

**2022 National Delegate Conference  
Decisions**

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Decisions**

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### Motions

#### 1. Building the Union Organising for Our Future

**Carried as Amended: 1.1**

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;
- 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;

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- 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 recognises that many UNISON members find their way into union activism through involvement in one of the self-organised groups (SOGs) and commends initiatives by SOGs which seek to recruit members to the union and to support and to encourage members to become involved in the union beyond those groups. It notes, for example, that the LGBT+ group's recruitment work includes running UNISON stalls at many Pride (digital or in person) events which help to further raise the profile of the group's work, recruit new members into the union and engage new activists. It further notes that some of these are run in conjunction with local branches, which gives those branches not only the opportunity to recruit new members into their branch, but also the opportunity to engage with potential activists as potential members (and existing members) often discuss workplace issues when they speak to activists on the stalls.

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

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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;
- 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) Work with the self-organised groups and the National Young Members Forum to identify and promote best practice in mentoring schemes, and to promote existing learning resources on activist development;
- E) Make appropriate 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;
- F) Encourage branches and regions to work with the relevant self-organised groups and/or the National Young Members Forum to organise a visible UNISON presence at appropriate community events such as Prides
- G) 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;

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H) Establish accurate organising benchmark data with regular and transparent reporting of progress against national and regional objectives;

I) 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;

J) 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;

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.

### **6. Recruitment Communication - Time for a Real Change**

**Fell**

### **7. The Seven Principles of Public Life**

**Lost**

### **8. Complaints**

**Carried as Amended: 8.1**

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;

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- 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 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. The complaints procedure includes an initial informal stage, a second formal stage which is the responsibility of the relevant regional office and provision for a third stage (or review) at national level.

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 I 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 unison 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 work with branches and Regions to that all complaints are dealt with quickly and timescales of the complaint procedure is adhered to;
- b) Instruct the National Executive Council to review the operation of UNISON's disciplinary procedures, in accordance with Rule I and Schedule D with a view to ensuring that any Rule I 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 receives, within one year of taking office, mandatory training in dealing with complaints and disciplinary matters, with a strong anti-racist component (to include sensitive handling of complaints of bullying and harassment).

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

**Carried as Amended: 9.1**

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



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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:

- 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.

Conference further instructs the National Executive Council to:

- i) Include in the union's annual report anonymised monitoring information indicating:
  - a) The number of Black members on the National Executive Council;
  - b) The number of National Executive Council sub-committee chair or vice-chair positions held by Black members;
- ii) Ask each region to report on the number of members of its Regional Committee (as defined by Rule F.5) and publish this information annually;

Ask each region to identify its key lay committees and consult on how best to collate anonymised monitoring information of members who chair these committees.

### **10. Not in Our Name**

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**Carried**

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 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.

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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.

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;

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- 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.

### **11. Not in Our Name**

**Carried**

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 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.

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### 12. Combatting the Rise of Discrimination and Harassment Through Education

**Carried as Amended: 12.1**

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 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.

We want the National Executive Council to understand that we need to have a more up to date approach to effectively dealing with racism and harassment in educational settings.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to

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;

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- 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.
- 8) Assess the East Midlands regional 'having the uncomfortable conversation about racism in the workplace campaign' and fully adopt its implementation across the whole union;
- 9) Contact all Branches in our union to confirm that the National Executive Council fully and proactively supports all regional campaigns against any form of race discrimination.

### **15. UNISON at 30**

**Carried**

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.

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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.
- 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.

### **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**

**Carried**

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.

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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:

- 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.

### **44. White Ribbon Accreditation**

**Carried as Amended: 44.1**

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 and that men and boys are central to ending 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.



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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.

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;

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- 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.

### **46. The Future of the National Minimum Wage**

**Carried**

Conference notes the pivotal leadership role that UNISON and its then general secretary Rodney Bickerstaffe 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.

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;

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- 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.

### 49. Covid Recovery and Rehabilitation

**Carried as Amended: 49.1, 49.2**

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. In particular we note that of the 185,000 plus people who died with Covid-19 on the death certificate, many thousands were front line public service workers.. 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 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 from our sister union the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (CSP) for a Right to Rehabilitation and campaign for the investment in NHS, local government and community services needed to deliver high quality, public owned, fully accessible and free at the point of use services , 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 in addition to a stronger right to reasonable adjustments including disability leave for those whose experience of Long Covid may now mean they meet the Equality Act definition of a disabled person.

Work with Hazards organisation and other trade unions to:

- a) Provide practical advice and support to bereaved families;
- b) Agree a Long Covid charter;
- 3) In the upcoming Covid-19 public inquiry put the case of front line workers – emphasising the way they were placed at unacceptable risk with tragic consequences.

Work with Hazards organisation and other trade unions to:

- c) Provide practical advice and support to bereaved families;

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d) Agree a Long Covid charter;

In the upcoming Covid-19 public inquiry put the case of front line workers – emphasising the way they were placed at unacceptable risk with tragic consequences.

### 55. For Safety – End Support for the Nordic Model

**Carried**

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:

- 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);

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- 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.

### **58. Campaigning for a National Care Service**

**Carried as Amended: 58.1**

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).

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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 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 proposed in Scotland in 2021, but also recognises the concerns of UNISON Scotland, particularly about the impact of the proposals on local government which it is proposed will be removed from any legal responsibility for social care, in favour of quangos who will administer a system which is still based on a market in care where for profit services predominate.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

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- 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.

### **67. Levelling up**

**Carried as Amended: 67.1**

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.

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 £2.6 billion 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. Moreover, Conference believes that the White Paper promotes a wholly inadequate model of sub-national governance. For the regions of England, the White Paper offers more of the same, with the roll out of the mayoral combined authority model to more areas. Any new governance arrangements will be ad hoc, subject to agreement from central government, and will be monitored by a new central accountability institution. All this

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is designed to ensure that local and regional institutions follow central government's agenda - the old, failed orthodoxy of supply-side economics and competition for global capital investment.

Conference believes that we need democratic sub-national institutions that have the authority, powers and resources to pursue different economic policies – that better reflect the wishes and needs of people in the regions of England. We need powerful and stable sub-national institutions that can stand up to Westminster Tories and to business interests.

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.
- c) An alternative comprehensive model of sub-national governance which gives local and regional democratic institutions the necessary resources, stability and powers to address economic inequalities in the UK and develop policies that address the living standards of the people they represent. This should include consideration and promotion of the idea of regional assemblies covering the whole of England.

### **69. Global Vaccine Inequality**

**Carried**

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.



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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 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.

### **80. CEDAW – Essential for Women's Rights**

**Carried as Amended: 80.1**

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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 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.

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In addition, Conference welcomes the landmark decision in March 2022 by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women that the criminalisation of consensual, same-sex intimacy between women is a violation of the Convention. In a case brought by Rosanna Flamer-Caldera, Executive Director of Equal Ground, the main LGBT+ organisation in Sri Lanka, the Committee said that the Sri Lankan authorities had subjected Ms Flamer-Caldera to gender-based discrimination and violence, and had not taken any legal or other measures to respect and protect her right to a life free from gender-based violence, or to eliminate the prejudices to which she has been exposed as a woman, lesbian and activist. The decision sets a major legal precedent that could affect millions of lesbian and bisexual women in most of the 40-plus countries where they are still criminalised.

Conference notes that the decision was made under the Optional Protocol procedure, which gives the Committee the power to consider complaints from individuals alleging violations of the Convention by countries, including the UK, that have signed the Optional Protocol.

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.

### **81. Incorporate CEDAW into domestic legislation**

**Fell**

### **82. Incorporate CEDAW into Domestic Legislation**

**Fell**

### **83. Challenging Sexism and Misogyny - Protecting Women**

**Carried**

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;

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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;
- 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;

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- 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.

### **87. Review of the Equality Act**

**Carried**

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.

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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 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.

### **89. Trans Equality – Louder and Prouder!**

**Carried as Amended: 89.1**

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

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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.

In April 2022, the Westminster government made yet another U-turn on its commitment to ban LGBT+ conversion therapy, announcing the ban would relate to sexual orientation only. UNISON, along with over a hundred LGBT+ organisations, responded to this by withdrawing support for the government's 'Safe to be me' flagship international conference, which resulted in a humiliated government having to cancel the conference.

Also in April, The EHRC issued non-statutory guidance for service providers on single sex facilities which, rather than clarifying the Equality Act (its stated aim) undermined key protections for trans people.

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.

Conference notes that the Scottish Government published their proposed GRA bill in March 2022

- 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

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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 and for a ban on conversion therapy which covers all LGBT+ people, and to continue our campaign for inclusive public services

### 93. Post Glasgow COP26 - Decarbonising UK Public Services

**Carried as Amended: 93.1, 93.2**

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;
- 2) Complement inclusive climate policies that respect and promote human and labour rights;



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- 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 notes the publication of the joint UNISON Scotland and Scottish TUC publication 'Climate hazards and resilience in the workplace' which deals with the necessity to adapt workplaces to the hazards climate change already poses, as well as providing practical suggestions for further action. Conference believes that whilst promoting individual action to combat climate change is important, collective action

## **2022 National Delegate Conference (c) Decisions**

and social change are essential if man made climate change is to be tackled effectively and public services will be crucial to doing so.

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 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;

## **2022 National Delegate Conference (c) Decisions**

- 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) Encouraging public bodies to support a sustainable transition away from meat and dairy farming in recognition of the massive contribution this industry makes to the Climate Emergency.
- ix) Update training materials for branch and green reps to support their increasing responsibilities and roles;
- x) 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.

### **102. Proportional Representation**

**Carried**

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.

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;

## **2022 National Delegate Conference (c) Decisions**

- 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.

### **109. Taking Effective Industrial Action Under Current Legal Restrictions**

**Carried**

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 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.;

## **2022 National Delegate Conference (c) Decisions**

- 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.

### **121. Speak Up and Speak Out**

**Carried**

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;

## **2022 National Delegate Conference (c) Decisions**

- 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;
- 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.

### **E6. NEC RESPONSE**

**Carried**

Conference notes with dismay that the result of motion 11 has not produced a response from our National Executive Committee.

In most other circumstances the carrying of a vote of no confidence against such a committee results in the committee standing down, or taking other agreed action to restore confidence. The NEC cannot stay silent.

The vote of no confidence was overwhelmingly passed by national delegate conference with a near two thirds majority of membership. The National Executive Committee can’t ignore the will of conference, particularly as the vote was prompted by their past actions in ignoring conference.

Conference therefore calls on the NEC to:

Issue a statement on the conference floor in response to the no confidence vote, before the close of conference business on Friday.

# COMPOSITES

## 2022 National Delegate Conference (c) Decisions

### Composites

#### A. Supporting Low Paid Women to be Active in Our Unio

Carried

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.

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.

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.

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.

Many of our lowest paid women members are working for employers in contracted public services and are the hardest to reach and secure facility time for. Conference welcomes any proposals brought forward that can improve participation for this group of members."

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.



## **2022 National Delegate Conference (c) Decisions**

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 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 therefore calls on the National Executive Council to work with the National Women's Committee, Regions, Private Contractors Forum, Service Groups and the other self-organised 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) Work towards developing a programme which will support and mentor women activists into leadership roles in branches and regions;
- 4) 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;
- 5) Develop a strategy for increased recruitment, organising and campaigning around issues relevant to low paid women (and) target work to increase the participation of women who meet the earnings criteria for the reserved seats in UNISON elections;
- 6) 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.

### **B. Public Sector Pay, Finance, Taxation and the Cost**

**Carried**

Conference notes that 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. 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 12 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. It is anticipated that inflation could rise above 7 percent by Spring 2022.

## **2022 National Delegate Conference (c) Decisions**

Conference further notes that 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.

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 10 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.

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.

Conference notes that pay failing to keep up with the cost of living effects pensions in later life and that today's pensioners are facing rising bills too with fixed incomes. Furthermore, the government has suspended the triple lock on the state pension.

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.

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.

## **2022 National Delegate Conference (c) Decisions**

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, we also need to acknowledge that when we are pursuing national pay claims, we are doing so in a hostile environment. There is little sense in submitting claims and waiting patiently for positive, or even reasonable responses.

We are in year two of what is effectively a government-imposed policy to further cut living standards for public sector workers. As the largest Public Sector Union UNISON needs to give confidence to our members that we will seek to use our full strength across all service groups sectors and nations to defend our members living standards, in co-ordination with other relevant unions wherever possible. Whilst it is for service groups, sectors, and other appropriate bodies to determine the conduct of particular pay campaigns within their remit, we believe that as a union we need to strive for maximum unity in campaigning and action that is co-ordinated wherever possible.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Coordinate support across the union in support of fair pay rises which will defend members standard of living;
- 2) Provide 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, WTUC, STUC, and ICTU;
- 3) 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;
- 4) Issue case studies/examples that can be used to demonstrate and humanise campaign material;
- 5) 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;
- 6) Assist in securing decent pay awards by lending the weight of our entire union to proactive campaigns on pay that start from an expectation of employer and government hostility and seek to organise and mobilise members across service groups to capitalise on pressure points such as local elections or high-profile events;
- 7) Work with the National Retired Members' Committee to build an alliance across the generations on cost of living issues.

### **D. Sick Pay**

**Carried**

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

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they are sick. These issues are well known to UNISON members who work for a variety of different private contractors in our public services.

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.

A decent system of sick pay is also particularly important for disabled workers who may have to take time off due to their impairment. Where a worker has a cancer diagnosis for example, and their rehabilitation takes longer than the 28 weeks allowed for SSP pay, they may be forced onto inadequate levels of Employment Support Allowance of £74 a week or of Universal Credit. It is also important to note that SSP is funded by employers and not by government, which leads to some employers being reluctant to hire disabled workers due to the perceived potential for having to pay sick pay.

A stronger right to paid disability leave would mean disabled workers could take time off relating to their disability at their normal rate of pay without having to go onto the pitiful £99 a week SSP, but most employers are unaware they might have a duty to provide this and disabled workers are stuck with SSP instead. Conference notes UNISON's guide to bargaining for disability leave policies which can be negotiated directly with employers in the absence of government action. when they are ill.

Conference believes that every worker deserves full sick pay now.

Conference also believes that where UNISON reached agreements with public service employers that workers on private contracts such as care workers would receive full pay during the pandemic if they were shielding, self-isolating or off sick with covid, then lives were saved.

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 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) Work with the Private Contractors Forum on company pay claims for improved occupational sick pay with employers at local and national level;
- 4) Campaign for a Statutory Sick Pay system linked to the Real Living Wage
- 5) Campaign for a sick pay system that starts on day one without any lower earnings limit or earnings threshold

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6) Work with the National Disabled Members Committee to draw up a list of other improvements to sick pay for disabled workers including extending SSP beyond 28 weeks as a reasonable adjustment where the worker is disabled, such as in cases of cancer, exploring calls for a government funded SSP system for small and medium sized employers; and actively encouraging branches and service groups involved in national bargaining to negotiate disability leave agreements with employers.

7) To seek support of Labour Link to campaign for the Labour Party to commit full statutory sick pay for all in the next manifesto.

**EC1. Angela Rayner and National Delegate Conference**

**Lost**

# RULES

**2022 National Delegate Conference (c)  
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**Amendment to Rules**

**1. Rule C Unemployed Members**

**Not carried by required 2/3 majority**

C 2.4.2

In second sentence delete the words: "unless otherwise decided by the National Executive Council."

**2. Rule C Unemployed Members**

**Carried**

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)."

**5. Rule D Committees**

**Carried**

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."

**6. Rule D Powers**

**Carried**

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."

**7. Rule D Retired Members' Organisation**

**Withdrawn**

**9. Rule F Regional Council**

**Carried**

Add new rule Rule F 4.3.5:

"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."

**10. Rule G Branch Organisation**

**Carried**

Add new rule G 1.4:

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“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.”

**11. Rule G Branches**

**Lost**

**12. Rule G Branch Officers**

**Carried**

G 4.1.1

Add after: "Women’s Officer (who must be a woman)":

"Environmental Officer (also known as Green rep)"

**14. Rule I Disciplinary Action**

**Lost**



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**Emergency Motions**

**E6. NEC RESPONSE**

**Carried**

Conference notes with dismay that the result of motion 11 has not produced a response from our National Executive Committee.

In most other circumstances the carrying of a vote of no confidence against such a committee results in the committee standing down, or taking other agreed action to restore confidence. The NEC cannot stay silent.

The vote of no confidence was overwhelmingly passed by national delegate conference with a near two 3rds majority of membership. The National Executive Committee can't ignore the will of conference, particularly as the vote was prompted by their past actions in ignoring conference.

Conference therefore calls on the NEC to:

Issue a statement on the conference floor in response to the no confidence vote, before the close of conference business on Friday.