

2022 National Delegate Conference

UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Brighton Centre

14 Jun 2022 - 17 Jun 2022

This publication contains the motions and amendments to rule for the 27th national delegate conference, followed by motions and amendments to rule ruled out of order by the standing orders committee and the reason for the ruling. Please note that amendments to rule are not subject to further amendment. The deadline for amendments to motions is 12 noon Tuesday 19 April 2022. These should be submitted using the Online Conference System (OCS).

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

Organising and Recruitment

Organisation and Development

1. Building the Union Organising for Our Future

Conference notes that UNISON membership surged in 2020 in response to government's mishandling of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on vital public services and public service workers. However, as home working continued and workplace access remained restricted, UNISON's workplace activity and visibility decreased. Following an initial surge in schools' members in January 2021 rates of new joiners fell dramatically and the rate of leavers increased. Despite a positive national profile throughout the pandemic, UNISON's membership decline persisted and 2021 ended in net membership decline of around 30,000.

In the context of continuing disruption and uncertainties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, UNISON faces major challenges including:

- 1) A declining membership poses a direct threat to current levels of resources, influence and effectiveness and has a detrimental impact on activist and member morale whilst a hostile national UK Government threatens further coercive legislative measures and new rounds of austerity;
- 2) Ongoing decline of Local Government direct employment and threats of further privatisation of our NHS leading to increased fragmentation and a growing proportion of public service workers employed in areas not covered by UNISON recognition and facility agreements;
- 3) Traditional physical workplaces are shrinking with an increase in hybrid and home working, precarious employment, and automation, moving many public service workers away from UNISON's traditional branch and workplace organisation;
- 4) Large private public service employers such as social care providers and academy trust chains increasingly operate beyond and across UNISON branch and regional boundaries, with increased finance and remote overseas parent companies more hostile to UNISON aims and values and better able to withstand local workplace union campaigning activity.

Conference recognises UNISON's unique strengths to address the challenges and to revitalise the organisation at all levels including:

- a) A strong public profile with clear UNISON values and public service focus;

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- b) A well-established organisational base at workplace, branch, regional and national level including infrastructure and expertise in organising, campaigning and activist development from which to build and grow;
- c) A long-held ambition to be an Organising Union with significant foundational work already achieved through investment in Meeting the Organising Challenge strategies;
- d) The new Branch Support and Organising Fund (BSOF) which will build on best practice from the former fighting fund and regional pool;
- e) Lessons from proactive initiatives developed throughout the Covid-19 pandemic for improved digital communication, campaigning and engagement, creating new opportunities for organising within fragmented and inaccessible workplaces and providing new opportunities for members from under-represented groups to participate in union activity.

UNISON is an organising union and seeks not merely to service its members but also to organise them: to recruit new members, to find and support new activists, to win recognition where we need to, and to go on to win real gains for members' terms and conditions.

However, too often UNISON's marketing of itself to its members presents the union as a servicing union, with emphasis on the 'insurance' of joining a union for individual protection.

Whilst Conference recognises the importance of supporting individual members with their personal issues in the workplace, we know that until members understand they are joining a collective and are prepared to participate in and develop that collective endeavour, UNISON will struggle to make major gains for workers and change the balance of power in the workplace.

Conference reaffirms UNISON's commitment to:

- i) Embed equalities, proportionality, fair representation, and participation in all aspects of UNISON organisation and activity as key to building our union density and effectiveness;
- ii) Continue to strengthen the Organising Framework process, demonstrating partnership working between branch and union staff and ensuring adequate resources for organising activity and officer and activist succession planning;
- iii) Proactively recruit and organise private and community sector public service workers with a view to securing union recognition and improved pay and conditions and encouraging members' participation in UNISON structures and democracy;
- iv) Research future growth in public services employment including social care and under-five's education; followed up by adoption and roll out of whole union organising strategies for those sectors to tackle endemic worker exploitation, low pay and insecure employment in the predominantly female workforce;
- v) Recruit more activists across the whole union, particularly from under-represented groups such as low paid women, Black and migrant workers;
- vi) Welcome the establishment of a UNISON College to train and support new and existing activists and support wider access to member learning and activism;

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- vii) Support branches to defend and where necessary, expand the right to the facilities required for collective and individual representation;
- viii) Continue the use of social media targeted at members and activists to share and signpost guidance and key information; hold regular webinars, on key topics that will inform and reassure our members; contact new members as soon as possible to welcome them and learn the key issues affecting them at work;
- ix) Build on successful pilots using the Member Contact Tool (MCT) to contact new joiners and potential leavers to improve membership retention.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- A) Develop a joined up national organising strategy with a clear vision for a stronger UNISON and a resourced plan to build workplace organisation, grow our activist base especially elected workplace representatives, increase member participation, and achieve sustainable membership growth;
- B) Support and encourage internal solidarity between all parts of the union around the common goal to revitalise workplace activism and branch organisation, return membership to pre-2020 levels and re-establish sustainable membership growth;
- C) Deliver increased standardisation of organising tools, templates, techniques, and training and embed organising best practice across the union;
- D) Analyse staffing data of large employers with existing UNISON organisation, recognition, and facility agreements to establish UNISON densities and potential for infill membership recruitment and growth as well as recruitment of more activists;
- E) Establish accurate organising benchmark data with regular and transparent reporting of progress against national and regional objectives;
- F) Urge branches, where appropriate, to identify three employers in their branch where a campaign could be launched of recruitment and/or union recognition. This will be led by the branch with resources (labour, finance and time etc.) from the Region to ensure that where they have recruitment campaigns, they are linked to form objectives / improvements for our members;
- G) Carry out a full and detailed review of UNISON's marketing of itself to members. This review will utilise external expertise should that be necessary and will look at how other trade unions are dealing with this challenge in the twenty-first century. This review will include the following:
 - I) Tone of voice: do we sound like an organising trade union at all times?;
 - II) Newsletters and the advertising they carry;
 - III) Do our members read literature and what do they take away from them?;
 - IV) Application forms and membership leaflets;
 - V) Websites and social media;
 - VI) Emails and texts;

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VII) Materials to recruit reps to accurately reflect devolution arrangements where appropriate.

This review should include opportunities for branches to feed in their views at the outset, and to monitor and comment on progress as it develops. It must also include significant opportunities for the self-organised groups and equality groups to input: we need UNISON's marketing to work for all our members if we are to move successfully in marketing ourselves from a servicing outlook to an organising outlook.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to implement this review over the next twelve months.

National Executive Council

2. Building the union, promoting workplace democracy and tackling inequality

Conference notes the new report published by the trade union federation, UNI Europa, entitled "The planned obsolescence of Social Europe" which shows that the weakening of collective bargaining is a key driver behind increasing inequality in Europe, including the UK. Organised workplaces with high density of trade union membership ensures workers can negotiate with employers from a position of strength. Collective bargaining is the main vehicle for workers to claim higher salaries and better terms and conditions. As such, policies that have weakened trade unions' ability to engage in collective bargaining have overwhelmingly resulted in income being diverted away from working people and towards the top 10 percent highest incomes instead.

Inequality is growing in the UK. A small percentage of people at the top are capturing more of the wealth being produced. Part of the reason is a decrease in collective bargaining coverage. In the UK, we see a dramatic increase in inequality as a larger share of the national income goes to the richest 10 percent. At the same time, collective bargaining was dismantled.

Meanwhile countries that have maintained collective bargaining coverage at a high level, have kept inequality at bay too. It's clear collective bargaining results in more equal and fairer societies. When workers bargain collectively, they get a larger piece of the pie. The problem is, however, that over the last 10 years the proportion of workers covered by collective agreements in the UK have declined by over 10 percent. Importantly this decline in collective bargaining, in workers power is a policy choice. Acting in the interests of the richest individuals and corporations, right-wing governments and policy makers have weakened unions, made strikes more difficult, facilitated derecognition and cancelled collective agreements. This is driving inequality. Over in America, US President Biden is moving to change this dynamic by reinforcing collective bargaining. In his words "the middle class built America and unions built the middle class".

In the UK we need to fight for a government that values trade unions.

Conference is resolute that we must take decisive steps towards building union organisation and strengthening collective bargaining in the UK. We need to grow exponentially each year and invest in our activist base - because where we are absent, we are seen as weak. But where we are present and visible, we are seen as strong

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Conference instructs the National Executive Council to prioritise delivering a new strategy to rebuild union organisation in public service workplaces. The priority needs to be delivering change in our members' workplaces not internal union issues and debates. To do this the National Executive Council must implement a strategy that:

- 1) Breaks down the barriers to branch activism and organising;
- 2) Pursues securing recognition agreements in workplaces especially in private, community and voluntary sector workplaces;
- 3) Ensures members have access to high quality and relevant activist education - whether in-person or on-line;
- 4) Creates a database of bite-size activism training and organising opportunities to dispel the excuse of 'not enough time';
- 5) Places a greater value and emphasis on the role of the workplace contact. The one role members often say they would be willing to do but which is often de-prioritised in the pursuit of harder to recruit ERA Accredited Stewards. Thus, creating, almost overnight, a visible presence in our workplaces which can be coordinated into a network;
- 6) Reimagines, simplifies and digitalises the UNISON activist mentoring programme Trained and Active Plan (TAP).

Conference further calls on the National Executive Council to request that UNISON Labour Link discuss with the Labour Party how the next Labour Government intends to undo the damage caused by the Trade Union Act 2016; reducing the barriers to the right to organise, collectively bargaining and engage in industrial action.

Peterborough City

3. Union Cooperatives: a New organising Opportunity

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

This year saw the launch of a manifesto for decent work written by a coalition of activists from the trade union and cooperative movements including activists from UNISON. This manifesto draws upon successful international organising campaigns to argue the case for a new form of workplace governance – the union cooperative. In a fully realised union cooperative all workers are members of both the union and the cooperative and a union

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committee is a central part of the democratic governance of the cooperative – placing the workforce at the centre of decisions about how their work is organised, flattening status and pay differentials between managers and workers, and ensuring that any profit accrues to the cooperative and the workers within it, rather than being leached out of the business, as is the case under financialised capitalistic systems as we now know them. Broader approaches to making local economies fairer, such as the Preston Model of community wealth building have been enthusiastic supporters of the potential of the union cooperative approach. The union cooperative approach to securing decent work and industrial democracy is well suited to the task of building back following the Covid-19 pandemic and is also likely to be congruent with efforts to secure a green new deal.

The union cooperative model offers unions like UNISON an opportunity to pin aspects of organising campaigns on the establishment of union cooperatives. In doing so, we can grow our membership and reduce the demands upon branches because the union cooperative will deliver decent work and workplace democracy. Our US allies in SEIU and 1Worker1Vote have shown how this can be achieved at scale with hugely beneficial impact for the union and its members.

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

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

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

Mersey Community Hospitals and Health

4. Discrimination and Mental Health

The place of discrimination as a cause of mental illness, or factor that leads to poor health, is contested but the evidence is now emerging, but the anecdotal evidence is clear.

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Discrimination is an unpleasant reality that many live through and experience on a day-to-day basis for many, it exists in many forms and acts not only through interpersonal assaults, but also through societal structures.

There is a growing amount of evidence demonstrating that discrimination leads to mental illnesses, especially depression and long-lasting periods of adjustment, like grief or difficulty coping with and adapting to change. Evidence suggests discrimination is followed by more experiences of hallucinations and delusions; and if physical assault is involved, post-traumatic stress can emerge. These mental illness experiences are often co-existent. There is evidence that it also influences physical health, for example, high blood pressure.

Institutional discrimination is defined as the collective failure of an organisation to provide appropriate and professional services to people because of their protected characteristic. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour that amount to discrimination, either through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, or thoughtlessness and stereotyping, which disadvantage people. Discrimination can occur in institutions, such as the NHS, Local Government, even when the leadership does not intend to. In fact, it can occur without any awareness of it happening.

This motion calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with the National Self Organised committees to develop support mechanism for those dealing with the impact discrimination;
- 2) To work with the National Self Organised committees to explore if the remit of the Race protocol can extend across all discrimination cases;
- 3) To explore and implement training opportunities across the union in order to support mental health of members and activists;
- 4) To work with the National Self Organised committees to ensure fair representation across all areas of the union.

West Midlands Region

Recruitment and Organising

5. A Focus on Apprentices

Conference notes that in 2019/20, there were 719,000 people participating in an apprenticeship in England, with 322,500 apprenticeship starts and 146,900 apprenticeship achievements.

The NHS alone currently has 14,000 apprentices.

In spite of these high numbers, union membership amongst apprentices remains very low.

Apprentices are often poorly paid, with a much lower minimum wage set for them. Apprentices are open to being treated as cheap labour by an employer and reports of bullying, abuse and harassment are not uncommon. Apprentices are not always made aware of their rights at work.

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There is often a great misunderstanding of apprenticeships. A common assumption is that apprentices are all of college age yet just only half of apprentices are aged under 25.

Conference believes that apprenticeships are a great way for people to enter the workforce and apprentices should get the respect and recognition that they deserve.

Conference further believes that by focusing on these actions, the trade union movement will be stronger and the rights of workers better respected.

Conference asks UNISON's National Executive Council to:

- 1) Put the recruitment and activist development of apprentices as a UNISON priority;
- 2) Work with the National Young Members Forum to develop a campaign around improving the pay and strengthening the rights of apprentices.

National Young Members' Forum

6. Recruitment Communication - Time for a Real Change

Conference notes:

- 1) If we are to build and retain an powerful and effective trade union of over a million members, it's crucially important to recruit, and for new members to have an understanding of what they've joined and their role within it;
- 2) For obvious reasons, we want to encourage new members to engage with our communications, ballots, surveys etc. and where appropriate, become activists and stewards, strengthening our campaigning ability and industrial weight;
- 3) If members are joining on the basis that membership to them means only individual assistance, then they are probably missing the point;
- 4) A trade union should be based on working people collectively recognising that organising together to achieve our aims is the most effective way of improving our rights at work. Improvements to pay, pension rights and working conditions are all won by collective action, or the threat of it during negotiations;
- 5) Whilst members may well be attracted by free legal assistance or holiday offers, it is imperative that our union strengthens its ranks with workers who recognise that collective organisation and struggle is the prime reason for our existence.

Conference further notes:

- a) Our website and other recruitment material emphasises the individual over the collective, with seven reasons to join a union listed as "legal help, financial assistance, compensation, discounts, helpline, training and support";
- b) Other phrases, such as "get essential cover", "always with you" and "join now and you'll receive our support" (not necessarily true for a pre-existing issue), further reinforce the impression that this trade union operates as an insurance company. Members are seen as buying their own, individual benefits so that we can, in return, provide help for their individual problems;

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- c) Of course a trade union correctly provides members with assistance for work-related problems, but we need to emphasise that we're a campaigning union, which can and will use our collective strength to win better conditions and equal rights for all. This message needs to be central;
- d) Where members have no appreciation of the power of collective action, or no faith in the local or national leadership to take steps to harness that power, they will not engage with our union, seeing crucial ballots over industrial action or internal elections as nothing to do with them;
- e) Whilst we want to maximise our membership, we have to make member education and an understanding of collective power and responsibility a central part of the recruitment process;
- f) This will not deter potential members, but could engage a whole generation of working people who have been radicalised by the potential of a Corbyn-led government. We can and should recruit those inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, and ongoing campaigns calling for environmental justice or an end to gender-based violence.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- i) Conduct a thorough review of all recruitment material, on the basis that Conference agrees that moving toward an emphasis on the collective and away from the individual will strengthen our union;
- ii) Report back to the next appropriate Conference on progress made and necessary changes actioned.

University of Brighton

Fair Representation

7. The Seven Principles of Public Life

Recent times have created an atmosphere of dismay with the way many people in public life behave, from the Partygate scandal involving Boris Johnson, to the awarding of PPE contracts or the leadership of the Metropolitan Police.

The trade union movement prides itself on having high standards and behaving in the interests of working people. To ensure this continues, UNISON should commit itself to adopting the Nolan Principles on conduct in public life, as an organisation representing 1.4 million people.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to adopt the seven principles listed below:

1) Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2) Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not

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act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3) Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4) Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5) Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6) Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7) Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Integrate these principles in to all parts of the union's structures;
- b) Lead by example on these principles and give them wide publicity in the union;
- c) Ensure they are included in activist and member training courses;
- d) Report back to Conference next year demonstrating what progress has been made.

North Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Health

Constitutional matters

8. Complaints

Conference notes:

- 1) That the workplace can be a very difficult situation for our members when they face disciplinary action and it can have an adverse impact on their physical and mental health and well-being. This can impact on them having unrealistic expectations as to what UNISON reps can do to resolve their workplace issues;
- 2) The representation provided by UNISON activists who deal with these distressed members do it to the best of their abilities, within the union guidelines and within the

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constraints of UK employment law. Despite this sometimes our members are dissatisfied with their representative;

- 3) UNISON rightly has a complaints procedure that allows members to submit a complaint if they believe they have not been treated correctly or received the appropriate representation.

Linked to this there is a requirement that UNISON members and activists themselves act appropriately and should treat all with dignity and respect the rule 1 procedure within the rule book deals with alleged misconduct of UNISON members.

Both these procedures are vital for an organisation that takes misconduct seriously and ensures that there are fair impartial and transparent procedures to deal effectively with complaints or alleged misconduct of union members and activists

For any UNISON member or activist who is the subject of such a complaint, it can be a really difficult and stressful time. It is however important to acknowledge the stress often involved for those UNISON members who submit such complaints especially if they are alleging that they have been bullied or harassed.

Conference therefore resolves to:

- a) Instruct the National Executive Council to ensure that all complaints are dealt with quickly and timescales of the complaint procedure is adhered to;
- b) Instruct the National Executive Council to make a statement that any Rule 1 hearings will be dealt with in a timely manner and heard by a panel that is independent and has no conflict of interest;
- c) Instruct the National Executive Council to ensure that every National Executive Council member has undertaken mandatory complaints training.

Cymru/Wales Region

9. National Executive Council and Rule Book Commitment to Fair Representation

The UNISON rule book stipulates one of the aims of our union is to “promote fair representation in all the Union’s structures for women, members of all grades, Black members, disabled members and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBT+) members.” As a movement built on the values of solidarity and collectivism, we know just how important it is to defeat the tendencies that divide people. It is why we in the trade union movement have a special responsibility to tackle discrimination. We know that unless we do so our objective to organise and unite all working people becomes more difficult.

UNISON has a long and proud tradition of tackling discrimination in the workplace and more broadly in society. We were the Union that championed self-organisation, proportionality, and fair representation, to guarantee through our rule book a union that reflects the diversity of its membership. We have long campaigned for a fair, equal, and just society.

By embracing progressive ideals, changing our own organisation, we positioned the union so we could speak with credibility challenging others to follow in our footsteps. Conference is extremely disappointed that the initial actions of the National Executive Council elected in 2021 resulted in:

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- 1) An all-white Presidential team;
- 2) No Black Members selected as the Chair or Vice Chair of any of the 7 National Executive Council sub-committees;
- 3) UNISON's delegation to the TUC General Council being all white (with three of the four members representing just one region).

Conference believes that the union has the most unrepresentative structure of senior lay leaders since the union was founded 29 years ago. It reflects the old established order of white privilege. It diminishes the role and value of Black members, and it ultimately weakens our union.

Conference therefore urges the National Executive Council:

- a) To pay full attention to the rule book requirement to fair representation in the future;
- b) To call for measures to be taken to prevent this from happening again with a report back on actions taken at next year's National Delegate Conference.

National Black Members' Committee

10. Not in Our Name

Conference is concerned about the impact resolutions agreed at a meeting of UNISON's National Executive Council on 6 October 2021 have had, and could have, on our union and our members.

These resolutions were added to the agenda despite advice from the legal department that four of these resolutions were in breach of UNISON rules, potentially unlawful and could bring our union into disrepute.

At the meeting the National Executive Council received further internal and external legal advice warning that these resolutions were beyond the remit of the National Executive Council. The National Executive Council were advised that as the resolutions changed UNISON's rules, they could only be agreed by a two thirds majority of the union's sovereign body, that is, National Delegate Conference.

Despite this advice the resolutions were passed by a simple majority of the National Executive Council.

Conference is further concerned that at subsequent meetings, despite further external legal advice that at least two of the resolutions were either potentially unlawful or a breach of UNISON rules, the National Executive Council again voted to pass and implement the resolutions with only slight changes to the wording.

Conference notes that some members of the National Executive Council have made statements condemning these resolutions. We recognise the concerns they have raised as these resolutions put all our members in a difficult position and, in particular, could potentially have a negative impact on the rights of disabled members in UNISON.

Public sector workers are held to extremely high standards and any member associated with something which could be deemed unlawful could find themselves subject to disciplinary

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procedures at work. Additionally employers, whether in the public, private or community and voluntary sector, may feel the need to reconsider recognition agreements with a union that is perceived as potentially behaving unlawfully or unfairly towards its own members. This would leave our members without representation in the workplace.

Despite the slightly change of wording to the resolutions the aims, whether intended or not, of the resolutions still appear to be to:

- 1) Remove the majority of the powers that are delegated to the General Secretary;
- 2) Allow the Presidential Team or the National Executive Council to bypass UNISON's legal department when seeking legal advice;
- 3) Give the Presidential Team and some other members of the National Executive Council additional powers in relation to disciplinary and suspension issues;
- 4) Allow members dismissed by their employers to retain the rights of full membership of UNISON, including the right to hold elected office, even if they have been found to have committed a serious offence or gross misconduct, including acts of discrimination or bullying and harassment.

Conference notes that during the National Executive Council debate on 6 October 2021 it was confirmed that the right to remain a member and hold elected positions would not apply to retired members, and this is in line with the rule book. Disabled members who are medically retired do not have the right to choose between becoming a retired member or an unemployed member even if they could potentially get a different job at some point in the future.

This means that a disabled member, dismissed on the grounds of capability, who is given medical retirement is not allowed to retain full membership rights or to hold elected positions as they are only able to become a retired member.

A non-disabled member who has been dismissed for misconduct should not be treated more favourably than a disabled member forced to take medical retirement. This could also be very damaging to UNISON's reputation as a union that has led the fight for equality and is committed to supporting people from under-represented groups.

Conference is further concerned about the impact these resolutions could have on members who do not hold elected positions. If members are involved in a dispute in the workplace both have the right to the same level of support and representation from UNISON. If two or more members are on different sides of a dispute in the workplace then it is not UNISON's responsibility to decide on the merits of the case or to decide who is right or wrong. UNISON's role in these situations is to provide support and representation to all those involved without taking sides or trying to influence the outcome of the case in any way.

By treating members with elected positions more favourably than those who don't hold these positions UNISON could be seen as sending out a message that some members are more important, have more standing and influence, and will receive better representation than others. We know that disabled members are less likely to hold elected positions so the perception of different classes of membership could leave disabled members feeling undervalued and unwelcome in our union.

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All UNISON conferences, including National Delegate Conference, have a duty to follow and uphold our rules and procedures which have been established over many years. It is also important that we support the status of our democratically elected General Secretary.

Conference notes that only National Delegate Conference can change UNISON's rules. As the resolutions passed by the National Executive Council on 6 October 2021 effectively changed UNISON's rules, conference cannot support them. Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- a) Reverse all changes that have been implemented as a result of the resolutions passed by the National Executive Council on 6 October 2021 and commit to not implementing these or similar resolutions in the future without the support of a two-thirds majority at National Delegate Conference;
- b) Commit to bringing any future resolutions which are, or which could be perceived to be, rule changes to National Delegate Conference for a full debate by delegates before they are implemented;
- c) Write to all UNISON service group executives, national self-organised groups and other national committees to confirm that in the future the National Executive Council will always bring resolutions that are, or could be perceived to be, rule changes to National Delegate Conference;
- d) Contact all regional disabled members groups to reassure them of the National Executive Council's support for self organisation and to commit to opposing any action that treats, or could be seen to treat, non disabled members more favourably than disabled members;
- e) Write to the General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary with responsibility for equalities and the National Secretary for Equalities to seek assurance that the Equality Liaison Committee will be included in the annual National Executive Council meetings schedule so that future concerns can be raised directly with the chairs of National Executive Council's strategic committees in a timely manner.

National Disabled Members' Committee

11. Not in Our Name

Conference notes with extreme concern the decisions taken by UNISON National Executive Council to change UNISON rules without National Delegate Conference approval as set out in the Rule Book.

While the National Executive Council has power to interpret rules, the power to change them is vested solely in the National Delegate Conference, the supreme democratic decision making process in our union.

The actions of the National Executive Council in by-passing the National Delegate Conference has the potential to bring the union into disrepute and to sour our reputation with our membership.

The National Executive Council is also seeking to remove Rule Book powers delegated to the General Secretary and to undermine the democratic mandate of the first ever woman

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General Secretary of UNISON with blatant disregard for the principles and values of our union and rights enshrined in our Rule Book.

Conference notes these action subvert the democratic authority of the members' vested in our National Delegate Conference and our General Secretary with the potential for discrimination and division.

Conference notes that the National Executive Council's actions have caused deep division across our base of elected representatives. One year into the term of a new National Executive Council it has shamefully concentrated on what appears to be an internal power play while the rest of us are left to take on the challenge of austerity, UK government attacks on members and services and bad employer that deny our members rights. It is time for real change. It is time to reverse the last year of division and to work collectively for our membership.

Consequently, Conference expresses a vote of no confidence in our current National Executive Council.

Craigavon

Down and Lisburn Community Health

Omagh and Fermanagh Health

Ulster Community and Hospitals

Education & Training

12. Combatting the Rise of Discrimination and Harassment Through Education

Conference notes with alarm the rise in discrimination and harassment in society and the workplace.

Reported hate crimes have risen sharply across the UK. Compared to 2019/20 Police recorded figures for 2020/21 showing a 9 percent increase in England and Wales and a 6 percent increase in Scotland. Northern Ireland saw a 6 percent increase in sectarian hate incidents and crimes increased by 5 percent. In the same year racist incidents increased by 6 percent.

Workplace discrimination is also on the rise. A 2021 study by CIPHR showed that 36% of UK adults experienced workplace discrimination. Other research has shown that the pandemic has caused greater inequality for women and Black people and that online bullying and harassment has increased notably for women and disabled people.

Further the Black Lives Matter and the #MeToo campaigns have raised awareness of endemic race and sexual discrimination and harassment across society.

UNISON has been at the forefront of raising awareness and campaigning to eradicate discrimination and harassment. To better combat workplace discrimination we need to build our union, support our activist base and encourage all members to engage and participate.

UNISON recognises that education plays a vital role in empowering members to fight discrimination. We have a duty to ensure that our activists are trained and equipped to

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recognise workplace discrimination and harassment, and have the confidence to challenge it. That duty extends to ensuring that our member learning programmes educate, politicise and inform members to take up the fight against bigotry, prejudice, discrimination and harassment.

The new UNISON College will play a key role in achieving this. UNISON needs clear training pathways so all activists, whatever their role, are trained to a standard where they understand the importance of equality and are empowered to challenge discrimination and harassment.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Make resources available to review and refresh UNISON's member learning and activist equality training courses and materials, working with self-organised groups and utilising new ways of delivering education for all to increase our reach and influence;
- 2) Require all UNISON representatives (including stewards, health and safety reps, union learning reps and equality reps) to attend the appropriate induction training for their role within one year of appointment;
- 3) Require all UNISON representatives to attend equality training within two years of completing their induction training;
- 4) Require those UNISON representatives and branch officers who undertake representation and negotiation to attend the Challenging Racism in the Workplace course and other appropriate equality training, such as UNISON's advanced employment equality law courses, within three years of appointment;
- 5) In circumstances in which UNISON representatives work for hostile employers who will not release them for this training, make resources and materials available that will support them to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to undertake their duties as qualified reps;
- 6) Make resources available to create training materials and resources that support members involved in the self-organised or the young members' groups to engage in wider union activism;
- 7) Make resources available to work with the regions, to review and refresh the current suite of organising courses that support UNISON campaigns combating discrimination and ensure organising around equality is embedded in these materials.

National Executive Council

13. Be the Reason Campaign

Workplaces in which active stewards are those with high union density, greater levels of membership participation and the ensuing power exercised by union members is necessary to defend pay and conditions and improve the quality of working life.

The challenges faced with building effective steward networks are complex, influenced by many external factors including austerity, anti-union laws, privatisation, and the breakdown of collective bargaining structures.

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So to the transition to automation and remote working which has been accelerated through Covid-19 presents new challenges to building union organisation. With small, fragmented teams, and a high propensity of home working the sense of collectivism and mutual dependency is undermined making it more important than ever for workers to identify with a union activist in their immediate peer group.

Against a difficult and challenging backdrop establishing the conditions necessary to build a stronger network of workplace stewards can be daunting and will only be achieved with a clear union wide strategy, supported by a detailed plan alongside the organisational commitment to provide the necessary resources to bring it to fruition.

Conference notes the East Midlands Region "Be the Reason campaign" encompassing the whole region and extends across all service groups. The campaign objectives are to increase union activists by 10 percent during 2022 through helping to redefine the steward journey from first steps through to training and obtaining the experience necessary to act as an ambassador for the union in the workplace.

Conference also welcomes the new Branch Support and Organising Fund (BSOF) which provides resources to help build campaigns in each region to deliver stronger and more effective workplace structures designed to build worker power.

Our ability to deliver such ambitious targets will be measured against the willingness of the whole union to set a clear strategy and invest in developing the skills of our activists. Our learning offer must not only be rich in content, but strategically aligned with the objectives of the union focusing on membership growth, developing campaign networks, including those on-line, and enhancing workplace democracy to securing better outcomes for our members. This must also include a clear commitment to develop political education in the union so that our activists in the workplace have the skills and understanding to champion a political discourse based on protecting public services and securing worker power.

Conference therefore agrees to call on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Develop and prioritise a strategic plan to build on and enhance our existing network of workplace stewards;
- 2) Implement operational plans at each level of the union with clear measurable outcomes and accountabilities to achieve a step change in the number of stewards across the union;
- 3) Through the development of UNISON College commission a root and branch review of the current activist training and development programme;
- 4) Develop a blended learning offer in recognition that access to time off with pay to undertake training is not always possible and represents a major barrier to participation;
- 5) To consult regional convenors, self-organised groups, and service groups in the development of points 1) to 4) above;
- 6) To report to Conference 2023 on the work undertaken and the outcomes secured as a result.

East Midlands Region

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14. Recognising the Importance of and Increasing Support for Workplace Health and Safety Reps

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic health and safety related issues continues to be of concern for our members, whether it be, for example, around Covid secure working environments, working from home or positive strategies for dealing with employee health and wellbeing, UNISON is playing its part in workplaces in the UK and devolved nations to ensure that employers are meeting the needs of their workforces as well as fully meeting their health and safety responsibilities.

However, Conference notes that there is much more to be done to build on our health and safety resource and capacity in workplaces to ensure our Health and Safety reps are fully recognised and supported to carry out their duties and continue to build on the success of the Be on the Safe Side campaign.

One example of where taking time out to plan and organise around workplace health and safety is at UNISON University of East Anglia branch, who have:

- 1) On the back of the pandemic successfully encouraged their stewards to dual train as Health and Safety reps in recognition of how key health and safety knowledge is when dealing with day to day representation on a variety of issues— being able to do training online has been a huge positive in enabling this to happen;
- 2) Set up a Branch Health and Safety Committee as a sub section of their general Branch Committee which all their Health and Safety Reps input into;
- 3) Devised terms of reference for the Branch Health and Safety committee, which amongst other requirements, clearly sets out its responsibilities in relation to members, how it interacts with the UNISON branch and how it engages with the employers allocated to the Branch;
- 4) Set aside monies from the Branch budget to enable health and safety related activities;
- 5) Using this Branch Health and Safety Committee as a vehicle, they have successfully implemented a plan of action around members workplace health and safety concerns.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- a) Develop and prioritise a strategic plan to continue to build on and enhance our existing network of workplace Health and Safety reps (phase two of the 'Be on the Safe Side Campaign') at both national and regional levels, including that of encouraging existing stewards to 'double up' and dual train as health and safety reps as best practise;
- b) Continue to work with every part of the union on increasing the number of health and safety reps in workplaces;
- c) Review of the union current training and development programme with a view to creating a revised offer that will meet the ongoing needs of all health and safety reps and Branch Health and Safety Officers;
- d) Continue to promote the training offer both nationally and in regions of blended learning around health and safety [both online and face to face training] in recognition of enabling

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access to training for those where participation in face-to-face training may not be possible for a number of reasons;

- e) Publish updated guidance to activists and branches on identifying and encouraging potential health and safety reps/activists;
- f) Develop a communications strategy to focus on promoting success stories from new and existing health and safety reps using all communication platforms available to the union eg; social media, UNISON's website and printed magazines;
- g) Look at how health and safety organising activities can be facilitated, funded and relevant structures strengthened within Branches as part of the union rule book and the Code of Good Branch Practise;
- h) To report to National Delegate Conference 2023 on the work undertaken and the outcomes secured as a result.

Colchester and Ipswich Area Health

University of East Anglia

Participation

15. UNISON at 30

Next year, in 2023, UNISON will celebrate 30 years as a trade union.

At its creation, UNISON became a union with the majority of its members being women and from the start put rules in place to ensure proportionality.

Delegates to UNISON conferences and committees across all its structures ensure that two-thirds of those nominated to participate are women, with seats reserved for low paid women.

However, now as the UK's largest union, the proportion of women members has grown to approximately 75% and it is possibly higher, numbering around one million in total.

As UNISON approaches its landmark birthday in 2023, it is the time to review what progress has been made to ensure women are represented in proportion to their strength in the union.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Produce a statistical report:
 - a) Showing the numbers of men and women holding branch officer posts as defined in Rule G 4.1.1;
 - b) Showing the numbers of men and women holding the role of steward and also indicate how many are low paid;
 - c) With the results to be broken down by Service Group and also by Region;
 - d) To be published by September this year and distributed to all Branches and Regions for discussion across the union.

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- 2) Produce a detailed report to be submitted to National Delegate Conference 2023 with an action plan and recommendations to improve the number of women participating at all levels in UNISON.

Newcastle Hospitals

16. Never Forget to Lift as You Rise

Our Women Members are our greatest asset.

Conference welcomes the election of Christina McAnea as the first woman General Secretary of a major trade union. Representing more than a million women working across the range of public services, UNISON with its commitment to lay democracy and proportionality and fair representation enshrined within our rule book are in a unique position to ensure that women's voices and experiences are heard at all levels of government as representatives, negotiators, and leaders.

The pandemic has clearly demonstrated the roles that women have had in the workplace. Whilst some were able to work from home, the jobs of others meant that these women had to go into workplaces, into schools, into people's homes and were reliant on UNISON to ensure that they were safe, protected and appropriately rewarded. It became very clear that the experiences of women workers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were very different to those of England as restrictions differed in the four countries.

Additionally, the experiences of Black women, disabled women, LBGT+ women, young women and older women became more distinct as the impact of the pandemic illustrated the risks and dangers that women experience.

Conference believes that it remains vitally important that UNISON continues to reflect the diversity of its membership both within our internal structures and externally with our relationships with the TUC, Scottish TUC, Welsh TUC (WTUC) and Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), the Labour Party and our international trade union partners.

Conference is deeply saddened by the actions of the National Executive Council to fundamentally change the lay representatives on the TUC General Council so there are no longer any Black women on the UNISON delegation or the voices of anyone who does not live or work in England.

Conference welcomes the development of the Membership Engagement Project and the exploratory work that has been done with women who meet the earnings limit for UNISON's reserved seats. These women are the backbone of our union and experience many barriers to get involved in our union. Some of these barriers are practical but others are very much cultural and there is a piece of work to be done to ensure that women are supported and empowered to challenge and change our union.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to work with the National Women's Committee, Regions and the other self-organised groups to:

- 1) Work towards developing a programme which will support and mentor women activists into leadership roles in branches and regions;

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- 2) Work towards recognising that the different experiences of women in all 4 countries of the UK need to be reflected in all work plans at a UK level. However, sometimes there is the need for a specific piece of work which is only applicable in one country in which case it should be clearly highlighted which of the countries this applies to;
- 3) Particularly target work to increase the participation of women who meet the earnings criteria for the reserved seats in UNISON elections.

Lanarkshire Health

17. Supporting Low Paid Women to be Active in Our Union

Conference recognises that employers continue to under value the work of our low paid women members. No service can exist without the cleaners, caterers, clerical and care workers that are predominately women.

UNISON's structures try to ensure that low paid women are represented at all levels of the union. However we recognise that organising in the sectors that are predominately low paid and female is challenging, that there remain barriers to low paid women's involvement and that more work is needed to involve more low paid women in the union.

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

Conference calls on the National Executive Council, with the National and Regional Women's Committees and Service Groups to:

- 1) Conduct a review of low paid women's involvement in the union;
- 2) Convene a seminar of all low paid women elected onto the National Executive Council and Service Group Executives to consider proposals for improving the involvement of low paid women and to review current bargaining priorities to ensure they are appropriate to this group of members;
- 3) Develop a strategy for increased recruitment, organising and campaigning around issues relevant to low paid women;
- 4) Consider setting up a commission to look at the barriers to low paid women's involvement with our union and to find ways to address these.

Aberdeenshire

18. UNISON – the Union for Low Paid Women

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- 3) Develop a strategy for increased recruitment, organising and campaigning around issues relevant to low paid women.

South Lanarkshire

Branch Development

19. Building Our Union in the Community Sector

Conference celebrates the commitment of UNISON members in the community and voluntary sector who continued to deliver vital quality public services throughout the COVID pandemic, whether this was in their usual place of work or from their own home.

Conference notes the ongoing changes in community sector workplaces due to a toxic combination of project based voluntary sector commissioning that does not cover overheads, slashed local authority funding due to 11 years of austerity, restrictive social care contracts, increased commercialisation and a relentless target driven culture.

Before the pandemic, our members were already coping with ever-increasing workloads, violence at work, unsafe working practices, inadequate safeguarding measures, poor sickness leave policies and employers not taking health and safety seriously.

Black members in the sector also experience racism. In 2019 a survey of Black members in the sector found that in the previous five years, 75 percent of respondents said they felt isolated or uncomfortable at work because of their skin colour, race, or ethnic background. The same survey also found that, over the same period, 41 percent of respondents said they had been personally racially harassed at work.

Conference affirms that the best way to improve workplaces in the community sector (or indeed any sector) is by building strong, effective and sustainable trade union organisation. This is dependent upon a network of well-trained, motivated and engaged workplace stewards encouraging others to become active in their union, negotiating with employers, delivering campaigns and representing members. Unfortunately far too many community workplaces do not have a UNISON representative.

There is no single organising model for members in community sector employers. Regions and branches all face specific local circumstances and challenges, ranging from geographical boundaries to hostile employers. Some members are in single employer branches, others are in branches solely focused on community members, and others are in

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branches with clearly defined sectors for community members. However, most community members are still in branches that are primarily focussed on members in other service groups. UNISON is proud to be a member led union but in too many branches community members do not have a leadership role or even a voice. All members should have a meaningful opportunity to identify the issues that affect them in their workplace and agree how they should be addressed. Our work in community workplaces should be led by community members, not branch officers from other service groups.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Develop and implement a clear strategy on how to build the union in community sector workplaces including the identification of priority employers and occupational groups;
- 2) Ensure any guidance relating to the Branch Support and Organising Fund (BSOF) specifically highlights how it can be used to build the union in community and private sector workplaces;
- 3) Consider if the Organising Framework process, including the ongoing review of the branch action plan, supports branches to devote sufficient resources to members in the community sector;
- 4) Consider if the Code of Good Branch Practice should recommend the election of a nominated officer within the branch committee to have oversight in organising and supporting members in community employers;
- 5) Advise branches and regions of the effectiveness of different branch structure models;
- 6) Ensure all regions resource and support regional structures for members in community to ensure that their voices are heard throughout our democratic structures;
- 7) Review the make up of branch, regional and national structures to ensure that community members are represented in all our decision making forums;
- 8) Implement an activist development programme that aims to ensure community members are trained and participate in the union's democratic structures at branch, region and national level.

Eastern Region

Negotiating and Bargaining

Bargaining

20. Campaigning on COVID and Long COVID

Conference notes the news article in the Guardian online 24 January, reporting that NHS trusts in England lost nearly two million days in staff absences due to long Covid in the first 18 months of the pandemic and that The Office for National Statistics estimates that 1.3 million people, or two percent of the population, are living with long Covid. Conference notes that UNISON members have been on the front line of the fight against COVID and have been instrumental in ensuring that vital public services could continue during the pandemic. This has meant they have been exposed than most to the physical and mental impacts of Covid-19.

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As of December 2021, Office for National Statistics data showed that 1.3 million people in the UK were experiencing self-reported long Covid. People working in health, social care, teaching or education were included in those greater affected, along with those who had an activity-limiting health condition or disability. Education staff are the second most likely group to have long Covid, after healthcare workers.

Separate figures from the Labour Force Survey in 2021 revealed that 645,000 workers reported suffering from a work-related illness caused or made worse by the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. This includes long Covid, stress, anxiety and depression. The data also shows that nearly 100,000 workers reported catching Covid-19 at work in 2020/21 - far more than the 32,000 cases officially reported by employers to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

These figures make clear that Covid-19 and long Covid have been, and continue to be, massive threats to local government workers' health, safety and physical and mental well-being.

Conference notes that even during lockdowns, huge numbers of our members could not work from home and continued to provide services in workplaces and in our communities, putting them more at risk. School support workers kept schools open even when teachers were teaching online lessons from home; refuse workers continued to travel in cramped vehicles; social workers and housing workers continued to visit people's homes. Many members contracted Covid-19 and Conference believes that Covid-19 should be officially recognised as an occupational disease.

Conference believes that those suffering from long Covid should not be subject to normal sickness absence processes and triggers.

The Equality Act in the main does not specify if something is or is not a disability. A person is disabled if they have a mental or physical impairment that has lasted or is likely to last twelve months or more and which has an impact on their normal day to day activities. Conference believes that for many of our members, long Covid therefore qualifies as a disability.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Support UNISON's work with the TUC membership of the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC) to recognise Covid-19 as an occupational disease including calling for Government funded research into work-related exposures, risk and disability;
- 2) While awaiting any IIAC decision on prescribing as an occupational disease, campaign through Labour Link and other political routes to promote the need for long Covid to be recognised as an occupational disease and to get political support for the campaign;
- 3) Endorses the campaign agreed at 2021 Disabled Members Conference, "for the government and employers to recognise that people with long Covid can be defined as disabled under the Equality Act if the condition has a substantial impact on their ability to do normal day to day activities that is expected to last twelve months or more."
- 4) Ask regions and branches to raise this with employers and employers' organisations as a priority in ongoing negotiations, so as to seek to get it agreed and included in relevant policies and procedures.

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Kent Local Government

21. Supporting our Members to Balance Caring and working

Conference notes that, for some time our members, many of whom are in low paid work, have been struggling to combine caring responsibilities with working. And that some are dropping out of work altogether because they just cannot make it work for them.

Conference recognises that despite so many improvements in flexible working practice, for many people, balancing work and care can still feel almost impossible. and for some becomes actually impossible.

Working during Covid-19 has been challenging but also provided a chance for some to re-think their work and job and the chance to work flexibly that they were previously denied.

Conference is therefore pleased to note UNISON's research in this area with Coram Family and Childcare which found, amongst other things, that a flexible working pattern and emergency leave is not always enough, that there are some elements of caring that would simply be inappropriate to delegate to others under any circumstances and with any amount of notice.

Conference also notes the link between the current gender pay gap and the importance of support for carers because we know that, despite many more men taking up caring responsibilities, caring is still predominantly covered by women and this feeds into the horribly persistent pay gap in the UK.

Conference is not surprised that the biggest difference was to have a supportive and flexible employer. However, the research also highlighted some specific changes that can improve life for our members with caring responsibilities. Including, recognising the value of having a Carers Policy, paid carers leave to manage important appointments as well as emergencies – access to a period of temporary unpaid leave.

Therefore, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with the service groups and the Bargaining Unit to update current bargaining materials for negotiating for carers to include the elements highlighted in the UNISON report;
- 2) Lobby central and devolved governments, via Labour Link, to support employers, champion carers and to make the necessary legislative changes to carers leave recommended in the research.

Kensington and Chelsea

Somerset Local Government and Community

22. Campaigning for Improved Sick Pay for Agency/Private Contractors in the Public Sector.

Many agency and private contractors employers delivering public services offer very restrictive sick pay/occupational health schemes or have no sick pay scheme at all.

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Some agency/private contractor employer's pay no sick pay for the first 2 days of sickness or in the case of Covid-19 related illnesses just pay Statutory Sick Pay. This can have an immediate detrimental financial effect (certainly for agency UNISON members who are paid weekly), if need to take a short period off work. Low paid members are reporting having to rely on other institutions such as charities and food banks in the present time.

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the structural inequalities for low pay agency/private contracted members and the disparity compared to members working directly for Public Service employers.

Conference notes that many agency/private contracted members were compelled to work or due to financial reasons attended work while having Covid-19 Symptoms, when they should have been self-isolating at home as per the Government Covid-19 guidelines.

The same situation generally arises in the winter months with an increase in illnesses and agency/private Contractor members having either been compelled or due to severe financial reasons having to rush back to work, leading to a situation which can be very counterproductive not only for the individual, but potentially spreading the illness to other employees and service users.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council:

- 1) To campaign with the relevant private contractors and the public sector bodies who hold the contracts – for agency and private company employers to implement a full company sick pay scheme for all employees working in the public sector;
- 2) To promote the campaign across major agency and private contractors employers and the contracting NHS Bodies. To have an indication where the campaign is successful with agency or private contractors as part of the key aim "full sick pay is a basic right for every worker";
- 3) To work closely with other UNISON bodies and other key stakeholders, which should include lobbying political parties in powers and position of influence across the four administrations of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

NHS Logistics

23. Procurement - Don't Sell Our Workers Out

Since the UK departed from the European Union we have seen much change unfold. One area is that the UK is no longer tied to the European Laws and Directives in relation to procurement. This should be used as a positive step to overhaul current commissioning and procurement processes that occur in Local Government, Health and the Third Sector. Too often we have seen that the procurement process has led to contracts being awarded to companies who do not have workers' pay and terms and conditions of employment at the heart of their services. Rather these companies adopt the poorest terms and conditions for workers, in many cases with no union recognition agreements. The Covid-19 pandemic has put this into sharp focus and we need to call a halt now. This can no longer be an acceptable way where public funds are, by way of contracts, given to these companies. These workers should not be sold short.

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In Scotland there has been the Fair Work agenda with the Scottish government, however, there is still much to do. It cannot be enough to claim you are a Fair Work employer, evidence needs to be provided. UNISON should be holding these employers who commission and procure to account to ensure we use our voice to highlight poor practices. We need to use any levers we have to best effect. We must ensure that where public money is being spent, those companies are doing right by their workers.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Provide updated advice for branches to use as a tool kit when dealing with employers who are involved in commissioning and procurement;
- 2) Ensure that full consideration is given to the Devolution Protocol as it is recognised that different arrangements for governance are in place across the UK.

Renfrewshire

Health and Safety

24. Young Workers, Burnout and the Right to Disconnect: The Negative Impact of Remote Digital Work on Young Members' Well Being During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Conference notes that even before the pandemic mental health and stress at work were among the leading issues raised by young workers.

Conference notes that the pandemic has only exacerbated young workers' concerns about mental health, whether that is due to working in stressful conditions on the front line, or due to isolation from friends, family and support networks.

Conference denounces the negative impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on workers' wellbeing and work/life balance, specifically with regard to the Right to Disconnect.

Conference notes that the Right to Disconnect is the ability to not engage in work-related electronic communications such as e-mails or messages during non-work hours.

Conference notes that, according to a survey conducted in July 2021 by the South West Young Members Forum, the majority of respondents find it hard to switch off (57 percent), work over their contracted hours (66 percent) and continue to work despite not feeling well (83 percent).

Conference notes the November 2020 report by The National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) which linked mental health problems with insecure work contracts, and the following report in July 2021 which identified higher levels of mental distress to working from home during the pandemic.

Conference believes that mental health is a workplace issue which must be addressed by trade unions in negotiations with employers and by direct support for affected workers.

Conference believes that urgent action is needed to safeguard young members' wellbeing.

Therefore, Conference asks the National Executive Council to:

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- 1) Work with the National Young Members Forum to campaign and raise the impact of the Right to Disconnect on wellbeing amongst all union branches;
- 2) Support branches in negotiating with employers to produce clear guidelines and policies on the Right to Disconnect, and consider producing bargaining guidance on this;
- 3) Lobby the government over the introduction of a Right to Disconnect Bill, and to work with the Labour Link Forum to promote legislation supporting the Right to Disconnect;
- 4) Promote UNISON's updated mental health bargaining advice;
- 5) Work with the National Young Members Forum to develop a campaign around the issues of stress, mental health, burnout, and mentally healthy workplaces, and for the 'right to switch off';
- 6) Work with the National Young Members Forum to promote the support offered by There For You more widely to young members;
- 7) Work with the National Young Members Forum to share successes in campaigning around mental health issues and to promote UNISON's work on mental health to young members;
- 8) Promote UNISON's Young Workers Charter.

National Young Members' Forum

25. Right to Disconnect: Ensuring a Fair Work Life Balance

Work life balance has always been a priority for trade unions. The working time directive was one of our earliest and most far-reaching achievements. It has benefited generations of workers. In recent years however, the short working day has come under threat from an always-on work culture. While the push from unions around the world for a Right to Disconnect from work-related calls, email and other electronic messages out of hours pre-dates the pandemic, the large swathes of workers suddenly thrust into remote working in response to the virus catapulted the issue up the political agenda. Much of the same technology that enables us to work from anywhere, makes us reachable at any time.

When the occasional intrusion on a worker's personal time becomes the norm, it becomes a health and safety concern. An overtired worker is a danger to themselves and others. It was in recognition of this that existing European Union legislation regulating working hours and rest periods was introduced. But these decades-old protections haven't kept pace with new technologies and modern work practices. workplaces. Newer technologies, such as online collaboration tools and video conference calling platforms such as Teams or Zoom, have accelerated the trend. Always-on working cultures, and inexpertly managed home-working, can raise a range of issues for workers: hidden overtime, mental health and wellbeing, work intensity, remote and digital bullying, suitability of homeworking environments, equality impacts and discrimination against women and people with disabilities, injuries to physical health. Whilst the Right to Disconnect is not the only solution, it can help frame a conversation between unions and employers around appropriate boundaries and curbs to the always-on culture.

Ireland is just the latest country to have introduced a code of practice in April 2021 that gave workers the right to disconnect. In doing so the Irish trade unions and government produced

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a useful guide which refers to the right of employees to disconnect from their work and to not receive or answer any work related emails, calls, or messages outside of their normal working hours. It can be seen as including three key principles:

- 1) The right of an employee to not routinely perform work outside normal working hours;
- 2) The right not to be penalised for refusing to attend to work matters outside of normal working hours;
- 3) The duty to respect another person's Right to Disconnect (for example by not routinely emailing or calling outside normal working hours).

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- a) Work with each Service Group Executive Committee to develop and promote bargaining guides that branches can use to negotiate agreements with employers which will mean members have clear work/home boundaries and not engage in any work-related electronic communications outside of working hours;
- b) Seek to work with other trade unions, the TUC, Scottish TUC and Welsh TUC to campaign for a statutory right to disconnect;
- c) Request that Labour Link considers how best to ensure delivering a statutory right to disconnect becomes, and remains, Labour Party Policy.

Fenland District

26. Freedom to Disconnect

Conference welcomes the very real benefits that agile working and technological advances have created, particularly over the last 18 months.

However, we are concerned that many workers now feel pressurised to be available and online outside of their contracted hours, effectively working for nothing. The pressure to respond to emails, other electronic communications and calls outside of normal working hours is detrimental to hard fought improvements in work life balance, can have an adverse effect on family life, mental health and wellbeing and ultimately only benefits the employer.

Conference welcomes the advances in establishing the right to disconnect in Ireland and other parts of the world and calls on the UK government to introduce similar legislation to protect working people.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to campaign for:

- 1) Legislation so that workers have the right to not routinely perform work outside normal working hours; not be penalised for refusing to attend to work matters out of hours; and a duty to respect another person's right to disconnect.

Staffordshire Police Staff

27. Better For All – Wellbeing Hour

During the COVID pandemic, Aberdeenshire branch did a survey asking a series of questions on the impact of Covid-19 on our members' lives. One of the main themes across

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all sectors, was that our members were working long hours. More than half felt undervalued by their employers.

Conference recognizes that this experience is widespread and has been made worse for many of our members by the pandemic. We believe that employers must do more to protect their employees' welfare not just in the current COVID climate but into the future.

One such strategy is providing employees with a wellbeing hour every month as part of their paid employment, to provide their workers with time to focus on their own wellbeing. We note that the wellbeing hour is in place in the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), agreed with the employer and counted as working time.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work with the TUC to campaign for this to become a statutory requirement for all employers to give their staff a monthly wellbeing hour.

Aberdeenshire

28. Threats to UK Health and Safety Legislation

Conference is aware that, the United Kingdom left the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020, with the transition period ending on 31 December 2020. As part of this process, provisions were made within the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 to give all previous EU regulations and directives continued effect within UK law under a provision called "retained EU law".

As a result, many of the current health and safety regulations produced within the last 30 years (because of a need to enact EU directives) were covered within this provision.

What Conference may not be aware of is that in the short time since the UK withdrew from the EU, the gap between the UK and the EU on workers' health and safety has widened.

On 28 June 2021 the EU adopted the "EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027" Occupational safety and health in a changing world of work"

The Strategic Framework takes a tripartite approach and focuses on three key priorities:

- 1) Anticipating and managing change in the context of green, digital and demographic transitions;
- 2) Improving the prevention of work-related accidents and diseases, and striving towards a Vision Zero approach to work-related deaths;
- 3) Increasing preparedness to respond to current and future health crises.

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) who had been actively involved in its development welcomed its adoption of the "vision zero" on work-related accidents and the much-needed gender focus on occupational safety and health, put forward by the European Commission.

Even whilst dealing with the impacts of the global pandemic, work on taking steps towards achieving the aims of the framework commenced. On the 16 December 2021 it was

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announced that a provisional deal had been reached to update the carcinogens and mutagens directive, which would also include substances toxic to reproduction in the revised directive.

The total number of substances with a binding exposure limit under the directive is now 39 substances (25 plus two new carcinogens and 12 new reprotoxic substances).

Conference notes that these changes should result in the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) bringing forward recommendations to seek an update to EH40/2005 (Workplace Exposure Limits) which contains the lists of Workplace Exposure Limits (WELs) for use by employers when undertaking assessment of the risks in accordance with the requirements of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended) (COSHH). At the time of this motion's writing, no such proposals had been brought forward.

However, on the 31 January 2022, the UK government did publish its "Benefits of Brexit" report. Within which it stated "Our intent is to amend, replace, or repeal all the retained EU law that is not right for the UK"

It also says "We will bring forward legislation that will clarify the status and operation of retained EU law, with the aim of ensuring that retained EU measures can be amended in a proportionate and sensible way. We plan to simplify the complex status provisions that apply to retained EU law. Legislation could make any further changes as recommended by the retained EU law status review, as discussed above.

To ensure that we swiftly maximise the opportunities of Brexit across the economy, we plan to create new powers to amend retained EU law by way of domestic secondary legislation, where appropriate, to ensure that key industries do not wait decades for simplified, agile regulation."

Conference recognises that if enacted as written, these proposals have the potential for ministers to be given the power to make changes to UK legislation (including existing Health and Safety Legislation) without the full scrutiny of the primary parliamentary processes, and without the means to challenge the changes.

Conference believes that the power to make these types of legislative changes should not rest with one or two individuals, and that the UK should in fact follow the EU's example by engaging in a tripartite approach towards the future direction of health and safety legislation, and that it should start from the principles of prevention by anticipating, managing change to increase preparedness and keep up with the needs of both a changing work environment and any new risks to individuals health, safety and wellbeing.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- a) Seek to work with Labour Link and build support amongst all political parties and other stakeholders, to lobby against and challenge any attempts to make changes to UK Health and Safety legislation without the introduction of new primary legislation;
- b) Seek to work with the TUC to:

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- i) Continue to engage with the ETUC to gain insight into the approach and evidence used to secure the commitments made within the new EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027;
- ii) Use the information gained from point B1 above, to draw up plans for a campaign which highlights the need for a refreshed approach to health and safety, and challenges any attempts to deregulate or water down legislations which would result in workers being at greater risk in the UK than those undertaking similar activities within the EU.

South Lanarkshire

29. Protecting the Health and Safety of Home and Hybrid Workers

Conference notes that as a result of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns by UK governments, there has been a profound but long overdue move to the use of technology to facilitate home working.

Since the end of these lockdowns, there has been a cultural shift with workers wishing to retain the opportunities to achieve a more effective work life balance with the introduction of hybrid working. Employers too have realised the potential benefits from increased productivity and cost savings.

Whilst hybrid working does bring about opportunities to improve work life balance, it also may come with hidden risks to workers' health and safety.

Conference notes that two of the U.K.'s highest causes of work-related absences are stress and musculoskeletal disorders, these risks are not diminished by hybrid working but have the potential to increase if the employer does not continue to meet their duty of care.

Homeworking is also invisible to the workplace regulator (the Health and Safety Executive and the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland) and health and safety regulations, policy, guidance, and enforcement action must move with the times and be inclusive of this group of workers.

Whilst having the flexibility to work in a slightly different way it is important to remember that everyone is an individual and that one person's choice of flexibility in the time of day they work, could result in another person feeling pressure to respond outside of their normal working hours. This therefore has the potential to be a cause of stress and systems need to be put in place to prevent this.

Another area related to homeworking is the working environment itself, not just for the use display screen equipment which are a potential cause of musculoskeletal conditions if the risks are not correctly managed, but also other aspects of an employer's duty within traditional workplace, such as those covered within the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 which cover a number of issues including thermal comfort and lighting.

Unfortunately, whilst the employer may benefit from cost savings when changing to a model of home working, it is the employee who bears the full costs of the heating and utilities for their working environment. It is possible that workers will have seen an increase in these costs without any reimbursement from employers and whilst there may be the opportunity to

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seek some tax relief from Her Majesties Revenue and Customs (HMRC), this is not an automatic process and may not cover the full increases experienced by members

Conference fully respects and acknowledges that the role of determining policy and terms and condition negotiations sits firmly with each service group and its' democratic structures.

However, as these issues are not unique to any one service group, Conference believes that each would be aided in their steps to determining policy and approach to negotiations by the further development and expansion of both UNISON's bargaining guidance, and health and safety resources on these issues.

Therefore, Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Seek to engage with service groups to identify their current experiences of hybrid and homeworking policies for negotiations, and then ask the appropriate UNISON departments to review existing guidance, and where needed, to develop new guidance and training resources which will also support organising around these issues within a fragmented workforce;
- 2) Work with the TUC and other unions and lobby the workforce regulator to ensure that policy and practice and inspection activity picks up on employers' duties to protect home/hybrid workers.

Isle of Wight Local Government

30. Workplace Ventilation and Air Quality

Conference notes that during the pandemic, there appeared to be a sudden realisation as to the important role good ventilation might play in reducing transmission risks indoors, by seeking to dilute and purge airborne virus particles. It can also reduce indoor air pollutants and reduce fatigue and headaches from a build-up of carbon dioxide.

However, the important role of ventilation within buildings was in fact first outlined nearly 150 years ago with its inclusion within the Public Health Act 1875.

Over the years, in addition to general building regulations, the requirements for ventilation and air quality within workplaces have been strengthened by the Health and Safety at work etc Act 1974 and the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992. These are often referred to as the "Welfare Regs" given that they also cover issues like temperatures, cleaning, toilets, minimum space requirements.

Conference may be aware that whilst reviewing Covid-19 risk assessments, many UNISON members have reported that their workplaces have been identified as not having good levels of effective fresh air ventilation within particular work environments.

The use of air monitoring devices such as Carbon Dioxide Monitors (CO2 meters) has been encouraged to identify potentially poorly ventilated areas, but employers are still being given extreme latitude in interpreting what is an indication of good ventilation, referring to reading from CO2 meters as indications of "safe levels".

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The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended) (COSHH) places a duty on employers to prevent or control exposure to hazardous substances which included biological agents such as SARS-CoV-2 the virus which can cause Covid-19.

There are currently no known safe workplace exposure limits for SARS-CoV-2 and therefore it is not possible to declare an indication of the level of CO2 within an area as also being safe in regard to the risk of virus transmission.

In a bid to temporarily improve ventilation, thermal comfort has been compromised in many workplaces. It shouldn't be a choice of clean air or warm buildings. Had employer met their existing legal duties neither should be an issue.

After nearly 30 years of knowing and needing to meet their legal duty, the pool of excuses has run dry, employers can no longer simply expect employees to put up with poor and unhealthy working environments and compromise their welfare for the sake of the employer's poor estates management, neither can the Health and Safety Executive or other enforcement authorities continue to stand by and allow this in-action to go unchecked.

Therefore, Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Resource and initiate a campaign (which includes the development and production of appropriate advice, guidance, training and recruitment materials) that seeks to supports branches to:
 - a) Attempt to work constructively with employers to achieve (in a timely fashion) compliance with the requirements of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, ensuring amongst other things the provision of good fresh air ventilation without compromising thermal comfort;
 - b) Work with regional staff to identify appropriate routes of escalation in the event an employer chooses not to engage with the branch on the issues raised within (a) above or other health and safety concerns;
 - c) Organise around the issues identified in 1 a) above and other health and safety issues within workplaces where UNISON has recognition, by promoting and actively encouraging the election or appointment and training, of more Health and Safety representatives (in accordance with their branch constitution, UNISON rule book and requirements of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977;
 - d) Organise around the issues identified in 1 a) above and other health and safety issues within workplaces where UNISON is not currently recognised but has members, by:
 - i) Promoting and actively encouraging the election and training of a representative of employee safety, in accordance with their branch constitution, UNISON rule book and requirements of the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996.
 - ii) Continuing their efforts to achieve recognition with that employer, by promoting the value and proven benefits of trade union involvement in workplace health and safety as outlined by studies such as the TUC's "The Union Effect".

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- e) Promote and encourage the election and training of Branch Health and Safety Officers (BHSO) to support the roles mentioned in (c) and (d(i)), in accordance with the functions the BHSO role as identified in the UNISON “Code of Good Branch Practice”.
- 2) Seek to work with the National Committees of UNISON’s Self Organised Groups to:
 - a) Identify the potential barriers to achieving better engagement and participation of Women, Black and Young members, coming forward to take up the roles mentioned in 1 c), d i) and e) above.
 - b) Develop proposals to seek to address and remove any barriers identified as part of 2 a) above.
- 3) Continue to support out existing amazing activists and their work on raising and addressing concerns around the health, safety, and welfare of members, by
 - a) The provision of guidance, information, and learning opportunities such as webinars and virtual learning aids.
 - b) Seeking to work with service group executives and branch to identifying potential ways to better assist activists take up the opportunities mentioned in 3(a) above, especially those who work in fragmented or isolated workplaces.
- 4) Seek to work with other trades unions via the TUC and other organisations as may be appropriate to;
 - a) Raise concerns in relation to the perception that the HSE does not appear to be being proactive in their approach to the enforcement of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.
 - b) Campaign for the implementation of Independent Sage’s recommendation for a ‘scores on the doors’ type ventilation assessment in all workplaces.

(conference to take in to account differences in our devolved regions and associated laws and regulations)

Omagh and Fermanagh Health

31. Work Related Violence

Conference notes the UK government’s commitment to ratify the International Labour Organisation’s Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment, recognising the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment.

Ratification should not be the end point but the start of action to strengthen legal protections, employer actions and enforcement activity to better protect workers exposed to violence and harassment.

Conference acknowledges the work done by our Women’s committee to tackle gender based violence and harassment, the work of the community and voluntary sector on the violence charter and campaigns by service groups.

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National strategies around gender-based violence, harassment and health and safety at work are not currently coordinated in a coherent manner. Instead, we have separate legal frameworks with national laws on health and safety goal setting that are not prescriptive on violence at work.

The pandemic and lockdown has seen a rise in assaults and abuse against public sector workers with Covid-19 infection being weaponised. Particularly towards those who have had to enforce Covid-19 safety measures or those supporting vaccination roll out.

The impact of cuts to public services and cost cutting measures by employers has led to more lone working across all the sectors our members work in. Leaving lone workers more vulnerable to the risk of violence and harassment. Teleworkers and call handlers across the public sector are also experiencing verbal and online abuse and harassment related to waiting times and cuts in services. We expect employers to be doing more to tackle these issues.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Lobby the UK governments and the health and safety regulators of Britain and Northern Ireland to fully recognise the scope and implement the articles within International Labour Organization Convention 190 including:
 - a) Effective inspection, enforcement and appropriate sanctions on employers who fail to protect workers;
 - b) Protections for workers travelling to and from work or on work related activity outside the workplace;
 - c) Recognition and action against online/telephone abuse related to work activity;
 - d) Consultation with trade unions on measures to tackle work related violence at both a national and local level;
- 2) Update resources to support branches to organise around workplace violence and third party harassment.

Camden

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The pandemic and lockdown has seen a rise in assaults and abuse against public sector workers with Covid-19 infection being weaponised. Particularly towards those who have had to enforce Covid-19 safety measures or those supporting vaccination roll out.

There has been a significant increase in violent incidents among our members in Glasgow, particularly in Education & Social Work services. The lack of proper enforcement action by the HSE is also a major concern.

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 - d) Consultation with trade unions on measures to tackle work related violence at both a national and local level.
- 2) Update resources to support branches to organise around workplace violence and third-party harassment.

City of Glasgow

33. Violence At Work

Conference notes over the duration of the pandemic in all sectors public and private workers have experienced an increase in violence against them by members of the public and service users.

More acutely this is being seen in a majority of front-facing public service roles and for workers.

Conference notes that workers delivering critical public and private sector roles within local government and the NHS should not be subjected to these sometimes violent attacks. The

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British Medical Journal stated in a paper published in November 2021 that workplace violence in the Healthcare sector was now a serious workplace hazard requiring urgent preventative measures with between 8-38% of healthcare workers having experienced some form of physical violence in their careers and that this figure has increased during the pandemic. It is a trend being seen across different sectors where public services are being provided. The Local Government Association noted the increase in incidents from March 2020 where council workers were being 'attacked' for implementing the government's coronavirus policy.

Conference notes that as well as the physical toll violence at work has on workers, it also can also have a mental toll too. Employers must do more to ensure that there is adequate support in place for staff that have been the victims of violence at work.

Therefore, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Draw up a UNISON violence at work charter that covers all sectors and alongside this write a toolkit and action plan that practically explains how branches can work with their employers to implement the charter;
- 2) Deliver a campaign around the charter that calls for employers to sign up the charter so that workers can be sure of safety in the workplace;
- 3) Conduct a union-wide survey to identify the prevalence of violence at work since the pandemic started in 2020;
- 4) Publicise the results of the survey in a report using the media to highlight the experiences of UNISON members during the pandemic;
- 5) Through Labour Link lobby politicians to support the campaign.

Herts Community Healthcare

34. Violence against Workers in Supported Living Accommodation

UNISON have many members working in the care system supporting vulnerable adults many with learning disabilities, autism and mental health issues. Many of our members are employed to work in supported living accommodation whereby they support people living in a shared accommodation unit to live as independently as they can.

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

We have a company in Bolton which run some of the supported accommodation and employs staff to work in these units. Bolton UNISON regularly deals with reports from members who have experienced threats and physical assaults on them. The attitude of management is that this is to be expected and is just part of their role as a support worker.

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

We held meetings with employers whose responses were dismissive indicating that this is "part of the job" and failing to acknowledge the emotional, psychological and physical impact this has on workers. It is our experience that the culture of accepting abuse has increased with the outsourcing of social care where profit comes before their duty of care to the worker. Many workers feel that they have to put up with this abuse as they need to work to support their families. Some workers have told us they feel that this low paid care work is the only employment they can take, as shift patterns fit around their family commitments. However, this leaves workers vulnerable, some workers who rely on this income are often afraid to complain as they don't want to lose their job.

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

We call on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Ensure that UNISON'S national campaign against violence in the workplace continues and is promoted at local and national level;
- 2) Ask that all branches take up this campaign and lobby their employers in both the statutory and voluntary sector to sign the End Violence at Work Charter;
- 3) Ask UNISON to issue guidance as to how existing Health and Safety legislation can be used to escalate issues of abuse in the workplace when the employer fails in their duty of care to address the issue of violence from service users.

Bolton Metropolitan

35. A Breakthrough in Tackling Stress and Bullying and Harassment

Conference understands the huge scale of harm being caused to members by work related stress, including wrecked lives and relationships, debilitating mental and physical illness and sometimes, tragically, death. Such misery is often compounded by the insensitive treatment of victims by some employers who, far from acknowledging their own responsibility for causing excessive workplace stress, seek to punish the victims of their negligence.

COVID, the pandemic, lockdowns, isolation and restrictions have introduced a new dynamic and pressures.

Conference understands that work related stress is a top concern of members. The 2018 TUC survey of safety reps confirmed that stress, bullying/harassment and overwork were the biggest three health and safety concerns.

Conference notes that stress is not an inevitability; it is a consequence of the way work is organised and the way people are managed. The solution lies in prevention, with the Health

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and Safety Executive Management Standards approach to tackling stress, which refers to six primary causes:

- 1) Demands including workload;
- 2) The control people have in the way they do their work;
- 3) The support people get from line management and colleagues;
- 4) Relationships at work;
- 5) How well they understand what's expected of them;
- 6) How change is managed.

The approach involves an anonymous staff survey, and then focus group discussion of the results leading to action plans to address the issues identified. It recognises that the solutions best stem from the people affected.

The breakthrough is in full branch involvement in the process; joint working with the employer, significantly improving the effectiveness of the approach. Trust in the branch means we can carry out a confidential survey, which includes people's names, jobs, teams, and locations. We can build a much more accurate picture, identifying hotspots, where things are really bad, and the specific causes behind them. Full branch involvement will also improve survey response rates, focus group discussions, action plans, monitoring of implementation, and staff and employer confidence in the whole process. Bullying and harassment will be addressed along with all the other causes of stress such as violence at work.

Conference understands this solution will be valuable wherever stress is a serious problem for members, wherever high sickness absence rates are a serious concern of the employer and wherever they are willing to work with us. Where employers have had doubts over the Management Standards approach, this is an opportunity to show that, by working with us, it is very effective.

Conference notes that experience from branches shows that this work:

- a) Is a very real support to our members affected by stress;
- b) Helps prevent the harm that stress can cause;
- c) Helps develop partnership working with employers;
- d) Demonstrates the union effect;
- e) Represents a considerable opportunity for the recruitment of members and reps;
- f) Will help improve our public services.

Conference understands that full branch involvement in tackling stress is a long term commitment, and that branches will need the appropriate financial and physical resources to help develop the capability and capacity required. Developing capability will involve the provision of training resources and mentors, to help develop the skills, knowledge and

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confidence required. Developing capacity, the time required, will stem from discussions with the employer over the business case and the significant savings to be made from reduced sickness absence etc.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to wholeheartedly grasp the opportunity to develop and support this work, to provide the necessary training, materials, advice and assistance to help make this approach available to all branches.

Building on work done to date, Conference calls specifically on the National Executive Council to:

- i) Identify appropriate financial and physical resources to develop appropriate training resources and materials for branches;
- ii) Identify appropriate financial and physical resources to develop and provide training for those involved with delivering training and assistance at regional level;
- iii) Ask regions to fully back this work, providing the training and advice for branches, electing or nominating a regional project lead, and facilitating the sharing of experience between branches;
- iv) Ask branches to consider leading on this development in their area, electing a branch project lead, and discussing it with employers;
- v) Work with service groups, regions and branches with a view to ensuring that employers at local and national level may develop a greater understanding of how tackling stress more effectively will reduce costs and improve productivity, as well as improving the health of workers;
- vi) Ensure that UNISON continues to lobby the government and Health and Safety Executive for clearer guidance and stronger enforcement action regarding the implementation of the Stress Management Standards;
- vii) Campaign with the aim of establishing illness resulting from work-related stress as an industrial injury, acknowledging that stress is always a process rather than event;
- viii) Work with Labour Link to ensure these issues and policy aims are given full consideration by the Labour Party as it develops its manifesto for the next general election;
- ix) Give increased support to the UK Work Stress Network whose annual conference is an excellent opportunity for networking, learning and inspiration.

Greenwich Local Government and Grant Aid

Pay

36. Public Sector Pay, Finance and Taxation

Conference notes that according to Office of National Statistics data, inflation using the government's preferred measure of the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 5.4 percent in the twelve months to December 2021. This is the highest rate since 1997. The more representative Retail Price Index registered an increase in inflation of 7.1 percent.

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Conference further notes that even these figures do not give a complete picture of the disproportionate impact of inflation on the low paid who have to spend a greater proportion of their income on essentials such as food and energy bills which are rising at rates faster even than indexed inflation.

Meanwhile the Office of National Statistics figures estimates that inequality is so pronounced in the UK that the wealthiest ten percent hold around half of all wealth.

Conference does not believe that the workforce in public services who have kept the country going during the pandemic should be facing a post pandemic cut in their living standards.

Conference notes the economic dislocation and difficulties caused by the pandemic.

Conference believes public sector wages represent an effective form of economic stimulus. Providing growth that has a tangible effect in local communities. The below inflation wage rises and pay freezes which have been the norm over the last decade have contributed to slow growth, worsening inequality and a recruitment and retention crisis in key sectors of public services.

Conference believes taxation policy must limit opportunities for evasion, avoidance and non-payment and prioritise effective action, including appropriately severe penalties, where wrongdoing is identified. To do this administration of the tax system at all levels and including action to identify and penalise evasion, avoidance and wrong-doing, must be adequately resourced.

Conference calls on government at all levels, local, Scottish and UK to take seriously their responsibility to fund services and deliver a fair wage for those who provide them.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to coordinate support across the union in support of fair pay rises which will defend members standard of living.

Scotland Region

37. Pay and Cost of Living Crisis

Conference we are in a worsening cost of living crisis, with inflation at the highest rate for 30 years and a record increase in household energy bills. It is anticipated that inflation could rise above seven percent by Spring 2022.

Conference, high rates of inflation are eroding the spending power of our member's pay. The rising inflation rate comes alongside a huge increase in energy costs with OFGEM announcing that the price cap determining the maximum energy companies can charge will rise by 54 percent in April. At the same time workers will be hit by a hike in NI contributions. This means that most households will be worse off in 2022 as the cost of living continues to rise.

Real pay has been declining for decades and we need to engage our members in giving them the confidence to campaign for above inflation pay increases. Whatever the finer detail of our pay claims, if we are to be effective in making our demands, we need to place ordinary UNISON members at the centre of our campaign.

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From the very start of this year's pay campaign, we need to inform members of the issues and enable activists to run a lively and effective campaign. We need to ensure that activists engage with members on pay and they accurately report back to Regional and National meetings on the strength of feeling of their membership.

Conference we need to acknowledge that more needs to be done to engage members in pay consultations to ensure that pressure can be brought on the employers to offer real pay increases and not below inflation ones. Activists need to "empower our own members," to get them to believe taking action will result in an improved pay offer.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Produce briefings of the key facts and issues of the campaign and to provide this to branches along with info graphics and visual materials that can be used on social media and newsletters;
- 2) Issue case studies/examples that can be used to demonstrate and humanise campaign material;
- 3) Work with regions to support the running of regional activist workshops as part of the pay campaign to help spread good practice and to further inform future publicity and campaign events.

Cymru/Wales Region

Campaigning

Pensions

38. Equality & Pensions

The United Kingdom (UK) has a system of pensions which, far from tackling inequality, tends to consolidate and exaggerate it.

Conference notes, for example, that:

- 1) In 2018/9 the UK's Gender Pensions Gap stood at 40.3 percent and this was the second year running it had widened. This reflects the UK's inadequate state pension and over reliance on occupational and private pension-saving, the cumulative lifetime impact of the gender pay gap and scarce and inadequate childcare and adult social care services which lead many more women workers than men to take time off, work fewer hours and/or retire early.
- 2) Other inequality pay gaps, for example that affecting Black workers, result in similar pension inequality.
- 3) The equalisation on women's and men's state pension ages, carried out 2010-8, took account of none of the factors at 1) above. Equalisation was a sham, it was, in fact, a large cost imposed on women born from 1950.
- 4) Further planned rises to state pension age, from 66 to 67 between April 2026 and March 2028 and, later, to 68 take no account of growing disparities in life expectancy, the incidence of ill-health or of caring responsibilities or the availability of jobs that workers are actually able to continue doing all through their sixties.

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- 5) The Pension Act 2014, did attend to gender inequality in the state pension but it only applies to men born from 6 April 1951 and women born from April 1953 – leaving older pensioners high and dry. As for those to whom the act does apply, it will only eradicate gender inequality in the state pension from the 2040's.
- 6) Automatic enrolment has led to many more private sector workers joining pension schemes but the exclusion of workers earning less than £10,000 a year excludes many more women than men.
- 7) Many public service pension schemes continue to pay pensions to widowers of women scheme members only in respect of contributions since 1988 while other surviving partners receive pensions in respect of contributions since 1972.
- 8) While surviving same sex partners achieved equality with widows of male scheme members five years ago, this equality continues to rely on the precedent of a single court case, not on legislation or regulation.

Conference believes that the most effective way to tackle pension inequality and to reach the poorest pensioners would be to increase the value of the State Pension. Conference therefore calls for:

- a) Restoration of the triple lock and legislation to secure its future;
- b) Speed up of the implementation of the Pension Act 2014 by gradually transferring all pensioners, beginning with the oldest and those eligible for pension credit, to a full rate New State Pension, irrespective of National Insurance Contribution record;
- c) 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 a caring responsibility;
- d) Resistance to any further rises in State Pension Age;
- e) Flexible access to the State Pension from age 60 to address circumstances including redundancy, ill-health and caring responsibilities.

Conference also calls for:

- i) Early reform of automatic enrolment, in particular to reduce the earnings trigger and the age threshold, to increase employer's contributions and to set up an independent commission to keep these under review;
- ii) Steps to ensure that everybody whose income is too low to pay income tax nevertheless receives a government contribution to their pension saving;
- iii) UK legislation to provide for equal treatment in public sector pension schemes of surviving spouses and civil partners irrespective of gender or sexual orientation and steps to ensure easily available advice to scheme members on their entitlement and how to claim it;
- iv) Immediate restoration (and/or withdrawal of proposals to remove) age-based benefits lost under the Johnson government. These include free television licences for the over 75's, removing free prescriptions from 60-65 years olds in England and abatement of Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit, in England, for those reaching State Pension Age from April 2021.

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Conference affirms UNISON's commitment to achieving equality in our union, our workplaces and across society. It recognises that pensions are a major area of public policy that might help to achieve equality but now hinders doing so. It instructs the National Executive Council to work with the Self-Organised Groups and the Retired Members' Organisation in pursuit of the above aims.

West Midlands Region

City of Wolverhampton

39. Future Pension Provision For Public Service Workers Not Eligible For Defined Benefit Scheme

Conference recognises the vital importance of "Defined Benefit" (DB) schemes in providing decent pensions for so many public service workers.

However, many millions of public service workers (including hundreds of thousands of UNISON Members) are not eligible to join such schemes and are instead dependent on Defined Contributions (DC) schemes.

Many (not all) of these DC schemes are grossly inadequate, badly run and expensive with little or no involvement by workers in their Capital stewardship.

UNISON has negotiated with employers in these sectors and have successfully brought about a number of relatively high quality DC schemes for members in recent years.

It is likely that in the near future the government will allow a new type of pension scheme to operate in the UK. It is called a "Collective Defined Contribution" (CDC) which is a commonplace scheme elsewhere in Europe and in some cases operates with the assistance and direct involvement of trade unions.

The Communication Workers Union strongly supports the establishment of a CDC scheme for Royal Mail.

Conferences requests:

- 1) The National Executive Council to carry out a review to collate information and identify best practice with regard to current pension provision for workers not eligible for DB schemes. This can also be used for collective bargaining purposes;
- 2) Examine our members attitudes to pensions and identify barriers as well as means to encourage improved take up of existing pension provision;
- 3) Evaluate possible alternatives to current pension provision including CDC and Sectorial DB schemes;
- 4) Report back to Conference in 2023 with recommendations.

Greater London Region

40. Pension Fund Governance

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Conference applauds the work undertaken by UNISON members participating in the governance of public sector pension funds in the important roles of Member Nominated Representatives (MNR's) and Trustees.

Conference reiterates its support for good governance of pension funds and active shareholder engagement with companies which can improve fund values while simultaneously benefitting employment and society at large. This is evident from current UNISON campaigns which engage with pension funds to secure divestment from companies involved in the occupation of Palestine and divestment from all fossil fuel companies as well as divestment from the arms trade.

Conference recalls decisions of National Delegate Conference in 2007 and 2008 which committed the union to capital stewardship and responsible contractor investment policies respectively. In doing so, it calls on the National Executive Council to revitalise UNISON's work on pension fund governance, including:

- 1) Refreshed support and training for MNR's and Trustees;
- 2) Encouragement of members to participate in scheme governance;
- 3) Delivery of an education programme and webinars to promote and build support for current divestment campaigns;
- 4) Publication of updated governance guidelines, investment guidelines for MNR's based on UNISON social and industrial policy;
- 5) Provide information on the make up of all the Pension Fund Boards on regional websites in order to facilitate effective lobbying.

North West Region

41. Public Sector Pensions

Conference condemns the government for ripping up the pensions cost sharing agreement for public sector schemes and for treating the cost of the McCloud/Sargeant remedy as a member cost, ensuring that the bill has to be met entirely by the scheme members.

Conference notes that evidence from the first round of scheme valuations in the public services do not support the claim that future pension costs in the public services are unaffordable, representing a risk to the public finances.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to coordinate campaigning on public sector pensions.

Conference believes that in a post-pandemic world of work the need to reduce the pension age is more urgent than ever as a means to address the shameful levels of social and health inequality.

The claimed justification for higher pension age is longer life expectancy, but there are great variations in life and disability-free life expectancy. For example, in Wales people living in the poorest neighbourhoods will, on average, die seven years earlier than people living in the richest neighbourhoods. There is now a slowing down and even an overall decline in life expectancy.

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Conference calls on the National Executive Council to launch a campaign for:

- 1) The immediate honouring of the public sector pension cost sharing arrangement measures;
- 2) A reduction in the state pension age, and in the normal pension age for public sector schemes.

University of South Wales

Campaigns

42. Sexual Harassment - More Work To Do

Conference welcomes the announcement by the UK government in July 2021 that it will introduce a new duty on employers to protect all their staff from sexual harassment at work and protections for workers harassed by clients or customers as well as colleagues. This announcement came as part of the government's published response to the 2019 consultation on sexual harassment in the workplace, and commits the government to:

- 1) Introducing a mandatory duty on employers to protect their staff from sexual harassment at work;
- 2) Introducing explicit protections for employees from harassment by third parties, for example customers or clients;
- 3) Considering extending employment tribunal time limits from three to six months;
- 4) Tasking the Equality and Human Rights Commission with developing a statutory code of practice on sexual harassment and harassment at work, setting out the steps that employers should take to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, and what can be considered in evidence when determining whether the duty has been breached.

This is a victory for UNISON and the #ThisIsNotWorking alliance, the TUC led coalition of unions, women's rights bodies and business organisations that campaigns for employers to be proactive in tackling sexual harassment, with training and policies that cut to the root of the problem: abuse of power in the workplace.

However, Conference recognises that UNISON must continue to press the government to keep to these commitments and introduce a properly enforceable law so that all employers make prevention a priority and can be held to account if they do not act.

Conference is concerned that sexual harassment is pervasive in workplaces and that there is evidence that the requirement to work from home during the pandemic has led to online sexual harassment becoming more prevalent.

Figures from the TUC show that half of women have been sexually harassed at work, two thirds of LGBT+ people have experienced it and worryingly, four out of five people do not feel able to report it to their employer. UNISON's recent joint survey with the Nursing Times revealed worryingly that 73 percent of respondents had not reported incidents, many because they felt nothing would be done.

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The survey also highlighted that in many workplaces sexual harassment is not treated seriously and has become 'normalised'.

Achieving the changes to the law is urgent. As UNISON set out in its submission to the Home Office on the government's violence against women and girls strategy in February 2021, workplace culture that tolerates sexual harassment also allows violence to fester.

Conference notes the need to refresh and update UNISON's own guidance on sexual harassment to take account of new ways of working due to the pandemic, particularly video conferencing.

In addition, Conference notes that in June 2019 the International Labour Organisation adopted Convention 190 on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work, the first international treaty to recognise the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, and that the convention came into force on 25 June 2021. Governments that ratify Convention 190 will be required to put in place the necessary laws and policy measures to prevent and address violence and harassment in the world of work. It is concerning that the UK has not yet ratified it.

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

- a) Press the government to introduce the changes to the law that it has promised urgently;
- b) Continue to build the campaign for zero tolerance of sexual harassment in workplaces, including on-line abuse;
- c) Refresh and update the UNISON guidance on sexual harassment, and promote it widely in the union;
- d) Campaign for the UK to ratify ILO Convention 190;
- e) Work with Labour Link to raise the campaigns in points a) and d) with the Labour Party.

National Women's Committee

43. Zero Tolerance to Sexual Harassment Facing Young Women

Everyone has the right to work in a safe and supportive environment. But for many young women, the sexual harassment they experience at work leaves them feeling vulnerable, scared and powerless. Victims are often left with little confidence and unable to speak out about the harassment, often downplaying the situation, attempting to ignore, forget or endure the behaviour.

Conference recognises that anyone of any age and at any time can experience sexual harassment, but the statistics demonstrate that the overwhelming majority of victims are young women.

Conference notes the shocking figures issued in January 2022 by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) demonstrating an unacceptable increase in violence against women over the course of 2021. In a year that included the violent murders of Sarah Everard and Sabina Nessa, the ONS statistics demonstrated an overall 12 percent increase in sexual offenses in

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2021. This includes a shocking and unacceptable 13 percent increase in the number of rapes recorded by the police. Conference also notes that changing workplace cultures has a direct impact on culture outside the workplace, placing an even greater necessity and urgency on the importance of keeping women safe in work from sexual harassment. Young women have the right to feel safe when travelling to and from work, travelling between workplaces and when at work.

What makes matters worse, is that young women are more likely to be in precarious forms of work; fixed term and zero hours contracts exacerbate the sexual harassment pandemic sweeping our workplaces. Power imbalances are more pronounced in precarious workplaces and the link between this and sexual harassment is no coincidence. Young women may feel less able to raise issues of sexual harassment if they have concerns over potential repercussions on their employment status and career progression, or work in an environment with a toxic culture. Although protection against discrimination is a day one right, many young women have not been in their job for more than two years meaning they are missing out on other vital employment protections that leave them more vulnerable.

In a report published by The Young Women's Trust, over one third of young women would not report sexual harassment at work over fear of being fired. Not only is this obstructing key workers' rights, but building on a legacy that young women are not welcome in workplaces.

Too often, young women are told it is just "banter" and this toxic workplace culture silences victims and absolves perpetrators and employers of any responsibility. Whether this "banter" takes place in or outside of the workplace, employers have a duty to protect young women at work. The reality is, the "banter" and "jokes" can erode confidence, especially if this is dismissed or not taken seriously by management. This adds an additional barrier for young women wanting to speak up about sexual harassment in the workplace.

In a survey conducted by UNISON during TUC Young Workers' Month 2020, 23 percent of young members who responded to the survey responded that one of the most frequent reasons for young members to contact UNISON was around the issue of bullying and harassment.

Conference notes that there needs to be education and training provided to managers and staff about the different forms of sexual harassment; in order for incidents to be identified and dealt with appropriately.

Moreover, over a third of 18 to 34 year olds who have experienced some form of harassment, abuse or violence at work said it was carried out by a third party (member of the public, client or customer), according to TUC research. Some employers claim that it is not possible to stop third parties from harassing staff as they have no direct control over them. An employment relationship is between the employer and the worker, the employer's responsibility is to ensure good health, safety, and wellbeing for all employees. UNISON's anti-sexual harassment policy helps to ensure that the workplace environment is non-discriminatory, safe and respectful for all, and that a co-operative culture is established.

According to data collected by Eurostat, just 37.6 percent of senior managers in the UK are women, indicating that women's issues are not necessarily understood throughout all levels of an organisation.

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Conference also notes that as well as supporting our branches in negotiating sexual harassment policies with employers, the government needs to take immediate action and introduce employer duties that prevent sexual harassment in the workplace and protect victims.

The Young Women's Trust also reports that 61 percent of young women feel ignored by politicians. The government need to reconnect and listen to young women. This includes young Black women, young women with a disability, young female parents and young women part of the LGBT+ community.

The TUC's #ThisIsNotWorking campaign to try and stamp out sexual harassment at work has been calling for:

- 1) A new easily enforceable legal duty on employers to take all reasonable steps to protect workers from sexual harassment and victimisation;
- 2) Compulsory guidance explaining exactly what employers must do to prevent harassment, including mandatory training;
- 3) Mechanisms for workers to report anonymously to the regulator, bypassing toxic workplace environments that leave victims unable to speak out;
- 4) Real consequences for employers who do not comply, making sure the onus lies with the employer and not with the victim.

Although the government have committed to introduce a new duty for employers to protect all their staff from sexual harassment at work, and to protect workers harassed by clients, customers or colleagues, Conference believes this new duty should be introduced as soon as possible. If this is to be a genuine turning point, the government must change the law swiftly, put more resources into enforcing the new duties and ensure victims have access to justice. Pressure must be put on the government to action these promises.

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

- a) Publicly promote, endorse, and raise the profile of the TUC #ThisIsNotWorking campaign and support the action of lobbying the government in introducing a new duty for employers;
- b) Raise the profile of what sexual harassment is and the different ways it can impact young women and use this as a strategic tool when recruiting and organising young women;
- c) Work with the appropriate bodies within UNISON to conduct research about young women in UNISON and the sexual harassment they experience, in order to generate resources and toolkits for branches that are reflective of the different service groups we represent;
- d) Develop a tool kit for activists and branch officers that includes guidance on:
 - i) Support and guidance when negotiating and utilising UNISON's Sexual Harassment Guide and Model Policy 2020;

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- ii) Appropriate external bodies, that branches can signpost victims to, for expert support and counselling outside of the workplace.
- e) Work with Learning and Organising Services to provide specific training for activists on sexual harassment in the workplace and how to develop workplace policies;
- f) Work with Labour Link to promote the issue of sexual harassment of young women in the workplace;
- g) Campaign for the reintroduction of Section 40 of the Equality Act 2010 on 'third party protection'.

South East Region

44. White Ribbon Accreditation

Conference condemns all violent and abusive behaviour including bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Evidence shows that the vast majority of people subjected to violent and abusive behaviour are women and girls and most perpetrators are men and boys. Despite this gender-based violence is still seen as a women's issue.

Conference recognises that this attitude needs to change as it is only men and boys who can end male violence against women.

White Ribbon UK (WRUK) is the leading charity that engages with men and boys to make a stand to end gender-based violence. They encourage everyone, but particularly men and boys, to take action to end male violence against women.

White Ribbon Day is held on 25 November each year to coincide with the United Nation's International Day of the Eradication of Violence Against Women and is the start of 16 Days of Action to end male violence against women. The theme for the latest campaign was #AllMenCan.

White Ribbon Promise: WRUK's mission is for all men to fulfil the promise to never commit, never excuse and never remain silent about male violence against women.

White Ribbon Ambassadors are men, from all walks of life, who are work with WRUK to change the cultures that lead to violence against women.

White Ribbon Champions are people, many of whom are women, who work with WRUK to encourage men to get involved in ending violence against women by finding opportunities to inspire and inform through presentations, conversations and on social media.

White Ribbon Accreditation is awarded to organisations of any size who can demonstrate their commitment to tackling male violence against women and girls. By developing and implementing an action plan to achieve accreditation organisations can improve their culture, safety and morale; increase knowledge and skills; improve their reputation and become both a provider and employer of choice.

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White Ribbon Supporter Organisation is available to organisations with under 250 employees who don't feel able to apply for full accreditation but who commit to taking seven actions to show they are working to end male violence against women.

While some cases of gender-based violence might make local or even national news there are many more that we never hear about. One in three women in the UK experience domestic abuse, over 80% of women have been harassed in public and more than 20% of women over 16 have experienced some type of sexual assault. Some of these women are UNISON Members.

Newcastle City UNISON Branch was pleased to support Newcastle City Council's successful application for White Ribbon Accreditation. Some Branch Members have signed up to become Ambassadors and Champions, some have taken the White Ribbon Promise and the Branch is working towards achieving accredited or supporter status.

With around 1.4 million members, UNISON is the UK's biggest union but although some Branches have achieved White Ribbon Accreditation UNISON hasn't. UNISON leads the way on equalities and now is time to take the lead in tackling gender-based violence by achieving White Ribbon Accreditation.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Begin the process of applying for White Ribbon Accreditation with the aim of becoming accredited before National Delegate Conference in 2023;
- 2) Write to all branches encouraging them to become accredited or supporter organisations and individual members to take the White Ribbon Promise and become Ambassadors and Champions;
- 3) Publicise details of all branches who achieve accreditation or supporter status on the UNISON website and social media channels;
- 4) Work with Self-Organised Groups, young members and retired members to identify additional actions that UNISON can take to help tackle other types of violent and abusive behaviour.

Newcastle City

45. Sexual Harassment in the Trade Union

Conference recognises moves made by the UK government to introduce duties on employers regarding sexual harassment in the workplace. We believe this is long overdue but welcome, nonetheless.

Conference believes there is a need to address sexual harassment in our trade union. This too is long overdue. Across the trade union movement, we've seen members expelled for sexual harassment and other forms of misogynistic behaviour. And this is happening in our union.

Conference applauds the brave women who come forward. It takes courage to speak out about behaviours that have no place in our union – a union of majority women membership.

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Conference recognises that sexual harassment within our trade union cannot be ignored. The One Bad Apple argument put forward by the Metropolitan Police in the wake of the death of Sarah Everard isn't believable for that organisation, and it's not believable in our organisation either.

Conferences notes that pay for women is still less than that for men, that women are more likely to be engaged in part time work, that women arrange their work around family caring commitments in a way that men do not. 2021 saw again and again high-profile cases of rape and murder of women at the hands of men who used their power and privilege to carry out these acts. Behind the headlines is the day to day lived experience, in the workplace, of sexual harassment and sexual violence. This is the reality of misogyny.

We know we can do more. We know we can do better. We need to shine a light on a culture that allows sexual harassment to take place, and perpetrators to be shielded by other members. It's not enough to say 'Not all men' and believe that this will deliver an end to misogyny, we have to say Men can and do challenge language and behaviours, particularly in male only company. Men in our union need to back women up in the workplace and in the union when they are talked over, shouted down and made to feel less by challenging the views that lead to sexual harassment.

Conference believes that the time is now to put fighting misogyny as a trade union issue front and centre. Our members have battled throughout the pandemic to keep services open, to keep the public safe and supported. And they deserve more than misogyny in return.

Conference welcomes the national union initiative in developing Sexual Harassment Training. Manchester Branch officers and members of its Executive Committee have taken part in this training, with the learning being brought back into the Branch where it is informing the Branch Action Plan for the coming year.

- 1) Conference calls on the National Executive Council to make every effort to ensure that UNISON nationally should become a White Ribbon organisation and encourage all members to sign up to the White Ribbon Campaign;
- 2) That the national union carries out a campaign highlighting forms of sexual harassment, from inappropriate language and touching dressed up as 'banter' to sexual violence, and promoting the channels for reporting it, and assuring members of support if they do break the silence and come forward;
- 3) That steward's training includes a section on Sexual Harassment, with guidance on how to challenge perpetrators, and how to support members to come forward.

Manchester

46. The Future of the National Minimum Wage

Conference notes the pivotal leadership role that UNISON and its then general secretary Rodney Bickerstaff played in establishing the National Minimum Wage (NMW). Conference further notes that the idea emerged from the real experience of low paid public service workers who continued to lose out during the economic turmoil of the 1970s and that it took many years of campaigning to win the argument for the minimum wage within the wider trade union and labour movement.

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Conference also notes that this ultimately paid off, with UNISON then closely involved in discussions with government around the legislation that brought the Low Pay Commission (LPC) and NMW to life in 1999. The union was represented among the first group of commissioners and, since the time of its introduction, UNISON has continued to engage fully in the annual LPC consultation process whilst in parallel also campaigning for low paid members to receive the quite distinct and voluntary (and higher) Living Wage.

Conference notes that the world has come a long way since 1999. The idea of a legally enforceable minimum has now achieved consensus, with the Tories introducing the National Living Wage (NLW) and then setting a target of achieving an adult rate of 2/3 median by April 2024. This is a significant figure, not least because anyone earning below 2/3 of median is classified as low paid. Conference notes that this is also close to Rodney Bickerstaffe's original goal of achieving a minimum wage of 2/3 male median.

However, Conference is only too aware that whilst the battle for the NMW may have been won in some respects, there is still work to be done to address the hardships experienced by today's low paid public service workers. And just as UNISON led the calls for and succeeded in winning the original NMW, so the union should now lead the campaign for what comes next.

As analysis of recent court cases by the Institute of Employment Rights has shown, there is a clear need for both interim measures and longer-term reforms to make the minimum wage system work better for low paid workers. Initial measures should address problems around worker status (bogus self-employment), calculable work periods (what good is a higher hourly rate if you can't get the hours - or if you are not being paid for all your time) and lack of enforcement. For the longer term the case is made for sector rates to be negotiated in hard to organise parts of the economy.

Conference calls for the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Carry out research into the strengths and weaknesses of the current NMW/NLW, including it's rate, the government's target, the operation of the LPC and it's overall effectiveness;
- 2) Develop policy proposals to improve how the NMW/NLW delivers for low paid workers today;
- 3) Campaign with like minded unions and other campaign groups for change.

Northern Region

47. Bargaining to Resist Cuts in Living Standards

With the cost of living predicted to rise by almost six per cent in 2022 and core costs such as energy and housing running at double digit inflation rates as the year began, conference recognises the vital importance of wage bargaining in resisting cuts to standard of living.

In conducting negotiations on pay, conference believes that the Retail Price Index (RPI) remains the most accurate indicator of the rise in the cost of living facing workers. And it condemns the government's decision to effectively abolish RPI from 2030, which for the first time in over 80 years will leave the UK without an official inflation measure that represents an accurate benchmark for wage bargaining.

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Conference also recognises that though wage bargaining should seek to push minimum pay rates beyond the National Minimum Wage (NMW), the NMW has a vital role in protecting the living standards of the lowest-paid workers in public services. The decision to increase the highest tier of the NMW to two-thirds of average earnings has narrowed the gap with the real Living Wage (as announced annually by the Living Wage Foundation). However, the real Living Wage currently remains higher and affords greater protection against the cost of living because rises are more strongly linked to inflation.

Therefore, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to campaign for:

- 1) A National Minimum Wage that rises at least in line with the real Living Wage rate;
- 2) A single National Minimum Wage that applies to all workers and therefore lifts all apprentices and young workers up to the highest NMW rate.

Lanarkshire Health

Lothian Health

48. Covid-19, Poverty and Social Security

Conference recalls that pre-pandemic, the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Professor Philip Alston stated following his visit to the United Kingdom that it is “patently unjust” that in the world’s fifth largest economy so many live in poverty.

Conference notes that since Professor Alston’s report the Covid-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted on those living in areas of poverty and is concerned that the pandemic will have further deepened poverty and inequality.

Conference believes that the events of the last two years will have a financial impact on those in and out of work that will be felt for generations to come. Conference notes with concern that inflation is at a 30 year high and the rising costs of food, fuel, energy and housing. Conference notes the reality that many of those living in poverty are in working households.

For many of those in need, the crisis is exacerbated by the ongoing reality of low pay, precarious work and the additional stress and suffering caused by the impact of welfare cuts driven by the austerity agenda.

Conference notes that the system of universal credit was sold as something that would protect the vulnerable and ‘make work pay’ yet we now know that it has failed to do this on almost every level. Conference is concerned in particular by the following:

- 1) The five week wait for payment of Universal Credit, which drives increases in debt and rising food bank use;
- 2) The ‘two child rule’ for child tax credits that disproportionately impacts on women and children;
- 3) The impact of the benefit cap and bedroom tax;
- 4) Monthly assessments which are out of touch with the pay schedules for most low-paid workers;

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- 5) The payment to a single recipient – reducing financial independence for vulnerable women.

On top of these fundamental flaws in the design of universal credit and the wider welfare reforms, the UK government has further removed the £20 increase to Universal Credit payments introduced at the beginning of the pandemic, taking away a much-needed lifeline from claimants. Conference notes the view of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation that this cut represents “the biggest overnight cut to the basic rate of social security since the foundation of the modern welfare state”.

Conference notes that in Northern Ireland, the Anti-Poverty Strategy promised within the peace process remains outstanding. Conference notes the continuing mitigation measures put in place by the NI Executive and Assembly to protect against the worst aspects of UK Government policy, but recalls that many of these are due to expire in March 2025, creating another ‘cliff-edge’ that could have dire consequences for those living in poverty. Conference agrees that the devolved Governments should not be placed in the position of having to spend resources to shield people from the impact of UK Government policy, whilst also suffering significant reductions in block grant funding, due to the austerity agenda.

Conference welcomes the work done by UNISON to raise awareness of the flaws in universal credit and the wider social security system and calls on the National Executive Council to continue to mount a high-profile campaign, including:

- a) Campaigning for the reintroduction of the £20 uplift introduced during the coronavirus crisis;
- b) Immediate reform of the fundamental flaws in the system as laid out above, campaigning for a social security system that upholds human rights and ends poverty for those in and out of work;
- c) Universal credit to be replaced by a social security system that supports low-paid workers;
- d) Continuing to campaign against the austerity agenda at Westminster and for increased funding for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland;
- e) Supporting and resourcing the Northern Ireland region in its continuing campaign for an Anti-Poverty Strategy and against ongoing ‘cliff-edge’ scenarios around welfare mitigations.

Belfast Education

49. Covid Recovery and Rehabilitation

Conference notes that, over the last two years, the UK, along with the rest of the world, has faced, a crisis like no other with Covid-19. However, while acknowledging the incredible advances made by vaccination and treatment, the pandemic is not yet over and will continue to affect the daily and working lives of the UK’s population for years to come.

As a union we will continue to mourn and to honour all those who have lost their lives to Covid-19. Alongside this, we will need to redouble our efforts on behalf of those Covid-19 survivors who experience long-term effects. These will be both health-related and economic

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and will have an impact not only on individuals but also on the wider UK economy and world of work.

Conference recognises that all unions like UNISON have responded to Covid-19 in our workplaces, including on health and safety, financial support and long Covid.

Further to this, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to campaign for both Covid and long covid to be recognised as industrial diseases, with appropriate loss of earnings compensation;
- 2) Join calls for a Right to Rehabilitation and the investment needed to deliver it, for those requiring rehabilitation after Covid-19 as well as others whose needs have not been met or have worsened as a result of the pandemic.

North Yorkshire

Northern Health and Community

West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Transport

50. Coronavirus – National Day to Remember

Conference agrees to lobby the UK government to honour every life lost to Coronavirus. Furthermore, it acknowledges every worker's effort to keep the country running.

In giving thanks to the workers, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to further lobby the UK government, and the administrations of the devolved nations, to assign a national day to remember those who lost their lives, and to remember the sacrifices of all workers in this period.

Finally, Conference calls on the National Executive Council, after such a period of reflection, to campaign for an independent public inquiry into the response to the pandemic. Especially the care home scandal, where thousands of patients across the whole of the UK, who were infected, or possibly infected with the virus, were discharged from hospital and into care homes without a testing process in place.

Scottish Healthcare

51. Maternity Rights

Conference notes with deep concern that research by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) highlights that too many women continue to experience pregnancy and maternity discrimination in UK workplaces. In UNISON we also recognise that this issue can impact on trans men and non-binary people.

According to the EHRC research, of the 3,034 employers surveyed:

- 1) 70 percent said women should declare up front about pregnancy during recruitment;
- 2) 25 percent said it was reasonable during recruitment to ask women about their plans to have children;

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- 3) 28 percent said that protection from redundancy during Ordinary Maternity Leave was unreasonable;
- 4) 27 percent felt pregnancy put an unreasonable cost burden on the workplace; and
- 5) 17 percent felt pregnant women and mothers were less interested in career progression and promotion than other employees

Given that employers felt able to disclose such discriminatory and unlawful opinions, it is unsurprising that the EHRC's survey of 3254 mothers found that:

- a) 77 percent said they had a negative or possibly discriminatory experience during pregnancy, maternity leave and/or on return from maternity leave.
- b) 11 percent felt forced to leave their job;
- c) 20 percent said they experienced harassment or negative comments related to pregnancy or flexible working from their employer/colleagues;
- d) 10 percent were discouraged from attending antenatal appointments 51% of mothers who had their flexible working request approved said they felt it resulted in negative consequences

Conference believes that tackling pregnancy and maternity discrimination is vital in tackling fundamental inequalities in our labour market. Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- i) Continue to highlight the rights of women, trans men and non-binary people whilst pregnant and on their return to work;
- ii) Campaign to maintain and improve anti-discrimination laws, maternity and parental leave, pay and health and safety rights.
- iii) Campaign to ensure that women, trans men and non-binary people working in the insecure economy have meaningful access to basic employment rights including attending ante-natal appointments, health and safety at work and paid sick leave;
- iv) Campaign to extend existing protections against unfair redundancy to cover notification of pregnancy through to six months after return to work;
- v) Continue to work and campaign with Maternity Action to protect maternity rights at work and extend support to those who are vulnerable and destitute in our communities.

North Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Health

52. Sick Pay for All Workers

Conference notes that the Covid-19 pandemic has drawn attention to a previously hidden problem in this country. The shocking lack of support many workers get when they are sick. These issues are well known to UNISON members who work for a variety of different private contractors in our public services.

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The Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) system is grossly inadequate, and forces too many people to work when sick, borrow money from family and friends, go into debt or take annual leave as an alternative.

TUC research shows the weekly UK SSP rate is one the lowest in Europe.

Conference believes that every worker deserves full sick pay now.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to publicise the problems with sick pay for low paid workers and the inadequate level;
- 2) Work with the Private Contractors Forum on company pay claims for improved occupational sick pay with employers at local and national level;
- 3) Campaign for a Statutory Sick Pay system linked to the living wage for a 35-hour week;
- 4) Campaign for a sick pay system that starts on day one.

Private Contractors National Forum

53. Full Sick Pay Now!

Conference notes that the last two years of the Covid-19 pandemic have drawn attention to the shocking lack of support many workers get when they are sick. Conference believes that the Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) system is grossly inadequate, and forces too many people to work when sick, borrow money from family and friends, go into debt or take annual leave as an alternative.

Conference notes that TUC research shows the weekly UK SSP rate is one the lowest in Europe. Conference is concerned that inadequate sick pay is an issue particularly affecting the lowest-paid, those precariously employed and those whose jobs have been outsourced and privatised, such as our members working across social care.

Conference believes that every worker deserves full sick pay now.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to publicise the problems with sick pay in the UK;
- 2) Work with service groups and branches on local and national pay claims for improved occupational sick pay with employers, starting with those sectors and workers currently most affected by inadequate sick pay;
- 3) Campaign for a Statutory Sick Pay system linked to the living wage for a 35-hour week;
- 4) Campaign for a sick pay system that starts on day one;
- 5) Work with the National Disabled Members Committee to draw up a list of other improvements to sick pay for disabled workers.

Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust

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54. School Based Counselling in Every Primary and Secondary School in England

The grief, anxiety and depression children have experienced during the pandemic is welling over into classrooms and hallways, resulting in crying and disruptive behaviour in many younger kids and increased violence and bullying among adolescents. For many other children, who keep their sadness and fear inside, the pressures of school have become too great.

Good mental health is fundamental to be able to thrive in life. If we are not tackling mental health problems early, then we risk failing the next generation right at the start of their lives.

We know there is no one single way for schools to provide such an environment. To make them mentally healthy places for all who attend and work in them, we need to pursue a “whole school” approach to prevention. School staff, leadership, the curriculum, children, and access to support all contribute to creating a mentally healthy, nurturing environment for children and young people.

Speaking to a school counsellor can be a transformative experience for children and young people. It can help them cope with the difficult circumstances they face in their lives and to go on and flourish in the future.

But England is lagging in its provision of counselling in schools. Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland all have government funded school counselling services. England does not.

As children face increased change and uncertainty in their lives because of the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever before that they have access to this vital therapeutic support.

A trained school counsellor gives a young person a place that is focused 100 percent on their needs, a safe space to help them to understand and cope with what they are going through.

Counselling has a positive effect on young people’s confidence, resilience, sense of self-worth, family relationships, friendships, school attendance and academic achievement.

A survey this year by National Association of Head Teachers showed an increased prevalence of other mental health issues among pupils this school year, including staff seeing:

- 1) 86 percent noted an increase in low self-esteem;
- 2) 76 percent said they had seen an increase in depression;
- 3) 68 percent witnessed an increase in sustained feelings of anger.

For staff working in secondary schools, 72 percent have noticed an increase in self harm, 61 percent in suicidal thoughts, and 56 percent in eating difficulties among pupils.

Unfortunately, only 23 percent of staff said they had regularly been able to access specialist support for pupils with mental health needs, leaving most children and young people struggling without access to the support they need.

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Poor mental health in school age children has a negative impact on UNISON members working in schools due to:

- a) Pupils not engaging in learning;
- b) Pupils poor behaviour increasing;
- c) Staff workload increasing;
- d) Staff wellbeing impacted negatively.

Positive mental health in pupils leads to better workplaces for our members.

Newcastle City branch has been working with Citizens UK on their campaign with the British Association for Counselling to secure a fully funded statutory provision of school-based counselling in every primary and secondary school in England.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to support the Citizens UK school based campaign by:

- i) Publicly endorsing and promoting the Citizens UK campaign;
- ii) Encouraging other UNISON branches to collaborate with regional chapters of Citizens UK on this issue;
- iii) Encouraging individual UNISON members to promote the campaign within schools they work in.

Newcastle City

55. For Safety – End Support for the Nordic Model

Conference notes that UNISON's policy on sex work, adopted in 2010, is to support decriminalising the selling of sexual services while introducing a sex buyers law criminalising those who purchase those services.

Conference recognises that the great majority of sex workers are women. Conference also recognises a significant number of women sex workers identify as LGBT+, and there are many gay, bisexual and trans sex workers who do not identify as women.

Conference notes that national LGBT+ conference policy:

- 1) Recognises that criminalisation of any kind, including of buyers, increases the risks for sex workers;
- 2) Opposes the introduction of a sex buyers law;
- 3) Recognises sex workers as workers who should have the same rights and protections as workers in other industries.

Conference further notes:

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- a) Significant developments since 2010 include Amnesty International's 2016 policy on sex workers, which includes advocating for the decriminalisation of all aspects of consensual adult sex work;
- b) That the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women published a report in 2011 which explored the impacts of anti-trafficking initiatives that utilise an 'end demand' approach, including the criminalisation of clients, and states that such approaches cause serious harm to sex workers by putting their livelihoods at risk, increasing the stigma they face, and intensifying police power over them;
- c) Full decriminalisation is supported by many other organisations including the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Royal College of Nursing, Human Rights Watch, Freedom United, the Global Commission on HIV and the Law, ILGA World, ILGA Europe, Transgender Europe, the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, Survivors UK, The Gemini Project, Anti Slavery International, and sex workers organisations;
- d) It is also supported by trade unions including GMB, ASLEF (Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen), UCU (University and College Union), BFAWU (Bakers, Food, and Allied Workers Union), UVW (United Voices of the World) and the RMT (National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers);
- e) The adoption by 2022 UNISON women's conference of the motion "For safety – End Support for the 'Nordic Model'" which called on women's conference to stop supporting the Nordic Model, a legal model based on decriminalising the selling of sexual services while introducing a 'sex buyers law';
- f) Poverty, benefit cuts and sanctions have led to an increase in the number of women working in the sex industry, and long waits for Universal Credit payments have led to some turning to 'survival' sex work to pay rent and put food on the table.

Conference further notes New Zealand decriminalised sex work in 2003. The legislation recognises sex work as work, and therefore covered by employment law. The law treats sex workers consent as crucial and gives them the legal right to refuse any client for any reason at any point.

The 'New Zealand model' has been praised by women's rights organisations and international bodies including the WHO as the best legal approach to protect the safety, rights, and health, of people who sell sex.

Conference recognises that decriminalisation is not about 'encouraging' sex work – it's about the safety of people who sell sex. No legal model anywhere in the world has been shown to increase, or decrease, the number of people who sell sex. The evidence is that all that laws can change is whether people do sex work in dangerous conditions or in safer conditions.

Conference believes that UNISON should not call for laws that put sex workers, including women and LGBT+ sex workers, at greater risk.

Conference therefore resolves that UNISON should not call for the introduction of a sex buyers law, and instructs the National Executive Council to begin a dialogue with the National LGBT+ Committee, National Women's Committee and other appropriate bodies within the union with a view to reviewing and advancing UNISON policy in this area.

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender plus Committee

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Public Services

56. Learning the Right Lessons from Covid-19

Conference notes the immense strain that the Covid-19 pandemic continues to place on the UK's public services and UNISON members.

This has been most obvious in the NHS, particularly during the peaks of the infection, but it has also had a major impact in other areas, such as care homes, local government, community health services, schools, universities, refuse collection, social work, homecare and public transport.

Conference notes that although the situation is improving, as a consequence of the vaccination programme and immunity acquired through prior infection, the pandemic continues to cause major disruption, with Omicron leading to a wave of sickness absence. This has left staff exhausted from dealing with close to two years of Covid-19 struggling to keep services afloat.

Conference further notes that these problems were made much worse by years of chronic underfunding and privatisation.

Conference notes that the UK has suffered worse health and economic outcomes than most other countries. Conference also notes that the pandemic has not affected everyone equally, with some groups being at disproportionate risk of death or harm, including Black and disabled workers. There has also been disproportionate impact on women, young and LGBT+ people, alongside the well documented and devastating impact on the oldest in society.

The disproportionate impact on some groups is the direct consequence of the failure to tackle institutional and structural discrimination. For example, Black and women workers are disproportionately represented in front line, low paid and insecure work, including public services and often in jobs handed over to private contractors, where they become second class citizens in terms of wages and conditions.

Conference asserts that a major reason for these failings is that the resilience of UK public services had already been severely weakened by more than a decade of damaging austerity. UNISON members know all too well that our services were nearing collapse before the pandemic hit, but despite this they continued to deliver for the communities they serve, reminding the public how important public services and the people that deliver them are.

Conference believes that such underlying problems, begun by privatisation in the 1980s by Thatcher; extended under the Labour government of 1997-2010 including the disaster of Private Finance Initiative (PFI), followed by over 10 years of Tory austerity, were compounded by the UK government's mishandling of many aspects of the response to the pandemic. Conference notes and shares the huge wave of anger that has followed revelations about parties held at 10 Downing Street during lock down and agrees that it is simply not acceptable for the Tories to make rules but not follow them.

Billions were spent on contracts with private operators at various points during the pandemic; many of which were awarded without competition and without contract details

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being published. In addition the UK government failed to pay sufficient heed to the advice of scientists and experts.

PPE guidelines for aerosol based disease were insufficient and often inadequate public protections were frequently implemented too late, as the Government continued to prioritise profits over people's health.

Such failings have contributed to the high number of excess deaths, which includes UNISON members.

With this in mind, conference is particularly concerned by the UK government's October 2022 Spending Review. If proof were needed that the UK government has failed to learn the lessons from the pandemic, this is it. Although the headlines following the chancellor's announcement of the government's spending plans were all about how the government were pouring billions into the NHS, social care and other public services, the fine print shows a different story. Although spending is increasing, it comes nowhere near to making up ground lost since 2010, when the Tories were first elected.

Conference agrees that UNISON's No Going Back to Normal Campaign has brought these issues before the public and highlighted a compelling case for the post Covid world to be one built around high and sustained investment in public services, decent pay that recognises the immense worth of people who work in public services, safe and fair workplaces and an equal and sustainable society.

Conference agrees that as Covid-19 moves to the next phase UNISON must intensify its efforts to ensure that the right lessons are learned from the pandemic and that we come together as a union to campaign to put them into practice. This must involve ensuring that our members' experiences and testimony are fed into the public inquiries taking place within the UK and the devolved nations and that we continue to build campaign momentum behind the union's calls to ensure there can be no going back to austerity and the failed policies that had so weakened public services over the last decade.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to develop a programme of work that will:

- 1) Seek to ensure UNISON members who have been affected by the pandemic are given a platform to share their experiences and to hold decision makers to account through the inquiry processes across the UK;
- 2) Collect and submit relevant evidence and testimony of UNISON members to the UK government inquiry and the parallel processes that take place in the devolved administrations;
- 3) Undertake research and analysis into the impact of austerity on the resilience of public services, the consequences of outsourcing/privatisation and fragmentation of services on the ability of public services to respond and the deep structural inequalities exposed by Covid-19;
- 4) Undertake campaign activity with allies, including, where appropriate, the TUC, Welsh TUC, Scottish TUC and Irish Congress of Trade Unions and Labour Link, public service users and community groups in furtherance of our No Going Back to Normal campaign

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goals - including bringing all privatised services back in house in all public services on equal pay and conditions with the existing workforce;

- 5) Work with campaign groups such as Keep our NHS Public and Health Campaigns Together;
- 6) Develop and support calls for priority and urgent actions to address the ongoing challenges being faced by members responding to the pandemic, including the recommendations of the recent Health and Social Care Committee report calling for a full health and care recovery plan, as well as an urgent review of recruitment and retention issues within the health and care workforce;
- 7) Develop a communications strategy to underpin this programme of work.

National Executive Council

57. A Post-Pandemic Plan for Public Services

Conference places on the record its profound thanks for the bravery and sacrifice of public service workers who cared for the vulnerable and ensured that our communities continued to function during the pandemic.

In honouring their contribution, Conference calls for the National Executive Council to campaign for the public inquiry into the pandemic to have the authority to compel disclosure of evidence under oath and enable the voices of workers to be heard. Those responsible for failings and negligence should be held to account and lessons learned.

Conference notes that the UK has suffered worse health and economic outcomes than most other countries. A major reason for these failings is the fact that the UK has been hamstrung by a decade of damaging austerity.

Conference agrees with the eminent epidemiologist Professor Sir Michael Marmot that the UK suffered particularly badly from coronavirus due to disinvestment from public services and an accompanying growth of economic and social inequality since 2010.

This was made worse by the UK government's mishandling of many aspects of the response to the pandemic, including the decision in England to hand responsibility for the Test and Trace system to private companies and to spend billions on contracts with private operators, many of which were awarded to Tory donors.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to campaign for a new post-pandemic plan for:

- 1) Profit-free public services;
- 2) Championing long-term sustainable investment;
- 3) Decent jobs and fair pay across all public services.

Bedfordshire Police

58. Campaigning for a National Care Service

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Conference notes the severe impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has exerted on the social care sector. Tens of thousands of elderly and disabled people have died from Covid-19 in care homes and other care settings across the UK since March 2020 and the death rate among care workers has been particularly high. The pandemic has disproportionately affected Black and migrant workers, who make up a larger part of the social care workforce, than most other parts of the economy.

Although the experience has varied across the four nations, Conference remains appalled at the treatment that thousands of care workers have received during this period. This has included, at various points, a lack of access to appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), no access to adequate sick pay when self-isolating, a failure to ensure sufficient availability of COVID-19 tests, and then being marked out as the first staff to be subject to mandatory vaccination (in England).

Despite everything that care workers have been through over the past two years, far too many are still receiving poverty pay. Conference notes the progress made in Scotland where, since May 2021, all care workers are now paid at least the real living wage and contrasts this with the pathetic response of the Westminster government, where what pay boosts there have been, continue to be piecemeal and short-term.

Conference further notes the damage done by the lack of employment security for many that work in social care. For example, in England a quarter of total staff in the sector are employed on zero hours contracts, but this proportion rises to more than half for care workers employed in the domiciliary part of the sector.

Conference asserts that it is therefore no surprise that vacancy rates in care homes continue to rise, reaching 11.5 percent in England at the end of 2021, as reported by the Care Quality Commission in January 2022.

Conference believes that there are a number of reasons the pandemic had such a damaging impact on social care, including the impact of decades of chronic underfunding and privatisation; the failure to treat the workforce with the respect it deserves; and the tolerance of far too many cowboy operators, as part of an under-regulated and massively fragmented care system.

Conference therefore asserts that the pandemic has demonstrated once and for all the need for a much more joined up and coherent system of care delivery a National Care Service that brings about consistent standards of care for the elderly and disabled, and consistent terms and conditions for the workforce.

Conference therefore denounces the recent white paper for social care in England as wholly inadequate for dealing with the scale of problems in the sector.

Conference reasserts its support for a much more fundamental overhaul of care provision based on a number of key elements: a massive increase in funding now and into the future; immediate, substantial and sustained pay rises (recognising that UNISON is calling for a national minimum wage of £15 per hour); a comprehensive workforce strategy for the sector; support for person-centred services that ensure the human rights of service users are protected; an end to the use of the profit motive in social care; support for public sector or genuinely non-profit provision of services; and a clampdown on the wholly inappropriate use of private equity in the sector. The ultimate aim should be to seek parity with the NHS, with

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care free at the point of use and for social care to be seen as a crucial part of the economic infrastructure.

Conference congratulates the union on its ongoing campaigning for a National Care Service and notes that this is beginning to deliver results in some parts of the UK. Conference notes that a plan for a National Care Service was achieved in Scotland in 2021, but also recognises the concerns of UNISON Scotland, particularly about the impact of the proposals on local government.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Intensify the union's demands for a National Care Service, in line with the principles outlined above and backed by campaigning, lobbying and research;
- 2) Ensure that the union works across each part of the UK and with service users to share best practice in campaigning and developing National Care Services;
- 3) Work with other like-minded organisations across the sector as part of a broad based alliance of those calling for substantial changes to the delivery of care services.

National Executive Council

59. A New Settlement for Care Services

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 members of UNISON's 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.

Conference will also note that in the past UNISON has worked with the National Pensioners' Convention (a campaigning organisation for older people with 1.5 million members) promoting issues of concern to older people.

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-up" 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

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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;
- 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 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.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to support a national care service and consider relevant sections of the National Pensioners’ Convention’s report with a view to UNISON working with the National Pensioners’ Convention in the campaign for a better, fairer and sustainable future for the care of the elderly.

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Such a campaign would include relevant service groups and self-organised groups and be carried out alongside continuing support for “Care after Covid: A UNISON vision for social care” and UNISON’s Care Workers For Change campaign.

National Retired Members’ Committee

60. The Crisis in Social Care

Conference notes that years of chronic underfunding and a dysfunctional market have produced a social care system in which the needs of hundreds of thousands of society’s most vulnerable people are not being met and in which care workers are frequently exploited.

Covid-19 has exposed the crisis in social care and now is the time to for break from the past and pay care workers properly.

Conference is bemused therefore that successive governments seem unwilling or unable to bring much needed changes to the sector and the new Conservative government continuing to drag its heels in 2022 on limited care costs cap.

Conference asserts that piecemeal attempts made to prop up the current failing system will not cater adequately for the needs of our growing and ageing population.

Instead, Conference wants to see a more ambitious vision of where social care should be in ten years’ time, with serious financial commitments to back this up, and a strict timetable for achieving change.

Conference notes that by the time of the 2019 general election there was a widespread consensus across unions, the Labour Party, health think tanks and cross-party Parliamentary committees in favour of making universal access to personal care free at the point of delivery.

As part of a longer term plan, Conference believes that ultimately the goal should be to bring social care up to equivalent levels of equity and access as those associated with the NHS.

Conference accepts that this would be expensive but believes that the ongoing failure to invest properly in social care by successive governments is purely a matter of political choice.

Conference is also convinced that providing extra money is only part of the solution, there must be accompanying changes to the way in which care is delivered.

For example, Conference notes the findings of the UNISON supported report from the CHPI think tank, which showed in stark terms how much money bleeds out of the care sector into the pockets of private equity barons.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign for social care to finally receive the proper funding it deserves and for such funding to be raised by collective rather than individual means;

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- 2) For any spending boost to be accompanied by meaningful reform of service delivery to improve the system in the interests of its staff and the service users they care for; and
- 3) Social care to remain an organising and recruitment priority for UNISON, complementing the union's high-profile campaigns against injustice, privatisation and underfunding.

Halton

61. For a Publicly Owned, Democratically Managed, Free at the Point of Need National Health and Social Care System

Conference recognises that every single family will need access to both health care and social care at some point in their lives. Whether it is help with washing and dressing at home or long term nursing support, most social care has never been automatically free at the point of use like the NHS.

Since the establishment of the welfare state in 1948, councils have had responsibility for social care, but it has always been means tested, with delivery left to town halls, charities and private companies.

Successive governments, Labour, Tory and Con-Dem, have been unwilling or unable to solve the issue of social care.

Cuts in hospital beds and reduced hospital stay times have not been met with increases in social care provision.

Over 40,000 died from Covid in care homes during the pandemic in an overwhelmingly privatised system that puts profit before safety.

Between 2016 and 2020, the number of people requesting social care support increased by 120,000 but about 14,000 fewer people received it, according to the King's Fund think tank.

The current shortfall between what is needed to meet demand, improve access and improve care facilities, according to the Health Foundation charity, is between £6 billion and £14 billion per year.

The Care Quality Commission warns that vacancy levels across the social care sector could reach 170,000 – not surprising with the low average pay for care workers and one in four are on zero-hour contracts.

The government's knee jerk response was to announce a 'workforce retention and recruitment fund' amounting to a mere £108 per care worker, with no explanation as to how this will attract new staff and relying on existing staff to work "more hours in the system" making burnt out carers do even more work.

Once again, the Tory response is to make working class people pay the cost of a crisis not of their making. Increasing national insurance contributions will hit working people in their pockets just as food and energy prices are going up, the Universal Credit uplift has been scrapped.

Conference believes there is an intrinsic and vital link between health and social care.

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Social care should address problems before they escalate to a person requiring hospital treatment. With the current shortfall in care provision, people will either remain in NHS beds or, as has frequently occurred during Covid, be sent home without adequate support, creating a vicious circle.

Conference believes there should be no place for private profiteers in our health and social care system.

Everyone should have access to free universal health and social care in an integrated system based on need not profit. It should not be based on ability to pay.

The Trades Union Congress has calculated that if capital gains tax, the tax on profits from assets like stocks and property, was paid at the same level as income tax, that would alone generate £17 billion a year for funding health and social care.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to publicly campaign for:

- 1) A fully integrated Health and Social Care Service, from the Cradle to the Grave, free at the point of need, publicly owned and democratically run by workers and service-users;
- 2) Bringing back in-house all privatised health and social care and removing the profit motive entirely from all care services;
- 3) An increase in Capital Gains Tax to the same level as income tax.

South Derbyshire Healthcare

62. For a publicly owned, democratically managed, free at the point-of-need national health and social care system

Conference recognises that every single family will need access to both health care and social care at some point in their lives. Whether it is help with washing and dressing at home or long term nursing support, most social care has never been automatically free at the point of use like the NHS.

Since the establishment of the welfare state in 1948, councils have had responsibility for social care, but it has always been means-tested - with delivery left to town halls, charities and private companies.

Successive governments, Labour, Tory and Con-Dem, have been unwilling or unable to solve the issue of social care. Cuts in hospital beds and reduced hospital stay times have not been met with increases in social care provision

According to an article in the Guardian in September 2021, “for the hundreds of thousands of families paying 100% of care costs, bills stack up very fast, especially when loved ones have long term-conditions.”

Over 40,000 died from Covid in care homes during the pandemic in an overwhelmingly privatised system that puts profit before safety.

Between 2016 and 2020, the number of people requesting social care support increased by 120,000 but about 14,000 fewer people received it, according to the King’s Fund thinktank.

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The current shortfall between what is needed to meet demand, improve access and improve care facilities, according to the Health Foundation charity, is between £6 billion and £14 billion per year.

The Care Quality Commission warns that vacancy levels across the social care sector could reach 170,000, not surprising with the low average pay for care workers and one in four are on zero hour contracts.

The government's knee-jerk response was to announce a 'workforce retention and recruitment fund' amounting to a pathetic £108 per care worker – with no explanation as to how this will attract new staff and relying on existing staff to work 'more hours in the system' making burnt-out carers do even more work.

Once again, the Tory response is to make working-class people pay the cost of a crisis not of their making. Increasing national insurance contributions will hit working people in their pockets just as food and energy prices are going up, the Universal Credit uplift has been scrapped, and workers are facing attacks on their wages, terms and conditions through 'fire and rehire' across the sector.

Conference believes there is an intrinsic and vital link between health and social care. Social care should address problems before they escalate to a person requiring hospital treatment. With the current shortfall in care provision, people will either remain in NHS beds or as has frequently occurred during Covid-19, be sent home without adequate support, creating a vicious circle.

Conference believes there should be no place for private profiteers in our health and social care system.

Everyone should have access to free universal health and social care in an integrated system based on need not profit. It should not be based on ability to pay.

The Trades Union Congress has calculated that if capital gains tax - the tax on profits from assets like stocks and property - was paid at the same level as income tax, that would alone generate £17 billion a year for funding health and social care.

But taxing the rich and big business should be just the start. They will do everything they can to avoid paying higher taxes that eat into their profits. We need to be able to plan the funding of health, social care, education and other services based on need not profit.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to publicly campaign for:

- 1) A fully integrated Health and Social Care Service, 'from the Cradle to the Grave', free at the point of need, publicly owned and democratically run by workers and service users;
- 2) Bringing back in-house all privatised health and social care and removing the profit motive entirely from all care services;
- 3) An increase in Capital Gains Tax to the same level as income tax.

Nottingham City

63. Public Ownership of Water, Energy and Transport – It's Common Sense

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Conference recognises that the privatisation of the water industry, energy generation and distribution and the provision of public transport is a failed experiment.

In these three sectors investment in infrastructure has been kept to a minimum. There is little or no strategic planning. The terms and conditions of members within these industries are constantly under attack. Why? Because these companies prioritise profit before anything else.

The tackling the climate crisis, pollution, ever rising prices and failing infrastructure and the welfare of staff, need organisations that put all these needs before profit. Therefore, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Develop a national campaign that demonstrates the common sense of having these strategic sectors in public hands and keep this importance subject is fundamental to this union's agenda;
- 2) To work with Labour Link to ensure that renationalisation and public ownership of these sectors is high on the agenda within the Labour Party.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Transport

64. UK Public Procurement Post - Brexit Must Protect Public Services

Conference notes that although the UK exited the European Union on the 31st January 2020 there is still a lot of post Brexit legislation changes, to be expected in the next few years that impacts on public services.

Conference further notes that a "hard Brexit" was legally hard wired into Boris Johnson's Withdrawal Agreement, which now puts at risk getting a deal that benefits the economy and workers in the UK.

Ministers were prohibited from extending the transition negotiating period and so with such a short negotiation period of nine months a World Trade Organisation or No Deal with the EU is still a real risk.

The red lines particularly harmful to public services and workers was the removal of any commitments to a future Level Playing Field in the future EU - UK Treaty. The removal of the Level Playing Field (LPF) from the Agreement will significantly weaken workplace, equality, health and safety, consumer and citizens, environmental and climate change standards, regulations, rights and protections.

Conference notes that this deliberately paves the way for a Free Trade Agreement with the EU so that the government can negotiate more easily a Free Trade Agreement with the United States with lower standards, regulations, rights and protections.

Conference notes that the shape of post Brexit public procurement in the UK largely depends on two things:

- 1) The details of the deal reached during the transition period, if indeed one is reached at all;
- 2) The strength of the government's drive to push for relaxing regulations.

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The new public procurement bill at Westminster is both a threat and an opportunity.

Conference notes that privatisation of public services under the EU was not mandatory but liberalisation was often encouraged and was often hard to reverse once in place. The EU Public Procurement Directive, followed and set out in the UK Public Contract Regulations, only set the rules once a public authority has decided to test the market or outsource public services.

The current EU rules, successfully campaigned for by UNISON with the European Public Services Union, includes the need to consider the price quality ratio in tenders where along with price, social and environmental provisions are considered so that the quality (e.g. paying the living wage, having a gender pay audit, promoting diverse workforce, sustainability service plan etc.) of a particular bid could be considered equally alongside price.

The price - quality ratio removed and replaced the MEAT – Most Economic Advantageous Tender - driver that has fuelled the race to the bottom because previously all that was considered was price as the most important criteria when considering an outsource tender. The UK has not taken up the opportunities inside existing EU regulations to be more progressive.

Conference also notes that public procurement in the UK is a devolved matter and the Scottish government has used the new EU regime to introduce social and environment provisions much further and comprehensively than the Westminster government.

Conference notes that UNISON has been critical of the EU public procurement regime and campaigned for much more to be done to improve and make mandatory the inclusion of social and environmental provisions in public procurement regulations and stop the 'race to the bottom'.

The EU procurement regulations (and in particular their interface with EU state aid and cross border competition rules) can definitely be improved and UNISON has long standing objections but losing them all could open the ability of public bodies to outsource or sell off services quickly to a single contractor without a tender.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Campaign for any changes to the UK Public Contract Regulations to be made by primary and not secondary legislation so that citizens, trade unions, stakeholders, MPs and Peers can engage in an open, transparent and consultative process to have the opportunity to scrutinise and amend any changes;
- b) Campaign with MPs, Peers, the TUC and public sector and civil society alliances to make sure that any new UK public procurement regime does not make any public services outsourcing compulsory, or easier to privatise via the use of vehicles such as 'public service mutual' models;
- c) Campaign for UK public procurement in the EU–UK trade deal to:
 - i) Continue to apply current EU procurement directives, as has been done in an EU trade agreement with Ukraine, but leave room to improve. This would maintain the UK's commitment to the social and environmental provisions in public procurement and

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strengthen non-divergence and regulatory alignment and the Level Playing Field. It would make it harder to liberalise public services like the NHS in future Free Trade Agreements with the United States;

- ii) Include non-regression, dynamic alignment and direct effect clauses that would allow UK employment law to keep pace with improvements in EU social and employment policy linked to the public procurement regime;
- d) Campaign for any new UK public procurement regime to be maintained as a devolved matter for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland;
- e) Provide updated public procurement negotiating and bargaining guidance for branches and regions once the new UK public procurement changes have been finalised.

Newcastle Hospitals

Economy

65. Tackling the Cost of Living Crisis

Conference notes that UNISON members are at the sharp end of a cost of living crisis as a consequence of rising prices and Tory imposed pay cuts and tax rises.

Inflation has spiralled, largely as a consequence of increased worldwide demand for energy, shortages of many goods, the pandemic and, in the UK in particular, the consequence of Brexit.

Conference notes that the increase in the energy price cap announced in February will push the average energy bill to almost £2000. It is a disgraceful condemnation of how far this government have taken us, that in the UK, the sixth richest country in the world, poorer people are sitting in the cold because of the price of fuel. This was set to be compounded by the Tory manifesto busting 10 percent increase in National Insurance (NI), set to take effect from April. Whilst conference agrees that it is right for taxes to rise to cover the costs of increased investment in health, social care, and other public services, National Insurance is a regressive tax, targeting workers rather than wealth. Workers earning as little as £10,000 will now pay a NI rate of 13.25 percent.

Conference further notes that the steep rise in our members' household bills takes place against a backdrop of the government's vicious pay policy. This has left public sector workers, including those on the frontline during the pandemic, still being paid less today than they were a decade ago. Although the Chancellor announced that the public sector pay freeze is over, it is far from clear that government departments are going to receive the funding necessary to meet pay claims in 2022 and beyond.

Whilst budget documentation announces that some public sector workers will see pay rises over the next three years as the recovery in the economy and labour market allows a return to a normal pay setting process (including through recommendations from Pay Review Bodies where applicable), it also states that to ensure fairness and the sustainability of the public finances, public sector pay growth over the next three years should retain broad parity with the private sector. And whilst Boris Johnson has vowed to build a high wage economy, without a concerted fight back by UNISON and the wider labour and trade union movement, the prospects for pay right across the economy look dire.

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Conference notes analysis by the Resolution Foundation think tank which shows that real terms pay growth will have been just 2.4% in the sixteen years between 2008 and 2024 whilst in the previous sixteen years up to 2008 pay grew by 36 percent.

Conference also notes that despite the Tory government's claim that they are levelling up the country, wealth gaps are widening between rich and poor, north and south and white and Black. The deep irony underpinning this situation is that it is the Tories who have done so much to make the UK an unequal country. The closing of the coal mines without corresponding just transition policies, the monetarism which laid waste to heavy industry and the country's manufacturing base and the post financial crisis austerity measures inflicted upon public services have turbo charged regional disparities and structural inequality. Conference notes that many of these policies were first inflicted on the UK by Thatcher and the Tories in the 1980s. In the preceding decade the UK had been more 'level'. The history books show that the 1970s were the most equal time on record. In the 1980s, there was a meteoric rise in top pay and wealth soared, while the lowest salaries fell behind. That great gap never narrowed again. The richest ten percent of the population now own 43 percent of wealth, leaving the entire bottom half just nine percent.

Conference agrees that the different aspects of the cost of living rising crisis set out in this motion are characteristics of the UK's capitalist economic system.

Conference agrees that higher wages are not just good for working people and their families. They also boost the economy too, and, as such, measures that promote them, such as collective bargaining, effective minimum wage rates and funding from governments to support public sector pay increases, should be a priority.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to undertake a programme of work and campaign activity to address the cost of living crisis faced by our members. Conference agrees that this should include a mix of measures that will address both the need for higher pay and benefits and help with household bills, including:

- 1) Providing maximum support to our members submitting pay claims and embarking upon industrial action, including, where appropriate, co-ordination of campaign activity with sister unions across public services and the TUC, STUC, WTUC and ICTU;
- 2) Undertaking research work to understand the barriers to members participating in industrial action ballots and developing solutions to address these;
- 3) Campaigning for a repeal of the Trade Union Act, including the removal of the draconian and undemocratic thresholds for industrial action ballots;
- 4) Working with sister unions, the TUC, STUC, WTRUC, ICTU and Labour Link to develop and promote proposals to extend collective bargaining coverage across the economy, including through fair wage resolutions and sectoral bargaining;
- 5) Campaign with like-minded organisations, including Robin Hood Tax Campaign and Centre for International Corporate Tax Accountability (CICTAR), to shift the balance of taxation from workers to wealth;
- 6) Campaign for a minimum wage of £15 per hour;
- 7) Campaign to oppose the £20 per week cuts to Universal Credit;

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- 8) Support the Right to Food campaign, which seeks to enshrine the right to food in UK law;
- 9) Support protests which are likely to arise from the community as bills bite even harder next winter;
- 10) Continue to publicise to our members the vital help that is available through the There for You charity;
- 11) Work with the TUC, Welsh TUC, Scottish TUC and Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Labour Link and other like minded organisations to establish more meaningful criteria to establish levelling up benchmarks. These should include sustained progress at improving the Gini coefficient (which measure inequality), the relative share of national income received in the nations' pay packets (the labour share), progress towards eradicating the gender pay gap, the ethnicity pay gap, the disability pay gap and associated employment gaps, the extent to which regional disparities in wealth, job opportunities, public service provision and levels of government investment persist. This work should include developing alternative policies that will genuinely promote levelling up;
- 12) Work with colleagues in the Energy Service Group on a campaign for measures to help address spiralling energy bills and tackle fuel poverty, including:
 - a) Immediate relief for consumers in the form of effective price caps, cutting VAT and the removal of all levies which are on bills as these should be financed via general taxation which is more progressive than the energy bill which result in low-income householders paying a bigger share of income on energy bills;
 - b) Moves to implement UNISON's comprehensive plan on a national energy efficiency programme to reduce usage and with it bills via great energy efficiency in the home (this move would save circa £600 per annum for poor energy efficiency homes);
 - c) Public ownership of retail supply and infrastructure to provide stability for consumers and lead the way to helping consumers make the necessary changes to achieve net zero in a way that is affordable and does not lead to greater fuel poverty;
 - d) Nationalisation of the entire energy industry.

National Executive Council

66. Cost of Living Crisis

Conference notes that UNISON members are being impacted by excessive price rises on essentials like food (+10 percent on average in a year and much higher in reality on lower priced items) and domestic energy bills (with an imminent rise of up to +50 percent).

The Government know the hardship this will bring yet persist with a £20 a week cut in Universal Credit for low income working and non-working households. Also, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, underfunding the welfare budget by £3billion.

This compounds twelve years of real pay cuts for the vast majority of our members amidst ever harder workloads as public services are stretched to breaking point.

This government seeks to tackle this not by taxing hugely growing private wealth, and adequately funding vital services, but by stealth taxes through forcing hard strapped councils

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to raise council tax and taxing working people only through National Insurance in a forlorn attempt to plug the gaps left by their failed austerity policies.

They have further left local councils high and dry with a piecemeal and poorly targeted funding response falling way short of the long-term funding and support ordinary people need.

UNISON's political strategy must:

- 1) Underpin our wage bargaining;
- 2) Support funding demands of local politicians;
- 3) Lobby MPs and Lords to demand the government act to ease this crisis or be exposed for their failure to act.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work with Labour Link to develop a strategy which:

- a) Presses the government to resolve the cost of living crisis;
- b) Promotes alternative Labour proposals among members.

And to this end we should consider supporting:

- i) A Windfall tax on energy companies;
- ii) Removing VAT from domestic energy bills;
- iii) Real Living Wage and Fair Pay;
- iv) Repeal the £20 Universal Credit Cut;
- v) Fair and Adequate Funding for Councils;
- vi) Make Work Pay: Good wages, not cuts to safety net;
- vii) Long term policies including insulation of homes and tackling food waste;
- viii) Opposing right wing exploitation of crisis to roll back decarbonisation or promote 'small state' policies.

Manchester

67. Levelling up

Conference expresses its deep scepticism and anger at the Tory government's claim that they are levelling up the country.

UNISON members and the communities in which they live will know only too well that it is the policies pursued by Tory governments that have resulted in the UK becoming one of the most unequal countries in the world.

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From the Thatcher period to the present day, successive Tory governments have reigned down deindustrialisation, monetarism, anti-union laws, flexible labour markets and austerity on working people. And rather than seek to create a more equal country, their policy priority has been to make the UK a haven for global capitalism by creating an environment of low taxes, deregulation and privatisation.

Conference notes that these policies have resulted in growing wealth gaps between rich and poor, white and Black and north and south.

Conference notes the findings of recent research by IPPR North which show that:

- 1) Funding for levelling up pales in comparison to what has been lost during the austerity years;
- 2) For every job created in the North, just under three were created in London and the Greater South East;
- 3) In work poverty has risen in the north to 3.5 million in 2019/20.

Conference notes that the Shared Prosperity Fund, which forms a key component of the levelling up package announced by the government and which is worth £2.6billion over three years, simply replaces cash that poorer regions used to receive from the EU.

Conference agrees that targets included in the levelling up white paper on improving regional inequalities in life expectancy and educational outcomes are meaningless without measures to tackle the fundamental structural inequalities and work and class based power imbalances that underpin them.

Conference believes if anyone is qualified to identify the most appropriate levelling up criteria and the effectiveness of policies to achieve it, it is UNISON along with the wider trade union and labour movement.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to put in place plans to work with the TUC, the WTUC, the STUC and the ICTU, Labour Link and other like-minded organisations to establish:

- a) Objective criteria to hold the government to account and establish substantive benchmarks for measuring levelling up. These should include progress towards increasing the share of national income received in the nations pay packets, progress towards closing the gender pay gap and addressing regional disparities in wealth, job opportunities, public service provision;
- b) Alternative policies that will genuinely level up the UK, recognising the importance of public services, higher wages, an effective benefit system and progressive taxation.

Northern Region

68. 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-19 crisis there had been a series of attacks on older people's entitlements and standards of living including:

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- 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 2019 this started to deprive couples of Pension Credit and Housing Benefit if one partner was over state pension age and the other under that age. Couples 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 recommended:
 - 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.

Conference notes that UNISON's retired members are concerned that the proposal by the Social Market Foundation to scrap the triple lock on pensions and the United Kingdom government's proposal to align the qualifying age for free prescriptions in England with State Pension Age are a foretaste of policies to come. 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 to ask the older generation to face cuts in their income, before making proposals to limit higher pay or imposing taxes on extreme wealth.

We are all paying the cost of Covid-19, one way or another and we must not be distracted into arguments over which section of the working class has suffered most or least.

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

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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 Executive Council to work with all appropriate bodies to:

- i) To defend retired members from attacks on their standard of living;
- 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;
- iii) Make the rich pay.

National Retired Members' Committee

International

69. Global Vaccine Inequality

Conference expresses its deep concern at the ongoing inequity in access to Covid-19 vaccines globally. In addition to the strong moral imperative, failure to ensure high vaccine coverage in all countries puts everyone at risk from new, potentially vaccine resistant variants of the virus.

Conference notes that sixty nine of the world's poorest and most vulnerable low income and middle-income countries missed the World Health Organisation's end of year target for vaccinating 40 percent of their populations.

Conference condemns the fact that the world's richest countries continue to accumulate vaccine doses while the world's poorest struggle with woefully inadequate supplies. It is estimated that by the end of 2021, there were 600 million surplus vaccine doses across G7 countries alone. At the same time, only one in eleven people in low income countries have received a single dose.

Conference calls on the UK to show true leadership by raising its ambition and commitment to expedite vaccines reaching those most in need. Actions to support this should include increasing the UK's overall commitment to COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX). To help ensure transparency, we urge the government to publish a schedule for reallocation of doses to support COVAX, in line with the Joint Statement on Dose Donations of COVID-19 Vaccines to African Countries.

Conference further calls on the UK government to join the US and other World Trade Organisation (WTO) members in supporting a Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver at the WTO during this global crisis. While the waiver is essential to simplify and accelerate production of vaccines in and for the Global South, it must also be accompanied by support for knowledge and technology transfer to rapidly increase manufacturing capacity.

Conference further notes that the rapid development and roll-out of the Covid-19 vaccine was only possible due to high levels of government expenditure, research by public

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universities and public subsidies to pharmaceutical companies despite the fact that the pharmaceutical industry is one of the most profitable in the world making billions in profits from charging high prices and controlling who gets access to their products. Meanwhile, people suffer and die from treatable conditions because they cannot afford extortionate prices.

Conference believes that the pandemic has exposed how this profit driven system is completely inadequate to ensure Covid-19 vaccines and treatments reach everyone who needs them, that it is economically and socially unsustainable and that the pharmaceutical industry is in need of urgent reform.

Conference welcomes the leadership played by UNISON in raising this issue in the UK and its willingness to work collaboratively with other organisations such as Global Justice Now, the Trade Justice Movement and others from outside the trade union movement. Conference also congratulates Public Services International and the European federation of Public Service Unions for their strong campaigning role within the global and European trade union movements.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to campaign for the UK to support a waiver of the WTO TRIPS agreement and for other measures to facilitate true global access to Covid-19 vaccines and other treatments;
- 2) Support calls for a reform of the pharmaceutical industry based on the principles of access to affordable pharmaceutical products for all based on need rather than the ability to pay;
- 3) To campaign for such reform within the TUC, Scottish TUC, Irish Congress of Trade Unions and European and global trade union movements as well as the Labour Party alongside non-governmental organisations who share our values and commitment to this campaign.

National Executive Council

70. Global Covid-19 Vaccine Inequality is a Health and Justice Emergency

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to support the global call for the waiving of intellectual property rights of Covid-19 tests, vaccines and treatments, to prioritise people over the financial interests of big pharmaceutical companies.

Globally, only around 40 percent of healthcare workers are fully vaccinated. On average, in the western Pacific and across sub-Saharan Africa, less than one in ten healthcare workers are fully vaccinated. Across low income countries, around 4.36 percent of the population are fully vaccinated. Only 7 percent of the number of vaccine supply deals secured by low income states in Africa have been fulfilled. All the while vaccines are stockpiled by rich countries. G20 member states, including UK, Italy and France, have secured 15 times as many doses per capita as sub-Saharan African states.

Conference also calls on the National Executive Council to support UNISON joining with unions representing nurses and healthcare workers, 2.5 million across the globe, including Brazil, Costa Rica, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and Uganda, who filed a formal appeal to the

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United Nations over the refusal by the UK, EU and other nations to waive the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement. Waiving TRIPS would allow vaccines, tests and treatments to be manufactured across the globe, increasing supply and distribution.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to review of UNISON's position on global vaccine inequality, and to call on the National Executive Council to publicly support the People's Vaccine Campaign to demand an end to vaccine and treatment inequality by ending the TRIPS agreement.

Central and North West London Mental Health Trust

71. Stop Buying Solar Energy Made With Forced Labour and Dirty Fuel from China

Conference notes that 95 percent of the world's solar panels rely on the primary material Polysilicon. Over 45 percent of the global supply of this component is manufactured in the Uyghur region ("Xinjiang"), where millions of indigenous Uyghur people are forced into mandatory "labour transfer" programmes as part of a system of mass-internment.

Conference recalls that The Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice has found that all Polysilicon manufacturers in the Uyghur region have participated in labour transfer programmes and/or are supplied by raw materials that have. The scale of forced labour is such that it is impossible to source from the Uyghur region without risking being part of a supply chain that uses modern slavery, especially as the Chinese government simply do not allow for proper transparency and reporting.

Conference further notes that according to Human Rights Watch, the pervasive nature of forced labour across the Uyghur region makes [human rights] "due diligence assessments impossible." The Ethical Trading Initiative also makes it clear that traditional due diligence in this region simply will not work: "Audits conducted within the XUAR (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region) cannot be relied upon and there must be a presumption of a high risk of forced labour in any workplace located within the region."

Conference condemns that researchers have found that multiple UK public sector bodies are supplied solar materials by companies with forced labour in their supply chain, including the Ministry of Defence and Scottish Water. As the UK's solar capacity sets to double by 2030 and the government expands its council led Solar Together scheme, researchers fear that public bodies' complicity in modern slavery practices will increase.

Conference welcomes that many councils are now sourcing solar panels for their housing stock. However, before they are locked into further long-term contracts with unethical suppliers, conference believes that it is essential that public procurers begin to source solar materials from outside the Uyghur region.

Finally, Conference determines that finding alternative ways of procuring solar panels is not only a humanitarian priority but an environmental one. China is currently the planet's biggest polluter and the Uyghur region is the government's national hub for sourcing oil, gas and coal. Lax national environmental standards allow companies to drill into the Uyghur people's natural resources and fuel their factories with cheap coal. 'Clean' energy made with dirty fuel and reliant on "surplus" labour cannot be sustainable.

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Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Support Stop Uyghur Genocide's campaign to target local authorities to pledge to end all sourcing of Polysilicon, or manufactured goods containing Polysilicon, from the Uyghur region and ask them to make it a condition of future solar procurement that suppliers will not source from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region;
- 2) Lobby the Local Government Association to ask them to support the campaign and to ensure their response to the climate emergency doesn't rely on polluting industries and cheap labour in low-income countries that are themselves on the front line of climate change impacts;
- 3) Raise the issue with Scottish Water and ask them to change their suppliers;
- 4) Raise awareness among members of the atrocities happening to the Uyghur in Xinjiang region through a news article and a webinar providing guidance to enable them to act within their workplaces;
- 5) Include information about responsible procurement in an updated version of the UNISON government procurement guidelines;
- 6) Raise the issue among Labour Parliamentarians.

North Yorkshire

Northern Health and Community

72. End Colonial Occupation of West Papua - Solidarity with the Indigenous People of West Papua

Conference notes that since 1963 the Indonesian State has colonised West Papua, the Western half of the island of New Guinea and a former Dutch colony, marginalising the indigenous Papuan population in what has been termed a "cold genocide"* akin to the treatment of indigenous Australians or Native Americans. Human rights organisations including Amnesty International have documented and repeatedly expressed concern about the gross human rights violations and abuses against the indigenous people of West Papua by the Indonesian state and its agents over the past fifty years. *["Colonialism and Cold Genocide: The Case of West Papua" in *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*, Vol 9 2015].

Indonesia bases its claim to West Papua since Dutch control ended in 1963 on a fundamentally flawed referendum which was held in 1969, the so-called "Act of Free Choice", to give West Papuans a decision as to whether they should be an independent state or not. The so-called vote consisted of just over 1,000 West Papuans (out of a population of around 1.5 million) being coerced, cajoled and bribed into voting in favour of integration with Indonesia. Since then, the West Papuan people have resisted the new coloniser, with untold thousands of Papuans killed. Shocking demographic statistics illustrate the effects of the Indonesian occupation : in 1962 the population of West Papua and Papua New Guinea (the Independent state which comprise the Eastern half of the island of New Guinea) had a rough parity. Since then the number of indigenous Papuans in Papua New Guinea has reached over eight million whilst West Papua's indigenous population lingers at around 1.5 million, overwhelmed by an equal number of Indonesian settler-migrants from other parts of the archipelago.

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The relation of much of the West Papuan population to the Indonesian state is not one of labour exploitation but of marginalisation and elimination. The Indonesian state oversees huge resource extraction projects in West Papua, staffing them with settler Indonesians from Java and elsewhere in the archipelago. The indigenous population is pushed off its land by Indonesian and multinational corporations and the Indonesian military and then kept peripheral by constant police repression. Palm oil companies from across the world are implicated in defrauding indigenous people of their land as swathes of primary forest – New Guinea is home to the third-largest tropical rain forest in the world – are levelled for mono-plantations, resulting in an ecological disaster as well.

The Indonesian state is also complicit with abuses of labour rights of the largely migrant workforce, particularly in relation to the mineral extraction industry in West Papua. The world's largest gold mine and third largest copper mine, Grasberg, operated by the US company Freeport McMoRan, is located in West Papua. The miners work in dangerous conditions for poor remuneration and the company uses union-busting tactics, including excessive violence by the Indonesian military and police, resulting in an ongoing fight for justice by the 800 workers fired for taking industrial action in 2017. Efforts have been made to find common ground and solidarity between the indigenous West Papuans and exploited migrant workers, most notably by Tongoi Papua, a rank and file trade union, and this work is ongoing.

Conference notes with concern the UK's connections with Indonesia's occupation of West Papua:

- 1) BP has one of the largest foreign investment projects in West Papua, the Tangguh liquefied natural gas fields
- 2) The British state trains an elite Indonesian police unit, Detachment 88 (Densus 88) at the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation. The unit is employed in West Papua and implicated in serious human rights abuses there.
- 3) Latest figures from the Campaign Against the Arms Trade show that, over the last three years, export licences (to Indonesia) for arms worth £393 million were issued to UK arms companies by the UK government
- 4) The British government supported Indonesia's take-over of West Papua in the 1960s. Britain was well aware of the fraudulent nature of the Act of Free Choice and the Foreign Office reported at great length on the brutality of the Indonesian occupation but diplomats were instructed to support Indonesia at all costs

Conference further notes that Benny Wenda, the founder of the Free West Papua Campaign, Chair of the United Liberation Movement for West Papua and recognised leader of the people of West Papua, has been living in exile in Oxford since his escape from Indonesian prison and attempted assassination in 2001-2.

Conference condemns the ongoing human rights abuses being perpetrated by the Indonesian state against the indigenous people of West Papua and the denial of their right to self-determination and therefore calls on the National Executive Council to :

- a) Lobby the UK government to press - using all means at its disposal -the Indonesian government to end the widespread and systemic human rights abuses perpetrated by its

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security forces in West Papua, including the suppression of the expression of independence views;

- b) Call on the UK government to immediately end its support for the training of Indonesian police and military units (such as Detachment 88) which have been shown to be perpetrators of human rights abuses against West Papuans and to suspend all support for the Indonesian military (including suspension of the issuing of arms export licences) whilst concerns exist that the military are complicit with serious human rights abuses in West Papua;
- c) Publicise UNISON's position to members to raise awareness of the issue and to encourage them to lobby their MPs;
- d) Support campaigns in the UK, such as the Free West Papua Campaign, which raise awareness about the human rights situation in West Papua and the rights of the West Papuan people to self-determination and freedom from Indonesian colonial rule, and to do this by, for example:
 - i) Encouraging branches and regions to establish links with, and provide support for, their local Free West Papua group and affiliated groups (e.g. Grassroots for West Papua);
 - ii) Inviting Free West Papua Campaign to have a stall or meeting for members at national and regional conferences;
 - iii) Inviting Benny Wenda to speak at events on international issues organised by UNISON e.g. at National Delegates Conference and at the seminars held for Branch International Officers;
 - iv) To make contact with Indonesian trade unions which are acting in solidarity with the indigenous population of West Papua and to explore the possibility of providing them with support in such solidarity work.

City of Wolverhampton

North Tyneside Metropolitan

73. Justice for Colombia - Justice for Darnelly

Conference pays tribute to the Colombian people for their commitment to human rights, peace and social justice through trade union-led, national strike protests that have mobilised millions of people and condemns the horrific abuses against protesters committed by security forces under President Ivan Duque. Research by Justice for Colombia and UNISON has named 962 trade union, social, environmental, Afro-Colombian and Indigenous activists who were murdered between 2017-2020. In addition, the United Nations received information about 196 killings in 2021, at least 28 of whom were women. The violence has continued into 2022, with 12 social activists murdered in the first four weeks of the year alone. Among them was Luz Marina Arteaga, found dead on 17 January after she had spent years campaigning for the rights of victims forced from their land.

Conference condemns the violent suppression of anti-government protests in 2021 and the way in which Colombian government ministers made dangerous and unfounded insinuations linking protesters to criminal organisations and legitimising police violence against them. Conference welcomes the letter sent in January to the Colombian embassy by Frances

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O'Grady, TUC General Secretary, calling on the Colombian Government to ensure protection for trade unionists following new threats from paramilitaries targeting prominent trade union activists.

Conference is appalled that Colombian trade unionists face stigmatisation even as they are being killed and that, according to the International Trade Union Confederation, Colombia remains the world's most dangerous country in which to be a trade unionist. Conference is also very concerned that Britain's free trade agreement with Colombia and its training of Colombian security forces is giving the green light to state violence, while impunity still surrounds most killings of trade unionists and social activists.

National Delegate Conference applauds the vital ongoing work of Colombian women activists to defend human rights, peace and social justice and is extremely concerned about threats against human rights defender Darnelly Rodriguez. Darnelly has met with UNISON members in online meetings organised by Justice for Colombia and she features on a recent UNISON and JFC human rights leaflet, "Silenced: The Murder of Community Activists in Colombia". Threats have twice forced Darnelly from in home. In November 2021, she and other activists received paramilitary threats after documenting police abuses against trade union-led protests that included 43 killings, 28 sexual assaults, over 100 permanent eye injuries and thousands of illegal arrests. Police attacked Darnelly and other activists as they observed detention conditions for protesters and she needed spinal surgery afterwards.

Conference welcomes the fact that UNISON has previously condemned the Colombian government during last year's trade union-led protests in which Darnelly was attacked as she co-ordinated support for victims and documented police abuses in Cali, the worst affected city. In addition to suffering police brutality, Darnelly has received multiple paramilitary death threats, which twice have forced her to leave her home. Darnelly works with the most marginalised communities and to highlight the Colombian government's failure to comply with its obligations to the peace process (which is officially supported by Colombian trade unions as well as the TUC and its member unions, including UNISON) and the protection of human rights.

Conference recognises that the continuing situation of insecurity impacts severely on women as they fight human rights abuses which often manifest themselves in gender-based and sexual violence. In the light of this, Conference believes it is vital to maintain the international spotlight on the country to pressure the Colombian government to take all possible measures to reduce the level of threat and to advance implementation of the peace process.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Call on the UK government to review security and trade partnerships with Colombia in response to human rights abuses;
- 2) Pressure the UK government to demand accountability for perpetrators of state violence and full investigations into killings of trade unionists and social activists;
- 3) Lobby the UK government to demand accountability for state abuses against women activists and to call on the Colombian government to guarantee safety for Darnelly Rodriguez and women activists through implementation of the 2016 peace agreement;

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- 4) Call on the UK government to increase its efforts to support full implementation of the 2016 peace agreement;
- 5) Continue to work within the TUC alongside other affiliates to highlight the extreme dangers faced by trade unionists in Colombia;
- 6) Support the work of Colombian women activists and campaign for their security and rights including the sending of a message of solidarity to Darnelly;
- 7) Encourage all UNISON Branches and Regions to support the vital work of Justice for Colombia by affiliation to the campaign and to send UNISON trade unionists on JFC delegations;
- 8) Call on UNISON Labour Link to take up these issues with both Shadow Ministers and MPs as well as within appropriate Labour Party Committee and Policy Forums.

Isle of Wight Local Government

74. Justice for Colombia

Conference pays tribute to the Colombian people for their commitment to human rights, peace and social justice through trade union-led, national strike protests that have mobilised millions of people.

Conference condemns the horrific abuses against protesters committed by security forces under President Ivan Duque. Research by Justice for Colombia and UNISON has named 962 trade union, social, environmental, Afro-Colombian and Indigenous activists who were murdered between 2017-2020.

Conference further condemns the violent suppression of anti-government protests in 2021. Colombian government ministers made dangerous and unfounded insinuations linking protesters to criminal organisations and legitimising police violence against them.

Colombian trade unionists also face stigmatisation even as they are being killed. According to the International Trade Union Confederation, Colombia remains the world's most dangerous country to be a trade unionist.

Conference is concerned that Britain's free trade agreement with Colombia and its training of Colombian security forces is giving the green light to state violence, while impunity still surrounds most killings of trade unionists and social activists.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Call on the British government to review security and trade partnerships with Colombia in response to human rights abuses;
- 2) Pressure the British government to demand accountability for perpetrators of state violence and full investigations into killings of trade unionists and social activists;
- 3) Lobby the British government to increase its efforts to support full implementation of the 2016 peace agreement;
- 4) Support the vital work of Justice for Colombia by encouraging regional and branch affiliation.

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Manchester

75. Nicaragua - Time to Support

A motion passed by National Delegate Conference in 2013 noted the longstanding friendship between UNISON and Nicaraguan public service trade union UNE and the strengthening of that relationship in recent years. It also applauded the progress made by the Sandinista government since 2007 towards social and economic justice in Nicaragua and recognised the pivotal role that the Nicaragua Solidarity Action Group (NSCAG) has played in maintaining an awareness of Nicaragua's progress both amongst trade unions and the general public, and in facilitating the deepening of the relationship between UNISON and UNE. The motion called for the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Encourage all branches and regions to affiliate to the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign Action Group and promote NSCAG events and campaigns;
- 2) All UNISON regions to develop twinning agreements with UNE regions in Nicaragua.

Conference therefore notes with concern that a decision has been taken at national level to disaffiliate from the NSCAG. The failure of UNISON nationally to renew its affiliation to the NSCAG is not only against policy agreed by Conference but, at a time when international solidarity with Nicaragua is more important than ever, sends a signal to UNISON's sister unions that it no longer wishes to support them.

Nicaragua's national elections in November 2021, where the FSLN and President Ortega were elected with 76 percent of the popular vote, have been met with increased hostility and aggression by the United States who have imposed a raft of punishing sanctions on the country as part of their aim to oust the democratically elected government of the country and replace it with one more to its liking. This is a critical time for Nicaragua as it fights to defend the country's sovereignty and right to self-determination. UNISON's sister unions have reaped the benefits of the social and economic programmes implemented since 2007 by the FSLN government and have no wish to return to the dark days of neo-liberalism with staggering levels of poverty, high unemployment, health and education privatised and public services decimated.

NSCAG is a small organisation which relies almost entirely on trade union support and funding to carry out its work in support of sister unions in Nicaragua. Conference believes that the decision taken at national level not to renew its affiliation to the NSCAG is detrimental not only to the NSCAG but also to our relationship with our Nicaraguan brothers and sisters.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- a) Renew its affiliation to the NSCAG with immediate effect;
- b) Encourage regions and branches to affiliate to NSCAG;
- c) To work closely with NSCAG to explore how relations with sister unions in Nicaragua can be further developed;
- d) Support NSCAG's campaign to defend Nicaragua's sovereignty and right to self-determination;

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- e) Invite a representative from Nicaraguan public sector union UNE to attend Conference in 2023.

Knowsley

76. Solidarity With Zimbabwean Workers

The people of Zimbabwe have endured a deep political, economic and humanitarian crisis for well over two decades; subjected to state repression, deepening poverty and denied the right to decent work and public services by a kleptocratic and corrupt government.

Since the mid 1990s Zimbabwe has experienced amongst the highest rates of inflation and unemployment in the world. Public expenditure has been cut drastically, devastating Zimbabwe's public services, which during the first decade of independence were seen as the best in Africa. Quality of life has deteriorated rapidly for most Zimbabweans as a result of the crisis, forcing millions to leave the country.

As a consequence of the Covid pandemic the situation has deteriorated further, as the government has resorted to increasingly oppressive economic measures, which have hit workers and the poorest hard, in particular women, whilst protecting the interests of the elite.

Conference notes that the ITUC has consistently rated Zimbabwe amongst the ten worst countries in the world for workers, with no guarantee of workers' rights. Fundamental rights including the right to organise and freedom of expression are severely curtailed by repressive laws such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (AIPPA).

Conference congratulates the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) for leading the struggle for workers' and human rights, against an increasingly militarised and repressive government.

Conference condemns these brutal acts, and calls on the Government of Zimbabwe to end its use of violent repression against workers and address their legitimate demands.

Conference is deeply concerned that since President Emmerson Mnangagwa took office, following a military coup, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and several governments are already seizing the opportunity to privatise Zimbabwe's dilapidated public services.

Conference condemns this ideological attack, which will only further entrench corruption and inequality in Zimbabwe and supports trade union demands for the rebuilding of democratically controlled quality public services.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue campaigning against the persecution of trade unionists in Zimbabwe and for the government to repeal repressive legislation and respect the International Labour Organisation's core convention;
- 2) Support ZCTU's demands for end to the economic crisis, and for the payment of workers in US dollars instead of worthless bond notes;

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- 3) Support demands for the rebuilding of democratically controlled quality public services, and oppose IMF, World Bank and UK government attempts to promote privatisation in Zimbabwe;
- 4) Work with Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) and other groups which support call for democracy, human rights and equality for Zimbabwe.

Halton

77. Palestine

Conference notes that the Palestinian people remain under occupation, under siege, in exile or subject to systematic discrimination which, in respects, could amount to the crime of apartheid as defined by the International Criminal Court.

Conference observes that this is only possible because of international support for Israel. Governments do not hold Israel to account. Corporations and institutions all over the world help Israel to oppress Palestinians. Palestinians have called for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS). UNISON was one of the earliest supporters of this global citizens' response of solidarity with the Palestinian struggle.

In keeping with this support, Conference welcomes:

- 1) UNISON's publication of a new version of "Palestine: Is Your Pension Fund Investing in the Occupation? A UNISON Guide to Engaging Your Pension Fund.";
- 2) The Palestine Solidarity Campaign's (PSC's) launch of its "LGPS Divest Campaign" and its continuing work which has included research that found that Local Government Pension Funds have £4.4 billion invested in companies it describes as "complicit in the oppression of Palestinians";
- 3) The United Nations' (UN's) publication of a database of companies involved in Israeli settlements and the call by the UN's Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Palestine, in a letter late last year to local authorities' pension committee chairs, to "accept their international responsibilities and extricate themselves from any direct or indirect involvement with the settlement economy."

Conference notes that the United Kingdom (UK) government tried but failed to introduce regulations to require Local Government Pension Funds to refrain from BDS and to invest in accordance with UK foreign policy. Conference congratulates PSC on its perseverance challenging these regulations to final victory in the Supreme Court in April 2020. However, the UK government now intends to introduce new legislation. Such plans were included in the Conservative manifesto for the 2019 general election and the subsequent Queen's speech. Late last year, Robert Jenrick MP, during an on-line talk hosted by the Leadership Dialogue Institute, said, "what we want to do is pass a piece of legislation... ..which would outlaw BDS in the UK. Within a year or two we should really have an absolute ban on BDS which would really be a great step forward." Asked about this remark, the government confirmed it remains committed to its manifesto pledge.

Conference is concerned that this policy will undermine local democracy by restricting the ability of public bodies, including local government, to purchase, procure and invest ethically in the interests of workers and of the communities they represent. While the proposed legislation is intended to restrict campaigning in support of Palestinian rights, it may also

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hinder UNISON's work in other parts of the world too. Our former partner unions supported boycotts, divestment and sanctions in their campaigning against apartheid in South Africa.

UNISON has made similar calls in the course of campaigning for justice and rights in Western Sahara, Colombia and Burma. All these campaigns would be severely restricted by this policy.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to continue to:

- a) Defend the rights of public bodies to purchase, procure and invest ethically, including by using BDS in support of Palestinian rights;
- b) Support branches to campaign for Local Government Pension Funds to engage in lawful ways with the companies they invest in to demand they end their involvement in the occupied Palestinian territory and the violation of Palestinian rights;
- c) Support BDS in lawful and targeted ways to demand an end to the occupation and to hold the Israeli government to account for its violations of Palestinian rights and international law.

City of Wolverhampton

78. Palestine

Conference welcomes the comprehensive Amnesty International report, Israel's Apartheid against Palestinians: Cruel System of Domination and Crime against Humanity, which sets out how massive seizures of Palestinian land and property, unlawful killings, forcible transfer, drastic movement restrictions, and the denial of nationality and citizenship to Palestinians are all components of a system which amounts to apartheid under international law. This system is maintained by violations which Amnesty International found to constitute apartheid as a crime against humanity, as defined in the Rome Statute and Apartheid Convention. This report also reinforces the findings of apartheid by the Israeli Human Rights organisation B'Tselem.

Conference supports Amnesty's call on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to consider the crime of apartheid in its current investigation in the OPT and its call on all states to exercise universal jurisdiction to bring perpetrators of apartheid crimes to justice.

The current threat to formally annex the West Bank follows many years of 'de facto' annexation, during which the Israeli government has continued to colonise Palestinian land by expanding the illegal settlements, restricting access to land and natural resources and displacing the Palestinian population.

Conference notes that the demolition of Palestinian homes and property, and the building of settlements continues at an unprecedented rate. Settlements are illegal under international law, contribute to de facto annexation and render unviable any Palestinian state alongside Israel.

Conference believes that corporations that do business in and with the settlements are contributing to a grave violation of international law, and welcomes the United Nations Human Rights Council database, listing some of the business enterprises involved in or with the illegal settlements. Conference calls on the United Nations to expand the database to

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include all corporations involved in and with the settlements and the violation of Palestinian human rights, and for the UK government to ensure that all corporate enterprises regulated by them cease doing business with the Israeli settlements or face sanction.

Conference is deeply concerned by the Conservative government's plans to introduce new laws to restrict calls for Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) and stop public institutions from imposing their own approach or views about international relations, through preventing BDS campaigns against foreign countries and those who trade with them". This policy will undermine local democracy, by restricting the ability of public bodies, including local government, to purchase, procure and invest ethically, in the interest of workers and the communities they represent.

Conference notes that UNISON was one of the first trade unions in Europe to respond to the call from Palestinian civil society, including trade unions, by passing a BDS policy, and reaffirms its support for BDS as a practical way to force the Israeli government to end the occupation and colonisation of Palestinian land, dismantle the Wall, recognise the fundamental rights of Palestinians in Israel and the occupied territory and the right of refugees to return.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Encourage distribution of and discussion on the new Guide for UNISON activists 'Talking about Palestinian Rights';
- 2) Support the call for action on apartheid to the International Criminal Court;
- 3) Continue to oppose the annexation of Palestinian land by the government of Israel;
- 4) Work with the European Trade Union Network for Justice for Palestine to call for the United Nations Human Rights Council database to be expanded to all business enterprises involved in the settlements, and for states to take measures to end corporate complicity with the illegal settlements;
- 5) Support branches to campaign for Local Government Pension funds to engage with the companies they invest in and to demand they end their involvement in the occupied Palestinian territory and in the violation of Palestinian human rights;
- 6) Defend the right of public bodies to purchase, procure and invest ethically, including by using BDS in support of Palestinian rights;
- 7) Continue supporting BDS to demand an end to the occupation and hold the Israeli government accountable for its violations of Palestinian rights and of international law.

Royal Victoria Hospital Belfast and Muckamore Abbey

79. Defending Workers' Rights in Turkey

Conference is deeply concerned by the continued erosion of workers' and human rights in Turkey and the increasingly authoritarian rule of President Recep Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). Turkey remains one of the 10 worst countries in the world for workers, according to the ITUC, due to the brutal repression of strikes, the harassment of trade unionists and systematic use of union busting.

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Conference notes that since the Gezi Park protests in 2013, when security forces brutally crushed nationwide protests, arresting thousands and injuring many more, the government has imposed increasingly draconian restrictions to curtail fundamental freedoms and rights. The situation deteriorated significantly following the failed coup in July 2016, when a two year state of emergency was introduced, under which President Erdogan introduced dozens of decrees and made hundreds of changes to legislation. Turkey's Parliament has also repeatedly approved legislation to retain restrictive state of emergency laws which further curtail rights.

Conference is concerned that many of the 150,000 public service workers dismissed during the state of emergency continue to be denied justice by the State of Emergency Inquiry Commission. Conference calls for all who were unfairly dismissed and falsely accused of terrorist offences to be reinstated and compensated for the grave injustice they have endured.

Conference notes that democracy in Turkey has been fundamentally undermined following the controversial 2017 referendum which awarded President Erdogan extraordinary powers to rule by decree, seriously limited the ability of parliament to hold the president to account and eroded the independence of the judiciary. Democracy has been further damaged by systematic attacks on opposition parties, including attempts to close down the People's Democratic Party (HDP), Turkey's second largest opposition party. Over 4,000 members, officials and MPs from the party have been imprisoned, whilst 48 elected mayors from the south-east have dismissed and replaced by government trustees.

Conference condemns the repression of trade unions by the government of Turkey, noting in particular the government attacks against the progressive trade union federations KESK and DISK. Conference welcomes UNISON's solidarity with the dozens of trade union leaders and activists facing protracted trials and falsely accused of terrorist offences, simply for defending workers' rights, and calls on the National Executive Council to continue this important work.

Severe limits on the right to strike, draconian legislation restricting freedom of association and police crackdowns against protests have further undermined trade union rights at a time when neoliberal economic policies have resulted in repeated economic crises and spiralling rates of inflation, aggressive privatisation of public services and deepening poverty and inequality.

Conference condemns the presidential decree to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, overturning the unanimous decision of Turkey's parliament to be the first country to ratify the convention. The withdrawal took place against the backdrop of an extraordinary increase in femicide and violence against women, exacerbated by dangerous government rhetoric and attacks on women's rights. Conference stands in solidarity with progressive trade unions and women's organisations who bravely continue to lead the struggle for women's rights in Turkey and condemns government attempts to silence them by alleging they have links to terrorist organisations.

Conference is concerned that these attacks have extended to all those perceived not to support the AKP government, including human rights defenders, academics, journalists and particularly the Kurdish population. The AKP government's formal coalition with the ultra-

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nationalist, far right Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) has accelerated the deterioration of rights, further polarised the country, undermined the prospects of peace in the south-east of the country and contributed towards an aggressive foreign policy.

Conference also notes Turkey's continued military aggression targeting Kurdish populations in the neighbouring states of Syria and Iraq and the civilian casualties involved in attacks on a UN refugee camp and hospital. Further Turkey has threatened military action in the Eastern Mediterranean around Greek and Cypriot waters.

In this context of the rapid erosion of democracy, human and workers' rights and the rule of law, conference is deeply concerned by the decision of the UK government to pursue closer diplomatic and economic relations with Turkey, including by signing a trade deal with the government in December 2020 which failed to acknowledge or mitigate these issues. Conference welcomes the joint statement by KESK, DISK and the TUC, calling for the trade deal to be suspended until issues of human rights and labour standards have been addressed.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign against the attacks on trade union leaders and defend those accused of terrorist offences for their legitimate trade union work, including by monitoring, observing and responding to trials;
- 2) Support trade union calls for the reinstatement of, and compensation for, public service workers dismissed during the state of emergency;
- 3) Support trade union demands for decent work, the implementation of ILO conventions, quality public services and an end to privatisation;
- 4) Call for the suspension of the UK Turkey trade agreement until issues of human rights and labour standards have been addressed and demand any future deal includes enforceable commitments for Turkey to respect human and workers' rights;
- 5) Urge the UK government to use its significant leverage with the government of Turkey to call for human and workers' rights including the reinstatement of the Istanbul Convention, the release of political prisoners, including Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan, reinstatement of the peace process with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and for free and fair elections.

South Lanarkshire

Equalities

80. CEDAW – Essential for Women's Rights

Conference recognises that CEDAW, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, is significant in the international human rights framework because it is exclusively devoted to gender equality. It is one of the core international human rights treaties of the UN and it requires countries that have ratified it to undertake legal obligations to respect, protect and fulfil women's human rights.

Countries that have ratified CEDAW, including the UK which ratified it in 1986, are expected to work towards implementation of its provisions and must submit a report, usually every four

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years, to the CEDAW Committee, the UN Committee which monitors the implementation of CEDAW, giving a report of their progress.

The Committee examines the measures implemented by the country to comply with its obligations under the Convention and then releases a report with its findings, called 'concluding observations', and recommendations for concrete steps to enable the realisation of women's rights.

Following the last review of the UK in 2019, the Committee produced a report which concluded that the UK is still not compliant with the Convention, and its Concluding Observations listed concerns and recommendations under 17 themes for the UK Government to address before the next monitoring round in 2023.

Some of the recommendations were reiterated from previous reviews in 2009, 2013 and in 2018, including a recommendation for the UK government to incorporate CEDAW into domestic law throughout all territories under its jurisdiction.

The government's response was that it did not agree that it needed to incorporate all the provisions of CEDAW into domestic legislation 'because women and girl's rights under CEDAW are already largely covered under domestic legislation such as the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act'.

However, the manifestos of the Scottish National Party and the Welsh Labour Party for the May 2021 devolved Parliamentary elections committed them to introducing the CEDAW convention into Scottish and Welsh law, and work is already underway in both Scotland and Wales on draft legislation.

Further, the CEDAW People's Tribunal, a civil society initiative, conducted a hearing over three days in June 2021 that examined the case for the UK to introduce CEDAW into domestic legislation, and published its 252 page report in September. The report includes comprehensive proposals backed up by research on a very wide range of areas to improve the rights of women. It provides a 'blueprint' for a Women's Bill of Rights to transform national law and law in different parts of the UK to end all forms of discrimination against women and to properly implement CEDAW.

Conference recognises that these positive developments have opened up a new basis for campaigning for the incorporation of CEDAW into domestic legislation, and it welcomes the adoption by the 2021 Labour Link Forum of a motion that called on the Labour Link National Committee to campaign for the Labour Party to take a policy position that is in favour of the implementation of CEDAW into domestic legislation and to develop a campaign to pressurise the government to do so.

Conference therefore asks the National Executive Council to work with National Women's Committee to:

- 1) Develop a campaign for the implementation of CEDAW into domestic legislation, working with other organisations as appropriate;
- 2) Raise these issues with Labour Link and seek to develop a campaign for the Labour Party to support implementation of CEDAW into domestic legislation and a campaign to pressurise the government to do so.

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National Women's Committee

81. Incorporate CEDAW into Domestic Legislation

CEDAW is the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women, also called the International Bill of Rights for Women.

CEDAW provides an international framework for States to take responsibility for tackling discrimination against women and achieving substantive equality for women in both the private and public spheres. It outlines a set of rights of women in a variety of areas including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It is the first human rights treaty to affirm the reproductive rights of women.

The Convention was adopted by the UN Assembly in 1979 and entered into force as an international treaty in 1981. The UK ratified CEDAW in 1986. By ratifying, the UK committed to the articles, rights and procedures within it. This means that the UK committed to eliminate discrimination against women in all aspects of life and to protect, promote and fulfil the human rights of women under all circumstances.

The Convention is overseen and monitored by a UN committee of 23 experts on women's rights from around the world. The committee is known as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (the CEDAW Committee). State Parties must report to the Committee who examine the measures implemented by the country to comply with its obligations under the Convention. The Committee meets twice a year and countries are examined on a rolling basis, approximately every four years.

In 2019, the UK government attended a hearing in Geneva with the Committee of the Convention on how we are complying with the Convention. Following that hearing, the Committee produced a series of concluding observations, listing concerns and recommendations under 17 themes for the UK government to address until the next monitoring round in March 2023. One of the key recommendations was for the UK to incorporate CEDAW into domestic law throughout all territories under its jurisdiction. This would give CEDAW, the rights of women, more teeth in the UK.

Conference, UNISON's membership is majority women. We are seeing the rights of women be undermined again and again by our government. We need all the tools available to help us to protect our human rights and we should be ones leading this campaign for the vital protection of our women.

Conference we call on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with National Labour Link and the national women's committee to develop a comprehensive campaign for the implementation of CEDAW into domestic legislation;
- 2) Work with Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) on developing a training and awareness package on CEDAW for activists and members;
- 3) Report back to National Delegates Conference 2023 on progress made.

EDF Energy (Doxford)

82. Incorporate CEDAW into Domestic Legislation

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CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women) provides an international framework for States to take responsibility for tackling discrimination against women and achieving substantive equality for women in both the private and public spheres. It outlines a set of rights of women in a variety of areas including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It is the first human rights treaty to affirm the reproductive rights of women.

The Convention was adopted by the UN Assembly in 1979 and entered into force as an international treaty in 1981. The UK ratified CEDAW in 1986. By ratifying, the UK committed to the articles, rights and procedures within it. This means that the UK committed to eliminate discrimination against women in all aspects of life and to protect, promote and fulfil the human rights of women under all circumstances.

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- 2) Work with Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) on developing a training and awareness package on CEDAW for activists and members;
- 3) Report back to National Delegates Conference 2023 on progress made.

North Cumbria Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Health

83. Challenging Sexism and Misogyny - Protecting Women

Conference notes with alarm and shock the report from the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), into the abhorrent and discriminatory workplace culture at Charing Cross Police Station that was published on 1 February 2022. The report identified the exchange of hateful and offensive messages between a group of 19 police officers.

Numerous messages were exchanged via Facebook and WhatsApp and included:

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- 1) One officer telling a female colleague “I would happily rape you ... if I was single ... if I was single I would happily chloroform you.”;
- 2) Another advocating violence to get a “woman in bed”;
- 3) Several officers pledging to attend a festival dressed as known sex offenders;
- 4) Officers boasting about perpetrating acts of domestic violence on their partners;
- 5) One officer bragging about visiting a sex worker when he was on steroids.

The IOPC report further identified a workplace where colleagues feared challenging poor conduct or whistleblowing as they believed managers would not take complaints seriously or protect them from reprisals. The police watchdog noted the offensive messages and bullying was rooted in culture: “We believe these incidents are not isolated or simply the behaviour of a few ‘bad apples’.”

One police officer has been promoted since the incidents - after he was reprimanded for not reporting the inappropriate messages that he received.

The IOPC has ongoing investigations in two forces, Kent and the Metropolitan Police, over whether they missed chances to identify Wayne Couzens as a potential threat to women before he kidnapped and murdered Sarah Everard.

Conference recognises that not all police officers hold misogynistic views but the impact of even a small minority of officers on their colleagues and the communities they are employed to serve, must not be underestimated.

Conference commends the leadership shown by the Police and Justice Service Group in recent years. In 2018 they published the results of a major survey of sexual harassment in police forces in England, Scotland and Wales, undertaken in partnership with the London School of Economics (LSE). The survey results showed that police staff were the subject of extensive and on-going sexual harassment in the workplace, including exposure to dirty jokes, unwelcome touching, repeated requests to go on dates, promises of job advancement in return for sexual favours and in some cases sexual assault. UNISON and Professor Jennifer Brown from the LSE presented the results of the survey to National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) which launched the NPCC ‘Knowing the Line’ campaign to tackle sexual harassment in 2019. Recent events have shown that the police service continues to have a major problem with sexism, misogyny, and sexual harassment in its workforce. The SGE is again working with the NPCC on a new Sexual Harassment Working Party to seek to tackle this pernicious, on-going stain on the reputation of the service. There must be a zero-tolerance policy to sexual harassment in policing.

Conference further notes:

- a) Misogyny and bullying of women must be challenged every time it appears;
- b) Existing policy of UNISON Women's Conference is clear that women complaining of sexual harassment should be believed and supported;
- c) The conduct of police officers at Charing Cross station reflects attitudes in wider society where women's dignity and safety are trivialised and demeaned;

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- d) The Metropolitan Police is not the only police force with employees that demonstrate such behaviour;
- e) Women police staff have an absolute right to work in workplaces free from sexism and free from colleagues that demonstrate sexist and misogynistic attitudes, in or out of work;
- f) All public service employers must redouble efforts to ensure women that work for them or use their services can do so without fear of discrimination or harassment;
- g) UNISON branches have a key role in ensuring employers are held to account about what they are, or are not, doing to stamp out sexual harassment, discrimination and misogyny.

Conference is clear that like any other organisation, UNISON should not be complacent, and all activists must be eternally vigilant and call out any incident of sexism or misogyny that they experience or witness. Any member that does should know that their union supports them.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- i) Work with each Service Group Executive and develop clear action plans setting out how UNISON can do everything in its powers to eliminate sexism and misogyny in members' workplaces;
- ii) Make a public statement that they are opposed to sexual harassment, discrimination, and misogyny wherever it rears its ugly head and make it clear that action will be taken against any member who is found to perpetrate such behaviour;
- iii) Provide guidance to all members of the National Executive Council, Service Group Executives, and Regional Convenor teams on how to act as champions of anti-discriminatory practice and not to act in a way that could be perceived as belittling, downplaying or obfuscating reports of sexual harassment from women members of our union.

Bedfordshire Police

84. End Misogyny and Violence against Women

This conference supports women in their fight against misogyny, aggression, harassment & violence against women in society. We have seen an increase in this behaviour nationally and locally towards female Members of Parliament, Councillors and elected officials and staff.

Recent cases such as the Goodwillie, Mendy, Greenwood and the Met Police highlight the struggle women have when raising issues; this lead to low conviction rates and feeling of isolation and lack of support when raising these issues.

We have seen elected members facing increased aggression, with women facing harassment especially via social media, for example, MP's such as Diane Abbott, Angela Rayner and Dr Rosena Allin Khan. Recent cases in Kent, for example, where trade union members who are councillors were subject to ridicule and misogyny from Tory councillors when raising the issue of cuts to Universal Credit, which was widely reported in local and national media. This was seen by UNISON members and widely condemned.

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We have watched televised council meetings where misogynistic comments have been aimed at Labour councillors dismissed as banter and the political cut and thrust of politics. In meetings where UNISON members must work.

If this behaviour is seen as "banter" or "cut and thrust of politics" when it involves such high-profile women, what message does it send to our members working in local government, many who will have experienced such behaviours and unfortunately some who may be the perpetrators.

This behaviour should not be tolerated in any organisation, whether political parties, trade unions, local government, the police, NHS or any other employer. When women members raise complaints against such behaviours, they should never feel unsupported and alone.

We call upon UNISON to join the campaign to make misogyny a hate crime

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Support members, particularly women members, who raise complaints against such behaviour so that they never feel unsupported or isolated;
- 2) To support branches when complaints are raised against employers, so our members are not victimised;
- 3) To survey members to identify patterns and concerns that women have in the workplace and report back to the next National Delegate Conference on a strategy to support women who experience such behaviour;
- 4) Demand that the standards we expect of employers are upheld in our own union and ask National Executive Council to report back on how they are achieving this within UNISON and report back to National Delegate Conference next year.

Kent

85. No Place for Sexist Bullies

Conference notes with outrage the report published by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) into the abhorrent and discriminatory workplace culture at Charing Cross Police Station, with 19 Police Officers sending and receiving misogynistic, coercive, bullying and offensive messages via social media advocating violence and abuse against women.

Conference further notes:

- 1) That the report identifies institutionalised misogyny in the Charing Cross police station;
- 2) That the WhatsApp messages referred to in the report are disgusting and referred to women in utterly degrading and exceptionally unacceptable ways;
- 3) That the comments and behaviours of the police officers at Charing Cross police station were not isolated from wider society;
- 4) That women face such comments and attitudes every day, in the workplace, outside of the workplace, and sadly in our own union;

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- 5) That this kind of misogyny and bullying of women must be challenged whenever and wherever it rears its ugly head, especially when it happens in our own union.

Conference also recognises that not all Police Officers share the views of those at Charing Cross, the majority value women, the roles they perform within Policing, the wider work environment and wider society.

Our union is no different to any workplace, the majority of our members are women and abuse of one in any form is abuse to all, our union must stamp out such behaviours and support women who face such behaviours from within.

Conference therefore request that the National Executive Council:

- a) Send a public message of support to the women affected in the Charing Cross case and publish that message on the National UNISON website;
- b) Make a public statement on the UNISON website that UNISON is opposed to misogyny and sexist bullying of women and will not tolerate such behaviour within our union;
- c) Commit to all our members that their union will take a firm action against any lay member who is guilty of such behaviour, regardless of the office they hold in our union;
- d) That a copy of all published messages and statements are sent to every branch;
- e) Work with UNISON's Women's Committee on a campaign to stamp out misogyny, sexist bullying and harassment and coercive behaviours in our union and the workplaces where we organise.

Lancashire Police

86. No Place for Sexist Bullies

Conference notes:

- 1) The horrific reports of institutional misogyny detailed in the report of the Independent Police Complaints Authority investigation into the Charing Cross police station published earlier this year;
- 2) That the WhatsApp messages referred to in the report are disgusting and referred to women in utterly degrading and unacceptable ways;
- 3) That the comments and behaviour of the Police Officers at Charing Cross police station were not isolated from wider society;
- 4) Women face such comments and attitudes every day, in the workplace, outside of the workplace, and sadly in our own union;
- 5) This kind of misogyny and bullying of women must be challenged whenever and wherever it rears its ugly head, especially when it happens in our own union.

Conference also recognises that not all Police Officers share the views of those at Charing Cross, the majority value women, the roles they perform within Policing, the wider work environment and wider society.

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Our union is no different, the majority of our members are women and abuse of one in any form to one is abuse to all, our union must stamp out such behaviour and support women who face such behaviour from within our union.

Conference therefore direct the National Executive Council to:

- a) Send a public message of support to the women affected in the Charing Cross case and put that message on the National UNISON website;
- b) Make a public statement on the UNISON website that UNISON is opposed to misogyny and sexist bullying of women and will not tolerate such behaviour anywhere but particularly within our union;
- c) Commit to all our members that their union will take firm action against any member who is guilty of such behaviour, regardless of the office they hold in our union;
- d) Copy all messages and statements and send them to every branch;
- e) Work with UNISON's Women's Committee on a campaign to stamp out misogyny, sexist bullying and harassment and abusive behaviour in our union and the workplaces in which we recruit and organise.

North Yorkshire

87. Review of the Equality Act

Conference notes that the Equality Act 2010 has now been in place for over ten years and despite both the House of Lords and the United Nations stating that it fails disabled people there are still no plans for a review. The government's recent Disability Strategy, published on 31 July last year, is a very thin document made up of re-heated promises and very little additional funding. Even worse, as far as Disabled Members are concerned, it does not include a commitment to updating the Equality Act.

Unsurprisingly, the government's Disability Strategy has now been found to be illegal and based on an illegal consultation.

As one of the founder members of the coalition which has developed it, UNISON believes the new Disability and Employment Charter should replace the government's discredited disability strategy and be the basis for our campaigning.

Since the Equality Act's implementation the world has changed significantly with Covid-19 being just one major event that has impacted on the lives of our Disabled Members.

Since Brexit, equality legislation that came from the European Union has been transferred into domestic law but there is no guarantee that this won't be repealed as the government review their position EU law.

Some sections of the Equality Act such as dual discrimination have never made it onto the statute books leaving some Disabled Members at increased risk of discrimination. A 2021 government response to a consultation on sexual harassment in the workplace mentioned looking at protections against third party harassment in the workplace by customers, contractors and members of the public for example, but no concrete steps have been taken and it seems unlikely this will happen any time soon. In the same consultation response, the

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government rejected calls to reintroduce the repealed power of Employment Tribunals to make broader recommendations such as requiring an employer to make reasonable adjustments.

Other groups, such as carers, still have no legal rights or protection against discrimination under the Equality Act except in relation to discrimination by association.

Conference calls on National Executive Council to work with the National Disabled Members Committee and Labour Link to:

- 1) Campaign for a full independent review of the Equality Act 2010 which involves meaningful consultation with disabled people and considers whether there are other groups, such as carers, who need to be offered additional protection;
- 2) Lobby for the parts of the Equality Bill that were never implemented to be revisited, reviewed and brought into law;
- 3) Support the TUC campaign to fully implement all Equality Act provisions including the socio-economic duty, dual and multiple discrimination and the publication of impact assessments;
- 4) Campaign for the introduction of protection against third party harassment in the workplace as a matter of urgency;
- 5) Campaign for the Disability and Employment Charter to be recognised as the starting point for radically improving the government's Disability Strategy, which should be based on robust consultation with disabled people and should include improved support for disabled people to enforce their rights, including the right to reasonable adjustments, provided by the Equality Act.

National Disabled Members' Committee

88. Still Fighting for Equality

Conference notes that since the landmark 1975 Sex Discrimination Act and 1976 Race Relations Act, and the subsequent legislative victories won for Disabled, LGBT+ and other people with protected characteristics such as age and religion or belief, we are still fighting for true equality.

Women, Black people, disabled people and LGBT+ people still face concrete ceilings in the workplace and discrimination within our communities. The gender, disability and race disparity pay gaps, inaccessible work, harassment and bullying, occupational segregation and reduced career opportunities continue to be the everyday experience of too many of our members.

Covid-19 exposed many of these underlying structural problems.

Conference notes that our hard won legal rights are now under attack from right wing groups who strive to characterise these victories as having gone too far. There have been attempts to use the struggle for equality and justice as a cause for grievance and resentment from those who are perceived as not sharing these protected characteristics, even though these rights benefit everyone.

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UNISON has always been a leader in speaking for equality, justice and fairness in our workplace, our trade union movement and in our society.

Conference believes that not only should we defend our gains but we must campaign positively to redress longstanding inequalities and injustices in our workplace.

Conference believes our role is needed more than ever as Boris Johnson's Tory government in Westminster seeks to roll back equality and trade union protections.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign with our Self Organised Groups and Labour Link against any legislative attacks on equality rights both in Westminster and in our communities;
- 2) Work with regions and branches to share good practice and ensure equality remains on the trade union organising, bargaining and negotiating agenda;
- 3) Raise these issues with the TUC, Scottish TUC, Welsh TUC and Irish Congress of Trade Unions to ensure they are addressed across the trade union movement and the devolved nations.

Norfolk Community Health

89. Trans Equality – Louder and Prouder!

The toxic debate ignited by the government's consultation on reforming the Gender Recognition Act underlined the importance of our union supporting and representing trans members effectively.

Attacks on trans people have escalated further over the last year. There has been a sustained attack on Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme and repeated false claims that Stonewall is misinterpreting the Equality Act's protected characteristic of gender reassignment in its advice to organisations. Attacks are being coordinated to undermine support for Stonewall's work on LGBT+ equality at work.

The tactics being used, particularly the vilification of trans women, 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.

In January 2022 the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) issued two public statements, in response to plans to legislate for a ban on conversion therapy in England and Wales, and Gender Recognition Act reform in Scotland, which effectively seek to exclude trans people from improved rights and protections. Following this, a coalition of 19 LGBT+ organisations led by Stonewall made a detailed submission to the UN Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions stating their belief that the EHRC no longer meets the minimum international requirements of a top tier national Human Rights institution and calling for a special review of the EHRC's 'A' rating.

Further, 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 and the religious-right.

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Conference notes that:

- 1) 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”;
- 2) 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.”;
- 3) Some anti-trans individuals and groups in the United Kingdom have links with far right and alt right religious groups in the US and elsewhere;
- 4) 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 now needs to become more visible and more vocal – be louder and prouder - in promoting trans equality.

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

- a) Explore ways to increase the strength and visibility of UNISON’s work to promote Trans equality inside and outside the union;
- b) Continue to promote Trans ally training;
- c) Encourage branches to urge employers to become members of the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme if they are not already members;
- d) Produce and promote materials to help members counter the gender critical narrative and provide information on the links with the far right and the religious right;
- e) Continue to campaign for reform of the GRA.

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender plus Committee

Decentralisation

90. Devolution Protocol

Conference notes that National Delegate Conference in June 2019 passed Motion 110 calling for the National Executive Council to review the devolution protocol which was put in place following the decision of the 2004 National Delegate Conference. The 2004 conference also amended the UNISON Rule Book to provide the National Executive Council with “powers to issue a protocol on devolved administration and union governance” (Rule D2.9.5). The National Executive Council has the power to “issue a protocol on devolved administration and union governance” under rule D2.11.5.

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Conference notes that devolution in Northern Ireland operates in a unique environment having developed as a consequence of the peace process. Established under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 following the Good Friday Agreement, conference notes that devolved Government in Northern Ireland operates within a multi-party, mandatory power-sharing Executive in which policies, programmes and budgets have to be developed on a cross-party basis.

Conference also notes the developments in devolution in Northern Ireland since 2004. These have included the St Andrews Agreement in 2006 and the subsequent restoration of the Assembly and Executive in 2007; the expansion of the powers of the Assembly and Executive with the devolution of policing and justice powers in 2010; numerous political crises around power-sharing, culminating in the collapse of the Executive and Assembly in 2017; and the restoration of the Executive and Assembly in 2020 following the New Decade, New Approach agreement, with a major factor being the industrial action undertaken by UNISON members across health and social services for pay parity and safe staffing. Conference notes that at the time of writing, Northern Ireland is due to have Assembly elections in May, with uncertainty as to whether a new Executive will be formed following the election and as to how the Assembly will operate in the new mandate.

Conference recalls that the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly have devolved powers in relation to workers' rights and equality, uniquely across the devolved administrations and the ability to mitigate on welfare. Conference further notes the impact that the UK's exit from the EU has had on the operation of devolution within Northern Ireland, with the Assembly now required under the Northern Ireland Protocol to vote on the trade provisions at regular intervals.

Conference notes that although UK wide issues such as overall levels of public spending provide the backdrop to negotiations it is important to remember that for the majority of members in areas within devolved government, such as all members working within health and social care in Northern Ireland, they will have their terms and conditions bargained at the devolved level.

This has profound implications for the union in areas with devolved administrations. It requires the support of a resourced bargaining and policy development machinery based in the devolved regions across huge areas and almost all service groups. Our Health and Local Government service groups progress UNISON UK claims and campaigns on the pay bargaining agenda in the context of the Northern Ireland Executive pay policy. There is a wider plethora of regionally based and employer-based negotiations across private social care providers (with a devolved regional Fair Work Forum to be established), education, the community and voluntary sector and further education.

In addition, Conference notes that a wide range of policy interventions, campaigns and communications output must be undertaken at the Northern Ireland level on a diverse range of issues such as the Executive budget and Programme for Government, safe staffing within health and social care, opposing privatisation of the health service, delivering ethical care, calling for free school meals for all, protecting the gains of the peace process and securing delivery on unimplemented commitments on equality and human rights.

Conference acknowledges, however, that the experience of the union in the devolved administrations has been that it is required to respond to policy initiatives and differing

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political and legislative developments from the wider UK and has therefore had to develop policy positions which reflect that.

Conference notes that the work of reviewing the devolution protocol agreed by the 2019 National Delegate Conference is not yet complete and calls on the National Executive Council to complete that review with the aim of bringing forward an up-to-date devolution protocol.

Conference notes the resourcing implications in having to maintain separate bargaining and policy development structures in areas with devolved administrations and resolves that it will be a priority for the union to ensure that these areas are adequately funded.

Northern Ireland Region

91. Devolution Protocol

Conference notes that National Delegate Conference in June 2019 passed Motion 110 calling for the National Executive Council to review the Devolution Protocol which was put in place following the decision of the 2004 National Delegate Conference. The 2004 Conference also amended the UNISON Rule Book to provide the National Executive Council with “powers to issue a protocol on devolved administration and union governance” (Rule D 2.9.5). The National Executive Council has the power to “issue a protocol on devolved administration and union governance” under Rule D 2.11.5.

Conference also notes the developments in devolution since the drafting of the 2004 Devolution Protocol; these have included the expansion of powers of the Scottish Parliament through the Scotland Act 2012, and Scotland Act 2016, the direct law making ability acquired by the Senedd through the Government of Wales Act 2007 and recent attempts by the Conservative government in Westminster to undermine devolution arrangements through the Internal Market Act.

Conference notes that although UK wide issues such as overall levels of public spending provide the backdrop to negotiations it is important to remember that for the majority of members in areas with devolved government the majority of UNISON members, over 90 percent in the case of Scotland, will have their terms and conditions bargained at the devolved level, (including main bargaining groups in Local Government, NHS Scotland, Further Education).

This has profound implications for the union in areas with devolved administrations. It requires the support a bargaining and policy development machinery across huge areas, almost all service groups and respond to devolved administrations and the need for that work to be resourced. UNISON Scotland’s Health and Local Government Committees and the UNISON Scotland Further Education Branch develop national claims and campaigns annually on the pay bargaining agenda in the context of the Scottish Government pay policy. There is a wider plethora of employer based negotiations in Police Scotland, Fire and Rescue, Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) and Social Care, together with the policy output and programme of government of an entire national government, and bargaining support in all Scotland's public services.

Conference acknowledges, however, that the experience of the union in the devolved nations has been that it is required to respond to policy initiatives and differing political and

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legislative developments from the wider UK and has therefore had to develop policy positions which reflect that.

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Conference notes the resourcing implications in having to maintain separate bargaining and policy development structures of areas with devolved administrations and resolves that it will be a priority for the union to ensure that these areas are adequately funded.

Scotland Region

Northern Ireland

92. Peace and Human Rights

Conference notes the recent proposed actions of the UK Government in relation to human rights protections that could have detrimental consequences not only for our members in Northern Ireland and the Peace Agreement, but also with wider consequences across the UK.

This includes proposals for an amnesty in relation to the legacy of the conflict in Northern Ireland, including introducing a statute of limitations and ending all other judicial activity and inquiry, including civil cases and inquests. Conference notes that these proposals have been rejected by many victims and survivors of the conflict. Conference is acutely aware of the scale of loss and human suffering experienced by victims and survivors and is concerned that these proposals will only add to their pain and suffering. Conference believes that victims and survivors deserve at the very least the prospect of truth, justice and accountability for the harm caused to them, regardless of the perpetrators. Conference agrees that these proposals will undermine the commitment to human rights and the rule of law that is at the core of the peace process.

Conference further notes that the UK government seeks to replace the Human Rights Act with a weaker 'Bill of Rights', an even more disturbing proposal when we recall that the UK is a founder member of the Council of Europe and one of the chief architects of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Conference is opposed to the replacement of the Act and any weakening of the rights protections afforded to all our members.

Conference recalls that the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into Northern Ireland law is a core provision of the Good Friday Agreement, and is currently provided for via the Human Rights Act. UNISON Northern Ireland has supported the submissions made by the Human Rights Centre at Queen's University Belfast and the Committee on the Administration of Justice to the Independent Human Rights Act review, which state that it is neither necessary or appropriate to change the operation of the Human Rights Act in Northern Ireland, that this would contravene the Good Friday Agreement and present risks to the wider peace settlement.

Conference is further concerned that the proposals advanced by the UK government to replace the Human Rights Act with a Bill of Rights will conflict with the commitment to non-

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diminution of rights under Article Two of the Northern Ireland Protocol, and will interfere with the long overdue introduction of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

Conference notes that once again the Northern Ireland Executive has collapsed leaving us without a Programme for Government and shelving the proposed three year budget with adverse consequences for public services and our members' jobs and pay. At the time of writing, the NI Assembly Election 2022 is scheduled for May 2022, with uncertainty about the formation of a new Executive following the election.

Conference supports the determination of our members to give voice to the major issues affecting them during the Assembly election campaign. Conference recalls the consistent position taken by the union in support of genuine power sharing in Northern Ireland, as a major outworking of the Good Friday Agreement and peace process.

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

Conference recalls the decision the Northern Ireland Regional Council took at the outset of UNISON, and reaffirmed at the 2021 Northern Ireland Regional Council that the union in Northern Ireland would not affiliate to or align with any political party. Consequently we seek to secure support for the UNISON manifesto from all candidates across all parties.

Conference notes that the core demands, framed by our members, include:

- 1) That all parties in the Executive share power within a framework of equality and human rights and support the implementation by Government at Westminster of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland;
- 2) That there is 'No Going Back' to the austerity measures of the past and that there is a new deal for public spending to improve the social and economic outcomes of all to aid recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic;
- 3) That sustained levels of poverty and deprivation are addressed by proper social security provision and investment based on objective need;
- 4) That the Executive implements the Feminist Recovery Plan, addressing gender inequality and recognising the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women;
- 5) That the commitments already made within 'New Decade, New Approach' to protect workers' rights, including to pay the real living wage and end zero-hours contracts, be immediately and fully implemented and that workers' rights are protected from the effects of exiting the EU;
- 6) That funding for our education system is reformed to target objective need and inequality of outcomes and that academic selection is finally abolished;
- 7) That universal, nutritious, free school meals for all pupils are made a reality, to combat poverty and improve child health and development outcomes;
- 8) That a full Anti Poverty Strategy based on objective need is finally put in place;

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- 9) That a fully resourced Childcare Strategy is finally delivered and that we have a childcare system that is affordable, accessible, offers high quality provision and recognises the value of the childcare workforce through decent pay and terms and conditions;
- 10) That in tackling the climate emergency facing our planet, there is a full commitment to a 'Just Transition';
- 11) That cuts made over many years to the Supporting People programme are reversed, and that UNISON members working across the community and voluntary sector are valued and recognised;
- 12) That there is a significant, cross governmental approach to eliminating health inequalities that tackles low pay, precarious work, poor housing and discrimination in housing provision and which creates real jobs for the long term unemployed in areas of the highest deprivation;
- 13) That there is radical reform of health and social care that puts the rights of patients, service users and the workforce front and centre. Increased investment in pay, recruitment and retention must be guaranteed and the exploitation of the workforce across social care must be ended through the new Social Care Fair Work Forum. Safe Staffing legislation should be introduced without delay and outsourcing and privatisation must cease, with services being brought back 'in-house'.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council:

- a) To support and resource the Northern Ireland region in its ongoing political engagement and campaigning on the core issues affecting our members, their families and their communities;
- b) Through Labour Link to seek manifesto commitments to reverse the attack on the Human Rights Act, scrap the proposed amnesty and press for a Westminster legislated inclusive and enforceable Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland Region

Environment

93. Post Glasgow COP26 - Decarbonising UK Public Services

Conference notes that last year UNISON supported the UK and global trade union movement at the United Nations 26th Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26) held in Glasgow in November 2021.

UNISON supported the International Trade Union Congress (ITUC) by participating in the UK's observer delegation to the conference and played a successful active role in the COP26 Coalitions' trade union initiatives by mobilising our members across the UK to take part in a Youth Day and Global Day of Action amongst many other activities, during the COP26.

Conference further notes that the global trade union movement had four clear demands:

- 1) Raise climate ambitions with Just Transition policies;

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- 2) Complement inclusive climate policies that respect and promote human and labour rights;
- 3) Provide climate finance for the Global South;
- 4) Implement funded plans that would achieve the transition to net zero economies.

Conference notes that COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021 ended with an agreement, The Glasgow Climate Pact (GCP), that failed to put the governments of the world on course to achieve the target, set in Paris in 2015 of keeping the rise in global temperatures to 1.5 degrees celsius, and no more than 2 degrees celsius, above pre industrial levels. Estimates show that even if all the actions proposed in the GCP, including all the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) were achieved, the world is headed for a rise of 2.4 degrees celsius by the end of the century. It is accepted that this would mean catastrophic climate change with all its environmental, economic and social consequences.

Conference agrees that, in this context, it is essential that all countries revisit and strengthen the 2030 targets in their Nationally Determined Contributions as necessary to align with the Paris Agreement temperature goal by the end of 2022.

Conference also notes with disappointment that the COP26 presidency, led by UK MP and Minister Alok Sharma, consistently refused to meet with the trade union delegation ahead of and during the COP26. This flies in the face of the UK's Just Transition commitments and those embodied in the GCP, agreed by the UK government, which "recognises the need to ensure just transitions that promote sustainable development and eradication of poverty and the creation of decent work and quality jobs".

Conference believes that the UK government can only meet its Just Transition commitments, as part of its UK Climate and Net Zero commitments, by implementing a social dialogue and partnership "between governments and the representative organisations of workers and employers". Trade unions must play a central role so that workers voices are at the table to deliver the policies and measures to keep the temperature rise to no more than 1.5 degrees celsius.

Conference notes that at COP 26 UNISON launched its own ground breaking report Getting to Net Zero in Public Services: The Road to Decarbonisation. Based on the evidence and research, the report concluded that without significant and immediate government funding, public services still reeling from a decade of austerity, will struggle to decarbonise.

The UNISON report sets out that getting public services to net-zero needs £140billion government funding by 2035. In the absence of a significant capital injection of funds, public services would only be able to move slowly towards its decarbonisation targets, taking resources from already stretched budgets, with disastrous consequences.

Conference reaffirms that public and not private investment is the solution. Relying on private investment has already meant delay and will only increase extra taxes and financial burden for those least able to pay. The government must invest now to help public services over the green line to net zero. Otherwise, the cost of transitioning will be anything but just.

Conference supports the key recommendations in the report such as the demand for new national public service climate social partnership approaches, campaigning for affordable

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and public ownership of energy and water, supporting green reps in our branches, developing educational materials, engaging with employers, service users and elected representatives in developing inclusive Just Transition boards for all public service sectors.

Conference agrees that UNISON should continue play a key role in:

- a) The international and national policy debates about the best and fairest way of achieving decarbonisation;
- b) The civil society movements that will keep leaders and governments on track;
- c) The social dialogue and workplace negotiations needed to deliver just transition across all workplaces.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- i) Build on the momentum and climate focus gathered around COP26 and continue to work closely with the ITUC, TUC, Scottish TUC, Welsh TUC, Irish Congress of Trade Unions on the roll out of the Glasgow Climate Pact (GCP) and the COP26 Coalition;
- ii) Continue to work with the TUC TUSDAC (Trade Union Sustainable Development Action Committee) in developing and campaigning for public service sector climate plans and funding for the climate transition;
- iii) Continue to promote UNISONs net zero report to relevant stakeholders. Including engaging and consulting on our key findings and recommendations with the government, public service employers and relevant community and private contracted organisations delivering public services;
- iv) Support the development of a green bargaining and negotiating agenda by introducing a rule change to enable green reps to sit on branch committees and nationally campaign for facility time for green branch reps;
- v) Update guidance for branches and green reps with case studies of good practice initiatives, funding opportunities and examples of successfully negotiated decarbonisation and Just Transition plans;
- vi) Continue to work with service users, community, NGO and green alliances on public sector workplace climate policies as they are developed and announced, calling for greater public investment to secure a Just Transition;
- vii) Support our Energy Service Group Executive in developing and promoting decarbonisation of the energy system in a way that ensures it is affordable for all, and in ensuring a Just Transition for energy members;
- viii) Update training materials for branch and green reps to support their increasing responsibilities and roles;
- ix) Arrange at least quarterly online national meetings of green reps and those signed up to the green network to share best practice and plans for activity.

National Executive Council

94. Climate Emergency

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Conference recognises that the climate emergency is the gravest threat currently facing humanity. The UK's plan to address the climate crisis still lacks real detail, especially in key areas like heat decarbonisation.

Conference notes the Green Jobs Task Force report and agrees that a detailed long-term plan for net-zero to support good quality green jobs in the UK is needed.

Conference further notes the launch of the UNISON report at COP26 in Glasgow on the role public services can play in reaching net zero. The COP26 meeting was a key opportunity to agree a viable strategy for addressing the climate emergency, but it fell short. Success of any such strategy depends on having a skilled and diverse workforce to deliver it, and it must include a just transition for workers in high-carbon sectors. No worker should be left behind. Workers and unions must also be at the heart of the broader fight for climate justice.

Conference recognises the valuable role of workplace representatives in driving action to reduce employers' carbon emissions and to press for changes to ensure the long-term sustainability of their organisations.

Conference believes that the work of environmental representatives should be backed by legal rights.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to campaign for:

- 1) A comprehensive, publicly funded government plan to fully address the climate emergency led by our public services;
- 2) A just transition for workers in high-carbon industries;
- 3) A legal right for trade union environment reps.

EDF Energy (Doxford)

95. Supporting Sustainable Farming

Conference recommit to UNISON's policy of calling for public sector pension schemes to divest from fossil fuels, as one important way of tackling the Climate Emergency.

Conference believes it is right for this union to use our influence to hasten the demise of fossil fuels. However, we recognise that the burning of fossil fuels is not the only contributor to the Climate Emergency.

Approximately, a fifth of global greenhouse gas emissions comes from meat and dairy and this is only a part of the overall environmental impact which include land and water degradation, drought, deforestation, biodiversity loss and coral reef death. Worldwide, the greenhouse gas emissions from the meat and dairy industry exceeds that of all transport. Even if grass fed or organic farming systems are employed in the UK, and soya feed is not imported from deforested land in South America, the greenhouse gas emissions from animal farming are vastly higher than that of horticulture or arable farming. The UK government's climate change committee says that meat and dairy consumption needs to be reduced by 20-50 percent.

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The necessary reduction in the consumption of meat and dairy presents huge challenges for the trade union movement. Many workers are employed in this industry, including within our own trade union. However, the industry that sustains those workers in one respect is also damaging the environment they live in and offering a damaged future for their children.

We believe that workers and communities affected, must be directly involved in the development of a transition from agriculture based on meat and dairy, to more sustainable alternatives. A new study published last week in Public Library of Science Climate showed that phasing out animal agriculture represents “our best and most immediate chance to reverse the trajectory of climate change” according to study co-author Patrick Brown. If animal agriculture is phased out within 15 years, it will result in a 68 percent fall in greenhouse gas emissions globally. That is a phenomenal amount, and should keep global temperatures below the vital 2 degrees celsius threshold. It is clear that, such a transition is necessary.

By leaving the EU, and therefore the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the UK has an opportunity to move away from subsidising meat and dairy farming and instead support arable and horticultural alternatives that are less damaging to the environment.

If the trade union movement wants to shape what the transition looks like we must come forward with our own proposals, or risk having it undertaken by hostile forces who have no interest in workers and communities affected.

Conference therefore calls for:

- 1) The National Executive Council to ask the TUC to bring together trade unions to develop a sustainable plan for transition away from meat and dairy farming that will safeguard the needs of workers and communities engaged in that industry. This should include, a training and jobs guarantee for those working in that industry, so that the skills and expertise of those affected by the first two demands could be used to develop the more sustainable forms of food production we are calling for;
- 2) Divestment of pension funds from meat and dairy production, to be replaced with investment in more sustainable forms of agriculture;
- 3) An end to state subsidies of the meat and dairy industry, and for such subsidies to instead be invested into more sustainable forms of food production.

Salford City

Health

96. Fighting Privatisation in the NHS

According to the Government's own figures, 2018 -2019 more than £9 billion of the NHS Budget went to profit making companies. In some areas of NHS are particularly susceptible to privatisation for example Ambulance trusts in England spent £92 million on private ambulances and taxis . Nearly half of all spending on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services went to private providers.

Conference re-asserts UNISON belief that the NHS always functions best as one team, with all staff able to pull together in the same direction, rather than being splintered off into

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separate organisations. This has been strongly enhanced over the last 2 years during the Covid 19 pandemic

Conference recognises the strength of UNISON campaigning against subsidiary companies prior to the pandemic. Conference congratulates the branches that fought off of such threats, using a combination of industrial action, media and political campaigning.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council:

- 1) To continue to fight NHS privatisation in all its forms;
- 2) To support branches/regions campaigning at local levels;
- 3) Work with sympathetic campaign groups and alliances, which may call for national and/or regional events such as rallies, demonstrations and lobbies post Covid pandemic;
- 4) To continue to campaign with other UNISON key stakeholders for legislative change that moves the NHS away from the market.

NHS Logistics

Education

97. Higher Education Under Threat

Conference notes the Covid-19 pandemic has had a major effect on the whole education system, from nursery provision to higher education.

When the pandemic hit, universities were moving further towards full marketisation, with a generation of students facing colossal tuition fee and living costs debt. Competition between universities to recruit students at any cost has, and still continues to create winners and losers, further fragmenting the higher education service and treating students and income generators.

Whilst the pandemic did not create the financial collapse of many institutions, as was predicted by some, a significant number of universities are still experiencing financial problems, leading to desperate measures to recruit their way out of trouble. Inevitably, this is combined with planned redundancies, course and building closures, outsourcing (to avoid pension rights) and attacks on our members' conditions.

The long-awaited Augar review of higher education, combined with government noises about attacking so-called "low-value" courses and restricting entrance to those with a minimum set of qualifications, will further exacerbate the existing problems.

In keeping with all public services, even though "funding follows the student", real-terms income as payment of fees, provided by the government for universities, has been cut repeatedly. This government is starving universities of funding whilst burdening millions of (mainly) young people with decades of debt.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

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- 1) Maintain UNISON's policy of campaigning for an end to student tuition fees, calling for a properly funded higher education system, free for all with living grants, all funded through general taxation, for the benefit of society;
- 2) Give full support for all higher education branches and members resisting the effects of marketisation by defending jobs, pension rights etc.

University of Brighton

Racism

98. Migrant Workers on the Covid-19 Frontline

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

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

Conference believes that it is shameful that policies such as "no recourse to public funds" (NRPF) meant that migrant workers on the Covid-19 frontline felt under constant financial pressure to work or be left unable to feed their families. It made no moral or practical sense even before a pandemic hit. In addition, the Immigration Health surcharge is an unfair double tax on migrant workers who already contribute to the NHS through general taxation.

Conference welcomes the hard won exemption of workers on an "NHS visa" from paying the surcharge. However, Conference notes that the lowest paid and most vulnerable migrant workers in the NHS and nearly all migrant social care workers still have to pay thousands of pounds upfront to access the very healthcare they help provide, and have to reclaim their money in instalments every six months.

Conference calls upon all migrant workers who worked on the Covid-19 frontline, in both public and private sectors be granted "Indefinite Leave to Remain" (ILR) as a gesture of gratitude by the UK. Conference welcomes the work by UNISON's "There for you" charity which gave vital, life saving grants to many migrant worker families during the pandemic enabling members left destitute by immigration fees to feed their children. Conference also welcomes the provision of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) immigration advice helpline to UNISON members which provided practical, free support to many of our migrant worker members during a time when navigating fast changing immigration rules became vital to retaining jobs and keeping essential services running.

Conference notes that this government has consistently used anti-migrant racism to divert people's attention from their attacks on our living standards. This leads to increased racism against all Black people and is intended to divide us so we cannot effectively resist government attacks on our living standards.

Conference believes that attacks on migrant workers are underpinned by the Hostile Environment that treats them as second class citizens in the UK. This affects not just migrant workers, but also the UK's settled Black communities. Conference notes that the EHRC's

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investigation into the Hostile Environment found that the Home Office broke the law and failed to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The EHRC concluded: “our findings, together with those of the Windrush Lessons Learned Review about the devastating effects of the hostile environment on Black members of the Windrush generation, show a clear failure by the Home Office to develop and implement immigration policies that were fit for purpose for the Black people affected by them.”

Conference expresses our continuing support to the Windrush Generation in their search for justice and restitution for the suffering they endured and continue to experience. This includes moving the administration of the Compensation Fund away from the Home Office to an independent body.

Conference is deeply concerned by proposed attempts in the Nationality and Borders Bill to enable the Home Secretary to deprive UK nationals who could gain citizenship elsewhere of their British citizenship without notice and render them stateless – a concern that is widely shared by many in the UK who now feel that their citizenship status is more insecure than others. Conference believes that very little has been learned from the Windrush scandal. Attempts to enshrine in legislation the principle that those with overseas heritage possess British citizenship as a “privilege not a right”. This is precisely the attitude that led to the Windrush scandal in the first place.

We continue to support groups like Stand Up to Racism, Hope not Hate, Care4Calais and Show Racism the Red Card who fight the racism created by scapegoating migrants, who welcome migrants, who encourage us all to resist these attacks together.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue UNISON's campaign to dismantle the Hostile Environment, end No Recourse to Public Funds and scrap the Immigration Health Surcharge;
- 2) Campaign for Indefinite Leave to Remain for all migrant workers who worked on the Covid-19 frontline;
- 3) Support the work of branches and regions in organising migrant workers with resources and advice, including continuing support for the JCWI helpline;
- 4) Campaign to improve the rights of migrant workers, working with the union's migrant worker networks;
- 5) Continue to support the annual UN anti racism day;
- 6) Continue to campaign for justice for the Windrush Generation.

National Executive Council

99. Migrant Workers, the Hostile Environment and Covid-19

Conference is clear that public services in the UK could not exist without migrant workers.

Black communities experience higher rates of serious illness, hospitalisation and death from COVID-19, as well as vaccine hesitancy. However, these trends are exacerbated further within communities of migrant workers.

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Long before the pandemic, the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) provision deliberately and callously excluded migrants from the public safety net and pushed them into poverty, unsafe or overcrowded housing, and homelessness. This situation got worse during the pandemic as furlough payments were classed as public funds so many workers were either dismissed or had to find alternative and unsafe work. A study by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants identified that 21 percent of migrant workers have lost their jobs since the first lockdown in March 2020.

The illegal working offence and 'right to work' checks force undocumented migrants into precarious, unregulated and low-paid work. As such, they are over represented in jobs on the frontline of the crisis, increasing their exposure to Covid-19. However, they are also unable to access the vast majority of employment protections and rights necessary to keep them safe if they lose work, fall sick, or suffer exploitative treatment at work.

Policies including the illegal working offence, NRPF and discriminatory 'right to rent' checks mean undocumented migrants are more likely to live in unsafe and overcrowded housing, making them less able to effectively isolate to protect themselves and prevent further transmission. They have also been more likely to face homelessness during the pandemic, further increasing their risk of contracting COVID.

NHS charging and data-sharing have created a climate of fear and distrust, deterring undocumented migrants from accessing healthcare. These policies are dangerous by non-pandemic standards but during a crisis are irresponsible to the extreme, leaving undocumented migrants at heightened risk of COVID and undermining public health efforts and crisis recovery. If the government is serious about protecting all our communities from Covid-19 and returning to life as 'normal', it must put public health before anti-immigrant policies and immediately suspend the Hostile Environment from healthcare.

Conference resolves that the government's Hostile Environment policies are dangerous at the best of times, but during the pandemic they have undermined public health efforts and subjected migrants, particularly those who are undocumented, to the worst outcomes from Covid-19. Our union must continue to campaign for the end of Hostile Environment policies which fundamentally endanger the lives of migrants

Conference welcomes the union's ongoing partnership with the Joint Council for Welfare of Immigrants so our members who are migrant workers can access specialist support.

Conference believes that even though UNISON is proud to be a member led union, there are too many branches migrant workers do not have a leadership role or even a voice. Migrant workers should have a meaningful opportunity to identify the issues that affect them in their workplace and agree how they should be addressed.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Ensure that its organising strategy and guidance explicitly refers to recruiting more migrant workers in the public services and supporting them to become active in their union;
- 2) Ensure that the voices of migrant workers are heard throughout our democratic structures.

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Conference further instructs the National Executive Council to campaign for:

- a) The terms of reference of the official Covid inquiry into the handling of the pandemic to explicitly refer to migrant workers including those with no formal immigration status so it will consider the impact of the Hostile Environment policies on the response to the pandemic;
- b) The end of data sharing between the NHS and the Home Office which will ease the culture of fear that deters migrants from accessing healthcare;
- c) The limiting of immigration fees to the cost of processing the application. No worker should have to pay thousands of pounds every year just so they and their family can stay in the country.

Hertfordshire

100. Tackling Structural Racism in the Workplace

Conference asserts that racism in the UK is not history but a daily experience for Black workers. Black workers, under protected and over exposed to Covid19 had additional vulnerabilities created by a lifetime experience of structural racism, from housing to healthcare to work.

Conference notes that a 2021 UNISON survey of Black staff in social care found:

- 1) 46 per cent of respondents had experienced racism at work in the previous year;
- 2) 60 per cent felt able to raise concerns about infection control with their employer;
- 3) 21 per cent said they would get no sick pay at all if they needed to self-isolate.

TUC research also exposed the over representation of Black workers in insecure work, being twice as likely as white workers to be in agency work and more likely to be on zero-hours and temporary contracts. The tragic death toll of Black workers during the pandemic should have renewed a commitment to tackle racism. Instead, the government minimised the reality of racism and dismissed the concept of institutional racism. Where the government steps back, the trade union movement must step forward and Conference welcomes the creation of the TUC race equality taskforce and its work.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to produce resources to support:

- a) Negotiating for race equality in the workplace;
- b) Training for reps and activists to track and challenge racism;
- c) Tackling the ethnicity pay gap;
- d) Supporting Black workers' self-organisation.

Staffordshire Police Staff

Political Fund

101. The Future of Our Political Fund and the Tory Threat to Democracy

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Conference notes that the result of the General Election has created a great deal of uncertainty around the future of union political funds. The introduction of the opt-in, which was a requirement of the Trade Union Act, has resulted in a reduction in the resources that UNISON and other unions can use to ensure that the voices of working people are heard loud and clear on the political stage. Labour had pledged to scrap the Trade Union Act, but the outcome of the election inevitably means a further period in which fund income will be under pressure.

The latest attacks including an expensive union levy to pay for the Certification Officer and an Elections Bill to restrict campaigners and unions.

The Policing Bill will restrict the right to protest.

Conference is under no illusion that the intention of the Conservatives in introducing the Trade Union Act has been to weaken its main political opponent. At a more fundamental level, in diminishing the political voices of trade unions and, by extension the Labour party, the Tory government is creating serious democratic imbalance in which labour is weakened relative to capital.

The Conservative government and their cuts have hit communities hard and their so-called Levelling Up is just a slogan.

Conference sees a link between moves to cut services and moves to curtail democracy, local government and trade unions.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to stand up for democracy and to lead the fight back within the trade union movement. This should involve:

- 1) A campaign to revive real local democracy;
- 2) Genuine fair funding for public bodies based on need;
- 3) Undertaking a programme of work with the political funds to remove barriers to opting-in to the political fund, and develop the way we talk about the value of our political work with people when they join the union;
- 4) Working with Labour Link, the Campaign Fund, Labour Unions (previously TULO), the TUC and other unions to share best practice on political funds;
- 5) Doing everything possible to make effective interventions with our political campaigns.

North Yorkshire

Northern Health and Community

Constitutional Reform

102. Proportional Representation

Westminster's First Past the Post (FPTP) voting system has created a toxic environment by repeatedly returning extreme governments against the wishes of most voters. In 19 of the last 20 general elections parties to the left of the Conservatives won the popular vote, yet the Tories have governed for two-thirds of that time.

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This has enabled soaring inequality, underfunded public services, attacks on trade unions and the undermining of workers' rights. Our electoral system has heavily contributed to a polarised UK, with a disillusioned and disengaged electorate.

FPTP privileges 'swing voters' over neglected voters - including younger, Black and minority ethnic communities. It allows the UK to be governed by an out of touch elite, throwing our democracy into crisis.

Trade union bargaining power tends to be higher in countries that use Proportional Representation. In the UK successive right wing governments have been able to water down trade union rights, empowered by a voting system that advantages the Tory party.

Countries that use PR tend to return more progressive governments than those with FPTP. We need PR to bring in lasting policies to help end inequality, defend rights in the workplace, protect our public services and create a better society for all. To give everyone a real voice in a 21st century democracy, we must change the voting system.

Conference resolves:

- 1) To reject First Past the Post and support the introduction of a form of Proportional Representation for UK general elections, in which all votes count and seats match votes;
- 2) To call on the National Executive Council to campaign for this policy within the wider trade union and labour movement;
- 3) To commit to a programme of education to provide information to UNISON members about how democratic reform, including electoral system change, can support progressive politics and a more democratic society.

Camden

Central Bristol Health

Hampshire

Hastings and Eastbourne Healthcare

Herefordshire

Somerset Local Government and Community

South Lanarkshire

Surrey County

103. Proportional Representation

Conference notes that Westminster's First Past the Post (FPTP) voting system has created a toxic environment by repeatedly returning extreme governments against the wishes of most voters. In 19 of the last 20 general elections parties to the left of the Conservatives won the popular vote, yet the Tories have governed for two-thirds of that time.

Conference notes this has enabled soaring inequality, underfunded public services, attacks on trade unions and the undermining of workers' rights. Our electoral system has heavily contributed to a polarised UK, with a disillusioned and disengaged electorate. FPTP

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privileges 'swing voters' over neglected voters - including younger, black and minority ethnic communities. It allows the UK to be governed by an out of touch elite, throwing our democracy into crisis.

Conference believes trade union bargaining power tends to be higher in countries that use Proportional Representation. In the UK successive right wing governments have been able to water down trade union rights, empowered by a voting system that advantages the Tory party. Countries that use PR tend to return more centre & left wing governments than those with FPTP. We need PR to bring in lasting progressive policies, help end inequality, defend rights in the workplace, protect our public services and create a better society for all. To give everyone a real voice in a 21st century democracy, we must change the voting system.

Conference therefore resolves:

- 1) To reject First Past the Post and support the introduction of a form of Proportional Representation for UK general elections, in which all votes count equally and seats match votes;
- 2) To call on the National Executive Council to campaign for this policy within the wider trade union and labour movement;
- 3) To commit to a program of education to provide information to UNISON members about how democratic reform, including electoral system change, can support progressive politics and a more democratic society.

Norfolk County

104. Proportional Representation

The First Past the Post (FPTP) voting system has created a toxic environment by repeatedly returning extreme governments against the wishes of most voters. In 19 of the last 20 general elections parties to the left of the Conservatives won the popular vote, yet the Tories have governed for two-thirds of that time.

This has enabled soaring inequality, underfunded public services, attacks on trade unions and the undermining of workers' rights. Our electoral system has heavily contributed to a polarised UK, with a disillusioned and disengaged electorate.

FPTP privileges 'swing voters' over neglected voters - including younger, black and minority ethnic communities. It allows the UK to be governed by an out of touch elite, throwing our democracy into crisis.

Trade union bargaining power tends to be higher in countries that use Proportional Representation. In the UK successive right wing governments have been able to water down trade union rights, empowered by a voting system that advantages the Tory party.

Countries that use PR tend to return more left wing governments than those with FPTP. We need PR to bring in lasting progressive policies and to avoid losing future decades to Tory minority rule. To give everyone a real voice in a 21st century democracy, we must change the voting system.

Conference therefore resolves:

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- 1) To reject First Past the Post and support the introduction of a form of Proportional Representation in which all votes count equally and seats match votes;
- 2) To call on the National Executive Council to campaign for this policy within the wider trade union and labour movement;
- 3) To commit to a program of education surrounding democratic reform for Unison members.

City of Glasgow

North Lanarkshire

105. Trade Unions for Proportional Representation

Conference notes that the UK is one of only three major developed countries to use a First Past the Post voting system for general elections.

There is consensus among experts that First Past the Post has a strong right wing bias wherever it is used, leading to parliaments and governments that are on average much more right wing than the voters.

This corresponds exactly with the UK's experience. Most votes went to parties to the left of the Conservatives in 19 of the last 20 general elections, yet the Tories have been in power for 63 per cent of this time. Instead of building a society "for the many", this has created one of the most unequal societies in the developed world, with some of the most restrictive trade union laws.

Conference believes we need a government that supports UNISON's values and priorities to reshape society in the interests of workers and our communities. But it is imperative to realise that the current voting system offers no protection against later Conservative governments tearing up these hard fought gains as they have in the past. The world's most equal and progressive societies all use forms of Proportional Representation which prevent rule by a right-wing minority and lock in the hard-won victories of their Labour movements.

Conference therefore resolves:

- 1) To reject First Past the Post and support the introduction of a form of Proportional Representation in which all votes count equally and seats match votes;
- 2) To call on the National Executive Council to campaign for this policy within the wider trade union and labour movement.

York City

Employment Rights

106. Worker and Trade Union Rights

Conference notes that working life in the UK remains one in which there are huge power imbalances between workers and employers and that strong trade unions, robust workers' rights and effective labour market regulation are essential to redressing this imbalance.

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Conference notes that although trade unions remain strong across public services and utilities, with most UNISON members still able to benefit from recognition, effective bargaining machinery, collective agreements and the first-class support provided by our excellent workplace reps and services to members, working people in the UK are under attack. This can only be a bad thing for our own members as, regardless of sector, some employers join a race to the bottom.

Fire and rehire is being used by employers to re-engage workers on inferior terms and without compensation.

Casualised and low paid work has become a fact of life for many, with one in five now working insecurely, over half of whom earn less than the living wage.

Over two million workers do not receive statutory sick pay, the level of which has fallen over the last decade and which now only amounts to a paltry £95.85 per week.

Unregulated use of digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly being used in workplaces to facilitate intrusive monitoring and surveillance of workers, whilst algorithms and data collection are being used to manage recruitment, selection and disciplinary issues.

Conference further notes the particular problems in sectors such as social care, where non-payment of the minimum wage to largely female workforce is endemic and where advertised pay rates are just above or paid at the legal minimum. The Resolution Foundation has estimated that around 160,000 care workers across the UK are paid below the minimum wage and that they are collectively cheated of £130m in sub-minimum wage pay.

Conference notes that working life is also being made harder as a consequence of Covid-19, which is weakening the bonds of solidarity and workplace regulation. In some places this is resulting in a growing gap in experience between those who have to attend workplaces and those who can work from home - with the former more at risk in periods of high infection and the latter largely isolated, often working in unsuitable and in some cases unsafe workspaces in their own homes.

Conference notes that these trends are at best ignored or at worst actively encouraged by a deeply ideological Tory government that continues to adhere to a belief that flexible labour markets are the route to riches and the outmoded mantra that trade unions are the enemy within. Nothing typifies this more than the Trade Union Act and the huge barriers this places on the ability of UNISON and other trade unions to take industrial action, and the government's continued branding of equality measures as red tape.

Conference agrees that the Tory government simply do not understand the importance of dignity at work or the need to make policy choices that will deliver it.

Conference notes that despite these pressures and challenges, there are countervailing forces at a policy and campaign level across the UK, including the fair work framework in Scotland, the Social Partnership legislation in Wales and the Good Employment Charter in Greater Manchester.

Although these measures are no substitute for the comprehensive framework of rights and regulations that we need, they do at least represent the basis of an alternative to the flexible labour market orthodoxy and the beginning of a trajectory aimed at improving working life.

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Conference calls on the National Executive Council to develop a campaign that engages all parts of the union to:

- 1) Build on the initiatives above;
- 2) Inform the public about the political and economic choices that have led to current labour market conditions;
- 3) To mobilise support behind a programme of reforms that can deliver dignity for all workers through redressing the power imbalances that blight working life in the UK today.

In the short term this should include:

- a) Reforming employment status laws and rules to ensure that all workers benefit from the same basic floor of rights at work;
- b) Scrapping the trade union act and all other anti-trade union laws;
- c) Introducing measures to ensure that workers in low paid jobs do not lose out on key safeguards when they are unable to work, due to sickness, maternity and paternity leave or in retirement;
- d) Banning fire and rehire;
- e) Increasing minimum wage enforcement by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs;
- f) Giving trade unions the right to make formal complaints and trigger minimum wage investigations without naming individual workers;
- g) Providing proper resourcing and funding for the new Single Enforcement Body to enforce regulations across the labour market;
- h) Giving trade union health and safety reps increased rights to carry out inspections including use of the roving safety representatives model which allows union health and safety representatives to access and support members in non-unionised workplaces and raise standards of health and safety;
- i) Introducing regulations to ensure that there can be no abuses of zero hours or short hours contracts and which deliver cast iron guarantees that all who want them get a regular hours contract;
- j) Strengthen workplace level bargaining and campaigning to tackle discrimination and workplace injustice;
- k) Ensuring there are meaningful and transparent pay slips for workers in the care sector and more widely where this is a problem;
- l) Increasing resources for health and safety inspections by the health and safety regulator;
- m) Providing stronger rights to work flexibly, including right to homeworking as a reasonable adjustment;

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- n) Strengthening the equality framework, through better enforcement of the Equality Act, improved rights on reasonable adjustments, disability leave and carers leave, effective protections from harassment and sexual harassment.

For the longer term this programme should involve working through the Labour Link to develop and deliver the New Deal for Working people, including a comprehensive package of trade union rights with collective bargaining at their core. These should include learning from best practice in the devolved administrations, including the social partnership measures being implemented in Wales and include explicit rights to negotiation around the introduction of Artificial Intelligence into the workplace.

National Executive Council

107. Flexible Working and Workers' Rights

Conference notes that more than eight in ten workers want to work more flexibly in the future. As a recent TUC report argues, genuine two way flexibility can be a win-win arrangement for both workers and employers, allowing people to balance their work and home lives, promote equality at work and boost morale and motivation.

However Conference also notes that too often so called flexibility can be a one way street. Zero hours and casual contracts and other forms of precarious employment dominate parts of our labour market-leaving many workers unsure how much they will earn, or what shifts they are expected to work.

Over the course of the pandemic many workers have worked effectively from home or in a hybrid way, but Conference notes that enforced working from home has the potential to entrench existing inequalities. With this in mind, Conference urges employers to work positively with unions to agree approaches to hybrid and flexible working, flexible working needs to be negotiated and agreed with workers and unions, not imposed in a top down manner.

Of course, many UNISON members did not have this option to work from home due to the nature of their jobs and Conference recognises this. On the other hand, many disabled workers got access to flexible working they had previously been denied.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to campaign for the UK government to take action as outlined in the TUC report The Future of Flexible Work, to ensure every worker can work flexibly;
- 2) Coordinate branch and service group efforts to ensure that every worker, including those working flexibly, has effective access to and support from a union, because the best way to ensure fair flexibility for workers is through collective action.

North Wales Health

108. Protecting Workers Rights after EU Exit

Conference notes the UK withdrawal agreement from the EU and our new trading relationship.

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Conference further notes many current employment rights result from case law emanating from the European Court of Justice.

It is vital that after our EU exit these rights are preserved and enhanced.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council:

- 1) Work with the European Trade Unions Confederation, TUC, Scottish TUC, Welsh TUC and Irish Congress of Trade Unions to review employment legislation that may be at risk;
- 2) Work with Labour Link to make sure the Labour Party fully understand the arguments around protecting and improving current employment rights;
- 3) Ensure political lobbying of MPs includes MPs and Lords of all parties, including the Conservative Party;
- 4) Work devolved parliamentary and assembly members to ensure that devolution issues are properly considered and full protections offered to devolved nations;
- 5) Work with our self organised groups so that equalities are at the heart of our response to post-EU exit issues around employment rights and health and safety;
- 6) Develop resources for branches to support them in their campaigning with our members and the wider public on why it is important to protect workers' rights.

CWM Taf Morgannwg Health

Efficient and Effective Union

Industrial Action

109. Taking Effective Industrial Action Under Current Legal Restrictions

Conference notes with grave concern the impact of the 2016 Trade Union Act on our union's ability to take large scale industrial action in support of legitimate trade disputes.

The main lesson of the first five years of this restrictive legislation is that, repeatedly, national industrial action ballots are returning high majorities in support of industrial action but failing to meet the legal voting thresholds, often by substantial margins. This contrasts markedly with the general success of branches and regions in overcoming the legal barriers in local disputes, albeit on a much smaller scale.

This severe legal framework - which imposes a turnout threshold of 50 percent and in so called "important public services" requires a majority of at least 40 percent of all balloted members in support of industrial action – is effectively outlawing our members' right to strike and weakening UNISON's leverage in pay and conditions negotiations.

Conference reaffirms the importance of effective industrial action and therefore calls on the National Executive Council, in consultation with regions and service groups, to review and develop a new strategy for industrial action ballots, including:

- 1) In member consultation processes, setting a minimum turnout for indicative ballots before industrial action is triggered. This will create a mobilising and organising

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imperative to deliver the membership participation and support necessary for credible and winnable statutory industrial action ballots;

- 2) Reviewing the merits of aggregated and disaggregated industrial action ballots taking into the account the experience in recent years of UNISON and TUC affiliated sister unions;
- 3) Ensuring that clear and compelling narratives are presented to members in support of all potential disputes;
- 4) Investigating effective use of digital communications to maximise one to one conversations with members in bargaining units at all stages of consultative and formal balloting periods;
- 5) Developing a whole union approach in order to maximise resources allocated to industrial action consultative and formal ballots on the basis that "we are in it to win it", this should include ensuring that UNISON is "ballot ready" with continuous, forensic cleansing of member and member records;
- 6) Examining the feasibility and use of leverage tactics including action short of strike action, lobbying of employers, digital campaigns etc.;
- 7) Work with the different service groups to seek to ensure that ballot and action timetables are joined up across disputes, wherever possible;
- 8) Work with Learning and Organising Services to ensure member training and education programmes encompass the challenges posed by restrictive anti-trade union legislation and how we can organise effectively to overcome them.

Also, Conference reaffirms the need to:

- a) Press the UK government to deliver on its 2017 commitment to review the use of electronic balloting;
- b) Campaign for the repeal of all restrictive legislation on industrial action to bring Britain in line with International Labour Organisation conventions;
- c) Build strong workplace organisation including much greater numbers of workplace representatives.

North West Region

110. Learning the Lessons from 2021 National Pay Ballots

Conference notes the frankly embarrassing national turnout of the recent National Joint Council (NJC) industrial action ballot in Local Government, the disaggregated industrial action ballots in nearly all Higher Education employers and the Agenda For Change and Police Staff Council consultative ballots. It would be shocking if it wasn't so predictable. Across the sectors the union's national campaigns have failed in their cause to ignite the fire in our activists, in our branches and amongst our membership.

There is likely to be a combination of reasons – lack of access to some workplaces, the timing of the ballots, some branches not doing enough organising, the Service Group Executives not providing sufficient direction and support. But in the end will we all just blame

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the members and their frustrating penchant for apathy? The truth is we have all failed on some level to get our membership voting on pay. Even when faced with the impending financial hardships caused by years of austerity, cuts to universal credit, tax rises, fuel rises, and cost of living increases etc, the union was unable to get their membership voting for better pay. What does that say about us?

When even the most reviled of the Tory-press, The Sun, leads with a headline “Stealth Tax: Five million low-paid workers to be hit by tax rises within weeks that will cost them hundreds extra a year. It comes as millions of UK households are already battling a cost-of-living crisis which is forcing some to choose between heating and eating.” What topsy-turvy world are we living in when even The Sun sounds like they’re on the side of ‘the low-paid workers’? What does it say about us when we can’t harness that public mood to our own advantage? Do we really know what matters to our members? Not the members who like most conference delegates respond to every UNISON survey, are involved in committees that decide the union’s direction, who respond to every ballot. The members that need to be prioritised are those who are currently disengaged and disenfranchised, the silent yet sadly the ‘majority’ of our non-voting membership? Do we know what matters to them? If we knew then perhaps, we could deliver campaigns that resonate with them and in turn they may then support campaigns that matter to us?

There have been countless studies conducted which site the ‘organising model’ as the best option for recruitment and the ‘servicing model’ for retention. We know this and even UNISON have come down on the side of organising. In fact, amongst the many priorities of UNISON, according to the Code of Good Branch Practice ‘organising’ still holds the official number one slot. According to our own literature “A successful organising approach is one that involves members in identifying issues, finding solutions, and dealing with problems. It takes a ‘what can we do about it approach’ rather than a ‘leave it with me to sort it out’. It reaches out to and inspires non-members to join and leaves existing members feeling good about the union and ready to recruit others”. Strong workplace organisation is the foundation of an organising union. High membership density, local activity and effective workplace representatives are essential to UNISON’s strategy for the future. Working on issues that do not directly involve and engage members will always be less successful than when members take ownership of an issue. These words aren’t just tired tropes but are perhaps the road map out of our predicament and in to a strong, dynamic, and growing union.

Conference recalls the phrase “Those who do not learn from history are destined to repeat it”. So, before we blame each other again for one another’s failings and before we eventually place the ownership of blame on to membership apathy let us reflect on what lessons we can learn from this before the next big campaign falls flat on its face.

Conference instructs National Executive Council to prioritise delivering a new strategy which focuses on local organising. This priority needs to be delivering tangible and member led change in our members’ workplaces. To do this the National Executive Council must implement a strategy that:

- 1) That looks at new and existing ways of engaging and connecting with the membership;
- 2) That puts as much effort into supporting local campaigns in branches as it does into national campaigns;

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- 3) That promotes a campaign guide for branches, encourages local campaigns and monitors member participation in local campaigns and promotes examples of good practice.

Conference further instructs the National Executive Council to:

- a) Conduct an immediate review of what went wrong with the 2021 pay ballots and the lessons that should be learned;
- b) Reports the outcomes of this review to all branches no later than 30 September 2022 with explicit recommendations about what will happen differently the next time there is a ballot.

Peterborough City Council

111. Learning the Lessons from 2021 National Pay Ballots

Conference notes the frankly embarrassing national turnout of the recent National Joint Council (NJC) industrial action ballot in Local Government, the disaggregated industrial action ballots in nearly all Higher Education employers and the Agenda For Change and Police Staff Council consultative ballots. It would be shocking if it wasn't so predictable. Across the sectors the union's national campaigns have failed in their cause to ignite the fire in our activists, in our branches and amongst our membership.

There is likely to be a combination of reasons – lack of access to some workplaces, the timing of the ballots, some branches not doing enough organising, the Service Group Executives not providing sufficient direction and support. But in the end will we all just blame the members and their frustrating penchant for apathy? The truth is we have all failed on some level to get our membership voting on pay. Even when faced with the impending financial hardships caused by years of austerity, cuts to universal credit, tax rises, fuel rises, and cost of living increases etc, the union was unable to get their membership voting for better pay. What does that say about us?

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that involves members in identifying issues, finding solutions, and dealing with problems. It takes a 'what can we do about it approach' rather than a 'leave it with me to sort it out'. It reaches out to and inspires non-members to join and leaves existing members feeling good about the union and ready to recruit others". Strong workplace organisation is the foundation of an organising union. High membership density, local activity and effective workplace representatives are essential to UNISON's strategy for the future. Working on issues that do not directly involve and engage members will always be less successful than when members take ownership of an issue. These words aren't just tired tropes but are perhaps the road map out of our predicament and in to a strong, dynamic, and growing union.

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- 1) That looks at new and existing ways of engaging and connecting with the membership;
- 2) That puts as much effort into supporting local campaigns in branches as it does into national campaigns.

Conference further instructs the National Executive Council to monitor member participation in local campaigns and promote examples of good practice.

Peterborough City Council

112. Industrial Action Ballots

Conference believes that the ability to take effective legal industrial action is a key requirement for our union.

Conference notes that although there have been some industrial action ballots which have met the threshold for legal industrial action, the threshold has not been achieved in large national ballots.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to organise a discussion within the union to identify the steps necessary to achieve successful legal industrial action ballots.

Merton

Resources

113. Insourcing

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to undertake an urgent survey of the services provided by the union with the aim of maximising insourcing.

We particularly need to look at insourcing:

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- 1) Services in national/regional offices which are routinely provided by private companies such as cleaning, catering and caretaking;
- 2) Services which are provided by private companies which used to be provided by some of our partner unions but were privatised i.e. legal, travel, accommodation and insurance etc;
- 3) IT provision.

National Executive Council

114. Protecting our Members' Data

In the modern age it has never been more important to protect our members' data.

With the Data Protection Act 2018 introducing the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) protecting our members' data is even more important.

It is our belief that using our employers' systems puts members data at risk and despite recognition agreements, gives the employers the ability to 'see' communication between the union and our members with the potential for an employer to use the information to either discipline our members or to potentially attack our activists.

Branches need a cost effective, dedicated and secure email server to communicate with members. Whilst it is possible for Branches to purchase an email client and server to provide a dedicated system, this comes with a cost and not every branch in our union could finance this cost or sustain the commitment long term; nor does it provide uniformity within our union. The current functionality within our membership system to email is only suitable for bulk emails and not for individual emails.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Explore the possibility of implementing a dedicated national secure email system for all branches within the union to use;
- 2) Consider whether the membership system could provide this functionality to our branches as an alternative to a dedicated standalone system;
- 3) Explore the possibility of extending the existing UNISON staff email system for Branch and lay activist use;
- 4) Explore potential solutions from existing dedicated systems branches use and the costs vs the benefits of this;
- 5) Report back to Conference 2023 on how this is progressing.

Let's work to secure our members' data in this technological age and reduce the risk of employer interference.

West Mercia Police Staff

115. Who Cares For Us

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Conference, Neath Port Talbot acknowledge that activists are only volunteers for UNISON when undertaking casework and representing our members.

Conference, Neath Port Talbot acknowledge that all our employment rights are held by our employers.

Conference, Neath Port Talbot acknowledge that our employers are required to supply us with any employee assistance and occupational health interventions required under good practice measures, however, Neath Port Talbot believe that it would be inappropriate and unprofessional to discuss UNISON casework and UNISON concerns in an employers' forum.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to investigate and consider an Employee Assistance and Occupational Health Programme to be made available to all our case holding activists and report back to Conference next year.

Neath and Port Talbot County

116. Fact Checking in a Fake News Age

The move away from print media has been gathering pace over several years now. So many people now get their information from online sources. The recent events in 2020/2021 like the misinformation over the Covid-19 pandemic and political figures' misleading announcements on social media clearly demonstrates the urgent need for unbiased and fact checked information. Conference recognises that the growth in fake news has been a major factor in the outcome of recent elections. We need to fight back and dispel the myths and half-truths where we see them, giving our members the facts not the fiction. UNISON is ideally placed to do so with our communication strategy for members - we need to give them the knowledge to tackle fake news and the prejudices which arise from it.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Develop and resource work to create a page on our website as a UNISON Public Services Fact Checker that relates to sphere of representation and political influence. This will be a valuable resource for branches to use in communication with their members.

Renfrewshire

117. Stop the Use of Helium Balloons at UNISON Protests and Gatherings

Conference recognises the need for governments and organisations around the world to put in place collective initiatives to reduce carbon emissions in order to mitigate human society's contribution to the ongoing climate crises. Conference also recognises that the essence of these initiatives should involve the wider consideration of using the Earth's resources in a way that benefits human society whilst not being harmful or wasteful.

All Helium found on Earth is produced by radioactive decay deep in the Earth's crust and is a non-renewable resource. The property it is most famous for is being the second lightest element in the periodic table and as such lighter than air. So light that once released into the air it will escape Earth's atmosphere altogether and float off into deep space.

Helium also has other less well known properties which makes it a unique resource for applications such as:

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- 1) Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scanners;
- 2) A variety of medical treatments;
- 3) Medical and scientific research applications;
- 4) Mobile phone and computer chip production;
- 5) A variety of key industrial uses;
- 6) Filling Balloons

As a naturally produced resource, there will come a point where global stocks can no longer meet the demands for these applications. Helium itself has gone through periodic global shortages, as is the case now, where both balloon shops and university research departments, as examples, have had their supplies rationed. These periodic shortages evidence the need to conserve our reserves of Helium, recycle as much as is possible and limit any wasteful use in favour of more essential applications.

One of the most profligate uses of this valuable gas is through its use in balloons and other inflatables. Whilst this may on the face of it appear harmless, when compared to other more essential uses of helium it must be considered a wasteful use and a non-essential drain on supply. The popular practice of releasing Helium filled balloons can also pose a threat to wildlife and ecosystems (through ingestion, asphyxiation and breakdown of containers into micro-plastics) where they float off and become either terrestrial or marine litter, which is already a well-established problem that we do not wish to contribute to.

Given helium is a finite resource, this motion asks the question as to whether the filling of balloons is an essential use when compared with more essential applications such as MRI scanners. Conference agrees it is not.

Therefore, conference instructs the UNISON National Executive to issue a statement to all UNISON Regions and Branches highlighting the wasteful and detrimental practice of using helium to inflate balloons when it can be best used in more meaningful and positive circumstances (for example, MRI scanners and research). This statement to be accompanied by a UNISON wide ban on helium filled balloons and to be issued no later than eight calendar weeks following the close of UNISON National Delegate Conference 2022.

Environment Agency Thames

Services to Members

118. Immigration Advice and Black Members

Many Health Trusts have recruited new nurses from the Philippines and India. Our activists have been working hard to try and recruit them and include them in UNISON. One of the most useful tools to attract migrant workers has been our immigration advice clinic.

On top of the JCWI help line accessible through UNISON Direct, some regions have monthly face to face clinics with a solicitor. This has been a great resource that has allowed us to not only recruit members, but also gives us appropriate and current advice on immigration issues. This is particularly relevant within the context of the hostile environment that Brexit and the Windrush scandal have contributed to.

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However, organising around immigration issues requires being able to follow through when someone needs support. At present, when immigration and employment collide, members are left with advice only when they also need representation.

UNISON continues to lead on campaigns against an increasing hostile immigration environment to give reps and members the tools to recruit and organise our Black and migrants' workers.

The National Black Members Committee should have the influence within UNISON structures to seek that Services to Members reviews this situation and call on the National Executive Council Black representatives to raise this important issue.

We call on the National Executive Council to explore how we can give members access to more comprehensive immigration advice and representation, including to our members in Northern Ireland.

National Black Members' Committee

119. National Executive Council email addresses

Conference notes that, as has always been the case, in the current UNISON diary, email addresses are provided for members of the regional convenor teams.

However, Conference notes, that unlike in previous years, email addresses for National Executive Council members are not given. Why the anomaly?

In past years the UNISON diary had email addresses for National Executive Council members. Given that the National Executive Council members are accountable to UNISON members in a similar way to regional convenor teams, Conference believes it is both desirable and necessary for all National Executive Council members to have an email address published in the UNISON diary.

Conference therefore instructs the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Ensure all National Executive Council members have an email address;
- 2) Publish National Executive Council email addresses in all future UNISON diaries.

North Yorkshire

120. UNISON's Use of Gambling Advertisements

Conference notes with concern UNISON's continuing affiliation to the gambling company Tombola and the continued placement of promotional materials for the company in magazines for UNISON members. Conference believes that gambling companies have no place in our union, and that in no way should UNISON's members be encouraged to join or subscribe to their activities.

Problem gambling can affect as many as 1 percent of the population (BBC, 2020) with £14.4 billion lost by UK gamblers in year to March 2019 and a 114 percent rise in gambling-related hospital cases in six years. Bingo is consistently viewed as a low-risk or soft form of gambling, but is disproportionately played by women, individuals in poor health and individuals on low incomes (Moubarac, Will Shead and Derevensky, 2010). Additionally,

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whilst portraying itself as a benevolent and social medium of gambling, several studies show that regular bingo players demonstrate symptoms and signs of the development of problem gambling. In online gambling, especially bingo, this is amplified to excess. VIP clubs, lucrative deposit bonuses, "social" aspects and chatrooms and glamorous advertising seek to lure in new customers to bet their money. The number of women seeking treatment for problem gambling has doubled in the last five years, and up to a million women are at risk of being harmed by gambling (Guardian, 2022).

It is unbelievable that UNISON seeks to encourage its members to place themselves at risk for its financial gain. A trade union with a majority female membership, representing a significant low-pay membership, actively encourages these two groups to engage in the form of gambling that places them at greatest risk of addiction and financial loss. Conference is disappointed in the decision by our union to advertise such companies. Conference believes this is an ill-advised route to gain advertisers' money.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Cease all affiliations, advertising contracts and financial arrangements pertaining to promotion of the gambling industry to members, excluding UNISON's own There For You Lottery;
- 2) Develop an ethical advertising policy over the next twelve months and to report back to Conference in 2023;
- 3) Develop awareness training and guidance for activists around gambling addictions.

Dorset

Rules

Rule C Membership

1. Rule C Unemployed Members

C 2.4.2

In second sentence delete the words: "unless otherwise decided by the National Executive Council."

Lothian Health

2. Rule C Unemployed Members

After "Council" add:

"providing they have not been dismissed from employment for any act of discrimination or harassment as defined in Rule I 2.3 (i) and (ii)."

Eastern and Coastal Kent Health

Rule D Structure of the Union at National Level

3. Rule D National Executive Council

D 2.4

Delete "two years" Insert "one year"

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D 2.6

Delete "two years" Insert "one year"

* linked to amendment D 2.7

Neath and Port Talbot County

4. Rule D Elections

D 2.7.1

Delete "two years" Insert "one year"

*Linked to rule amendments 2.4 and 2.6

Neath and Port Talbot County

5. Rule D Committees

D 2.9

Renumber existing Rule D 2.9 as D 2.9.1 and add a new rule as D 2.9.2:

"D 2.9.2

The election of chairs and vice-chairs of the committees shall occur in accordance with the union's commitment to fair representation as set out in Rule D 2.14.3 and in particular the proportion of posts held by Black members shall be at least equal to the proportion of Black members on the National Executive Council."

Eastern Region

6. Rule D Powers

Add new rule D 2.11.13 and renumber accordingly:

"D 2.11.13 to issue model procedures for 'on-line' or 'virtual' meetings to all national committees to improve efficiency, participation and the environment."

National Executive Council

7. Rule D Retired Members' Organisation

D 7.5

Delete Rule D 7.5 and renumber remaining rules accordingly.

City of Wolverhampton

Rule F Regions

8. Rule F Function of Regions

F 3.1.10

Delete "branches" and, at the end, add: "and representatives."

City of Wolverhampton

9. Rule F Regional Council

Add new rule Rule F 4.3.5:

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"F 4.3.5 The region's standing orders shall have an 'on-line' or 'virtual' meeting procedure option to improve efficiency, participation and the environment."

National Executive Council

Rule G Branches

10. Rule G Branch Organisation

Add new rule G 1.4:

"G 1.4 Each Branch shall have an additional 'on-line', 'virtual' or 'hybrid' meeting procedure in their local rules and/or standing orders to improve efficiency, participation and the environment."

National Executive Council

11. Rule G Branches

G 2.1.1:

After "elected annually" insert "or biennially, dependent on branch rules"

G 3.4.2:

After "the coming year" insert "or two years dependent on branch rules"

G 4.1.2:

After "annually" insert "or biennially, dependent on branch rules"

G 5.1:

After "annually" insert "or biennially, dependent on branch rules"

G 7.1:

After "annually" insert "or biennially, dependent on branch rules"

G 8.1:

After "annually" insert "or biennially, dependent on branch rules"

Neath and Port Talbot County

12. Rule G Branch Officers

G 4.1.1

Add after: "Women's Officer (who must be a woman)":

"Environmental Officer (also known as Green rep)"

National Executive Council

13. Rule G Branch Officers

Insert the following new rules:

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UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

"G 4 1.7 All Branch Officers shall complete the mandatory data protection training within three months of being elected; and any updates.

G 4 1.8 Ensure that member's data is processed in accordance with data protection legislation and report all branch data breaches to the UNISON Data Protection Officer."

National Executive Council

Rule I Disciplinary Action and Appeals

14. Rule I Disciplinary Action

I 8.5 Delete after "for" and add: "whatever period seems to be appropriate, up to a maximum of 24 months;"

I 8.6 Delete after "for" and add: "whatever period seems to be appropriate, up to a maximum of 24 months;"

National Executive Council

Rule M Financial and Legal

15. Rule M Data Protection

Remove existing Rules under Rule M 6 Data Protection and replace with:

"6.1 All Union members are obliged to comply with the data protection principles in all the work carried out on behalf of members and the Union as well as the requirements set out in data protection legislation.

6.2 To access and process members data, all activists are required to complete the mandatory data protection training and updates.

6.3 All prospective and eligible candidates for General Secretary, National Executive Council, Labour Link, Service Group Elections shall complete the mandatory data protection training and updates prior to qualifying as a bona fide candidate.

6.4 Upon receiving a statutory data protection request from a data subject, a branch and any of its members shall supply the required information to the Data Protection Officer as soon as reasonably practicable to ensure the DPO can comply with the request within the statutory deadline.

6.5 All members and elected officials shall cooperate with any investigation instigated by the Data Protection Officer. This shall include data protection investigations, requests for personal data to comply with a data subject request and for information required for the DPO to advise the Union on the lawful basis for processing and improving personal data processing. Refusal to provide information requested or cooperate with an investigation by the Data Protection Officer could be considered for disciplinary action.

6.7 Any personal data being processed by the Union, for legitimate union purposes, must not be shared with a third-party (including external third parties) before advice is sought from the Data Protection Officer.

6.8 Data protection legislation refers to all applicable data protection and privacy legislation in force from time to time in the UK including the UK GDPR; the Data Protection Act 2018

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(DPA 2018) (and regulations made thereunder); and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (SI 2003 No. 2426) as amended."

National Executive Council

Rule P Standing Orders for Conferences

16. Rule P Limit of Speeches

Insert new rule P 14.3:

"P 14.3

Following the moving of a motion or amendment, delegates speaking For must be called on the basis of a ratio of two women for every man. The same will apply to those speaking Against."

Suffolk County

Schedules

Schedule D Disciplinary and Appeals Procedures

17. Schedule D Disciplinary Procedures

Schedule D 8

Delete all and replace with:

"The member or the member's representative shall have the opportunity to ask questions of the Union Representative and the witnesses except in hearings involving allegations of harassment when the Chair of the Panel may require that only the member's representative shall ask questions of the complainants of harassment."

Dorset Police

Motions Ruled Out of Order

Beyond remit of the Conference

Mobilising for Climate Change Resilient Communities and a Just Transition.

Storms Arwen, Malik and Corrie wrought havoc across the North East of Scotland and England over a 100,000 households and their communities were without electricity, heating, water and WiFi for up to 10 days in the lead up to Christmas and again at the start of February 2022. Branch members worked flat out to support their communities.

UNISON Aberdeenshire recognises the need to continue to mobilise to address the twin needs of workers and their communities to be resilient to the impacts of climate change and to achieve a just transition to a low carbon society.

The mobilisations around COP26, led by the COP26 Coalition, UNISON along with other trade unions from around the world and their allies in the environmental and global justice movements, demonstrated the support for building a climate justice movement to demand action for all workers and all communities.

UNISON Aberdeenshire calls upon the National Delegate Conference to take a lead in supporting and mobilising UNISON branches across the Devolved Nations and regions to play a significant role in the climate justice movement to:

- 1) Keep climate justice on the agenda of all UNISON branches:

2022 National Delegate Conference

UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- 2) Call for climate change resilience, a Just Transition and global justice issues to be raised at trade union councils, the TUC, Welsh TUC, the Scottish TUC and mobilised for within workplaces and our home communities;
- 3) Across the Devolved Nations and Regions support the need for fully funded Climate Action Plans and Just Transition Action Plans that include skills audits, training, workplace mitigation for climate health issues and adaptation for climate change impacts;
- 4) Support mobilisations by UNISON Branches around the UK in solidarity with the build up to COP27 in Egypt later this year;
- 5) Call for UNISON to take a lead with other trade unions to demand that the UK Government and employer(s) fulfil the pledges made at the COP26 in Glasgow.

Aberdeenshire

Can be dealt with in other ways

People = Equalities = Trade Union Duties

Conference believes that equalities is fundamental to the work of trade unions and should be incorporated into everything we do. For this reason, we believe that the time has come for equalities reps/officers and equalities coordinators to have dedicated facility time to enable the post to fully promote and embed equalities in the branch and the workplace.

Our branch was fortunate enough for 23 months to have a full time Equalities Coordinator and this assisted the branch to have a focus on reaching out to our members in equalities groups and work with our employers on equalities issues. Throughout this time the branch was able to have a greater influence on the equalities agenda, which was crucial given the experiences of discriminatory practices within our workplaces. The branch has seen more members involved in the wider branch as well as self-organisation than ever before.

We believe that in recognition of the important role they play, equalities officer and co-ordinator roles should get dedicated facility time similar to health and safety reps and officers, which gives a legal entitlement to time to carry out their duties in these roles

We call on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with the TUC and Trade Union Congress's in the devolved nations to campaign for Equalities Coordinators, reps and officers to have recognised facility time;
- 2) Make the Equalities Coordinator a recognised Branch Executive role in the Code of Good Branch Practice.

Aberdeenshire

Conflicts with an Existing Rule

For a Publicly Owned, Democratically Managed, Free at the Point of Need National Health and Social Care System

Conference recognises that every single family will need access to both health care and social care at some point in their lives. Whether it is help with washing and dressing at home or long-term nursing support, most social care has never been automatically free at the point of use like the NHS.

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Since the establishment of the welfare state in 1948, councils have had responsibility for social care, but it has always been means-tested - with delivery left to town halls, charities and private companies. In the last decade the means test has become meaner and the demand for help has grown.

Today, more than half of residents in elderly care homes pay all or some of their fees and 82% of places are provided by for-profit operators, according to research company LaingBuisson. Hedge funds, finance houses and profiteers now own and control much of the social care market.

Successive governments, Labour, Tory and Con-Dem, have been unwilling or unable to solve the issue of social care.

According to an article in the Guardian in September 2021, “for the hundreds of thousands of families paying 100% of care costs, bills stack up very fast, especially when loved ones have long term-conditions. Katie Meacock, part of the Rights for Residents campaign group, is selling her mother’s flat to pay for her care fees. Caroline Hockter-Duncan, 75, has advanced dementia and moved into a £4,800 a month care home six years ago, and after the fees rose to £7,000 her savings ran out. She has already spent more than £400,000”.

Many families who run out of money have to move often highly vulnerable loved ones out of privately funded care homes into council-funded care, which is considerably less well resourced and scandalously, many of those council-funded care home places are actually owned by the same companies raking it in from private payers. Such moves can be highly distressing and even dangerous for those residents’ health.

Over 40,000 died from Covid in care homes during the pandemic in an overwhelmingly privatised system that puts profit before safety.

Between 2016 and 2020, the number of people requesting social care support increased by 120,000 but about 14,000 fewer people received it, according to the King’s Fund thinktank. There are now more older people, partly as a result of the postwar baby boom and partly because older people are living longer. There are also more working-age adults with disabilities: 19% in 2019-20 compared with 15% in 2010-11.

Projected adult social care spending between now and 2031 is £22 billion. The Health Foundation argue that to meet demand, improve access and pay more for care will need £36.5 billion – and that is with some means-tested charges still applying. The charity also argues that pay levels in social care must be improved and access to publicly funded care must be increased.

The Care Quality Commission warns that vacancy levels across the social care sector could reach 170,000 – Not surprising when the average pay for care workers is a paltry £8.50 an hour and one in four are on zero-hour contracts.

The government’s knee-jerk response was to announce a ‘workforce retention and recruitment fund’ amounting to a pathetic £108 per care worker – with no explanation as to how this will attract new staff and relying on existing staff to work ‘more hours in the system’ making burnt-out carers do even more work.

Once again, the Tory response is to make working-class people pay the cost of a crisis not of their making. Increasing national insurance contributions will hit working people in their pockets just as food and energy prices are going up, the Universal Credit uplift is being

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UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

scrapped, and workers are facing attacks on their wages, terms and conditions through 'fire and rehire' across the sector.

In its last annual report, the Care Quality Commission described the sector as “very fragile” and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services said that in summer 2021 “close to 75,000 disabled and older people and carers were waiting for help in England. While the Covid pandemic has increased the focus on elderly care, council bosses are most worried about providing for people of working age with disabilities”.

Conference believes there is an intrinsic and vital link between health and social care. Social care should address problems before they escalate to a person requiring hospital treatment. Social care services should also enable people to be discharged safely from hospital, freeing up resources. With the current shortfall in care provision, people will either remain in NHS beds or - as has frequently occurred during Covid - be sent home without adequate support, creating a vicious circle. Cuts in hospital beds and reduced hospital stay times have not been met with increases in social care provision.

Conference believes there should be no place for private profiteers in our health and social care system. Everyone should have access to free universal health and social care in an integrated system based on need not profit. It should not be based on ability to pay.

The Trades Union Congress has calculated that if capital gains tax - the tax on profits from assets like stocks and property - was paid at the same level as income tax, that would alone generate £17 billion a year for funding health and social care.

But taxing the rich and big business should be just the start. They will do everything they can to avoid paying higher taxes that eat into their profits. We need to be able to plan the funding of health, social care, education and other services based on need not profit. That would be possible if the whole of health and social care services and the major companies, banks and financial institutions were publicly owned and democratically controlled by workers and service users.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to publicly campaign for:

- 1) A fully integrated Health and Social Care Service, ‘from the Cradle to the Grave’ – free at the point of need - publicly owned and democratically run by workers and service-users;
- 2) Immediate nationalisation (ie taking into local authority control) of any health or social care firm/organisation going out of business or threatening mass redundancies;
- 3) Bringing back in-house all privatised health and social care and removing the profit motive entirely from all care services;
- 4) A £15 per hour minimum wage, abolition of zero-hour contracts and national terms and conditions across all health and social care services, negotiated by the recognised trade unions in those sectors.

Surrey County

For A Publicly Owned, Democratically Managed, Free at the Point of Need National Health and Social Care System

Conference recognises that every single family will need access to both health care and social care at some point in their lives. Whether it is help with washing and dressing at home

2022 National Delegate Conference

UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

or long-term nursing support, most social care has never been automatically free at the point of use like the NHS.

Since the establishment of the welfare state in 1948, councils have had responsibility for social care, but it has always been means-tested - with delivery left to town halls, charities and private companies. In the last decade the means test has become meaner and the demand for help has grown.

Today, more than half of residents in elderly care homes pay all or some of their fees and 82 percent of places are provided by for-profit operators, according to research company LaingBuisson. Hedge funds, finance houses and profiteers now own and control much of the social care market.

Successive governments, Labour, Tory and Con-Dem, have been unwilling or unable to solve the issue of social care.

According to an article in the Guardian in September 2021, “for the hundreds of thousands of families paying 100% of care costs, bills stack up very fast, especially when loved ones have long term-conditions. Katie Meacock, part of the Rights for Residents campaign group, is selling her mother’s flat to pay for her care fees. Caroline Hockter-Duncan, 75, has advanced dementia and moved into a £4,800 a month care home six years ago, and after the fees rose to £7,000 her savings ran out. She has already spent more than £400,000”.

Many families who run out of money have to move often highly vulnerable loved ones out of privately funded care homes into council-funded care, which is considerably less well resourced and scandalously, many of those council-funded care home places are actually owned by the same companies raking it in from private payers. Such moves can be highly distressing and even dangerous for those residents’ health.

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Between 2016 and 2020, the number of people requesting social care support increased by 120,000 but about 14,000 fewer people received it, according to the King’s Fund thinktank. There are now more older people, partly as a result of the postwar baby boom and partly because older people are living longer. There are also more working-age adults with disabilities: 19 percent in 2019-20 compared with 15 percent in 2010-11.

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UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Once again, the Tory response is to make working-class people pay the cost of a crisis not of their making. Increasing national insurance contributions will hit working people in their pockets just as food and energy prices are going up, the Universal Credit uplift is being scrapped, and workers are facing attacks on their wages, terms and conditions through 'fire and rehire' across the sector.

In its last annual report, the Care Quality Commission described the sector as "very fragile" and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services said that in summer 2021 "close to 75,000 disabled and older people and carers were waiting for help in England. While the Covid pandemic has increased the focus on elderly care, council bosses are most worried about providing for people of working age with disabilities".

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Surrey County

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South East Region

UNISON Recognition by DEFRA

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UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

A number of posts within the Environment Agency have been transferred to the Department for Food and Rural Affairs over the past few years. Also, some new Environment Agency vacancies are advertised as DEFRA posts.

UNISON has strong representation on behalf of our members in the Environment Agency.

We are entitled to elect representatives to the Water, Environment and Transport Sector Group to speak up on behalf of our members.

Our Environment Agency Sector Group brings together our Environment Agency branches to decide policy and appoints representatives to negotiate with EA Management at our National Negotiating Group.

Our strong UNISON branches within the Environment Agency work hard on behalf of our members. We negotiate, on their behalf, with the EA management at national, regional, and local levels. We defend our members in disciplinary, grievance, bullying and harassment, discrimination cases, and on any other issues.

We do not have a full recognition agreement with DEFRA.

The Environment Agency Sector Group is not represented at Trade Union Side meetings with DEFRA management, we have to rely on PCS to negotiate on behalf of our members.

UNISON Branch Officers and Stewards cannot represent our UNISON Environment Agency employees in DEFRA posts if they have an issue. They must be represented by a UNISON regional officer.

As more and more Environment Agency posts become DEFRA employees, our Environment Agency Sector Group and our UNISON EA branches will become more undermined and weakened. Branches, indeed UNISON itself, will become irrelevant to our UNISON members within the Environment Agency.

Our past experience, regarding Environment Agency members subject to TUPE from the EA to other organisations, shows that it is essential that UNISON has full recognition in order to protect our members and their working conditions.

This motion calls on our National Executive Council, and our Water Environment and Transport Sector Committee to employ every means to achieve full recognition by DEFRA on behalf of our UNISON members in the Environment Agency, seeking intervention by the TUC if required.

Environment Agency Anglian

Legal Support for Our Members and Activists: Getting It Right

Not printed

National Executive Council

Could place the union in legal jeopardy

Supporting Dismissed Sri-Lankan PPE Workers

Conference notes that many of the medical supplies to the NHS are manufactured across the world under the remit of large multi-national companies. These Multinational Companies may have contracts with local companies across several countries and where some of these factories are located in Free Trade Zones.

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Some of these manufacturing companies are producing PPE gloves for the NHS, where it seems exploitation of migrant labour from neighbouring countries is common, example by having large so-called recruitment fees. To pay off these large fees, workers would have to undertake 150 hours overtime per month.

The Australian Trade union - Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) is supporting 11 sacked Sri Lankan Trade Unionists leaders of Free Trade Zone and General Services Employees Union (FTZ&GSEU) by a large Australian Multinational Company in 2013, who are struggling for union rights, compensation and to abolish “debt bondage” arrangements, while making gloves and other PPE for this large Australian multinational company. The Sri Lankan court instructed the Multinational Company to reinstate these Trade Unionists.

The International PPE Solidarity Campaign held solidarity actions on Saturday 15th October 2021 in Australia, UK, Belgium, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia and Malaysia. These included a PIRC/UNISON webinar.

Conference welcomes the statement placed on the UNISON website on 4th November 2021 - with UNISON General Secretary co-signing a letter addressed to the Investors of the Australian Multinational Company ahead of its AGM held on 11th November 2021 – “to help change the culture change of worker exploitation in Sri Lanka”.

The letter continues with “Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, when workers have been at greater risk of infection and immense pressure, due to exponential rise in global demand for PPE not negotiating with FTZ&GSEU, who have been alerting management to safety oversights on the behalf of its members”.

Conference calls on National Executive Council:

- g) To continue liaising with UNISON’s National Executive Council International Committee and the International Unit in sending messages of support to ANMF and the solidarity campaign;
- h) To report back to the Health Conference/branches on the solidarity campaign for the 11 Sri Lankan (FTZGSEU) Trade Union leaders at the Australian Multinational Biyagama Free Trade Zone complex in Sri Lanka as supported by ANMF members - to pay compensation as awarded at an 2020 arbitration. Also, to feedback on the other important aspects raised in the letter, e.g. covering recognising FTZ&GSEU, at the time payments of workers overtime as set by Sri Lanka’s commissioner-general of labour and ensuring safe working conditions in accordance with the Sri Lankan ministry health’s updated Covid19 guidelines;
- i) To explore with the UNISON’s National Executive Council International Committee and the International Unit – requesting UNISON sponsored MPs/MSP’s/MA’s to raise questions with Department of Health’s on NHS England/Scotland and Wales’ procurement policies where workers are denied their basic rights.

NHS Logistics

Supporting Dismissed Sri-Lankan PPE Workers

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- 1) To continue liaising with UNISON’s International Committee and the International Unit in sending messages of support to ANMF and the solidarity campaign;
- 2) To report back to Health Conference and branches on the solidarity campaign for the 11 Sri Lankan (FTZGSEU) trade union leaders at the Australian Multinational Biyagama Free Trade Zone complex in Sri Lanka as supported by ANMF members to pay compensation as awarded at an 2020 arbitration. Also, to feedback on the other important aspects raised in the letter, e.g. covering recognising FTZ&GSEU, at the time payments of workers overtime as set by Sri Lanka’s Commissioner General of Labour and ensuring safe working conditions in accordance with the Sri Lankan Ministry of Health’s updated Covid19 guidelines;
- 3) To explore with the UNISON’s International Committee and the International Unit – requesting UNISON sponsored MPs/MSP’s/MA’s to raise questions with Department of Health’s on NHS England/Scotland and Wales’ procurement policies where workers are denied their basic rights.

East Midlands Region

Supporting Dismissed Sri Lankan PPE Workers

Conference notes that many of the medical supplies to the commodities to the NHS are manufactured across the world under the remit of large multi-national companies. These Multinational Companies may have contracts with local companies across several countries and where some of these factories are located in Free Trade Zones.

Some of these manufacturing companies are producing PPE gloves for the NHS, where it seems exploitation of migrant labour from neighbouring countries is common, example by

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having large so-called recruitment fees. To pay off these large fees, workers would have to undertake 150 hours overtime per month.

The Australian Trade union, Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) is supporting eleven sacked Sri Lankan Trade Unionists leaders of Free Trade Zone and General Services Employees Union (FTZ&GSEU) by a large Australian Multinational Company in 2013, who are struggling for union rights, compensation and to abolish “debt bondage” arrangements, while making gloves and other PPE for this large Australian multinational company. The Sri Lankan court instructed the Multinational Company to reinstate these Trade Unionists.

The International PPE Solidarity Campaign held solidarity actions on Saturday 15 October 2021 in Australia, UK, Belgium, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia and Malaysia. These included a PIRC/UNISON webinar.

Conference welcomes the statement placed on the UNISON website on 4 November 2021, with the UNISON General Secretary co-signing a letter addressed to the Investors of the Australian Multinational Company ahead of its AGM held on 11 November 2021 “to help change the corporate culture of worker exploitation in Sri Lanka”.

The letter continues with “Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, when workers have been at great risk of infection and immense pressure due to the exponential rise in global demand for PPE, Ansell refused to negotiate with the FTZ&GSEU, who had been alerting management to safety oversights on the behalf of its members”.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council:

- 1) To continue liaising with UNISON’s National Executive Council International Committee and the International Unit in sending messages of support to ANMF and the solidarity campaign;
- 2) To report back to the Health Conference/branches on the solidarity campaign for the eleven Sri Lankan (FTZGSEU) Trade Union leaders at the Australian Multinational Biyagama Free Trade Zone complex in Sri Lanka - as supported by ANMF members - to pay compensation as awarded at an 2020 arbitration. Also to feedback on the other important aspects raised in the letter, eg covering recognising FTZ&GSEU, at the time payments of workers overtime as set by Sri Lanka’s commissioner-general of labour and ensuring safe working conditions in accordance with the Sri Lankan ministry health’s updated Covid19 guidelines;
- 3) To explore with the UNISON’s National Executive Council International Committee and the International Unit, requesting UNISON sponsored MPs/MSP’s/MA’s to raise questions with Department of Health’s on NHS England/Scotland and Wales’ procurement policies where workers are denied their basic rights.

National Executive Council

Language Used to Defend the People Who Have Been Accused or Found Guilty of Bullying

Not printed.

North Yorkshire

Language Used to Defend the People Accused or Found Guilty of Bullying

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Not printed.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Transport

Time Off Work for NEC Members

Not printed.

West Sussex

Assistance for Branches Who Employ Staff

Not printed.

Dorset

Redress the Balance

Not printed.

Orchard Health and Social Care

In breach of the agreement on the political fund

Join Other Unions by backing PR

Conference notes:

- 1) Westminster's First Past the Post (FPTP) voting system has created a toxic environment by repeatedly returning extreme governments against the wishes of most voters. In 19 of the last 20 general elections parties to the left of the Conservatives won the popular vote, yet the Tories have governed for two-thirds of that time;
- 2) This has enabled soaring inequality, underfunded public services, attacks on trade unions and the undermining of workers' rights. Our electoral system has heavily contributed to a polarised UK, with a disillusioned and disengaged electorate;
- 3) FPTP privileges "swing voters" over neglected voters, including younger, black and minority ethnic communities. It allows the UK to be governed by an out of touch elite, throwing our democracy into crisis;
- 4) Trade union bargaining power tends to be higher in countries that use Proportional Representation. In the UK successive right wing governments have been able to water down trade union rights, empowered by a voting system that advantages the Tory party;
- 5) Countries that use PR tend to return more left wing governments than those with FPTP. We need PR to bring in lasting progressive policies, help end inequality, defend rights in the workplace, protect our public services and create a better society for all. To give everyone a real voice in a 21st century democracy, we must change the voting system.

Conference therefore resolves:

- a) To reject First Past the Post and support the introduction of a form of Proportional Representation for UK general elections, in which all votes count equally and seats match votes;
- b) To commit to a program of education to provide information to Unison members about how democratic reform, including electoral system change, can support progressive politics and a more democratic society;

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- c) To call on the Labour Party to campaign for this policy and submit an appropriate motion to the Labour Party annual conference in 2022.

Southwark

Not competent

Organising to Win

Conference notes:

- 1) The pandemic has posed union organising new challenges, with activists learning new tools and means to engage members;
- 2) Engaging members working from home, particularly non-members, remains challenging;
- 3) Some employers used the pandemic to attack pay, terms and conditions, some using fire and rehire tactics;
- 4) That despite the challenges, last year witnessed a number of sectional disputes across the UK where unions organised to beat the 50% ballot turnout thresholds, with many disputes securing wins for workers;
- 5) The UCU held national ballots on a disaggregated basis, organising to surpass the 50% ballot thresholds in many Universities;
- 6) That sadly, UNISON's national ballots fell well short of surpassing the 50% turnout threshold;
- 7) There are no UNISON training courses on how to organise industrial action ballots and win disputes.

Conference believes:

- a) Nationally, regionally and at a Branch level UNISON needs to beat the 50% ballot thresholds if we are to win for our members;
- b) Learning the organising methods from those ballots that do surpass 50%+ turnouts, from both local disputes and other trade union national successes is an urgent task for UNISON.

Conference resolves to:

- i) Request that the National Executive Council establishes a working group to examine and explore the organising methods used in both local and national trade union ballots that have surpassed the 50% ballot thresholds in recent times. For this working group to undertake this task to make findings and recommendations on which methods of organising are key to holding successful industrial action ballots;
- ii) Devise a UNISON training course for all activists on how to organise industrial action ballots and win disputes.

Herefordshire

Organising to Win

Conference notes:

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- ii) Devise a UNISON training course for all activists on how to organise industrial action ballots and win disputes.

Sandwell General

Organising to Win

Conference notes:

- 1) The pandemic has posed union organising new challenges, with activists learning new tools and means to engage members;
- 2) Engaging members working from home, particularly non-members, remains challenging;
- 3) Some employers used the pandemic to attack pay, terms and conditions, some using fire and rehire tactics;

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- 4) That despite the challenges, last year witnessed a number of sectional disputes across the UK where unions organised to beat the 50% ballot turnout thresholds, with many disputes securing wins for workers;
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- ii) Devise a UNISON training course for all activists on how to organise industrial action ballots and win disputes.

Birmingham

Oppose the Nationality and Borders Bill

Conference notes:

- 1) The government's attempt to further restrict the rights of people seeking asylum to the UK. through the Nationality and Borders Bill;
- 2) That it will make it virtually impossible to enter the UK to seek asylum as applicants will be automatically deemed to be illegal as there will only be an extremely limited legal route to enter the country;
- 3) That those deemed to have arrived illegally will be placed in so called reception centres and the Government will try to deport them;
- 4) That even if their UK application claim is successful, they will only get protection for up to 30 months and little access to welfare benefits;
- 5) That the law will introduce new powers to stop and redirect boats out of UK waters if they suspected of facilitating illegal entry to UK;

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- 6) That additional clauses make significant changes to the rules and manner in which appeals are heard and how evidence is submitted further penalising appellants;
- 7) That Clause 9 of the Bill exempts the government from giving notice, "if it's not reasonably practical to do so" or "in the interests of national security, diplomatic relations or otherwise in the public interests to do so" of the withdrawal of an individual's British Citizenship, threatening anyone whose parents were born outside of the UK, even if they have a British passport.

Conference further notes:

- a) Millions of refugees around the world are forced to resort from necessity and desperation to so-called illegal methods and routes by the ever-diminishing legal options as they flee war zones and authoritarian regimes for example;
- b) Fewer than one percent of the world's refugees get chosen for resettlement schemes, which are the main legal route;
- c) The head of the Refugee Council in the UK, Enver Solomon, described offshore processing as "an act of cruel and brutal hostility towards vulnerable people." and that UNISON's national campaigning partner the Joint Council for Welfare of Immigrants deem the Act to be 'inhumane and farcical'.

Conference believes:

- i) That far from being motivated by 'fairness' as Priti Patel claims, the Nationality and Borders Act is driven by racist scapegoating and puts into primary legislation measures which further frustrate the opportunities to create a fair, equitable and just system for those seeking asylum and migrating to the UK;
- ii) That refugees should be welcomed here and that attempts to whip up hostility to refugees as 'undeserving' and 'illegal' must be firmly opposed;
- iii) Clause 9 gives Priti Patel the power to strip up to 6 million people of their British citizenship without notice;
- iv) That immigration is not the cause of housing shortages, health cuts and poverty pay and unions should not accept such arguments, which are an attempt to divide us, but fight against racial institutional discrimination enshrined in immigration legislation.

Conference resolves to:

- A) Continue to campaign with all our political and civil society campaigning partners to oppose the Nationality and Borders Bill as an attack to our human rights;
- B) Support the right of people of seeking asylum to work;
- C) Ask the TUC and other affiliated trade unions to campaign to dispel the myths demonising migrant and refugee labour and outline the positive benefits that immigration has brought to the UK and produce material to that effect.

London Fire Brigade

Workplace Gambling

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UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

National Delegate Conference 2022 recognises the issues workplace gambling including online can bring to UNISON members extending to their families and friends and also lead to gambling addiction.

The issue has been exacerbated by the increase of homeworking by UNISON members brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conference is concerned that UNISON appears to approve gambling by adding flyers to UNISON publications which should immediately cease.

We call upon UNISON to actively consider signing up to the “charter to reduce gambling related harms in the workplace” produced jointly by the Unite union who organise in this sector with the Gambling Commission, Unionlearn and the NHS Lancashire Care Foundation Trust with other smaller partners which will benefit UNISON members including their mental health.

United Utilities

Fully Fund the NHS Not the Private Sector

This National delegate Conference notes that private hospitals are set to receive up to £525 million of public money in a deal negotiated by Sajid Javid, the Tory Health and Social Care Secretary. It means that they will treat a wider range of NHS patients, including those needing cancer surgery.

The deal has been sanctioned despite warnings from Amanda Pritchard, the Chief Executive of NHS England. She has warned that it would leave the NHS exposed financially, the beds would be significantly more expensive than those in the NHS and there is a great degree of uncertainty as to how they would be staffed.

Scandalously, the private companies will be given up to £270 million from the NHS as a minimum income guarantee, which means they will receive it regardless of whether they

treat any patients. Pritchard expressed her concern to Javid that she might in fact be in breach of her legal duty to follow the Treasury rules on managing public money.

Javid then gave her a direct order to give private hospitals the money anyway.

The Labour Party has now abandoned its previous promise, under Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership, to protect the health service from privatisation. Wes Streeting, shadow health secretary, has said that Labour would use private healthcare providers to tackle NHS waiting lists too. Streeting does blame the Tories for running down the NHS, but has not as yet come up with any solutions whatsoever to provide sufficient funding.

Successive governments, Tory and Labour, have presided over a massive underfunding and privatisation of the NHS.

Conference recognises that:

- 1) The NHS is short of around 100,000 staff;
- 2) The number of beds has been cut by a third since 1988;
- 3) The health service has one of the lowest number of beds per person in Europe, with 246 per 100,000 people, while Germany has 800 per 100,000 people.

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We need socialist policies to defend the NHS.

Conference calls for the following:

- a) A publicly funded NHS free at the point of use;
- b) All privatisations of NHS services must be reversed;
- c) Support the setting up of a National Care Service, to work in conjunction with the NHS;
- d) Private healthcare and pharmaceutical companies to be nationalised, with compensation paid only to small shareholders on the basis of proven need, and integrated into the public health service;
- e) The NHS should be run by democratically elected and accountable committees including health service workers and users.

Hackney Local Government

Campaign Against the Climate Emergency

Conference notes:

- 1) The COP26 meeting, and the People's Summit and protests both here and around the world that took place in November 2021;
- 2) That the climate emergency is happening now for huge parts of the world, with floods, pollution, wildfires, droughts and extreme temperatures making poverty, migration and death a very real prospect for people living in those areas or seeking refuge elsewhere;
- 3) On 8 August alone, the US Fire Centre reported over 39,000 wildfires, burning 3.5 million acres. Fires in Siberia were bigger than all the other fires in the world combined, with smoke from them detected in the North Pole;
- 4) In Madagascar, 1.1 million people were without food as a result of a prolonged drought;
- 5) By 2050, it is expected that there will be 200 million climate refugees fleeing failed harvests, droughts and flooding;
- 6) That COP26 did not set the targets to reduce fossil fuel consumption needed to tackle the climate emergency and stop the temperature rising. If all current pledges to cut emissions are met by 2030, there is still only a 50% change of keeping global warming below 2.4 degrees, well above the 1.5 degree maximum to avoid climate catastrophe;
- 7) 2020 was the hottest year ever in Europe and the joint hottest with 2016 on record;
- 8) That 2019 saw the emergence of an inspiring climate movement, spearheaded by young people taking action on the streets, and urging trade unions to join them. This led to the huge protests and demonstrations in September 2019, with many workers protesting against the climate emergency for the first time.

Conference believes:

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- a) That COP26 was a chance for world leaders to make intentions and policies clear that could address the climate emergency and start to make a real difference on a global scale – policies around carbon reduction, fossil fuel use, deforestation and much more – but this opportunity was squandered. Greta Thunberg was right to say the world leaders only said “Blah, Blah, Blah”;
- b) That the COP meetings are not a level playing field. The Global North, with most of the powerful economies, have most power in the negotiations, usually by promising or withholding money or applying political pressure;
- c) That the extremes of the climate emergency disproportionately affect the countries and people who have done least to cause the problem and have the least resources to deal with them;
- d) That trade unions have a huge role to play in combatting the Climate Emergency both locally and globally – from pension divestment from the fossil fuel industry, campaigning to welcome climate refugees, supporting the Fridays 4 Future movement and mobilising internationally;
- e) That UNISON can mobilise members and make a difference.

Conference resolves:

- i) To continue to campaign against the Climate Emergency, producing and distributing material to explain why it's a trade union issue and what members can do;
- ii) To continue with the UNISON Green Week and use it to highlight particular aspects of the Climate Emergency, how UNISON Green Reps can make a difference, and how we can decarbonise our workplaces;
- iii) To continue to work with Climate Emergency campaigns, particularly youth movements such as Fridays 4 Future, co-ordinating action where possible;
- iv) To affiliate to the Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union group, and to encourage branches to affiliate.

Greater London Region

Election of Officials

Conference believes that as a member-led union, UNISON members should be allowed to decide in a democratic manner who occupies essential full-time positions within our union which are not currently elected.

Conference believes that the positions of assistant general secretaries, heads of service groups, and regional secretaries, ought to be elected on a regular basis comparable to the election of our general secretary and lay bodies.

Conference therefore resolves to call upon the National Executive Council to support this position and identify how UNISON rules should be changed at National Delegate Conference 2022 to enable this position to be implemented forthwith.

City of Wolverhampton

UNISON Housing Policy

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Conference notes that there is an under provision of homes in this country of over one million. More than one million dwellings have planning permission but are not being built. 3.8 million people, or 1.6 million households, are in need of social housing in Britain. 500,000 homes are empty in Britain. Meanwhile, Britain's biggest house building companies made £7 billion profits during the pandemic.

Conference recognises that the planning system operating in Britain can do nothing to speed up the provision of houses and little to ensure they affordable or safe, and agrees that a more radical intervention in the supply and allocation of houses is necessary. UNISON policy, as set out in UNISON's Housing Manifesto is inadequate to tackle the scale of the housing crisis in this country.

Conference agrees that a revised Housing policy be brought to the 2023 National Delegate Conference with explicit support for the public ownership of all development land, and the nationalisation of house building and development companies, such that house building is directed towards housing need and not towards profitability.

Hounslow

Violence Against Women and Girls

Every day in the media, there are incidents of violence against women and girls. This violence ranges from domestic abuse, rape, paedophilia or random attacks on women and girls by men or boys with some resulting in death.

On November 25 the National Day to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls, a vigil was held in Liverpool City Centre to remember the three women who lost their lives to domestic abuse in one weekend on Merseyside. On the exact day of the vigil a 12 year old girl was murdered by a teenage boy in the city centre and a woman was murdered by a man.

Enough is enough. This has to stop.

Conference resolves to:

- 1) Work with the necessary internal sections of our union such as the National Women's Committee and recognised outside organisations/charities to provide education and training for members plus young people to eliminate violence against women and girls;
- 2) Campaign for the elimination of violence against women and girls, so members feel confident in reporting any sexual harassment, misogyny and domestic abuse to their employer;
- 3) Encourage Employers to become White Ribbon UK accredited.

Knowsley

Stand Up to Racism

Conference notes:

- 1) That the coronavirus pandemic has continued to highlight the inequalities faced on a daily basis by Black people, in particular around low pay in frontline service roles and housing, and the disproportionate way that this has led to increased infection and death rates;

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- 2) That Black people have been more likely to be fined for alleged breaches of Covid-19 regulations than white people, in the first three months of the pandemic, Black people were over 50% more likely to be fined than white people, according to research by Liberty;
- 3) That later in the year, staff partied at 10 Downing Street without being fined as the rest of us had xmas plans cancelled. This particularly impacted our Black members with family abroad who they had planned to visit;
- 4) The continued police brutality faced by Black people. The 2020 murder of George Floyd by the police in the US reignited the Black Lives Matter movement around the world, seeing huge protests despite the pandemic, and has highlighted once again how Black people are treated by the police;
- 5) That racism and police brutality is not confined to the US, nor is it a matter just for people in the US;
- 6) That following the Euro football finals, there was a dramatic increase in racism, particularly online;
- 7) The Tory Sewell report that denied the existence of institutional racism;
- 8) The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill that will increase racism and discrimination through the use of stop and search powers and the criminalisation of trespass laws, this latter particularly impacting on the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities;
- 9) The racist Nationality and Borders Bill going through Parliament at the end of 2021.

Conference believes:

- a) That the Tory government will continue to try to make us pay for the pandemic and continue with austerity. This is demonstrated by their financial packages being aimed at businesses and the way contracts for PPE have been handed out to their families and friends, compared to the ending of furlough and the £20 a week reduction in Universal Credit;
- b) That this will again disproportionately impact on Black people who will be more likely to be sacked, furloughed and face pay cuts or freezes;
- c) Footballers and other sportspeople should continue to Take the Knee to show their commitment to opposing racism;
- d) That the Nationality and Borders bill will scapegoat those fleeing war, famine, the climate emergency and poverty, and will make horrific tragedies where people die whilst seeking safe haven more likely to happen.

Conference further believes:

- i) That we need a campaign that puts people before profit to respond to coronavirus – health and care workers, cleaners and transport workers should not die because friends of Boris Johnson want to get rich through PPE supply contracts;

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- ii) That an ongoing response to racism and austerity is essential, and trade unions have an important role in that. We can campaign to end low pay and organise huge numbers of members to challenge racism;
- iii) That UNISON's continued support of Stand Up To Racism, Unite Against Fascism, Show Racism The Red Card and other organisations makes a real difference to making sure racism on the streets and in institutions is always opposed.

Conference resolves:

- A) To campaign against the Nationality and Borders Bill and the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, and to continue to campaign against them if they become law;
- B) To work with Show Racism The Red Card and highlight to members how they can also be involved;
- C) To publicise the next Unite Against Fascism educational visit to Auschwitz and send a delegation if possible;
- D) To affiliate to Stand Up To Racism;
- E) To continue to support and publicise Stand Up To Racism meetings, protests and other activities to members;
- F) To continue to support the event hosted by Camden UNISON at National Delegate Conference on Weds 15 June 2022 fundraising for Stand Up To Racism, to add the branch to the list of sponsors and to donate to sponsor it.

City of Glasgow

Challenging Sexism and Misogyny - Protecting Women

Conference notes with alarm and shock the report from the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), into the abhorrent and discriminatory workplace culture at Charing Cross Police Station that was published on 1 February 2022. The report identified the exchange of hateful and offensive messages between a group of 19 police officers.

Numerous messages were exchanged via Facebook and WhatsApp and included:

- 1) One officer telling a female colleague "I would happily rape you ... if I was single ... if I was single I would happily chloroform you.";
- 2) Another advocating violence to get a "woman in bed";
- 3) Several officers pledging to attend a festival dressed as known sex offenders;
- 4) Officers boasting about perpetrating acts of domestic violence on their partners;
- 5) One officer bragging about visiting a sex worker when he was on steroids.

The IOPC report further identified a workplace where colleagues feared challenging poor conduct or whistleblowing as they believed managers would not take complaints seriously or protect them from reprisals. The police watchdog noted the offensive messages and bullying was rooted in culture: "We believe these incidents are not isolated or simply the behaviour of a few 'bad apples'."

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One police officer has been promoted since the incidents - after he was reprimanded for not reporting the inappropriate messages that he received.

The IOPC has ongoing investigations in two forces, Kent and the Metropolitan Police, over whether they missed chances to identify Wayne Couzens as a potential threat to women before he kidnapped and murdered Sarah Everard.

Conference recognises that not all police officers hold misogynistic views but the impact of even a small minority of officers on their colleagues and the communities they are employed to serve, must not be underestimated.

Conference commends the leadership shown by the Police and Justice Service Group in recent years. In 2018 they published the results of a major survey of sexual harassment in police forces in England, Scotland and Wales, undertaken in partnership with the London School of Economics (LSE). The survey results showed that police staff were the subject of extensive and on-going sexual harassment in the workplace, including exposure to dirty jokes, unwelcome touching, repeated requests to go on dates, promises of job advancement in return for sexual favours and in some cases sexual assault. UNISON and Professor Jennifer Brown from the LSE presented the results of the survey to National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) which launched the NPCC 'Knowing the Line' campaign to tackle sexual harassment in 2019. Recent events have shown that the police service continues to have a major problem with sexism, misogyny, and sexual harassment in its workforce. The SGE is again working with the NPCC on a new Sexual Harassment Working Party to seek to tackle this pernicious, on-going stain on the reputation of the service. There must be a zero-tolerance policy to sexual harassment in policing.

Conference further notes:

- a) Misogyny and bullying of women must be challenged every time it appears;
- b) Existing policy of UNISON Women's Conference is clear that women complaining of sexual harassment should be believed and supported;
- c) The conduct of police officers at Charing Cross station reflects attitudes in wider society where women's dignity and safety are trivialised and demeaned;
- d) The Metropolitan Police is not the only police force with employees that demonstrate such behaviour;
- e) Women police staff have an absolute right to work in workplaces free from sexism and free from colleagues that demonstrate sexist and misogynistic attitudes - in or out of work;
- f) All public service employers must redouble efforts to ensure women that work for them or use their services can do so without fear of discrimination or harassment;
- g) UNISON branches have a key role in ensuring employers are held to account about what they are - or are not - doing to stamp out sexual harassment, discrimination, and misogyny.

Conference is clear that like any other organisation, UNISON should not be complacent, and all activists must be eternally vigilant and call out any incident of sexism or misogyny that they experience or witness. Any member that does should know that their union supports them.

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Bedfordshire Police

Protecting Our Rights as a Member in this Union to Have a Say About Rule Changes and Their Interpretation

Protecting our rights as a member in this union to have a say about rule changes and their interpretation.

The reason that the majority of people have joined this union, is that we believe we have a say in how this union is run collectively. We are all educated from our very early trade union involvement and activism that it is not about our own personal views but our collective views, the foundation of democracy. Otherwise, you need to question why you are a member of a trade union in the first place.

To become a trade unionist this is our backbone, how we can all collectively make decisions to benefit the many, not the few or the individual. Rule books are made and agreed from this democratic agreement, we may not always agree individually but we respect that this is the agreement of the majority.

It has come to our branches attention that the current National Executive Council has no respect for this.

Any rule that has been changed, or even interpreted or misinterpreted to benefit the few or the individual must come to this conference. The work of any executive committee is to follow the motions of the previous conference, this is their timetable of work to get on with, and this is what the delegates have voted on. Not wasting time.

Every rule change taken or interpretation should be open and transparent and brought to Conference for debate. This is why we are the biggest and strongest union, we are member led.

We call upon Conference to demand full transparency of any rule changes made by the National Executive Council, and interpretation they have used to the benefit of any one individual. (Not taking in to account our other members), since their elections for this term and going forward.

We call on Conference to make it totally clear, without any room for misinterpretation, that National Delegate Conference is the place to discuss, debate and vote on rule changes. By doing this we protect our membership's rights and further enshrine that we are the membership led union that we portray ourselves to be. This calls for a vote of no confidence with our current National Executive Council.

Omagh and Fermanagh Health

Defend Flexitime

Conference notes that many of our members, mainly those in office based occupations, have operated on a flexitime system of working for many years and have valued the benefits that this system brings. Flexitime can generally be defined as an agreement to work the contracted hours flexibly over an extended period of time. The agreement may, or may not, state that there are 'core hour's' during which an employee must work, and an extended band of non-core hours during which an employee may choose to work. The system will typically allow a surplus or deficit numbers of hours to be accrued, with the ability to take surplus hours as flexi leave or make up deficit hours in a future period.

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UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Flexitime was initially introduced in the 1960's and 1970's mainly as a result of trade union pressure and regulated under negotiated collective agreements. The flexitime system was treated with caution or even fears at first by employers worried about the impact upon productivity. However, evidence, accepted by many employers, has shown that flexi time has led to benefits for the employer in terms of increased productivity and reduced levels of absenteeism.

For our members flexitime has allowed greater control of their working lives, with consequential benefits to their personal lives. Our members have been able to exercise personal control over how they manage their workload, enhancing their autonomy to make work related decisions independently and with a greater degree of confidence and trust. The ability to adjust the working hours in the day, and to take flexi leave provides an opportunity for a greater balancing of work and home priorities.

However, the impact of the pandemic aligned to technological advances means that the world of work and in particular 'office work' is being revaluated. The most obvious example is in the increase of homeworking. Homeworking can bring many challenges as well as potential benefits, and flexitime is being examined by many employers in light of this.

In a recent report by the TUC (Union reps' experiences of flexible working and parental leave) it was found that 20 percent stated that it got harder to access flexitime during the pandemic. Increasingly we are seeing examples of employers saying that homeworking is not compatible with flexitime. Homeworking or Hybrid policies are being produced that explicitly remove flexitime or restrict its application. Notably whilst employers are willing to see greater flexibility of hours in the day when work can be done, that is being restricted to 35 hours worked in any one week or 7 hours in any one day (when the contractual week is 35 hours). The opportunity to accrue deficit or surplus hours from week to week and to take flexi leave is being restricted. This is often rooted in management distrust of workers.

The impact of these restrictions is to remove the control and autonomy our members have over their workloads and working life rather than enhancing the benefits that flexibility of new ways of working can offer. There is also a consequential and detrimental impact upon members balancing the priorities of their working lives.

Conference recognises that new ways of working can bring enhancements and flexibilities to our working lives that will be welcomed by many. However, Conference also recognises the challenges that must be faced. Our members are not inherently more untrustworthy whilst working from home, and as we move to new ways of working, we must retain and build upon the benefits of the past.

Conference therefore resolves to:

- 1) Defend the principles underpinning flexitime;
- 2) Publish material highlighting the benefits of flexi time;
- 3) Ensure that Negotiating Guides in respect of New Ways of Working (Homeworking) explicitly reference the retention and extension of flexitime as a priority;
- 4) Recognise Flexitime as a key element in UNISON's approach to Flexible working policies.

Wirral

Oppose International Men's Day

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UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

The history of International Women's Day is well known, with its roots dating back to the nineteenth century, clearly and politically linking women's struggle for equal rights with the labour trade union and broader socialist movement. Whilst the flood tide of neo liberalism has sought to sanitise and commercialise 8 March, recent years have seen the day reclaimed by women in struggle, with many strikes, protest and rallies being held on that that day. It remains a day to mark the achievements in, and renew the struggle for equal rights, a day that the entire labour movement rightly embraces and celebrates.

By contrast, Conference recognises that International Men's Day, has much shallower roots, which are at best more confused, with murkier beginnings. The first International Men's Day was launched as a reaction to International Women's Day by Thomas Oaster an American academic, and Men's Rights' advocate. His stated aims were to celebrate the achievements of men, improve life options and stop the victimisation of men; in his keynote speech at the first event he said "we want the bashing {of men] to stop. We want it to stop!". Following the relaunch of International Men's Day attempts have been made to soften the approach, with references to specific men's health issues, however the message that men face gender inequality and discrimination has not gone away.

The naming of the day was itself a conscious and deliberate attempt to undermine International Women's Day, to seek to achieve some recognition that women did not face any specific disadvantage, and that there was a parity of oppression. We are clear that women do face specific disadvantage, that equality has not been achieved at home, in the community or the workplace. The social media movements #metoo and #timesup have gone some way to raising awareness about systemic oppression women face in their daily lives including at work, and the killing of Sarah Everard and subsequent violence that protestors were subject to have served to highlight the violence women face. Women make up 51 percent on the population, yet generally occupy less than 25 percent of senior positions; three-quarters of people who've held minimum wage jobs in the last ten years are women. To celebrate International Men's Day is to give tacit support to the view that gender inequality is equally important for men and women, a view as trade unionists that we cannot endorse.

We do however recognise that there are specific issues that affect men in particular, that require addressing for example Prostrate Cancer; it is correct that specific attention is given to such issues, and UNISON should play a leading role and consider how we can develop initiatives to raise awareness. These initiatives however do not need be under the tainted banner of International Men's Day; specific health initiatives can be more properly utilised to address these matters. International Women's Day is not about women's health, it is about the struggle for equal rights, and is a progressive movement at its root. International Men's Day is at its root, reactionary, and should not be endorsed by the union movement.

Conference therefore agrees:

- 1) To continue and enhance our work to celebrate International Women's Day;
- 2) To refrain from any endorsement of or participation in, International Men's Day events;
- 3) To consider and encourage UNISON initiatives which could support men with male specific health conditions;
- 4) To write to all branches explaining this position.

Wirral

TUC General Council - UNISON Delegation

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UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Conference believes that UNISON at its heart, and at its best when it is a member led union. Our commitment to lay democracy and proportionality and fair representation is enshrined within our rule book. We welcome the steps taken under the current National Executive Council to broaden and extend member and lay activist involvement. This was best exemplified by the Fight for Fairness End of Year Rally, which had speakers from across the union and allowed active involvement from all our activists.

We also recognise that as the largest trade union in Britain we have an active and significant role to play in the wider trade union movement. We are rightly proud of our union and seek to build our membership, our activist base and our profile and recognise that we will do that by organising and campaign successfully to enhance the lives of our members, especially those, mainly women and Black members who suffer the scourge of low pay. Where possible we see the value of working with other trade unionists and see them not as competitors but as comrades in a common struggle.

We therefore see the value of our work in the TUC, to explore issues of common interest, to apply solidarity and identify areas for joint action. With 7 members on the 56 member TUC General Council, we are and should be one of the most significant and influential voices on that body. It is important that we reflect not only our policies but our principles within that General Council. As a member led union, we believe therefore that all our delegates to the General Council must be elected representatives of UNISON. These delegates should reflect the views of our members through the National Executive Council in keeping with our principles of proportionality.

Conference therefore resolves that our delegates to General Council should comprise:

- 1) General Secretary;
- 2) President;
- 3) Other delegates to be elected from, and by the National Executive Council, taking account of the diversity of our membership and the principles of proportionality.

Wirral

UNISON: Stop the Promotion of Online Gambling

Conference notes that on a number of occasions in the past year members have received official UNISON mailings that have included promotional materials for online gambling companies. This has included material advertising 'Tombola Online Bingo'. We recognise that gambling, especially online gambling can be a destructive addiction, and that our members and their families are not exempt from the impact. Whilst gambling may be a legal activity, we are concerned that UNISON as part of a progressive workers movement is encouraging, and profiting from, this activity.

Conference therefore agrees that UNISON will no longer accept advertising from companies whose primary or only purpose is gambling.

Wirral

National Support for Branches

Conference notes the outcome of the Branch Resources Review and accepts the branch funding motion agreed at the 2021 Conference.

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The decision to keep the high proportion of resources in the centre must be now be justified by the right sort of national office support being available for the kind of things that branches need.

On principle universal services should not be complicated by charges to branches and other services should be competitively priced to avoid the temptation for branches to seek outside options.

Specifically, Conference calls on UNISON:

- 1) To deliver on its promise to replace WARMS/RMS with a more efficient system;
- 2) To roll out Caseweb to all branches without the impediment of a charge back;
- 3) To begin a review improve branches access legal advice;
- 4) To make available HR advice and a payroll service to Branches that employ staff.

Plymouth in UNISON

Take Back Suicide Awareness and Training

At the National Delegate Conference in 2019 Northamptonshire Health Workers Branch requested Conference to consider a short programme of training in suicide awareness, to be implemented nationally to empower our stewards and staff with knowledge and the skills to identify and signpost members appropriately and effectively. Conference believed this training would support our stewards in signposting our members to seek the best advice which could be potentially lifesaving. This would also enable our stewards when reviewing policies and procedures within their own working environments to enable them to assess this against risk of suicide.

This motion was carried with great support, but unfortunately as far as we can ascertain no further action has been taken following this. We are aware of the increase of Mental Health First Aid training within regions, but this is not specific to suicide or covers awareness of suicide in a way that a targeted approach would achieve. We request that Conference consider supporting this motion again and commit to an effective strategy to role suicide awareness training out for all our staff and stewards as a matter of urgency. There are lots of approved free online learning available such as the zero suicide alliance training which UNISON could access and recommend. The Northamptonshire Health Workers Branch is happy to offer the National Unison support in implementing this training strategy. We need an effective strategy to role this training out for all our stewards as soon as possible the need for action is more important than ever.

Suicide is everyone's business and touches families whatever their class, age, gender or family situation. In 2018 nationally 6,213 people completed suicide and the highest suicide rate was among males between the ages of 45-49, though there has been an increase in males between the ages of 25-34 in 2018 (Samaritans' Suicide Statistics Report, 2018). We need to make sure all our stewards are aware of not only of risk groups but how to signpost anyone they come into contact that might be having suicidal thoughts or at risk from suicide. We can empower our stewards to be able to support their members in accessing the correct support in a timely manner. We know from research that 3 out of 5 people have experienced mental health issues due to work (Samaritans' Wellbeing in the City report, 2018), and workplace stress is associated with significantly increased suicide risk (Schneider et al., 2011; Milner et al., 2017). As union representatives we will be dealing with many members

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who are experiencing pressure and stress caused by their working situation even more so now with the added pressure of Covid. Suicide is not inevitable, it is preventable. Early identification of suicidal thoughts and behaviour, and effective care for those at risk, are crucial in reducing the likelihood that an individual makes a suicide attempt or dies by suicide. We are not expecting our stewards to be experts, but we also know that they can be at the sharp end of members' distress and giving them the correct tools to work with is key for them to feel confident but also be able to support members effectively.

We would ask Conference to again support this motion and put in place a national strategy.

Northamptonshire Health Workers

2022-2023 Year of Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health affects everyone, but many public service workers are at heightened risk of mental health difficulties and elevated risk of suicide compared to the general population. This has been acknowledged at a national level including the increased risk to our members mental health due to working through a pandemic. Our branch believes that as a trade union supporting public services workers, we should demonstrate that mental health concerns, particularly in the workplace, are taken seriously and without stigma. As mental health difficulties can impact on an individuals' working life and vice versa, they are more likely to end up in workplace disputes requiring UNISON support (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development Study).

Although mental health has risen on the public agenda over recent years, there is still much work that needs to be done. A recent index of 301 diseases found mental health problems to be one of the main causes of the overall disease disability worldwide and depression as the leading cause of disability in the world (Vos et al., 2013). Despite these statistics, mental health services continue to be chronically underfunded, crisis support available is limited, we have not yet achieved parity of esteem and stigma remains.

Research surrounding numerous mental health awareness campaigns has demonstrated the positive impact this can have in reducing stigma, and that individuals exposed to these campaigns are more likely to talk about and seek information relating to their mental health (Livingston et al., 2013). The awareness raising that got the issue of mental health into the public consciousness is also what provided the mandate for further funding and political attention (Time to Change, 2017). It stands to reason therefore that further awareness and campaigning would likely lead to increased support for members (as patients and as mental healthcare staff) and further funding for these services that are in dire need.

We therefore propose that Conference considers making 2022-2023 the year of mental health and wellbeing, to demonstrate UNISON's commitment to this cause.

Northamptonshire Health Workers

Accessing Proper Sick Pay for Care Workers

Conference notes a UNISON survey held in July 2020 highlighted more than half (52 percent) of low paid care workers say their employer was paying less than £100 a week or nothing at all, if they needed to shield or self isolate.

During the height of the pandemic, care workers facing severe financial hardship, were left with a stark choice of either carry on working whilst ill, or not paying the bills. The scrooge like payment of statutory sick pay only served to harm the rate of infection in this sector, as the failure of such a basic measure as full sick pay, meant many continued to work to ensure food was on the table and bills were paid.

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The £600 million infection control fund had little effect, as 44 percent of carers reported that their employer continued to offer just statutory sick pay or nothing at all (8 percent).

It is also widely reported that many care workers are choosing to use their valuable annual leave, paid at full pay, rather than reduce to statutory sick pay or nothing at all whilst ill. The use of annual leave in such circumstances, to prevent your earnings falling should not be necessary in today's climate.

Unfortunately, the future is set, Covid-19 and its variants as well as the annual cycle of Flu, which unnecessary kills an estimated 15,000 elderly people every year. Action must be taken to prevent this tragic toll rising.

When according to official Government statistics. Care homes that fail to offer sick pay are more likely to have higher levels of Covid-19 infection among residents. The answer is a simple one, give care sector the tools they need to support a safe environment for their service users, the ability to pay and for the workers to receive, full sick pay.

We call upon UNISON to:

- 1) Work with Regions and Branches to share good practice and ensure improving workplace rights for social care staff remains a priority for our union;
- 2) Raise these issues with the TUC to ensure they are addressed across the trade union movement;
- 3) Continue to work with the Future Social Care Coalition and other appropriate organisations and build a powerful, wide based campaign that will secure the change needed;
- 4) To work with other trade unions in this sector to bring about the change needed;
- 5) Publicise a list of local authorities that have agreed to enshrine the provision of contractual sick pay in their social care commissioning;
- 6) Work with Labour Link and do everything possible to ensure the National Care Service remains party policy and Labour local authorities commit to only commission providers of social care that pay full sick pay;
- 7) Continue to campaign for a significant and urgent increase in central government funding of local government commissioned social care.

Cambridgeshire County

Single Parent Rights Campaign: Supporting Single Parent Being Added to the Equality Act 2010 as a Protected Characteristic

Despite significance changes in social attitudes since the 1960s, single parents have continued to face stigma and discrimination but they are still not protected in single parent specific laws.

Single parents are often the most vulnerable to policy changes, such as the recent cuts to universal credit and rules around COVID isolation which left single parents unable to see any other adult.

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In the media single parents are constantly vilified, even by our current Prime Minister who in 1995 in The Spectator Magazine said the children of single mothers are “ill raised, ignorant, aggressive and illegitimate”.

Research from the campaign group Single Parent Rights have identified that up to 80% of single parents face discrimination in various areas of their life from housing to employment and even discounts for holidays where discounts are enjoyed by two parent families!

Despite this, single parents are not afforded protected characteristic status in the Equality Act 2010 alongside those who are married or in a civil partnership. This means direct discrimination towards single parents is not illegal.

Single parent discrimination disproportionately hits women who make up over 85 percent of single parents in the UK.

Single parent discrimination has huge impacts on single parents and their children, financially, emotionally and practically and contributes to poorer mental health, higher poverty rates and lower employment rates.

By adding single parents to the Equality Act 2010 employers, businesses and landlords would need to ensure they do not discriminate against single parents and where discrimination occurs single parents would have a clear legal route to challenge this.

This legal change would lead to multiple benefits, from higher employment rates to better mental health, benefitting single parents, their children and wider society.

Backing this campaign will put UNISON at the forefront of supporting single parent members in gaining equality within and outside the workplace.

Conference I request you to support this motion to:

- 1) Support single parent being added to the Equality Act 2010 as a protected characteristic;
- 2) Lobby the Government to implement single parent friendly policies and create a National Policy;
- 3) Check that UNISON's own policies, work practices, training etc. support single parents.

Thank you, Conference - I move!

West Cheshire

Stop Workers Being Charged to Have DBS Checks so they Start Jobs

Conference believes that we need to stop the regressive practice of organisations charging their new employees to get their Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) done.

As the average hourly rate of a support worker is £9.60 and an enhanced DBS costs £44 this means that a new employee loses over 4 hours of work they have done paying off their DBS.

This practice penalises low paid workers that provide essential work in our society by caring for the most vulnerable and have done this throughout the pandemic putting their lives at risk.

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We call upon UNISON to campaign to change government policy so that this practice is prohibited in law and lobby the Labour Party to adopt this as a policy.

By campaigning against this practice and working to stop organisations from doing it will help to make social care a more attractive workplace and stop penalising these low paid workers for choosing a career that helps the most vulnerable in our society.

Community and Voluntary Organisations

Not in line with SOC procedures

For a Publicly Owned, Democratically Managed, Free at the Point of Need National Health and Social Care System

Conference recognises that every single family will need access to both health care and social care at some point in their lives. Whether it is help with washing and dressing at home or long-term nursing support, most social care has never been automatically free at the point of use like the NHS.

Since the establishment of the welfare state in 1948, councils have had responsibility for social care, but it has always been means-tested - with delivery left to town halls, charities and private companies. In the last decade the means test has become meaner and the demand for help has grown.

Today, more than half of residents in elderly care homes pay all or some of their fees and 82% of places are provided by for-profit operators, according to research company Laing Buisson. Hedge funds, finance houses and profiteers now own and control much of the social care market.

Successive governments, Labour, Tory and Con-Dem, have been unwilling or unable to solve the issue of social care.

According to an article in the Guardian in September 2021, "for the hundreds of thousands of families paying 100% of care costs, bills stack up very fast, especially when loved ones have long term-conditions. Katie Meacock, part of the Rights for Residents campaign group, is selling her mother's flat to pay for her care fees. Caroline Hockter-Duncan, 75, has advanced dementia and moved into a £4,800 a month care home six years ago, and after the fees rose to £7,000 her savings ran out. She has already spent more than £400,000".

Many families who run out of money have to move often highly vulnerable loved ones out of privately funded care homes into council-funded care, which is considerably less well resourced and scandalously, many of those council-funded care home places are actually owned by the same companies raking it in from private payers. Such moves can be highly distressing and even dangerous for those residents' health.

Over 40,000 died from Covid in care homes during the pandemic in an overwhelmingly privatised system that puts profit before safety.

Between 2016 and 2020, the number of people requesting social care support increased by 120,000 but about 14,000 fewer people received it, according to the King's Fund thinktank. There are now more older people, partly as a result of the postwar baby boom and partly because older people are living longer. There are also more working-age adults with disabilities: 19 percent in 2019-20 compared with 15 percent in 2010-11.

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Projected adult social care spending between now and 2031 is £22billion. The Health Foundation argue that to meet demand, improve access and pay more for care will need £36.5 billion and that is with some means-tested charges still applying. The charity also argues that pay levels in social care must be improved and access to publicly funded care must be increased.

The Care Quality Commission warns that vacancy levels across the social care sector could reach 170,000 – Not surprising when the average pay for care workers is a paltry £8.50 an hour and one in four are on zero-hour contracts.

The government's knee-jerk response was to announce a 'workforce retention and recruitment fund' amounting to a pathetic £108 per care worker – with no explanation as to how this will attract new staff and relying on existing staff to work 'more hours in the system' making burnt-out carers do even more work.

Once again the Tory response is to make working-class people pay the cost of a crisis not of their making. Increasing national insurance contributions will hit working people in their pockets just as food and energy prices are going up, the Universal Credit uplift is being scrapped, and workers are facing attacks on their wages, terms and conditions through 'fire and rehire' across the sector.

In its last annual report, the Care Quality Commission described the sector as "very fragile" and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services said that in summer 2021 "close to 75,000 disabled and older people and carers were waiting for help in England. While the Covid pandemic has increased the focus on elderly care, council bosses are most worried about providing for people of working age with disabilities".

Conference believes there is an intrinsic and vital link between health and social care. Social care should address problems before they escalate to a person requiring hospital treatment. Social care services should also enable people to be discharged safely from hospital, freeing up resources. With the current shortfall in care provision, people will either remain in NHS beds or - as has frequently occurred during Covid - be sent home without adequate support, creating a vicious circle. Cuts in hospital beds and reduced hospital stay times have not been met with increases in social care provision.

Conference believes there should be no place for private profiteers in our health and social care system. Everyone should have access to free universal health and social care in an integrated system based on need not profit. It should not be based on ability to pay.

The Trades Union Congress has calculated that if capital gains tax - the tax on profits from assets like stocks and property - was paid at the same level as income tax, that would alone generate £17 billion a year for funding health and social care.

But taxing the rich and big business should be just the start. They will do everything they can to avoid paying higher taxes that eat into their profits. We need to be able to plan the funding of health, social care, education and other services based on need not profit. That would be possible if the whole of health and social care services and the major companies, banks and financial institutions were publicly owned and democratically controlled by workers and service users.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to publicly campaign for:

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- 1) A fully integrated Health and Social Care Service, 'from the Cradle to the Grave' – free at the point of need - publicly owned and democratically run by workers and service-users;
- 2) Immediate nationalisation (ie taking into local authority control) of any health or social care firm/organisation going out of business or threatening mass redundancies.
- 3) Bringing back in-house all privatised health and social care and removing the profit motive entirely from all care services;
- 4) A £15 per hour minimum wage, abolition of zero-hour contracts and national terms and conditions across all health and social care services, negotiated by the recognised trade unions in those sectors.

South East Region

Not sufficiently clear

Democracy in UNISON

The current National Executive Council was elected to lead our union to defend services, jobs, terms and conditions as a rejection of the failed approach of the previous National Executive Council majority.

Conference notes that the six resolutions agreed by the National Executive Council at its meeting on 6 October 2021, concern the frequency of National Executive Council meetings, formalising the role of the Presidential Team, National Executive Council control of disciplinary proceedings against union members and union support for activists sacked by their employer for union activity.

These resolutions were all within the powers of the National Executive Council and aimed to clarify and again make transparent the processes for using these powers. The National Executive Council has since received a QC's legal opinion that they did not step outside of their powers when agreeing these 6 resolutions.

Conference therefore:

- 1) Supports the National Executive Council developing more open and transparent processes for exercising its powers, and supports the 6th October resolutions;
- 2) Calls on the National Executive Council to support the development of open, democratic discussion and debate within the union at every level to enable members to develop a fighting strategy to defend their jobs, terms, conditions and pay;
- 3) Calls on the National Executive Council to work on increasing lay-member control of the union.

Nottingham City

NEC democracy

Conference notes that UNISON members voted for a change of direction in the 2021 National Executive Council elections and that a new National Executive Council leadership has agreed the aims of more democracy and transparency in its decision making so that we can agree how to tackle the problems our members face.

Conference notes that:

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- 1) The National Executive Council passed 6 resolutions at its meeting on 6 October 2021 by a clear majority, about the frequency of National Executive Council meetings, formalising the role of the Presidential team, National Executive Council control of disciplinary proceedings against union members and union support for activists victimised and sacked by their employer for union activities. These resolutions were all within the powers of the National Executive Council and aimed to clarify and again make transparent the processes for using these powers;
- 2) The Presidential Team received independent expert legal advice on the content of the resolutions which confirmed that they are within the National Executive Council's powers under the union constitution, do not require a change in the union rules and are lawful. Lord Hendy QC stated that: "none of the six resolutions adopted by the National Executive Council on 6 October is in breach of rule, ultra vires, or otherwise unlawful";
- 3) UNISON is a member-led union and that the role of the full-time officials is to advise, support and carry out the democratically agreed lawful and constitutional decisions of the National Executive Council and National Delegate Conference;
- 4) A democratic lay member-led union is key to fighting for our members over key issues such as pay, public services and fighting against racism and for equality.

Conference agrees that we:

- a) Welcome the National Executive Council developing more open and transparent processes for exercising its powers, and supports the 6th October resolutions;
- b) Support the development of open, democratic discussion and debate within the union at every level to enable members to develop a fighting strategy to defend their jobs, terms and conditions and pay;
- c) Welcome the National Executive Council's decisions and hope that these are the first steps towards increasing lay-member control of the union including improving the accountability of staff to elected UNISON bodies.

Homerton Hospital

Who Pays for Hybrid Working?

Conference celebrates the commitment of UNISON members who continued to deliver vital quality public services throughout the COVID pandemic, whether this was in their usual place of work or from their own home.

Even when the pandemic is finally over, many, if not most, public service employers are unlikely to require all office based workers to return to working from the office every single day. "Hybrid Working" will become the norm in these employers.

When working from home, employees incur significant costs arising from increased energy bills and the installation or upgrading of broadband. Whereas self employed people may claim tax relief on additional expenses including a proportion of rent/mortgage costs and council tax, employees can often only easily claim tax relief of £6 per week which means most people only receive a paltry £1.20 per week.

Many public service employers have not revised their mileage policy and only allow workers to claim car mileage for business use once they have exceeded the home to work miles for a building they no longer attend daily.

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Employees working from home must do so safely and have the appropriate equipment and furniture provided to allow them to do this. More than half of respondents to an Institute of Employment Studies homeworking wellbeing survey in 2020 reported experiencing new aches and pains: 58% complained of neck pain, 56% experienced shoulder pain and 55% had experienced back pain. An employer has a duty of care for all their employees. The main concern for an employer should be whether there is a suitable workspace at home for the employee to work. While some employers provide some equipment for free, others require their employees to purchase their own.

The wellbeing of members must also be considered by employers and support measures put in place so members do not feel isolated.

Conference believes that:

- 1) Once the pandemic is over, working from home should be a choice. Employers must not make it mandatory so they can save money on accommodation costs;
- 2) Workers must not be required to pay for any equipment that is necessary for them to work safely at home.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council:

- a) To liaise with every Service Group Executive as necessary, and produce updated bargaining guidance (including examples of employers adopting best practice initiatives) for all branches on home working. The guidance must be based on the principles that employers must cover the costs of working from home and no worker should be forced to work from home if they choose not to;
- b) Advise members how to obtain information from HMRC about how to claim tax relief if they are working from home.

Central Suffolk

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Central Suffolk

Shorter Working Week and Higher Minimum Wage

Conference believes it is time to put forth a vigorous campaign to reduce the statutory number of working hours and increase the national minimum wage for all workers.

This is largely due to an increase in automation and new technology across all industries and services which has increased productivity. Robots and AI have the potential to facilitate a workforce that works less hours and has a better work/life balance.

Instead, this change has benefited only the employers and the bosses, who have seized on this as an opportunity to increase profits and cut labour costs. Workers in jobs which have become increasingly automated have found their jobs slashed. If this continues, this will have devastating impacts on workers, with those already hit the hardest by austerity impacted the most.

Predictions show automation could potentially impact up to 30% of UK jobs by the early 2030s. The UK Workforce Forecast 2021 has projected about 1.4 million jobs in Britain could become automated, leaving workers faced with job losses which impacts women and those in part-time work the most. Therefore, Conference notes we need to demand a shorter working week, to retain maximum employment and so workers can benefit from the new technology.

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Furthermore, the austerity agenda led by successive Conservative and Liberal Democrat governments since 2010 has had a huge impact on the workloads and mental health of public sector workers. Many jobs have been lost, leaving those who retained their positions facing big increases in workloads and consequently increases in stress and other sickness. This is during a time when there is a rising demand for services from the most vulnerable people in society and has consequently led to failures to deliver for them. The Covid pandemic has only exacerbated this existing situation, providing further stimulus for stress and a deteriorating work-life balance.

Conference emphasises that a shorter working week needs to be coupled with better pay. Otherwise, forcing workers to accept a reduced working week will do nothing to improve living standards and will only benefit those on a higher pay. We can already see adopting fewer working hours has become a real choice for the better paid; working hours are shorter for higher earners by approximately five hours per week in the case of male full-time workers according to a report by the Resolution Foundation (2018). TUC's 'A future that works for working people' research and report in 2018 echoed this stating: shorter working hours – without a reduction in living standards – should be on our agenda for the twenty-first century.

A motion for increasing the minimum wage to £15 an hour in the care sector was widely supported this year at Labour Conference. Trade Unions argued that the sector faced an exodus of nurses and carers who were worn down by enduring low pay and unsociable hours. This made working conditions even worse for those remaining and made it more unattractive for workers looking to enter the sector. Nurses and care staff should not have to sacrifice their own health and wellbeing for their vocation. It is vitally important that demands for a shorter working week and higher pay are met to ensure safe staffing and improve workforce uptake. Conference notes that this call should be taken up as a new national minimum wage. Local government workers, workers in education, transport, hospitality, and the like have put themselves on the line during the pandemic. It has shown how vital the work of low paid workers is to society and our economy.

Workers are far from getting an adequate share of the wealth and value they create. In-work poverty is increasing for many individuals across the UK, with inflation currently standing at 4%. Universal Credit is increasingly becoming a 'top up' benefit to help level up wages to a subsistence level. We need an increased minimum wage for all workers to protect living standards, as employers fight to protect their profits.

Lastly, working people are asking for this. TUC's 'A future that works for working people' research and report in 2018, showed that when polled on their views on the future of work, working time was high on workers agenda. Over a third said that shorter working hours would be what would most improve their working lives. Second on this list of priorities was higher pay. The report emphasised that what this week looks like should not be prescriptive. The pandemic has highlighted that not everyone has the same preferences about their working pattern. Moreover, there are reasons some workers over others may prefer shorter hours spread over more days. Such as women, who are more likely than men to adjust their schedules and sacrifice paid work to care for children. For part-time workers also, a four-day week could mean an undesirable increase in current working hours.

Due to the above, Conference calls on UNISON to work with the whole trade movement to develop an extensive, cross-sector campaign to reduce the statutory number of working hours and increase the national minimum wage for all workers.

Waltham Forest

Hybrid Meetings, Training Etc.

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Conference notes that the need, since the outbreak of Covid-19, to rely on on-line meetings, training etc. has had negative effects on many areas of our work, including:

- 1) Reduced participation;
- 2) Proportionally fewer women members taking part;
- 3) Digital exclusion and access issues;
- 4) Loss of valuable informal opportunities for organising; and,
- 5) Inflexibility and fewer initiatives.

On the other hand, Conference also notes that some members have found advantages in taking part online, reducing travel, saving time and avoiding risk of infections and, with many members continuing to work from home, online availability of meetings, training etc. must remain an integral part of organising.

Conference therefore considers there is an urgent need for UNISON to offer “hybrid” meetings, training etc., giving members and others we aim to reach the choice how to take part and offering flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances.

Conference recognises that the successful introduction of hybrid working needs a national UNISON approach and depends on the availability of support and training in regions, itself offering both face-to-face and online options. It is disappointed by UNISON’s lack of progress so far.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to use all possible means consistent with UNISON rules and accepted staffing processes to make urgent progress on this matter.

City of Wolverhampton

Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign Action Group

Conference notes that in 2013 UNISON passed a motion “voting the long-standing friendship between UNISON and UNE, the Nicaraguan public sector trade union and the strengthening of its relationship in recent years”.

National Delegate Conference have also agreed that UNISON nationally would affiliate to NSCAG. (Nicaragua Solidarity Action Group.)

The relationship has been strengthened since then particularly in the West Midlands.

It is not surprising that as the only voice in the UK speaking on behalf of the Nicaraguan trade unions, (NSCAG) would seek to voice the extent of the subversive activities of the US and the anti Ortega sentiment in much of the media (including sadly some “left”) and express support for the government.

In 2021 the affiliation which is usually due in July was not paid.

It would appear that a decision was taken by the International Committee late 2020 to review all affiliations.

At the time of writing a decision had still not been taken and the affiliation remains unpaid since July 2020.

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We recognise that as in other countries with which we are actively engaged there maybe occasions where actions cannot be condoned and constructive criticism of the government maybe necessary, but ultimately it is the people we are twinning with.

For many years Nicaragua has faced immense pressure from the US and its allies seeking to undermine the Nicaraguan Government and its people which had heightened during the election.

Conference believes that the decision to cease payment (if it has taken place) to NSCAG is detrimental to an organisation which is poorly funded and our relationship with our Nicaraguan brothers and sisters.

Conference therefore re affirms its commitment to the Nicaraguan people and their labour organisations, and to continue affiliating to the NSCAG (Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign Action Group).

City of Wolverhampton

Speak Up and Speak Out

Despite efforts to eradicate misogyny, discrimination, bullying, sexism, aggression and intimidation in our workplaces, society and in our union, we still have a long way to go.

If we are to achieve a truly equal society, we must consider what more needs to be done within our own movement. UNISON with over one million women members still does not have the necessary support structures in place to enable them to speak out with confidence.

It is important that we establish processes and space for anyone who has suffered to report, receive advice, assistance and support when speaking out. The union needs to strengthen and widen its support mechanisms to ensure all members are never deterred from raising their concerns.

Currently, it would appear that our processes are weighted towards the responder and whilst we would all agree that due process needs to take place before conclusions are reached, it cannot be right that this is the case.

When allegations are made the process should be equitable allowing for proper investigation and decision making (without interference or public campaigning). During this time, we need to take into consideration anyone making allegations may in fact be a victim of serious abuse and require additional help coping with both mental and physical injury.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council alongside our Self Organised Groups to:

- 1) Impartially consider the current procedures, policies and support around members' complaints and implement the necessary changes to strengthen our call to end acts of violence, abuse and discrimination;
- 2) To consider implementing a safe place for our activists and members to speak out. Similar initiatives exist such as "Everyone's Welcome";
- 3) Ensure that any allegations are investigated and concluded without any unnecessary delay, and as close to the reporting as possible;

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- 4) Ensure both parties are provided with the necessary advice, support and representation without prejudice and in-line with “natural justice”;
- 5) Ensure all parties have access to counselling and/or are directed to relevant external agencies.

Renfrewshire

Democratic Socialism

Capitalism is responsible for worldwide programmes of privatisation, attacks on workers' jobs, wages and conditions, increasing inequality and poverty, especially in the less developed countries, environmental destruction, wars without end for whole sections of the world and a massive increase in profits for the few transnational companies which dominate the world economy.

Never more than now are the failings of capitalism exposed. It is so exposed that even the bosses recognise the crisis. The response of the bosses a decade ago during the global banking crisis was to give away to the failing system billions of pounds of workers' money. Bailing out bankers and the super rich one percent with our money to protect their system while imposing brutal austerity on the majority of the population is unacceptable and not the way forward for trade unionists and working class people.

The Covid-19 pandemic has further exposed to all the inequalities and failures of the current capitalist system, and the clear need for socialist planning. Public ownership of key elements of the economy would ensure that we have control of the wealth and resources required to effectively protect both health and living standards in any future pandemics.

Conference believes that there is an economic alternative to capitalism based on the common and democratic public ownership of the major elements of the economy, namely democratic socialism.

Accordingly, Conference calls for:

- 1) The nationalisation of all the banks on the basis of democratic public ownership, i.e. run by representatives of banking workers and trade unions, the wider working class, as well as the government. Take them completely out of the hands of the fat cats who made the mess! Compensation should be paid only on the basis of proven need;
- 2) The nationalised banks to offer cheap loans and mortgages for housing and for the planned development of industry, services and social housing;
- 3) The democratic public ownership and the opening of the books of the major companies that dominate the economy; let popular committees of workers, trade unionists and consumer groups see where the profits have gone and what their financial situation really is and for no job losses;
- 4) The ending of fuel poverty by implementing a windfall tax on the oil and gas companies as a step towards nationalising them. Public ownership of the fossil fuel corporations would allow a massive transfer of oil and gas profits to invest in renewable energy and a socialist green new deal to create jobs and tackle the climate crisis;
- 5) A trade union struggle to immediately increase the national minimum wage to £12 per hour without exemptions for young people. The introduction of a sliding scale of wages with automatic increases to cover inflation. It is a scandal that in 2021 the average pay of

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the top 100 bosses in Britain is currently £941 an hour while so many working families are living in poverty.

- 6) The ending of privatisation and for a massive programme of investment to improve public services and to defend public sector jobs and pay;
- 7) The nationalisation of the care sector, bringing all private care providers into public ownership;
- 8) Accordingly, this meeting calls on the leadership of UNISON to use all means at its disposal to publicise and popularise these issues amongst the membership and the working class generally.

City of Glasgow

Requiring a rule change

Fair Representation in the National Executive Council

The UNISON rule book that stipulates one of the aims of our union is to “promote fair representation in all the Union’s structures for women, members of all grades, black members, disabled members and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBT+) members.”

As a movement built on the values of solidarity and collectivism, we know just how important it is to defeat the tendencies that divide people. It is why we in the trade union movement have a special responsibility to tackle discrimination. We know that unless we do so our objective to organise and unite all working people becomes more difficult.

UNISON has a long and proud tradition of tackling discrimination in the workplace and more broadly in society. We were the union that championed self-organisation, proportionality, and fair representation, to guarantee through our rule book a union that reflects the diversity of its membership.

We have long campaigned for a fair, equal and just society. By embracing progressive ideals, changing our own organisation, we positioned the union so we could speak with credibility challenging others to follow in our footsteps.

We extremely disappointed that the initial actions of the new National Executive Council resulted in:

- 1) An all-white Presidential team;
- 2) No Black Members have been selected as the Chair or Vice Chair of any of the seven National Executive Council sub-committees;
- 3) UNISON’s delegation to the TUC General Council is all white (with three of the four delegates representing just one region).

There is no doubt that the union has the most unrepresentative structure of senior lay leaders since the union was founded 28 years ago. It reflects the old established order of white privilege. It diminishes the role and value of Black Members, and it ultimately weakens our union.

Conference instructs the National Delegate Conference to:

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- a) Write to the Presidential team making it clear that the National Executive Council should pay full attention to the rule book requirement to fair representation in the future;
- b) Ensure the matter is placed on the agenda of the next National Executive Council/ Self-Organised Group Equality Liaison Committee;
- c) Submit a rule change to the 2022 National Delegate Conference to ensure that such situations are prevented from happening in the future.

Hertfordshire

Fair Representation in the National Executive Council

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Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- a) Write to the Presidential team making it clear that the National Executive Council will pay full attention to the rule book requirement to fair representation in the future;
- b) Ensure the matter is placed on the agenda of the next National Executive Council/Self-Organised Group Equality Liaison Committee;

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- c) Submit a rule change to the 2023 National Delegate Conference to ensure that such situations are prevented from happening in the future.

Hertfordshire

Fair Representation of Black Members in Branches

Conference recalls the UNISON rule book that stipulates one of the aims of our union is to “promote fair representation in all the union’s structures for women, members of all grades, black members, disabled members and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBT+) members.”

With reference to senior branch posts (Branch Secretary, Branch Chair and Treasurer), not enough has been done to ensure that the principle of fair representation for Black members has been enacted. Too many branches with a substantial proportion of Black members do not have Black activists in leadership positions – even when there are activists interested in these positions.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Write to all branches asking them to encourage all branch officers and activists have their ethnicity recorded on RMS;
- 2) Obtain information on the recorded ethnicity for activists elected to the Secretary, Chair and Treasurer posts and report the anonymised figures for the union every year;
- 3) Develop an action plan aimed at increasing the number of Black activists in these three positions. Branches should be asked for their ideas on what more can be done to promote our principles of fair representation and to ensure that the Black Lives Matter principles are carried forward within our union as well as our members’ employers;
- 4) Consider if any changes are needed to the UNISON Rule Book and report its conclusions to the 2023 National Delegate Conference.

Hertfordshire

Election of Officials

Conference believes that as a member-led union, UNISON members should be allowed to decide, in a democratic manner, who occupies essential key full-time positions within our union. We recognise that there are a number of these roles which are not currently subject to election by members.

Conference acknowledges and applauds the work undertaken on a national, regional and branch level, and recognises the importance of retaining a skilled, committed and directly employed workforce.

However, Conference believes that the positions of Assistant General Secretaries, Heads of Service Groups and Regional Secretaries are critical, high-profile roles of significant influence that ought to be elected on a regular basis, comparable to the election of the General Secretary that is subject to election every five years.

We recognise the value of these roles and believe that making the roles directly accountable to the membership will strengthen the positions and the work they carry out on behalf of members.

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Conference therefore instructs the National Executive Council to develop proposals, including any necessary rule changes, to make the above identified roles subject to member accountability by regular election at the earliest opportunity, and to bring these proposals to the 2023 National Delegate Conference.

University of Brighton

Elections in UNISON

Conference believes that as a member led union, UNISON members should be allowed to decide in a democratic manner who occupies essential key fulltime positions within our union. We recognise that there are a number of these roles which are not currently subject to election by members.

Conference acknowledges, and applauds the work undertaken by UNISON employed staff on a national, regional and branch level and recognises the importance of retaining a skilled and committed directly employed workforce. However, Conference believes that the positions of Assistant General Secretaries, Heads of Service Groups, and Regional Secretaries, are critical high profile roles of significant influence, that ought to be elected on a regular basis comparable to the election of the General Secretary, that is subject to election every five years. We recognise the value of these roles and believe that making the roles directly accountable to the membership will strengthen the positions and the work they carry out on behalf of members.

Conference therefore instructs the National Executive Council to develop proposals, including any necessary rule changes, to make the above identified roles subject to member accountability by regular election at the earliest opportunity, and to bring these proposals to the 2023 National Delegates Conference.

West Sussex

Election of Senior Roles in UNISON

Conference acknowledges, and applauds the work undertaken by UNISON employed staff on a national, regional and branch level and recognises the importance of retaining a skilled and committed directly employed workforce.

However, Conference believes that the positions of Assistant General Secretaries, Heads of Service Groups, and Regional Secretaries, are critical high profile roles of significant influence, that ought to be elected on a regular basis comparable to the election of the General Secretary, that is subject to election every five years. We recognise the value of these roles and believe that making the roles directly accountable to the membership will strengthen the positions and the work they carry out on behalf of members.

Conference therefore instructs the National Executive Council to develop proposals, including any necessary rule changes, to make the above identified roles subject to member accountability by regular election at the earliest opportunity, and to bring these proposals to the 2023 National Delegates Conference.

Knowsley

Election of Senior Officers

Conference believes that as a member led union, UNISON members should be allowed to decide in a democratic manner who occupies essential key full time positions within our union. We recognise that there are a number of these roles which are not currently subject to election by members.

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We recognise the value of these roles and believe that making the roles directly accountable to the membership will strengthen the positions and the work they carry out on behalf of members.

Conference therefore instructs the National Executive Council to develop proposals, including any necessary rule changes, to make the above identified roles subject to member accountability by regular election at the earliest opportunity, and to bring these proposals to the 2023 National Delegates Conference.

Salford City

Fair Representation in the National Executive Council

The UNISON rule book that stipulates one of the aims of our union is to “promote fair representation in all the Union’s structures for women, members of all grades, black members, disabled members and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBT+) members.”

As a movement built on the values of solidarity and collectivism, we know just how important it is to defeat the tendencies that divide people. It is why we in the trade union movement have a special responsibility to tackle discrimination. We know that unless we do so our objective to organise and unite all working people becomes more difficult.

UNISON has a long and proud tradition of tackling discrimination in the workplace and more broadly in society. We were the union that championed self-organisation, proportionality, and fair representation, to guarantee through our rule book a union that reflects the diversity of its membership.

We have long campaigned for a fair, equal and just society. By embracing progressive ideals, changing our own organisation, we positioned the union so we could speak with credibility challenging others to follow in our footsteps.

We extremely disappointed that the initial actions of the new National Executive Council resulted in:

- 1) An all-white Presidential team;
- 2) No Black Members have been selected as the Chair or Vice Chair of any of the 7 National Executive Council sub-committees;
- 3) UNISON’s delegation to the TUC General Council is all white (with three of the four delegates representing just one region).

There is no doubt that the union has the most unrepresentative structure of senior lay leaders since the union was founded 28 years ago. It reflects the old established order of

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white privilege. It diminishes the role and value of Black Members, and it ultimately weakens our union.

This Eastern Region Black members SOG instructs the National Delegates Conference to:

- a) Write to the Presidential team making it clear that the National Executive Council should pay full attention to the rule book requirement to fair representation in the future;
- b) Ensure the matter is placed on the agenda of the next National Executive Council/ Self-Organised Group Equality Liaison Committee;
- c) Submit a rule change to the 2022 National Delegate Conference to ensure that such situations are prevented from happening in the future.

UNISON Essex

Fair Representation of Black Members in Branches

Conference recalls the UNISON rule book that stipulates one of the aims of our union is to “promote fair representation in all the union’s structures for women, members of all grades, black members, disabled members and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBT+) members.”

With reference to senior branch posts (Branch Secretary, Branch Chair and Treasurer), not enough has been done to ensure that the principle of fair representation for Black members has been enacted. Too many branches with a substantial proportion of Black members do not have Black activists in leadership positions – even when there are activists interested in these positions.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Write to all branches asking them to encourage all branch officers and activists have their ethnicity recorded on RMS;
- 2) Obtain information on the recorded ethnicity for activists elected to the Secretary, Chair and Treasurer posts and report the anonymised figures for the union every year;
- 3) Develop an action plan aimed at increasing the number of Black activists in these three positions. Branches should be asked for their ideas on what more can be done to promote our principles of fair representation and to ensure that the Black Lives Matter principles are carried forward within our union as well as our members’ employers;
- 4) Consider if any changes are needed to the UNISON Rule Book and report its conclusions to the 2023 National Delegate Conference.

UNISON Essex

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As a movement built on the values of solidarity and collectivism, we know just how important it is to defeat the tendencies that divide people. It is why we in the trade union movement

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There is no doubt that the union has the most unrepresentative structure of senior lay leaders since the union was founded 28 years ago. It reflects the old established order of white privilege. It diminishes the role and value of Black Members, and it ultimately weakens our union.

Conference instructs the National Delegates Conference to:

- a) Write to the Presidential team making it clear that the National Executive Council should pay full attention to the rule book requirement to fair representation in the future;
- b) Ensure the matter is placed on the agenda of the next National Executive Council/ Self-Organised Group Equality Liaison Committee;
- c) Submit a rule change to the 2022 National Delegate Conference to ensure that such situations are prevented from happening in the future.

UNISON Essex

Rule Change: Conduct of Conferences

Add in new rule:

"P 4.3

When the SOC Chairperson moves the Standing Orders Committee Report, the Conference Chair asks the delegates for questions. At this point delegates are given the opportunity to ask a question. Delegates can move reference back of a particular section of the report if they are not satisfied with its contents. Therefore the SOC recommends that Conference may vote to refer back a whole, numbered section or part of a section. The effect of reference back of a particular section or part of a section is that Conference has not yet approved that section and the SOC is charged with amending the agenda to reflect the

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views of conference it. The SOC will then report back to Conference with its amended agenda and ask Conference to accept the updated report."

Wirral

Standing Orders Committee: Standing Orders Procedures

Conference recognises that as a member led union, Conference is the supreme body of our union. This is explicit in our rule book where Rule D 1.1 states "The supreme government of the Union shall be vested in the National Delegate Conference, which shall meet annually for four days at such time and place as the National Executive Council shall determine".

Conference recognises the important work undertaken by Standing Orders Committee to ensure that Conference has an agenda that allows for the effective and appropriate consideration of business. Their expertise and experience is invaluable in assisting Conference to ensure that competent motions are debated. However, Conference also recognises that as the supreme government of the union, Conference should have ultimate control of the agenda; however, the current standing orders procedures in relation to 'reference back' do not currently allow Conference to fulfil this role.

Conference therefore agrees that the following paragraphs of Standing Orders Procedures Section 2 'Reference Back of SOC Report' be deleted:

"The effect of reference back of a particular section or part of a section is that Conference has not yet approved that section and the SOC is charged with reconsidering it. The SOC will then report back to Conference with its reconsidered view and ask Conference to accept the updated report.

The SOC may decide to change its proposal, or to maintain its original proposal. Delegates can only vote to accept the report or refer back a section of the report. They cannot amend the report from the floor of Conference".

These paragraphs to be replaced with:

"The effect of reference back of a particular section or part of a section is that Conference has not yet approved that section and the SOC is charged with amending the agenda to reflect the views of Conference. The SOC will then report back to Conference with its amended agenda and ask Conference to accept the updated report."

Wirral

Expand Elected Positions - Increase Union Democracy

Conference believes that as a member led union, Unison members should be allowed to decide in a democratic manner who occupies essential key full time positions within our union. We recognise that there are a number of these roles which are not currently subject to election by members.

Conference acknowledges, and applauds the work undertaken by UNISON employed staff on a national, regional and branch level and recognises the importance of retaining a skilled and committed directly employed workforce. However Conference believes that the positions of Assistant General Secretaries, Heads of Service Groups, and Regional Secretaries, are critical high profile roles of significant influence, that ought to be elected on a regular basis comparable to the election of the General Secretary, that is subject to election every five years. We recognise the value of these roles and believe that making the roles directly

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accountable to the membership will strengthen the positions and the work they carry out on behalf of members.

Conference therefore instructs the National Executive Council to develop proposals, including any necessary rule changes, to make the above identified roles subject to member accountability by regular election at the earliest opportunity, and to bring these proposals to the next appropriate Conference.

Wirral

National Mental Health Officer, Regional and Branches

As a branch we are passionate about mental health and after our 2019 suicide awareness training motion was passed with huge support from delegates, we have become increasingly aware of the real need for a better mental health advocacy structure within UNISON.

Mental health currently sits under the health and safety committee nationally which as a branch we feel is not an effective or appropriate place for it to be dealt with. We ask conference to consider a dedicated officer role within branch similar to other equality groups, officers at regional and national level who are able to champion and forward key issues that are affecting members with mental health difficulties and stress in order to promote more effective change. We are aware that we are not experts in this field but feel it is important to have a separate mental health role as we would be able to more effectively campaign for change within organisations from staff on the ground up to the managers and directors who need to be held accountable for policies and procedures that discriminate against members who struggle with their mental health. We as a branch have had experience that many of our members are having problems with workplace stress which is often not dealt with appropriately and would value a dedicated officer who can champion change in the organisations we work alongside.

During this time of austerity and with the challenges of Covid-19 it is more important than ever to fight for equal support for mental health and against the chronic underfunding affecting mental health services. The UNISON Mental Health Matters project identified 60% of mental health services staff feel their mental health has been affected by their work and in the Struggling to Cope survey 38% reported working several hours of unpaid overtime on a weekly basis with well over half citing increased workload and cuts in staffing levels as reasons for why they are working these hours. UNISON has already prided itself on fighting to keep our members physically safe in their workplace, we believe this group will build on this previous work supporting members but also challenging organisations to understand their duty of care to their staff in regard to mental health.

We are proposing that the National Executive Council and Conference considers organisational change to empower our members by implementing the following positions:

- 1) National Mental Health Officer;
- 2) Regional Mental Health Officer;
- 3) Branch Mental Health Officer.

Northamptonshire Health Workers

Electing Senior Leaders in the Union

Conference believes that as a member-led union, UNISON members should be allowed to decide in a democratic manner who occupies essential key full-time positions within our

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union. We recognise that there are a number of these roles which are not currently subject to election by members.

Conference acknowledges, and applauds the work undertaken by UNISON employed staff on a national, regional and branch level and recognises the importance of retaining a skilled and committed directly employed workforce. However Conference believes that the positions of Assistant General Secretaries, Heads of Service Groups, and Regional Secretaries, are critical high profile roles of significant influence, that ought to be elected on a regular basis comparable to the election of the General Secretary, that is subject to election every 5 years. We recognise the value of these roles and believe that making the roles directly accountable to the membership will strengthen the positions and the work they carry out on behalf of members.

Conference therefore instructs the National Executive Council to develop proposals, including any necessary rule changes, to make the above identified roles subject to member accountability by regular election at the earliest opportunity, and to bring these proposals to the 2023 National Delegates Conference.

Coventry City

Delegations to National Delegates Conference

Conference notes the principles of proportionality and fair representation throughout the union under rule D 2.14.2 is the representation of women and men in fair proportion to the relevant number of female and male members comprising the electorate.

2.14.3 "Fair representation" is the broad balance of representation of members of the electorate, considering such factors as age and low pay, the balance between full time and part time workers, manual and non-manual workers, different occupations, skills, race, sexual orientation, disability and gender identity

The current delegation to National Delegate Conference is determined by numbers according to the membership total in each branch.

We seek the National Executive Council to review whether the current definition of fair representation is adequate and inclusive of the protected characteristics identified under the 2010 Equality Act:

- 1) Age;
- 2) Disability;
- 3) Gender reassignment;
- 4) Marriage and civil partnership;
- 5) Pregnancy and maternity;
- 6) Race;
- 7) Religion or belief;
- 8) Sex.

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We seek a report back on whether a rule change is necessary to facilitate full and equal representation for lay members and whether having two members present at National Delegate Conference from each of the Self Organised groups is adequate to provide national representation at the National Delegate Conference where the direction of our union is determined, or whether we should have a greater representation of delegates from our branches to National Delegate Conference.

Cambs and Peterborough Community and Mental Health

Statement not a motion

Privatisation, Pollution and Profit in our Waterways

This National Delegate Conference notes the deteriorating condition of pollution in our rivers and waterways. A new House of Commons committee report on water quality in rivers found that “only 14% of English rivers met good ecological status and no river met good chemical status.” It continued: “A ‘chemical cocktail’ of sewage, agricultural waste, plastic and persistent chemicals is polluting rivers...”

The report identifies the main culprits as agricultural pollution (mainly slurry from mega-farms) affecting 40% of water bodies; sewage and wastewater dumping by private water companies accounting for 36% of pollution; with a further 18% run-off from towns, cities and transport. The report could have been penned in 1864 when a Royal Commission described British rivers as “poisonous”. It seems that nothing much has really changed after one-and-a-half centuries of anti-pollution legislation under capitalism.

Much of the improved water quality in the Thames and other important rivers in recent decades are due to deindustrialisation as Britain’s capitalists have outsourced large parts of manufacturing to Asian countries. The report adds: “The prevalence of plastic pollution, the presence of persistent chemicals and spread of antimicrobial resistant pathogens in rivers in England are all issues of grave concern.

The snag is, manufacturing and the water companies are privately owned and run for profit. As the old socialist saying goes: ‘You can’t plan what you don’t control, and you can’t control what you don’t own’.

Conference recognises the relatively low cost of fines for water pollution vis-à-vis the cost of substantial investment to make the industry’s infrastructure fit for purpose, means that the private water companies, which prioritise shareholder dividends, will continue to pollute.

It was reported in 2020 that England’s for-profit water companies paid an astonishing £57 billion in dividends between 1991 and 2019 - an average of £2 billion a year to shareholders since privatisation more than three decades ago. These hollowed-out, debt-laden companies simply screw their customers to pay for any investments.

Johnson’s big business tory government, by squeezing the funding of the Environmental Agency’s (EA), environmental protection work so it becomes utterly ineffectual, has effectively protected the polluters. A decade or more of cuts means that funding for this aspect of the EA has slumped from £170 million in 2009-10 to just £76 million in 2019- 20, and £94 million in 2020-21.

Conference believes:

- 1) That all the Privatised water companies should be bought back into Public Ownership with compensation only on the basis of proven need;

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- 2) That substantial public investment is needed to make up for decades of chronic underinvestment and reservoir sell-offs;
- 3) That as part of an overall socialist plan of production, a workers' government could, after centuries of capitalist abuse and vandalism, restore our waterways to a pristine state.

Hackney

Withdrawn by submitting body

No Place for Sexist Bullies

North Yorkshire

Tackling the Social Care Crisis

Eastern Region

Received past the deadline

Future Pension Provision for Public Service Workers Not Eligible for Defined Benefit Scheme

Housing Associations

No Place for Sexist Bullies

Housing Associations

Rule Amendments Ruled Out of Order

Conflicts with an Existing Rule

Rule D The Right to Attend and Speak

D 1.7.8

At the end of Rule D 1.7.8 add:

"Each regional retired members' committee, having the right to be represented by only one retired member, may, in order to promote proportionality, fair representation or equal opportunities, seek the respective region's approval to appoint two retired members to share attendance between them. The respective region shall be responsible for any extra costs of this arrangement."

City of Wolverhampton

Schedule B Benefits of Retired Members

Schedule B 2.2

At the end of the first sentence add:

"and Schedule B, paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8 providing the accident or fatal accident happens whilst upon union business."

City of Wolverhampton

In breach of Rule D 2.12 Employment of Staff

Rule E Principal Officers

Insert new rule E 4 to read as follows:

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"4 ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY

There shall be Assistant General Secretaries of the Union

4.1 The National Executive Council shall determine the number and scope of Assistant General Secretary roles. Assistant General Secretaries shall have duties, rights, powers and responsibilities, as approved by the National Executive Council. The General Secretary shall conduct day to day management of the Assistant General Secretaries under the direction of the National Executive Council.

4.2 Assistant General Secretaries shall be elected and shall hold office for the maximum period of time prescribed by law for General Secretaries. Any candidate for the post of Assistant General Secretary must be nominated by the National Executive Council, or by at least two national Service Group Executives, or by at least two Regional Councils, or by at least 25 branches.

4.3 The ballot for the post of Assistant General Secretary shall be a secret postal ballot of the membership, which shall include retired members, conducted by a Returning Officer independent of the Union. The electoral rules in Rule D.8 and Schedule C shall apply to such elections."

National Executive Council

Rule E Principal Officers

Insert new rule E 5 to read as follows:

"5 REGIONAL SECRETARY

5.1 Each region of UNISON shall have a Regional Secretary. Regional Secretaries shall have duties, rights, powers and responsibilities, as approved by the National Executive Council.

5.2 Regional Secretaries shall be elected and shall hold office for the maximum period of time prescribed by law for General Secretaries. Any candidate for the post of Regional Secretary must be nominated by the respective Regional Council, or by at least two regional Service Group Executives, or by at least 3 branches within the respective region.

5.3 The ballot for the post of Regional Secretary shall be a secret postal ballot of the membership of the respective region, which shall include retired members, conducted by a Returning Officer independent of the Union. With the exception of the restricted regional constituency, the electoral rules in Rule D.8 and Schedule C shall apply to such elections."

National Executive Council

Rule E Principal Officers

Insert new rule E 6 to read as follows:

"6 HEAD OF GROUP

6.1 Each service group of UNISON shall have a Head of Group, who is the paid officer acting as the principal officer for that service group. Heads of Group shall have duties, rights, powers and responsibilities, as approved by the National Executive Council.

6.2 Heads of Group shall be elected and shall hold office for the maximum period of time prescribed by law for General Secretaries. Any candidate for the post of Head of Group must

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be nominated by the respective Service Group Executive, or by at least two regional Service Group Executives, or by at least 5 branches representing members from the respective Service Group.

6.3 The ballot for the post of Head of Group shall be a secret postal ballot of the membership of the respective service group, which shall include retired members, conducted by a Returning Officer independent of the Union. With the exception of the restricted service group constituency, the electoral rules in Rule D.8 and Schedule C shall apply to such elections."

National Executive Council

Rule Q Definitions

Remove the definition in section Q of the Rule Book, which currently reads:

"HEAD OF GROUP means the paid officer appointed to act as principal paid officer of a Service Group."

Replace with:

"HEAD OF GROUP means the paid officer acting as principal paid officer of a Service Group."

National Executive Council

Rule D Employment of Staff

Remove the existing wording for Rule D 2.12.1, which currently reads:

"The National Executive Council (or the General Secretary acting on its behalf) shall have the power to engage or dismiss such staff as may be required for the conduct of the business of the Union."

Replace with a new Rule D 2.12.1 to read:

"With the exception of staff appointed through election, the National Executive Council (or the General Secretary acting on its behalf) shall have the power to engage or dismiss such staff as may be required for the conduct of the business of the Union."

National Executive Council

Not competent

Rule D National Executive Council

D 2.2.2

Delete:

"Only full members within the Region shall be eligible to vote in respect of seats in the Region."

Replace with:

"All members, including retired members within the Region, shall be eligible to vote in respect of seats in the Region."

D 2.4

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After: "The period of office shall be two years" add: "Retired members shall be eligible to vote for these seats."

D 2.5

After: "The period of office shall be two years" add: "Retired members shall be eligible to vote or these seats."

D 2.6

After "The period of office shall be two years" add: "Retired members shall be eligible to vote for these seats"

Add a new Rule D 2.7:

"D .27 Retired Members' seats

There will be an additional two representatives reserved for retired members, one female and one general, elected from a national constituency of all regions.

No members shall be a candidate for election to the Retired Members' seats unless she/he has been nominated by at least two branches or a Regional Retired Members' Committee. The period of office shall be two years. All members, including retired members, shall be eligible to vote for these seats. These representatives will have the right to vote on any issue, including those which concern the pay and conditions of work of members in employment."

Hampshire

Rule C Membership

In second sentence delete the words "unless otherwise decided by the National Executive Council"

Lothian Health

Rule P Conduct of Conferences

Add in new rule P 4.3:

"P 4.3 When the Standing Orders Committee Chairperson moves the Standing Orders Committee Report, the Conference Chair asks the delegates for questions. At this point delegates are given the opportunity to ask a question. Delegates can move reference back of a particular section of the report if they are not satisfied with its contents. Therefore, the Standing Orders Committee recommends that Conference may vote to refer back a whole, numbered section or part of a section. The effect of reference back of a particular section or part of a section is that Conference has not yet approved that section and the Standing Orders Committee is charged with amending the agenda to reflect the views of conference it. The SOC will then report back to Conference with its amended agenda and ask Conference to accept the updated report."

Wirral

Schedule A to Schedule D

Rule changes to Schedule A to Schedule D:

Schedule	Currently says:	Change to:
A 1.3	she/her her/his	They Their
A 1.4	her/him her/his	Them Their

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B 2.4	her/his	Them	Their
B 3.3	her/him	Them	
	he/she is		They are
	her or his	Their	
C 6	her/him	Them	
D 1	she/he is		They are
D 2	her/his	Their	
D 3	her/his		Their
D 6	she/he admits		They admit
D 7	she/he denies	They deny	
	she/he	They	
	she/he claims	They claim	
D 10	her/his	Their	
	her/his	Their	
D 11	her/his	Their	
	her/his	Their	
	she/he wishes	They wish	
D 13	her/his		Their
D 14	her/his		Their
D 17	she/he does	They do	
	her/his	Their	
	her/his	Their	
D 23	her/his		Their
D 26(1)	she/her	They	
	her/his		Their
	her/his		Them
D 26(4)	her/his	Their	
D 26(6)	her/his	Their	

National Executive Council

Rule C Membership to Rule P Standing Orders for Conferences

Rule change:

Rule	Currently says:	Change to:
C 2.6.1	she/he has	They have
C 2.8.2	she/he resigns	They resign
C 4.1	her/his	Their
	she/he has	They have
C 5.1	her or his (used twice)	Their
C 5.5	him/her	Them
C 6.3	her/his	Their
C 6.4	her/his	Their
C 7.1.2	she or he intends	They intend
	she or he	They
	his or her	Their
C 7.3	her or his	Their
	her/his	Their
C 7.4.1	her or his	Their
	she/he	They
D 2.2.3	she/he has	They have
	her/his	Their
	she/he is	They are
D 2.2.4	she/he meets	They meet
	she/he was	They were
D 2.5	she/he	They

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D 2.5.2	Has	Have	
D 2.6	she/he has	They have	
D 3.5.7	(s)he meets	They meet	
	(s)he was	They were	
D 3.5.8	she/he	They	
	she/he	They	
D 3.5.10	she/he	They	
	she/he	They	
D 3.5.13	her/his	Their	
D 3.5.14	she/he has	They have	
D 7.1	she/he was	They were	
	her/his	Their	
E 3.2	her/his	Their	
G 3.2	her/his	Their	
G 3.5	her/his	Their	
G 4.2.5	her/his	Their	
G 4.3.2	her/his	Their	
H 2.1	she/her is	They are	
	her/his	Their	
H 2.3	her/his	Their	
I 2.2	her/his	Their	
I 2.4	her or his	Their	
	her or his	Their	
I 5.2	she/he	They	
K 2 (I)	her/him	Them	
K 4	her/his	Their	
K 5	her/his	Their	
	she/he has	They have	
M 1.2.1	she/he	They	
M 1.2.1 (a)	her/his	Their	
M 1.2.1 (b)	her/his	Their	
M 1.4.2	her/his	Their	
M 1.4.3	her/his	Their	
M 1.4.4	her/him	Them	
	her/his	Their	
M 1.4.5	her/him	Them	
M 5	she/he	They	
	her/his	Their	
M 6.4	his/her	Their	
M 7.1	her/his	Their	
P 7.1	her/his	Their	
P 7.2	his or her	Their	
P 7.3	she/he	They	
P 12.1.1	her/his	Their	
P 12.6	her/his	Their	
P 15.1	she/he considers	They consider	

National Executive Council

Not sufficiently clear

Rule G Retired Members

G 2.6.3

Line3: after “unless” insert “posts on their Branch Executive Committee cannot be filled by full members of the branch. Obviously, retired members would not be able to fill key

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positions such as Branch Chair, Secretary, Health and Safety Officer, or any other branch officer position that would require the post holder to negotiate directly with management, or”

The amended rule C2.6.3 would then read as follows:-

“Retired members shall be entitled to attend branch meetings and to vote on issues not relating to the pay and conditions of members in employment. They will be entitled to stand for office and vote only for positions in the Retired Members’ Organisation unless posts on their Branch Executive Committee cannot be filled by full members of the branch. Obviously, retired members would not be able to fill key positions such as Branch Chair, Secretary, Health and Safety Officer, or any other branch officer position that would require the post holder to negotiate directly with management, or otherwise determined by the National Executive Council or as otherwise provided for in these Rules.”

Environment Agency Anglian

Rule C Categories of membership

After existing rule C 2.1 insert new rule C 2.1.1:

“C 2.1.1 Members of UNISON who are members of another union (in employment covered by Rule C.1), shall not be entitled to stand for election or hold any office under these Rules where, at any time, they promote, support, or undertake organisation or recruitment activities for or on behalf of that other union; and undertake any activity for or on behalf of that other union which is detrimental to the interests of UNISON.”

National Executive Council

Schedule C Elections

Remove the current Schedule C wording, which reads:

"All elections for the post of General Secretary, and for election to the National Executive Council, and to a Service Group Executive shall be conducted in accordance with the following rules. Any election to any other post or body will be subject to these rules if the National Executive Council so decide."

Replace with:

"All elections for the post of General Secretary, and for election to the National Executive Council, and to a Service Group Executive shall be conducted in accordance with the following rules. Any election to any other post or body will be subject to these rules if the National Delegates Conference or National Executive Council so decide."

National Executive Council

Rule H Records of Members

Add the following new Rule H 1.1a:

"1.1a The Membership Record System shall be at Head Office shall be the only official membership list for the UNISON and there is an obligation on Branches and Regions to keep this list up to date to comply with the data protection principle of accuracy. Separate local lists must not be held to comply with the data protection principle of data minimisation unless otherwise directed by RMS Operations for data cleansing purposes."

National Executive Council

Rule C Unemployed members

C 2.4.2 After “Council” add new point:

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“providing they have not been dismissed from employment for any act of discrimination or harassment as defined in Rule I 2.3 (i) and (ii)’ subject to an appeal process by the National Executive Council.”

Kent Local Government

Received twice

Rule C Unemployed Members

In C 2.4.2

After “Council” add:

'providing they have not been dismissed from employment for any act of discrimination or harassment as defined in Rule I 2.3 (i) and (ii)'.

Eastern and Coastal Kent Health