glasgow in November 2021 are crucial for the success of global plans to limit response to climate change; yet the UK government continues to back false solutions like carbon markets and block the transformational changes which are necessary;
- 4) UK civil society needs to exert maximum pressure on the British government in the coming year for a green recovery and just transition, and to show leadership as COP 26 host; that trade unions can play a key role in the COP 26 coalition in which UK civil society has been organising as part of the wider global climate justice movement.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Join the COP 26 Coalition;
- b) Campaign, alongside allies in civil society for massive public investment in a green recovery that tackles the climate and ecological emergencies, creates climate jobs and is underpinned by a fair deal for workers both here and in supply chains in the Global South;
- c) Join and support the national mobilisations for protests in whatever form they take leading up to and during the COP 26 climate summit in Glasgow in November 2021;
- d) To take part in local mobilisations;
- e) To affiliate to the Campaign against Climate Change and take part in the trade union group.

SOAS

---

#### **62. UNISON and the Climate Emergency**

On 20 September 2019 four million young people and workers around the world took to the streets to strike and protest against climate change. A few days later Greta Thunberg berated the "empty words" of the world's leaders at the UN climate summit who are "failing" young people. Conference applauds those young people who have been at the forefront of this movement.

Conference accepts that there is a serious climate emergency and that radical action is needed to avert climate catastrophe. We accept that everyone in the union has a role to play in this including individual members, branches, regions and the national union.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Major action has to be undertaken by government who having declared a climate emergency must take appropriate actions to avert the climate change catastrophe.

At the current rate of progress, even the very modest targets set by the Paris Climate Agreement to limit rising temperatures to 1.5 degrees celsius by 2050 are unlikely to be achieved. A report from investment data company Arabesque S-Ray has revealed that 80 percent of the biggest 200 companies globally are unlikely to meet the target and 30 percent of them don't even disclose what their greenhouse emissions are. These corporations with their drive for profit must be held to account by Governments and have much stronger regulations controlling their ways of working, including the option of public ownership.

The Climate emergency was a prioritised topic in the Labour party manifesto. Despite the Labour Party's defeat in the general election UNISON believes a Green New Deal is still essential. A Green plan to stop emissions should also go hand in hand with campaigns to save workers' jobs in the so-called 'dirty' industries. The transformation of these industries should harness the expertise of this highly skilled workforce and ensure an expansion of well-paid, unionised, environmentally sustainable jobs.

Conference believes that a Green New Deal is a priority for a healthy society. Energy companies and other major public service institutions may need to be taken back into public ownership to enable the necessary actions to be undertaken to avert climate catastrophe.

We believe that a progressive government carrying out a Green New Deal would be a significant step in the right direction towards addressing the climate emergency. This must be alongside other progressive policies including a major review of transport policy and the development of a fully integrated public transport system, reclaiming and revitalising our city centres from the blight of the motor car, an energy-efficient house building programme, investment in health and education and reversing austerity.

Unfortunately successive governments have failed to deliver the necessary scale and pace of change. The role played by the trade unions will therefore be a crucial factor in the coming months and years in pushing these issues and campaigning for change.

Greta Thunberg in December 2018 told the UN Climate Change Conference: "We are about to sacrifice our civilisation for the opportunity of a very small number of people to continue to make enormous amounts of money. We are about to sacrifice the biosphere so that rich people...can live in luxury. It is the sufferings of the many which pay for the luxuries of the few." And "We have not come here to beg world leaders to care. You have ignored us in the past and you will ignore us again. You've run out of excuses and we're running out of time. ...if solutions within this system are so impossible to find then maybe we should change the system itself?"

We stand with Greta.

Conference believes that UNISON needs to be leading from the front as an organisation in terms of our policies and our own green agenda.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with all parts of the union to develop and promote a Green New Deal to tackle the climate emergency, eradicate poverty and reverse austerity;
- 2) Campaign vigorously for policies at local, regional, national and international levels that will deliver rapid reductions in carbon emissions in relevant areas such as transport, energy, buildings, food production and waste management, whilst harnessing the expertise of the workforce and ensuring an expansion of fairly-paid, unionised, environmentally sustainable jobs;
- 3) Launch a review of all UNISON's internal processes and procedures, aiming to be a union with a zero-carbon footprint;
- 4) Reach out to the young climate strikers, encouraging branches and regions to engage positively with local groups and raising these ideas with them.

#### **Surrey County**

---

Northern Ireland

#### **63. No Going Back to Normal - Post Pandemic Delivery on the Good Friday Agreement**

Pre pandemic 'normal' in Northern Ireland was an absent government for over three years and decades of neglect of equality, human rights and public services.

Conference notes that it is now 23 years since the Good Friday Agreement was reached, bringing the promise of peace to our members, their families and communities in Northern Ireland.

In January 2020, spurred on by industrial action from UNISON health workers, devolved government returned under the 'New Decade, New Approach' agreement.

Conference acknowledges that a significant factor in the previous collapse of devolved government was the failure to implement key rights and equality measures, including those aimed at combating poverty and delivering on socio-economic rights, that were provided for within the Good Friday Agreement and subsequent agreements.

Conference believes that the absence of a strong rights and equality framework in Northern Ireland left our members, their families and communities exposed to the worst effects of the pandemic. Conference agrees with the assessment of President Michael D Higgins of Ireland that Covid 19:

"has magnified the shortcomings of our failed paradigm of economy with all its imbalances, inequities and injustices...the crisis has also shown us how so many of our citizens and their families are only ever one wage payment away from hardship; how the self-employed or workers in the so-called 'gig' economy lack security and are often impeded from access to basic employment rights; how private tenants in under-regulated housing markets are at the mercy of their landlords, how many designated 'key workers', those providing essential services, are shamefully undervalued and underpaid."

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

In order to ensure that there is ‘No Going Back’ to the social and economic conditions that existed pre Covid 19 in Northern Ireland, Conference repeats our demands for the full implementation of all rights and equality commitments in the Agreement, particularly an enforceable and inclusive Bill of Rights, an Anti-Poverty Strategy based on objective need and all other outstanding equality strategy commitments.

Conference notes with concern that, as demonstrated by both its response to the pandemic and its approach to EU Exit, restricting and eroding equality and human rights is at the core of the Tory approach to government. Conference agrees that the signs are clear that the UK government intends to weaken and erode workers’ rights and the Human Rights Act post-EU exit, with no regard its obligations within the both the Good Friday Agreement and Northern Ireland Protocol.

Noting the threats to the peace process and our members’ rights, Conference endorses the Equality Coalition ‘Manifesto for a Rights Based Return to Power Sharing’ (2019). Conference notes that the Coalition is co-convened by UNISON and the Committee on the Administration of Justice and consists of over 100 civil society organisations, trade unions and the ICTU. It further notes that the manifesto calls for:

- 1) Full implementation of the rights provisions of the peace settlement, including the Bill of Rights;
- 2) Implementing international obligations and addressing ‘rights deficits’;
- 3) Ensuring power is ‘working within the rules’ so as to prohibit discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

Northern Ireland is now living with the same budgetary settlement it had in the teeth of the financial crash. Conference is disturbed by the failure of the UK government to clearly support the Northern Ireland Executive with the significant funding and investment in public services that is now more required than ever as they try to rebuild from Covid 19 and meet the challenges presented by EU exit.

The current single year, ‘flat cash’ budget does not provide a stimulus for economic recovery and does not provide enough resources for public services to meet rising demands. This follows the November 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review at Westminster which failed to provide the sustained, multi-year funding settlement needed.

Conference also endorses the ICTU ‘No Going Back’ campaign and particularly notes the calls for fundamental reform of government revenue, highlighting the fact that the UK has the second lowest level of public spending and the lowest levels of government revenue in all of the high-income Western European countries (per person).

Conference notes that the Northern Ireland Executive does not currently have powers to set rates of taxation or social contributions, meaning UK-wide approaches are needed in these areas to effect significant change. However, Conference calls for the Northern Ireland Executive to do its job and collectively call for a new deal for public spending in Northern Ireland that:

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- a) Allows government to invest in our public services so they can be rebuilt and reformed;
- b) Ensures public sector workers and all those in private sector providers delivering public services are recognised through decent pay and terms and conditions;
- c) Addresses sustained levels of poverty and deprivation through proper social security protections and investment on the basis of objective need;
- d) And which builds a fairer and more equal economy and society within a framework of equality and human rights.

Conference further notes that the absence of proper engagement with the trade union movement on the current Northern Ireland Executive Programme for Government, in contrast to the forms of bi-lateral relationship in Wales and Scotland, is rooted in the politics of division.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to support the Northern Ireland membership in an ongoing campaign:

- i) Calling on the UK government to honour its commitments and make the necessary resources available for a New Deal for public services in Northern Ireland to reverse years of austerity cuts and under-investment;
- ii) Calling on all parties in the new Executive to genuinely share power and deliver rights and equality for all within society in line with the Equality Coalition 'Manifesto for a Rights Based Return to Power Sharing';
- iii) Calling for the full implementation of all outstanding rights and equality commitments made under the peace agreements;
- iv) Calling for full engagement by all Executive Departments and Ministers with UNISON and the wider trade union movement on the development and implementation of a Programme for Government.

#### ***Northern Ireland Region***

---

#### **Equalities**

---

##### **64. No going backwards on gender equality**

Conference is concerned that the progress made to reduce gender inequality in the last fifty years is sliding into reverse.

Since the start of the pandemic, the number of women in the workforce has declined, women's earnings have reduced, employment prospects for women worsened and there is a widening gender pay gap. Much of this is due to society's expectation that women continue to provide the primary caring role.

In January 2021, a TUC report revealed that one in six women – mainly those on the lowest pay – have had to reduce their hours at work as a direct result of school and childcare closures and that some women have been forced out of work altogether.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

In March 2021 UNISON's own survey of 47,000 women highlighted that it is those women who can least afford it who are paying the biggest price in terms of the emotional, physical and financial effects of balancing work with caring responsibilities during the lockdown restrictions.

Nearly 25,000 who took part in the survey – almost half – earned £18,000 a year or less, and a third have an annual salary of £15,000 or less.

Public services would have come to a standstill without the vital jobs done by women in our schools, hospitals, police forces and local councils.

Post-Covid priorities for UNISON, as the UK's largest union, representing over 1 million women, must be gender equality, equal pay, restoring career opportunities for women and closing the gender pay gap.

Conference notes that the pay gap does not just impact on earnings it cuts across all aspects of women's lives. Women's earnings make a huge contribution to their families' standard of living. The gap also represents a loss in income for women that could be spent at local level. It is also money lost to the public purse through our taxation system.

Conference demands louder, clearer leadership on the gender pay gap and targets. The government must end the suspension of gender pay gap reporting. We need more visible female role models. We also need rights to flexible working and changes to recruitment practice. We need to see employers taking positive steps to encourage women to apply for traditionally male roles and to support their career development.

Conference also notes the vital role of childcare in supporting working women and reducing child poverty and is concerned that the post-pandemic recession means many childcare providers now face a tough time to keep their doors open. The implications for women could be devastating. Already facing reduced job opportunities, some women may have to give up paid work because of a lack of childcare.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Call on government to provide the necessary legislation and funding to make women's working lives easier and to get gender equality back on track including day one rights to flexible working, parental and carers' leave and funding for accessible and affordable childcare;
- 2) Demand that the government reinstates gender pay gap reporting immediately and for gender pay 'action plans' to be mandatory as well reporting data;
- 3) Reinvigorate UNISON's campaign #bridge the gap to raise awareness among members of the gender pay gap and its long-lasting impact on low pay and subsequent pension poverty for many of our women members;
- 4) Work with our service sectors to develop strategies and negotiating priorities to redress pay inequality including ensuring that all pay claims must seek to level

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

women's pay up and that employers' offers must be subjected to an gender equality impact assessment by the relevant regional or national service group.

#### ***National Women's Committee***

##### **65. No Going Backwards on Equality**

Conference acknowledges that even before Covid, equality was increasingly being seen as a luxury in the workplace, with many employers barely abiding by the law. There is now a risk of going backwards.

Challenging discrimination and winning equality is at the heart of everything UNISON does.

Conference believes that there is a need to review and refresh our equality strategy, to take into account developments during the pandemic including the potential for online union organising. A revised equality strategy should reflect issues such as increased working from home, bullying and harassment taking place online as well as in the workplace, and the growth in digital technologies at work including the expansion of monitoring software to help employers check on staff working from home.

Conference also believes that UNISON can combat discrimination in the workplace most effectively by being a strong and organised union. To do this we need to grow our activist base and ensure that activists are trained and equipped with the knowledge and skills to recognise workplace discrimination and the confidence to challenge it. It notes that many UNISON members find their way into union activism through involvement in one or more of the self-organised groups or the young members' forum.

Conference recognises that discrimination faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBT+) people at work remains persistent and widespread and notes there is still a significant lack of knowledge about trans equality among many employer HR departments and leads.

Conference notes that the government announced in September that the result of its two year consultation on reforming the Gender Recognition Act – the law that sets the process for trans people to bring the gender on their birth certificates in line with their gender identity – was that the only change would be to reduce the fee and move the process online. This was despite consultation responses being overwhelmingly in favour of bringing the law in line with international best practice.

The consultation ignited a toxic debate which underlined the importance of our union supporting and representing trans members effectively, and negotiating good workplace policy and practice.

Conference further notes that 2018 National Delegate Conference called on the National Executive Council to work with the self organised groups, regions and branches to continue to work towards making UNISON recruitment and organising, advice, negotiations, campaigns, services, communications and language inclusive of non-binary members. Non-binary people are people whose gender identity is not solely male or female. The ability to be yourself at work impacts on your work

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

performance, your relationships with colleagues and your health, both mental and physical. This is clearly a trade union issue, and there is still much to do.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council, working with other parts of the union as appropriate, to:

- 1) Develop a refreshed and forward looking equality strategy for the union which takes account of developments during the pandemic;
- 2) Profile equality within the union, across all its communications strands;
- 3) Seek to influence the Westminster government, the devolved governments, and the Labour Party, on our equality strategy and building a more inclusive society;
- 4) Continue to campaign for reform of the GRA, working with the TUC and other organisations as appropriate;
- 5) Review and update guidance for branches on key areas of work on all aspects of equality including inclusive language;
- 6) Promote the use of the model trans equality policy;
- 7) Review and refresh UNISON's equality training courses and materials to equip activists with the knowledge and skills to recognise workplace discrimination and the confidence to challenge it;
- 8) Develop resources and materials that support members involved in the self-organised groups or the young members' forum to engage in wider union activism at all levels of the union;
- 9) Review guidance and advice to assist stewards to identify discrimination, ensuring that it takes account of developments during the pandemic;
- 10) Provide updated guidance to branches and sectors on reviewing employer equality policies and seeking to build an inclusive bargaining agenda with employers;
- 11) Consider the use of the branch Organising Framework to develop equality outcomes;
- 12) Continue work to make UNISON recruitment and organising, advice, negotiations, campaigns, services, communications, and language inclusive of non-binary members.

#### ***National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender plus Committee***

---

#### **66. LGBT+ people; hidden figures in the pandemic**

The coronavirus pandemic has shone a stark light on the deep and persistent structural inequalities which cut across the UK.

However, the impact of the crisis on lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT+) people has often been absent from the narrative. This stems from many factors, including

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

failure to capture LGBT+ identities within specific research and national datasets, and has sometimes led to a perception that the pandemic has not had a particular impact on LGBT+ people.

We know that this is untrue. LGBT+ communities already face a wide range of health inequalities throughout their lives so are likely be disproportionately affected by the pandemic in many ways.

Calls to LGBT+ help lines have increased dramatically.

Galop, the LGBT anti-violence charity, found an escalation in the number of reports they received about hate crime and hate speech. Some of this violence and abuse was perpetrated by people who blamed the LGBT+ community for the pandemic, and often included references to the AIDS epidemic and Covid-19 as a ‘punishment from God’.

The pandemic has physically removed LGBT+ workers from workplace LGBT+ support groups, limiting their ability to seek help. For many their own homes have been unsafe with LGBT+ workers, particularly young workers, having been forced to stay in hostile environments with unsupportive family. Both the LGBT Foundation and Galop have reported a notable increase in the severity of hate crimes committed by neighbours.

Because of prejudice and discrimination, LGBT+ people are more likely to experience mental health problems. In the wider community, around 1 in 4 people are affected by mental ill health. But in the LGBT+ community these figures can be as high as 70%, with trans people – and in particular young trans people – significantly over-represented (41 percent having attempted to end their lives).

Many LGBT+ people will avoid healthcare settings they do not feel safe in, and are far more likely to access LGBT+ specific services for support with their mental health.

The 2020 LGBT Foundation report Hidden Figures: The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on LGBT Communities found;

- 1) Eight per cent of respondents did not feel safe where they were living, and this increased to 17 percent for trans and non-binary people;
- 2) 42 per cent of respondents reported they would like to access support for their mental health. This rose to 66 percent of BME LGBT+ people, 48 per cent of disabled LGBT+ people, 57 per cent of trans people and 60 per cent of non-binary people;
- 3) Nearly two thirds (64 percent) of respondents said they would rather receive support from an LGBT+ specific organisation. This figure was even higher for BME LGBT+ people, disabled LGBT+ people, trans people and non-binary people.

The pandemic has also had a profound impact on the LGBT+ voluntary and community sector, which reports not only unprecedented demand for services, but also reductions in staff and funding.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

There has been an escalation in reports of LGBT+ domestic abuse. Due to the ongoing impact of austerity, there were already only a limited number of specialised refuge places for LGBT+ victims and survivors. This has been reduced even further with hostels and some specialised LGBT+ refuges remaining closed during the pandemic.

Conference notes that in February 2021 a coalition of organisations including the TUC and Amnesty International wrote to the Equality and Human Rights Commission asking that it use its legal powers to investigate whether the government has acted in contravention of the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty during the pandemic by failing to carry out equality impact assessments on key policies.

Conference further notes that on 1 October 2020, the tenth anniversary of the Equality Act becoming law, the TUC called on the government to implement the Act in full and called on the government to bring the socio-economic duty, which has never been implemented, into force. This would require government and the public sector to deliver better outcomes for lower income people and make narrowing inequality a priority.

Conference believes that the government has acted in contravention of the Equality Act 2010 during the pandemic by failing to carry out equality impact assessments on key policies, and that there is a need for a public inquiry which examines the impact of the pandemic on all the communities covered by the protected characteristics.

This should include considering the specific needs of LGBT+ communities during, and beyond the pandemic, the impact of specialist LGBT+ services and resources for domestic violence, health and mental health having been devastated by austerity, and the need to redress the gaps in information on the needs of LGBT+ people through research.

The inquiry should also consider the need for a governmental cross-departmental action plan to tackle the structural inequalities experienced by women, Black communities, LGBT+ and disabled people in work, health, education, housing and the criminal justice system.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to campaign for a public inquiry which includes these issues, and to work with the TUC and other organisations as appropriate to campaign for:

- a) Long-term funding commitments to support the provision of vital, life-saving services for survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence that meet the level of need, including specialised by-and-for Black, LGBT+ and disabled people's services;
- b) The full implementation of the Equality Act 2010, including the socio-economic duty.

***National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender plus Committee***

---

#### **67. Covid 19 and Black Members**

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

The pandemic has caused devastation, loss and left communities fragile and finding mental health concerns on the rise. Structural inequalities have left groups of staff feeling targeted and discriminated against. Risk assessments are being completed as a matter of course, but not followed through if that member of staff has been identified as high risk. UNISON's 2020 Covid 19 survey showed that only 51 percent of Black respondents believed that adequate steps were taken to ensure their safety. Members cited lack of Covid 19 testing, lack of safety equipment such as PPE and a removal of reasonable adjustments as main concerns.

Frontline workers in the NHS and public services have felt abandoned and struggled to get the protection required to work safely and confidently. In addition, there have been reports of staff being disciplined and sanctioned if they do not have the vaccine. Black people are more likely to be cautious and mistrust the information on vaccinations due to historic abuse and inequalities.

The pandemic has highlighted that many Black workers are on the frontline, getting lower pay, left in poor working conditions and more vulnerable to the terrible effects of Covid 19. Those that work in some areas of the NHS and nursing homes have experienced delays in getting proper protective equipment, resulting in workers remaining away from their homes to protect their own families.

In addition to the struggles frontline staff have faced, Black workers who worked from home full or part-time have experienced immense pressure from their employers to return to a workplace without appropriate safety measures (UNISON's Covid 19 survey 2020).

The National Black Members' Committee (NBMC) calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with the NBMC in producing and distributing a best practice health and safety document on what a Covid 19 resistant workplace might look like;
- 2) Work with existing and new partners to create a coalition of Covid 19 equality allies who will champion workers and establish guidance on working environments and methods post Covid 19;
- 3) Campaign to create genuine equal opportunity in workplaces, leading to greater inclusion and increase rate of progression establishing a culture where Black member circumstances and ethnicity no longer determines where they get to in life;
- 4) Create clear policy guidance on the discrimination workers could face if they delay or choose not to take the vaccine.

*National Black Members' Committee*

---

Racism

---

#### **68. Championing Black Members in Public Services**

It is no secret that Covid 19 has disproportionately affected the Black community. Whilst there is some evidence to suggest that this is linked to genetic pre-disposal,

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference** **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

another reason is that Black people are over represented in frontline health and social care roles when compared with the wider workforce.

In the NHS, figures published in January 2021 show that 22.1 percent of the workforce were Black, with the overwhelming majority occupying frontline roles. Yet only 7.3 percent of senior managers are Black. How can it be that Black people make up almost a quarter of all employees, yet make up less than ten percent of senior management?

If there is one thing that this pandemic has taught us it is that there is no such thing as low skilled work, particularly in health and social care as well as across a number of other key sectors. What there is, however, is low paid work. It truly is time that we have the uncomfortable conversation about race.

We meet just a few short weeks after the first anniversary of the murder of George Floyd and the demonstrations that followed right across the globe, from Washington DC to Bristol and most likely a street, park or square near you. But what has changed?

The recent failure by the Supreme Court to recognise that sleep in shifts constitute work, is further evidence that this government has created a hostile environment in which the value of someone's contribution is not considered important.

We owe our lives to the brave workers that left their own families at home in order to ensure the safety of others. As we can see from the figures, a huge percentage of these people are Black and whilst no public sector hero will receive the thanks they truly deserve, it is all too clear that the sacrifices made by Black workers up and down this country should not go unrecognised.

The National Black Members' Committee (NBMC) calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to champion the contribution of Black members in the public services that we have all depended on throughout this pandemic;
- 2) Seek to ensure that Black members are provided with the opportunity to attend leadership training;
- 3) Work to bring in measures that ensure that public sector organisations up and down the country have senior management structures that are representative not only of the community in which they serve, but of their workforce in its entirety;
- 4) Campaign and lobby the government to implement legislation on what constitutes work to ensure those that deliver the services essential to which we owe our very existence, have the terms and conditions and are paid what they deserve;
- 5) Commit to tackling the institutional racism that exists, despite the Sewell Report, within public services and society by challenging policies that disadvantage Black workers.

***National Black Members' Committee***

## 2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

---

### **69. Covid 19 and the Detrimental Impact to Black Communities**

Covid 19 has affected the Black community disproportionately losing families and friends young and old.

Statistics shows that the Black community has suffered the most throughout this pandemic.

As the country tries to keep this under control, they have forgotten about the Black community, having stated we are at high risk but doing nothing to protect us.

We may be at higher risk, we may have underlying health issues but more so due to taking those jobs predominantly as frontline workers, working within the community, supporting nursing and dealing with the public who require more one to one support and close contact in caring positions.

Studies have shown that cities and towns with large Black communities are at higher risk of contracting coronavirus, it has also been stated that many Black families have extended families living together and likely to be living in overcrowded conditions.

Conference we further note the racist rhetoric of our government normalising racist language, now insinuating it is the fault of Black communities spreading Coronavirus because of living within extended families, told at the last minute we are not allowed to celebrate religious festivals but that it is ok to go to the pub and be surrounded by strangers.

While only two percent of White households are overcrowded, Black families are between 12 and 16 percent overcrowded, statistics as found in an article from The Guardian newspaper.

This will be interesting as the risk remains high after taking in the factors and how this is going to be dealt with, by the government and to protect Black people who are at risk.

Conference we call upon the National Executive Committee to:

- 1) To research coronavirus and the detrimental impact to Black communities;
- 2) To produce an action plan to support Black members affected by Covid 19 and its long-term effect on mental health;
- 3) To promote this research and findings as widely as possible.

### ***West Midlands Region***

---

### **70. Black Lives Matter - a Trade Union Issue**

Conference believes that:

- 1) The Covid 19 pandemic has led to starkly disproportionate Black deaths;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 2) The inspiring Black Lives Matter movement in the wake of the racist murder of George Floyd by police has exposed the deeply institutionalised racism in society;
- 3) The Black Lives Matter movement has also generated debates and action around the existence, naming and placing of statues and buildings, and UNISON is part of that movement to decolonise the education system and make sure the diversity of our communities is reflected in its structures;
- 4) Johnson's government has intensified the racist scapegoating of refugees and migrants. In particular, they have yet again broken their promises to the Windrush generation and their families.

Conference further believes that:

- a) Black members are more likely to be in lower paid jobs, more likely to be in privatised jobs with less security and less sick pay, more likely to be in frontline roles;
- b) The disproportionate Covid deaths of Black workers is driven by institutional racism in the workplace;
- c) Trade unions are essential to organising against such inequalities, and against the systemic racism that causes them;
- d) To do this successfully means opposing racism inside the workplace and in society as a whole.

Conference resolves:

- i) To urge branches and regions to challenge employers over institutional racism in the workplace. This can include:
  - A) Having, or developing if needed, strong policies on equality, diversity and dignity including zero tolerance for racism;
  - B) Supporting staff who raise concerns about racism and/or who are subject to racist abuse and discrimination;
  - C) Publishing data on pay that includes analysis by race to highlight any pay gap, and a commitment to address it;
  - D) Sharing with UNISON data on recruitment, advancement, dismissal and formal procedures such as sickness absence, underperformance and disciplinary action;
  - E) Setting targets that are regularly (a minimum of annually) reviewed to improve diversity within the organisation;
  - F) Considering schemes around sponsorship and mentoring to improve progression, development or wellbeing of Black staff;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference** **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- G) Campaigning to bring privatised services back in-house to end the scourge of low pay and long hours;
- H) Until that is achieved, campaigning for a social value component of commissioning that includes a Living Wage minimum so that staff do not rely on overtime to make ends meet;
- I)
  - i) Resourcing safety measures to eliminate or significantly reduce the risks that frontline staff face, particularly but not exclusively during the Covid pandemic.
  - ii) To challenge our employers and local authorities and political leaders to reflect the diversity of our communities including renaming buildings, removing and contextualising statues and decolonising the school curriculum in a way that involves both the workforce and the community.

Conference further resolves:

- I) To support the TUC's call for a judge-led public inquiry to investigate the scandalous failure to provide frontline workers with the personal protective equipment (PPE) that has been necessary during the Covid pandemic;
- II) To support and publicise the Stand Up To Racism petition calling for a public inquiry into the disproportionate impact of Covid;
- III) To support the recording of the ethnic background of a Covid patients as recommended by the British Medical Association;
- IV) To continue to support local and national initiatives called by Stand Up To Racism, Show Racism the Red Card and Unite Against Fascism;
- V) To continue to work with these organisations to challenge racism and fascism in our communities;
- VI) We agree to urge the TUC to prepare its agreed campaign on Jobs and Homes not Racism agreed in 2019 Congress.

***Camden***

---

### **Efficient and Effective Union**

---

#### **Industrial Action**

---

#### **71. Organising to Win During a Pandemic and Post-Pandemic**

Conference notes:

- 1) That for the last few years branches and regions have organised a series of local disputes where UNISON has won;
- 2) These branches regions are rightly congratulated for organising successful industrial action that delivers results for UNISON members;
- 3) During the pandemic, employers have increasingly been using 'fire and re-hire' tactics to erode long established pay, terms and conditions;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 4) Branches have continued to organise local industrial action during the pandemic, including against 'fire and re-hire';
- 5) To organise and beat the Tory trade union ballot thresholds during the pandemic means adopting new organising tools and methods to overcome barriers to physically meeting members;
- 6) That during the sectional strikes of the last few years, the importance of solidarity and industrial action funds in helping our members sustain strikes and achieve results, cannot be understated;
- 7) Political leverage can be a vital weapon, alongside our industrial power, for winning disputes.

Conference believes we should draw upon our collective knowledge and experience involved in recent disputes, as well as the collective power of being in a union with 1.3 million members. Therefore, Conference resolves to:

- a) Undertake a review of recent disputes, including those undertaken during the pandemic, with the aim of producing a document for branches outlining:
  - i) The best methods to motivate members to take collective action;
  - ii) The best methods to win industrial action ballots and smash the Tory ballot thresholds;
  - iii) The tools and methods that enabled branches to conduct successful industrial action ballots during the pandemic;
  - iv) How to win disputes;
- b) Devise and offer training course to all activists on how to organise industrial action and how to win.

**Birmingham  
Sandwell General**

---

#### Branch Funding

---

#### **72. Supporting Our Branches**

Conference notes that motion 126, which was passed at the 2019 National Delegate Conference, re-established a focussed two-year Branch Resources Review alongside agreeing interim branch funding formula changes. The aim was to conclude the review of branch funding which first started in 2011 with a report to conference this year.

Conference recognises the vital importance of well resourced and strong branches on the frontline, a feature of UNISON lay democracy since our creation in 1993 and unique in the UK trade union movement. Our branches are not abstract concepts in the rule book but made of stewards and officers who volunteer their time for the collective good. Strong active branches are the foundation of our union. Conference

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

welcomes the National Executive Council focus on making the running of a branch easier, whatever the size, small or large, across all sectors.

The two year review outlined in the National Executive Council report to conference, Supporting our Branches, has been achieved despite the Covid 19 pandemic and the recommendations are as set out below.

The current branch funding formula was created by conference in 2001 and after nearly 20 years and a decade of austerity it is struggling to deliver equitably, not least in accounting for the increase in employer fragmentation hitting branches and overall union finances. Our branches are facing new and growing challenges and need innovative forms of support to continue to organise, recruit and deliver for UNISON members in the current economic environment. Strong branches need strong services with support from centre and regions working collaboratively.

That said, 2020 was not a typical year for our branches or our union due to the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic, so financial modelling for the review's proposals have therefore been based on 2019 and earlier years.

The review group was made up of 24 lay members. They considered branch, regional and national functions of the union as well as the existing branch funding formula and governance issues.

A survey of branches in early 2020 gave detailed feedback based on how the union was supporting branches to fulfil all of the core functions of a healthy branch, as outlined in the Code of Good Branch Practice. Branch officers emphasised they wanted to recruit and retain members, develop and train a new generation of activists and support members with representation. They needed the union to help them with, in order of priority, more time (including facility time), more regional support and more funding.

The survey was followed up with in-depth interviews with branch officers across the country that gave a rich source of information about how our branch officers and stewards need the best modern support and systems. The review also engaged with regions, service group executives and self organised groups to further inform the review.

Conference recognises that the proposals in the National Executive Council report are built around a shift of resources towards branches by:

- 1) Improving support and services to branches,
- 2) An improved funding scheme that supports branches under financial pressure and recognises today's public service reality of fragmented employers;
- 3) The creation of a new Branch Support and Organising Fund to get additional and varied resources closer to branches and grow the union.

This approach and the comprehensive package include a series of measures that can be implemented in the short, medium and long term by the National Executive Council to help branches.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference welcomes the National Executive Council commitment to fully fund the report.

Conference therefore accepts the recommendations of the report and calls on the National Executive Council to implement the following five points from the start of the next financial year (1 January 2022):

- a) Introduce a new and improved funding formula and scheme for branches (as set out below) which establishes a new Branch Support and Organising Fund at 2% of national subscription income, which would replace the current Regional Pool and Fighting Fund, and a total funding package of 25.5%;
- b) Subsidise the monthly fees for the new CaseWeb system by 50% for branches who voluntarily subscribe to CaseWeb with 2,000 members or less;
- c) Establish a new procurement service to support branches in purchasing goods and services;
- d) Support online meetings at all levels of the union, recognising any reasonable adjustments necessary, to generate funds to help branches, widen participation and meet our environmental goals;
- e) Confirm physical annual conferences will return after the pandemic and make improvements to UNISON conference arrangements to help branches: such as offering a booking service for hotels and travel; a reasonable adjustment shared pooling fund for disabled delegates; and establish an appropriate lay member group to advise the NEC on other areas of reform.

Conference further calls on the National Executive Council to implement the following recommendations as soon as possible:

- i) Prioritise the roll-out of the upgrade to the RMS membership system to end the RMS/WARMS divide and support branches with a more modern, flexible and efficient membership system;
- ii) Confirm and promote the Branch Service Portal as a web-based hub to help branch officers access key services and information;
- iii) Deliver and promote an enhanced Bargaining Support Service to branches;
- iv) Provide an online branch expenses module to help both activists and treasurers;
- v) Update the Code of Good Branch Practice in three areas: online meeting procedures, easier and quicker arrangements for annual general meetings and encouragement of branches in sharing resources locally;
- vi) Establish a new national facility time strategy and campaign to improve facility time for lay activists;
- vii) Confirm arrangements for regular Organising School events to develop and share lay activist skills;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- viii) Publish a list of all UNISON affiliations and supported campaigns to help branches and regions make informed decisions;
- ix) To establish a small lay member group from both the NEC and regions to oversee, review and evaluate the implementation of the report.

Finally, Conference agrees to replace the 2001 branch funding formula and scheme with the following new formula and scheme as set out in the National Executive Council report:

#### **NEW BRANCH FUNDING SCHEME**

##### **Section A – General Arrangements**

###### **Implementation**

- 1) These new arrangements for the funding of total annual subscription income to branches will apply from 1 January 2022.

###### **Fixed Allocation to Branches**

- 2) Each financial year a fixed percentage of total annual subscription income should be allocated to these arrangements.

##### **Section B - The Overall Structure of the Funding Arrangements**

- 3) Funding of branches should be achieved by one or more of the following:
  - a) A standard percentage entitlement.
  - b) Additional percentage entitlements.
  - c) Additional funding drawn from a Branch Support and Organising Fund and managed at regional level.
  - d) Special funding managed at national level to meet the needs of branches with identified exceptional circumstances.

All percentage entitlements to branch funding will be expressed as a percentage of total annual subscription income relating to the branch.

##### **Section C – Special National Funding**

- 4) Branches with continuing exceptional needs may request special funding. All requests for special funding should be submitted to the National Executive Council. Special funding payments will not be considered part of the percentage of total annual subscription income allocated to branch funding.

##### **Section D – Additional Entitlements**

###### **Membership Numbers**

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

5) Additional entitlement for the number of members in the branch will be as follows:

-

Membership Additional Entitlement

Up to 500 4%

501- 3000 2%

over 3000 2.5%

Where a branch will be entitled under this formula to a lesser amount in cash terms than that to which it would be entitled if its membership were the maximum of a lower membership band, then for the purpose of this part of the formula its membership will be treated as the maximum of that lower membership band.

The additional entitlement for membership will be based on branch membership at the previous 31 December

Low Subscription Income

6) An additional entitlement will be allocated to branches according to the following: -

Average subscription income per member Additional Entitlement

More than 10% and not more than 20% below national average. 0.5%

More than 20% and not more than 30% below national average. 1.0%

More than 30% and not more than 40% below national average. 1.5%

More than 40% below national average. 2.0%

The additional entitlement for low subscription income will be based on branch membership at the previous 31 December and branch total annual subscription income for the previous year.

Reporting low subscription income bands to Conference

7) Each year the bands for low subscription income will be reported to the preceding National Delegate Conference. The bands will be shown as monetary sums rounded to the nearest pound. From 2022 the bands will be calculated using actual total annual subscription income and membership numbers contained in the financial statements presented to that National Delegate Conference.

For 2022 the following bands will be used based on the total annual subscription income for 2020 of £171 million and the total membership at 31st December 2020 of 1.24 million, giving a national average subscription income figure per member of £138.

Branch average subscription income per member    Additional Entitlement

Less than £124 and not less than £110 0.5%

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference** **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Less than £110 and not less than £97 1.0%

Less than £97 and not less than £83 1.5%

Less than £83 2.0%

Low Branch General Fund Reserves Entitlement

8) An additional entitlement will be allocated to branches according to the following: -

Per Capita General Fund Branch Reserves\* Additional Entitlement

Less than 80% and not less than 70% below the branch general fund regulator \*\*.  
0.5%

Less than 70% and not less than 60% below the branch general fund regulator \*\*  
1.0%

Less than 60% and not less than 50% below the branch general fund regulator \*\*  
2.0%

Less than 50% and not less than 40% below the branch general fund regulator \*\*  
3.0%

Less than 40% and not less than 30% below the branch general fund regulator \*\*  
4.0%

Less than 30% and not less than 20% below the branch general fund regulator \*\*  
5.0%

Less than 20% and not less than 10% below the branch general fund regulator \*\*  
6.0%

Less than 10% below the branch general fund regulator \*\* 7.0%

\* (As defined in recommendation 9)

\*\* (As defined in recommendation 10)

Definition of 'Branch General Fund Reserves'

9) Branch General Fund Reserves will be defined as all funds held in branch general funds, excluding fixed assets, as at 31 December in the preceding year. For the purpose of the calculation the following dedicated funds will be excluded for the calculation of branch general fund reserves:

- a) All monies held in industrial action/hardship funds as at 31 December 2000.
- b) All monies transferred into industrial action/hardship funds from 31 December 2000 which have been raised as a result of local levies.
- c) Any other dedicated fund comprising exclusively of monies raised by local levies.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference** **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- d) Any dedicated fund established with the agreement of Regional Committee or endorsed by that committee the purpose of which is future purchase (freehold or leasehold or planned and preventative maintenance) of property provided that:
- i) The dedicated property fund has been established as a result of a decision of a quorate general meeting of the branch;
  - ii) The dedicated property fund has been established or endorsed as part of a structured financial plan endorsed by the Regional Committee.
  - iii) Transfers into and out of the dedicated property fund must be in accordance with the agreed structured financial plan.

Each year branches will be required to report on the authorised dedicated property funds in their Annual Financial Return as required by national Rule G 10.1.

### **Definition of Branch General Fund Regulator**

10) The Branch General Fund Regulator is calculated as the equivalent of four months total branch funding divided by the total membership of the union. This is currently £11 but for the purposes of the scheme it has been set at £12.

Therefore, the bands for 2022 will be:

Per Capita General Fund Branch Reserves\* Additional Entitlement

Less than £11.40 and not less than £10.80 0.5%

Less than £10.80 and not less than £9.60 1.0%

Less than £9.60 and not less than £8.40 2.0%

Less than £8.40 and not less than £7.20 3.0%

Less than £7.20 and not less than £6.00 4.0%

Less than £6.00 and not less than £4.80 5.0%

Less than £4.80 and not less than £3.60 6.0%

Less than £3.60 7.0%

### **Geographic Spread**

11) An additional entitlement will be available to branches according to the following:

-

Branch Membership numbers Additional Entitlement

10% or more, further than 10 miles from the agreed central location of the branch 1%

OR

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

10% or more, further than 30 miles from the agreed central location of the branch 2%

OR

10% or more, further than 50 miles from the agreed central location of the branch 3%

For the purpose of the calculation the central location will be either the main branch office or the location with the largest number of members as agreed with the regional committee.

#### **Branches with Multiple Employers**

12) An additional entitlement will be available to branches according to the following:

Number of employers with at least 3 members each Additional Entitlement

5 to 19 Employers 0.5%

20 to 34 Employers 1.0%

35 to 49 Employers 1.5%

50 to 99 Employers 2.0%

100 to 149 Employers 2.5%

150 to 199 Employers 3.0%

200 to 249 Employers 3.5%

250 to 299 Employers 4.0%

300 to 349 Employers 4.5%

350 to 399 Employers 5.0%

400+ Employers 5.5%

For the purpose of this calculation employers will be defined as independent legal entities. The number of employers in each branch will be as at 31st December in the previous year.

#### **Section E - Restrictions**

A sliding scale for restrictions to entitlements

13) For branches with more than 500 members additional entitlements will be reduced according to the following:

Branch General Fund reserves expressed as an average per member Percentage reduction in additional

#### **Entitlements**

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

At Branch General Fund Regulator or below 0%

More than Branch General Fund Regulator and less than or equal to 10% above Branch General Fund Regulator. 20%

More than 10% above Branch General Fund Regulator and not more than 20% above Branch General Fund Regulator. 40%

More than 20% above Branch General Fund Regulator and not more than 30% above Branch General Fund Regulator. 60%

More than 30% above Branch General Fund Regulator and not more than 40% above Branch General Fund Regulator. 80%

More than 40% above Branch General Fund Regulator. 100%

For branches of less than 501 members additional entitlements will be reduced as follows: -

Total Branch General Fund reserves Percentage reduction in additional Entitlements

At 500 times Branch General Fund Regulator or below. 0%

More than 500 times Branch General Fund Regulator and not more than 10% above 500 times Branch General Fund Regulator. 20%

More than 10% above 500 times Branch General Fund Regulator and not more than 20% above 500 times Branch General Fund Regulator. 40%

More than 20% above 500 times Branch General Fund Regulator and not more than 30% above 500 times Branch General Fund Regulator. 60%

More than 30% above 500 times Branch General Fund Regulator and not more than 40% above 500 times Branch General Fund Regulator. 80%

More than 40% above 500 times Branch General Fund Regulator. 100%

General Fund reserves will be as defined in recommendation (9).

The Branch General Fund Regulator will be as defined in recommendation (10).

Reporting restriction bandings to Conference

14) Restriction bandings for a particular year shall be reported to the preceding National Delegate Conference as a monetary sum and shall be calculated from the Branch General Fund Regulator rounded to the nearest penny.

For branches of more than 500 members

Branch General Fund reserves expressed as an average per member Percentage reduction in additional

entitlements

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference** **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

At £12 or below 0%

More than £12.00 and less than or equal to £13.20 20%

More than £13.20 and less than or equal to £14.40 40%

More than £14.40 and less than or equal to £15.60 60%

More than £15.60 and less than or equal to £16.80 80%

More than £16.80 100%

For branches of less than 501 members

Total Branch General Fund reserves Percentage reduction in additional entitlements

£6,000 or below 0%

More than £6,000 and less than or equal to £6,600 20%

More than £6,600 and less than or equal to £7,200 40%

More than £7,200 and less than or equal to £7,800 60%

More than £7,800 and less than or equal to £8,400 80%

More than £8,400 100%

General Fund reserves will be as defined in recommendation (9).

The Branch General Fund Regulator will be as defined in recommendation (10).

Section F – High Branch General Fund Restriction

15) An additional restriction will apply to a branch's entitlement where their general funds are more than 40% above Branch General Fund Regulator.

Branch General Fund reserves expressed as an average per member Percentage reduction in entitlement for the years 2022-2024 Percentage reduction in entitlement from 1st Jan 2025

At £16.80 or below 0.0% 0.0%

More than £16.80 and less than or equal to £18.00 0.2% 0.2%

More than £18.00 and less than or equal to £19.20 0.4% 0.4%

More than £19.20 and less than or equal to £20.40 0.6% 0.6%

More than £20.40 and less than or equal to £21.60 0.8% 0.8%

More than £21.60 1.0% 1.0%

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

More than £24.00 - 2.0%

#### Section G - Participation

16) A branch's funding entitlement will be reduced by 2.5% if the branch is not represented at National Delegate Conference in the year to which funding applies by at least 50% of its delegate entitlement. The 2.5% reduction in funding for non-attendance at National Delegate Conference will be reduced by 0.5% for each of the following,

- a) if the branch is represented at a service group conference in the 12 months to June 30 in the year to which funding applies with at least 50% of its delegate entitlement
- b) if the branch is represented at regional council in the 12 months to June 30th in the year to which funding applies
- c) if one or more self-organised groups exist within the branch and any of them have been represented at the respective self-organised groups' national conference in the 12 months to 30 June in the year to which funding applies. Where branches are grouped for the purposes of participation in a self-organised group conference the reduction shall be reduced according to a formula 0.5% multiplied by branch membership divided by group membership.

Appeals against reduction in funding for non-attendance at National Delegate Conference will be adjudicated by the National Executive Council and the Subscriptions Appeals Committee taking account of a recommendation from the regional committee.

#### Section H – The Branch Support and Organising Fund

17) A Branch Support and Organising Fund will be established from which additional allocations may be made to branches. The annual sum allocated to the Branch Support and Organising Fund will be 2% of total subscription income.

The Branch Support and Organising Fund will be allocated to Regions according to a formula determined by the National Executive Council.

18) The Branch Support and Organising Fund will be distributed by the regional committee or other body delegated by the regional committee using guidelines to be issued by the National Executive Council. Each Region will establish an appeals sub-committee of the regional council to resolve disputes between the regional committee and branches in respect of allocations from the Branch Support and Organising Fund. Any unresolved disputes at regional level on funding may be referred in writing to the National Executive Council whose decision will be binding.

19) The National Executive Council shall have the discretion to make a supplementary allocation to the Branch Support and Organising Fund in any year. This supplementary allocation will not be considered to be part of the fixed proportion of total annual subscriptions income allocated to Branch Funding.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Section I -The Standard Entitlement and the Fixed Proportion of Total Annual Subscription Income

- 20) The standard entitlement will be 21% of total annual subscription income.
- 21) The fixed proportion of total annual subscription income allocated to the branch funding formula each year will be 23.5% and a further 2% to the Branch support Organising fund, making a total of 25.5%.
- 22) Should the branch funding formula in any one year fall below 23.5% of total annual subscription income, the balance will be ringfenced for future application towards the branch funding formula but capped and released on a 3 year rolling basis to the Branch Support and Organising Fund.

#### ***National Executive Council***

---

Member Services

#### **73. UNISON There For Us**

Conference notes with dismay the result of the recent Westminster General Election. The prospect of at least another five years under Boris Johnston and the Tories with their huge parliamentary majority can appear at first glance depressing and disheartening. However, as the UK biggest trade union we should use this as an opportunity to promote and recruit to our union.

UNISON Welfare's "There For You" does so much work to help our members and their families in times of trouble. This has never more so been seen during the coronavirus pandemic. Across the four nations throughout this pandemic, it was the immense work carried out by our members, by all UNISON service groups, that has kept our nations going. We need to highlight to our members that There for You can offer our members a hand up when in need.

Our branch welfare officers across our union deal every day with cases of hardship ranging from debt problems, funeral costs, cost of school uniforms, food and heat poverty. So much of that poverty is hidden with our members wrongly feeling ashamed to admit they need help, often due to in work poverty issues. The impact of grinding in work poverty has a devastating effect on our members and their families' health and wellbeing. Workers having to access foodbanks and clothing banks. The recent changes to bank overdrafts and withdrawal of credit cards will further add worries to our most vulnerable members. The economic fallout from the Pandemic will unfold over the coming years. We need a campaign which highlights our work in helping our members and raising the issues of why in the 21st century workers find themselves in need of help and assistance from their union. The Tories will try to gloss over these issues we need to highlight them with hard facts and put the blame and shame where it should be.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Develop and fund a national campaign to promote "There For You" to our members;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 2) Coordinate and publish findings into the type of issues we have encountered and resolved, by our members' accessing "There For You". This can be used by branches to lobby politicians at local and national level to highlight these issues that affect our members.

#### ***Renfrewshire***

---

#### **Motions Ruled Out of Order**

---

Beyond remit of the Conference

#### **Free Egyptian Activists**

Conference notes that Egyptian citizens are routinely denied their democratic and social rights by the current military regime, which is responsible for the arbitrary detention of tens of thousands of political prisoners, torture and extrajudicial executions.

We further note that the British government continues to export millions of pounds' worth of arms and military equipment every year.

Conference believes that solidarity with detained Egyptian activists is vital given the British government's role in bolstering the regime's repressive capacity and rewarding it for systematic human rights violations with trade deals and cooperation in areas such as higher education.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Within four weeks of conference write strong rebuttals calling for the release of: Hisham Fouad, Haitham Mohamedain, Mahienour el-Massry, Khalil Rizk, Ayman Abdelmoati Patrick Zaki and other political prisoners to the Egyptian Ambassador, London and the national media;
- 2) Disseminate information about Egypt Solidarity Initiative's campaigns to region and branches encouraging them to take part.

#### ***Doncaster***

#### **Halt the Genocide in Yemen – Ban Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia**

Conference notes that Yemen is facing a major humanitarian crisis.

A devastating conflict has left children and families in urgent need of food, water and medical supplies. Currently, 1.71 million children are internally displaced. No place in Yemen is safe for children.

More than five years of fighting has already pushed Yemen and its health system to the brink of collapse. Millions of children lack access to clean water and sanitation facilities and are in desperate need of basic healthcare. Malnutrition is also at an all-time high. Two million children are acutely malnourished and over 368,000 children under five are suffering from severe acute malnutrition and urgently need life-saving food to survive.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

80 percent of Yemen's population are in need of humanitarian aid and protection and now Covid is adding an additional burden on a country in crisis.

The main instigator and cause of this humanitarian crisis is Saudi Arabia (although the UAE has 'officially' withdrawn it still supports regional offensive groups within Yemen) by the bombing of civilian targets and infrastructure in Yemen.

Italy has halted the sale of thousands of missiles to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) due to their involvement in the Yemen conflict, making permanent an 18-month temporary suspension.

The US under Joe Biden has temporary halted some arms sales, but the UK continues to support the Saudi invasion of Yemen

The UK's arm sales to Saudi Arabia are continuing what has been described as 'the worst humanitarian disaster in history'

The UK's Campaign against the Arms Trade (CAAT) claims the UK has sold Saudi Arabia £5.4 billion worth of arms since the Yemen war began, challenging the government, in June 2019 the Court of Appeal concluded the Government's decision-making process for granting export licences was "irrational" and therefore "unlawful".

Liz Truss announced on 7 July 2020 that the Government will resume granting licences for export to Saudi Arabia. She said that, having applied a revised methodology to its decision-making process, the Government assesses "there is not a clear risk that the export of arms and military equipment to Saudi Arabia might be used in the commission of a serious violation of IHL".

Conference believes that the UK's continuing export of arms supports both humanitarian crisis and props up dictatorial states.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to within four weeks of Conference:

- 1) Write strong rebuttals of the Saudi Arabian intervention in the Yemen to:
  - a) The Saudi Arabian Ambassador in London;
  - b) Liz Truss MP;
- 2) To inform members of the results of exporting weapons to dictatorial states and mount a campaign against the UK's export of sales of military equipment of all classes;
- 3) To undertake a national press release.

***Doncaster***

---

Conflicts with an Existing Rule

**Free TV licence for the over 75 year olds**

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference recognises that it's been nearly two years now since the BBC announced its intention to remove the free TV licence provision from the over 75s in 2020 (having been forced by the conservative government to take over the funding of this social benefit). Since then, the protests have never stopped! Groups including Age UK, and the Scottish Pensioners Forum (SPF) have built a massive campaign against these proposals, while Silver Voices have led a no pay campaign.

Meantime a public petition gained a staggering 634,334 signatures against the BBC plans implementation was delayed, with the BBC citing the pandemic as the reason, however this did not stop them imposing the changes last August 2020. This is a disastrous action by the BBC. It is believed over 40,000 older people in Scotland, many already living below the poverty line, will lose out.

The BBC argue those on pension credit will be unaffected, but many do not, and history tells us many entitled to this benefit do not or cannot claim it.

UNISON Scottish Retired Members Committee are deeply concerned over this cut, causing added misery to older people, many living alone during this difficult time. We will continue to fight and expect the backing of our Scottish Council and our National Executive Council members in this campaign. We expect them to work with and support the SPF, and to seek the help and backing of our National Executive Council in bringing this to the front of our campaign agenda

Conference therefore;

- 1) Believes that the UK government should again accept statutory responsibility for the continued provision of free TV licences to all over -75s;
- 2) Demands that the BBC suspend any implementation of these changes during this difficult period due to Covid;
- 3) Calls on UNISON Labour Link to liaise with Labour MPs to push for a change to this disgraceful decision.

#### ***Scotland Region***

---

Could place the union in legal jeopardy

#### **UNISONs approach to schools during the Covid-19 pandemic**

Not printed on the advice of the legal officer

---

#### ***Doncaster***

Not competent

#### **Chile**

In October 2019 and continuing into 2020, civil protests took place throughout Chile in response to a raise in the Santiago Metro's subway fare, the increased cost of living, privatisation and inequality prevalent in the country.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Responding to public outcry against the rising fare, then Minister of Economy, Juan Andres Fontaine, announced that those upset with the price rise could wake up earlier and pay a lower rate.

“When the costs rise, there are not many options,” he said at the time.

Outrage grew after the remarks, leading students to conduct a mass fare evasion by jumping over the metro turnstiles, and, in some instances, destroying them.

A state of emergency, was initially after the demonstrations began, protests have continued, with frequent clashes between police and protesters. Police used tear gas, water cannon, rubber bullets and pellets, prompting allegations of rights abuses. The anger grew far beyond the cost of transport.

Chileans were also frustrated with the increasing cost of living, low wages and pensions, a lack of education rights, a poor public health system and crippling inequality.

As of February 2020, an estimated 36 people had died. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) denounced the violence of the police and announced that between 18 October and 6 December 2019, 28,000 people had been imprisoned.

The National Institute of Human Rights (INDH) said more than 1,233 civilians had gone to hospital with injuries from the unrest. At least 688 of those injured had wounds caused by weapons, according to the institute.

There are thousands of prisoners still currently in Chile following the unrest, incarcerated and under house arrest due to Covid. Many are facing harsh sentences with no or very little evidence, and some are being kept for 'preventative' reasons. Although the Chilean government denies that there are political prisoners in Chile it is very clear that they are using these cases to criminalise the protests which have continued.

Many of the prisoners are young, including under the age of 18, with very little means of support and finance for legal representation. They also struggle for basic necessities such as toiletries, food and clean clothing.

The Chile Solidarity Network have been working hard to establish links with grassroots groups and organisations which are trying to help the prisoners and their families.

They are also asking organisations and individuals to sponsor individual prisoners.

The sponsoring would involve writing letters to them and their families offering solidarity, writing letters to authorities in Chile to make them aware that the case is known outside of Chile and to put pressure for their release.

Fundraising would also be important as many fail to have access to quality legal representation as well as simple basic necessities whilst in prison.

Conference agrees:

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 1) In discussion with the Chile Solidarity Network identify a young prisoner and their personal story to whom we can give practical and moral support;
- 2) To send letters of protests to the appropriate organisations;
- 3) To make a one off payment of £200 to support the general campaign;
- 4) To write to all regional branches asking for their support.

#### ***City of Wolverhampton***

#### **West Papua**

Conference notes that since 1963 the Indonesian State has colonised West Papua, the Western half of the island of New Guinea and a former Dutch colony, marginalising the indigenous Papuan population in what has been termed a "cold genocide"\*\* akin to the treatment of indigenous Australians or Native Americans. Human rights organisations including Amnesty International have documented and repeatedly expressed concern about the gross human rights violations and abuses against the indigenous people of West Papua by the Indonesian state and its agents over the past fifty years. \*[Colonialism and Cold Genocide : The Case of West Papua" in Genocide Studies and Prevention : An International Journal, Vol 9 2015].

Indonesia bases its claim to West Papua since Dutch control ended in 1963 on a fundamentally flawed referendum which was held in 1969, the so called Act of Free Choice, to give West Papuans a decision as to whether they should be an independent state or not. The so called vote consisted of just over 1,000 West Papuans (out of a population of around 1.5 million) being coerced, cajoled and bribed into voting in favour of integration with Indonesia. Since then, the West Papuan people have resisted the new coloniser, with untold thousands of Papuans killed. Shocking demographic statistics illustrate the effects of the Indonesian occupation: in 1962 the population of West Papua and Papua New Guinea (the Independent state which comprise the Eastern half of the island of New Guinea) had a rough parity. Since then the number of indigenous Papuans in Papua New Guinea has reached over eight million whilst West Papua's indigenous population lingers at around 1.5 million, overwhelmed by an equal number of Indonesian settler-migrants from other parts of the archipelago.

The relation of much of the West Papuan population to the Indonesian state is not one of labour exploitation but of marginalisation and elimination. The Indonesian state oversees huge resource extraction projects in West Papua, staffing them with settler Indonesians from Java and elsewhere in the archipelago. The indigenous population is pushed off its land by Indonesian and multinational corporations and the Indonesian military and then kept peripheral by constant police repression. Palm oil companies from across the world are implicated in defrauding indigenous people of their land as swathes of primary forest – New Guinea is home to the third-largest tropical rain forest in the world – are levelled for mono-plantations, resulting in an ecological disaster as well.

The Indonesian state is also complicit with abuses of labour rights of the largely migrant workforce, particularly in relation to the mineral extraction industry in West Papua. The world's largest gold mine and third largest copper mine, Grasberg,

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

operated by the US company Freeport McMoRan, is located in West Papua. The miners work in dangerous conditions for poor remuneration and the company uses union-busting tactics, including excessive violence by the Indonesian military and police, resulting in an ongoing fight for justice by the 800 workers fired for taking industrial action in 2017. Efforts have been made to find common ground and solidarity between the indigenous West Papuans and exploited migrant workers, most notably by Tongoi Papua, a rank and file trade union, and this work is ongoing.

Conference notes with concern the UK's connections with Indonesia's occupation of West Papua:

- 1) BP has one of the largest foreign investment projects in West Papua, the Tangguh liquefied natural gas fields;
- 2) The British state trains an elite Indonesian police unit, Detachment 88 (Densus 88) at the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation. The unit is employed in West Papua and implicated in serious human rights abuses there;
- 3) Latest figures from the Campaign Against the Arms Trade show that, over the last three years, export licences (to Indonesia) for arms worth £393 million were issued to UK arms companies by the UK government;
- 4) The British government supported Indonesia's take-over of West Papua in the 1960s. Britain was well aware of the fraudulent nature of the Act of Free Choice and the Foreign Office reported at great length on the brutality of the Indonesian occupation but diplomats were instructed to support Indonesia at all costs.

Conference further notes that Benny Wenda, the founder of the Free West Papua Campaign, Chair of the United Liberation Movement for West Papua and recognised leader of the people of West Papua, has been living in exile in Oxford since his escape from Indonesian prison and attempted assassination in 2001-2.

Conference condemns the ongoing human rights abuses being perpetrated by the Indonesian state against the indigenous people of West Papua and the denial of their right to self-determination and therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Lobby the UK government to press, using all means at its disposal, the Indonesian government to end the widespread and systemic human rights abuses perpetrated by its security forces in West Papua, including the suppression of the expression of independence views;
- b) Call on the UK government to immediately end its support for the training of Indonesian police and military units (such as Detachment 88) which have been shown to be perpetrators of human rights abuses against West Papuans and to suspend all support for the Indonesian military (including suspension of the issuing of arms export licences) whilst concerns exist that the military are complicit with serious human rights abuses in West Papua;
- c) Publicise UNISON's position to members to raise awareness of the issue and to encourage them to lobby their MPs;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- d) Support campaigns in the UK, such as the Free West Papua Campaign, which raise awareness about the human rights situation in West Papua and the rights of the West Papuan people to self-determination and freedom from Indonesian colonial rule, and to do this by, for example:
  - i) Encouraging branches and regions to establish links with and provide support for their local Free West Papua group and affiliated groups (e.g. Grassroots for West Papua);
  - ii) Inviting Free West Papua Campaign to have a stall or meeting for members at national and regional conferences;
  - iii) Inviting Benny Wenda to speak at events on international issues organised by UNISON e.g. at National Delegate Conference and at the seminars held for Branch International Officers;
  - iv) To make contact with Indonesian trade unions which are acting in solidarity with the indigenous population of West Papua and to explore the possibility of providing them with support in such solidarity work.

### ***City of Wolverhampton***

#### **COP 26**

Conference notes that:

- 1) Human-caused climate breakdown is leading to and exacerbating extreme weather events across the globe - heat waves, wildfires, floods and hurricanes, and loss of biodiversity;
- 2) The IPCC 2018 Special Report has warned of the dire consequences of exceeding 1.5 degrees celsius global average warming and that a societal transformation would be needed to avoid this, including halving global carbon emissions by 2030. Nevertheless, global emissions have continued to rise;
- 3) The climate crisis is a social justice issue with those who have done least to cause the crisis and who are least able to address it facing the worst impacts. We need to mobilise for a just transition which protects and improves workers' livelihoods, creates a more inclusive society and stops greenhouse gas emissions;
- 4) Wealthy, industrialised countries have a responsibility to take on their fair share of emissions reductions. The UK's target of net zero by 2050 is insufficient to avoid global temperatures rising above 1.5 degrees celsius and the UK is failing to implement policies to meet even this target;
- 5) We also face a global and UK crisis of unemployment. Tackling the Covid 19 pandemic represents an ideal opportunity to invest in climate jobs, in a just transition and a fairer society. However, the global response to this opportunity has been wholly inadequate;
- 6) The UN COP 26 negotiations in Glasgow in November 2021 are crucial for the success of global plans to limit response to climate change. Yet the UK

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

government continues to back false solutions like carbon markets and block the transformational changes which are necessary;

- 7) UK civil society needs to exert maximum pressure on the UK government in the coming year for a green recovery and just transition and to show leadership as COP 26 host. Trade unions can play a key role in the COP 26 coalition in which UK civil society has been organising as part of the wider global climate justice movement.

Conference resolves:

- a) To join the COP 26 Coalition;
- b) To campaign, alongside allies in civil society for massive public investment in a green recovery that tackles the climate and ecological emergencies, creates climate jobs and is underpinned by a fair deal for workers both here and in supply chains in the Global South;
- c) To support the national mobilisations for protests during the COP 26 climate summit in Glasgow in November 2021.

### ***London Fire Brigade***

#### **Branch Resources Review: Insufficient and Incomplete – Our Branches Deserve Better!**

Conference welcomes the progress made by the Branch Resources Review since National Delegate Conference 2019 gave it renewed focus and impetus with the passing of Motion 126.

Conference, however, does not accept that the Branch Resources Review has concluded its work. We note that work on the Branch Resources Review was significantly interrupted by the Covid 19 pandemic during 2020. We also note that work on the most significant area of review (Workstream C) encompassing 60 per cent of the union's expenditure did not make sufficient progress and did not conclude. Because of this, proposals mooted to date:

- 1) Are not sufficiently ambitious to make significant enough change to how UNISON organises and services its membership through branches;
- 2) Do not meet the needs or aspirations of branches, or promise to unleash UNISON's huge latent potential;
- 3) Do not address the shift in where the work is done and from where members are supported i.e. the branches. Nor does it address the shifts caused by hyper fragmentation of the workforce.

Conference also notes lack of clarity on significant aspects of both Workstream B (Regional Support and Organising Fund) and Workstream D (Branch Funding Formula). Conference does, however, affirm the principle within the review work undertaken to date that excess branch reserves should be recycled to branches that need them but believes that this alone is not sufficient.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference notes we have an acceptable interim position for branches in Motion 126 2019 which provides branches with funding uplifts under certain conditions. Motion 126 made provision for this position to be retained until completion of the review and agreement by Conference. We therefore conclude that there is no urgency such that our union should adopt a settled position for the next five years on the basis of a review which did not complete or review the whole of our union.

Conference therefore calls on the new National Executive Council which will take office on 16 June 2021:

- a) To continue with the work of the Branch Resources Review undertaken to date, with a view to it completing and coming back to National Delegate Conference 2022 with a full and comprehensive report and plan for our union;
- b) To undertake work for and implement a range of identified measures deemed to be within scope of 'business as usual' for the union and which need not be tied to the completion of the Branch Resources Review, namely to:
  - i) Prioritise the roll out of the upgrade to the RMS membership system to end the RMS/WARMS divide and support branches with a more modern, flexible and efficient membership system;
  - ii) Confirm and promote the Branch Service Portal as a web-based hub to help branch officers access key services and information;
  - iii) Deliver and promote an enhanced Bargaining Support service to branches;
  - iv) Provide an online branch expenses module to help both activists and treasurers;
  - v) Update the Code of Good Branch Practice in three areas: online meeting procedures, easier and quicker arrangements for annual general meetings and encouragement of branches in sharing resources locally;
  - vi) Establish a new national facility time strategy and campaign to improve facility time for lay activists;
  - vii) Confirm arrangements for regular Organising School events to develop and share lay activist skills;
  - viii) Publish a list of all UNISON affiliations and supported campaigns to help branches and regions make informed decisions;
  - ix) Subsidise the monthly fees for the new Case Web system by 50% for branches who voluntarily subscribe to Case Web with 2,000 members or less;
  - x) Establish a new procurement service to support branches in purchasing goods and services;
  - xi) Support online meetings at all levels of the union, recognising any reasonable adjustments necessary, to generate funds to help branches, widen participation and meet our environmental goals;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

xii) Confirm physical annual conferences will return after the pandemic and make improvements to UNISON conference arrangements to help branches: such as offering a booking service for hotels and travel; a reasonable adjustment shared pooling fund for disabled delegates; and establish an appropriate lay member group to advise the National Executive Council on other areas of reform.

*Barnet*  
*Birmingham*  
*Bolton Metropolitan*  
*Central and East Berkshire*  
*Leeds University*  
*Staffordshire*  
*West Sussex*

#### **Branch Resources Review: Insufficient and Incomplete – Our Branches Deserve Better!**

Conference welcomes the progress made by the Branch Resources Review since National Delegate Conference 2019 gave it renewed focus and impetus with the passing of Motion 126.

Conference however, does not accept that the Branch Resources Review has concluded its work.

We note that work on the Branch Resources Review was significantly interrupted by the Covid 19 pandemic during 2020.

We also note that work on the most significant area of review (Workstream C) encompassing 60 per cent of the union's expenditure did not make sufficient progress and did not conclude.

Because of this, proposals mooted to date:

- 1) Are not sufficiently ambitious to make significant enough change to how UNISON organises and services its membership through branches;
- 2) Do not meet the needs or aspirations of branches, or promise to unleash UNISON's huge latent potential;
- 3) Do not address the shift in where the work is done and from where members are supported Nor does it address the shifts caused by hyper-fragmentation of the workforce.

Conference offers in principle support to the idea of a Branch Support and Organising Fund (BSOF). While we feel some questions remain around ownership and management of the BSOF we recognise that many of our most significant organising challenges cannot be resolved at a branch level alone.

Further to this, Conference affirms the principle within the review work undertaken to date that excess branch reserves should be recycled to branches that need them. Yet, we believe that this alone is not sufficient.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference notes we have an acceptable interim position for branches in Motion 126 2019 which provides branches with funding uplifts under certain conditions. Motion 126 made provision for this position to be retained until completion of the review and agreement by Conference. We therefore conclude that there is no urgency such that our union should adopt a settled position for the next five years on the basis of a review which did not complete or review the whole of our union.

Conference therefore calls on the new National Executive Council which will take office on 16 June 2021:

- a) To continue with the work of the Branch Resource Review undertaken to date, with a view to it completing and coming back to National Delegate Conference 2022 with a full and comprehensive report and plan for our union;
- b) To undertake work for and implement a range of identified measures deemed to be within scope of 'business as usual' for the union and which need not be tied to the completion of the Branch Resources Review, namely to:
  - i) Prioritise the roll out of the upgrade to the RMS membership system to end the RMS/WARMS divide and support branches with a more modern, flexible and efficient membership system;
  - ii) Confirm and promote the Branch Service Portal as a web-based hub to help branch officers access key services and information;
  - iii) Deliver and promote an enhanced Bargaining Support service to branches;
  - iv) Provide an online branch expenses module to help both activists and treasurers;
  - v) Update the Code of Good Branch Practice in three areas: online meeting procedures, easier and quicker arrangements for annual general meetings and encouragement of branches in sharing resources locally;
  - vi) Establish a new national facility time strategy and campaign to improve facility time for lay activists;
  - vii) Confirm arrangements for regular Organising School events to develop and share lay activist skills;
  - viii) Publish a list of all UNISON affiliations and supported campaigns to help branches and regions make informed decisions;
  - ix) Subsidise the monthly fees for the new Case Web system by 50% for branches who voluntarily subscribe to Case Web with 2,000 members or less;
  - x) Establish a new procurement service to support branches in purchasing goods and services;
  - xi) Support online meetings at all levels of the union, recognising any reasonable adjustments necessary, to generate funds to help branches, widen participation and meet our environmental goals;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

xii) Confirm physical annual conferences will return after the pandemic and make improvements to UNISON conference arrangements to help branches: such as offering a booking service for hotels and travel; a reasonable adjustment shared pooling fund for disabled delegates; and establish an appropriate lay member group to advise the National Executive Council on other areas of reform.

***North West Region***  
***Knowsley***  
***Manchester***  
***Salford City***  
***West Cheshire***

#### **Branch Resources Review Insufficient and Incomplete Our Branches Deserve Better**

Conference welcomes the progress made by the Branch Resources Review since National Delegate Conference 2019 gave it renewed focus and impetus with the passing of Motion 126.

Conference however does not accept that the Branch Resources Review has concluded its work. We note that work on the Branch Resources Review was significantly interrupted by the Covid 19 pandemic during 2020. We also note that work on the most significant area of review (Workstream C) encompassing 60 per cent of the union's expenditure did not make sufficient progress and did not conclude. Because of this, proposals mooted to date:

- 1) Are not sufficiently ambitious to make significant enough change to how UNISON organises and services its membership through branches;
- 2) Do not meet the needs or aspirations of branches, or promise to unleash UNISON's huge latent potential;
- 3) Do not address the shift in where the work is done and from where members are supported Nor does it address the shifts caused by hyper-fragmentation of the workforce.

Conference offer in principle support to the idea of a Branch Support and Organising Fund (BSOF). While we feel some questions remain around ownership and management of the BSOF we recognise that many of our most significant organising challenges cannot be resolved at a branch level alone.

Further to this, this Conference affirms the principle within the review work undertaken to date that excess branch reserves should be recycled to branches that need them. Yet, we believe that this alone is not sufficient.

Conference notes we have an acceptable interim position for branches in Motion 126 2019 which provides branches with funding uplifts under certain conditions. Motion 126 made provision for this position to be retained until completion of the review and agreement by Conference. We therefore conclude that there is no urgency such that our union should adopt a settled position for the next five years on the basis of a review which did not complete or review the whole of our union.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference therefore calls on the new National Executive Council which will take office on 16 June 2021:

- a) To continue with the work of the BRR undertaken to date, with a view to it completing and coming back to National Delegate Conference 2022 with a full and comprehensive report and plan for our union;
- b) To undertake work for and implement a range of identified measures deemed to be within scope of 'business as usual' for the union and which need not be tied to the completion of the Branch Resources Review, namely to:
  - i) Prioritise the roll-out of the upgrade to the RMS membership system to end the RMS/WARMS divide and support branches with a more modern, flexible and efficient membership system;
  - ii) Confirm and promote the Branch Service Portal as a web-based hub to help branch officers access key services and information;
  - iii) Deliver and promote an enhanced Bargaining Support service to branches;
  - iv) Provide an online branch expenses module to help both activists and treasurers;
  - v) Update the Code of Good Branch Practice in three areas: online meeting procedures, easier and quicker arrangements for annual general meetings and encouragement of branches in sharing resources locally;
  - vi) Establish a new national facility time strategy and campaign to improve facility time for lay activists;
  - vii) Confirm arrangements for regular Organising School events to develop and share lay activist skills;
  - viii) Publish a list of all UNISON affiliations and supported campaigns to help branches and regions make informed decisions;
  - ix) Subsidise the monthly fees for the new CaseWeb system by 50% for branches who voluntarily subscribe to CaseWeb with 2,000 members or less;
  - x) Establish a new procurement service to support branches in purchasing goods and services;
  - xi) Support online meetings at all levels of the union, recognising any reasonable adjustments necessary, to generate funds to help branches, widen participation and meet our environmental goals;
  - xii) Confirm physical annual conferences will return after the pandemic and make improvements to UNISON conference arrangements to help branches: such as offering a booking service for hotels and travel; a reasonable adjustment shared pooling fund for disabled delegates; and establish an appropriate lay member group to advise the NEC on other areas of reform.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference notes the government's announcement on 4 March to recommend a one percent pay increase for all NHS Staff to the Pay Review Body (PRB). This quite rightly set off a whirlwind of protest and anger. It was immediately clear that once again the Tories had underestimated the public mood.

The one percent 'offer' was and remains a disgrace. It would ensure that NHS pay continued to lag behind the cost of living. Over the last decade of wage restraint, pay for NHS staff has fallen in real terms by 15-20 percent, despite the obvious lies being repeated by government spokespeople. Yet MPs have had 8 pay rises over the same period taking their pay from £66,396 to £81,932.

Many public servants, across multiple service groups, had already been told in November 2020, not to even expect 1%, but rather a further pay freeze as thanks for their contribution to battling the pandemic.

These pay cuts, as that is what they are in real terms, were announced by the same politicians who hypocritically stood on their doorsteps applauding key workers during the first lockdown, including NHS staff who saved the Prime Minister's life! The widespread disgust with the government's intention to make public servants pay for the pandemic, has brought all the anger and frustration of the last 12 months to the surface. However, it has also increased the likelihood of staff leaving vital public services, as a result of exhaustion and demoralisation. There is for example, already a developing and escalating shortage of NHS frontline staff, which we feel can begin to be arrested if the trade unions take a decisive lead in coordinating the fightback and resistance.

Resistance should also include those social care staff who find themselves in an even more difficult situation, often existing on the minimum wage, and facing private owners of care homes and companies.

Indicators such as the increased call on the third sector services, charity provision such as There For You and local authority discretionary housing and welfare payments by UNISON members during the pandemic clearly demonstrates that this position is untenable and leads directly to in-work poverty.

Throughout the pandemic, Johnson has been forced into humiliating U turns when confronted with large scale opposition such as free school meals, A Levels or the forced return to schools in January. In the latter case, it was the brave actions of educators, mobilised by the education unions – including UNISON - who refused to go into unsafe working environments. We believe the lessons of the battles in education should be used to support members in the fight for fair pay.

Conference therefore calls for an escalation of the fightback, and calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with the different service groups to seek to coordinate resistance to this attack on UNISON members;
- 2) Build mass support with effective public campaigning and union recruitment and organising drives;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 3) Work with like-minded campaigns and active social media groups to build up the support;
- 4) Prioritise the training and recruitment workplace reps with a view to establishing workplace action committees;
- 5) Organise huge Days of Action in the build up to strike action;
- 6) Organise a national demonstration, when circumstances allow to fight both the pay freeze, miserable pay increases and the poverty pay faced by other key workers, such as those in social care;
- 7) Write to other public sector unions, without unnecessary delay, stating UNISON's support for an emergency summit of all such unions, in order to coordinate such resistance and to seek their support for this program o . Branch Resources Review: insufficient and incomplete – our branches deserve better!

Conference welcomes the progress made by the Branch Resources Review since National Delegate Conference 2019 gave it renewed focus and impetus with the passing of Motion 126.

Special Delegate Conference however does not accept that the Branch Resources Review has concluded its work. We note that work on the Branch Resources Review was significantly interrupted by the Covid 19 pandemic during 2020. We also note that work on the most significant area of review (Workstream C) encompassing 60 per cent of the union's expenditure did not make sufficient progress and did not conclude. Because of this, proposals mooted to date:

- 1) Are not sufficiently ambitious to make significant enough change to how UNISON organises and services its membership through branches;
- 2) Do not meet the needs or aspirations of branches, or promise to unleash UNISON's huge latent potential;
- 3) Do not address the shift in where the work is done and from where members are supported Nor does it address the shifts caused by hyper-fragmentation of the workforce.

Conference offer in principle support to the idea of a Branch Support and Organising Fund (BSOF). While we feel some questions remain around ownership and management of the BSOF we recognise that many of our most significant organising challenges cannot be resolved at a branch level alone.

Further to this, this Conference affirms the principle within the review work undertaken to date that excess branch reserves should be recycled to branches that need them. Yet, we believe that this alone is not sufficient.

Conference notes we have an acceptable interim position for branches in Motion 126 2019 which provides branches with funding uplifts under certain conditions. Motion 126 made provision for this position to be retained until completion of the review and agreement by Conference. We therefore conclude that there is no urgency such that

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

our union should adopt a settled position for the next five years on the basis of a review which did not complete or review the whole of our union.

Conference therefore calls on the new National Executive Council which will take office on 16 June 2021:

- a) To continue with the work of the BRR undertaken to date, with a view to it completing and coming back to National Delegate Conference 2022 with a full and comprehensive report and plan for our union;
- b) To undertake work for and implement a range of identified measures deemed to be within scope of 'business as usual' for the union and which need not be tied to the completion of the Branch Resources Review, namely to:
  - i) Prioritise the roll-out of the upgrade to the RMS membership system to end the RMS/WARMS divide and support branches with a more modern, flexible and efficient membership system;
  - ii) Confirm and promote the Branch Service Portal as a web-based hub to help branch officers access key services and information;
  - iii) Deliver and promote an enhanced Bargaining Support service to branches;
  - iv) Provide an online branch expenses module to help both activists and treasurers;
  - v) Update the Code of Good Branch Practice in three areas: online meeting procedures, easier and quicker arrangements for annual general meetings and encouragement of branches in sharing resources locally;
  - vi) Establish a new national facility time strategy and campaign to improve facility time for lay activists;
  - vii) Confirm arrangements for regular Organising School events to develop and share lay activist skills;
  - viii) Publish a list of all UNISON affiliations and supported campaigns to help branches and regions make informed decisions;
  - ix) Subsidise the monthly fees for the new Case Web system by 50% for branches who voluntarily subscribe to Case Web with 2,000 members or less;
  - x) Establish a new procurement service to support branches in purchasing goods and services;
  - xi) Support online meetings at all levels of the union, recognising any reasonable adjustments necessary, to generate funds to help branches, widen participation and meet our environmental goals;
  - xii) Confirm physical annual conferences will return after the pandemic and make improvements to UNISON conference arrangements to help branches: such as offering a booking service for hotels and travel; a reasonable adjustment shared

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

pooling fund for disabled delegates; and establish an appropriate lay member group to advise the National Executive Council on other areas of reform.

Theme - The Impact of Covid 19 on UNISON members, public services and working life

#### **Coordinate Action on Pay**

Conference notes the government's announcement on 4th March to recommend a one percent pay increase for all NHS Staff to the Pay Review Body (PRB). This quite rightly set off a whirlwind of protest and anger. It was immediately clear that once again the Tories had underestimated the public mood.

The one percent 'offer' was and remains a disgrace. It would ensure that NHS pay continued to lag behind the cost of living. Over the last decade of wage restraint, pay for NHS staff has fallen in real terms by 15-20%, despite the obvious lies being repeated by government spokespeople. Yet MP's have had 8 pay rises over the same period taking their pay from £66,396 to £81,932.

Many public servants, across multiple service groups, had already been told in November 2020, not to even expect one percent, but rather a further pay freeze as thanks for their contribution to battling the pandemic.

These pay cuts, as that is what they are in real terms, were announced by the same politicians who hypocritically stood on their doorsteps applauding key workers during the first lockdown, including NHS staff who saved the Prime Minister's life! The widespread disgust with the government's intention to make public servants pay for the pandemic, has brought all the anger and frustration of the last 12 months to the surface. However, it has also increased the likelihood of staff leaving vital public services, as a result of exhaustion and demoralisation. There is for example, already a developing and escalating shortage of NHS frontline staff, which we feel can begin to be arrested if the trade unions take a decisive lead in coordinating the fightback and resistance.

Resistance should also include those social care staff who find themselves in an even more difficult situation, often existing on the minimum wage, and facing private owners of care homes and companies.

Indicators such as the increased call on the third sector services, charity provision such as There For You and local authority discretionary housing and welfare payments by UNISON members during the pandemic clearly demonstrates that this position is untenable and leads directly to in-work poverty.

Throughout the pandemic, Johnson has been forced into humiliating U turns when confronted with large scale opposition such as free school meals, A Levels or the forced return to schools in January. In the latter case, it was the brave actions of educators, mobilised by the education unions – including UNISON - who refused to go into unsafe working environments. We believe the lessons of the battles in education should be used to support members in the fight for fair pay.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference therefore calls for an escalation of the fightback, and calls upon the National Executive Council to:

#### ***Medway Health***

#### **Branch Resources Review**

Branch Resources Review: insufficient and incomplete – our branches deserve better!

Conference welcomes the progress made by the Branch Resources Review since National Delegate Conference 2019 gave it renewed focus and impetus with the passing of Motion 126.

Conference however does not accept that the Branch Resources Review has concluded its work. We note that work on the Branch Resources Review was significantly interrupted by the Covid 19 pandemic during 2020. We also note that work on the most significant area of review (Workstream C) encompassing 60 per cent of the union's expenditure did not make sufficient progress and did not conclude. Because of this, proposals mooted to date:

- 1) Are not sufficiently ambitious to make significant enough change to how UNISON organises and services its membership through branches;
- 2) Do not meet the needs or aspirations of branches, or promise to unleash UNISON's huge latent potential;
- 3) Do not address the shift in where the work is done and from where members are supported Nor does it address the shifts caused by hyper-fragmentation of the workforce.

Conference offer in principle support to the idea of a Branch Support and Organising Fund (BSOF). While we feel some questions remain around ownership and management of the BSOF we recognise that many of our most significant organising challenges cannot be resolved at a branch level alone.

Further to this, this Conference affirms the principle within the review work undertaken to date that excess branch reserves should be recycled to branches that need them. Yet, we believe that this alone is not sufficient.

Conference notes we have an acceptable interim position for branches in Motion 126 2019 which provides branches with funding uplifts under certain conditions. Motion 126 made provision for this position to be retained until completion of the review and agreement by Conference. We therefore conclude that there is no urgency such that our union should adopt a settled position for the next five years on the basis of a review which did not complete or review the whole of our union.

Conference therefore calls on the new National Executive Council which will take office on 16 June 2021:

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- a) To continue with the work of the BRR undertaken to date, with a view to it completing and coming back to National Delegate Conference 2022 with a full and comprehensive report and plan for our union;
- b) To undertake work for and implement a range of identified measures deemed to be within scope of 'business as usual' for the union and which need not be tied to the completion of the Branch Resources Review, namely to:
  - i) Prioritise the roll-out of the upgrade to the RMS membership system to end the RMS/WARMS divide and support branches with a more modern, flexible and efficient membership system;
  - ii) Confirm and promote the Branch Service Portal as a web-based hub to help branch officers access key services and information;
  - iii) Deliver and promote an enhanced Bargaining Support service to branches;
  - iv) Provide an online branch expenses module to help both activists and treasurers;
  - v) Update the Code of Good Branch Practice in three areas: online meeting procedures, easier and quicker arrangements for annual general meetings and encouragement of branches in sharing resources locally;
  - vi) Establish a new national facility time strategy and campaign to improve facility time for lay activists;
  - vii) Confirm arrangements for regular Organising School events to develop and share lay activist skills;
  - viii) Publish a list of all UNISON affiliations and supported campaigns to help branches and regions make informed decisions;
  - ix) Subsidise the monthly fees for the new CaseWeb system by 50% for branches who voluntarily subscribe to CaseWeb with 2,000 members or less;
  - x) Establish a new procurement service to support branches in purchasing goods and services;
  - xi) Support online meetings at all levels of the union, recognising any reasonable adjustments necessary, to generate funds to help branches, widen participation and meet our environmental goals;
  - xii) Confirm physical annual conferences will return after the pandemic and make improvements to UNISON conference arrangements to help branches: such as offering a booking service for hotels and travel; a reasonable adjustment shared pooling fund for disabled delegates; and establish an appropriate lay member group to advise the NEC on other areas of reform.

Theme - The Impact of Covid 19 on UNISON members, public services and working life

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

#### **Coordinate Action on Pay**

Conference notes the government's announcement on 4 March to recommend a 1% pay increase for all NHS Staff to the Pay Review Body (PRB). This quite rightly set off a whirlwind of protest and anger. It was immediately clear that once again the Tories had underestimated the public mood.

The 1% 'offer' was and remains a disgrace. It would ensure that NHS pay continued to lag behind the cost of living. Over the last decade of wage restraint, pay for NHS staff has fallen in real terms by 15-20%, despite the obvious lies being repeated by government spokespeople. Yet MPs have had 8 pay rises over the same period taking their pay from £66,396 to £81,932.

Many public servants, across multiple service groups, had already been told in November 2020, not to even expect 1%, but rather a further pay freeze as thanks for their contribution to battling the pandemic.

These pay cuts, as that is what they are in real terms, were announced by the same politicians who hypocritically stood on their doorsteps applauding key workers during the first lockdown, including NHS staff who saved the Prime Minister's life! The widespread disgust with the government's intention to make public servants pay for the pandemic, has brought all the anger and frustration of the last 12 months to the surface. However, it has also increased the likelihood of staff leaving vital public services, as a result of exhaustion and demoralisation. There is for example, already a developing and escalating shortage of NHS frontline staff, which we feel can begin to be arrested if the trade unions take a decisive lead in coordinating the fightback and resistance.

Resistance should also include those social care staff who find themselves in an even more difficult situation, often existing on the minimum wage, and facing private owners of care homes and companies.

Indicators such as the increased call on the third sector services, charity provision such as There For You and local authority discretionary housing and welfare payments by UNISON members during the pandemic clearly demonstrates that this position is untenable and leads directly to in-work poverty.

Throughout the pandemic, Johnson has been forced into humiliating U turns when confronted with large scale opposition such as free school meals, A Levels or the forced return to schools in January. In the latter case, it was the brave actions of educators, mobilised by the education unions – including UNISON - who refused to go into unsafe working environments. We believe the lessons of the battles in education should be used to support members in the fight for fair pay.

Conference therefore calls for an escalation of the fightback, and calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with the different service groups to seek to coordinate resistance to this attack on UNISON members;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 2) Build mass support with effective public campaigning and union recruitment and organising drives;
- 3) Work with like-minded campaigns and active social media groups to build up the support;
- 4) Prioritise the training and recruitment workplace reps with a view to establishing workplace action committees;
- 5) Organise huge Days of Action in the build up to strike action;
- 6) Organise a national demonstration, when circumstances allow to fight both the pay freeze, miserable pay increases and the poverty pay faced by other key workers, such as those in social care;
- 7) Write to other public sector unions, without unnecessary delay, stating UNISON's support for an emergency summit of all such unions, in order to coordinate such resistance and to seek their support for this program of action, including through the coordination of lawful strike action.

#### **Organising to End the Crisis in Social Care**

Conference notes 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, urged the government to provide an immediate £8bn cash injection and to 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 identified that since 2008/09, there had been a 5% reduction in the number of people receiving publicly funded social care per year. Between 2008-09 and 2019, this equated to around 600,000 people. This had occurred despite a significant increase in the number of people in need of care.

Conference further notes 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.

The IPPR's 2019 report highlighted 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 went 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."

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

In July 2019, in his first speech as Prime Minister, Boris Johnson promised to “fix this crisis in social care once and for all.”

Conference believes that the onslaught of the Coronavirus pandemic exposed the consequences of the failure of successive governments to tackle the crisis in social care.

In September 2020, the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) produced a report entitled “Beyond Covid: New thinking on the future of adult social care”, in which they highlighted the negative impacts of Covid-19 on social care and offered reasons for that impact.

Based on conversations with commissioners and staff employed in the sector, SCIE reported” that:

- 1) The sector was “poorly prepared for the pandemic” and that “the years of underfunding had left the sector without the equipment and estates necessary to manage the crisis. Examples offered, included that “many care homes had insufficient space to safely isolate people who had caught Covid 19 and contain the spread. Local supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) were low, or non-existent in some places as late as the end of March, which left many care workers exposed to the virus.”;
- 2) The pandemic had exposed inequalities within social care, with “Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities, adults with learning disabilities, and those on the lowest incomes disproportionately affected.”;
- 3) Social care was “a fragmented and disconnected sector” of “around 18,500 organisations working in 39,000 locations” across England alone. Many of those they engaged with told them that “the scale and complexity of the sector posed significant practical and logistical challenges in organising effective responses. For example, in ensuring that providers have access to sufficient PPE, coordinating safe hospital discharges, and testing staff and residents in a timely manner.”;
- 4) “Despite many in the workforce showing immense resilience overall, morale is low in adult social care, and care staff have felt undervalued compared with their healthcare counterparts. This has also played out in practical terms, for example, in care workers not having priority access when shopping for their clients.” SCIE “were told about registered managers of adult social care services suffering from burn out and extreme anxiety.”

Conference believes this picture will be immediately recognisable to our members in social care and the officers and reps who have supported them over the last twelve months.

Conference believes that the crisis in social care is not simply a crisis of underfunding, but a systemic crisis of fragmentation and exploitation arising from the dominance of the market.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

In 2020, it was revealed that more than one in five care providers – looking after over 200,000 people – were currently failing to meet the Care Quality Commission's quality and safety standards. This grew 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.

Despite regular pleas of poverty from the market, In 2017 a detailed financial analysis of care homes undertaken by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) found that £200m a year was flowing directly to private equity operators and other institutions that played no role in providing any form of care.

In addition, providers were paying a total of £390m each year in rent to landlords and yearly payments of £177m were going to bond holders, banks and other financial institutions to pay off debts.

According to an article in the "New Statesman" examining the report, "even before the big 26 care home operators account for their profits, which range between £60m and £80m in a good year, nearly £760m a year has already leaked out of the social care sector and into the pockets of those who never meet care workers or care home residents as part of their job... Injecting the care home industry with more cash while failing to address its underlying financial structure will merely line the already well-stuffed pockets of off-shore investors."

We should bear in mind that care homes only make up one part of the social care sector. The labyrinthine nature of many providers' financial structures, make finding similar information from providers of other forms of care very difficult. We can state though that, according to Skills for Care, the adult social care sector in the UK is worth £46.2 billion.

Conference 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 the securing of recognition and collective bargaining agreements with a number of employers.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Since “Care Workers for Change” was launched, UNISON North West has further invested resources into campaigns such as “Care Workers v Covid 19”, which has secured commitments from 18 of the region’s 23 commissioning authorities to ensure care workers would not suffer financially if they could not attend work for reasons relating to the Coronavirus.

Through the “Stand Up for Social Care” campaign, UNISON North West has launched a successful network of more than a hundred councillors and a worker-led Organising Committee. Crucially, this involves a clear focus on insourcing social care provision and ending the dominance of the market.

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 National Executive Council to:

- a) Work with 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 paid for by universal progressive taxation. Such a system should ensure proper methods of accountability to the workforce and those in receipt of care and support, with the principle of co-design at its heart, so that we do not repeat past injustices, where recipients have been denied their right to control over their own lives;
- b) Work with 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 a way designed to empower those workers to realise their collective strength;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- c) Work with Service Groups, Labour Link and other stakeholders including by 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.

Disproportionate Death and Increased levels of sickness due to Covid - Black Lives Matter

Conference notes:

- 1) "In UNISON, 'Black' – with a capital B – is used to indicate people with a shared history. 'Black' is used in a broad political and inclusive sense to describe people in the UK who have suffered from colonialism and enslavement in the past and continue to experience racism and diminished opportunities in today's society";
- 2) The Covid 19 pandemic has led to starkly disproportionate Black Deaths. This and the inspiring Black Lives Matter movement in the wake of the racist murder of George Floyd by police, has exposed on a mass scale the deeply institutionalised racism in society. Meanwhile Johnson's Government have turned to an intensification of the racist scapegoating of refugees and migrants;
- 3) Trade unions are critical in organising the mass anti-racist movement we need to challenge every instance of racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, and opposing the threat posed by divisive racists in our communities and workplaces, the far right and fascism.

Conference believes:

- a) Black lives matter and we as trade unionists must fight to eradicate racism in the workplace and our communities;
- b) That the disproportionate deaths of Black workers by Covid 19 is driven by institutional racism in the workplace that results in them more often being in low paid and casualised work, more likely to be in frontline job roles, under employed but more likely to be subject to grievance and disciplinary procedures, not reflected in management structures. The horrific murder of George Floyd and the subsequent ongoing Black Lives Matters movement is an impetus to achieve real change.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to ensure that, as a matter of urgency, at every level of the union, demands are made upon employers, with the direct involvement of Black members on negotiating teams, to:

- i) Provide resources and support for Black workers to ensure health and safety; this should be included in service wide and individual Risk Assessments which over a variety of options to support their physical as well as mental health well-being;
- ii) Ensure strong equality, diversity and dignity policies, including zero tolerance for racism and all forms of discrimination. Black Workers should be able to report internally to their employer and be offered support. This should be monitored and addressed as part of collective bargaining structures between our union and employers. Employers must make it clear that they will support all staff who raise

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

concerns about racism (and other forms of discrimination) and act to protect staff who are subject to racial abuse;

- iii) Publish data on Black Workers Pay (Race Equality), statistics on recruitment, promotion and dismissal; set aspirational targets for diversity at their organisation to at least reflect the community it serves and measure progress against those targets annually;
- iv) Address the under employment of Black staff across all service groups. Initiatives should be taken and monitored through collective bargaining structures between our union and the education sector;
- v) Address the often-high turnover of Black staff across all service groups, as well as not proportionately employed in management structures;
- vi) Support the TUC's call for a judge-led public inquiry and the Stand up to Racism petition into the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus; The recording of the ethnic background of all Covid-19 patients is recommended by the British Medical Association;
- vii) Continue to support both physical and virtual events organised by Stand up to Racism, Show Racism the Red card and Unite against Fascism. Organise to oppose the growing threat of racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism from the Government's hostile environment and far right and fascist organisations;
- viii) Organise Forums with the above organisations, bringing activists from UNISON together with all affiliated trade unions to develop, organise and share best practice in challenging discrimination;
- ix) Support Branches to develop Black Members Self Organised Groups that can allow Black members to share, support and develop responses;
- x) Work with Regional Black Member Committees (RBMC) and Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) to ensure that all training programmes and initiatives are promoted to Black members, encourage Black Women, Black Young Members and Black members with more than one protected characteristic to participate in leadership programmes and that equality data on all courses is monitored and reviewed regularly;
- xi) Undertake further consultation with RBMCs and branches to consider further survey Black members around their work on the inclusion and participation of Black members in lay democratic structures, member development and capacity-building;
- xii) Ensure that any member triggering the Race Discrimination Protocol (RDP) is offered the additional support of their Regional Black Members Committee and that implementation of the RDP is reviewed annually with the involvement of the Regional Black Members Committee.

Theme - Securing an equal and sustainable post pandemic settlement

Supporting Sustainable Farming

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference welcomes the National Executive Council's recognition that "the creation of a green and sustainable economy" is an important matter for consideration, within the theme of "Securing an equal and sustainable post pandemic settlement".

Conference recommits to UNISON's policy of calling for public sector pension schemes to divest from fossil fuels, as one important way of tackling the Climate Emergency.

Conference believes it is right for this union to use our influence to hasten the demise of fossil fuels. However, we recognise that the burning of fossil fuels is not the only contributor to the Climate Emergency.

Approximately, a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions comes from meat and dairy and this is only a part of the overall environmental impact which include land and water degradation, acid rain, deforestation, and coral reef death. The greenhouse gas emissions from the meat and dairy industry exceeds that of all transport. Even the UK government's climate change committee says that meat and dairy consumption needs to be reduced by 20%.

The necessary reduction in the consumption of meat and dairy presents huge challenges for the trade union movement. Many workers are employed in this industry, including within our own trade union. However, the industry that sustains those workers in one respect is also damaging the environment they live in and offering a damaged future for their children.

We believe that workers and communities affected, must be directly involved in the development of a transition from agriculture based on meat and dairy, to more sustainable alternatives. However, it is clear that, such a transition is necessary.

By leaving the EU, and therefore the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the UK has an opportunity to move away from subsidising meat and dairy farming and instead support arable alternatives that are less damaging to the environment.

If the trade union movement wants to shape what the transition looks like we must come forward with our own proposals, or risk having it undertaken by hostile forces who have no interest in workers and communities affected.

Conference therefore calls for the National Executive Council to ask the TUC to bring together trade unions to develop a sustainable plan for transition away from meat and dairy farming that will safeguard the needs of workers and communities engaged in that industry. This should include, a training and jobs guarantee for those working in that industry, so that the skills and expertise of those affected by the first two demands could be used to develop the more sustainable forms of food production we are calling for:

- 1) Divestment of pension funds from meat and dairy production, to be replaced with investment in more sustainable forms of agriculture;
- 2) An end to state subsidies of the meat and dairy industry, and for such subsidies to instead be invested into more sustainable forms of food production.

Facilities and Expectations for Workplace Representatives

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference welcomes the National Executive Council's recognition that "well organised workplaces, a fairer labour market and overhaul of employment and trade union rights" is an important matter for consideration, within the theme of "Securing an equal and sustainable post pandemic settlement."

Conference notes that accredited, recognised and trained 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, Conference believes 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.

Many employers have taken advantage of increased government hostility towards trade unions to clamp down on trade union facilities time.

Even those 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.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

In our experience, team meetings, where representatives are given the opportunity to spend time with members, during the working day, once management and non-members have left the room, have been a casualty of austerity. The pandemic has provided opportunities for engagement with members over virtual platforms, but this has not resolved the problem of securing adequate collective engagement during work time.

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 National Executive Council to work with the Service Groups 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 National Executive Council to support branches to defend and where necessary, expand the right to the facilities required for collective representation.

### ***Liverpool Hospitals Health***

#### **Disproportionate Death and Increased Levels of Sickness Due to Covid - Black Lives Matter**

Conference notes:

- 1) "In UNISON, 'Black' – with a capital B – is used to indicate people with a shared history. 'Black' is used in a broad political and inclusive sense to describe people in the UK who have suffered from colonialism and enslavement in the past and continue to experience racism and diminished opportunities in today's society";
- 2) The Covid 19 pandemic has led to starkly disproportionate Black deaths. This and the inspiring Black Lives Matter movement in the wake of the racist murder of George Floyd by police, has exposed on a mass scale the deeply institutionalised racism in society. Meanwhile Johnson's government have turned to an intensification of the racist scapegoating of refugees and migrants;
- 3) Trade unions are critical in organising the mass anti-racist movement we need to challenge every instance of racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, and opposing the threat posed by divisive racists in our communities and workplaces, the far right and fascism.

Conference believes:

- a) Black Lives Matter and we as trade unionists must fight to eradicate racism in the workplace and our communities;
- b) That the disproportionate deaths of Black workers by Covid 19 is driven by institutional racism in the workplace that results in them more often being in low paid and casualised work, more likely to be in frontline job roles, under employed but more likely to be subject to grievance and disciplinary procedures, not reflected in management structures. The horrific murder of George Floyd and the

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

subsequent ongoing Black Lives Matters movement is an impetus to achieve real change.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to ensure that, as a matter of urgency, at every level of the union, demands are made upon employers, with the direct involvement of Black members on negotiating teams, to:

- i) Provide resources and support for Black workers to ensure health and safety; this should be included in service wide and individual Risk Assessments which over a variety of options to support their physical as well as mental health well-being;
- ii) Ensure strong equality, diversity and dignity policies, including zero tolerance for racism and all forms of discrimination. Black Workers should be able to report internally to their employer and be offered support. This should be monitored and addressed as part of collective bargaining structures between our union and employers. Employers must make it clear that they will support all staff who raise concerns about racism (and other forms of discrimination) and act to protect staff who are subject to racial abuse;
- iii) Publish data on Black Workers Pay (Race Equality), statistics on recruitment, promotion and dismissal; set aspirational targets for diversity at their organisation to at least reflect the community it serves and measure progress against those targets annually;
- iv) Address the under employment of Black staff across all service groups. Initiatives should be taken and monitored through collective bargaining structures between our union and the education sector;
- v) Address the often high turnover of Black staff across all service groups, as well as not proportionately employed in management structures;
- vi) Support the TUC's call for a judge-led public inquiry and the Stand up to Racism petition into the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus; The recording of the ethnic background of all Covid 19 patients is recommended by the British Medical Association;
- vii) Continue to support both physical and virtual events organised by Stand up to Racism, Show Racism the Red card and Unite against Fascism. Organise to oppose the growing threat of racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism from the Government's hostile environment and far right and fascist organisations;
- viii) Organise forums with the above organisations, bringing activists from UNISON together with all affiliated trade unions to develop, organise and share best practice in challenging discrimination;
- ix) Support branches to develop Black members Self Organised Groups that can allow Black members to share, support and develop responses;
- x) Work with Regional Black Member Committees (RBMC) and Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) to ensure that all training programmes and initiatives are promoted to Black members, encourage Black Women, Black Young Members and Black members with more than one protected characteristic to

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

participate in leadership programmes and that equality data on all courses is monitored and reviewed regularly;

- xi) Undertake further consultation with RBMCs and branches to consider further survey Black members around their work on the inclusion and participation of Black members in lay democratic structures, member development and capacity-building;
- xii) Ensure that any member triggering the Race Discrimination Protocol (RDP) is offered the additional support of their Regional Black Members Committee and that implementation of the RDP is reviewed annually with the involvement of the Regional Black Members Committee.

#### ***Salford City***

#### **Fact Checking in a Fake News Age**

The move away from print media has been gathering pace over several years now. So many people now get their information from online sources. The recent events in 2020/2021 like the misinformation over coronavirus and political figures misleading announcements on social media clearly demonstrates the urgent need for unbiased and fact checked information. Conference recognises that the growth in fake news has been a major factor in the outcome of recent elections. We need to fight back and dispel the myths and half-truths where we see them. Giving our members the facts not the fiction. UNISON is ideally placed to do so with our websites for our members. We need to give our members the knowledge to tackle fake news and the prejudices which arise from it.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Develop and resource work to create a page on our website as a UNISON Fact Checker. This will be a valuable resource for Branches to use in communication with their members.

#### ***Renfrewshire***

#### **COP 26**

Conference notes that:

- 1) Human caused climate breakdown is leading to and exacerbating extreme weather events across the globe: heat waves, wildfires, floods and hurricanes, and loss of biodiversity;
- 2) The IPCC 2018 Special Report has warned of the dire consequences of exceeding 1.5 degrees celsius global average warming and that a societal transformation would be needed to avoid this, including halving global carbon emissions by 2030; nevertheless, global emissions have continued to rise;
- 3) The climate crisis is a social justice issue, with those who have done least to cause the crisis and who are least able to address it facing the worst impacts. We need to mobilise for a just transition which protects and improves workers' livelihoods, creates a more inclusive society and stops greenhouse gas emissions;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 4) Wealthy, industrialised countries have a responsibility to take on their fair share of emissions reductions; that the UK's target of net zero by 2050 is insufficient to avoid global temperatures rising above 1.5 degrees celsius, and that the UK is failing to implement policies to meet even this target;
- 5) We also face a global and UK crisis of unemployment; that tackling the Covid 19 pandemic represents an ideal opportunity to invest in climate jobs, in a just transition and a fairer society; and that the global response to this opportunity has been wholly inadequate;
- 6) The UN COP 26 negotiations in Glasgow in November 2021 are crucial for the success of global plans to limit response to climate change; yet the UK government continues to back false solutions like carbon markets and block the transformational changes which are necessary;
- 7) UK civil society needs to exert maximum pressure on the British government in the coming year for a green recovery and just transition, and to show leadership as COP 26 host; that trade unions can play a key role in the COP 26 coalition in which UK civil society has been organising as part of the wider global climate justice movement.

Conference resolves:

- a) To support the COP 26 Coalition;
- b) To campaign, alongside allies in civil society for massive public investment in a green recovery that tackles the climate and ecological emergencies, creates climate jobs and is underpinned by a fair deal for workers both here and in supply chains in the Global South;
- c) To support the national mobilisations for protests during the COP 26 climate summit in Glasgow in November 2021. The support given will comply with the Covid guidance at that time. Support will be given to local initiatives if more appropriate due to travel restrictions.

#### ***York City***

### **Defend the Right to Protest – Oppose the New Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill**

This UNISON branch notes:

- 1) That the government's new Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill is an attempt to limit the right to protest in the wake of Covid pandemic;
- 2) The new Policing Bill gives police new powers to stop protests that cause "serious disruption" to an organisation or have a "relevant impact" on people nearby;
- 3) The Bill targets protest noise that could have "a relevant impact on persons in the vicinity of the procession". This provision would apply to a protest carried out by one person;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 4) A further clause in the Bill criminalises protests causing “serious annoyance” – a vague clause which could be used to curb and prevent protest;
- 5) The Bill increases stop and search powers that will be also be used to scapegoat minorities and increase racism;
- 6) The Bill includes a new trespass offense that will be used to target Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups. Instead of providing adequate sites, the government wants to move trespass from a civil law offence to a criminal offence;
- 7) Other clauses against “unauthorised encampments” will mainly be used against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups. But they could also hit homeless people making makeshift shelters and protesters.

This branch further notes:

- a) That Karen Reissmann, a Manchester mental health nurse and UNISON member, was recently fined £10,000 by police for organising a small socially distanced protest over the insulting one percent pay offer to NHS staff;
- b) The attempt by police to break up a vigil in memory of Sarah Everard on Clapham Common;
- c) The actions of the police in breaking up a peaceful protest on 26 March in Bristol.

This branch believes:

- i) The Police Bill is a serious assault on our right to assembly and protest. Its aim to make protest as ineffective as possible;
- ii) The government wants the police to have more powers to harass and jail Black people and Muslims, target Gypsies and Travellers and to silence protesters;
- iii) The Bill is also a threat to trade union activity through restricting our right to protest and place further limits potentially on our freedom to picket during industrial disputes.

This branch resolves to:

- A) Oppose any attempt by government to use the Covid 19 crisis to limit the right to protest;
- B) To campaign against the whole of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill;
- C) To work with other trade unions and campaigns – human rights, environmental, anti-racist and all those defending the right to protests – to oppose and defeat this attack on our rights;
- D) To send this motion to our National Executive Council and National Special Delegate Conference in June asking for UNISON to take up opposition to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- E) To request that Special Delegate Conference mandates UNISON to set up a national Gypsy, Roma and Traveller forum to enable GRT members to connect with each other, to carry out education and outreach work within our union and to support these members.

#### ***Central and East Berkshire***

##### **The Fight Against the Public Sector Pay Freeze and Pay Restraint**

Conference condemns the Tory government's announcement that millions of workers across the public sector will have their pay frozen or receive only an insulting one percent pay "increase" as is the case for health workers in England and Wales.

This is despite the fact that:

- 1) Key workers in the public and private sector have been on the front line providing social care, education and other essential services throughout the pandemic;
- 2) Health workers have played an absolutely key role in treating patients in the most difficult and stressful conditions as well as fighting for workplace safety during Covid to protect both staff and our communities.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to bring together the different service groups to seek to co-ordinate a union wide campaign to defeat the pay freeze and pay restraint for all of our members to help secure an equal and sustainable post-pandemic settlement.

Conference agrees that the union must:

- a) Call a national day of action of protests in support of pay justice;
- b) Seek to co-ordinate strike ballots across the service groups where they have voted for them;
- c) Where possible work with other public sector trade unions to coordinate the campaign and action;
- d) Where possible seek to involve our private contractor members as part of the wider union campaign to bring those privatised workers back in house.

#### ***Homerton Hospital NHS Trust***

##### **Mandatory Vaccinations in Public Sector Workplaces**

North West Regional Committee recognises the dangers posed by Covid, flu, and other viral infection with an average of 8,000 people in England killed by flu every year and Covid taking over 130,000 lives across the whole of the UK.

North West Regional Committee believes that it is appropriate for public sector staff, particular those providing care within a variety of settings, to have the opportunity to have a free Covid and flu jab, and that staff who are offered free vaccinations should, as appropriate, be encouraged to take this up by both employers and unions. North West Regional Committee notes that this approach is generally reflected in jointly

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

agreed national statements and within the campaigns supporting the vaccination programmes within workplaces and national press.

However, North West Regional Committee notes with concern that some employers are looking to make Covid vaccinations mandatory, alongside employers who have already mandated flu vaccination. North West Regional Committee also notes that numerous research and guidance, including that from NICE, does not recommend mandatory flu vaccination for healthcare workers, with Covid vaccinations being challenged with supply chain issues which would challenge employers delivering these vaccinations.

North West Regional Committee believes that the decision to have a vaccination should be a matter of personal choice and that the decision of a worker or potential new recruit to decline a vaccination should be respected. Workers should face no sanction or detriment if they choose to decline any vaccination; no national vaccination programme is mandated under law and no worker should be forced to have any vaccination by their employer.

North West Regional Committee calls on the National Executive Committee to:

- 1) Continue to work with employers nationally to promote the voluntary take-up of free vaccinations by workers;
- 2) Reject any move by employers nationally or locally to adopt a policy of mandating any vaccination(s) for workers;
- 3) Provide support for branches facing initiatives by their local employers to impose any mandatory vaccinations.

### ***Liverpool Hospitals Health***

#### **Sacking and Reengagement During Covid and Beyond**

Conference notes the growing use of sacking and re-engagement to impose detrimental contracts on workers.

Disgracefully a series of employers sought to take advantage of the Covid crisis to deploy this tactic, doubtlessly believing that unions would be unable to organise effective industrial action.

Conference congratulates all those workers in UNISON and other unions who despite this have organised strike action, and in doing so not only resisted their own employers' plans but made the use of sack and reengage a national issue.

Conference welcomes the fact that Keir Starmer has now committed a future Labour government to making the practise of sacking and re-engagement unlawful but deplore the failure to intervene when Labour Authorities like Tower Hamlets have also used the tactic.

Conference believes that removing employers' ability to sack and reengage workers as a means of imposing detrimental contracts should be part of a new settlement on rights at work and resolve to campaign for this.

# **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

## **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

**Tower Hamlets**

### **No Public Sector Pay Freeze**

Conference notes:

- 1) The government's intention to impose a pay freeze on some public sector workers;
- 2) That the government wants to create division not only between public and private sector workers but even between "deserving" public sector workers in the NHS and other public sector workers;
- 3) That many council workers have been in the front line throughout the pandemic in social care, schools, caretaking, cleaning and elsewhere. All public sector workers continue to support our communities through the pandemic and will be vital to the recovery from it;
- 4) That council workers have lost over 20% of their income in real terms in the last decade, and now the Tories want us to pay for the coronavirus pandemic. At the same time, the government has found billions to give to their families and friends in private contracts for PPE, and to fund warfare;
- 5) That no attempt has been made by the Tories to tax corporations or to collect unpaid taxes from tax evading and avoiding companies and super-rich individuals. During this pandemic, some individuals have got richer whilst working class people have been sacked, furloughed and seen pay cuts.

Conference believes:

- a) That while some NHS workers may not face the same degree of pay restraint as other public sector workers, we should reject divide and rule tactics and point out that NHS workers are likely to be offered pay rises well below their aspirations. We are in favour of unity between workers in the NHS, local government, and the private and voluntary sector;
- b) That currently unpaid corporation taxes and those avoided/unpaid by the rich should be collected and used to fund public services, public sector pay and full pay for all furloughed, self-isolating and shielding workers in the public and private sectors, and to fully compensate local councils for their Covid-relief work.

Conference resolves:

- i) To campaign for central government to fully fund local councils and to make up the estimated £10 billion funding gap;
- ii) To campaign against a public sector pay freeze;
- iii) To organise rallies and protests, whether virtually, or physically with suitable social distancing and other Covid safe measures when possible, that bring together public and private sector workers in a fight for decent pay and safety at work;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- iv) To campaign for the industrial action we will need to win a battle to defeat the government's pay freeze amongst members throughout the union, specifically calling on the Service Group Executives and the National Executive Council to consult members on industrial action at the appropriate time and if possible in a coordinated way across various public sector bargaining groups.

#### ***Camden***

#### **Never Again: The Impact of Covid 19 on Disabled People**

Conference notes the shocking fact that 60 percent of those who died as a result of Covid 19 were disabled people.

We have often heard it said that the virus does not discriminate. But society clearly does discriminate and issues such as access to health care and housing, poverty, lack of political voice and barriers to independent living contributed to the disproportionate impact on disabled people.

Disabled people's fundamental human right to live independently was swept away by the suspension of the Coronavirus Act, by the lifting of safeguards to the Mental Health Act, and by blanket decisions on Do Not Attempt Resuscitation (DNAR) for older and disabled people.

Conference believes that the suspension of the Care Act demonstrates categorically what we have long argued - that the social care system is broken.

The government's Equality Impact Assessment into the Coronavirus Act acknowledged that some of the provisions of the Act indirectly discriminated against disabled people but they argued this was proportionate. This highlights the weakness of the public sector equality duty, with the cumulative effect of the package of measures on disabled people's rights not taken into account.

The Care Quality Commission has also continued to raise human rights issues around blanket DNARs, particularly in relation to learning disabled people.

Conference also notes that some UNISON disabled workers employ personal assistants (PAs) in their homes in order to access personal care, allowing them to work. These disabled workers struggled to access PPE for their personal assistants. In some cases, their PAs, often understandably, did not come to work due to safety concerns and the disabled worker was left without care. There was no clear Government guidance for these disabled workers and their PAs who were not included in Government schemes to distribute PPE.

The impact of Covid 19 on disabled workers has been profound. Many have spent over a year in fear for their lives, frightened to step outside the door. In other cases they have been met by intransigent employers who have insisted they continue to attend the workplace despite the risks.

Some employers have refused to consider options such as home working or temporary re-deployment for disabled workers. There is also a risk that some employer decisions on furlough might potentially be discriminatory.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

In a UNISON survey in June 2020, 17 percent of Black disabled members who had a letter requiring them to “shield” had continued to work in their usual workplace during the pandemic for all or most of the time. Where the employer did allow them to shield, many disabled workers had to survive on statutory sick pay at a paltry £95 a week.

Other disabled workers who were shielding or had underlying conditions were forced to take unpaid leave or apply for Universal Credit as their employer would not agree to homeworking or special paid leave.

The government’s advice to disabled people who were shielding originally included no acknowledgment at all that they might be workers. Only as a result of UNISON’s intervention was the advice amended to include information for shielding people who were also workers.

Many disabled workers did not receive an individual risk assessment where their additional risk of death from the virus was acknowledged and mitigated against – instead employers relied on generic workplace assessments that applied to everyone. 60% of Black disabled workers responding to our survey had not had an individual risk assessment and, of those who had a risk assessment, 34% said no clear steps were taken by their employer as a result of the risk assessment.

Conference believes that from the outset of the crisis, communication and consultation with disabled people was almost entirely inadequate because government did not fully consider disabled people as a group with protected characteristics and rights. Instead government established two new categories of people, “clinically vulnerable” and “extremely clinically vulnerable”.

Using the language of vulnerability obscured disabled people’s rights under the Equality Act 2010. Employers often did not understand that they had a duty to consider reasonable adjustments for disabled workers, which could include home working and redeployment. Instead many focused on the need for a shielding letter and did not consider home working and redeployment for those disabled workers not in the “extremely vulnerable” category.

Conference believes that disabled people should never again have their human rights withdrawn, be forced to go to work when they do not feel safe or be paid a pittance to stay at home.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to campaign for an independent public inquiry into the handling of the Covid 19 pandemic and as part of this to:

- 1) Seek to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) into UK law to protect and underline disabled people’s human rights so that they are not overlooked or over-ruled in a future emergency;
- 2) Highlight the inadequacy of the government’s interpretation of the public sector equality duty in protecting disabled people’s human rights and seek to strengthen the general and specific duties;

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 3) Push for emergency funding for our social care system and urgent steps to establish a new National Care Service, to include personal assistants employed through direct payment/personal budgets, ensuring a real living wage, standard terms and conditions and training;
- 4) Learn from the failure of many employers to fully protect disabled workers from the risk of contracting Covid 19 at work and seek to strengthen health and safety protections to require specific steps where there are additional levels of risk faced by disabled people and others with protected characteristics;
- 5) Call for the social model of disability to be fully embedded in the UK government, civil service and public health bodies so that disabled people are understood as citizens with specific rights, ensuring future Government guidance does not contribute to the victimisation of disabled people;
- 6) Campaign to increase Statutory Sick Pay levels and extend this to more low paid workers, with rebates for small and medium sized employers.

#### ***National Disabled Members Committee***

#### **Democracy In UNISON**

Conference notes that:

- 1) Democracy within UNISON is being replaced with limited debate on non-controversial topics for annual conference rather than the hard truths facing members and the world we live in.
- 2) UNISON continue to clamp down on internal democracy, with the limitations placed on the scope of this year's national conferences.
- 3) UNISON is continuing with the passivity seen of the previous leadership and outside of UNISON within national politics in the face of the attacks on the jobs, living standards and health of union members.

This branch instructs the Branch Secretary to take the following motion to Unions Local Government Service Group meeting

This Service Group supports the following motion to the National Executive Council.

"It is deplorable in that having a year to organise the annual delegate conference, that UNISON has failed completely to deliver a democratic conference agenda and have systems for full participation.

This service group knows that it is possible to undertake large-scale conferences, as we have seen other unions do so, to hold a reduced special delegate conference instead of a full National Delegate Conference is undemocratic, restricts agenda items, suppresses legitimate debate and insulting to members.

Three hours a day for just three days and limited to three topics; Covid, public sector pay and the branch resource review is not by any means an inclusive conference that members expect to see.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

This fails to deliver participation on many issues that members feel strongly about and this ‘limited’ three-subject agenda is simply UNISON stifling debate and controlling motions that UNISON do not want raising

This is both oppressive UNISON control that is totally devoid of any semblance of a full participatory and democratic conference meeting.

Issues like Black Lives Matter, oppression’s within Yemen and Palestine and not mentioned nor are COP 26 or the Tories cronyism with PPE and the looming NHS restructure”

This service group calls upon the National Executive Council:

- a) To cease being limited in the approach for Conference and instructs a full conference agenda to take place over a full week dealing with all motions put forward, as would be fitting of a normal conference;
- b) It further instructs the National Executive Council to investigate and establish why a full conference was not planned for and delivered and just how long ago was the decision taken to not seek a full democratic on-line conference what planning had taken place for a full on-line conference and to report back to branches within eight weeks.

### ***Doncaster***

#### **COP 26**

Conference notes that:

- 1) Human-caused climate breakdown is leading to and exacerbating extreme weather events across the globe: heat waves, wildfires, floods and hurricanes, and loss of biodiversity;
- 2) The IPCC 2018 Special Report has warned of the dire consequences of exceeding 1.5 degrees celsius global average warming and that a societal transformation would be needed to avoid this, including halving global carbon emissions by 2030; nevertheless, global emissions have continued to rise;
- 3) The climate crisis is a social justice issue, with those who have done least to cause the crisis and who are least able to address it facing the worst impacts. We need to mobilise for a just transition which protects and improves workers’ livelihoods, creates a more inclusive society and stops greenhouse gas emissions;
- 4) Wealthy, industrialised countries have a responsibility to take on their fair share of emissions reductions; that the UK's target of net zero by 2050 is insufficient to avoid global temperatures rising above 1.5 degrees celsius, and that the UK is failing to implement policies to meet even this target;
- 5) We also face a global and UK crisis of unemployment; that tackling the Covid-19 pandemic represents an ideal opportunity to invest in climate jobs, in a just transition and a fairer society; and that the global response to this opportunity has been wholly inadequate;

## 2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- 6) The UN COP 26 negotiations in Glasgow in November 2021 are crucial for the success of global plans to limit response to climate change; yet the UK government continues to back false solutions like carbon markets and block the transformational changes which are necessary;
- 7) UK civil society needs to exert maximum pressure on the British government in the coming year for a green recovery and just transition, and to show leadership as COP 26 host; that trade unions can play a key role in the COP 26 coalition in which UK civil society has been organising as part of the wider global climate justice movement;
- 8) Conference resolves:
  - a) To join the COP 26 Coalition;
  - b) To campaign, alongside allies in civil society for massive public investment in a green recovery that tackles the climate and ecological emergencies, creates climate jobs and is underpinned by a fair deal for workers both here and in supply chains in the Global South;
  - c) To support the national mobilisations for protests during the COP 26 climate summit in Glasgow in November 2021.

### *Doncaster*

---

Not sufficiently clear

#### **Demand Public Inquiry**

More than 100,000 UK Citizens lost their lives because of Covid. Worldwide, the pandemic is responsible for more than two million deaths and few countries have escaped its impact.

While this is a global phenomenon, it is clear the UK has been one of the hardest hit countries.

A tragedy in one of the richest countries on the globe with a national healthcare system, a long tradition of public health services and world class research infrastructure.

The scene for the current crisis was set long before the virus arrived. Covid laid bare the widespread inequalities that exist in the UK and the lack of resilience in our key public services after ten years of Tory austerity and policy failure.

The legacy of poor health and inequalities in the UK left much of the population more vulnerable to the disease. Obesity and diabetes are key risk factors for severe Covid and overall mortality from the virus has been higher for those with pre-existing health conditions.

Overcrowded housing, poverty and insecure work became the ideal conduit for the virus to spread.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Under investment in public services is at the heart of the staffing shortages in the NHS which saw the health service short of 100,000 staff at the start of the pandemic. Austerity has forced the NHS to breaking point, with pre Covid bed occupancy at 90% and numbers of ICU beds, doctors, nurses and diagnostic equipment well below comparator countries. When the surge came managing it became very difficult.

The pandemic has also shone a harsh light on the obviously inadequate system of social care where spending in 2018/19 was less than a decade earlier in real terms. A fragmented system of private care providers who operate in a way that hinders accountability. Over a fifth of UK deaths took place in care homes.

Privatisation hasn't worked. Two-thirds of adult social care workers say the quality of adult care has dropped because of large-scale outsourcing since the early 1990s. One in four home care services are failing to meet quality and safety standards.

With a 22% cut in public health teams local government was left with fewer staff and less capacity to meet the sudden surge in demand that Covid 19 entailed.

As the pandemic took hold, the Tories reverted to type using the cloak of a national emergency to enrich the privateers. The government awarded over 8600 contracts worth £18 billion by 31 July, with most of these (£16.2 billion worth) awarded by the Department of Health and Social Care and its national bodies. Contracts totalling £10.5 billion have been awarded without a competitive tender process.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with the Labour Party and civic society groups to call for a full trade union led public inquiry into the government's response to the pandemic. With interim findings published before the next General Election;
- 2) Campaign for fair funding for our public services with greater democratic accountability;
- 3) Campaign for the creation of a national care service founded the enduring values of public service.

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

### **Supporting Sustainable Farming**

Conference welcomes the National Executive Council's recognition that "the creation of a green and sustainable economy" is an important matter for consideration, within the theme of "Securing an equal and sustainable post pandemic settlement".

Conference recommits to UNISON's policy of calling for public sector pension schemes to divest from fossil fuels, as one important way of tackling the Climate Emergency.

Conference believes it is right for this union to use our influence to hasten the demise of fossil fuels. However, we recognise that the burning of fossil fuels is not the only contributor to the Climate Emergency.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference** **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Approximately, a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions comes from meat and dairy and this is only a part of the overall environmental impact which include land and water degradation, acid rain, deforestation, and coral reef death. The greenhouse gas emissions from the meat and dairy industry exceeds that of all transport. Even the UK government's climate change committee says that meat and dairy consumption needs to be reduced by 20 percent.

The necessary reduction in the consumption of meat and dairy presents huge challenges for the trade union movement. Many workers are employed in this industry, including within our own trade union. However, the industry that sustains those workers in one respect is also damaging the environment they live in and offering a damaged future for their children.

We believe that workers and communities affected, must be directly involved in the development of a transition from agriculture based on meat and dairy, to more sustainable alternatives. However, it is clear that, such a transition is necessary.

By leaving the EU, and therefore the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the UK has an opportunity to move away from subsidising meat and dairy farming and instead support arable alternatives that are less damaging to the environment.

If the trade union movement wants to shape what the transition looks like we must come forward with our own proposals, or risk having it undertaken by hostile forces who have no interest in workers and communities affected.

Conference therefore calls for:

- 1) The National Executive Council to ask the TUC to bring together trade unions to develop a sustainable plan for transition away from meat and dairy farming that will safeguard the needs of workers and communities engaged in that industry. This should include, a training and jobs guarantee for those working in that industry, so that the skills and expertise of those affected by the first two demands could be used to develop the more sustainable forms of food production we are calling for;
- 2) Divestment of pension funds from meat and dairy production, to be replaced with investment in more sustainable forms of agriculture;
- 3) An end to state subsidies of the meat and dairy industry, and for such subsidies to instead be invested into more sustainable forms of food production.

***Salford City***

---

Received past the deadline

**SDC Climate Emergency**

***Northumberland Tyne and Wear Health***

---

Received twice

**The Fight Against the Public Sector Pay Freeze and Pay Restraint**

# **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

## **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

***Homerton Hospital NHS Trust***

---

Referred to other bodies in the Union

### **For Fair Public Sector Funding And Against a Public Sector Pay Freeze**

Conference notes that during a time of international pandemic, once more local government workers rose to the occasion alongside other key workers in the NHS, care, transport and retail to keep essential services running and to support lockdown policies that were the front line in reducing infections and allowing time for a vaccine to be developed. We are therefore appalled that the Conservative government has announced that the reward for this vital and lifesaving service will be yet another local government pay freeze.

This is not only an insult to all our members who worked tirelessly and selflessly on the frontline, and in support, but also demonstrates that the Tories are still wedded to the internationally discredited idea of austerity that has done so much damage to this country over the last ten years. This austerity hollowed out the very services that were so vitally needed once the pandemic struck and our members were caught between the decade of economic vandalism that had been done to the public sector from previous Conservative led and ConDem Coalition governments and the mismanagement of the health crisis from the incompetent leadership of the current government.

Conference agrees that UNISON should continue to oppose pay 'offers' which in reality continue to result in further cuts in real living standards for our members and call on the union to campaign for action at every level of UNISON to provide the fair and equitable remuneration that our members deserve. This can only be fully achieved when the public sector gets the funding that is so desperately need in order to have a fair and equitable recovery from the pandemic and the damage done by the current government's mishandling of it.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Build a national campaign to fight against any pay freeze or derisory pay offer that is below our National Joint Council (NJC) demands, alongside calling for the funding from national government to fund it;
- 2) Reject any return to austerity as a part of the post Covid settlement;
- 3) Campaign for investment in local services that will provide safe, secure, well-paid jobs while providing the best outcomes for residents;
- 4) Campaign with others for this investment to be part of a just, green settlement, not just a return to business as usual.

***Manchester***

---

Statement not a motion

### **From pandemic panic to a brighter future**

Inequalities have worsened the impact of the pandemic and the pandemic has worsened inequalities.

## **2021 Virtual Special Delegate Conference**

### **UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

The Marmot report “Build Back Fairer” says: “mismanagement during the pandemic, and the unequal way the pandemic has struck, is of a piece with what happened... in the decade from 2010... enduring social and economic inequalities... mean that public health was threatened before and during the pandemic and will be after.”

As the largest union we can play an important role campaigning for essential measures to build a fairer and greener post Covid 19 society. These include:

- 1) The right to isolate on full pay; improved sick pay for all, on principle of levelling up conditions;
- 2) Comprehensive reversal of privatisation and outsourcing; full public ownership of health and social care;
- 3) Benefits increased to a livable level. The TUC demand is £260 per week. Strengthening of furlough and self-employment schemes as necessary;
- 4) Increase in the minimum wage to £15 per hour, scrapping exemptions and differentials. Action to increase wages; substantial increases for public-sector workers;
- 5) Repeal of all anti union laws;
- 6) Banning of zero hours contracts;
- 7) Reversal of all cuts since 2010 and to increase funding;
- 8) Abolition of ‘No Recourse to Public Funds’;
- 9) Creation of millions of secure, well-paid, green, public jobs;
- 10) Tax the rich and take banking and finance into democratic public ownership, to pay for investment in extended public services.

***Lambeth***