

UNISON Virtual Retired Members' Conference

Conference agenda and guide

12/13 October 2021

Virtual

Monitoring for Fair Representation and Proportionality

All delegates will be asked to complete an online form which enables the Conference to be monitored in order that UNISON can check on progress towards its objectives of fair representation and proportionality at all levels of the union. This exercise is conducted at all UNISON conferences and at regional level.

The form is available at: <https://survey.alchemer.eu/s3/90380204/UNISON-Representation-Form-2021-Virtual-Retired-Members-Conference>

Or by scanning the QR Code:



Please assist us by completing the online form before the end of conference.

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Welcome to the UNISON Virtual Retired Members' Conference 2021

A very warm welcome to everyone joining UNISON's Virtual Retired Members' Conference this year.

Holding a virtual conference in this way will be a new experience for you, but I hope you will feel able to get involved and play a part in shaping the future of our union.

This guide includes the motions and amendments that make up the final agenda for conference, along with practical information about how the event will be run.

I hope you find the guide helpful.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature reads "Christina McAnea".

Christina McAnea
General Secretary

How to attend UNISON Virtual Retired Members' Conference 2021

Delegate Information

Welcome to UNISON's Virtual Retired Members' Conference.

Due to coronavirus and the on-going uncertainty surrounding being able to meet in large groups, we are running Retired Members' Conference on a virtual platform.

Retired Members' Conference may look and feel very different to what we are used to, but the National Executive Council feels that it is important to give our retired members and activists a platform to discuss the issues the union faces and use our democratic processes to shape how we work in the future.

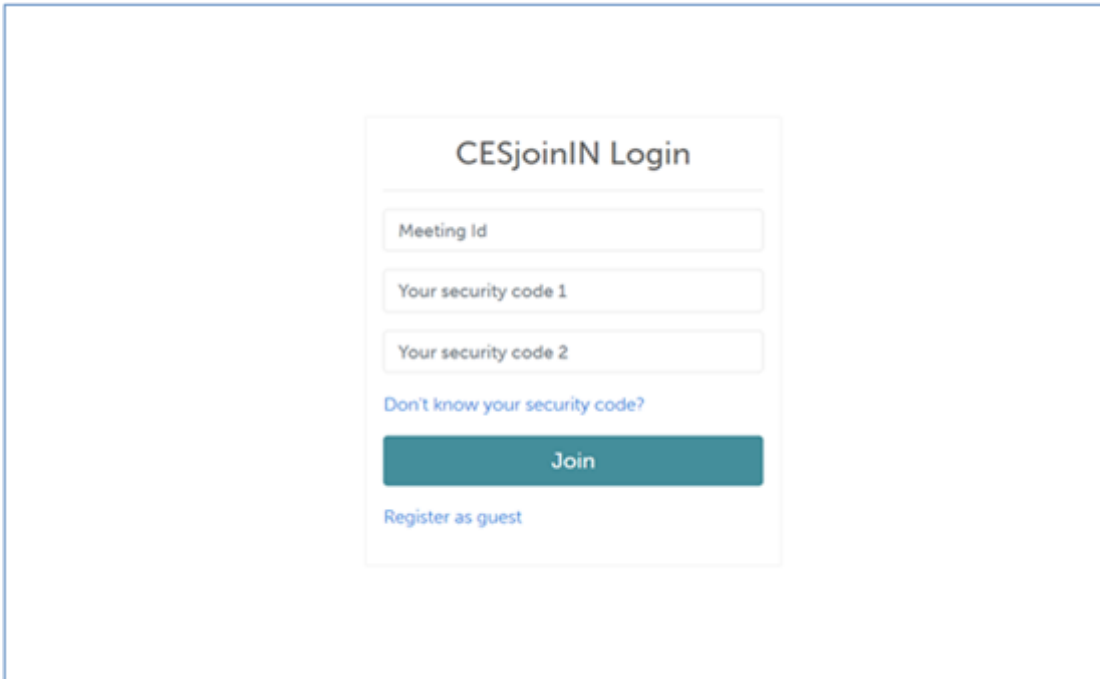
How to attend Virtual Retired Members' Conference

In order to fully experience Virtual Retired Members' Conference you will need to have the following things in place:-

- Your meeting and access codes – these will be e-mailed to you 48 hours before conference and you will need to login at the start of each session.
- If you do not receive your access codes before Conference starts, please contact the Conference Office via email conferences@unison.co.uk
- Access to a PC, laptop, tablet or mobile device with the following minimum specification:-
 - Access to the internet – either by hard wire, WiFi or a mobile signal of at least 3mbs
 - The CESjoinIN site supports most common browsers including all recent versions of Chrome, Safari, Internet Explorer, Firefox and Edge. Internet Explorer has been replaced by Edge and is no longer supported. For the best viewing experience, please update to the latest version of your browser. The video stream is similar to viewing YouTube or iPlayer or other streaming services so if you can view those services then you should be able to view the event.
 - A video walkthrough of the CESjoinIN is available here: <https://vimeo.com/458073736/9495e81fb4>
 - Any other reasonable adjustment you personally require to use the device

Sign in Page

Please follow the link to the CESjoinIN Login in page - <https://attend.cesjoinin.com/>
You should see the following screen:-



Enter your meeting ID and your two security codes (keep these safe and confidential as you will need them to log-in to each session of Conference). This will take you to the welcome page, which should look a bit like the example below.

Welcome Page



On the right-hand side of your screen (where the UNISON Logo is) is where the live stream of Conference will be. This screen will be active throughout all of the Conference sessions and will have an integrated BSL signer and subtitles for all Conference sessions.

On the left hand side of the page you will see some “welcome text” about Conference and four tabs over to the left. The first one being “welcome” which is where you should be now.

Documents Page



The second tab on the left is the “documents” tab – here you will find links to any Conference specific documents, like the Standing Orders Report, the Conference guide – with all of the motions that will be debated at Conference.

Voting Page



The third tab on the left will take you to the voting page. When a vote is called, this page will “pop out” and you will have the ability to vote on the motion being debated at that time. There will also be an alert on the top right-hand side of the page when the votes open and close. You will be able to vote for or against for any motion, and change your vote as many times as you like until the voting is closed.

Results Tab



Once the vote is closed, and the Chair reads out the result, you will be able to see the results of closed motions in the Results tab on the left – which is the fourth tab.

Troubleshooting

If you have issues signing in – you can call the Conference office on 0207 121 5123 or e-mail on conferences@unison.co.uk

Conference Timetable

Tuesday 12th October

1.30pm – 2pm

Black Members' Caucus meeting

2.10pm – 2.40pm

LGBT+ Members' Caucus meeting

2.50pm – 3.20pm

Disabled Members' Caucus meeting

3.30pm – 4pm

Women Members' Caucus meeting

Wednesday 13th October

9.30am – 12.30pm

Morning conference session

(Break 11am – 11.15am)

1.30pm – 4.30pm

Afternoon conference session

(Break 3pm – 3.15pm)

Caucus meetings

Meetings will be virtual this year by way of Zoom meetings and details of the links to enable members to participate will be emailed to delegates nearer to conference. They will not be part of the Civica system.

The caucus meetings are informal meetings open to retired members who identify themselves as belonging to the following groups: women members, Black members, disabled members and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender plus members. There is a specific meeting for each group.

Due to the informal nature of these meetings there will be no staff involvement (except to provide technical support in setting up the virtual meetings) and members attending are free to identify the issues of mutual interest they wish to discuss in a confidential environment. However, it would be advisable for each meeting to agree a person to facilitate debate by ensuring that everyone, who wishes to, has a chance to participate in discussions.

At each meeting there will be an election to select the two retired member delegates to attend the relevant self-organised group conference. Nominations were sought prior to conference.

Each meeting should also appoint a reporter to produce a report for consideration by the National Retired Members' Committee.

CARD VOTES for Virtual Conference

A card vote will be held if the results of the voting are tied.

This will be relayed to Conference by the President.

If the President calls a card vote – the same motion will be voted on again, but the system will use the voting strength of the branch to calculate the votes.

Each branch's voting strength has been pre-loaded to the system and will divide the total of available votes equally across all registered delegates – for example – 100 branch votes across 4 delegates would equal 25 votes each.

If a delegate is not in attendance or does not vote – then their share of the branches voting strength will be lost.

The President will announce the opening and closing of each vote

Final Agenda

Motions and amendments admitted to the agenda

Conference Motions and Amendments

Following are the motions and amendments approved for the 2021 Retired Members' Conference. Motions and amendments ruled out of order are also included.

Motions and Amendments admitted to the agenda (list)

1	Gender Pension Gap	West Midlands Region
2	Widowers' Pensions	West Midlands Region
3	A New Settlement For Care Services Proposed By The NPC	South West Region
3.1		National Retired Members Organisation
3.2		West Midlands Region
4	A New Settlement For Care Services Proposed By The NPC	Devon County
4.1		National Retired Members Organisation
4.2		West Midlands Region
5	Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) Decisions, Covid, And Older People In Need Of Care	East Midlands Region
6	Access To GP Services	Birmingham UNISON Branch
7	The Impact Of Services Moving Online On Older/Elderly People	Leicestershire County
7.1		West Midlands Region
7.2		Islington UNISON (M)
8	Self Harm Amongst Over-65's	Knowsley
9	Pensioner Poverty	National Retired Members' Committee
9.1		West Midlands Region
10	Ensuring That The Living Standards Of Older People Are Not The Price Paid For The Cost Of The Pandemic	National Retired Members' Committee
10.1		West Midlands Region
11	Women's Pensions - Underpayment	National Retired Members' Committee

12	Rights Of Older People In The UK To Treatment During The Pandemic	Northern Ireland Region
13	Ageism in Covid Age	Cymru/Wales Region
13.1		West Midlands Region
13.2		Enfield LG UNISON
14	Disappointed If You Fail, Doomed If You Don't Try	Hampshire
14.1		National Retired Members Organisation
15	Exploit Modern Communication Systems	Hampshire
16	Surprise, Surprise! You Will Receive 25 Whole Pence Age Allowance Each Week When You Reach Your 80th Birthday!	Hampshire
16.1		Yorkshire - Humberside Region
17	Retired Members And Technology	Hampshire
17.1		Yorkshire - Humberside Region
17.2		National Retired Members Organisation
17.3		West Midlands Region
18	Retired Members Conference	Southwark
18.1		West Midlands Region
19	E-scooters and Older People	Greater London Region

Note: Motion 19 is a motion that has been re-admitted onto the agenda as the result of a successful appeal.

Composites

The following have been identified as possible composites:

3	A New Settlement For Care Services Proposed By The NPC	South West Region
3.1		National Retired Members Organisation
3.2		West Midlands Region
4	A New Settlement For Care Services Proposed By The NPC	Devon County
4.1		National Retired Members Organisation
4.2		West Midlands Region

Final agreed Composites will be notified in Standing orders Report No 1

Motions and Amendments rule out of order

ACTION NOT SPECIFIC TO THE CONFERENCE

Public Toilets	Birmingham Branch
Inheritance Tax	Leicestershire County
Their Contribution should be recognised	Hampshire
LGPS Divestment campaign	Bolton Metro

BEYOND THE REMIT OF THE CONFERENCE

Inflation And Delayed Cost Of Living Payments For Pensioners	South West Region
Inflation And Delayed Cost Of Living Payments For Pensioners (Duplicate Of Above)	Devon County
Climate Change	Scotland Region
Covid Lockdowns, Fraud and the Elderly	Leicestershire County
Retired Members Holding Branch Office	Eastern Region
Timetable Of Retired Members Annual Conference	Eastern Region
Telephone, Doorstep And Email Scams	East Midlands Region
Retired Members Holding Branch Office	Environment Agency Anglian

COULD PLACE THE UNION IN LEGAL JEOPARDY

Retired Members Information	Southwark
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REQUIRING A RULE CHANGE

Retired Members Political Fund Contributions	West Midlands Region
Rewarding Loyalty Of Service	Flintshire County Branch
We Are Not Bad People	Hampshire
Retired Members Representing Members Employed In Non-Unionised Workplaces	Bolton Metro

STATEMENT NOT A MOTION

Free TV Licence Over 75 Payment	Scotland Region
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NOT SUFFICIENTLY CLEAR

The Digital Age	North West Region
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Motions and Amendments (text)

1. GENDER PENSION GAP

Conference notes that in 2018/19, the United Kingdom's (UK'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:
 - (a) The cumulative lifetime impact of the gender pay gap; and,
 - (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; and,
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 Retired Members' Committee, seeking the support of the National Executive Council as need be 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; and,
- iv) Steps to ensure that everybody whose income is too low to pay income tax nevertheless gets a government contribution to their pension saving.

West Midlands Region

2. WIDOWERS' PENSIONS

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
3. 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 Retired Members' Committee, collaborating with the National Executive Council and 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; and,
- (b) Seek to ensure appropriate advice is issued to UNISON members on their entitlement and how to claim it.

West Midlands Region

3. A New Settlement for Care Services Proposed by the NPC

In May 2020, the National Pensioners Convention published a booklet "Goodbye Cinderella – A New Settlement for Care Services" which included 15 recommendations: -

- 1) A National Care Service funded by general taxation delivering high quality care, free at the point of need with the service user at its heart.
2. A National Care Service must be fully funded. It also requires the full funding of the NHS and Local Government to ensure that assessments are carried out and needs met.
3. A "joined-op" service with no division between health and social care provision. Individuals and their carers will be entitled to receive a variety of care services from a range of regulated providers with communication the key to ensuring a seamless transition process between providers.
4. A new approach to training the care workforce (including managers) that raises the status and skills of the workforce in order to respond to individual needs. Urgently develop a mandatory programme of training, publicly provided, nationally accredited and transferable qualifications to ensure stability and raise standards. The policies of other government departments, for example, immigration, should not work against the need for, or operation of, a National Care Service.
5. All employed care workers to be required to register. England is the only nation in the UK that does not require care workers to be registered by a professional body.
6. Recognition of the important and different role played by "family/informal carers" against that of employed care workers. Support services must be in place to assess their needs and meet them. Implement the Care Act fully and ensure the long-awaited Appeals Procedure is in place.
7. Parity of illness and impairment, so that those with dementia and other long-term conditions are no longer means-tested for care or treatment, whether they receive it at home, in residential care or respite care.
8. Preventative services such as care, support and advocacy need to be widely available to enable individuals and their carers to maintain their independence, health and well-being and social inclusion wherever they are.
9. Investment in the long-term housing needs of older people, as sub-standard housing conditions exacerbate the poor health of many older people.
10. A robust, independent regulatory body that individuals, their rights body to oversee and ensure that individuals are protected, their rights safeguarded, complaints investigated, recommendations acted upon and feedback encouraged.
11. More frequent inspections carried out by highly trained inspectors working in a multi-disciplinary setting to help provide improve standards and to use enforcement more appropriately when vulnerable people are shown to be at risk of abuse, neglect or poor standards of service.
12. Reintroduce a mixed economy of care so that residential care and other key services for older people can be increasingly provided by Local Authorities, the not-for-profit Voluntary Sector, the NHS and others, thereby reducing the role of the private sector.

13. The government must develop a strategy to remove private sector equity funded providers from care services in view of their precarious and unethical financial structures and practices. All contracts for care must be based on public sector criteria and standards

14. Generational Fairness – no section of the population is penalised by regressive taxation or inequitable penalties.

15. A national debate on how we move to a National Care Service and its structure, must take place with the public and other stakeholder, with government of the day being open and honest about the cost and the need for current public spending.

The National Retired Members' Conference endorses all the recommendations contained in this report and calls upon the National Retired Members' Committee to support a national care service and work with the NPC in its campaign for a better, fairer and sustainable future for care of the elderly.

South West Region

3.1

Add the following sentence at the end of the motion:

"Such work to be carried out alongside the National Retired Members' Committee's continuing support for "Care after Covid: A UNISON vision for social care" and UNISON's Care Workers For Change campaign."

National Retired Members Organisation

3.2

Add a new first paragraph:

Conference notes that social care is a service delivered in a variety of settings to users of all ages. UNISON is the principal union that organises care workers and it has launched a distinct campaign led by care workers, Care Workers for Change. UNISON also represents a variety of service user interests including those articulated by this Retired Members' organisation, others that arise within the self-organised groups and those of UNISON members who are family and informal carers and who rely on UNISON's support to combine that role with work. Conference welcomes UNISON's publication, Care After Covid, issued in June 2020.

In the final paragraph:

- Delete "endorses all the recommendations in this report and"
- Delete "work" and substitute – "raise the National Pensioners' Convention's report with the National Executive Council and with relevant Service Groups and Self-Organised Groups with a view to UNISON working"

West Midlands Region

4. A NEW SETTLEMENT FOR CARE SERVICES PROPOSED BY THE NPC

In May 2020, the National Pensioners Convention published a booklet "Goodbye Cinderella – A New Settlement for Care Services" which included 15 recommendations: -

- 1) A National Care Service funded by general taxation delivering high quality care free at the point of need with the service user at its heart.
- 2) A National Care Service must be fully funded. It also requires the full funding of the NHS and Local Government to ensure that assessments are carried out and needs met.
- 3) A "joined-op" service with no division between health and social care provision. Individuals and their carers will be entitled to receive a variety of care services from a range of regulated providers with communication the key to ensuring a seamless transition process between providers.
- 4) A new approach to training the care workforce (including managers) that raises the status and skills of the workforce in order to respond to individual needs. Urgently develop a mandatory programme of training, publicly provided, nationally accredited and transferable qualifications to ensure stability and raise standards. The policies of other government departments, for example, immigration, should not work against the need for, or operation of, a National Care Service,
- 5) All employed care workers to be required to register. England is the only nation in the UK that does not require care workers to be registered by a professional body.
- 6) Recognition of the important and different role played by "family/informal carers" against that of employed care workers. Support services must be in place to assess their needs and meet them. Implement the Care Act fully and ensure the long-awaited Appeals Procedure is in place.
- 7) Parity of illness and impairment, so that those with dementia and other long-term conditions are no longer means-tested for care or treatment, whether they receive it at home, in residential care or respite care.
- 8) Preventative services such as care, support and advocacy need to be widely available to enable individuals and their carers to maintain their independence, health and well-being and social inclusion wherever they are.
- 9) Investment in the long-term housing needs of older people, as sub-standard housing conditions exacerbate the poor health of many older people.
- 10) A robust, independent regulatory body that individuals, their rights body to oversee and ensure that individuals are protected, their rights safeguarded, complaints investigated, recommendations acted upon and feedback encouraged.
- 11) More frequent inspections carried out by highly trained inspectors working in a multi-disciplinary setting to help provide improve standards and to use enforcement more appropriately when vulnerable people are shown to be at risk of abuse, neglect or poor standards of service.
- 12) Reintroduce a mixed economy of care so that residential care and other key services for older people can be increasingly provided by Local Authorities, the not-for-profit Voluntary Sector, the NHS and others, thereby reducing the role of the private sector.

- 13) The government must develop a strategy to remove private sector equity funded providers from care services in view of their precarious and unethical financial structures and practices. All contracts for care must be based on public sector criteria and standards
- 14) Generational Fairness – no section of the population is penalised by regressive taxation or inequitable penalties.
- 15) A national debate on how we move to a National Care Service and its structure, must take place with the public and other stakeholder, with government of the day being open and honest about the cost and the need for current public spending.

The National Retired Members Conference endorses all the recommendations contained in this report and calls upon the National Retired Members Committee to support a national care service and work with the NPC in its campaign for a better, fairer and sustainable future for care of the elderly.

Devon County

4.1

Add the following sentence at the end of the motion:

"Such work to be carried out alongside the National Retired Members' Committee's continuing support for "Care after Covid: A UNISON vision for social care" and UNISON's Care Workers For Change campaign."

National Retired Members Organisation

4.2

Add a new first paragraph:

Conference notes that social care is a service delivered in a variety of settings to users of all ages. UNISON is the principal union that organises care workers and it has launched a distinct campaign led by care workers, Care Workers for Change. UNISON also represents a variety of service user interests including those articulated by this Retired Members' organisation, others that arise within the self-organised groups and those of UNISON members who are family and informal carers and who rely on UNISON's support to combine that role with work. Conference welcomes UNISON's publication, Care After Covid, issued in June 2020.

In the final paragraph:

- Delete "endorses all the recommendations in this report and"
- Delete "work" and substitute – "raise the National Pensioners' Convention's report with the National Executive Council and with relevant Service Groups and Self-Organised Groups with a view to UNISON working"

West Midlands Region

5. DO NOT ATTEMPT CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION (DNACPR) DECISIONS, COVID, AND OLDER PEOPLE IN NEED OF CARE

National Retired Members Conference expresses its deep concern about the number of deaths occurring in Care Homes from Covid 19.

We are concerned that

- a) Covid-positive patients were discharged from hospital into care homes.
- b) Delay in ensuring that care home staff were provided with sufficient, effective PPE, were evident.
- c) There appeared to be a reluctance to admit Covid positive patients into hospital.

We note with alarm that a report from the Care Quality Commission found disturbing variations in people's experiences of do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation (DNACPR) decisions during the pandemic.

Blanket orders not to resuscitate some care home residents at the start of the Covid pandemic have been identified. Best practice is for proper discussions to be held with the person involved and/or their relatives. While examples of good practice were identified, some people were not properly involved in decisions or were unaware that such an important decision about their care had been made. Poor record-keeping, and a lack of oversight and scrutiny of the decisions being made, was identified.

The report surveyed a range of individuals and organisations, including care providers and members of the public, and identified:

- Serious concerns about breaches of some individuals' human rights
- Significant increase in DNACPRs put in place in care homes at the beginning of the pandemic, from 16,876 to 26,555
- 119 adult social care providers felt they had been subjected to blanket DNACPR decisions since the start of the pandemic
- A GP sent DNACPR letters to care homes asking them to put blanket DNACPRs in place
- In one care home a blanket DNACPR was applied to everyone over 80 with dementia.

We note that the CQC is conducting a review into the use of DNACPRs in Care homes to establish good practice and that these decisions are an important part of advanced care planning and good quality care.

We call on the National Retired Members Committee to work with the NEC and relevant Service Groups to make sure that UNISON produces union guidance for retired members about their care rights and also how health and care organisations can establish better practice in Care Homes. This must include that where DNACPR notices are issued, they are recorded in patient files only after discussion with the patient and relatives where relevant, and always only with informed consent. This should take account of cases where the patient has granted Power of Attorney.

East Midlands Region

6. ACCESS TO GP SERVICES

This conference notes with concern the findings of the survey carried out in December 2020 by the Birmingham UNISON Retired Members Section, that during the pandemic it has been increasingly difficult to access GP services. As the survey has indicated, there is a major problem with the more vulnerable elderly section of society – where health issues will generally be more urgent - accessing GP services, leading to frustration and fears that the delays being encountered could affect people's health.

Of the 90 members who took part in the survey, 52 % said they had had difficulty in getting an appointment. While most had to wait around a week to get an appointment, some respondents had to wait longer than a month. Only 10 % of respondents had face to face consultations with their GP, the remainder having phone or virtual consultations only.

There is increasing evidence that this is a nationwide problem, with the Royal College of GPs saying they now only have face to face consultations with 7 out of every 100 patients. Meanwhile the Healthwatch report, GP Access During Covid-19 – Review of evidence April 2019 – 2020, reported a major shift in which the way elderly and vulnerable are being treated. Problems include:

- Telephone triages, normally being carried out by receptionist staff, with on average up to 3 contacts to get access to a GP
- Delays in getting appointments, with long telephone queues
- Limited face to face consultations, while home visits have been virtually non-existent
- An assumption by GPs that the elderly age group and those on low incomes have digital or telephone access
- Telephone or digital consultations discriminate against people with hearing and sensory difficulties or those with advancing dementia, and for those where English is not their first language
- Difficulties with access to GPs is likely to continue given the huge backlog of non-Covid health care.

While recognising the operational difficulties that GP Practices have faced during the pandemic, the elderly age group are now most likely to be fully vaccinated, as GP Practice staff will be too, so the previous concerns around social distancing are beginning to recede, opening the opportunity for the return of face to face consultation.

This conference notes its concern that the pandemic is being used to make virtual consultation the 'new normal', and shares the view of many bodies such as the British Medical Association that new online services are letting the private sector skim off healthier patients with short-term care needs, while leaving other parts of the NHS - funded by the taxpayer - with a heavier financial burden, looking after the more vulnerable with long-term health needs.

This conference therefore calls upon the National Retired Members Committee to work with those campaigning for improved access to GPs and medical services, including Healthwatch England, National Voices, the Patients Association, the National Pensioners Convention and Age UK.

Birmingham UNISON Branch

7. THE IMPACT OF SERVICES MOVING ONLINE ON OLDER/ELDERLY PEOPLE

Conference notes the inexorable drift towards services and activities being online which has been markedly accelerated during the covid pandemic and its impact on the older demographic.

New analysis from Age UK shows that the pandemic has not in fact produced a sea change in older people's use of digital technology and that there needs to be greater support for those who are offline and finding it increasingly difficult to access essential goods and services which could leave millions of older people high and dry.

The charity's new report Digital inclusion and older people - how have things changed in a Covid-19 world? published in March 2021 shows that while 24% of over-75s in England have increased their internet usage since the pandemic hit, this is mainly driven by existing users going online more often. Indeed a few months into the pandemic more than two in five (42%) of this age group were still non-users - busting the myth that as a result of this health emergency 'everyone' is now online.

Caroline Abrahams, Charity Director at Age UK, said: "These new findings debunk the idea that the pandemic has prompted a headlong rush online among our older population, and that once an older person starts to use computers they continue to do so and carry out an ever-wider range of tasks using technology. This will disappoint many businesses and policy makers who are keen to move to a digital approach, in the hope of cutting costs. However, our analysis shows that if we continue in that direction and do nothing else, we will simply marginalise millions of older people who either cannot or do not wish to use computers, many of whom never will."

Whilst acknowledging that there has been an increase in internet use among older people, this is mainly due to existing older online users broadening their range of such activities rather than an overall increase by everyone in this demographic and that there are still almost two million over-75s who are not using computers at all. Indeed, analysis showed that usage among those already online declined between 2020 and 2021.

Furthermore, this apparent compulsion for everyone and everything to be online ignores several important features beside the fact that significant numbers of older people neither have nor use computers or smart phones:

- 1 affordability - many older people live on or close to the breadline and cannot afford computers and/or smart phones;
- 2 access - older people who may want to use computers will now find options such as public libraries either have fewer opportunities, have closed and have few if any staff available to assist;
- 3 IT training - older people will need training options which seem to be few and far between and rarely offer courses beyond Microsoft thus excluding anyone with other, mainly Apple, equipment. Such courses would need to be free or affordable;
- 4 social isolation - many older people live alone and find services and activities now being moved online an important means of social contact within their community;
- 5 choice - the move to do everything online seems to ignore the option for people to be able to choose how they partake of services, activities etc including doing so in person rather than digitally.

Conference believes that this issue needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency and the reality of significant numbers of older people being left behind in this one-dimensional digital world.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to:

- 1 liaise with the NEC about the impact of access to services & activities being moved online on older people, particularly the apparent lack of choice which will leave many excluded from societal essentials;
- 2 liaise with the NPC on this issue including working with Age UK as appropriate with reference to their report on this matter;
- 3 liaise with the regions to canvass opinion on this matter and if possible, ascertain its impact on the union's retired members;
- 4 report back to Retired Members' Conference 2022.

Leicestershire County

7.1

6th paragraph, bullet point 3 - after "IT training - older people will need" add "face to face"

West Midlands Region

7.2

"In the final paragraph, after '...Committee to:', insert new action point to read:

'1. Draft a survey, to be circulated through Regional Retired Members' Committees to Branches, to identify how many retired members are suffering digital exclusion and seek to ascertain the reasons for this based on the features outlined in points 1 to 5 above;'

and renumber subsequent action points accordingly."

Islington UNISON

8. SELF-HARM AMONGST OVER 65S

Conference notes with concern the amount of self-harm amongst over 65s, as highlighted in work undertaken by Professor Nav Kapur, advisor to the NHS on suicide prevention.

Whilst it is recognised that the Covid crisis is likely to have increased this problem, there are long standing social issues that underlie it, including social isolation, cuts in social service provision and pensioner poverty.

Conference calls on the National Retired Members Committee to consider this matter, and to make appropriate representations within the union, and politically to increase public awareness of this problem and to press for the financial and other resources to be provided to tackle the problem

Knowsley

9. PENSIONER POVERTY

Conference notes that many pensioners live in poverty and have a precarious existence. Many pensioners did not have access to an occupational pension and many remain unaware that they can claim pension credit to increase their income.

The UK state pension is one of the lowest in the developed world. Women are particularly affected by low income on retirement. In a speech in the House of Lords in February 2020 Baroness Janke stated 'There is a significant pensions gender gap. The average pension pot of a woman aged 65 is one-fifth that of a 65-year-old man's, and over 20 years, women receive £29,000 less in state pension than men. This deficit is set to continue, with all else being equal, closing by only 3% by 2060. Women are often most acutely disadvantaged by divorce.'

One example of increasing poverty amongst older women, in particular is the significant increase in the number filing for bankruptcy. From 2008 to 2018 the number of women over 65 entering bankruptcy doubled.

Conference is aware that the Triple Lock was introduced to counter pensioner poverty. Conference reiterates its support for a living pension and pension equality.

Therefore, Conference calls upon the National Retired Members' Committee (NRMC) to work with the National Executive Council (NEC), the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and organisations representing pensioners to: -

- 1) Oppose the lifting of the Triple Lock even temporarily;
2. Promote the take up of pension credit;
3. Press the Government to establish a working party including representatives of the TUC, organisations representing pensioners in the UK and the Commissioners for Older People in Northern Ireland and Wales. The Working Party will make recommendations on measures to eliminate pensioner poverty and the gender pensions gap;
4. Press for the appointment of a Commissioner for Older People in every part of the UK in addition to those already in post in Northern Ireland and Wales.

National Retired Members' Committee

9.1

Add a new paragraph after "Conference reiterates its support for a living pension and pension equality." as follows -

"Conference recalls the resolution of the 2018 Retired Members' Conference (Motion 9 as amended) which instructed the National Retired members' Committee, seeking the support of the National Executive Council as need be, to:

- A. Examine the case for a commissioner for older people, whether for England or for the United Kingdom, their appointment, accountability, responsibilities, etc;
- B. Examine other ways older people might gain a voice at the highest level of decision-making;
and,
- C. Submit its conclusions and recommendations to retired members' conference (in 2019 or 2020).

Conference looks forward to these recommendations and conclusions in the near future.

In the final paragraph -

- Add at the end of sub-paragraph (2): - “, assess the effectiveness of take-up campaigns and continue to campaign for a Real Living Pension not subject to means testing”.
- Add at the beginning of sub-paragraph (4): “Examine, without further delay, the case for commissioner(s) for older people in line with our 2018 resolution, then, subject to our conference’s agreement next year”,

West Midlands Region

10. 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 75's;
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; and,
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 5 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 70's. 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 therefore calls on the National Retired Members' Committee to work with the National Executive Council and all appropriate bodies to:

I) To defend retired members from attacks on their standard of living; and

II. To promote the key importance of public services and public service workers to stimulate and ensure a healthy economy, as well as providing the essential services that so many older people rely on.

National Retired Members' Committee

10.1

In the second paragraph:

- Delete "is" and substitute: "and the United Kingdom government's proposal to align the qualifying age for free prescriptions in England with State Pension Age are".

- After "come." add: "Austerity was a con. There was no austerity for the rich. The number of British billionaires grew annually from 2010. The same is true now. During the first year of the pandemic, the global wealth of billionaires increased from \$8 trillion to \$13 trillion. Amazon boss, Geoff Bezos, could give each of his employees a £43,000 bonus and still be as rich as he was at the start of the crisis. Tory donors who gave the Conservative Party £8.2 million recouped £881 million in government contracts. Conference finds it unacceptable" (then, continue "to ask the older generation").

Delete the third paragraph and substitute: "We are all paying the cost of Covid, one way or another and we must not be distracted into arguments over which section of the working class has suffered most – or least".

In the final paragraph:

- Move "and," from the end of the first sub-paragraph to the end of the second; and,

- Add a new sub-paragraph: "iii. Make the rich pay."

West Midlands Region

11. WOMEN'S PENSIONS UNDERPAYMENT

Conference notes that the Government announced earlier this year that there had been an underpayment of up to £3 billion in total of pensions for some who reached State Pension Age (SPA) before April 2016 and fall into certain categories.

These sums affect thousands of women and some men who were underpaid their state pensions and not all will receive their repayments in full. It is estimated that it will take 6 years to repay all those affected. All this allegedly due to a computer glitch.

Tens of thousands, possibly as many as 200,000 women, are affected and it could boost their pension payments by up to 60%. Whilst it is understood that the majority of those affected will receive a letter and an automatic backdated payment which could be in the £1,000s. The average payment will be £13,500 but could be potentially far more.

However, others will need to check their pension entitlement and will need to make a claim and not all those who have been underpaid will receive the full sum owed to them and others may just slip through the net.

Conference is aware that the high cost of living has meant that many impoverished pensioners are dependent on food banks and the delivery of cooked meals daily. The pandemic has highlighted many injustices and the women's pensions underpayment is another. It is unacceptable and the government needs to pay up now rather than continuing a policy of making the rich richer and the poor even poorer.

Therefore, Conference calls upon the National Retired Members' Committee to:

1. Raise awareness of the issue with the National Executive Council, Labour Link and the TUC;
2. Campaign with the National Pensioners' Convention and Age UK for the immediate repayment of the underpaid pensions in full to all those affected.

National Retired Members' Committee

12. RIGHTS OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE UK TO TREATMENT DURING THE PANDEMIC

As governments around the world begin developing ethical guidelines on hospital treatment and admission, organisations across the UK, including the Commissioners for Older People have issued a call to UK governments to ensure that such guidance upholds fundamental human rights principles and is free from discrimination on the grounds of age.

They state: "... We strongly believe that decisions about treatment should always be made on a case by case basis through honest discussion between doctors, patients and their families that factor in the risks, benefits, and people's wishes. There is no reason to abandon this long-established good practice now; in fact, the current health emergency makes it more critical than ever that we keep it.

In addition, the fact that someone is in need of care and support, in a care home or their own home, should not be used as a proxy for their health status, nor blanket policies applied - for example, over whether they should be admitted to hospital. To make such decisions without considering either an older person's needs or their capacity to benefit from hospital treatment would be discriminatory and unfair."

Conference welcomes and supports the joint statement and calls for a UNISON campaign calling for open and transparent guidance and direct UNISON involvement to help protect the human rights of our retired members and older people in general.

UNISON Northern Ireland

13. Ageism in a Covid Age

This Retired Members' Conference recognises that ageism exists, and that ageism is a bias from one age group towards another. It includes the use of stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination against people based on their age.

Evidence shows ageism is widespread in society and can be found everywhere from our workplaces and health systems to the stereotypes we see on TV, advertising and in the media. In the UK ageism is the most prevalent form of discrimination amongst all age groups, with one in three people experiencing age-based prejudice or discrimination.

Common ageist themes that affect people in later life include:

- Pitting younger and older generations against each other.
- Reducing older people to stereotypes.
- Portraying later life as a time of frailty and decline.

This Conference understands that for older people, the fear of ageism has intensified during this period of the Covid pandemic. Some of the language and framing of issues has been deeply troubling, from labelling all people aged over 70 as 'vulnerable' to the questioning of the value of protecting people in later life. The use of the term 'elderly' can be very offensive to many of this union's mature members.

To give one specific area of concern which arose during lockdown was seen in Do Not Attempt Resuscitation (DNAR) decisions being made without consulting either the person or their family

For many members the way we talk about ageing influences how we feel about the ageing process and how we act towards people in other age groups. One of the biggest obstacles to embracing later life is that the way we think and talk about ageing? Is consistently negative.

Contrary to media representations of intergenerational conflict, 80% of people believe older adults have a wealth of experience and perspectives to offer society today

This Conference calls upon the National Retired Members Committee to work with the National Executive Council, National Service Groups, National Self Organised Groups, National Young Members Group and all appropriate staff to actively campaign internally within UNISON and externally with the TUC and the Labour Link to: -

- i) Challenge ageism in everyday conversations? And ensure that no UNISON literature or press coverage contains anything that could be interpreted as ageist language, and that all such literature is supportive of older people.
- ii) In the routine monitoring of press coverage, challenge ageist inferences by the press and media.
- iii) Cover this issue in literature produced by UNISON nationally such as the U magazine.
- iv) Work with other appropriate interested organisations such as the Third Age Trust to promote the interests of older people.

Cymru/Wales Region

13.1

In the first paragraph after "use" add: "by those with the power to do so"

At the end of the second paragraph, following the bullet points, add:

"and lead to outcomes such as unemployment, poverty, ill-health, lack of access to goods and services, loneliness and early death."

In the third paragraph:

- Delete "the fear of": and,

- After "pandemic", add: "including:

- A. Job losses among older workers:

- B. Growing poverty, especially among the very old people and among older women;

- C. A number of issues about older people's treatment in health and social care settings; and,

- D. Rising crime, especially fraud, targeting older people"

Add new seventh and eighth (third-last and second-last) paragraphs:

"Trade Unions organise members around common experience. Among the common experiences of nearly all of us, as UNISON retired members, is the prejudice and discrimination we face as we get older."

"Conference believes that tackling ageism should be a theme underpinning our Retired Members' Organisation's work and that, with others, we have a role to play to take up this equality issue across all UNISON's structures."

In the final paragraph, add a new sub-paragraph:

"i. Try to ensure that ageism is given a priority in UNISON's work similar to the priority given to other equality issues;"

Renumber existing sub-paragraphs accordingly.

West Midlands Region

13.2

Add after second paragraph (after 3rd bullet point), new paragraph as follows:

This Conference believes that ageism is sustained by many factors, and that the leadership of those in Government have the power to influence attitudes.

This Conference therefore finds the Prime Minister's Whatsapp message (as follows) with regard to actual and potential COVID-related deaths of those aged 80 and over, to be disgraceful and callous, and further evidence that Boris Johnson is unfit to hold the office of Prime Minister:

"I must say I have been slightly rocked by some of the data on Covid fatalities. The median age is 82 to 81 for men 85 for women. That is above life expectancy. So, get Covid and live longer. Hardly anyone under 60 goes into hospital (four per cent) and of those virtually all survive. And I no longer buy all this NHS overwhelmed stuff. Folks I think we may need to recalibrate. There are max 3m in this country aged over 80. It shows we don't go for nationwide lockdown."

This Conference notes that this comment was sent at a time when the Prime Minister's father was shortly to turn 80, underlining the abhorrent character of the man.

Add new paragraph at end of motion:

This Conference agrees that the recently revealed Whatsapp message from Boris Johnson adds further evidence of his unfitness to be Prime Minister and condemns his attitude to the rights to life and dignity of older people and calls on the National Retired Members Committee to seek to ensure this decision is communicated widely.

Enfield LG UNISON

14. Disappointed if you fail, doomed if you don't try

The past year, particularly for pensioners, has been incredibly difficult.

In its report entitled 'As if expendable', Amnesty International claims that during the first three months of the pandemic, thousands of pensioners died due to government incompetence. Free TV licences were withdrawn for most of those of 75 plus years, the triple lock protection on the state pension was treated by some in Parliament and the media as a plaything to be continually challenged. Worst of all, the ten years of austerity continues, with public services being continually reduced or removed, implementation of which particularly affects pensioners.

We looked to our regional and national committees for leadership to oppose this endless attack on our rights and found none. Instead, it was the National Pensioners Convention and the TUC who offered guidance and information and initiated many responses to the onslaught, which we followed with enthusiasm.

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

To review its lack of leadership during a year when so many aspects of pensioners' lives were either under attack or diminished, not least in some cases the right to life itself.

Consider how their response to these and other similar ongoing issues can be improved and report back to the membership by 1st May 2022, International Workers Day.

Hampshire

14.1

In the second paragraph, first sentence, after "rights" delete "and found none".

In the second paragraph, second sentence, delete "Instead, it was" and replace "the National" with "The National" and after "TUC" delete "who".

In the second paragraph, second sentence, after "enthusiasm." add the following sentence: "It should be noted that much of the TUC guidance and information was originally produced by UNISON to protect all our members. In addition, information was provided by UNISON specifically for retired members."

In action point 1. after "its" delete "lack of".

In action point 2. after "improved" insert "to ensure that UNISON can continue to provide support for retired members"

National Retired Members Organisation

15. EXPLOIT MODERN COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

During the period of the pandemic many of us have grown used to attending meetings, talks and conferences via the internet using such intermediaries as Zoom. Whilst not matching the intimacy and desirability of a head-to-head meeting, they have allowed active if limited participation to continue.

For some retired members the ageing process in its many forms makes attendance to our annual conference impossible. In addition, the limitation on numbers who can actually attend denies access to those who might wish to do so.

Using modern technology these issues can be easily overcome. Live streaming would allow those denied direct access to be observers of the conference. The cost implications of providing such a service would be minimal.

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

Investigate the cost and practical implications of providing a live stream of conference to all members who desire it.

Having satisfied themselves that this is financially acceptable and desirable, to extend the reach and availability of conference, seek to have a system installed by conference 2022.

Hampshire

16. Surprise, surprise! You will receive 25 whole pence age allowance each week when you reach your 80th birthday!

This age addition increase was introduced in September 1971 by Sir Keith Joseph, a Conservative MP. He said it was to recognise 'albeit in a small way the special claims of very elderly people who need help rather more than others. As they grow old their possessions wear out and they need help for necessary jobs they used to do themselves' (Hansard). Nothing has changed that situation since 1971 and does 25 pence per week extra fulfil that need? No, of course not!

In 1971, 25 pence was 4% of the basic State Pension and would buy, for example, either 12 large eggs or one pound of bacon or one pound Cheddar cheese or 4 white loaves costing only 23 pence! Today, 25 pence doesn't even buy a first class stamp or even a 2nd class stamp! Sir Keith Joseph's good intentions have long been forgotten since his statement 48 years ago. No Government has ever considered raising the 25 pence to a more substantial amount to meet all the extra costs an 80 year old incurs. Taking account of inflation, the age addition allowance at 80 years and over should be £50.

MPs and all political parties rely on pensioners to vote and as there are over 11 million of us, we should encourage them to include in their manifestos an increase in the age allowance for the pensioners reaching their 80th birthday and over.

Unison retired members are among the pensioners included in this campaign and some probably don't realise that this paltry amount will be paid to them when they are 80. No publicity has ever been given to this sad state of affairs during the 48 years since it was introduced.

The number of cold-related deaths amongst the elderly increased substantially in the winter of 2017 (Government Office for National Statistics 30 November 2018). How much warmth does 25p buy these days?

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

1) campaign urgently for a substantial increase to the weekly age addition

payment of 25 pence to state pensioners aged 80 and over;

2. report back on progress to the Unison National Retired Members Conference 2022.

Hampshire

16.1

Para 4 - amend 'and calls on UNISON NEC.' to 'to call on UNISON NEC'

Insert after point 1 (new point 2)

2. each UNISON nation / region be asked to organise an appropriately located demonstration and public awareness campaign

Yorkshire - Humberside Region

17. Retired members and technology

It is becoming increasingly apparent that some Unison retired members in Branches and Regions are experiencing difficulties in communicating with colleagues as they are not computer literate or able to afford computers.

Therefore, this Unison National Retired Members Conference instructs the National Retired Members Committee and calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) be aware of this situation when communicating with retired members;
2. Ensure paper communication is continued for those retired members who do not have an email facility or cannot access one;
3. Encourage Branches and Regions to promote technology education and provide computers/printers/paper/cartridges for retired members Officers;
4. To communicate progress on the availability of technology to all retired members on a regular basis.
5. Report back to the 2022 Unison National Retired Members Conference

Hampshire

17.1

Para 2, line 2 - remove 'and calls' and replace with 'to call'

point 1 - insert 'and take due notice' after 'be aware' - to read be aware and take due notice of this situation

point 2 - insert ' request it' after 'who' and delete the rest of the text. It will then read - 'ensure paper communication is continued for those retired members who request it.'

Yorkshire - Humberside Region

17.2

In action point 4. after "progress" delete "on" and insert "and review".

National Retired Members Organisation

17.3

1st Paragraph – after “not computer literate” add “, have disability access barriers”

Bullet point 3, after “promote technology education” add “offering face to face and online options”

West Midlands Region

18. Retired Members Conference

This conference supports the good work of the Retired members National committee in organising the National Retired Members conference. We note that over the last few years it was not possible to debate many submitted motions due to time constraints. This conference requests the NEC to work with the National Retired Members committee to investigate altering the National Retired Members conference timetable with a view to having as much time as possible to debate submitted motions.

Southwark

18.1

Delete "timetable"

West Midlands Region

19. E-SCOOTERS AND OLDER PEOPLE

Conference is concerned over the increasing use of electric powered motorised 2-wheeled scooters (e-scooters) on roads and pavements throughout the United Kingdom. Conference notes that, although versions of e-scooters first appeared on London streets as long ago as 1916, it is only recently that steps are being taken to have them formally classified as motor vehicles and subject to regulation as such.

Whilst conference recognises the contribution e-scooters make to reducing pollution and the green agenda, conference notes that older and disabled people's groups have been raising safety concerns over e-scooters in particular the fact that these vehicles run silently and without any lighting. Older people, who are disproportionately affected by sight and hearing loss, are vulnerable to injury by these scooters being ridden without due care and attention to others.

Conference further notes, the government has given the go-ahead for its own e-scooter trials without considering safety issues nor taking any action over the use of e-scooters outside of the limited scope of its trials. These trials are to be carried out in areas across the country but will be limited to rental on the same terms as electrically assisted cycle hire.

For example, four London Boroughs which will only recognise legal e-scooters as ones which can only be rented and ridden on roads in designated areas with speed limiters fitted. These will be classified as electrically assisted cycles, which can only be ridden by holders of a provisional licence on roads. It is expected that the e-scooters in these trials (which can be hired for just under £.50 per hour plus £1 deposit) will have their speeds limited to 12.5 miles per hour and will be fitted with limiting devices which will essentially switch the motor off once the e-scooter is outside the borough boundary.

However, these trials fail to recognise the proliferation of privately owned e-scooters, some of which can reach speeds in excess of 70 miles per hour. Such e-scooters are unlicensed and are ridden with dangerous inconsideration and impunity by youths and adults on streets and sidewalks alike, despite, theoretically, being limited by law to use solely on private land. Conference notes that the scale of this problem was highlighted by the Metropolitan Police taking specific action against illegal e-scooter use one week in June which resulted in the confiscation of 507 vehicles.

Conference is concerned that, at the end of June 2021 seventy people have been involved in accidents with e-scooters with serious injuries occurring in South London and Wolverhampton. Older people are increasingly at risk of injury on our streets due to the dangerous use of privately owned and unregulated e-scooters.

Conference believes that there is an urgent need for clear legislation and regulation to restrict where and how e-scooters can be used in the future to protect older people from reckless riders of these motor vehicles. Such regulation must include the requirement for sound and lights to warn of an e-scooter's approach as well as some method of clearly identifying the owner/rider of the vehicle.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members Committee to:

- 1) Start a petition on behalf of the National Retired Members Organisation to call on the government to regulate e-scooters as road vehicles suitable for the use of appropriate adults,
- 2) publicise this petition throughout Regions, Service Groups and Branches of UNISON,

- 3) and
work with the National Pensioners Convention, Scottish Pensioners Forum, Age UK and other relevant groups to co-ordinate campaigns to ensure that older people are not at risk from reckless use of e-scooters.

Greater London Region

Motions Rule Out of Order (text)

Action not specific to the Conference

PUBLIC TOILETS

This conference notes with concern the virtual disappearance of public toilet facilities from our town centres and High Streets, most of which have been closed by Local Authority spending cuts and that Local Authorities should be given extra financial support from Central Government to replace public toilets and make them accessible to all.

To quote the British Toilet Association –

· “Just having access to clean, hygienic toilets when you need one is simply about our basic human rights and it fulfils an important requirement for:-

- Our Health and Wellbeing
- Equalities
- Social Inclusion
- Privacy and public decency”
- And – “That there be adequate facilities for specialist user groups such as wheelchair users, the elderly, babies and young children and people with medical conditions”.

Therefore, Conference calls on the National Retired Members Committee Union to support the campaign by the British Toilet Association for more government funding for the provision of public toilets suitable and accessible to us all, built by and maintained hygienically by Local Authorities.

Birmingham UNISON Branch

INHERITANCE TAX

Conference notes that the threshold for payment of inheritance tax is £500,000 for those with linear descendant beneficiaries legally defined as children; adopted children; foster children; stepchildren and grandchildren; while those with all other beneficiaries ie siblings, cousins, nieces, nephews, friends etc it is only £325,000, a difference of £175,000. Conference believes that this anomaly is discriminatory for all retired and older people without linear descendants and that the threshold should be the same for both.

Whilst Conference recognises that not all retired members will have estates worth either of these figures, with the ever increasing price of property those who are home owners will be closer to the lower threshold than might be realised and those without linear descendants should not be penalised by this discrepancy.

Conference therefore instructs the National Retired Members’ Committee to:

- 1 liaise with the NEC about ways to address this issue and seek their support for a campaign to equalise the threshold;

- 2 liaise with other relevant organisations including the NPC and SPC to seek their support;
- 3 publicise this anomaly through all relevant channels and urge retired members to write to their MPs to seek their support;
- 4 Report back to National Retired Members' Conference 2022.

Leicestershire County

THEIR CONTRIBUTION SHOULD BE RECOGNISED

Many of us know examples of fellow UNISON members who have spent much of their adult lives furthering the aims of our union. Often this requires, on a voluntary basis, defending the rights of others, attending training courses and involving themselves in the many activities that active membership requires.

Our union offers no recognition for these special individuals, whose contribution should be acknowledged.

Conference asks the National Retired Members Committee: -

That consideration be given to implementing a token award, perhaps a badge or brooch, which could be presented to individuals whose exceptional contribution to the union deserves recognition.

Hampshire (L)

LGPS DIVESTMENT CAMPAIGN

Conference notes that the 88 Local Government Pension Schemes investment funds hold over £280 billion worth of assets, and the comments of UNISON Head of Local Government Jon Richards who said "Pension funds should serve the best interests of their members and if those members want to ethically invest or divest then – as long as decisions don't undermine the pension fund – they must be allowed to do so".

Conference further notes recent research by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign which has shown that £3.5 billion of LGPS funds are invested in companies that profit from wars around the world, highlighting a range of investments in arms companies notorious for the manufacture of weapons used against civilian populations. Investments also include companies condemned by the United Nations for activity in Israel's illegal settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Conference further notes that for over half a century the people of Palestine have lived under occupation and been denied their human rights. The Israeli government has held Gaza under a tight land, sea and air blockade since 2007, cutting off 1.9 million Palestinians from the outside world, whilst nearly 4 million Palestinians live under Israeli occupation in the West Bank where the Israeli government continues to build illegal settlements and destroy Palestinian property. Many companies contribute to this illegal situation and the violation of human rights by doing business with, or in, the illegal settlements, providing the infrastructure for the occupation, or supplying weapons and other equipment used to oppress the Palestinian people.

Conference notes the excellent UNISON publication "Palestine – Is your Pension Fund Investing in the Occupation?" published this year.

Conference believes that companies that profit from the occupation and the violation of Palestinian human rights are taking significant financial, reputational and legal risks.

Conference further believes that LGPS that invest our money should do so in an ethical way that takes into account Palestinian human rights. It is deeply shocking that this money is being used to fund violations of international law. Administering authorities of local pension funds should seek to remedy this situation as a matter of extreme urgency.

Conference resolves to

1. Forward the UNISON publication “Palestine – Is Your Pension Fund Investing in the Occupation?” to all retired members groups and encourage them to get active in the campaign with their local pension fund.
2. Liaise with Palestine Solidarity Campaign nationally and locally to coordinate the campaign.
3. Start a petition for UNISON members urging LGPF to divest from companies complicit in the oppression of the Palestinian people
4. Write to the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF) making the views of this conference clear.

Bolton Metro

Beyond remit of the Conference

INFLATION AND DELAYED COSTS OF LIVING PAYMENTS FOR PENSIONERS

One of the concerns that many businesses suffer is the late payment for goods or services provided by public authorities. The norm is to settle payments within 30 days. If an invoice is not paid within the agreed time, there can be provision for payment of interest.

Payments to staff by local authorities are generally paid monthly in arrears and based on an annually agreed figure as at April each year. This would normally reflect the change in Inflation as at April each year.

For those in receipt of a local authority pension under the Local Government Pension Scheme, payments are uprated each April but only on the basis of the change in the rate of inflation as at the previous September, effectively meaning a late payment of 7 during which time the cost of goods and services could have increased substantially. With inflation rising and estimated to increase further as a result of economic charges, this is totally unreasonable and discriminatory to pensioners within the LGPS. As an example the September 2020 CPI was 0.5% whilst the April 2021 CPI was 1.5%

Conference calls upon the National Retired Members’ Committee to raise this issue with the NEC, Labour Link and TUC and requests that they take whatever steps necessary to ensure an end to this discrimination.

South West Region

INFLATION AND DELAYED COSTS OF LIVING PAYMENTS FOR PENSIONERS

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Payments to staff by local authorities are generally paid monthly in arrears and based on an annually agreed figure as at April each year. This would normally reflect the change in Inflation as at April each year.

For those in receipt of a local authority pension under the Local Government Pension Scheme, payments are uprated each April but only on the basis of the change in the rate of inflation as at the during which time the cost of goods and services could have increased substantially. With inflation rising and estimated to increase further as a result of economic charges, this is totally unreasonable and discriminatory to pensioners within the LGPS.

As an example the September 2020 CPI was 0.5% whilst the April 2021 CPI was 1.5%

Conference calls upon the National Retired Members' Committee to raise this issue with the NEC, Labour Link and TUC and requests that they take whatever steps necessary to ensure an end to this discrimination.

Devon County

CLIMATE CHANGE

The world is warming up and older people, who now generally have a longer life expectancy, suffer disproportionately from climate change. Extreme heat puts a stress on anybody's body, but if you are old and/or frail it can be harder. In addition, certain medications older people take, for blood pressure or cholesterol, reduce the body's ability to thermo-regulate. The risk of heatstroke, which is potentially fatal, increases because older adults may be less mobile and thus less able to reach cooler locations in a heatwave. They may also be socially isolated and less able to seek help. Impaired cognitive function may also make it harder for the elderly to find solutions. The air pollution often associated with heatwaves intensifies the problems. The Chicago heatwave of July 1995, for instance, caused 514 heat-related deaths; those older than 65 accounted for 72 per cent of the fatalities. Any particular episode of extreme weather may be linked only loosely to climate change. But the overall relationship is clear: aside from heatwaves, climate change will bring other kinds of extreme weather and disasters. Elderly people will be disproportionately affected. Mortality is always higher among older people in such situations as they can't get out of harm's way quickly enough. Nearly half of the individuals who died during Hurricane Katrina in 2005 were 75 or older. When Hurricane Sandy hit New York in 2012, almost half of those who died were over 65. (Independent, 12th June 2019)

During the last hot weather spell in the UK, almost universally attributed by scientists to climate change, NHS boards throughout the country have emphasised that older members of the population will be disproportionately adversely affected by this increasing abnormality of weather conditions.

It also has to be remembered that there is a moral argument that older citizens of western capitalist western countries have been benefiting from nature/fossil fuel extraction to the detriment of future generations and that they should at least admit this and support action to remedy the climate emergency.

Conference notes that:

- (1) The Earth's temperature has already risen by 1 degree above pre-industrial levels. The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report last autumn warned that we only have 12 years to keep global warming to a maximum of 1.5 degrees. Carbon emissions need to be cut by 45% by 2030, and reach zero carbon by 2050 in order to avoid a dangerous tipping point.
- 2) The tremendous impact of the school students strikes in shifting government complacency over climate change forcing them to amend the 2008 Climate Change act.
- 3) The role played by UNISON, both nationally and locally, in the global action on 20th September 2019. Many branches, including Dundee City, provided organisational, admin and equipment support to the school students involved. The action involved millions of students and workers worldwide.

Conference Believes:

- a) Climate change is an older person's and trade union issue.
- b) That the future of our planet is at risk if we don't organise now to force governments to cut emissions in line with the IPCC report and to cut out fossil fuels as soon as possible and replacing these with renewable energy projects including carbon capture
- c) That taxing the very wealthy and closing tax loopholes in line with Labour Party; and Scottish, Welsh and English Green Parties manifesto commitments will meet the cost of cutting emissions by 50%. All other parties should make a similar pledge as should the devolved governments to do likewise as far as their powers allow.
- d) That we must keep the pressure up. The school students have led the way but the trade union movement as a whole must continue it's involvement to ensure that they don't fight alone.

Conference calls on the National Retired Members Committee.

- i) To back any further calls for a climate strike similar to the one on 20 September 2019.
- ii) To support any calls for the TUC and STUC to organise 30 minute workday solidarity stoppages to coincide with future global school student strikes, similar to the one on the 20th September 2019.
- iii) To support any motion at TUC congress and/or UNISON National Delegate Conference calling for future 30 minute workday stoppages.
- iv) To campaign for and encourage retired members to support and become involved in climate change initiatives of UNISON at branch, regional and national level.

Scotland Region

COVID LOCKDOWNS, FRAUD & THE ELDERLY

Conference notes the impact of the covid lockdowns over the past year on all sectors of the community particularly the elderly. One of the most worrying aspects has been the exponential increase in fraud which has had a significantly deleterious effect on elderly people who have been targeted with impunity by the scammers.

One of the features of lockdown has been the inexorable march to do everything online or by phone, and the fraudsters have taken advantage of this and targeted this older and vulnerable demographic. Indeed many older/elderly people who would otherwise consider themselves to be more computer or telephone scam 'savvy' have been taken in by these, resulting in at best embarrassment and at worst loss of their hard-earned cash.

It is a sad fact that in a situation such as lockdown there are always people willing to profit and who have few, if any scruples, as to how they achieve this. Whilst recognising that lockdown frauds have been perpetrated against the whole population, it is still the case that fraudsters see the elderly demographic as "easy pickings" and tailor their approach to convincing these particular victims to hand over their money through a variety of ever more imaginative and sophisticated scams.

Conference reiterates that every effort must be made to get the message out to our vulnerable contemporaries that attempts to steal their money through false claims about compromised bank accounts; non-existent lottery and prize draw winnings; lockdown-specific offers and the many other means used by fraudsters are quite simply criminal enterprises designed to part them from their money. We must counter the many means used by fraudsters with publicity about such activities and try to prevent this becoming a criminal epidemic affecting untold numbers of elderly people.

In particular efforts must be made to publicise the scale of the problem and the fact that many victims feel embarrassed and ashamed that they have fallen for these scams and so fail to report them resulting in their true incidence remaining hidden.

Conference therefore instructs the NRMC to:

- 1 liaise with the NEC about publicising these lockdown scams as widely as possible;
- 2 liaise with the NEC to ensure warnings about them are publicised through UNISON magazines, newsletters and other relevant publications so as to reach as wide a readership as possible;
- 3 Liaise with the NPC and the SPF about ways of publicising these lockdown frauds and informing pensioners and other older/elderly people of their scale;
- 4 urge members to report any such scams/attempted scams to Trading Standards and the Police;
- 5 report back to National Retired Members' Conference 2022

Leicestershire County

RETIRED MEMBERS HOLDING BRANCH OFFICE

Conference notes that many UNISON branches struggle to fill branch officer roles. In some branches, all the roles are performed by only two, or three people. Some branch officer roles could be performed by retired members but rule C2.6.3 prevents them from doing so. A rule amendment would allow retired members to fill vacant, appropriate branch roles if no full member in the branch is able to do so. Conference recognises that it cannot change UNISON rules. Conference asks the NEC to explore the feasibility of doing so and to report back to Retired Members Conference 2022.

Eastern Region

TIMETABLE OF RETIRED MEMBERS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Conference notes that there was widespread disquiet at the 2019 Retired Members' National conference in relation to the organisation of conference. This was exacerbated by the fact that 18 items on the agenda were not reached by the close of conference. Giving over the first afternoon to attendance at workshops or a Panel debate was seen by many as a poor use of the time available, especially as the conference agenda was not completed despite speakers' time being curtailed from the beginning of conference.

Accordingly, Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to negotiate the following format for future conferences:

Day 1

- Registration from 10:00
- Caucus Meetings 10:00 -12:00
- Regional Meetings 12:30 – 14:30
- Conference opens 15:15 – 17:00 to deal with Standing Orders Committee report, welcome to venue, Annual report, and General Secretary's speech.

Day 2 Conference 09:30 -12:30 and 14:00 – 16:00

Eastern Region

TELEPHONE, DOORSTEP AND E-MAIL SCAMS

Conference notes that some of our vulnerable retired members are still being taken in by these fraudsters.

It has recently been reported in the press that there was an appeal for the Home Secretary to tackle £1.7 billion 'avalanche' of online scams. These scams are getting more sophisticated and harder to detect. No wonder many of our retired members are falling into the trap and are losing in many cases their life savings. During the day we get umpteen telephone scams, these range from problems with your computer or broadband, or your bank account has been compromised and so on. We need to get over to our retired members that they should never ever give their bank details and password to anyone, as your bank will never ask you for these details. If they give you a telephone number which is supposed to be your banks for you to verify, then make sure you do it from another phone as they block your phone and instead of getting your bank to verify you actually get back to them!

Doorstep callers who are not expected should never be allowed over your doorstep, always check credentials – if they have no credentials do not let them in. Never buy anything on the doorstep, and never agree to have work carried out. These people may sound pleasant but remember they are out to get your money.

In the post, always check any correspondence about winnings, inheritance, lotteries, pensions and investments. Obviously if you have won a prize or gift through a competition that you have never entered it is a scam. Anything that seems too good to be true probably is. A new one seems to be if you are expecting a parcel delivery you get a message allegedly from Royal Mail saying your parcel was not delivered and you have to pay a charge; whilst the charge is not great you have to pay by credit card then you find that fraudsters now have your card details and your card is misused.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to liaise with the National Executive Committee to ensure that warnings are given through UNISON magazines and newsletters to inform these vulnerable members to be aware of these scams.

East Midlands Region

RETIRED MEMBERS HOLDING BRANCH OFFICE

Conference notes that many UNISON branches struggle to fill branch officer roles. In some branches, all the roles are performed by only two, or three people. Some branch officer roles could be performed by retired members but rule C2.6.3 prevents them from doing so. A rule amendment would allow retired members to fill vacant, appropriate branch roles if no full member in the branch is able to do so. Conference recognises that it cannot change UNISON rules. This motion asks the NEC to explore the feasibility of doing so and report back to National Retired Members Conference 2022.

Environment Agency Anglian

Could Place the Union in Legal Jeopardy

RETIRED MEMBERS INFORMATION

This conference supports the good work of the Retired Members National committee in organising the National Retired Members section.

Unfortunately there is nowhere on UNISON's website that publishes any agenda, minutes or names of Retired members regional and national committees.

This conference requests the NEC to work with the National Retired Members committee to investigate reviewing the Retired Members webpages with a view to including agendas, minutes and details of Retired members regional and national committees.

Southwark

REQUIRING A RULE CHANGE

RETIRED MEMBERS' POLITICAL FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

Conference notes that -

1. Rule J, The Political Fund, refers throughout to members without distinguishing categories of membership;
2. Members in England, Scotland and Wales who joined the union before 1 March 2018 may contribute 6.5 per cent of their subscription to either section of the political fund
3. Such members who have elected to pay contributions to both sections of the fund shall contribute an additional similar sum to the other section;
4. For members in England, Scotland and Wales who joined the union on or after 1 March 2018 and who have given notice of the willingness to contribute to the political fund, the contribution shall be equivalent to 5 per cent of their membership subscription paid as an additional levy on top of their membership subscription set out in Schedule A; and ,
5. If such a member has elected to pay contributions to both sections of the political fund, they will pay the same amount, equivalent to 5 per cent of their subscription, to each section of the political fund.

Conference is concerned that arrangements may not be in place in all branches to collect all the political fund contributions retired members are due to make and/or to transmit them to the appropriate section of the fund.

Conference instructs the National Retired Members' Committee to raise this with the National Executive Council with a view to guidance being issued to branches so that all members who have retired are able to pay their subscriptions including any political fund contribution they wish to make.

West Midlands Region

REWARDING LOYALTY OF SERVICE

Conference calls upon the NEC to confer automatic free retired membership for life upon those members of UNISON retiring from employment where the individual member has been in continuous membership for a period of not less than 15 years as at the date of retirement.

It is a recognised fact that the overwhelming majority of UNISON members never require trade union assistance throughout their membership and yet they pay their monthly subscriptions without complaint.

In recognition of this loyalty and as a gesture of thanks, those members should not be expected to pay the nominal £15 fee and they deserve to have it waived. Individual Branches are well placed to undertake the necessary administrative task of informing retiring members of the

"award" in the hopes that some and, hopefully, many will become active within the Retired Members' Organisation.

Flintshire County Branch

WE ARE NOT BAD PEOPLE

Retired members make up 10% of the total UNISON membership and often play an active role in the organisation. We accept there are certain roles and activities, both in branch and more widely, in which they cannot take part.

Recently the union elected a new General Secretary, the proportion of members voting in a well organised event was disappointing. Retired members were able to take part in this election but were unable to do so in the NEC election which took place soon afterwards.

The NEC itself provides representation to the many groups and areas which make up the organisation. However, who represents the interests of retired members within the NEC is shrouded in mystery. This only adds to rumours that amongst UNISON's leadership, retired members are considered a nuisance.

Surely it is not democratic that 10% of UNISON's membership is denied the opportunity to vote in the election of our union's main decision-making engine?

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

Requesting this democratic inconsistency is removed and the necessary rule change be instigated to allow Retired Members to take part in NEC elections.

That the NEC declares who amongst them has a direct responsibility and enthusiasm for Retired Members issues and makes this appointment widely known.

Hampshire

RETIRED MEMBERS REPRESENTING MEMBERS EMPLOYED IN NON-UNIONISED WORKPLACES

Conference recognises the ever-changing fragmented work environment and new models of delivering public services. The changes mean that branch structures need to be fit for purpose and that resources are deployed fairly and efficiently.

The organising model is undoubtedly the best way to run our branches. However, servicing individual members is still important.

Many branches have multiple employers the majority of which do not recognise trades unions.

With cuts to facility time in the core employers servicing members in the Community, Voluntary and Private sector can cause problems. UNISON has a duty of care to its activists and many are reaching breaking point.

This conference believes that retired members can play a bigger role in supporting branches by

assisting with representation in those workplaces where there is no trade union recognition agreement.

As the rules stand retired members are unable to represent members. We believe that this rule whilst relevant at the time is now in need of reviewing.

Many activists have taken early retirement and remain ERA accredited but are unable to put those skills to good use in the branch.

Therefore, conference calls on the NEC to bring forward an appropriate rule change to the 2022 National Delegate Conference which would facilitate retired members representing members.

Bolton Metro

STATEMENT NOT A MOTION

FREE TV LICENCE OVER 75 PAYMENT

It has been nearly 2 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.

One solution on the short term would be for the BBC to further suspend any implementation of these changes during this difficult period due to Covid, on the long term, the UK Government should again, as before, accept statutory responsibility from the BBC for the continued provision of free TV licences to all over 75s. As a committee, we will continue to fight and would like the backing of our Scottish Council, work with and support the Scottish Pensioners Forum, and to seek the help and backing of our NEC, in bringing this to the forefront of our campaign agenda and to make sure our Labour MPs are pushing for change to this disgraceful decision.

Scotland Region

NOT SUFFICIENTLY CLEAR

THE DIGITAL AGE

UNISON has a duty of care towards its members including Retired Members and every current member should remember that one day (hopefully) they will be a Retired Member. (The alternative does not bear thinking about) The media is full of the issue of the rising cost of adult social care and this

Government is unwilling to properly fund both the NHS and Social Care. One of the major concerns about older people is the rise in poverty and the increase of loneliness of this group.

Digital services are expanding. They impact on Retired Members in two respects

- i) They are excluded from using digital services because they cannot afford the cost, have no access to digital services or there is no training or support for using the services. Furthermore it makes organising Retired Members events, distributing information or sending invitation to meetings difficult to achieve.
- ii) The cuts to public services means that government and local government are looking to reduce the cost of services especially adult social care. So digital solutions such as electronic medical dispensers are being proposed. It is possible to understand the benefits but such equipment could be used to reduce the number of social care visits.

This Conference calls upon the National Retired Members Committee to

- a) Find out how many Retired Members are digitally excluded because of the reasons listed in i) above. This could be achieved by designing a survey to be distributed through Regional Committees and then to branches. The results to be reported to the Retired Members Conference in 2022.
- b) Set up a working group and invite members from the Health Service and Local Government Group to:-
 - Investigate the use of digital equipment in the care of older people
 - To assess the advantages and disadvantages
 - To suggest solutions to address the shortcomings for the person being cared for
 - To bring a report to the 2022 Retired members Conference.

North West Region

MESSAGE FROM ROSIE MACGREGOR - CHAIRPERSON, UNISON NATIONAL RETIRED MEMBERS' COMMITTEE

Introduction

I began a sixth year as Chair of UNISON's National Retired Members' Committee in January. We represent nearly 170,000 retired members of UNISON.

The last two years have been challenging for everyone as a result of the pandemic but I remain proud of our union and its response to the crisis. Covid-19 has affected all our lives, our physical and mental health, and harmed the global economy which will have devastating consequences for the future.

Please spare a thought for all victims of this invisible enemy and for those who risked and continue to risk their lives on our behalf. There is still great uncertainty about what the future holds either for the pandemic or politics. We don't know what the long term impact will be of Covid or Brexit and the climate emergency is something that may eclipse all of this.

Dave Prentis retired on 31 December last year as our General Secretary after 20 years in this demanding role. We wish him a well-earned and long retirement. Perhaps we might even see him again as a retired member in UNISON!!!

We welcome Christina McAnea as our new General Secretary of a union with a majority of women in membership. She has taken a leading role on equalities within UNISON and has shown experience and skill in fighting for the rights of all our members. She has demonstrated a commitment to our retired members and to those working in the care sector during the current pandemic, by launching our Care After Covid Campaign and by calling for Universal Social Care. I'm really pleased that we now have a woman leading our great union.

I've enjoyed attending a number of conferences during the last two years including National Delegate Conference in 2019, National Pensioners Annual Convention in 2019 and our National Women's Conference, just before lock-down in 2020, as well as visiting several branches and talking to retired members prior to the pandemic. Conferences have been postponed or cancelled and we have had to rely on meeting on virtual platforms since then.

We share many of the same problems including worries about the future after Covid, poor pensions, the crisis in adult social care, an underfunded NHS, closure of libraries and other community services, lack of accessible transport, rising housing costs and falling living standards and insufficient specialist housing.

The Special Delegate Conference this year, though successful was challenging but so much better than nothing. We have to recognise that not all our members are comfortable or confident using digital platforms. However, there was no alternative for our 2021 Retired Members Conference other than to hold it on-line. We took the view that given our age group and a lot of uncertainty remaining over the pandemic, members would be putting themselves at a greater risk by meeting at a face-to-face event. We needed to be cautious about taking any action that might have led to greater uncertainty and the likelihood of the cancellation of

an actual conference if one had been arranged.

Policies

NHS and Social Care

It's more than 10 years since UNISON adopted its Charter for Older People and high time this is revised. It will form part of our National Retired Members Committee work plan for the future.

UNISON continues to campaign for effective social care and fair treatment and proper training of those who work and look after us within the care service. The reform of social care must be a priority, not just for those who those working in the sector but for those in its care. Fair pay for all workers, which of course has an impact on workers' pensions, is also a key priority. The underfunding of public services and the continued dogma of privatisation that puts profit before people is a massive scandal that we continue to challenge. We continue the fight to keep the NHS in public hands and we are calling for a universal social care system based on public provision, paid for by general taxation and free at the point of need.

The outcome of the last General Election was a huge shock for many of us, as was the more recent by-election in Hartlepool and the loss of Labour Party control of so many Councils. I recognise that not all our retired members support the Labour Party but make no mistake we are under threat from a government that will continue its attacks on the trade union movement. Whatever happens UNISON will continue to challenge austerity and fight privatisation whilst seeking improved funding of our NHS and Social Care, so chronically underfunded and so important to us as pensioners. The privatisation of social care and care homes has resulted in private companies and their shareholders taking profits that would otherwise have been reinvested in caring for those in need of care and paying their staff a decent wage. It was worrying even before Covid that nearly half of all care workers said they didn't have time to care with dignity and compassion; and that 31% of care workers leave the profession every year.

Given that health and social care barely featured in the Queen's Speech in May, it would appear that a policy to microchip cats is of greater importance to our government than promises of policies to protect those in need of care. UNISON continues to campaign for a National Care Service and is fighting to win fair funding, decent jobs and quality services in response to the care crisis.

The bigger picture continues to be of underfunding of essential services and the on-going harmful impact of privatisation. Indeed a survey carried out by UNISON of some 21,000 local government workers across all services prior to Covid found that 8 out of 10 had no confidence in the future of local services. More than half of those surveyed were not confident that vulnerable residents were safe and well cared and believed their employer no longer delivers quality services. A BBC Panorama programme 'Crisis in Care' last year exposed the desperate situation in Somerset where the cash strapped council struggles to provide adult social care. It is a situation repeated across the country.

Covid Pandemic

Despite life expectancy having risen during the 20th century recent statistics indicate that this rise has stalled during the last 10 years and that for poorer people in society it is now in decline. It has been shown that austerity and inequality are to blame. The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a rapid rise in death rates particularly affecting pensioners and ethnic minorities and the government must take the blame for mistakes it made including the lack of PPE (personal protective equipment) for frontline staff including care workers and NHS staff. The impact of this on health and care workers together with those in their care has been massive and led to numerous unnecessary deaths and workers living in fear. I'm sure you will join me in paying tribute to all key workers and essential health and care workers.

The Coronavirus has had an unprecedented impact on our lives. We must not forget that older people with underlying health problems were amongst the most vulnerable and for whom it was most likely to be fatal. Those living in Care Homes, including some of our retired members, have been particularly at risk. Many of us will have lost friends or family in the epidemic. As if there isn't enough to worry about, we have fresh fears and uncertainty about the future, whether the vaccine will be effective against new variants and the impact of the epidemic on the economy.

Our greatest fear must be the unknown – not knowing who will succumb or how long the epidemic will last worldwide. If anything good comes out of this it will be a reduction in the mania for travel and resulting harm to the environment and perhaps we might find ourselves living in a more caring society. Some of you have spoken to me about your own concerns and the impact it has had on your lives. Your fears, apart from whether or not you catch the virus, were loneliness and isolation, not being able to see grandchildren, money worries, lack of savings, rising costs, health care and the supply of food and drugs. I share some of these worries but at least we have our pensions even if for some it is barely enough to live on. I don't know how people of working age with their livelihoods taken away will cope if they can't pay the rent or mortgage.

There has been so much conflicting advice from government and so much misinformation from various different sources, not least social media.

The consequences of the pandemic including the cost to lives are not fully known at the present time but UNISON has been active in campaigning for a public inquiry into the numerous failures of the government, not least the failure to protect those in care homes, the lack of PPE and the sacrifices made by so many key workers. The question must be "Do you trust this government"? I don't especially when the government's own advisors and its disgraced Health Secretary broke their own social distancing rules.

We need to know what lessons can be learnt to ensure that the same mistakes are not made again and it is important that the government does not hide behind the success of the vaccination roll-out. Inevitably this has been the main focus for our union during these challenging times.

Digitisation of NHS patient data

The Government took the decision to digitise all NHS patient data in England including sensitive information from 1 July and transfer documentation from GPs to NHS Digital where it could be used for commercial purposes without any public consultation. There was only a short timescale for those who wanted to opt out and an original date of 23 June was subsequently revised to 1 September after pressure from UNISON, others including doctors and even some Tory politicians.

This is a gross infringement of human rights but under the pretence of enabling valuable research. Whilst UNISON supports health data being used for public health and ethically approved research this will allowed the release of information including sensitive personal information to third parties for commercial use, opening the door to private health care, insurance companies and US pharmaceutical companies having access to patient records and lead to further privatisation of the NHS. Most people and some GP Surgeries were completely unaware of this until it was too late. UNISON is seeking guarantees that the information will only be used ethically and for the benefit of healthcare in the UK. This has been rushed through and a similar attempt by the government to do this several years ago was stopped following public outcry and UNISON together with other unions and organisations are seeking safeguards and assurances that any data made available will only be used ethically. The National Pensioner Convention together with others is mounting a legal challenge.

Pensioner Benefits

The government's attack on pensioners' entitlements continues and threaten the much needed benefits we currently receive. We need these additional benefits because our state pension is the lowest in Europe.

The Tories made a manifesto promise to retain the Triple Lock on the State Pension but that was before Covid and there is now greater uncertainty about what the future holds. Pensions Policy Institute research previously indicated that if the Triple Lock was removed 700,000 more pensioners would be in poverty and that women would be disproportionately affected. Two thirds of all pensioners living in poverty are women.

Many people in the UK, including our retired members, continue to struggle with the consequences of debt and poverty compounded by rising costs of food, gas and electricity and the effects of the pandemic. The choice for many pensioners is between sufficient food on the table or a warm home. It is essential that the £200 Winter Fuel Allowance to towards heating costs in maintained.

It is equally important that we retain the Bus Pass on which so many of us rely. The loss of the bus pass, which provides a subsidy to bus companies, would result in fewer bus services, not just harming pensioners and bus companies, but the local economy. It will lead to greater loneliness, especially in rural areas, for those who rely on the bus to visit family and friends, go shopping, go to the bank or post office, attend doctor, dentist and hospital appointments, and visit other local services such as libraries and community centres. Loss of the bus pass also has the potential to increase journeys by private car, for those who have a car, which will further harm the environment.

We continue to campaign for the reinstatement of the free TV licence for the over 75s. I don't think the government realises how much older people, especially those who are housebound, live alone or forced into isolation by the pandemic, rely on the TV and radio for information and to combat loneliness. Perhaps they do realise but maybe they don't care!

Housing

An estimated ten million people in England live in homes which fail to meet basic standards and the majority of these pose a serious risk to health or safety. Research by the Centre for Ageing Better and the King's Fund highlighted the link between poor-quality housing and COVID-19. Those most at risk of the disease more likely to be living in non-decent homes.

We expressed concerns about the ending of the evictions ban introduced during the pandemic at a time when half a million private renters in the UK are behind on their rent and with a quarter of these being threatened with eviction. This has resulted in council housing waiting lists continuing to rise at an alarming rate. Those living in private rented accommodation can be evicted without any due cause.

According to the Centre for Ageing Better a lack of effective and sustained government action and funding is partly to blame for a crisis in the quality of England's homes. A new report commissioned to inform the Good Home Inquiry and written by the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence "*Past, present and future: housing policy and poor-quality homes*" identifies that the government has a crucial role in protecting the nation's housing stock but dramatic funding cuts and failure to act have left England's homes crumbling.

Black people are 70% more likely to be adversely impacted by the housing crisis compared to white people. Over a year after a black man George Floyd was murdered in the USA the fight for justice continues. His murder led to the Black Lives Matter protests and highlighted the fact that there is much more to be done in the UK to counter institutional and systemic racism.

June 14th marked the 4th anniversary of Grenfell Tower and many questions remain. Not everyone has been rehoused and the issue of cladding and fire safety together with the full costs of replacing cladding and other fire safety measures in similar blocks remains unresolved. Many owners of flats in these blocks face bankruptcy and the government continues to expect the owners of the flats to pay for repairs when the fault lies, not with those who purchased their flats in good faith but with the developers who should pay for these essential repairs.

Brexit

The incompetence of the Tory government in achieving Boris Johnson's so called "oven-ready" agreement continues to cause major problems and the country remains divided. It is difficult to predict how all the issues will be resolved and in the meantime there are massive problems with both imports and exports to and from Europe and the political situation in Northern Ireland is precarious. Brexit has created massive problems of recruitment not just in the NHS and Social Care but in agriculture, hospitality and supply of goods.

Like the Windrush Generation, who continue to be treated despicably by the government, many overseas workers from the EU and beyond are faced with uncertainty about their

immigration status or have been refused re-entry to the UK after visiting relatives abroad, often as a result of the pandemic. UNISON is committed to support our members who have been adversely affected.

Migrant Workers

We will always challenge extremist views on immigration and it must not be forgotten that the NHS and Social Care rely on migrant workers. The impact Brexit will have on the NHS and provision of social care is worrying. We don't yet know what the impact of leaving the EU will have in the long term but it is important that UNISON supports EU workers in NHS and in local authorities, especially those currently working in social care. We have heard too little about social care from the government and the proposals to limit immigration will have a disastrous impact on service delivery.

Palestine

UNISON regretted the loss of both Palestinian and Israeli lives in the recent conflict. We condemned the violence and continued oppression of Palestinians.

We called on the UK government to take action to seek an end to the occupation, suspend the UK's arms trade with the government of Israel and supporting calls for a UN arms embargo. UNISON continues to support Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions as a legitimate and practical way to persuade the Israeli government to end its repression of the Palestinian people and contribute towards the building of peace.

Recruitment

After our last Retired Members Conference in 2019 highlighting so many of the ways that pensioners, public sector workers and minority groups are short-changed by society, condemned by the government or criticised in the media, it could be argued, even without the impact of Covid, that matters have gone from bad to worse. Hardly surprising then that we have seen a massive rise in recruitment ensuring that UNISON can continue to claim to be the UK's biggest union. We mustn't be complacent. It is important that we continue to recruit new members. Whilst membership may be increasing overall, the number of retired members is not increasing at the present time and we need to encourage more working members to join us on retirement.

Pensioners' Organisations

The National Committee continues to work with the National Pensioners Convention (NPC), Scottish Pensioners Forum and Age UK in campaigning on behalf of older people. I continue to represent UNISON on a number of NPC committees including its General Council, the Executive Committee and I Chair its Women's Working Party. Richard Mann from Greater London Region represents us on its Trade Union Working Party. Sheila Crosby from Yorkshire and Humberside represents us at Age UK.

TUC Pensioners Committee

This Committee usually meets twice a year at Congress House but during the pandemic we have meeting using a virtual platform more regularly. The committee provides us with a useful dialogue and has been an opportunity to discuss the impact of Covid on our members, the various campaigns of other unions and share information. We have also received regular updates on TUC policy. It is important that we continue to make sure our voice is heard on the TUC Pensioners Committee and raise the issues that matter.

Communications

The National Committee continues to work to improve communications with retired members. It has been even more challenging than usual during the pandemic and is complicated by legislation on Data Protection and the fact that we do not have e-mail addresses for the majority of retired members.

We continue to look at ways of improving communications but often we have to rely on hard pressed and overworked Branch Secretaries to forward information.

We must ensure that our achievements are reported in UNISON publications at national, regional and branch level. We know we still have much to offer our union by assisting in campaigns and we must be given a voice.

Conferences

Martin Gallagher and I represented the National Retired Members Organisation at the Special Delegate Conference in June together with retired member representatives from the UNISON regions. One region was not represented because of difficulties over computer access and concern about the length of time sitting in front of a screen and the fact that there will be no option for shared delegates. These concerns were forwarded to the Conference Office for future consideration.

Priorities

Our priorities as ever are to campaign for the things that are vital to us as pensioners, not just for ourselves but for future pensioners.

This is why it is so important during our annual Retired Members Conference that we reconsider our policy priorities for next year. Furthermore, we have the opportunity as our conference ends to take forward two motions to National Delegate Conference 2022 that we consider most important to us as retired members.

I don't want to influence delegates but would ask that consideration is given to the Motions that contain issues likely to be prioritised as important to both working and retired members as these will be more likely to be heard at next year's National Delegate Conference.

Thanks

I would like to record my thanks to members of the National Committee for their support and contributions during the last two years which have been particularly difficult due to the pandemic.

The National Committee would like to thank the retired member activists in branches and regions for their hard work in pursuit of the interests of our retired membership. We know it has been especially hard during the pandemic and we recognise that not all our activists have been able to access suitable computerised systems.

Standing Orders for the conduct of Unison Retired Members' Conferences

Additional SOC Guidelines for Virtual Retired members Conference 2021

Additional SOC guidance is required for a virtual conference to facilitate the smooth running of a virtual, motions based, conference.

This will follow the guidelines and practices applied to the recent Special Delegate Conference, Local Government Conference and other virtual conferences held in June 2021.

Composite agreement deadline

The deadline for agreeing proposed composites will be **2pm on Monday 21st September 2021** (to coincide with the prioritisation process deadline) – Any resulting Composite booklet will be published with the Standing Orders report No 1.

Standing orders Report no 1 - publication

Standing Orders Report No 1, which includes the order of business following the completion of the Prioritisation Process, is usually agreed by the SOC the day before conference and published / printed overnight to be available the morning before the first conference session commences. However, for 2021, to facilitate the smooth running of a virtual conference, the SOC will commit to publishing the Standing Orders report No 1 ahead of conference and by no later than **Friday 8th October 2021**.

Challenges to SOC rulings

As usual, if the SOC rules your motion or amendment out of order, a letter will be sent by the SOC with the reasons why, via the Online Conference System (OCS).

If you are not happy with the decision and want the SOC to reconsider, **you must contact us in writing via the OCS**.

For the purpose of this Virtual Retired Members Conference **a written appeal must be made in advance of the Conference by the following deadlines:**

To appeal against motions ruled out of order the deadline is: **12.00 noon Wednesday, 25th August 2021**.

Please note, for this Virtual Retired Members Conference, the decision of the Standing Orders Committee will be final on any appeal received.

No further appeals will be possible.

This guidance is written for the 2021 Virtual Retired Members conference and does not set any precedents for future conferences

STANDING ORDERS FOR THE CONDUCT OF UNISON RETIRED MEMBERS' CONFERENCES (as amended at 2019 Conference)

1. COMPOSITION OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

- 1.1 The Standing Orders Committee shall consist of one retired member from each UNISON region.

2. FUNCTIONS OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

- 2.1 The members of the Standing Orders Committee shall hold office from the time of their election onto the Standing Orders Committee until the end of the next Retired Members' Conference.
- 2.2 At its first meeting after it takes office, the Committee shall elect a Chairperson and a Deputy Chairperson from amongst its members.
- 2.3 The functions of the Committee shall, subject to these Standing Orders, be to:
- 2.3.1 Ensure that the Union's Rules and Standing Orders relating to the business of Conferences are observed, and notify the Chairperson of Conference of any violation that may be brought to the Committee's notice
 - 2.3.2 Draw up the preliminary agenda and final agenda of Conference business, and the proposed hours of business, to be circulated in accordance with the timetable stated in Rule D.1.9 of the National Rules
 - 2.3.3 Determine the order in which the business of Conference shall be conducted, subject to the approval of Conference
 - 2.3.4 Consider all motions and amendments submitted for consideration by Conference and, for the purpose of enabling Conference to transact its business effectively the Committee shall:
 - 1) Decide whether such motions and amendments have been submitted in accordance with the Rules
 - 2) Group together motions and amendments relating to the same subject, decide the order in which they should be considered and whether they should be debated and voted on separately or debated together and voted on sequentially
 - 3) Prepare and revise, in consultation with the movers of motions and amendments, composite motions in terms which in the opinion of the Committee best express the subject of such motions and amendments
 - 4) Refer to the body within the Union a motion or amendment which in the opinion of the Committee should properly be considered there; the mover shall be informed of the reason for so doing
 - 5) Have power to do all such other things as may be necessary to give effect to these Standing Orders.
 - 6) Issue guidelines from time to time in order to assist with the smooth running of Conference. Such guidelines shall be consistent with these Standing Orders
- 2.4 Any decisions of the Committee which are to be reported to Conference shall

be announced by the Chairperson of the Committee and shall be subject to ratification by Conference.

3. SPEAKING

- 3.1 Those empowered to speak shall be delegates appointed by branches or representatives appointed by regions, members of the National Committee and those members of UNISON staff so appointed by the National Committee, plus the Chairperson of the Standing Orders Committee. Any member of a regional Retired Members' Committee attending the conference as a regional or branch delegate may be appointed by their regional Retired Members' Committee to move a motion or amendment submitted by that regional Retired Members' Committee. A regional delegate may move a motion or amendment submitted by a Branch within that Region if the Branch concerned is unable to be present at the Conference.
- 3.2 Members of the National Committee may speak from the platform to Committee policy on any motion or amendment on the Conference agenda, at any time during debate, as agreed by the Chairperson of Conference and the National Committee.
- 3.3 Apart from the elected delegates and those persons who have the right to speak at the Conference under Standing Order 3.1, no other person shall speak except by permission of the Standing Orders Committee.

4. LIMIT OF SPEECHES

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

5. VOTING

- 5.1 The method of voting shall be by show of hands of the delegates appointed by branches and present at Conference. A card vote may be called by the President or, immediately after the result of the show of hands has been declared, by at least ten per cent of the delegates registered at the Conference.
- 5.2 In the event of a card vote being called or demanded, the vote shall be taken immediately after it has been demanded, but no business shall be suspended, pending the declaration of the result of the vote except that which in the President's opinion may be directly affected by the result.

6. TELLERS

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

7. PROCEDURE

- 7.1 Any questions of procedure or order raised during the Conference shall be decided by the Chairperson of Conference whose ruling shall be final and binding.
- 7.2 Upon the Chairperson of Conference rising during a Conference session, any person then addressing Conference shall resume her/his seat and no other person shall rise to speak until the Chairperson of Conference authorises proceedings to continue.
- 7.3 The Chairperson of Conference may call attention to continued irrelevance, tedious repetition, unbecoming language, or any breach of order on the part of a member and may direct such a member to discontinue her or his speech.
- 7.4 The Chairperson of Conference shall have power to call any person to order who is causing a disturbance in any session of Conference and if that person refuses to obey the Chairperson of Conference, she/he shall be named by the Chairperson of Conference, shall forthwith leave the Conference Hall, and shall take no further part in the proceedings of the Conference.
- 7.5 The following procedural motions may be moved at any time without previous notice on the agenda:
- (i) that the question now be put, provided that:
 - (a) the Chairperson of Conference may advise Conference not to accept this motion if in her/his opinion the matter has not been sufficiently discussed;
 - (b) if this motion is carried, it shall take effect at once, subject only to any right of reply under these Standing Orders.
 - (ii) that the Conference proceed to the next business;
 - (iii) that the debate be adjourned;
- No motion under (i), (ii) or (iii) above shall be moved by a person who has spoken on the motion or amendment in question.
- 7.6 Any person empowered to speak as in Standing Order 3.1 above may at any stage in the Conference raise a point of order if she/he considers that the business is not being conducted in accordance with the Union's Rules and the Standing Orders of this Conference.
- 7.7 Such a point of order must be raised as soon as the alleged breach occurs or at the earliest practicable moment thereafter.
- 7.8 The Chairperson of Conference's ruling on a point of order is final.

8. MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

- 8.1 Motions and amendments will normally be considered in the order in which they appear on the final agenda.
- 8.2 Other than items appearing on the Final Agenda, and those relating to procedure, the only motions allowed for debate shall be those submitted under the emergency procedure previously agreed by the Retired Members Conference Standing Orders Committee and which have been approved for debate by that Committee. Any such motions will be circulated at the commencement of Conference proceedings.
- 8.3 The Retired Members Conference Standing Orders Committee will decide before the Conference the place on the Final Agenda at which any emergency motions should be heard.
- 8.4 When an amendment to a motion is moved, no further amendment may be moved until the first one is disposed of.
- 8.5 When an amendment is defeated, a further amendment may be moved to the original motion.
- 8.6 When an amendment to a motion is carried, the motion, as so amended, shall become the substantive motion, to which a further amendment may be moved.
- 8.7 Any person empowered to speak as in Standing Order 3.1 above shall not move more than one amendment to any one motion, nor shall the mover of a motion move any amendment to such motion.

9. WITHDRAWALS OF MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

- 9.1 A motion or amendment which appears on the Final Agenda may not be withdrawn without the consent of the Standing Orders Committee, whose decision shall be reported to Conference.
- 9.2 If a motion be withdrawn with the consent of the Standing Orders Committee, any amendment to that motion will fall.

10. REFERENCE OF OUTSTANDING ITEMS

- 10.1 If, at the end of the Conference, the Final Agenda has not been concluded, outstanding motions and amendments shall be referred to the National Retired Members Committee which shall report to the relevant Branch or submitting body its decisions on those matters. All such motions and amendments shall be responded to at least one month before the deadline for submission of motions and amendments to Standing Orders to the following year's Conference.

11. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

