

# 2022 Community Conference and Seminar

## UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

**Crowne Plaza (Glasgow)**

**18 March - 20 March 2022**

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### **Organising and Recruitment**

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#### Recruitment & Organisation

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#### **1. Organising to achieve fairer pay in social care**

Throughout the pandemic we have seen how important Social Care Workers have been to the country, demonstrating their skills and professionalism, yet most don't earn the real living wage and many are still on zero hours contracts.

As more workers leave the sector, for better pay and recognition of their skills, we need to fight for Social Care to be properly funded and for worker's pay and, terms and conditions to be significantly improved.

Strong workplace organisation is essential if we are to retain the members we gained during the pandemic. Key to this workplace organisation is the identification of new stewards, the continuing support of their role and encouraging more members to engage in the union's activities. It is vital we develop a campaign around improving pay and conditions, to encourage members to get involved as well as, attract new members, as they see the visibility of our campaign and identify UNISON as the union for Social Care workers.

In developing a campaign around fair pay for social care workers this conference asks the SGE to:

1. Develop a plan for recruiting new stewards and for support from the regions
2. Ensure support to new stewards and activists, through training and education, mentoring etc
3. Play a full role in developing UNISON's cross sectoral Social Care Strategy and campaign, pressing for a minimum sectoral wage of £12 an hour.
4. Call for all social care to be publicly owned and managed, particularly where organisations claim they cannot afford to pay a fair wage
5. Disseminate briefings for the social care campaign, including the key facts and main issues to branches, along with materials that can be used on social media and newsletters
6. Work with the Regions to support the running of activists workshops, as part of the campaign, to ensure consistent key messages and support to activists.
7. Coordinate pay campaigning where appropriate with Local Government and Health, ensuring developments in pay approaches in those sectors are taken into account in bargaining with community employers.

***National Major Charities Sector Committee***

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### 2. Social Care Recruitment and Retention Crisis

There have been longstanding and chronic issues around recruiting and retaining workers in the social care workforce. Skills for Care data showed a vacancy rate in England of more than 7% before COVID. Poor pay and terms and conditions and too many unscrupulous employers mean the care sector was already in crisis before COVID hit. But the pandemic, and the failure of the Westminster Government to adequately respond, have made things very much worse.

Increasing availability of jobs in other sectors at pay rates above those available for social care has led to large numbers leaving, particularly since Spring 2021. Standards of care for care recipients are already suffering, and without urgent action to increase pay levels and improve terms and conditions, the situation will deteriorate further.

Data from the Care Quality Commission in October 2021 showed a vacancy rate of over 10% across regulated social care settings in England. Employers report increasing levels of voluntary resignation, and extreme difficulties in recruiting to roles made vacant thereby. This has been exacerbated by the “no job, no job” policy which has led to tens of thousands more workers in care homes leaving their jobs. The same threat also hangs over the rest of the care sector following the government’s decision to extend the policy.

Conference calls upon the Community Service Group Executive to:

1. Play a full role in developing UNISON’s cross-sectoral social care strategy and campaign, to advance structural reforms and a level of funding for the sector which would enable the payment of decent, attractive wages to retain staff within the profession.
2. Work with the NEC and other service groups to promote terms and conditions improvement in the short term, including extending occupational sick pay schemes and barring zero hours contracts except where desired by the worker concerned.
3. Provide all support possible to groups of members in individual employers seeking to improve either their own terms and conditions or their pay levels.
4. Continue to support UNISON’s campaign for a reversal to “no job, no job” in English care homes, and oppose its extension to home care workers.

***Community Service Group Executive***

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### **Negotiating and Bargaining**

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Negotiation and Bargaining

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### **3. Now is the Time to: put women at the heart of economic recovery from Covid by investing in social care**

The pandemic has put in sharp focus the value and importance of care work, the majority of which, paid and unpaid, is still undertaken by women.

However, conference notes that the value and importance of care work is not reflected in the pay and working conditions of care workers. Jobs traditionally done

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by women are not considered to be as important or as beneficial as comparable jobs mostly done by men.

The sector is starved of investment, which has a knock-on impact on women who work and who have caring responsibilities for children and other dependants.

Jobs in social care are overwhelmingly low-paid and insecure contracts are a feature of working life. Covid has made things worse.

Low paid care workers have been particularly affected as only one in ten low paid jobs can be done from home. It's those that can least afford it who are paying the biggest price. Women who work and have children and/or other caring responsibilities continue to struggle to balance doing their job with childcare and home-schooling. One in six working mothers – mainly those on the lowest pay - had to reduce their hours at work as a direct result of school and childcare closures during lock-down. Some have been forced out of work altogether.

This is not just a phenomenon in the UK, this is the pattern World-wide.

2020 marked the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and was intended to be a ground-breaking year for gender equality. Instead, the limited gains for women's equality in recent decades have been put at risk of being rolled back as governments failed to account for the impact of pre-existing inequalities in social, political and economic systems on women.

Two years on since the first Covid-19 cases, governments World-wide have produced recovery plans with little or no mention of women's unemployment or unpaid care work and there is also little mention of action to improve the pay and working lives of the care workers and others who continue to be at the forefront of responding to the pandemic. Yet the participation of women in work is critical to economic recovery and building back better.

Conference calls on the Community Service Group Executive to work with the National Women's Committee and NEC to:

- 1) Lobby UK governments to invest in social care recognising the importance and value of the social care sector to increasing the participation of women in the labour market more generally.
- 2) Lobby for the development of a women's employment strategy which identifies the labour market issues facing women, in particular caring responsibilities, with a robust action plan to tackle these.
- 3) Campaign with the national Social Care Forum to improve pay and conditions for the thousands of mainly female low-paid care workers.

***National Women's Committee***

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#### **4. Trans equality in the community sector – louder and prouder!**

The toxic debate ignited by the United Kingdom government's consultation on reforming the Gender Recognition Act underlined the importance of our union,

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including branches in the Community Service Group, supporting and representing our trans members effectively.

Attacks on trans people escalated further in 2021. Groups trying to roll back the rights of trans people have encouraged supporters to lobby voluntary organisations to replace 'gender' in their equality policies with 'sex' and claim that some have agreed to do so.

There has been a sustained attack on Stonewall's trans inclusive Diversity Champions programme, which some community sector employers are members of. The programme gives advice, support and resources to employers on meeting their statutory requirements under the Equality Act 2010 and provides support and tools for organisations to improve their practice beyond the legal minimum.

There have been repeated false claims that Stonewall is misinterpreting the Equality Act's protected characteristic of gender reassignment in its advice to organisations. Stonewall's advice is based on the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Equality Act Code of Practice, which was reaffirmed by the High Court in May 2021 when it threw out an attempt by one of the co-founders of the anti-trans LGB Alliance to launch a judicial review against the EHRC's guidance.

These attacks are being coordinated to undermine support for Stonewall's work on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT+) equality at work.

The tactics being used by those campaigning to roll back the existing rights of trans people, including 'gender critical' and anti-trans groups, are almost identical to the tactics seen around the time of Section 28, when gay men were portrayed as sexual predators and a danger to children to spread fear and mistrust.

Conference recognises that recent years have seen a concerted international campaign against trans people, and there is growing evidence of this being linked to the far right.

Conference notes that:

a. The Southern Poverty Law Centre in the United States (US) reported that in 2017, at an annual right-wing, fundamentalist event called the Values Voter Summit, transphobia was discussed as a tactic to be deployed, because rallying against homosexuals was not working any more. One of the far-right panellists said: "Trans and gender identity are a tough sell, so focus on gender identity to divide and conquer...trans activists need the gay rights movement to help legitimize them...If you separate the T from the alphabet soup, we'll have more success".

b. The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation's study on the evolution of extremism in the first 100 days of the Biden Administration found that "Transphobia has long been one of the most major and ubiquitous narratives around which the far right mobilises... Transphobia should be recognised as a security concern."

c. Some anti-trans individuals and groups in the UK have links with far right and alt right religious groups in the US and elsewhere

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d. Targeting a minority, and spreading false information to provoke hatred and distrust by preying on people's fears, are classic far right recruitment tactics.

UNISON's position is clear: trans women are women, trans men are men and non-binary identities are valid. Conference recognises, however, that UNISON must now become more visible and more vocal in promoting Trans equality inside and outside the union.

Conference recognises that Trans people working in the community sector may be experiencing discrimination and transphobia and/or feeling that their workplace is not a safe place to disclose their gender identity. Some employers within the community sector may not have Trans inclusive policies in place and may feel under pressure to not speak up in support of their Trans staff.

Conference therefore calls on the Community Service Group Executive to work with the National LGBT+ Committee and other parts of the union as appropriate to:

1. Explore ways to increase the strength and visibility of UNISON's work to promote Trans equality in the community sector
2. Encourage community sector branches to urge employers to join the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme if they are not already members.
3. Promote the UNISON factsheet 'How to be a Trans ally' and the UNISON trans ally training widely within the service group.
4. Produce and promote materials to help members in the community service group to counter the 'gender critical' narrative and provide information on the links between the gender critical movement in the UK and the far right.
5. Promote the UNISON transgender workers' rights factsheet and the UNISON model trans equality policy to branches organising within the community sector.

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

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#### **5. COVID secure workplaces for Disabled Members working in community**

Conference is concerned that 60% of all people who have died from COVID were disabled and nearly half a million people have had long COVID for over a year. Long COVID can be a debilitating condition impacting on carrying out daily activities including duties at work. Conference notes that our members working in the community sector are potentially more at risk of contracting COVID and therefore may be at risk of Long COVID due to the nature of their work which includes face to face contact, provision of personal care, working in the community and in people's homes.

The Equality Act 2010 defines a person as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' impact on day to day activities. Long-term can mean the impairment or health condition has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more.

When the Government ended restrictions, the requirement for employers to make workplaces COVID secure and the work at home rules were withdrawn. However,

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this does not mean that employers can shy away from their health and safety duties or their obligations in respect of disability under the Equality Act 2010.

COVID has not disappeared. It is not something Disabled Members can simply learn to live with if there are no protections in place and it has highlighted the importance for branches to negotiate and bargain with employers on COVID, sickness absence, health and safety, mental health and disability inclusive policies. It is vital that employers understand the importance of flexible and timely implementation of reasonable adjustments and the benefits to both employer and worker.

UNISON has produced guidance on reasonable adjustments, access to work, mental health, disability leave and COVID including Post Covid syndrome, which includes guidance on whether the member may be a disabled person and entitled to protections and adjustments under the Equality Act 2010. However more needs to be done to raise awareness with employers in the community sector of their duties and responsibilities when it comes to supporting disabled staff.

Conference notes that at least 1 in 5 people are disabled which means that there could be at least 20,000 members working in community who are disabled. Community comprises of a broad church of employers and many of our members work face to face with people in offices, in the community and in people's homes. More and more employers within community are introducing hybrid working, returning to hot desking, and requiring our members to spend more time working from home. Such arrangements can have both positive and negative impacts for our disabled members. This will be influenced by whether such arrangements take into account disabled workers, including travel arrangements, reasonable adjustments at home and in office spaces, the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), guidance issued to try and ensure home environments minimises risk to our members, and much more.

When looking at the impact on disabled members this should include the financial impact, noting that the TUC have carried out a pay gap analysis which concludes that generally disabled members will be working from 9 November to the end of year for nothing. Some disabled members may be in low paid jobs or working part time as a reasonable adjustment. Consideration needs to be given by employers of the financial impact of different types of working which could include increased travel costs and utility bills as well as the additional costs that our disabled members incur in respect of disability. Disability related costs include the need to spend more on essential goods and services such as heating, medication, insurance, equipment and therapies. These extra costs mean disabled people have less money in their pocket compared to non-disabled people, or simply go without. The costs have been estimated on average at about £600 per month, which in some cases is equivalent to more than half of a disabled member's income.

Conference notes the guidance produced by UNISON on hybrid and home working and calls on the Community Service Group Executive to:

1. Encourage branches to negotiate around hybrid and home working, including with small employers in the community sector.

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2. Raise awareness that people with Long Covid could be defined as disabled under the Equality Act.
3. Circulate guidance for branches with members working in community to use when negotiating COVID secure workplaces and COVID policies including specific reference to issues faced by Disabled Members and members with long COVID.
4. Promote the current range of resources available to support branches, including:
  - i Quick guide to Reasonable Adjustment,
  - ii Reasonable Adjustments Passport and policy guide
  - iii Disability Leave bargaining guide and model Policy
  - iv Bargaining to support those with Long Covid guide
  - v Hybrid and home working
  - vi Mental health guidance
5. Publicise the TUC disability pay gap analysis and encourage branches to negotiate with employers in the community sector to carry out their own disability pay gap analysis and should a pay gap be identified, produce an action plan on how this gap can be closed.

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

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#### **6. The Future of Adult Social Care for LGBT+ People**

Conference notes the Tory government, has broken manifesto pledges by raising National Insurance contributions and suspending the 'triple lock' on pension increases. On 7th September 2021, it published 'Build Back Better: Our plan for health and social care' announcing an impending White Paper on the future provision of adult social care in England.

Conference acknowledges that there is roughly a fifty/fifty split in the numbers of adults receiving social care between those who are retired and those of working age. There will be a significant number of LGBT+ people who need or will need access to adult social care. Some will be disabled and/or retired LGBT+ UNISON Community Service Group members.

Conference notes that a motion was passed at the 2017 National LGBT Conference which highlighted a lack of LGBT awareness within the care sector and called on the national LGBT committee to engage with regions and service groups to identify what care provisions existed for older LGBT people in their areas. This motion made specific reference to the Equality Act 2010 requirements for service providers of social care not to discriminate against service users on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. These provisions apply equally to intersectional LGBT+ users of adult social care of working age.

Conference further notes LGBT+ charity Opening Doors London's research into the housing and care needs of LGBT+ people which found a preference for LGBT+

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organisations or LGBT+ accredited organisations to provide accommodation, care and support.

Opening Doors London runs the Pride in Care® quality standard awarded to United Kingdom organisations assessed as providing quality care and support to older LGBT+ people. Championed by Care England and with training endorsed by Skills for Care, the registered quality mark is an externally verified seal of approval publicly demonstrating commitment to the continuous improvement of LGBT+ inclusion.

Conference welcomes the continued work undertaken by the Community Service Group Executive (in collaboration with other UNISON structures) to promote UNISON's Ethical Care Charter and to campaign for a National Care Service.

Conference further believes this work provides opportunities to bargain and campaign for LGBT+ inclusive care provision within our overall objectives of changing the landscape of adult social care throughout our nations and regions.

Conference further believes that UNISON's response to the forthcoming White Paper on the future of adult social care should reflect the needs of LGBT+ older people recognising their diversity and intersectionality.

Conference therefore calls on the Community Service Group Executive to:

1. Liaise with the National LGBT+ Committee to identify and highlight aspects of best practice in the provision of adult social care to LGBT+ people;
2. Engage with appropriate UNISON structures to raise awareness of the needs of LGBT+ disabled and older social care users requesting that these are included in any UNISON response to the White Paper on the future of adult social care in England;
3. Continue to work with the National LGBT+ Committee to raise awareness among Community members of the Ethical Care Charter and UNISON's campaign for a National Care Service.
4. Highlight through all appropriate media work being undertaken by specialist LGBT+ Charities in pursuit of these objectives as part of the Community Service Group's ongoing recruitment and retention work.

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

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#### **7. Reasonable adjustments for Disabled Members in Community**

Conference welcomes the initiatives taken to date by the Community Service Group to advance the rights of disabled members in the workplace.

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conference is concerned at this situation especially when our members in Community work for organisations which provide services and support to disabled citizens.

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

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

Conference calls upon the Community Service Group Executive to work with the National Executive Council and the National Disabled Members Committee to:

- a. Campaign for a stronger right to home working as a reasonable adjustment for disabled workers who want it;
- b. Continue to publicise UNISON's Reasonable Adjustments bargaining guide, which includes a model policy and Accessibility Passport that can be used to negotiate locally, and our Disability Leave bargaining guide;
- c. Publicise UNISON's homeworking bargaining guide and the two Stewards Guides to representing disabled and Deaf members;
- d. Develop Community-specific recruitment materials targeted at disabled workers highlighting UNISON's achievements

***National Disabled Members Committee***

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### **Campaigning**

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#### **Campaigns**

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### **8. In-sourcing adult social care**

Conference notes the publication in July 2020 Liverpool City Council's report in conjunction with UNISON North West, the University of Kent, and the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE): "Who Cares? Reinventing Adult Social Care" which examines the case for the in-sourcing of social care and adds to the debate around this issue.

This report highlights that the principal argument used against insourcing adult social care is that local authorities cannot afford to do it and the private sector can provide a cheaper and affordable service.

This argument rests on "the smoke and mirrors of financialisation" and as demonstrated in the report Liverpool City Council, like others, could afford to insource a significant portion of the contracts currently outsourced to the private sector.

Conference further notes that this report demonstrates that private social care costs us more than public provision in some key areas including: tax evasion, low pay and the procurement, commissioning and managing of contracts.

Research by the Centre for Health and Public Interest based on a forensic analysis of accounts of care homes has indicated the depth of the crisis resulting from private equity ownership: overall, of a total annual revenue of £15 billion, 10% (or £1.5 billion) leaks out of the sector in rent, dividends, interest, debt repayments and management/directors fees. Their research analysed the accounts of 830 adult care home companies, including the 26 largest providers. Between them they represented 68% of total estimated annual revenue to the sector.

The leakage of £1.5 billion is an average figure for all care home companies in the study. For private equity owned care homes, 16% of the weekly fee per bed is paid in interest costs alone i.e. interest on the debt taken on by private equity to buy the care homes. In addition, of the seven largest for-profit care home chains, between 15% and 32% of their annual income is spent on rent, this compares to the eight largest non-profit chains which spent 2% of their annual income on rent.

The private equity owned care homes generally have complex corporate structures, with profits hidden in management fees, lease agreements, interest and purchases from related-party companies. In addition, four of the five largest care home chains owned by private equity have owners based in tax havens.

Conference additionally notes that in Salford, the City Mayor Paul Dennett's gave an election commitment to explore the direct delivery of all public services. Making good that commitment and the recognition that social care must be a priority area for consideration a Commission to examine the issues has been established. This Commission comprises the City Council, UNISON regional and branch representation, the Association of Public Service Excellence, Professor Lydia Hayes and crucially two frontline care worker UNISON activists. It is this model of co-production and inclusion that informs decision making and provides an example of good practice.

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Ultimately, the potential for local authorities to provide higher standards of care and to adhere to the requirements contained within the fundamental standards contained in CQC guidance lies with their ability to take responsibility for the basis upon which care workers are employed.

It is by paying attention to the strong links between care quality and job quality that local authorities have the potential to secure true value for money from their funding of care and support services and improve the working lives of care workers.

For many of our Community members, the in-sourcing of adult social care contracts back to local authorities would potentially drive up standards, ensure decent pay, terms and conditions and job security.

Conference therefore calls on the Community Service Group Executive to:

- a) Continue to work with the National Executive Council (NEC), Local Government Service Group Executive and other appropriate stakeholders such as UNISON's Social Care Steering Group to examine the case for in-sourcing of adult social care and to formulate a position reflecting the existing policies of Community Conference which reflects the national bargaining agenda of Community members within this sector.
- b) Work with UNISON Labour Link and other stakeholders including lobbying political parties in positions of power and influence in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to promote the need to secure appropriate levels of funding to secure the future of adult social care.
- c) Continue to work with civil society partners and lobbying/campaigning organisations such as the Future Social Care Coalition to advance the objectives contained in this motion.

***North West Region***

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### **9. Campaigning on the Housing Crisis**

Conference notes the publication in June 2021 of "A decent place to live", a report commissioned by UNISON and produced by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) which identifies the shocking extent of the housing crisis in the UK and outlines a clear, positive vision for the future of affordable housing. This in-depth research identifies and lays out both the wide range of housing issues and how these issues play out across different areas in the UK, fully highlighting their complexity.

The report outlines some key recommendations including:

- a. Investment in a new generation of council housing, at scale;
- b. Maximising opportunities within that investment for green growth and green upskilling;
- c. Re-empowering local authorities with meaningful control of planning;
- d. Restoring the link between local housing allowance, housing benefit and rent;

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e. To inject public sector led investment in social housing – new homes, that are green homes, and which generate spending in supply chains, jobs and reskilling displaced workers from industries that have either not survived the pandemic or are simply hanging on by a thread.

Conference further notes that the publication of this report is only one element of the union's wider ranging Housing campaigning around the housing crisis working with key partners such as Generation Rent, The Affordable Housing Commission, Inside Housing's End Cladding Scandal and Defend Council's Homes for All Campaign.

Conference additionally notes the significant role that the social housing sector and Community members working within it contribute to delivering key housing services to the most vulnerable members of the community who are our tenants.

Community members in housing associations and charities delivering housing and support services have a crucial role to play in both informing and furthering this campaign. The future shape and funding of the sector is of crucial importance to security and employment and the terms and condition of work for our members affected.

Conference therefore instructs the Community Service Group Executive to:

1. Continue working with the National Executive Council (NEC), relevant service groups, Labour Link and other stakeholders including by lobbying political parties in positions of power and influence in Scotland, Cymru/Wales and Northern Ireland to promote the recommendations contained in UNISON's Housing Campaign and Manifesto.
2. Work with regions and branches to engage Housing Association members and Community members in this campaign and promote joint working with the Local Government service group to achieve its objectives.
3. Regularly highlight the campaign objectives to Community members via all appropriate media.

### ***Community Service Group Executive***

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

Conference notes the judgement issued by the Supreme Court on 19 March 2021 in the case of Royal Mencap Society v Tomlinson-Blake, which found that care workers employed on sleepover shifts were not entitled to the minimum wage and congratulates UNISON on pursuing this case to the Supreme Court. We believe that this devastating outcome is the latest indictment of the scandalous state of social care and a further example of the complete disregard shown to those who deliver social care services, and the people they support.

Conference recalls the publication in July 2019 of the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee report on Social Care Funding "Time to end a national scandal" which highlighted that;

1. adult social care in England continues to be inadequately funded.

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2. 1.4 million older people had an unmet care need.

3. urged the government to provide an immediate £8 billion cash injection and to reform the provision of care, including by giving free personal care to people who need it.

Conference further notes that in its November 2019 report entitled “Ethical Care: A Bold Reform Agenda for Adult Social Care”, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) described social care as “the ultimate Cinderella service”. Identifying that since 2008/09, there had been a five percent reduction in the number of people receiving publicly funded social care per year. Between 2008-09 and 2019, this equated to around 600,000 people. This had occurred despite a significant increase in the number of people in need of care.

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

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

The sector was poorly prepared for the pandemic and the years of underfunding had left the sector without the equipment and estates necessary to manage the crisis. Our members know that many care homes had insufficient space to safely isolate people who had caught COVID-19 and contain the spread. Local supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) were low, or non-existent in some places, which left many care workers exposed to the virus.

The pandemic further exposed inequalities within social care too, with Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, adults with learning disabilities, and those on the lowest incomes disproportionately affected.

This picture will be immediately recognisable to Community members in social care and the officers and reps who support them.

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

As members in Community know, care homes only make up one part of the social care sector. The labyrinthine and opaque nature of many providers’ financial structures, make finding similar information from providers of other forms of care very difficult. Despite this, Skills for Care estimate that the adult social care sector in the UK is worth £46.2 billion.

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

Conference believes that we need to build on the work undertaken by UNISON North West and initiatives in other nations/regions and ensure that our legal and political efforts are combined with an effective national organising strategy for social care, building workplace organisation across the sector.

Conference therefore calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

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

b) Work with the National Executive Council and other stakeholder Service Groups to demand the requisite resources to properly resource a national social care organising campaign aimed at not only recruiting social care workers into UNISON, but doing so in way designed to empower those workers to realise their collective strength;

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

d) Continue to work with civil society partners and lobbying/campaigning organisations such as the Future Social Care Coalition to advance the objectives contained in this motion.

### *North West Region*

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#### **11. Care workers from abroad - a new form of slave labour?**

Conference notes that poverty wages and poor working condition are endemic in the care sector.

It is only after initiatives such as UNISON’s Ethical Care Charter, our national campaigns on sick pay and staff shortages and the hard work and determination of many UNISON activists and senior branch representatives, that have continued to bring attention to the disproportionate treatment of care staff in the sector that have brought these issues to light.

Black Members Conference recognises that Black and migrant workers are disproportionately affected by these issues. This also means that they are prey to the

## **2022 Community Conference and Seminar UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

more unscrupulous employers in the field. Some of whom exploit the vulnerability migrant workers and exploit them further, by giving them worse working conditions and pay, that they can get away with these unscrupulous practices.

We know well of the limited access to adequate PPE at the beginning of the pandemic, and we also hear of many nursing homes who are recruiting care workers from Asia and other parts of the world into the UK, giving them false promises. And when they begin work, these workers experience threatening behaviour, colleagues and managers being racist towards them in the language they use when addressing them, and then not paying them correctly for the work they are doing. There are numerous reports of this occurring across the UK, leaving the people who have been on the receiving end emotionally scarred.

We therefore call on the Service Group Executive with social care members to:

1. Commission and conduct research into the experience of our Black members in care homes and other settings to determine their pay and conditions.
2. Encourage recruitment campaigns across the sector to further provide support to a vulnerable workforce
3. Conduct an awareness raising campaign for care workers and migrant workers particularly, of their rights at work, and human rights.
4. Explore and consider the use of appropriate (varied e.g., Gujarati, Farsi, French) language translation in our information to such workers, recognising the diversity of the workforce and our growing membership in this sector.
5. Highlight the free immigration advice line run by JCWI for UNISON members

### ***National Black Members' Committee***

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#### **12. Fair Pay for all Social Care Workers**

In 2020 the Scottish Government commissioned Derek Feely to review adult social care services in Scotland. Following on from Feely's report the Scottish Government published plans for the introduction of a National Care Service (NCS) in autumn 2021 but widened this out to adult and children's social work and social care, including: alcohol and drug services; mental health services; community justice services and prison social care; and all community health services including general practice (GPs).

UNISON Scotland welcomes the planned introduction of a NCS, as long as conditions around sectoral bargaining, ethical commissioning, Fair Work, standards of training & development, as well as ensuring service users voice and needs shape services, are included in the plans for a NCS.

Across the UK social care is facing a funding and staffing crisis, with pay, terms and conditions often cited as reasons for staff leaving care. In autumn of 2021, to help recruitment in social care, the Scottish Government announced an increase in pay for social care workers of £10.02 but only for those working in adult social care



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services. We do not understand why this was not extended to all social care workers in Scotland.

In order to help address the staffing crisis across all of social care, we ask the Service Group Executive to campaign to have all social care workers, in Scotland, paid at least this minimum rate and to campaign across the rest of the UK for social care services to introduce minimum standards in pay, terms and conditions, training, with a view to have social care workers on same/similar contracts to NHS staff

***NHS Glasgow Clyde and CVS***

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### **13. Time For Change**

A call to press “pause” and assess the real impact of regular restructures in Housing Associations.

Conference notes the seemingly all too regular cycle of restructures in the housing sector. Housing Associations are obsessed with restructure, if they are working generically, they are convinced that specialist is the way to go, and vice-versa. This often appears regardless of how recent their last change was.

Whilst not all change is always a bad thing, and at time may be badly needed, it is the apparent frequency of these restructures that is of most concern, and more importantly the impact on the morale and wellbeing of our members.

It is high time that a sector that is quick to proclaim itself as progressive and mindful of wellbeing and mental health, has a torch shone into this practise, to highlight the effect that putting our members through cycle after cycle of restructure and especially when being informed they are at risk of redundancy on a cyclical basis.

Conference calls on the Community Service Group Executive:

1. To conduct a survey of members in Housing Associations on restructures.

To ascertain the numbers of associations currently on a restructure, and how many re-structures have taken place in the past five and ten years?

To find out how often our members have been advised of a risk of redundancy in the above periods?

2. To use this information to formulate policy and use this policy in campaigns with the following stakeholders.

UNISON'S National Executive Committee (NEC). UNISONs Nations, regions, and branches with members in housing associations.

The Labour Link and other political parties in positions of power and influence in the devolved nations.

Other relevant organisations such as The Chartered Institute of Housing, and its newsletter Inside Housing.

***Cymru/Wales Region***

## **2022 Community Conference and Seminar UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

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### **14. The Death of the Office**

Assessing the impact on changing working patterns on Members working in Housing and Community.

Conference notes the massive acceleration of home and flexible working since the imposed lockdowns. Conference further notes the great benefits this can bring to many of our members, in particular disabled members who for far too long had their needs for this type of work routinely dismissed as “not possible”. The same is also true for those members with caring responsibilities and there can be great benefits to many of these more flexible working patterns.

Despite many benefits however, it is important for UNISON to take stock of these changes and ensure that the “best of both worlds” becomes the working experience of our members, and not, the worst of all. A wide-ranging impact assessment is now required to assess the trends, good and bad practise, and the impact this is all having on UNISON members.

For example, there are anecdotal reports of longer working hours due to removal of core hours is putting immense pressure on some members. With the increased fuel costs, what will be the long-term impact on members living conditions? And to this end, what are the real impacts on the environment? A modern office building will typically be more efficient to heat, cool or light for many people, than all staff doing this on individual basis at home. Are any benefits from reduced commuting and traffic, quickly overtaken by members home utility usage and costs?

What are possible impacts on recruitment, organising and retaining of members from this shift in working patterns? We in the Community Service Group are acutely aware of the challenges to Trade Union activity in fractured and remote workplaces.

Conference calls on the Community Service Group Executive:

1. To carry out an extensive survey on members in the Sector’s experiences on home and flexible patterns.
2. To investigate any contract changes that have taken place or are currently proposed.
3. To ascertain the differences in any homeworking bonuses or payments made.
4. To survey members on their workplaces, and home utility costs etc.
5. To use the above information to start a wider environmental impact assessment.
6. To work with all levels of the lay membership and UNISON structures to assess any impact and challenges to recruiting, organising, and retaining members.
7. To use the results to campaign for UNISON members interests with relevant stakeholders such as National Executive Council (NEC), relevant service groups, Labour Link and other stakeholders including by lobbying political parties in positions of power and influence in the devolved nations.

## 2022 Community Conference and Seminar UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

8. To campaign with other external organisations, such as The Chartered Institute of Housing, and the media.

*Cymru/Wales Region*

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### **15. Stop bosses from encroaching on your free time and compensate your overtime properly**

This conference believes that we should campaign to stop the practice in the voluntary and charity sector of employers contacting their employees after work and should properly compensate their employees for overtime.

We deplore that the 2020 Charity people salary survey found that employees working in the voluntary and charity sector found more people working longer hours and getting less overtime payment/compensation for their time than before. This will inevitably compromise the work/life balance for employees in the voluntary and community sector and as a result impact their mental health and wellbeing.

We call upon the Community SGE (Service Group Executive) to mount a campaign to advocate for policies that empower employees to claim compensation for their overtime and bans on employers contacting employees after working hours (except in exceptional circumstances).

### *Community and Voluntary Organisations*

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### **16. Fair Sickness Absence for All – supporting better sickness absence for community workers with additional needs**

This conference believes that when members are employed by an organisation within the Charity and Voluntary sector, either on a zero-hours or permanent basis, they are put at a disadvantage when it comes to their working conditions, especially in relation to potentially losing out on pay and / or being marked down as off sick when their condition (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) prevents them from working on certain days for reasons not related to actual sickness.

Conference notes that, although disability-related absence is not a community sector-specific issue, due to the heavy reliance of the sector on zero hours contracts, the issue of whether a member within the sector is likely to be disproportionately affected by being marked down as sick or not, impacts on the sector as a whole – all workers potentially may experience a disability during their working life!

This conference believes that there is a need to review and address inadequate sickness absence policies drawn up by employers in order to improve pay and conditions for members who are frequently having to take time off due to their condition, particularly those whose conditions would make them exceed their organisation's sickness absence allowance. This should be done by working with organisations / employers to adjust their sickness absence policies to include disability leave alongside existing policy on standard sick leave and ensure that disability leave should not be taken into account when considering the use of management tools such as the Bradford Factor.

## **2022 Community Conference and Seminar UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

This conference therefore calls on the Community Service Group Executive to work with regions and local branches to develop a toolkit to support members, stewards and other reps such as Workplace Contacts to work with their organisation to strive towards amending sickness absence policy to better support members who may experience a disability now or in the future.

### ***Community and Voluntary Organisations***

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#### **17. Time to Recognise all Community and Voluntary Sector Workers**

Conference notes the £500 Recognition Payment Campaign launched by UNISON Community and Voluntary Sector Branch NI which called for all Community Sector frontline workers to be recognised for their heroic efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic, just like their counterparts working in the NHS.

The campaign achieved the desired recognition for a select few frontline worker's, those employed through the Supporting People Programme, however, this has left many workers continuing to feel forgotten and undervalued.

Community workers who already face significant hardships, through substandard terms and conditions of employment.

Following political intervention all NHS workers in the North of Ireland received a £500 recognition payment for their commitment and services during the Covid-19 pandemic, a welcome development.

It is now time for all frontline workers to be recognised, not just a select few, equality must be a central theme and a core value when recognising essential frontline workers.

When we collectively braced ourselves for the arrival of COVID-19 - Community Sector workers entered the unknown putting their lives at risk, doing so for all of us, now it seems they are less worthy of recognition for these efforts.

Surely, every Community and Voluntary sector worker is deserving of a thank you from government, as any other worker, who through their actions, protecting at risk individuals and families, ensuring that the fight against COVID-19 was effective and coordinated.

We therefore call upon the Community Service Group Executive to work collaboratively with all relevant stakeholders, joining the campaign and demanding that all essential frontline workers across the community sector in the North of Ireland are duly recognised for their work, commitment, and dedication during the ongoing public health emergency.

***Community and Voluntary Sector Branch NI***

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# 2022 Community Conference and Seminar

## UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

### Efficient and Effective Union

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Efficient and Effective Union

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#### **18. Countering fragmentation**

The Community Service Group is very different from others within our union. There are more than eighty thousand members, employed by more than six thousand different employers. More than three thousand members are the only UNISON member at their employer. And most UNISON community members are part of branches where they are in a minority, usually well outnumbered by members of the Local Government group.

This has consequences for members who wish to become active or remain active. They are very likely to work for an employer who does not recognise any union, and there is no question of employer support or facility time. This also raises for members the question of what would be the point in becoming a rep, where there is no one to represent. They are likely not to routinely come across other UNISON members or activists, who may have common issues or even have worked out how to deal with problems they are wrestling with. They may be less likely than others to be supported by their branch to become reps or stewards, to attend Conferences as a branch delegate, or to fill one of the core branch offices.

No one thing will reverse this fragmentation. But a combination of actions, consistently pursued, can build participation across our diverse membership. Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

1. Support training aimed at cohorts of members from our service group to enable them to build relationships and form networks.
2. Seek through regional community structures to strengthen support for Community reps and members at the regional tier.
3. Support the development and dissemination of resources enabling activists to seek recognition from their own employers.
4. Use all available communications channels and technologies to facilitate the development of networks of activists from our sectors, able to share knowledge and build solidarity across geographical and branch boundaries.

### ***National Community and Voluntary Sector***

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#### **19. Charitable sector emerging from Covid**

Conference notes the publication in July 2021 of the Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (OCSI) research submitted to the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Left Behind Neighbourhoods which outlines that those who live in 225 “left behind” neighbourhoods in England receive less than half the charitable grant funding than other deprived places.

In this research neighbourhoods are classified as “left behind” when they fall within the most deprived 10% of areas on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and also

## **2022 Community Conference and Seminar UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

lack social infrastructure, such as community centres. These areas are predominantly located near the coast and on the outskirts of post-industrial towns and cities in the North and Midlands.

Conference further notes that during Covid-19 the emergency £5m Charities Aid Foundation fund for small organisations was forced to close within days after receiving grant applications that totalled more than £40m. A snap poll in May 2021 from think tank Pro Bono Economics reported that more than one in 10 small voluntary sector organisations feared they would cease to operate. Conference also notes that the Budget contained no additional funding at all, and that Pro Bono Economics analysis in October 2021 shows that if giving by the public tracks consumption, as is the usual pattern in normal times, total funding for charitable organisations is likely to be £6.6bn lower over the years 2020-2023 than if COVID had not occurred.

They also found that although the positive signs in wider society had translated into increased optimism about the future for many charities, most charities still faced a growing demand for their services and staff challenges brought on by the 'pingdemic' with 66% of charities reporting a significant growth in demand for their support and services between April and June 2021.

A report from small charities funder the Lloyds Bank Foundation entitled "Small Charities Responding to Covid-19", similarly found that no charity funded by the foundation during the pandemic had shut down services, instead evolving their methods of support with minimal disruption.

A summary report published in February 2021 "The Value of Small in a Big Crisis", further highlighted the agility of the small charities sector in digitally supporting service users and playing a key role in local economies and supply chains during the crisis.

As we emerge from the pandemic, we are seeing a mixed picture relating to the health of the charitable and voluntary sector for a variety of factors, with varied impacts on the terms and conditions of members working in the sector.

As a recent Demos report on "The Covid -19 Impact on the Charitable Sector" outlines, ". . . we need to take stock and place the charitable sector on a more sustainable footing.

This comes from within, through learning lessons around digital delivery and fundraising, remote working and diversifying fundraising strategies, and from without – through grant funders and the Government supporting these endeavours with targeted resources."

Conference believes that charities, large and small, are the life-blood of a functioning civil society and that during the Covid-19 pandemic it is these institutions which have augmented and frequently filled the gaps in statutory service provision.

Conference further believes that in order to maintain crucial services charities and the voluntary sector need to invest in their staff – through good terms and conditions

## **2022 Community Conference and Seminar UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

and appropriate remuneration. Developing our presence and reach as a union within the sector is pivotal to achieving this.

Conference calls on the Community Service Group Executive to:

- a) Work with the NEC, service groups, Labour Link and other stakeholders including by lobbying political parties in positions of power and influence in Scotland, Cymru/Wales and Northern Ireland to continue to highlight the funding crisis within the charitable sector and the impact this has on society and statutory services.
- b) Utilise all appropriate media to highlight the work of our members in the charitable sector and the valuable work they do in creating and developing community cohesion.

### ***National Community and Voluntary Sector***

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#### **20. Supporting and organising Community Members**

Conference notes the work undertaken by the Service Group Executive since the passing of 2016 National Delegate Conference Motion 2 'Organising for growth' and in particular the initiatives taken by UNISON centrally to further examine the issues related to the current barriers and opportunities to developing, organising and supporting our membership, recognising that key lessons can be utilised to share good practice and facilitate the inclusion of community members at all levels of our lay structures in the Community Service Group.

Since 2016, a number of developments have taken place. We now face a completely different political landscape; legislative changes reinforce the pernicious impact of austerity measures on our sector along with renewed constraints on our ability to organise effectively existing and potential trade union members.

The diversity of the Service Group allows for a wide range of structures and models in place for organising, representing, negotiating on behalf of, supporting and developing our membership. A number of these models are innovative, effective and exemplify good practice.

Several models of branch structure underpin the Community membership across our nations/regions, from wholly Community based branches to the placement of Community members within predominantly Local Government and Health and other branches.

In some branches Community members play a full and active part in the decision-making of their branch, in others less so.

Additionally, internal changes within UNISON in the form of initiatives such as Activity Based Budgeting, Regional Compacts and Regional Pool and the advent of Branch and regional Organising Fund bidding processes provide opportunities for us to secure improved support and development for our membership in partnership with Regions and Branches.

The valuable work already undertaken, along with the production of the Service Group Executive's bi-annual survey, form the building blocks of what we are seeking

## **2022 Community Conference and Seminar UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

to achieve for our members in Community and how we play a full and active part at all levels of UNISON's lay decision-making process and beyond.

Conference believes that, in order to develop successfully and to support our increasing membership base, the service group must develop an effective strategy for organising and developing our collective work and how we inform UNISON's national bargaining agenda and developmental priorities.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

1. Build a comprehensive current picture of the organisation of our membership in UNISON highlighting the various models of organising with an evaluation of these.
2. Consult widely with Branches and Regions, Regional Community Service Group Committees, Self Organised Groups, Young Members, Retired Members and all parts of the Community membership on the barriers to participation and inclusion of our membership at all levels of UNISON's structures.
3. Begin the process for formulating a strategy for developing and organising the future work of the Service Group and present recommendations to 2023 Community Service Group Conference.

### ***Community Service Group Executive***

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#### **21. Learning and Organising in Community**

Conference notes the adoption of motion 72 "Supporting Our Branches: The Branch Resource Review" at 2021 Special Delegate Conference.

Conference further notes and endorses the principles contained in Branch Resource Review Proposal 12: Organising School.

Conference believes that the training, education and development of Community members is pivotal to ensuring that UNISON's equality and organising objectives are met and that our membership is engaged, enthused and resourced to take forward our negotiating, bargaining and campaigning work in Community and the wider union.

Conference, over the lifetime of the Service Group, has welcomed a range of initiatives from Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) at both national and regional levels which seek to address our training and educational needs and also has frequently highlighted Community-oriented good practice in our nations/regions which have augmented these initiatives.

In particular Conference notes the excellent work of LAOS, working with activists in Dimensions in early 2021, in running introductory rep training for a cohort of new reps. Through the development of a virtual course and resources, this geographically-dispersed group was able to take the course together, sharing with and learning from each other. This provides an excellent model for future training targeted at the needs of members in our sectors.



## 2022 Community Conference and Seminar UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Conference believes that only through a trained and active membership can Community increase its footprint within our union and play a full and active part through our democratic decision making structures.

Conference, therefore, calls on the Community Service Group Executive to:

- a) Work with the National Executive Council (NEC) and LAOS to develop appropriate training, development and organising opportunities that meet the needs of members in Community.
- b) Ensure that the training, development and organising needs of Community members are met through national Organising School initiatives.

***Community Service Group Executive***

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### **Motions Ruled Out of Order**

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Beyond remit of the Conference

#### **Motion The effect of COVID 19 vaccine on Black staff being mandatory**

Skills for Carer's most recent profile of the care workforce shows that a quarter of the workforce (23%) are from 'Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. In England, covid-19 vaccination uptake among older adult care homes is generally high, this is approximately 87% who have received at least one dose.

The World Health Organisation accept that uptake is known to be lower among some minority ethnic groups, many of whom work in health and social care sectors, and in patient-facing roles meaning the community sector.

Successful implementation of the vaccination programme has depended upon uptake, which differs among population groups. Without understanding the views, needs and barriers to vaccine uptake, and targeting interventions accordingly, vaccine implementation have exacerbated pre-existing inequalities. This is particularly pertinent considering evidence that minority ethnic groups are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, experiencing higher morbidity and mortality (SAGE ethnicity sub-group, 2020).

Research indicates that, for several vaccines, Black African and Black Caribbean groups are less likely to be vaccinated (50%) compared to White groups (70%). Furthermore, for new vaccines (post-2013), adults in minority ethnic groups were less likely to have received the vaccine compared to those in White groups (by 10-20%). Recent representative survey data from the UK Household Longitudinal study shows overall high levels of willingness (82%) to take up the COVID-19 vaccine. However, marked differences existed by ethnicity, with Black ethnic groups the most likely to be COVID-19 vaccine hesitant followed by the Pakistani/Bangladeshi group. Other White ethnic groups (which include Eastern European communities) also had higher levels of COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy than White UK/White Irish ethnicity.

Barriers to vaccine uptake include perception of risk, low confidence in the vaccine, distrust, access barriers, inconvenience, socio-demographic context and lack of endorsement, lack of vaccine offer or lack of communication from trusted providers and community leaders.

## **2022 Community Conference and Seminar UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

To overcome these barriers, multilingual, non-stigmatising communications should be produced and shared, including vaccine offers and endorsements from trusted sources to increase awareness and understanding and to address different religious and cultural concerns (such as whether the vaccine is compliant with the dietary practices of major faiths, or with their ethical positions around medical interventions). Communication should consider the "whole communication journey" for vaccine rollout. See previous SPI-B and Ethnicity sub-group reports on communication (SPI-B, 2020; SAGE ethnicity sub-group, 2020).

Conference therefore calls upon the Community Service Group Executive to:

1. Where possible engage in specific work to connect with local Black community groups who do work in support of our members in their communities.
2. To be able to explore and undertake statistical survey to get their view of members on those who have or have not received the vaccine and how the new policy would affect them.

### ***National Black Members' Committee***

#### **Motion Staffing Crisis in Social Care**

Conference notes with grave concern the on-going staffing crisis across the social care sector.

With social care organisations hemorrhaging staff, and vacancies remaining unfilled, the companies providing these essential services are on their knees, and those on the front line are feeling it the most.

Looking at the current job adverts, it is clear to see that one of the main reasons for recruitment difficulties is pay. When you can work in McDonalds for £3 more per hour than you can in the highly skilled workforce of social care, is it any wonder that we have a national staffing crisis on our hands.

Over many years, instead of paying staff a fair wage, employers have been happy to continue to fill the pockets of the nursing and care agencies, to plug gaps in the workforce. It should be no surprise to anyone at conference that agencies themselves now are unable to supply the much-needed staff in the care sector.

Conferences therefore calls on the Community Service Group Executive to:

1. To continue to work with the labour link, NEC and other stake holders including lobbying political parties in a position of power and influence
2. Hold an urgent review into member's salaries and benefits within the sector
3. Continue to build UNISON recognition across the whole sector
4. Work towards the aim of a national regulated pay structure for social care

Conference also calls on the National Executive Committee to;

## **2022 Community Conference and Seminar UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 1.) Make a focus on social care a priority
- 2.) Restore the faith in the community sector members that feel forgotten about
- 3.) Help turn around the low morale in the sector

### ***Gloucestershire Districts Health and Community***

#### **Motion Contractual Sick Pay Campaign**

Conference recognises the huge efforts made right across our region to protect and safeguard our members during the Covid-19 pandemic – this mobilisation was particularly evident when as a region we collectively demanded sufficient protections for our members in the event they were off work due to any Covid-19 related absence.

This was no more evident when as a fighting lay membership led trade union we successfully ensured that some of our members received full pay in the event they had to take time off work due to Covid-19.

Unfortunately, not all UNISON members received such a protection, leaving them facing untold hardships and additional struggles during the ongoing public health emergency.

During these unprecedented times, the UNISON membership service, There for You, stepped in and supported the most at risk and vulnerable, with pressures and demands on the There for You service, on the increase.

Conference recognises that frontline workers (UNISON members) who work within the outsourced and privatised, community and voluntary Sector, face particular challenges due to substandard contracts of employment, with no contractual sick pay being a huge issue of concern which leaves our members in a precarious position, with their livelihoods at risk.

Conference calls on the Community Service Group Executive to -

1. Launch a campaign right across the outsourced and privatised, community and voluntary sector, calling for contractual sick pay to be incorporated into all contracts of employment.
2. Work with the NEC, Service Groups, Labour Link and other stakeholders including lobbying political parties in positions of power in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Cymru/Wales and England to highlight issues affecting our members, specifically the absence of contractual sick pay allowances and wider substandard terms and conditions of employment, across the C&V sector.

Subsequently, working together towards a solution - addressing this unacceptable workplace issue once and for all.

***Community and Voluntary Sector Branch NI***