

# 2023 National Delegate Conference

## UNISON FINAL AGENDA

28<sup>th</sup> National Delegate Conference

ACC Liverpool

13 – 16 June 2023

This publication contains the motions, amendments to motions and amendments to rule for the 28th national delegate conference, followed by amendments to motions ruled out of order by the standing orders committee and the reason for the ruling.

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

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### Organising and Recruitment

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Organisation and Development

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#### 1. Organising to Win - Building Workplace Power through Participation

Conference notes that following a period of membership decline in early 2021, UNISON fought back in the latter half of 2022 to achieve net membership growth. Record recruitment of over 180,000 new members was 30 percent above 2021 levels and exceeded even the highest surges of joiners during the 2020 Covid pandemic peak. Membership growth was disproportionately high in areas of pay campaign activity and dispute, which also saw over 4,000 UNISON members sign up to become active as a “Pay Campaign Contact”.

Conference welcomes the ground breaking tools and techniques developed through the UNISON Member Engagement Project including the “Movt” phone banking and peer to peer text platform which enabled activists and staff to make one to one contact with more members than ever before to encourage participation in campaign activity. Conference also welcomes the service group strategies and union communications which emphasised member participation and collective action as the primary means to address the biggest issues facing members.

In addition to confident national pay campaigns, 2022 saw a number of important organising pilots launched by the Organising and Recruitment Strategy Development (ORS) project. Those pilots have seen successful Health Care Assistant re-banding campaigns deliver huge membership growth and big wins in Health branches across the union. Members and activists of target Multi Academy Trusts have been recruited and networked across branch and regional boundaries, and in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the social care pilots continue to develop techniques to organise in our most challenging growth areas of public service employment.

2022 also saw the launch of the UNISON College to draw together and offer new member learning and activist training opportunities, and the UNISON Year of the Disabled Worker saw workplace bargaining demands as the centrepiece of wider activity to recruit Disabled workers into UNISON membership and activism.

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To help fund these and other initiatives, the innovative Branch Support and Organising Fund was launched with over £3.45 million ring fenced in the first year to support projects that tackle our organising challenges and grow the union.

Serious challenges remain. The numbers of members leaving the union places future growth at risk, and new activist recruitment is not currently sufficient to build and sustain a stronger and more representative activist base. Despite all the hard work, innovation, and achievements, we have not yet achieved ballot turnout to the scale required for lawful national strike action in most service groups. But despite these challenges, Conference believes 2022 was a defining year in UNISON's journey to become an even bigger, stronger, and more powerful union. Conference believes we can build on the success of 2022 and overcome the challenges we face in 2023 and beyond with a renewed emphasis on member participation and an increased internal coherence and solidarity around key strategic priorities of the union.

During 2022 the ORSD project engaged with UNISON departments, regions, service groups, Self Organised Groups and equality groups and conducted over 100 one to one conversations with branch secretaries from across the union to identify existing best practice and key organising challenges. Resulting recommendations consider sectoral and workforce trends, organising tools, techniques and best practice, and the resource and coordination required to deliver successful organising at every level of the union. Conference welcomes the work of the ORSD project and recommendations for a comprehensive joined up organising strategy.

Conferences acknowledges consultation and implementation of initial ORSD recommendations is a process and an interim 2023 Organising Plan is required to consolidate 2022 achievements, sustain membership growth, and urgently begin to address the declining activist base.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue roll out of the interim 2023 Organising Plan across the union and ensure service group, regional, and Self Organised Group plans are in place to meet 2023 Organising targets of:
  - a) One percent net membership growth (on December 31 membership);
  - b) Ten percent increase in recruitment to Health & Safety Reps, Union Learning Reps and Steward activist roles;
  - c) Activist training as set out in the National Executive Council scheme of accreditation (as revised at the 2022 National Delegate Conference);
- 2) Consult on initial ORSD recommendations and then resource union-wide implementation;
- 3) Recognise that initial recommendations are part of a longer term process, and continue to support the ORSD project to develop further recommendations to build an even bigger, stronger, and more powerful organising focused union.

***National Executive Council***

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### 1.1

Insert new seventh paragraph:

“Consolidate the wider impact of UNISON’s award winning legal assistance by analysing CASEWEB for issues and trends that require a collective organising response, and to build an organising response to the attack on individual rights posed by the Tory’s Retained EU Law Bill.”

*Scotland Region*

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## 2. Equalities Grow Our Union

Conference notes that UNISON members are under sustained and constant attack by the United Kingdom (UK) government. From spiralling cost of living to services we rely on most disappearing, the UK Tory government’s attacks on our members are leaving many to feel isolated and weary. There is only one way to combat these attacks – we must agitate, organise and campaign.

Conference believes that we have a real opportunity to work with our self organised groups (SOGs) to recruit more members who are under represented in our union and get them active. Conference recognises that many of our members who become active are not only active within self organisation, but in their regional, branch and service group democratic structures.

And it works. Our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Plus (LGBT+) SOG members have been successful in recruiting at community events across the United Kingdom and have encouraged greater activism. The campaign on trans equality has encouraged over 200 members to be allies in the workplace. The LGBT+ national committee’s young LGBT+ worker campaign continues to grow with many in the network now getting involved in their branch and regional groups.

When national, regional and branch LGBT+ groups work together with Black members, disabled and women SOGs, our recruiting potential is enhanced, encouraging the young members and retired members forums to lend their expertise and voices, creating a unique mix of positive affirmation and excitement. We welcome the diversity of our equality organising, including migrant workers networks, and community campaigning brings. This produces a collective union identity to members in disaggregated, isolated and fragmented workplaces.

We also understand that there is no single form of communication to reach all non-members. While traditional engagement through one-to-one contact and mailings are effective, they should not be our only tools. We must expand our use of virtual platforms like social media to assist with recruiting and organising.

Conference notes the increasing importance of community organising and also of the website, social media and My UNISON, which can only be effective if members are signed up and using them. The LGBT+ national committee has recognised the importance of this and created a digital organising guide.

Conference believes that a key part of our response to the continuing attacks by the UK government must be to redouble our recruiting and organising effort, bringing together the best of our tried and tested strategies, and our newer strategies. We

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must continue to emphasise the collective nature of our movement and our demands, but at the same time we must engage directly with individual members and potential members. Conference, it is time for UNISON to launch a coordinated, sustained campaign to win back our rights.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to advertise and promote engagement with My UNISON, encouraging members to update their personal information, including completing the new sexual orientation and gender history fields;
- 2) Further develop the use of web-based tools to assist with our recruiting and organising objectives, including UNISON's app and the online skills bank to engage new members and encourage existing members to become active;
- 3) Publicise and promote examples of good practice in equality and community organising which have led to recruitment, engagement and effective local campaigns;
- 4) Encourage branches, regions and service groups to involve self-organised and young members groups and migrant worker networks in developing and implementing recruitment and organising strategies;
- 5) Publicise and promote the regional groups, caucuses and branch self-organised groups who are establishing and building on relationships with LGBT+ community organisations and groups;
- 6) Work with the service groups executives and national self-organised committees to encourage branches, regions and service groups to involve self-organised groups in developing and implementing recruitment strategies;
- 7) Support self-organised groups' priority bargaining initiatives such as promoting the trans equality model policy.

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

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#### **2.1**

In point 4) after "Young Members groups" add "Retired Members Organisation/Committee"

### ***National Retired Members' Committee***

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Branch Development

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### **3. Building UNISON in the Private Sector**

Conference notes that increasing numbers of UNISON members are delivering public services while being employed by the private sector. Whether this is in private nursing homes or for private contractors providing schools meals, all of our members, regardless of the type of their employer, deserve the very best of support from us. We also need to ensure that their voices are heard loud and clear throughout or democratic structures to maximise our industrial strength with

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employers and government and to meet our rule book commitment to proportionality and fair representation.

Conference affirms its belief that the best way to improve the support and involvement of members working in the private sector is by building strong effective and sustainable trade union organisation made up of those members working in those workplaces and occupational groups. This is dependent on a network of well trained, motivated and engaged workplace stewards. Unfortunately too many members working for private employers do not have a UNISON steward in their workplace or even in their employer.

The majority of members working in the private sector are in branches that are primarily focussed on the issues relating to the bigger public sector employers, we need to ensure that their voices and issues are heard in their branches, in our regions and at a national level. Our work in private employer workplaces should be led by members working for those employers, ensuring they are mentored and supported.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Develop and implement a clear strategy on how to build the union amongst those members providing public services while employed by private contractors. This should include the identification of priority occupational groups and employers;
- 2) Ensure any guidance relating to the Branch Support and Organising Fund (BSOF) specifically highlights how it can be used to build the union in private and community workplaces such as care homes;
- 3) Consider if the Organising Framework process effectively supports branches to devote sufficient resources to members in the private and community sectors;
- 4) Consider if the Code of Good Branch Practice should recommend the election of at least one officer from either a private sector or community employer and that they should be responsible for supporting members to become active in the union and organise in harder to reach workplaces;
- 5) Advise branches and regions of the effectiveness of different branch structure models that ensures that all parts of our membership are fully supported and included in our democratic structures particularly those employed by private contractor or community sector employers;
- 6) Ensure all regions resource and support regional structures for members working for private and community sector employers;
- 7) Review the make up of all our branch, regional and national structures to ensure that members working for private and community employers are represented in all our decision making forums and develop ways of delivering this;
- 8) Implement an activist development programme that aims to ensure that members working for private and community employers are fully equipped to tackle the specific challenges of those members working in smaller often less well organised workplaces;

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- 9) Consider changes to our working practices and structures that better empower members working in private and community sector workplaces to become fully involved in our democratic structures;
- 10) Develop and deliver training to branches around all types of outsourcing and insourcing including public sector to private but also private sector to another contractor and private to public sector. The training should include how to influence the tender process to include recognition of UNISON by any new employer from day one of the contract and an agreed facility time etc this will deliver the ability for those members to become involved at branch, regional and national levels of the union.

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

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#### **3.1**

Insert new third paragraph after “employer”:

"Conference notes that one of the ways of building strong effective and sustainable trade union organisation in the private sector is by our union positively engaging wherever possible with worker co-operatives (which along with the Labour Party and trade unions arguably represent the third arm of the labour movement), with the aim of negotiating recognition and facilities agreements."

In point 1) insert a comma after “employers” and add: “including current and potential worker co-operatives;”

In point 8) insert a comma after “workplaces” and add: “including information and training materials exploring alternative private sector business models that may be more amenable to trade union recognition such as worker co-operatives;”

### ***Leicestershire County***

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Participation

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#### **4. Equality is UNISON Business**

Conference notes that one of UNISON’s main aims is, as per UNISON’s rule book, “to seek to ensure equality of treatment and fair representation for all members and to work for the elimination of discrimination on grounds of race, gender, sexuality, gender identity, disability, age or creed”.

To achieve this, UNISON seeks for branches to have Equality Co-ordinators, whose role it is “to be the central liaison point for equality in the branch and to distribute information on equality issues”.

An audit in the Northwest this year identified that less than half of branches had an elected Equality Coordinator, less than a quarter have a Black Members Officer.

Conference believes that if branches cannot recruit to this core officer position, then it will be that much more challenging for self-organised groups to develop and flourish, and it will be less likely that those branches will consider the equality dimension to bargaining work, including bargaining for Equalities with the employers they organise in.

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When circulating matters relating to equalities including updates, issues etc. to Branches, Equality Coordinators, where in place, should also be included to avoid unnecessary delays in information being received, especially where urgent action is called for.

Conference therefore calls on National Executive Committee to:

- 1) Work with the National Black Members Committee, the National Women's Committee, the National Disabled Members Committee, the National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender + Committee and the National Young Member Forum to develop and deliver a campaign about why equality is UNISON business, including highlighting the resources available to activists, celebrating where UNISON has successfully made work better for those with protected characteristics and demonstrating the opportunities available to members if they choose to get more involved with UNISON;
- 2) Consider how training and workshops that are delivered on Equalities can be shared with all UNISON activists;
- 3) Produce a series of articles showcasing a diverse range of equality coordinators, exploring why they became activists, what they have achieved and what equality means to them;
- 4) Utilise the skills, knowledge, and experiences of Equality Coordinators, especially around matters of equalities, including when reviewing the annual Branch Development Plan;
- 5) To encourage all branches to send delegations to every national Self Organised Group Conferences.

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

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#### **4.1**

Insert new sixth paragraph:

“A separate survey in Scotland identified that all branch officers have a vital role to play in supporting members in combatting discrimination and accessing legal services. Equality coordinators therefore require the support of all branch officers in taking a strong collective approach to anti discrimination work.”

Insert after bullet point 5):

“6) Work with the National Black Members' Committee to create a training and development strategy for branch officers and representatives on identifying and supporting race discrimination cases. This should include training for representatives who do not identify as being Black on how to appropriately support Black members through these cases;

7) Build into Branch Organising Frameworks, an expectation that branch officers undertake this training within 24 months of being elected;

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8) Embed anti discrimination and good diversity practice in our work by exposing and reducing ethnicity pay gaps, taking a proactive anti-racist approach to recruitment, retention and progression of Black workers, and driving cultural, attitudinal and organisational change in UK public services;

9) Work with the National Black Members Committee and Regions to ensure that activity on challenging racism does not stop when the Year of the Black Worker ends.”

*Scotland Region*

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### 4.2

Add in point 1) after "Young Members Forum" add "Retired Members Committee/Organisation"

*National Retired Members' Committee*

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## 5. Increasing Participation of Lower Paid Women in Our Union

Conference notes proudly that UNISON is a union with over a million women members and that we reach every corner of the UK and every corner of the public sector.

Conference also notes that our collective labour as women contributes billions of pounds to the economy, and our human contribution keeps our society running, exceeding even that vast sum by adding our wealth of knowledge and experience to our workplaces and communities.

Whether it be in health, education, local government, or utilities it is women who hold our communities together. Despite this, years of low pay, the experience of the pandemic and women's substantial underpaid labour has shown us and continues to show us how we are taken for granted.

We know that much of what we do is under-regarded by our employers: the gender pay gap; zero hours contracts; misogyny; multiple part-time jobs just to make ends meet; discrimination and harassment are just a few of the problems we face at work.

Every year at Conference women share their stories of challenging their employers and we hear how our union has a long history of fighting for our hard-won rights. Yet Conference also needs to recognise that many of us in union activist roles have stable work, have access to facilities (albeit sometimes under attack from employers) and enough time to execute our roles to the best of our abilities while at the same time, many of the women we work hard to support find it difficult to undertake union activities even though their authentic voices are essential to understanding the issues they face. The barriers include lack of time, difficulty in negotiating facility time with employers, caring responsibilities, and the cost of childcare. Also, some branches and some women can be unwelcoming and may fail to provide support. Black women may face prejudice and racism and there can also be an element of snobbery if the woman has a low paid job.



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Conference believes that there is a need to be honest and recognise that we need to do more as a trade union to support low-paid women's involvement and reduce the barriers to participation. UNISON must do better than the employers.

Therefore, Conference calls on the National Executive committee to provide leadership in supporting low paid women members to become active in all areas of the union by:

- 1) Ensuring the availability of easily accessible explanations of the roles that are open to members;
- 2) Providing information about the advantages of union participation;
- 3) Working with the national women's committee to provide written assurance of support from of the branch and the region for individual women who show interest in becoming an activist;
- 4) Explore with relevant committees and staff on how to make it as easy as possible to participate by providing the information on participation in as many languages as possible and facilitating easy-to-claim expenses that are available without delay;
- 5) Explore with Learning and Organising Services the possibility of providing online training programmes and pathways to activism that can be used on a mobile phone;
- 6) Consider with relevant staff the possibility of a conference that is focused on issues of concern to low-paid women members;
- 7) Explore with relevant committees and staff the possibility of providing a dedicated legal helpline for low-pay issues through There for you, and specialist support for difficulties with Universal Credit (so expenses do not disrupt U Credit payments);
- 8) Discuss with National Black Members Committee ways to encourage more Black women to take an active role in their union and what support can be offered.

### *National Women's Committee*

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#### Education & Training

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#### **6. Empowering UNISON Members for Action and Participation Through Political Education**

Conference notes that 2022 and 2023 have been among the most challenging times ever experienced by public services and the workforce. The Conservative government has failed to address public sector pay, created the staffing crises across public services, and fuelled a cost of living crisis that has hit workers hard. The start of 2023 saw many NHS Trusts declaring critical incidents, while services across social care, housing and other services have reached crisis point across the UK.

There is a direct correlation between the Tories' austerity agenda and their cuts to public services. According to research by the Joseph Rowntree Trust, 14.5 million

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people in the UK (22% of the population) are living in poverty, of which 8.1 million are working age adults, 4.3 million are children (32%), and over 2.1 million are pensioners. Millions of people, many of them in paid employment, rely on foodbanks to feed themselves and their families.

Strike action across public services, particularly the NHS, had massive support from the public. Members voted in unprecedented numbers for industrial action in 2022 and 2023, but despite the anger felt by our members we failed to reach the legal threshold to formalise strike action in many employers.

Conference recognises that education has always played a vital role in encouraging members to participate in the union. Now more than ever we need to give confidence to our members and activists through the UNISON College to develop skills, knowledge, and confidence to fight back and make the political, economic, and social change needed to achieve a society in which all can participate fully, safely and constructively.

Conference recognises the good works and development taking place at branch, regional and national levels of the union aimed at engaging and growing the union. New initiative and developments through the UNISON College, the Organising and Recruitment Strategy Development Project, Member Engagement Project and Leadership Development programmes are not only focussed on growing and building a strong organised union with a stronger and more representative activist base but seek to empower and engage more members to participate in all activity of the union including participation in UNISON's democratic processes.

We need to restore confidence amongst members that voting matters and through the UNISON College raise awareness to encourage members to vote.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work with all levels of the union including Labour Link to:

- 1) Promote the benefits of workshops and resources on trade union history and political education as a means of engaging members in union activity and identifying and developing new activists;
- 2) Ensure that new UNISON learning resources emphasise the disproportionate impact that the cost of living crisis and government policies have had on women, Black people, disabled people, low paid and other marginalised groups at work and across our society;
- 3) Refresh and develop learning resources and workshops that encourage members to vote in elections whether they be local, national, or internal.
- 4) Encourage branches and regions to maximise opportunities to make use of short workshops designed to encourage political awareness and greater participation in the union at workplace meetings, annual general meetings and other activity.

***National Executive Council***

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The sixth paragraph, starting “We need to restore confidence...”, add new sentences to the beginning of the sixth paragraph:

“Conference recognises women make up over 80% of our union’s membership yet political representation is still mainly older white males. Voter disenfranchisement through the unnecessary introduction of voter ID will have a very real impact, especially on Black women, disabled women, young women, trans, non-binary and gender diverse. “

In the sixth paragraph, the phrase - “and through the UNISON College raise awareness to encourage members...”; add “and support” between “encourage” and “members”.

Add the following sentence to the end of the sixth paragraph, starting “We need to restore confidence...”:

“Enfranchised voters are more likely to be active union voters when they recognise the beneficial impact of political engagement.”

After the sixth paragraph insert new paragraph:

“Conference recognises that, as a Labour Party affiliated union, it is important that Labour Party members are encouraged to join the affiliated political fund and engage in Labour Link.”

After Point 1) add new bullet point:

“2) Work with the National Women’s Committee and other Self Organised Groups to develop materials aimed at getting under-represented groups interested and into politics.”

Renumber remaining points.

***National Women’s Committee***

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### **6.2**

Add Action Point 5):

"5) Use this education to maximise our voice through Labour Link. Advertise and explain the political fund and how we can influence future Labour Party policies through Labour Link Forum and committees."

***West Mercia Police Staff***

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Constitutional matters

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### **7. Speaking 'in a Personal Capacity'**

As a union we value the fundamental right to freedom of expression.

Speaking on public platforms when members use their UNISON designation and the union's name, we expect that they are representing the aims, values and

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democratically agreed UNISON position. When speaking 'in a personal capacity' they are entitled to give voice to their personal views.

However, there is a creeping tendency to use UNISON's designation followed by the phrase 'in a personal capacity'. This suggests that a speaker is not representing the views of the members or the union but is expressing their own personal or political views under the banner of UNISON.

This sets a dangerous precedent and has the potential to open the door for the use of UNISON's name to give expression to personal or political views that are in direct opposition to our aims and values, such as far right propaganda, hate speech, and other express forms of discrimination or exclusion.

Conference agrees that it must be one or the other, either public speech in UNISON's name representing UNISON's aims and values or speech 'in a personal capacity' without any UNISON designation.

Conference consequently calls on the National Executive Council to issue guidance on this distinction to ensure the protection of UNISON's integrity.

### *North and West Belfast Community Health*

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#### **Negotiating and Bargaining**

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##### Bargaining

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#### **8. Harassment – It's Not Part of the Job**

Conference notes the findings of the 2018 Trades Union Congress (TUC) report into third party harassment of young workers titled "Not part of the job", the 2016 TUC report into sexual harassment at work titled "Still just a bit of banter?", TUC research into experiences of sexual harassment of Black workers (2017), young workers (2017), LGBT+ workers (2019) and disabled women workers (2021), and of the TUC Anti-Racism Taskforce's 2022 report into racism at work, all of which found deeply disturbing levels of harassment, abuse and violence towards workers.

According to the "Not part of the job" report, nearly one in five workers aged 18-34 had been subjected to some form of harassment, abuse or violence at work. 36 percent of this was perpetrated by a third party, such as a service user, business associate or external staff member. 70 percent of those who experienced third-party verbal abuse, 63 percent of those who experienced third party bullying, 57 percent of those who experienced third party sexual harassment, and half of those who experienced physical assault or violence from third parties had been subjected to these behaviours three or more times. The TUC found in 2017 that 37 percent of Black women workers who experienced sexual harassment said this was also racial, and in 2022 that 41 percent of all Black workers surveyed had experienced racist behaviour at work. These are just a few of many worrying statistics.

Conference agrees that these findings, and many more workers' experiences, constitute a mountain of evidence showing real and serious safety issues which are worsened by a widespread lack of support or protection for workers. Conference agrees that these issues are pressing ones for public sector workers, in particular

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those working unsociable hours or working alone, and that our employers must prioritise action to protect workers.

Conference notes the work done by the National Women's Committee on tackling sexual harassment at work and by the National Black Members Committee on addressing racism in the workplace. In addition, conference notes that useful training and campaign materials are already available from the TUC.

Conference regrets that bullying and sexual harassment remain serious issues within the trade union movement itself, as the recent Kennedy Report into the TSSA has shown. Conference believes that as trade unionists we must model good behaviour when it comes to all forms of harassment.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Promote existing model policies and other relevant materials around harassment, abuse, violence and safeguarding at work across the service group;
- 2) Work with relevant sections of the union to develop model policies where relevant ones do not currently exist, and promote these;
- 3) Provide information to UNISON branches on negotiating adequate safety measures for lone workers, commuters and those working unsociable hours;
- 4) Promote awareness and understanding across UNISON of issues around harassment, abuse and violence, with a particular focus on combatting sexual harassment and racism;
- 5) Promote and facilitate training within branches around safety issues and means of proactively addressing them both at work and in the union;
- 6) Share and promote the guidance and campaigning materials from UNISON's National Women's Committee on tackling sexual harassment in the workplace;
- 7) Share and promote the guidance and campaigning materials from UNISON's National Black Members Committee on tackling racism in the workplace;
- 8) Work with the National Young Members Forum to promote UNISON's work tackling harassment and safety at work to young members in UNISON and young workers across public services;
- 9) Take a zero-tolerance attitude to bullying and harassment within UNISON, and to review UNISON's processes on these issues so that taking part in UNISON is safe and welcoming for all.

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

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#### **8.1**

In the second paragraph, after "behaviour at work" insert:

"The TUC's 2021 report found 68% of disabled women workers had been sexually harassed at work, much higher than non-disabled women. In fact, the report

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revealed that disabled women experience higher levels of every type of sexually harassing behaviour, reflecting the imbalance of power disabled women encounter at work and in wider society.”

In the fourth paragraph, after “racism in the workplace” insert “and by the National Disabled Members Committee on combatting workplace disability discrimination.”

After “Conference calls on the National Executive Council to”, insert: “work with the national self organised groups committees and the national young members forum to.”

In action point 4) insert at end “and workplace disability discrimination;”

Add new action point 8) as follows and renumber accordingly:

"8) Share and promote the guidance and campaigning materials from UNISON's National Disabled Members Committee on combatting disability discrimination in the workplace;”

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

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#### **9. Menopause**

Conference knows there is a vast social movement to remove the taboo around menopause; the subject is often still not recognised in the workplace.

Menopause awareness workshops seek to address this by focusing on the manager's role by considering the following:

- 1) How employee legislation should impact decision-making;
- 2) The provision of practical tools and solutions;
- 3) 'Reasonable adjustments in the workplace;
- 4) How to practice inclusive management through leadership;
- 5) Creating the right culture and environment;
- 6) How to approach conversations about the menopause.

Conference notes, it is acutely evident that if women are encouraged to be open about their menopause, they are equally as crucial to receive appropriate responses and support from their managers.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- a) Highlight good practices from employers who include health passports in their menopause policies;
- b) Work with the National Women's Committee to further develop best practices and disseminate this to branches.

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### *Coventry and Warwickshire Combined Health Care*

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#### **10. Recruitment of Black Care Leavers**

Conference notes that young people in care have little or no knowledge of how to access work or careers open to them, and in particular those care leavers from Black communities who are already disproportionately disadvantaged in the employment market.

We note that there are already charities, such as Catch 22, who work with young adults leaving care to young adults to bring about change for the better in their lives and help them to find work in their chosen careers. We believe we shouldn't rely on charities to do this work when there is a huge need in the NHS and other public services to engage and retain staff from all walks of life and diversities.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with employers to engage with care organisations to facilitate discussions around care leavers starting a career path within the NHS and the public services;
- 2) Ensure employers make apprenticeships and training more accessible for Black care leavers;
- 3) Work with UNISON members working with children and young adults in care to assist them in promoting opportunities in the NHS and social care sector.

***Bath Health***

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#### **11. Death Repatriation Rights for Overseas Members**

As the largest union in the United Kingdom, we have members working across all of our service groups who were not born in the UK.

A significant number of these members have also brought their children with them to help them adjust to their new home whilst they are working here. Sadly, we also have to address a major issue relating to when they die here.

These overseas members do not have any provision in their contracts for repatriating their bodies back to where they were born and that also applies to their children. If they are being sponsored there is no legal responsibility on that organisation to provide the right to be repatriated if they die in the UK.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to take action to protect and support all our overseas born members in our union:

- 1) We instruct the National Executive Council to do a survey across all Service Groups to identify how many overseas members there are in UNISON with the right or without the right to death repatriation;
- 2) We direct the National Executive Council to use the data from the survey above to create a contract template for branches to use with employers to provide contracts of employment for all overseas born members that includes the right to death repatriation.

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- 3) We advise the National Executive Council to do the survey annually so that the information is kept up to date.

### *North Northamptonshire Local Government*

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#### Health and Safety

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### **12. A Health and Safety Response to a National Crisis of Stress and its Effects on Public Service Workers**

Conference affirms that employers have a legal duty to protect both the health, and the safety of their employees in relation to the activities of the employer.

Conference notes that work related stress is defined as ‘the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them’. Stress is a hazard in the same category as electrical safety, fire safety, manual handling hazardous substances, violence, infectious diseases such as Covid-19 and long Covid.

Stress levels faced by those providing public services have been exacerbated by the legacy of Covid-19, growing workplace uncertainty and long term chronic underfunding of services and work related stress when linked to other mental health issues such as anxiety and depression could be classed as a disability and offer protection under the Equality Act. Lack of proper sick pay and reasonable adjustments in many workplaces reveal wider systemic failures in protecting our members rights at work. Staff dealing directly with the public and clients have seen stress rise due to service cuts, delays, waiting lists, verbal and physical abuse and all outside their direct control. This is contributing to a national crisis of stress at work and its effects. It is also deeply concerning that the Conservative government's haphazard approach to the Retained EU Law Bill, has put health and safety legislation and protections under direct threat this year.

Public service workers, including those working for private and not-for-profit employers, are all too often put in a position that compromises their health through being overworked, working ill and working too many hours. These and many other factors have contributed to an alarming number of workers being signed off sick with stress. The evidence of this can be seen in the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) own annual statistics on accidents and ill health, which have shown that work-related stress, depression and anxiety has become the highest cause of work-related ill health absence now accounting for 51 percent of all new and long-term cases.

The vital work of our health and safety representatives were put firmly under the spotlight as the pandemic progressed. It is important that this work continues. We must act now to support UNISON members facing these challenges.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Develop a stress checklist for branches to hold employers accountable in carrying out robust risk assessments, and making a commitment to uphold health and safety standards, with input from the National Disabled Members Committee;



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- 2) Support a national campaign utilising the existing 'Be On The Safe Side' campaign tools, including the development of new tools and resources to support branches and regions in campaigning, organising and recruitment approaches;
- 3) Work with regions to develop the regional lay health and safety forums, supporting branches to build strong collective bargaining arrangements and support the continued training and development of health and safety representatives and officers;
- 4) Work with self organised groups and young members to promote the health and safety rep role;
- 5) Campaign for proper sick pay from day one of an absence;
- 6) Work with our political funds to influence all political parties to lobby for more support and protection for workers in relation to stress and all other workplace hazards such as, Covid-19 and the ever-increasing effects of long Covid on workers;
- 7) Have a national day of action to protest about work related stress;
- 8) Continue to highlight poor pay, terms and conditions as having a material effect on the ability of services to recruit and retain staff and consequently encourage all campaigning, including industrial action to secure better pay, terms and conditions;
- 9) Report on the sheer waste of resources when it comes to training and hiring new staff for them only to leave due to unacceptable levels of stress;
- 10) Take inspiration from nurses in New York State who have recently taken strike action and secured minimum staffing level agreements and encourage other workers here to be bold to take the same action;
- 11) Recognise that unmanageable caseloads and unsafe staffing are a major factor in anxiety and stress, leading to more serious poor mental health issues. Work with service groups in developing recognised and agreed caseloads which can be used by national bodies and in local negotiations as best practice and supporting recruitment and retention;
- 12) Work with Hazards and Stress Network to raise awareness of these issues across a broader network of organisations and civil society.

***National Executive Council***

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### **13. A Health and Safety Response to a National Crisis of Stress and Its Effects on Public Service Workers**

Conference affirms that employers have a legal duty to protect both the health, and the safety of their employees in relation to the activities of the employer.

Conference notes that work related stress is defined as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them'. Stress is a

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

hazard in the same category as electrical safety, fire safety, manual handling, hazardous substances, violence, infectious diseases such as Covid-19.

Conference further notes that robust risk assessments are crucial in identifying and tackling the root causes of stress at work.

Stress levels faced by those providing public services have been exacerbated by the legacy of Covid-19, growing workplace uncertainty and long-term chronic underfunding.

This is contributing to a national crisis of stress at work and its effects. It is also deeply concerning that the Conservative government's haphazard approach to the retained EU Law Bill, has put Health and Safety legislation and protections under direct threat.

Conference also notes that an absence of strong collective bargaining arrangements can lead to unsafe working environments where 'control' rather than 'empowerment' is the common default policy in many workplaces.

Public service workers, including those working for private and not-for-profit employers, are all too often put in a position that compromises their health through being overworked, working ill and working too many hours. These and many other factors have contributed to an alarming number of workers being signed off sick with stress. The evidence of this can be seen in the Health and Safety Executive's own annual statistics on accidents and ill health, which have shown that Work-related stress depression and anxiety has become the highest cause of work-related ill health absence now accounting for 51 percent of all new and long-term cases.

The vital work of our health and safety representatives were put firmly under the spotlight as the pandemic progressed. It is important that this work continues. We must act now to support UNISON members facing these challenges. Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Develop a Stress charter for members to hold employers accountable in carrying out robust risk assessments, and making a commitment to uphold Health and Safety standards;
- 2) Support a national campaign utilising the existing 'Be On The Safe Side' campaign tools, including the development of new tools and resources to support branches and regions in organising and recruitment practices;
- 3) Work with regions to develop the regional lay health and safety forums and support branches in the recruitment, training and continued development of health and safety representatives and branch officers.

***East Midlands Region***

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### **14. Threats to UK Health and Safety Legislation**

Conference is aware that, the United Kingdom left the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020, with the transition period ending on 31 December 2020.

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

As part of this process, provisions were made within the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 to give all previous EU regulations and directives continued effect within UK law under a provision called “retained EU law”.

As a result, many of the current health and safety regulations produced within the last 30 years (because of a need to enact EU directives) were covered within this provision. What Conference may not be aware of is that in the short time since the UK withdrew from the EU, the gap between the UK and the EU on workers’ health and safety has widened.

For example, on 28 June 2021 the EU adopted the “EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027 - Occupational safety and health in a changing world of work”. The Strategic Framework takes a tripartite approach and focuses on three key priorities:

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

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

Even whilst dealing with the impacts of the global pandemic, work on taking steps towards achieving the aims of the framework commenced. On the 16 December 2021 it was announced that a provisional deal had been reached to update the carcinogens and mutagens directive, which would also include substances toxic to reproduction in the revised directive.

The EU has continued to work on limits to toxic substance exposure and adds to the list of substances covered. The UK fails to implement new restrictions and instead targets a bonfire of EU legislation.

Instead of seeking to improve Health and Safety legislation, the current UK government approach risks the UK becoming a dumping ground for non-compliant substances contained in products and materials that can no longer be used in the EU.

On the 31 January 2022, the UK government did publish its “Benefits of Brexit” report. Within which it stated: “Our intent is to amend, replace, or repeal all the retained EU law that is not right for the UK” It also says “We will bring forward legislation that will clarify the status and operation of retained EU law, with the aim of ensuring that retained EU measures can be amended in a proportionate and sensible way.

We plan to simplify the complex status provisions that apply to retained EU law.

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

Legislation could make any further changes as recommended by the retained EU law status review, as discussed above. To ensure that we swiftly maximise the opportunities of Brexit across the economy, we plan to create new powers to amend retained EU law by way of domestic secondary legislation, where appropriate, to ensure that key industries do not wait decades for simplified, agile regulation.”

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

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

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- a) Seek to work with Labour Link and build support amongst all political parties and other stakeholders it deems relevant to lobby against and challenge any attempts to make changes to UK Health and Safety legislation without the introduction of new primary legislation;
- b) Seek to work with the TUC to:
  - i) Continue to engage with the ETUC to gain insight into the approach and evidence used to secure the commitments made within the new EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027;
  - ii) Use the information gained from point above, to draw up plans for a campaign which highlights the need for a refreshed approach to health and safety and challenges any attempts to deregulate or water down legislations which would result in workers being at greater risk in the UK than those undertaking similar activities within the EU.

***South Lanarkshire***

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### **15. Working in High Temperatures**

Conference recognises the valuable work carried out by UNISON and the respective trade union congresses to improve conditions at work, making it safer and healthier for staff.

Conference notes that there is no law for minimum or maximum temperatures at work. An approved code of practice specifies a minimum, but not a maximum, and loopholes and exemptions mean that this very weak safeguard fails to protect many workers.

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

Conference believes that health and safety legislation must protect all people at work, particularly in areas such as hospital laundries and kitchens but also others working in safety critical industries, including outdoors. In excessively hot conditions workers can find their ability to focus and concentrate affected, creating a health and safety concern for them and others.

Conference understands that a maximum temperature for some work settings or industries may prove impracticable or impossible, but this should not be a bar to stipulating a maximum temperature at work where this can be achieved.

Where it cannot be achieved, a legal obligation should still require employers to introduce mitigation to keep employees safe.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign for a legal maximum temperature of 26 degrees at work where this is reasonably practicable, and where not, to still require employers to take all reasonably practicable measures to reduce the temperature at work, and to provide further mitigating measures to reduce the risk of harm from workers continued exposure to high temperatures;
- 2) Re-issue health and safety advice to branches on maximum working temperatures to branches and encourage feedback on both problems and successful resolution.

***Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust***

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### **16. Ongoing Negative Impact of Long Covid**

All Branches in UNISON have members who are still suffering the ongoing impact of Long Covid. As the largest union in the UK, we have the double issue of members who are also Branch activists.

Some of our members and activists are also worried about having to return to work due to their employer telling them that they are short staffed or will not pay them full sick pay.

Some employers are also taking advantage of our members dedication to do their jobs and there is the additional stress and wellbeing affect, which results in negative impacts from a mental health and wellness aspect.

We instruct the National Executive Council to undertake a survey of the impact of Long Covid on our members and activists by taking the actions listed below:

- 1) Obtain information on how many members and activists are suffering from Long Covid by 31 December 2023.
- 2) Provide details on the information obtained in the 2024 National Delegate Conference Annual Report;
- 3) Advise 2024 National Delegate Conference as to their recommendations about how to help branches, national and Regional structures implement an effective organising approach to supporting members and activists with Long Covid.

# 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

*North Northamptonshire Local Government*

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## **Campaigning**

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### Campaigns

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#### **17. Defend the Right to Strike**

Conference is alarmed at the new Strikes (Minimum Services Levels) Bill for Great Britain which further attacks the right to strike and with draw your labour in this country.

Conference believes that the right to strike is a fundamental human right and needs to be exercised now to win better wages and conditions in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis. Whilst there have been gains in individual employment rights over recent decades this country has seen a fall in collective bargaining coverage, a fall in living standards as a result and a concentration of power and money by the wealthy. There are now only 6.5 million trade unionists in the UK from a workforce of 31 million and the UK has some of the most restrictive laws in the western world.

This attack by the Conservative government in response should also be seen alongside the 2016 Trade Union Act, current threats from the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill, the rise of fire and re-hire as in the P&O scandal, the rise of zero hours contracts and the Public Order Bill restrictions on the right to protest in public. Plus, the threat to the Human Rights Act and the European Convention on Human Rights.

Conference believes that the right to strike underpins the right to collective bargain and have the following benefits:

- 1) Reducing inequality;
- 2) Raising income levels;
- 3) Stops under cutting by employers;
- 4) Tackling discrimination;
- 5) And gives workers a voice.

The new Bill will give politicians the power to impose Minimum Service Levels (MSL) during industrial action in health, fire and rescue, education, transport, nuclear and border security. This will be backed up by the right of employers to serve unions with 'work notices' to meet the MSL which can identify roles and workers forced to work. And if deemed to fail to comply with this notice immunity is lost from being sued for damages by employers with fines up to £1million and loss of unfair dismissal protection for striking workers. This Bill has nothing to do with public safety and is not comparable to provision in other European countries which have strong collective bargaining laws.

Conference believes we must send a clear message to the government, employers and other trade unions that we will not equivocate in demonstrating our solidarity in the strongest terms with any worker or union which falls foul of any new restrictive

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

anti trade union laws. In doing so we believe this sends a message to our movement to be ready to be mobilised and sends a message to the Government that we will not stand idly by and watch our rights being stripped away.

Conference therefore re-affirms our existing support for the right to strike and the abolition of the anti-trade unions laws and calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Oppose the Westminster Parliament's Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill;
- b) Work with TUC on a mass campaign to defeat the Bill; including joint meetings and protests with other unions;
- c) Work with campaign groups and political parties who align with UNISON policies to oppose the Bill;
- d) Work with Self Organised Groups, Young Members, Retired members, service groups and Regions to strengthen our campaign;
- e) Set out the case for the right to strike and the benefits of collective bargaining;
- f) Fully support UNISON members taking industrial action in defence of their pay and conditions at work;
- g) Work with Labour Link to call on the Labour Party to follow through on commitments to repeal these anti-trade union laws and further call on them to repeal all other anti-trade union laws.

***National Executive Council***

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### **17.1**

In first paragraph, in the phrase "which further attacks the right to strike and with draw your labour..." delete "with draw" and replace with "withdraw".

In Point 3) delete "under cutting" and replace with "undercutting".

After fifth paragraph add new paragraph:

"Conference recognises that, according to "Understanding the Gender Pay Gap within the UK Public Sector" published in 2019, between 70-75% of the public sector is staffed by women. The gender pay gap in the public sector is slightly lower in the public sector compared to the private sector, and any restriction on the right to strike to improve pay settlements will undoubtedly have a negative impact on the gender pay gap. Conference is clear that any bill that restricts the right to strike, in the public sector specifically, will have a disproportionate effect on women, essentially silencing the voices of women."

After point c) add new action point d) and renumber remaining points:

"d) Commission an equality impact assessment to assess the gendered impact of the Bill."

***National Women's Committee***

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

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### **18. Resisting the Tories Sustained Assault on Democracy and Our Fundamental Rights**

Conference notes that this UK government has launched a sustained volley of attacks on our basic freedoms at break-neck speed and in such volume that even very basic levels of appropriate scrutiny and challenge is almost impossible. They have defied legal norms of parliamentary process and sunk to new levels to force through their proposals.

Taken separately any one of these attacks is alarming enough together they are a coordinated attack on all of us.

Conference notes that the attacks include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Police Crime Sentencing, and Courts Act 2022, a mammoth populist, multifaceted attack on our rights that mainly consists of serious, basic threats to a host of our civil liberties such as:
  - a) Widening the scope of laws that already disproportionately impact Black and minority communities, such as Stop and Search and laws making life for Gypsy and Roma traveller communities almost impossible, have been broadened;
  - b) Introducing new duties on frontline workers (including youth workers) that will break down hard-won relationships of trust by forcing them to share private data, no matter what other legal assurances of confidentiality are given;
  - c) Placing avoiding 'causing serious unease' (an undefined and unmeasurable concept) as more important than our historic right to peacefully protest;
  - d) Does not exempt legitimate industrial action such as picketing from 'disruption' definitions.
- 2) Public Order Bill – A staggering escalation of the government's clampdown on protest above, this set of proposals is a vindictive response to recent protests that the Tories personally dislike – Black Lives Matter, Extinction Rebellion etc. They further attack our democratic right to protest whereby police will not need to wait for disruption before shutting down a protest on the grounds that it 'might' cause disruption which might have 'more than a minimal impact' on people or business, potentially criminalising peaceful protest;
- 3) Elections Act 2022 including new Voter ID requirements - an attempt to cynically and critically undermine our democracy by directly attacking free and fair elections. This Bill is not just about introducing voter ID, it's about rigging future elections in favour of those already in power;

This legislation gives ministers control over the, currently independent, Electoral Commission enabling them to direct scrutiny toward their political rivals or even to turn a blind eye to their party's own wrongdoing;

It imposes limits on groups, trade unions, charities and even individuals doing anything considered to be 'intended to achieve a common purpose'. Legal and political experts have cited this as a direct attack on the involvement of unions and



## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

union members in elections and a way for the government to attack the funding streams for opposition parties;

This comes alongside proposals for mandatory voter ID, supposedly to prevent election fraud despite there being little evidence that this is a problem. This is blatant voter suppression which, as early as this year, stands to disenfranchise young people, people on lower incomes and has been very well documented Black communities hardest.

- 4) Human Rights Act Reform Bill - The UK Human Rights Act has been a significant curb to this governments most excessive attempts to dismantle our democratic, and fundamental, rights and it is no surprise that they now seek to replace and dilute the act itself;

The proposal is to replace the UK Human Rights Act with a weaker Bill of Rights and seems entirely based on the false premise that basic human rights for all somehow take rights away from others;

The UK's Human Rights Act safety net is a crucial source of legal protection for people across the country. It provides a means for those who have been mistreated or failed by the system to challenge their treatment and hold authorities to account. It has been vital in securing rights for many of our members including for the LGBT+ community and for disabled people with physical or mental impairments. It provides essential protection for all of us when we're at our most vulnerable;

The government's own independent review bodies have said there is no need to change the current Human Rights legislation but is still being cynically pushed through parliament.

- 5) Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill – a direct threat to industrial action that must be stopped;
- 6) Retained EU Law Bill - This bill is a direct attack on workers' rights. It creates a countdown for the expiry of vital protections in the workplace. By 2023, removing over 3800 pieces of EU derived legislation.

Conference is clear that we can not let the Tories weaken our basic democratic rights and freedoms now just to gain them populist votes or to avoid difficult conversations and debates about the cost of living crisis and their own failings.

Despite the overwhelming body of attack from this government, UNISON is well placed to challenge and resist this complete onslaught on all our rights as trade unions have had to many times before.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- i) Campaign to resist any dilution of the current UK Human Rights Act which underpins all other freedoms, alongside developing a broader campaign to resist anything that weakens our fundamental rights such as the current threats to industrial action, protest and free and fair election;

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

- ii) Undertake joint campaigning activity with the TUC, STUC, WTUC, ICTU, engaging with the Labour Party via Labour Link, Liberty, the British Institution for Human Rights, and any relevant civil society organisations in furtherance of defending and developing our current rights and freedoms from these attacks;
- iii) Support branches to campaign on these issues;
- iv) Challenge any attempt by the government to dilute current workers' rights.

### ***South West Region***

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#### **19. Free Our Unions – Resist New Anti-Union Laws Repeal Existing Ones**

Conference notes:

- 1) The full impact of the current anti-union laws has been seen in the recent strike wave (Jan 2023): The laws mean thousands of workers who vote to strike cannot do so. They strengthen the hand of the bosses in industrial disputes and result in widespread confusion amongst union members as to what action they can support;
- 2) That the Tories' "Transport Strikes (Minimum Service Levels)" Bill is already making its way through Parliament (Jan 2023). Rishi Sunak has also promised to bring forward further, as yet unspecified, legislation to place additional restrictions on workers' and unions' ability to organise and take action.

Conference further notes:

- a) That Britain already has what Tony Blair once proudly called "the most restrictive union laws in the western world".

Conference believes:

- i) These new restrictions would further criminalise effective trade unionism. The whole labour movement must resist. That resistance must not only focus on threatened new laws, but must demand the abolition of all existing restrictions on the right to organise and strike.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council:

- A) To produce a briefing for members explaining the threatened new laws, and the scale of existing restrictions;
- B) To support calls for a national demonstration on this issue, and work with other unions to organise this;
- C) To raise this issue through Labour Link asking Labour to commit to repealing the laws when next in government, in accordance with its Conference policy.

***Birmingham***

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#### **20. Cost of Living**

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

Conference notes that we are in a cost of living crisis with inflation and energy prices soaring, outstripping pay deals in every sector.

The increases in interest rates and the impact on mortgages, and therefore also private renting, as a result of the Truss government's failed economic policies have only heightened pressures on households.

In 2022 we are seeing many public sector workers, not just those on low income, facing the very real reality of having to decide between food or heating, missing meals to feed or cloth their children or relying on food banks or pay day loans.

Conference notes that the impact of the crisis is impacting all workers but is disproportionately impacting those that already face disadvantage, including our women, Black, Disabled, LGBT+ and young members.

Conference notes the union's cost of living campaign 'Together We Rise' and the London Region's campaign 'Better off in UNISON' which aims to put the cost of living crisis at the heart of all of our work for 2023.

UNISON must continue to fight for a properly funded public sector that puts workers at the heart of it and highlight the mounting financial pressure faced by public sector workers.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to develop and promote cost of living campaigns as a key priority;
- 2) Collate information and good practice on successful bargaining initiatives around the cost of living such as one off cost of living allowance, increased mileage rates and subsidised hot drinks/meals;
- 3) Produce information and training for branches, such as those in the community and voluntary sector, that negotiate pay locally on how to submit and win above inflation pay claims;
- 4) Ensure training and support is available for all Branch Welfare Officers on their role and the range of welfare services the union provides;
- 5) Work with the Self-Organised Groups to continue to highlight the disproportionate impact on Women, Black, LGBT+, Disabled and Young members;
- 6) Produce a cost of living toolkit for branches and activists to include bargaining guides and services available from UNISON There For You.

***Greater London Region***

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### **21. Tackling Child Poverty**

Most workers in the UK are facing real terms pay cuts that add to the cost-of-living crisis, fuelling rises in child poverty, homelessness, food and fuel poverty.

Conference notes with dismay and anger that:

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- 1) 3.9 million children were living in poverty in the UK in 2020–21. This is approximately 27 percent of all children, or eight in a classroom of 30;
- 2) Half of all children in lone parent families were in poverty as we entered the pandemic;
- 3) Almost half of children in Black parents are in poverty;
- 4) Educational outcomes for children living in poverty remain consistently lower, and this gap has widened through the pandemic;
- 5) The combined impact of discriminatory barriers to employment and cuts to disability benefits mean that children of Disabled parents are more likely to live in poverty.

Over two thirds of children in poverty have at least one parent in employment. Government-imposed limits on pay offers of five per cent or less, while inflation is rising well above ten per cent constitute real terms pay cuts. Energy and fuel costs at a time when the profits of energy companies are at their highest ever level, are the most significant contributor to rising inflation and impact on production and transport costs of all consumer goods.

Conference resolves to call on the National Executive Council to campaign:

- a) For the UK government to fund free school meals for every child in primary school, learning from the positive experience in Wales and from the last Labour government;
- b) For urgent measures to eradicate child poverty through higher incomes and proper living standards;
- c) To win pay rises across the public, community and private sectors and improve standards of living.

***Suffolk County***

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### **22. Tackling Health Inequalities and Closing the Life Expectancy Gap**

Conference notes that health inequalities in the UK, that were already unacceptably large, have intensified in recent years.

Conference notes that one of the most measurable demonstration of such inequalities is the “social gradient in health” which outlines differences in life expectancy for different groups of people.

For example, women living in the least-deprived 10 percent of areas have a life expectancy of 86.4 years, which is nearly eight years more than the 78.7 years expected for those in the most deprived 10 percent of areas. The gap is even wider for men, with a difference of more than nine years between the life expectancy for those in the least-deprived areas (83.5 years) and the most deprived (74.1 years).

Conference is alarmed that these gaps are growing larger for both women and men. Even more starkly, for the poorest in society the overall growth in life expectancy,

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

which had been a decades long trend before 2010, has now gone into reverse. A 2021 study by The Lancet found that, even before the Covid pandemic hit the UK, many parts of the north and other urban areas had seen life expectancy fall over the past decade.

Conference believes that it is no coincidence that such trends have occurred at a time of biting government austerity. This has affected the quality of people's homes, their diets, their ability to exercise, their mental health and also their ability to access healthcare services, given the restrictions that even the NHS has had to endure over this period.

Conference is also deeply concerned that public health services, which have the potential to help relieve health inequalities, have suffered substantial funding cuts over the past decade. For example, public health grant allocations were cut by nearly a quarter between 2015/16 and 2021/22.

In addition, Conference notes that Covid-19 has had an unequal impact on different population groups and has exacerbated health inequalities. Mortality rates from Covid have been higher in more deprived areas, contributing to widening disparities in life expectancy between the most and least deprived sections of society.

But Conference notes that health inequalities are not restricted to differences between socio-economic groups; they also affect women and our Black, disabled and LGBT+ communities.

Conference believes that health inequalities are not inevitable; evidence shows that a comprehensive joined-up approach to tackling inequalities can yield results. Putting a definitive end to austerity and guaranteeing proper investment in our public services should be the starting point.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Highlight the increase in health inequalities and disparities in life expectancy in the union's campaigning in health and other areas;
- 2) Campaign to put an end to the increase in health inequalities for those from the most deprived backgrounds and other groups in society;
- 3) Continue to campaign in the strongest terms for no return to austerity and proper investment in our public services, including public health.

***Yorkshire and Humberside Region***

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### **22.1**

At the end of the fourth paragraph:

"Professor Sir Michael Marmot, director of UCL's Institute of Health Equity, said in April 2022, "In the decade before the pandemic, improvement in health in the UK slowed dramatically, inequalities increased, and health for the poorest people got worse. This was all amplified by the pandemic"

After existing sixth paragraph, insert new paragraphs as follows:

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

“England’s public health grant allocation for 2023-24, announced in March, is effectively yet another real terms cut, as it does not include any provision for covering the cost of the NHS pay award to those NHS staff working on programmes and initiatives funded by the Public Health Grant”

“The years of public health grant cuts have had a direct impact on frontline public health prevention and treatment services, including sexual and reproductive health, health visiting and school nursing, tackling obesity, substance misuse, and HIV prevention and support. These services are disproportionately relied on by people – including LGBT+ and Black people - who experience gross health inequalities”.

After existing eighth paragraph, insert new paragraph as follows:

“Conference notes that the TUC is a member of Health Equals, a coalition of 29 organisations led by the Health Foundation, which is urging the government to implement new strategies to reverse the health inequalities and that Health Equals launched its #LivesCutShort campaign, which draws attention to regional inequalities in life expectancy across the UK, on 23 March.”

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

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#### **23. Opposing the Rise of the Far Right in Europe**

Conference believes that one of the most important lessons of the last century is how the economics of despair can lead to the rise of the politics of hate, in the 1930’s and 1940’s leading to world war and genocide.

Therefore, Conference is alarmed by the rise of neo fascist forces in recent elections in Europe. Both Hungary and Poland have well-entrenched right-wing leaders in Viktor Orban and Andrzej Duda. They are now joined by the new Italian Prime Minister, Georgia Meloni. Her ‘Brothers of Italy’ Party received over 25 percent of the vote on a platform described as the most right-wing since Mussolini.

Conference notes with concern that the far right is getting closer to power in other European countries. In France, Marine Le Pen received 41 percent of the vote in the Presidential run off last year, up from 34 percent in 2017. In Sweden, a party with neo Nazi roots called the Sweden Democrats won over 20% of the vote in last year’s election. Similarly, in Austria, Spain, the Netherlands and Serbia far-right parties have gained momentum at the ballot-box, fuelling division and discontent through their anti migrant and so called nationalist narratives.

Across Europe, there are significant proportions of voters who are sufficiently desperate and disillusioned with the failings of mainstream politicians to vote for the far right.

Conference notes some similarities in the far right programmes, which are anti-immigrant and nativist, hostile to LGBTQ+ people, and sometimes emphasise Christian nationalism. Conference is concerned that some groups are linked together internationally, with Hungarian political leaders being linked with the far right in the US, and an Italian terror cell being found to have links with the Ukrainian Azov battalion.

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

Conference believes that in an economic climate where living standards are falling across Europe, it is important that mainstream politicians speak to the needs of working class people, and do not leave them prey to right wing ideology.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work to challenge far right ideology through:

- 1) Education for members by including anti-fascism into our training for activists as part of the day job;
- 2) Continue and expand international trade union co-operation by reaching out to trade unionists across the globe and actively working together to challenge the far right threat;
- 3) Work with anti-fascist organisations, including Hope not Hate and Unite against Fascism and Stand up to Racism, to secure accurate, up to date intelligence on the state of the modern far right, and tactics and strategies to challenge them;
- 4) Continue to engage in activity that challenges the far right in all areas of its activity. Eternal vigilance, zero tolerance leaving no scope for the far right to grow;
- 5) Develop trade union narratives on migration that enable trade unions, not bigots, to lead the discussion on the causes of problems that create angst that the far right exploit, without answers, whether unemployment, low wages, poor housing or other issues;
- 6) To defeat the politics of hate, we need to expose the malignance of the far right, but even more importantly to offer better answers, to offer hope that both mobilise those who oppose the far right, win over those who are complacent or undecided, and draw away those that the far-right target for support by isolating their activists as the extremists they are, without support.

***North West Region***

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### **23.1**

After existing fifth paragraph, insert new paragraphs as follows:

“Conference further notes that a March 2022 report from Hope not Hate, “Transphobia and The Far Right” stated “In recent years transgender people have become an important target of far-right hate, both here in Britain and internationally. Hate against trans people has united the broader far right in a way few other issues have done. From more mainstream figures and parties that usually avoid explicit references to race, to explicitly fascist and racist groups, transphobia has become a central focus”.

The report also stated “because [the] strict view on gender as binary and biologically defined is shared across the far right, so too has opposition to the movement for transgender equality. This opposition is shared almost universally across the far right’s, usually conflicting, segments”.

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

After existing point 3), insert new action point 4) and renumber remaining action points accordingly:

“4) Ensuring that work to challenge far right ideology fully reflects the fact that Transgender people are a key target of far right hate;”

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

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#### **24. Improve Bereavement Leave**

Conference notes an estimated one in five pregnancies ends in miscarriage yet, despite this, women still face stigma and are not able to talk about their loss.

Staffing shortages and lack of funding has led to reduced training of healthcare staff in bereavement care and specialist bereavement services unable to run seven days per week. There is no entitlement to statutory maternity, paternity or parental bereavement leave following a miscarriage that happens in the first 24 weeks of pregnancy. But this does not mean that a family is not bereaved or that the loss should not be acknowledged and support not given.

In England, Scotland and Wales the Equality Act 2010 includes a protected period of two weeks against discrimination, dismissal, redundancy or unfair treatment related to pregnancy, miscarriage or related sick leave. Sickness absence certified as pregnancy or miscarriage-related by a GP or other medical practitioner is therefore legally protected. Employers must count this absence separately. Unfavourable treatment outside of this period may be considered as sex discrimination.

In Northern Ireland, the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 and associated regulations introduced, as a day one right, the entitlement for eligible working parents who experience a stillbirth from the twenty-fourth week of pregnancy, or the death of a child under the age of 18, to two weeks of bereavement leave. These laws also create an eligibility for Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay for any employee who has been continuously employed by an employer for at least 26 weeks before the death or stillbirth.

Conference further notes the stated intention of the then Minister for the Economy in Northern Ireland to update regulations to extend the eligibility to parental bereavement pay and leave to parents who experience “unintentional miscarriage” and to remove the existing 26-week qualifying period for parental bereavement pay entitlements in the case of stillbirth and death of a child.

While these proposals would make Northern Ireland the first in the UK to have any provision for miscarriage and one of the first places in the world to do so, concerns exist that any choice to extend these provisions only to people who experience “unintentional miscarriage” moves away from the medical use of the term towards something exclusive of those who end their pregnancies via medical intervention. This includes pregnancies that are ectopic and non-viable, therefore requiring termination, as well as abortion for non-medical reasons.

Conference notes that UNISON has been part of the call for the provision to explicitly cover the loss of a pregnancy where conception occurred through IVF and failed implantation of an embryo transfer. This is particularly important to make the



## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

regulations more inclusive of lesbian and bi women as well as all people who undergo fertility treatment.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council, in conjunction with the relevant lay structures, to:

- 1) Campaign for investment in specialist bereavement services;
- 2) Issue general bargaining guidance that embeds the existing legal protections for those who have suffered a miscarriage;
- 3) Encourage employers to sign the Miscarriage Association pregnancy loss pledge;
- 4) Support further expansion of legislation enhancing bereavement leave in both Great Britain and Northern Ireland legislation.

*Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust*

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### **25. Defend Abortion Rights**

Conference asserts that the overturning of Roe v. Wade by the US Supreme Court is the biggest attack on abortion rights since the 1970s. There are many US states ready to bring in bans following this ruling. These bans will not stop abortions. But they will stop safe abortions, and they will make it a crime to assist someone to have an abortion. This means thousands of working class people, mainly women, face an unwanted pregnancy, an unsafe procedure, a jail sentence. Rich people will be okay, they can afford to travel to states or countries without bans, or to check in to a private clinic.

We cannot be complacent: our right to choose and access to abortion has repeatedly come under attack, and the Supreme Court decision will give confidence to those wanting to attack abortion rights. Nadine Dorries used the publicity around the Tory leadership battle in 2022 to call for reducing the time limit for abortion. Working class people and the trade union movement have come together before to fight for our right to choose. The TUC called the biggest ever protest to defend abortion rights against the Corrie Bill in 1979, mobilising 80,000 people onto the streets. This made a huge difference to the campaign, and to women in the workplace.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Encourage branches to affiliate to Abortion Rights UK;
- 2) Campaign for decriminalisation of abortion in England, Scotland and Wales and for fair access.

*Greenwich Local Government and Grant Aid*

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Public Services

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### **26. Ending the Social Care Crisis**

Conference is appalled that adult social care continues to exist in a state of permanent crisis and that the sector remains severely underfunded, with hundreds of thousands of elderly and disabled people being unable to access the care they need.

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

Conference is deeply concerned that workers continue to leave the sector in massive numbers and notes that the social care workforce shrank by 50,000 people in 2021-22, contributing to the record high of 165,000 vacancies across the sector. This ongoing exodus of care staff further compounds the major staff retention problems caused by the Tory government's disastrous 2021 legislation which imposed compulsory vaccinations on care home employees and for those staff visiting care establishments.

Conference asserts that a major reason for workers leaving the sector is the fact that pay levels are too low to compete with other sectors, such as retail, and further notes that these problems are bound up with the fact that too many cowboy care providers continue to operate in the sector, as part of an under-regulated and massively fragmented system.

Conference notes that government attempts to address the crisis have so far amounted to little more than a sticking plaster when what is needed is substantial and sustained investment, coupled with wide ranging reform of the sector and a comprehensive workforce strategy.

Conference therefore reasserts its support for a National Care Service that brings about consistent standards of care for service users and consistent terms and conditions for the workforce.

Conference congratulates UNISON on its ongoing work in being a prominent proponent of such a system as we move towards the next general election and calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Intensify the union's campaigning for a National Care Service, including national pay bargaining and a national partnership forum similar to the NHS;
- 2) Campaign for an end to the use of private equity in social care and a clampdown on the inappropriate use of the profit motive;
- 3) Continue to work with other like minded organisations in the care sector as part of a broad-based alliance of those demanding reform;
- 4) Build alliances with other TUC affiliates to ensure the broadest possible trade union campaign for a properly funded National Care Service under democratic control;
- 5) Call on UNISON's Labour Link to continue to campaign for a National Care Service within all relevant Labour Party forums.

***South East Region  
Isle of Wight Local Government***

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### **26.1**

Add new points 6) and 7):

"6) Use Labour Link and all TUC structures to lobby for tax avoidance or low tax companies to start being taxed in the UK so that these huge profits can be used to fund social care across the UK;

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

7) Use Labour Link and all TUC structures to lobby for energy companies profits from oil revenues to be used annually to help fund social care provision across the UK."

### ***North Northamptonshire Local Government***

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#### **27. Radical Change in Social Care in Wales Can Influence the Whole of the UK**

Conference welcomes the good work UNISON is leading in Wales in partnership with the Welsh government and other unions to address the long term crisis in social care and recognises developments here have enormous potential to influence how care is delivered across the UK.

UNISON's campaigning resulted in Wales TUC and Welsh Labour's adoption of the creation of a National Care Service for Wales as policy and the Welsh Government alongside Plaid Cymru, has pledged to explore the establishment of such a service.

The Welsh Labour government has acknowledged the system is broken and needs radical change and is working on a range of measures in partnership with the trade unions:

- 1) A tripartite Social Care Fair Work Forum which will address pay, career pathways, poor levels of trade union membership and recognition and explore the establishment of sectoral collective bargaining;
- 2) Introduction of the real living wage as a minimum for care workers in Wales from April 2022, despite the current challenging financial situation.

Conference commends the landmark UNISON Wales/Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) National Care Service for Wales report, launched in November 2022, which shows the private sector is the barrier to improved social services in Wales.

Conference is very encouraged the Deputy Minister for Social Services, Wales TUC and various councils want to work with UNISON on the report's findings and recognises developments in social care in Wales place it ahead of every other nation. Meeting our objectives in Wales will provide a successful template for social care for the whole of the UK.

Conference agrees that UNISON resources need to be appropriately identified and allocated to regions (devolved administrations and English regions) to effectively challenge the private vested interests which deliver up to 70 per cent of social care and where there is hardly any trade union membership or recognition. If UNISON Wales can succeed in its campaign to establish sectoral collective bargaining in Wales, it will be vital the union has the means to win a majority of the 100,000-strong workforce in Wales and become the union for care workers.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Further develop and adapt our policy and campaigns for National Care Services in Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, particularly applying the lessons learned from the developments in Wales and Scotland that clearly

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

demonstrate marketised social care removes taxpayers' money that should be invested in care provision and in care workers themselves. These campaigns should be underpinned by commissioning representative pilot investigations to 'follow the money' in care as it disappears in private profit or is wasted in the commissioning process in Wales and elsewhere in the UK.

- b) Review the allocation of UNISON's policy and organising and recruitment capacity across our regions to ensure that within the devolved administrations and England we are best able to maximise the opportunities to recruit, organise and improve the pay and conditions of social care workers across the UK.

*Cymru/Wales Region*

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### 27.1

After a) add:

"b) Campaign for a National Care Service including national planning for complex needs. A National Care Service will need to be democratically planned based upon the expressed wishes of service users and their advocates and fully utilising the expertise of care workers. Care workers, organised in trade unions, must have a leading role in developing a National Care Service."

Re-letter point b) as point c)

*Merton*

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### 28. A Vision for a National Care Service

Conference recognises the need for change in social care. The current system values neither staff or service users. It creates a low paid workforce and fails to recognise the skills required for the high quality social care that our most vulnerable citizens deserve. The current system across the UK enables and promotes a market approach which has seen for profit companies take over many care services, driving down pay and conditions and directing profits to shareholders, many of whom do not even live in the UK. Often, when they fail, councils have to pick up the services with tax payers' money.

The cost to the public purse goes even beyond that, with the failure to provide quality social care services delaying hospital discharges.

Conference agrees that things need to change and that a care system is needed that values staff and increases both the pay and status of social care workers. At present morale amongst staff across the UK is very low and there is a serious recruitment and retention crisis. Changes in carers, a lack of staff and an increasing reliance on agency workers does nothing to promote consistency of care for the most vulnerable in our communities.

UNISON has supported the creation of a National Care Service but there needs to be a very clear vision of what we mean by that. In Scotland what is being proposed in the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill is not something that we should recognise as a real National Care Service. Instead it will retain care as a commodity

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

in a market based system, and extend market mechanisms across all of social work and community health.

If passed the Bill will enable services to be taken out of the democratic control of local authorities and placed in the hands of care boards – quangos responsible only to Ministers. It will also enable all social work services to be removed from council control to be the responsibility of care boards which will not deliver services directly but procure them – from public, third sector and private providers. In total, 75,000 workers could be transferred out of councils and an unknown number of NHS staff, potentially taking this workforce out of our service areas and into the civil service.

The moves will devastate local government, removing over a third of the workforce and having knock on effect to services elsewhere in councils that currently support the social care and social work services, such as Human Resources and payroll. UNISON has a policy of protecting local government and the services they provide. The Scottish proposal flies in the face of all we have collectively fought for.

The Bill also offers nothing to our members in social care and fails to take profit out of care provision which holds down terms and conditions, especially in the private sector.

It would be better for the workforce and service users if the money it would cost for this huge restructuring was invested in local government to enable councils and not for profit providers to provide the quality care services we want to see and to reward and value staff.

The Bill leaves massive uncertainty around pay, terms and conditions, and potentially allows a race to the bottom. Currently there is a living wage paid to care workers in Scotland, through their contracts with the integration Joint Care boards. This could be further enhanced without the need for a separate quango. The impact on our members' pensions has not been addressed, creating massive uncertainty for workers and for local government and other pensions funds. TUPE has been promised but this has its limitations, especially with pensions.

This has highlighted the key importance of starting with a vision for what a care service should look like. We commend the UNISON Cymru Wales' report conducted by APSE as a starting point towards this.

Its conclusions set out key principles that should be included in a National Care Service including a promise for a fully funded, universal, free at the point of delivery service that works in the interests of all; an end to private companies making profit out of care and a commitment to deliver care services through local government

Conference agrees that UNISON must, as a matter of urgency, set out our vision for a National Care Service in the UK and in each devolved nation to underpin our campaigning and negotiations. Scotland's situation demonstrates that it is not enough to assume that all stakeholders, including governments, share our principles and values for a National Care Service.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

- 1) Work with devolved nations, service groups, self organised groups and other like-minded stakeholders to design a vision of the National Care Service we want to see. This should be underpinned by the following principles:
  - a) Social care should be fully funded, universal and free at the point of delivery;
  - b) Social care should be delivered by democratically elected councils and there should be proper investment to develop social care to a high standard;
  - c) There should be sectoral bargaining across social care;
  - d) For-profit providers should have no place in a National Care Service;
  - e) Fair work, decent pay and improved status should be the norm for all care workers.
- 2) Call on Labour Link to promote this vision within the Labour Party in the UK and the devolved nations and seek their support to take it forward in UK Parliaments and to implement it when in power.
- 3) Support UNISON Scotland in their campaign to have the NCS (Scotland) Bill withdrawn and learn lessons in the other nations from the Scottish experience.

### ***Scotland Region***

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#### **28.1**

After the paragraph that begins “Its conclusions”, insert new paragraph as follows:

“Conference also notes that some care workers are directly employed by disabled people through personal budgets which support their independence. Our vision needs to include how these workers are incorporated in nationally agreed terms, conditions and training, while maintaining disabled people’s independence and right to choose.”

In action point b) insert “primarily commissioned and” before “delivered” and at end of sentence insert a new sentence: “A clear vision for care workers employed directly by disabled people must also be developed;”

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

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#### **29. The Urgent Need for Reform and Increased Investment in Social Care**

Conference notes that it has debated many motions over recent years on social care, including for older people. However, the problems remain.

Conference recognises that health and social care workers are poorly paid and that training for staff in this sector is inadequate for the care that is needed for people in residential homes, nursing homes or for that matter, in their own home. A large number of care staff are leaving the sector and this has continually increased during and after the pandemic due to the poor pay and conditions.

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

UNISON has 165,000 retired members and this is a serious concern for retired members as well as anyone who relies on care workers to assist them with their day to day living.

Nothing that the governments in Westminster, in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland has done has made an impact on this crisis situation.

A House of Lords report in 2019 said that 1.4 million older people have an unmet care need. The Health Foundation's report "What's the problem with social care" identified a funding gap of £18 million for social care by 2030/31. UNISON General Secretary Christina McAnea has stated that without sufficient staff the Government's policy on the NHS and Social Care is doomed.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council, working through the appropriate UNISON structures to:

- 1) Continue to campaign for improvements to social care for older people including the provision of care by the Public Sector;
- 2) Continue to campaign for increased investment particularly in the work force;
- 3) Report back to National Delegate Conference in 2024 on any progress.

### ***National Retired Members' Committee***

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#### **30. National Care Service**

Conference recognises that while adult social care is largely seen as care for the elderly, some service users with complex needs require lifelong care.

Increasing medical expertise and life expectancy for some service users has led to an increasing number of adults needing specialist services, but these services may not be available with adult social care being increasingly provided by private providers and on an unplanned basis.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to campaign for a National Care Service including national planning for complex needs.

Conference recognises that a National Care Service will need to be democratically planned based upon the expressed wishes of service users and their advocates and fully utilising the expertise of care workers.

Care workers, organised in trade unions, must have a leading role in developing a National Care Service.

***Merton***

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#### **31. Unprecedented Crisis in Social Care**

Conference recognises the acute crisis in Adult Social Care provision as evidenced by the Skills For Care's report: "The state of the Adult Social Care sector and workforce in England" for the 2021/22 period, published in October 2022.

This report highlighted:

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

- 1) The number of vacant posts in Adult Social Care was then the highest on record;
- 2) Filled posts had dropped by 50,000;
- 3) Vacancy rates were at 11% - twice the national average;
- 4) Zero hours contracts made up 24 percent of all Social Care jobs, compared to 3 percent in the market as a whole;
- 5) Four out of every five jobs in the wider economy pay more than the median for care workers;
- 6) In 2021/22, real term hourly pay rates fell by 1.5 percent (and this figure will almost certainly increase for 2022/23);
- 7) Fuel price inflation for Domiciliary Care Workers exacerbates such real terms pay cuts;
- 8) The public sector is now responsible for delivering less than one sixth of Social Care in England with 79 percent of posts in Adult Social Care with independent employers, almost three quarters of these in the private sector (a further 7% is accounted for by the estimated 90,000 workers employed by individual direct payment recipients).

Conference further acknowledges the crisis in Children's Social Care is as acute with the President of Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) stating last autumn that the sector needed three quarters of a billion pounds just to stand still, whilst criticising a system which saw providers earning significant profits from a statutory service.

Social Care Workers need a significant pay increase, along with other improved conditions of service, to begin to even tackle the crisis. Failure of governments to tackle this will result in an even worse situation.

UNISON members working within Social Care are organised in three separate Sectors; Health Local Government and Community. This can make it difficult for pay claims to be formulated across different employers for workers who often do very similar jobs. Conference recognises that UNISON structure should not hinder UNISON seeking a proper living wage for all our Social Care members.

A high profile campaign around pay will also lead to recruitment opportunities across all sectors.

Therefore, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Facilitate discussion between Service Groups and Sectors that would enable pay claims to be submitted at the earliest opportunity for the greatest number of our Social Care members;
- b) Produce joint campaign materials to be used by Branches to maximise participation and publicity.



# 2023 National Delegate Conference

## UNISON FINAL AGENDA

*Derbyshire County*

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### 31.1

Add end of point a) add: “, whilst recognising the practicalities on fragmentation and non-recognition and also work sites and/or care homes with a single UNISON member present;”

*National Executive Council*

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## 32. Fighting for the Future of Local Government

Conference notes that local councils across the country are facing significant budget shortfalls after years of austerity and record inflation. Councils are being forced to resort to ever more desperate measures just to keep services going, while the cost of living crisis, made worse by the Tories crashing our economy, means increased demand for support and services.

Rather than responding to the crisis facing local government by increasing funding, the Chancellor chose to freeze funding in cash terms, while inflation continues to push up prices and demand for services. Furthermore, much of this funding requires councils to increase council taxes on residents already struggling to make ends meet.

UNISON believes that local communities cannot be the ones to pay the price for the government's grotesque mismanagement of the economy. Conference applauds UNISON's work to collect data on local council budget shortfalls and campaigning on the urgent need to fill the £3.2 billion budget shortfall. Conference also welcomes the work undertaken by UNISON Scotland with the Jimmy Reid Foundation on countering Scottish Government centralisation of local government.

Conference notes that local tax varying powers are unfair and inadequate. Council tax bands in England are still based on property values in April 1991 and reform is long overdue. UNISON commends the Welsh Government for undertaking a review of council tax and condemns the governments in Westminster and Holyrood for kicking the issue into the long grass. Additionally, business rates punish physical shops and businesses while allowing online companies to profit.

UNISON believes that council tax and business rates should be scrapped in favour of a more progressive alternative, and that the balance between local tax varying powers and national taxation should be designed to ensure redistribution of funding to the communities that are in the greatest need.

Conference also notes the announcement in Autumn 2022 of a new wave of devolution deals in Suffolk, Cornwall, Norfolk, and the Northeast, following the conclusion of talks with council leaders in August 2022 in North Yorkshire and the East Midlands. Over half of England will soon have a directly elected mayor, while the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill seeks to expand the devolution framework and enable the creation of County Combined Authorities in England through new devolution deals.

UNISON believes that decisions are better when communities and workers have a say in the issues that affect them. Power should not be hoarded in Westminster or

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

devolved governments. UNISON believes it is important to engage in debates on English devolution to ensure that these deals deliver for everyone. It is also important to continue making the case that not only should Westminster increase local government funding to devolved nations, but that devolved governments in Holyrood and Cardiff Bay should be held to account on how they choose to distribute funding and power to councils.

To this end, UNISON welcomes English devolution so long as it conforms to the following principles:

- 1) Devolution deals should be developed from the bottom up, not in backroom deals in Whitehall. Public service workers, who support and understand their communities, should be involved in developing plans. Proposals must be developed and adopted through full consultation with the public and not be imposed on an area;
- 2) Devolution deals should draw powers from the centre, not reduce the power of local councils and communities;
- 3) Devolution deals should not result in any job losses, erosion of terms and conditions for staff, outsourcing of services or reduction in collective bargaining rights. Regional and city-level devolution should give greater union representation on regional bodies;
- 4) Devolution deals should give public authorities the ability/ power to provide services directly (for example, providing bus services directly) ;
- 5) Devolution deals should include a predictable, secure and sufficient funding stream based on need;
- 6) Devolution deals should not be at the financial expense of the provision of public services in the region or in other regions not included in the deal, and should not impose any preconditions over the implementation of public services;
- 7) Devolution deals should form part of an equitable constitutional settlement, meaning there should not be a 'race to the bottom' on local/regional taxes or regulations and funding should be allocated based on need not as part of a reductive competition for inward investment between places.

Conference further notes the threat that the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill presents to local government in Scotland. It paves the way for social care and all of social work to come under the purview of new quangos under the direct control of Scottish Ministers and could see 75,000 workers transferred out of local authorities.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Develop a positive vision for the future of local government, showing how councils are uniquely placed to address many of the biggest issues the country is facing such as tackling the climate emergency, alleviating the cost-of-living crisis, reducing socioeconomic inequalities, and growing fairer local economies. This should include commissioning analysis into the funding needs for local government to deliver in these areas on top of delivering good quality statutory

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

services, and to enable UNISON to lobby for a credible, forward-looking and needs-based funding settlement that is greater than 2010 levels;

- b) Continue to make the economic case that public service pay is key to sustainable regional economic growth;
- c) Work with the TUC, the WTUC, the STUC and ICTU, Labour Link and other like minded organisations to develop progressive alternative models of local taxation and make the case for greater redistribution based on need;
- d) Write to Ministers setting out UNISON's principles for English devolution and asking for trade unions to be represented in any devolution negotiations;
- e) Support regions and branches in England to engage in local discussions on devolution deals and share resources for activists to use for local campaigns;
- f) Continue to campaign for better funding for Local Government;
- g) Campaign for a National Care Service in each of the nations, that retains services under the democratic control of local government, as is proposed in Wales.

### *National Executive Council*

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### **33. Fighting for Local Government to Have the Powers and Funding It Needs!**

Conference notes that local government in the UK is in a period of change and crisis. Westminster's top down reorganisation through devolution deals creates uncertainty for both the workforce and local communities. Austerity has seen core budgets cut, with the Government forcing towns and regions to compete for limited levelling up funding.

Conference also notes that, much like the rest of the UK, councils in the Southwest of England are facing huge budget shortfalls. Councils are being forced to resort to ever more desperate measures just to keep services going, while the cost of living crisis, made worse by the Tories crashing our economy, means increased demand for support and services. UNISON research shows that Cornwall Council, for example, has closed three children's centres in Newquay and Falmouth because of austerity.

Conference believes that current local tax varying powers are unfair and inadequate. Council tax bands in England are still based on property values in April 1991 while business rates punish physical shops and businesses, allowing online companies to profit at their expense.

Conference also notes the announcement in Autumn 2022 of a new wave of devolution deals in Suffolk, Cornwall, Norfolk, and the Northeast, following the conclusion of talks with council leaders in August 2022 in North Yorkshire and the East Midlands. Over half of England will soon have a directly elected mayor, while the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill seeks to expand the devolution framework and enable the creation of County Combined Authorities in England through new devolution deals.

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

Conference recognises the need to engage in debates about the future of local government, from how power is devolved from Westminster to how taxes are raised and redistributed, in order to ensure communities and workers do not pay the price of this government's mismanagement and top-down meddling.

UNISON believes that council tax and business rates should be scrapped in favour of a more progressive alternative, and that the balance between local tax varying powers and national taxation should be designed to ensure redistribution of funding to the communities that are in the greatest need.

UNISON also believes that decisions are better when communities and workers have a say in the issues that affect them. Power should not be hoarded in Westminster or devolved governments. UNISON believes it is important to engage in debates on English devolution to ensure that these deals deliver for everyone.

To this end, UNISON understands that English devolution is the direction of travel and will support so long as it conforms to the following principles:

- 1) Devolution deals should be developed from the bottom up, not in backroom deals in Whitehall. Public service workers, who support and understand their communities, should be involved in developing plans. Proposals must be developed and adopted through full consultation with the public and not be imposed on an area;
- 2) Devolution deals should draw powers from the centre, not reduce the power of local councils and communities;
- 3) Devolution deals should not result in any job losses, erosion of terms and conditions for staff, outsourcing of services or reduction in collective bargaining rights. Regional and city level devolution should give greater union representation on regional bodies;
- 4) Devolution deals should give public authorities the ability and power to provide services directly (for example, providing bus services directly);
- 5) Devolution deals should include a predictable, secure and sufficient funding stream based on need;
- 6) Devolution deals should not be at the financial expense of the provision of public services in the region or in other regions not included in the deal and should not impose any preconditions over the implementation of public services;
- 7) Devolution deals should form part of an equitable constitutional settlement, meaning there should not be a 'race to the bottom' on local or regional taxes or regulations and funding should be allocated based on need not as part of a reductive competition for inward investment between places.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Fight for needs based local government funding by presenting a positive vision for the future of local government, only by pressuring councillors and decision makers to research the objective needs of local communities and demand that

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central government provide adequate funding. As part of this, UNISON should support councillors opposing further austerity. This would build the popular support to stand up to Tory cuts and ensure local government is best placed;

- b) Support branches and regions in England to engage in local discussions on devolution deals and share resources for activists to use for local campaigns, based on the principles outlined above;
- c) Write to Ministers setting out UNISON's principles for English devolution and asking for trade unions to be represented in any devolution negotiations;
- d) Work with the TUC, the WTUC, the STUC and the ICTU, Labour Link and other likeminded organisations to develop progressive alternative models of local taxation and make the case for greater redistribution based on need;
- e) Continue to make the economic case that public service pay is key to sustainable regional economic growth;
- f) To fight to maintain national bargaining within all devolution proposals.

### *South West Region*

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#### **34. Local Power and Money Needed to Tackle Poverty**

Conference notes that local government in the UK is in a period of change and crisis. Westminster's top down reorganisation through devolution deals creates uncertainty for both the workforce and local communities. Austerity since 2010 has seen core budgets cut, with the government forcing towns and regions in England to compete for limited levelling up funding.

Conference also notes that, much like the rest of the UK, councils in the North of England are facing huge budget shortfalls. Councils are being forced to resort to ever more desperate measures just to keep services going, while the cost-of-living crisis, made worse by the Tories crashing our economy, means increased demand for support and services. The Local Government Association have warned that Councils currently face over a £3billion a year shortfall in funding. Collectively Councils lost £15billion of funding between 2010 and 2020. Council funding is needed to work jointly with colleges, Universities, the NHS, Schools, Transport, Police, Probation, Voluntary sector and energy companies (on warm homes and buildings).

Conference therefore welcomes UNISON's Council Cuts website that enables the public to see the funding shortfalls in each local authority area based on Freedom of Information Act requests.

Conference believes that current local tax varying powers are unfair and inadequate. Council tax bands in England are still based on property values in April 1991 while business rates punish physical shops and businesses, allowing online companies to profit at their expense.

Conference also notes the announcement in Autumn 2022 of a new wave of devolution deals in Suffolk, Cornwall, Norfolk, and the Northeast of England,

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following the conclusion of talks with council leaders in August 2022 in North Yorkshire and the East Midlands. Over half of England will soon have a directly elected mayor, while the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill seeks to expand the devolution framework and enable the creation of County Combined Authorities in England through new devolution deals.

Conference recognises the need to engage in debates about the future of local government, from how power is devolved from Westminster to how taxes are raised and redistributed, in order to ensure communities and workers don't pay the price of this government's mismanagement and top-down meddling.

UNISON believes that council tax and business rates should be scrapped in favour of a more progressive alternative, and that the balance between local tax varying powers and national taxation should be designed to ensure redistribution of funding to the communities that are in the greatest need and that have the greatest poverty levels.

UNISON also believes that decisions are better when communities and workers have a say in the issues that affect them. Power shouldn't be hoarded in Westminster or devolved governments. UNISON believes it is important to engage in debates on English devolution to ensure that these deals deliver for everyone.

To this end, UNISON welcomes English devolution so long as it conforms to the following principles:

- 1) Devolution deals should be developed from the bottom up, not in backroom deals in Whitehall. Public service workers, who support and understand their communities, should be involved in developing plans. proposals must be developed and adopted through full consultation with the public and not be imposed on an area;
- 2) Devolution deals should draw powers from the centre, not reduce the power of local councils and communities;
- 3) Devolution deals should not result in any job losses, erosion of terms and conditions for staff, outsourcing of services or reduction in collective bargaining rights. Regional and city-level devolution should give greater union representation on regional bodies;
- 4) Devolution deals should give public authorities the ability/ power to provide services directly (for example, providing bus services directly);
- 5) Devolution deals should include a predictable, secure and sufficient funding stream based on need;
- 6) Devolution deals should not be at the financial expense of the provision of public services in the region or in other regions not included in the deal and should not impose any preconditions over the implementation of public services;
- 7) Devolution deals should form part of an equitable constitutional settlement – meaning there should not be a 'race to the bottom' on local/ regional taxes or

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

regulations and funding should be allocated based on need not as part of a reductive competition for inward investment between places.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Fight for needs-based local government funding by presenting a positive vision for the future of local government – only by persuading communities and decision-makers that local government is best placed to tackle the big issues like the cost-of-living crisis and climate change will UNISON get the popular support needed to stand up to Tory cuts;
- b) Support branches and regions in England to engage in local discussions on devolution deals and share resources for activists to use for local campaigns, based on the principles outlined above;
- c) Write to Ministers setting out UNISON's principles for English devolution and asking for trade unions to be represented in any devolution negotiations;
- d) Work with the TUC, the WTUC, the STUC and the ICTU, Labour Link and other likeminded organisations to develop progressive alternative models of local taxation and make the case for greater redistribution based on need;
- e) Continue to make the economic case that public service pay is key to sustainable regional economic growth.

*Northern Region*

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### **35. Campaigning for Better Public Procurement**

Conference notes that with £300 billion of annual expenditure on goods, services and works, procurement accounts for a third of all public expenditure in the UK. Conference agrees that the way in which this expenditure is used is a crucial issue for public services, the economy and UNISON members who deliver public services whilst being employed by private contractors or the community and voluntary sector.

Decades of outsourcing has seen hundreds of thousands of staff transfer from employment by local councils, NHS trusts, police authorities, universities, colleges, schools and utility services to external providers, such as private companies or charities. From school catering to social care, cleaning to IT and HR services, almost no area of public services has been left untouched.

All too often this has led to a deterioration in the pay, pensions, terms and conditions of the staff delivering the service, creating a “two-tier” workforce of directly employed staff working alongside contractor staff, as well as a “two-tier” or “multi-tier” workforce within the contractor themselves between staff who transferred with TUPE rights and new starters joining in different waves.

Conference further notes that the post Brexit Procurement Bill, which the UK government has introduced to replace EU regulations, is a clear indication that the Tory government is no friend of working people and public services. Although procurement is a topic that is hardly likely to capture the headlines, the implications of the Bill are far reaching and indicate the type of country that Tories want to create.

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

It is one characterised by an insecure and flexible labour market, austerity and profit taking from public services.

International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions have been abandoned. Commitments to using public expenditure to promote decent jobs, employment standards, end modern slavery in supply chains, equalities policies and sustainability have been downgraded. Opportunities to make procurement transparent and to call time on abuses typified by the PPE VIP lane have been ignored.

Conference agrees that now is the time for UNISON to set out and campaign for an alternative vision of procurement that puts the power of the pound behind quality public services, our communities and our members.

This should involve calling time once and for all on the wishful thinking of too many contracting authorities that procurement can deliver easy cost savings, better services and deliver a profit for providers, all at the same time. And it should involve supporting our members who already work for outsourced public services and who want to campaign for their jobs and pensions to be improved and/or to be brought back in-house.

Conference notes that in some regards the supposed benefits of outsourcing have been eroded by the reality of contracting outs. There has been a notable turn toward “insourcing” recently. But we are still a very long way from the presumption that services should only be outsourced if it can be shown that such work can’t be delivered in house. Hundreds of thousands of carers, cleaners, porters, security and catering staff in our public services workplaces are among the most worse off and insecure workers in the UK. Yet they are providing the vital public services upon which we all rely.

Conference agrees this has to end.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Put the future of public procurement at the heart of its political campaign activity in the year ahead;
- 2) Campaign for national collective agreement compliance to be allowed in tender specifications as is common in other countries;
- 3) Highlight the final parliamentary outcome of the Procurement Bill in the Westminster parliament and update any general negotiating advice;
- 4) To work with the National Private Contractors Forum (NPCF) to build our activist capacity;
- 5) To work with the NPCF to target contractors for local and/or national recognition drives;
- 6) Support our service groups and branches make annual pay claims for contracted staff;



## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

- 7) Support our service groups and branches make claims for improved sick pay, pensions and annual leave;
- 8) Be aware of procurement developments in the devolved nations.

### *Private Contractors' National Forum*

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#### **35.1**

Add new sentence at the end of the third paragraph:

"The result of privatisation has seen Black workers disproportionately trapped in these jobs with lower pay and worse conditions and part of our organising against institutional racism has to include improving conditions and campaigning for the services to come back in house."

In point 6) Add after "contracted staff":

“, and support our branches and members taking industrial action if necessary to win their pay claim;”

*Camden*

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#### **35.2**

Add new point 9) as follows:

“9) include the UNISON supported Disability Employment Charter in any model procurement templates and claims available to branches.”

### *National Executive Council*

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## **36. Ending the Two Tier Workforce in Public Services**

Conference believes that direct, in-house provision is best for our members, service users and communities. For over 40 years this union and our predecessor unions have campaigned for unionisation and decent pay and conditions among contracted out public service workers and resisted the under-cutting of workers' pay and conditions.

Conference notes:

- 1) The problems caused by a two-tier workforce, where staff working side-by-side receive different pay and conditions. Conference believes that reducing the quality of employment for new starters is one of the main methods used by private companies to extract profit at the expense of public service workers;
- 2) UNISON's substantial and hard-won achievements in pressing the previous Labour government to introduce the 'Code of Practice on Workforce Matters' that applied in local government from 2003 and across all public services from 2005. The Code stipulated that any new starters must enjoy terms and conditions no 'less favourable' than those of existing colleagues and was backed by a dispute resolution model involving ACAS. Conference further notes that the Code was successful in preventing further incidences of two-tier working in the years up to 2010.

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Conference recalls with dismay that the Code was removed across central government public services by the incoming Con-Dem government in December 2010, just seven months after they took office. They subsequently removed the Code in local government services from 2011.

Conference believes that an incoming Labour government could move with similar speed to reintroduce a Code to prevent the expansion of two-tier working.

Conference notes that EU member states may face difficulties in maintaining or introducing such a code following the *Alemo-Herron* Judgement by the ECJ in 2013, as it may be seen to bind the external employer to public sector pay and conditions. However, no such legal impediment exists in the UK that could prevent an incoming Labour government from taking swift action.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Liaise with the TUC, the WTUC and the STUC to formulate the wording of a new two-tier code that applies to all public services;
- b) Work through the Labour Link and TULO to promote a new code as Labour Party policy, and seek a commitment to early implementation;
- c) Campaign publicly for the end to the two-tier workforce to help build public support for a new code and to make it harder for a future hostile government to sweep it away;
- d) Support all industrial attempts to defeat the two-tier model, in order to strengthen collective bargaining and pave the way for the necessary insourcing of public services.

***North West Region***

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### **37. Outsourcing and Procurement**

Conference notes that decades of relentless outsourcing has seen hundreds of thousands of staff transfer from employment by local councils, NHS trusts, police authorities, universities, colleges, schools and utility services to external providers, such as private companies or charities. From school catering to social care, cleaning to IT and HR. Services, almost no area of public services has been left untouched.

Conference further notes that outsourcing is accompanied by a deterioration in the pay, pensions, terms and conditions of the staff delivering the service, creating a "two-tier" workforce of directly employed staff working alongside contractor staff, as well as a "two-tier" workforce within the contractor. These inferior conditions can translate into lower costs for contractors, which plays a crucial role in offering a cheaper tender and winning contracts.

Conference agrees that a major flaw of this model is that it create a false economy. The cost of the service is superficially lower. But, over time, many staff have to claim universal credit. Most contractors do not provide their employees with pension schemes of the same quality that public service employees pay into. This means that employees working for private or third sector contractors are enrolled into inferior

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

pension schemes and consequently need to claim pension credit. Lower pay and insecure work have been shown to have a negative impact on mental health. The decline in the number of decent public sector jobs in the community has a chilling effect on the local economy. The dots aren't joined up, nor are the wider and longer term economic costs considered.

Conference agrees that not only is this model of delivery wrong for our members and the economy, it is all too often a disaster for public services too, with provision often deteriorating and contracting authorities struggling because they have failed to consider the full cost of procurement and contract management.

Conference notes that in some regards the supposed benefits of outsourcing have been eroded by the reality of contracting out services in more recent years and that this has resulted in a notable turn toward "insourcing". Conference notes the key role that our members have played in making the case for services to be brought back in-house and applauds those branches who have taken part in successful in-sourcing campaigns, including Barts Health, Kings College London and North Port Talbot Council.

However, we are still a very long way from where we need to be. Hundreds of thousands of carers, cleaners, porters, security and catering staff in our public services workplaces are among the most worse off and insecure workers in the UK. Yet they are providing the vital public services upon which we all rely.

Conference notes four important developments and the renewed opportunities these provide to address the injustices and the false economy of outsourcing.

First the government has come forward with a Procurement Bill to fill the legislative gap left by the UK's exit from the European Union. Whilst weak and full of loopholes that enable the Tories to help their cronies by keeping VIP lanes open, the Bill has restarted a debate about what an alternative, progressive procurement regime that puts public services, workers and our communities first should look like.

Secondly, the Labour Party has set out its own five point National Procurement Plan, which includes a commitment to the biggest wave of insourcing in a generation.

Third the Labour government in Wales has introduced a Social Partnership and Procurement Bill, which institutionalises social dialogue around all procurement and introduces social public workforce clauses in all outsourcing contracts.

Fourth, UNISON has itself launched a new insourcing campaign, backed by the Campaign Fund, which is providing support and resources to branch campaigns to bring services back in-house.

Conference agrees that it's important that the union seizes this moment to win a new policy settlement on procurement and outsourcing that delivers for our members and for public services. To these ends Conference calls for the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Develop practical policy proposals that will deliver on plans for the biggest wave of insourcing in a generation, as called for by the Labour party;

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- 2) Work through Labour Link and Campaign Fund to make the economic, moral and political case for in-house delivery of public services and for a wider procurement regime including goods and works which uses the power of public expenditure to promote decent, well-paying jobs, social value and economic development across the UK and internationally;
- 3) Continue to support branches to campaign for services to be brought back in-house;
- 4) Learn lessons from the Social Partnership and Procurement Bill in Wales and explore how relevant aspects of this legislation can be applied in other parts of the UK.

### *East Midlands Region*

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#### **38. Private Renters Deserve The Right To A Secure, Decent and Affordable Home**

Conference notes that more and more of our members are forced to live in the Private Rented Sector due to the unaffordability of home-ownership and inaccessibility and lack of affordable social housing.

This is due to failed housing policies, austerity and government cuts. This problem is exacerbated by the increasing number of properties that are lost in the market as Second Homes and Airbnb use. The Right to Buy policy has also led to the loss of social rented properties, through sales, which end up as expensive rentals in the poorly regulated Private Rented Sector.

Private renters face high rents, poor quality housing and insecurity, as well as the threat of eviction hanging over their heads. Private landlords can evict private tenants without giving them a reason by simply issuing a two-month notice after their fixed term tenancy ends under Section 21 no-fault evictions, and renters have limited protections and less power to fight against this.

Our members deserve the right to a decent and affordable home, and improved rights and protections to make renting more secure and stable.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work with appropriate bodies, including Generation Rent to:

- 1) Continue to campaign for Section 21 no-fault evictions to be abolished to protect tenants from unfair, unnecessary evictions;
- 2) Campaign for the introduction of new legislation to create secure, permanent tenancies in line with Scotland;
- 3) Campaign for a fair rent system or rent controls to protect private tenants from unpredictable, extortionate rent increases;
- 4) Campaign for all councils to be allowed to introduce borough wide licensing schemes setting out minimum standards of landlord accreditation to deter rogue landlords and drive up standards in private renting;

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- 5) Call for councils to be supported with adequate funding to increase staffing levels in environmental health, trading standards, tenancy relations and other roles, which are needed to provide effective regulation and enforcement in the Private Rented Sector;
- 6) Campaign for significant investment in council and social rented homes and an end to the Right to Buy in England, in line with Scotland and Wales, to increase the supply of housing, help make housing more affordable and to provide alternative accommodation for private renters;
- 7) Campaign for legislation to deter more owners from taking up Second Homes and converting rental properties into Airbnb's;
- 8) Affiliate to Generation Rent and publicise its campaigns to our members.

***South East Region  
Isle of Wight Local Government***

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### **39. UNISON Housing Policy**

Conference notes that there is an under provision of homes in this country of over one million. More than one million dwellings have planning permission but are not being built. 3.8 million people – or 1.6 million households are in need of social housing in Britain. 500,000 homes are empty in Britain. Meanwhile, Britain's biggest house building companies made £7 billion profits during the pandemic.

Conference recognises that the planning system operating in Britain can do nothing to speed up the provision of houses and little to ensure they affordable or safe, and agrees that a more radical intervention in the supply and allocation of houses is necessary. UNISON policy, as set out in 'UNISON's Housing Manifesto' is inadequate to tackle the scale of the housing crisis in this country.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to bring a revised draft Housing Policy to the 2024 National Delegate Conference with explicit support for the public ownership of all development land, and the nationalisation of house building and development companies, such that house building is directed towards housing need and not towards profitability.

***Hounslow Local Government***

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#### **39.1**

In first paragraph before "social housing" add the words "Council housing and"

In second paragraph, after the first sentence, delete the following sentence:  
"UNISON policy, as set out in 'UNISON's Housing Manifesto' is inadequate to tackle the scale of the housing crisis in this country"

and replace with:

"UNISON's housing policy priorities are set out in its Housing Manifesto. Conference calls on the National Executive Council to review and update the manifesto by early

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2024 and bring it up in line with members' priorities on how to tackle the housing supply and affordability crisis as fed back in the 2023 UNISON Housing Survey."

*National Executive Council*

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### 40. Public Transport

Conference notes the important role of public transport in tackling climate change, improving air quality, reducing socioeconomic inequality, easing loneliness, growing local economies, and improving quality of life.

Everyone should have access to good quality, affordable and sustainable transport that meets their needs.

Conference notes that public transport is especially important to public service workers and users. The lack of affordable, accessible and integrated public transport options contributes to the cost-of-living crisis as workers struggle to afford their commute and puts any public service workers working night shifts at risk. The community relies on public transport to access public services too, including going to hospital appointments, attending community meetings, using their local library, and accessing local council assistance.

Conference also notes that many public service workers have to travel to do their jobs. The lack of public transport options means many have to use a vehicle – but out-of-date mileage rates mean they are left out of pocket.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Write to sitting metro mayors, mayoral candidates standing for election and council leaders to highlight the importance of a properly funded, affordable and integrated public transport system, and sharing the experiences of public service workers who rely on public transport to commute, visit their clients and travel safely to and from night shifts;
- 2) Ensure that the affordability, availability and reliability of public transport features strongly in campaigns on the cost-of-living and climate change;
- 3) Write to His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and government ministers about the unfair impact that out-of-date mileage rates and a lack of public transport options are having on public service workers who have to travel to do their jobs, calling on Ministers to increase mileage rates to reflect the actual costs of using a vehicle and to improve public transport networks;
- 4) Work with the TUC, the WTUC, the STUC and the ICTU, Labour Link and other like minded organisations to develop progressive proposals for bringing buses back under public control and ownership;
- 5) Develop resources for branches and regions to support them to lead local campaigns for public transport reform, including:
  - a) Bringing buses under public control and ownership;
  - b) Saving bus routes at risk of being axed;

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- c) Lower fares for everyone, including discounted fares for public service workers and further concessions for young, disabled and retired people;
- d) Improving accessibility of all public transport networks;
- e) Greening public transport networks;
- f) Fairer pay for UNISON members working in public transport.

### *Yorkshire and Humberside Region*

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#### **41. Public Ownership of Critical Business Infrastructure and Transport**

This conference welcomes the initiative announced by the Labour Party of the plan to form a new publicly owned company GB Energy when Labour comes to power.

We congratulate Andy Burnham Manchester Metro Mayor for ensuring that the people of Greater Manchester have taken back control of buses a decision that was upheld by the courts following a challenge by bus operators.

In the South East many of our communities have lost bus services altogether or cuts have been so devastating that children cannot get to school, people cannot get to work which has left whole communities isolated and cut off. Where bus services are available many in a cost-of-living crisis find the fares unaffordable.

Profits by the companies are siphoned off to owners such as Deutsche Bahn and not reinvested in lower fares, energy efficient and less polluting buses.

Cuts to local government funding have led to cuts to subsidies for public transport.

There is no connectivity between bus and rail services leading to increased car use because people have no alternative with an increase in congestion and pollution.

Kent like many areas in the South East has suffered whole communities being without water due to lack of investment in infrastructure and a flagrant disregard by water companies' management for environmental standards leading to pollution and swathes of the countries beaches and rivers not being safe to swim in.

We call upon the National Executive Council to work with service groups and campaign across the union and wider trade union movement for:

- 1) Bringing buses back under public control;
- 2) To campaign for a publicly owned water infrastructure;
- 3) To campaign for the end of the current franchise system on the railways bringing back rail operators into public ownership.

*Kent Local Government*

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#### **42. Childcare, Women and Boosting Economic Growth**

Conference notes that according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the UK has the most expensive childcare and early years

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education in the developed world. The Centre for Progressive Policy reports that there are 1.7 million women in the UK who are prevented from taking on more hours of paid work due to childcare issues. The government's own data from 2018 found that there were 870,000 women who wanted to work but could not, due to childcare costs and availability.

Conference also notes research carried out by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) published in December 2022 which identified that providing free childcare for all families until the end of primary school could boost the UK economy by £13billion per year.

Conference believes that until society recognises that women still take on the majority of caring responsibilities at home and have to balance these with their work responsibilities, the pay gap will remain stubbornly wide, and that women will 'choose' low-paid, part time work to fit around caring commitments or give up their paid work.

The cost of living crisis is affecting everyone, but more often than not, it is women who cannot make their household budgets add up and women who have to make the choice between skipping meals or buying their children's school uniforms. Conference is concerned that it is women in the main who end up leaving their jobs because childcare is so expensive. Providing care for shift workers, multi-job holders, workers on Zero Hours contracts or children with additional needs is harder than ever and many parents facing these difficulties will find it harder to access the government's free early education provision. School holiday provision is often non-existent or hard to find. These children often end up being catered for in more informal or poorer quality childcare settings which can lead to worse outcomes for children. In the short term urgent additional support is need for families falling between the gaps of current provision.

UNISON's research shows that many public service workers are having to take second or third jobs to pay for childcare and that some are leaving work altogether because they cannot afford nursery fees.

Conference clearly understands that it is the government's failure to address childcare that is at the heart of the problem. The current system is insufficient and inefficient, combined with enabling more women to be economically active, the savings made through a simpler universal offer would be a much better use of public funds than the current system.

Full time nursery provision for just one child under the age of two costs almost two-thirds of a parent's weekly take-home pay in England and wrap around school care is not universally available, does not have to cater for Special Educational Needs (SEN) children and is unaffordable for many.

Childcare costs on top of rising household bills are putting working parents, but particularly women, in an often impossible position.

Further, Conference notes that the childcare/early years sector is now in crisis and that UNISON has thousands of members in this area. The workforce, similarly to other female dominated professions, is currently undervalued, underpaid with little or



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no investment in training and career progression. Four hundred nurseries across England have folded since August 2020 from a total of 27,610 according to Ofsted. There has also been a dramatic reduction in the number of childminders, more than 11% in the last two years.

A recent warning from the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) stated that the early years sector will see an eight percent drop in real-terms funding over the next three years.

Conference considers that proper public funding for childcare and universal, flexible access is crucial to helping working parents, particularly women, and is a key to unlocking economic growth. There would also be a positive impact on children. Research shows that not participating in early years education is a factor in life chances - 40 percent of educational inequality is baked in by the age of five.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) In the short term, lobby and campaign for the government to increase the funding to childcare providers to prevent the costs increasing further, to ensure more childcare places are available and ensure staff are paid fairly;
- 2) Also lobby and campaign for wholesale reform of all childcare/early years provision (including breakfast clubs and after school clubs) and development of a sustainable high quality early education and childcare system that provides:
  - a) Fully funded childcare from the point of need, free at the point of use, flexible, publicly provided and workplace support so women who want to work are enabled to;
  - b) Good pay, terms and conditions for the staff that deliver it making it a valued, attractive long-term career option;
  - c) High quality provision for all children, including high quality provision for disabled children and those with special educational needs with a system of high-quality enforceable standards;
- 3) Work with Labour Link to push towards the reform and full funding of childcare being a key priority for the Labour Party and their manifesto at the next General Election;
- 4) Campaign to keep existing children's centres open, brought back into the public sector where possible and fully funded.

***National Executive Council***

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### **43. Unionised Worker Co-operatives**

Conference notes the potential that unionised worker co-operatives may have to substantively improve the pay, terms, and conditions of private sector workers in comparison to many of those employed in similar profit-making businesses. Additionally, the principles of workplace democracy fundamental to worker co-operative enterprises are recognised as being of potential benefit to the workers within such enterprises.

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Conference further notes our unions position that worker co-operatives should not be used as a device to outsource public services, nor to undermine the nationally agreed pay, terms, and conditions of workers in the public sector.

Our members delivering public services but employed in the private sector often do not enjoy trade union recognition and the benefits that accrue when unions and employers engage in collective bargaining. They are often unable to assert anything other than their statutory rights to representation when there are problems with their employment, they are usually poorly paid and often abysmally treated by their managers, rarely have access to occupational sick pay and a decent pension scheme, and many have to deal with not knowing if they will be given enough hours in the days and weeks ahead to earn a living.

In an ideal world all of our public services would be delivered by public sector workers under national agreements, terms and conditions. Conference notes that we do not live in an ideal world, and that many of our members will remain employed within the private sector for the years to come.

A model of how trade unions and worker co-operatives can engage constructively together in the UK has been produced by union:coops-uk. It draws upon extensive case studies of unionised worker co-operatives here in the UK, in the US, and in Canada and in Europe. The model and case studies demonstrate how each party; the union, the workers, and the business can cooperate effectively to the benefit of all parties.

Conference believes that unionised worker co-operatives potentially represent a means by which decent employment within the private sector could be achieved. Therefore, Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to establish a dialogue with union:coops-uk with a view to exploring how UNISON can use the union co-op model as part of its organising efforts to improve employment and UNISON recognition in the private sector.

Conference further calls upon the National Executive Council to report back to National Delegate Conference in 2024 summarising its dialogue with union:coops-uk and detailing the actions arising from it.

### *Leicestershire County*

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Health

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#### **44. Crisis in the NHS and Social Care**

Conference is appalled at the state of our NHS and social care services.

Conference believes that 13 years of Tory neglect have produced an unprecedented crisis which needs urgent attention.

Conference notes that waiting lists for treatment have reached their highest ever level, thousands of hours of ambulance crews' time is lost each month due to delays in the system, and delayed discharges from hospital have massively increased, in large part due to the lack of social care capacity for those well enough to leave hospital.

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

Conference notes that while the problems differ across the four nations of the UK, all are beset by underfunding and staffing problems.

Indeed, Conference believes that one of the main causes of the current crisis is staff shortages, with both the NHS and social care experiencing record levels of unfilled vacancies of over a quarter of a million. No wonder there are too few beds, treatments and appointments. Conference blames the staffing shortfall on an absence of centrally-driven workforce planning since 2010, the lack of comprehensive workforce strategies for health and social care, and the failure to account for the loss of staff that has taken place since the Brexit vote.

Underlying all of this, Conference continues to denounce the austerity of the past decade as disastrously short-sighted. International comparisons show how far the NHS has been left lagging behind other OECD countries on a number of metrics. For example, France has more than double the UK's number of beds per 1,000 people, and research shows that average health spending in the UK was 18% lower than the European average in the 2010s.

Conference is similarly appalled at the ongoing failure to produce an appropriately ambitious plan to transform social care. Action so far has been short-term and piecemeal, without the system overhaul that is required.

Conference is deeply concerned that the crisis is now directly reflected in the number of excess deaths, with Covid-19 no longer the main cause of death. In 2022 the UK had one of its highest levels in the past 50 years, with around 1,000 excess deaths per week.

Conference condemns those companies who are seeking to make money from this crisis – whether the private health firms bidding for more work as NHS waiting lists continue to grow or the cowboy operators who continue to profit in social care while their staff work for poverty pay.

Conference understands that 13 years of Coalition/Tory rule has devastated the NHS. This is why it is crucial that UNISON members expect an ambitious plan from Labour party for an incoming Labour government. UNISON expects Labour to make clear that it a) commits to the significant funding needed to increase both wages and staff numbers in the NHS and Social Care paid for by taxing the rich and b) makes clear that the privatisation and marketisation of both health and social care are more expensive to administer, less likely to deliver quality care as profits come before people, and should not form part of the solution to the NHS and Social Care current problems.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to demand vastly improved funding settlements for the NHS and social care;
- 2) Also continue to campaign for fully-funded, comprehensive workforce strategies for the NHS and social care as part of a wider plan to address the alarming gaps in the workforce;

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

- 3) Intensify the union's demands for a National Care Service to bring greater consistency to social care delivery and to workforce terms and conditions;
- 4) Work with Labour Link to restate UNISON's opposition to market mechanisms in healthcare, and the need to prioritise the rebuilding of the NHS rather than the expansion in use of the private sector;
- 5) Work with Labour Link to help the Labour health team to develop proposals for primary care which delivers improved and equitable access to patients and works with the health service group to deliver improved conditions for members working in GP practices;
- 6) With as wide a group of NHS and Social Care workers, users, campaigners, such as but not exclusively Keep Our NHS Public, politicians, community groups to organise a series of activities and events, such as national demonstrations, that highlight the issues raised in this motion.

***National Executive Council***

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### **45. Integrated Care Systems**

Conference notes that the government's new Health and Social Care Act introduced Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) into 42 areas of England, which became fully operational in July 2022. Under the act, former Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) have been absorbed into the ICSs – specifically into their boards (ICBs). Each ICB will take on the commissioning and funding responsibilities that formerly sat with their local CCGs. ICBs will also be responsible for broader aims such as strategic planning for their area.

Conference notes with concern that the Act removed section 75 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 which previously forced CCGs to competitively tender for contracts, and that the proposed replacement, the Provider Selection Regime, could allow for contracts to be handed out without proper scrutiny.

Conference therefore agrees to call on the National Executive Council to campaign with all appropriate organisations to stop the consequences of this legislation, calling for:

- 1) A commitment that ICSs will maintain a comprehensive health service, free at the point of need, accessible to anyone at the time they need health care or treatment, with priority based on clinical need;
- 2) The ICSs will not include representatives from private sector organisations on any ICB or committees, or any bodies with delegated powers from the ICB;
- 3) A commitment that National Health Service (NHS) providers are the default providers of health services, care and treatment, and that as contracts with private sector companies come up for renewal the default position be that these are awarded to NHS providers;

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

- 4) Any contracts continuing to be awarded to the private sector must be vigorously scrutinised with Compulsory Competitive Tendering, to ensure that these are conducted in a transparent and accountable manner;
- 5) That hospital patients are entitled to a full assessment of their ongoing medical and social care needs, with referrals being made to appropriate agencies, to ensure care services are in place prior to discharge, including a thorough assessment of their ongoing needs and support as a fundamental objective of the discharge policy of the ICS;
- 6) In addition to this, ensuring that consultation and assessment of their carer's needs and role are undertaken;
- 7) That independent annual reviews are undertaken in relation to workforce shortages;
- 8) Resistance to changes that lead to de-professionalisation and deregulation of the health workforce, and to the substitution by less qualified staff taking on clinical roles, which is putting profits before the needs of people, as has already been demonstrated the Operose GP practices across the country.

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

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#### **45.1**

Replace second paragraph with:

“Conference welcomes the removal of section 75 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 which previously forced CCGs to competitively tender for contracts. However, Conference is concerned that the proposed replacement, the Provider Selection Regime, could allow for contracts to be handed out, extended, rolled over without proper scrutiny or proper process and could, therefore, open even more NHS services to be taken over by private sector providers.”

Replace point 4) with:

“4) Any contracts which may be awarded to the private sector must be vigorously scrutinised in a transparent and accountable manner which allows bids to be rejected if they present abnormally low tenders, or if the suppliers have violated social, environmental, or labour laws including ILO conventions such as Freedom of Assembly and the Right to Strike.”

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

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#### **45.2**

Replace the second paragraph with the following:

“Conference notes with concern that, while the removal of section 75 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 is welcome, it does not completely rule out the prospect of private operators continuing to win healthcare contracts.”

In addition, in action point 4) remove the words “with Compulsory Competitive Tendering”.

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

*Isle of Wight Local Government*

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### **46. Campaigning Against NHS Resources Haemorrhaging to PFI Companies**

Conference notes £475 million was spent by the NHS in 2020-21, just to pay interest on Private Finance Initiative (PFI) loans alone. With interest linked to RPI inflation, as the costs of goods rise, so does the size of PFI debts, and of annual repayments too. This is at a time when the NHS is facing cuts of £12 billion a year by 2024-25 as Covid funding is withdrawn, and an estimated £6 billion of increased costs in 2023 due to rising prices.

On the whole PFI contracts ensure re-payments are guaranteed with precedence over all other NHS expenditure, such as staffing and expenditure, resulting in large profits for the PFI schemes.

It is reported in 2018/9 two Trusts in the East Midlands region were paying Unitary payments of 16.51 percent and 10.90 percent of their net income for that period.

The PFI was based on Private Companies raising capital for hospital building schemes, built them and then leased them back to the NHS on lucrative contracts which may last as long as 40 to 50 years. In addition, the PFI schemes include maintenance of the buildings and may provide services such as cleaning and catering. It is calculated the PFI schemes will eventually make £80 billion for the lenders and leave the NHS with just £13 billion of assets. A third of the projects ran late and went over budget with a number of PFI hospitals having structural defects.

Conference welcomes the decision of the Government in 2018 concerning potential future PFI schemes, but the legacy and a mountain of debt remains for NHS Trusts in making these payments.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council:

- 1) To continuing working with representatives of UNISON's General Political Fund and Labour Link to produce materials in support of our NHS and where possible in highlighting the PFI payment/interest payments in line with Service Group Executive Priorities; such as raising UNISON Health profile with UNISON Health members;
- 2) Continuing campaign against the internal market and put forward proposals, which give NHS workers, trade unions and NHS service users a real voice on how the NHS is run and what its priorities are;
- 3) To campaign for a 'windfall tax' on the excessive profits currently being made by PFI consortia with NHS PFI lucrative contracts, highlighting where the money could be used to support NHS staff and service.

***NHS Logistics***

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### **47. NHS Data – For the Public Good Not for Profit or Political Advantage**

Conference believes that this Tory government is set to hand a huge part of NHS assets over to profit driven private interests with far-right ideologies in the name of 'innovation'.

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

NHS data is our private health data. It is not just a part of necessary record keeping it is also a hugely valuable public asset, currently used for improving NHS care and for non-profit NHS research where the benefits are all directed back into the NHS in a virtuous circle of positive public investment.

Conference welcomes the recognition that improving our ability to harness this data across a coherent data platform (referred to as a Federated Data Platform), rather than the current disjointed systems, will vastly improve the benefits for patients and staff and help keep the UK at the forefront of medical innovation.

If kept within the public sector, the cost benefits and potential profit from such data use would be hugely beneficial to the public purse and could directly help to support the institution where the data is gathered – our data – our NHS. The cost of the contract for establishing and running the data platform is currently estimated at £360m. Some estimates suggest the deal may eventually be worth £1 billion over ten years. The cost to the future of the NHS could be devastating.

Conference is deeply concerned about the lack of public information about the Federated Data Platform: what is it for, how will it work and how can we be sure our data will remain safe and protected?

There is a serious risk that once this contract is awarded outside the public sector it will be almost impossible to exit the contract and get our data back. The use of data is currently under-regulated and set to be de-regulated further in current government moves. The contract is likely to have some vendor tie in that will mean it will be almost impossible to withdraw from technology as it will potentially involve proprietary software and impenetrable algorithms that will be hard to exit from or replicate without huge costs.

Conference is therefore hugely concerned that this government seems hell-bent to hand this contract, along with your data, to profit-driven organisations. Conference is further concerned that the current front runner is Palantir who, controversially, and with no competition and little scrutiny, were awarded a temporary NHS data contract during the pandemic. Palantir is a huge company in America.

Conference notes that Palantir's founder has given large funds to far right movements in America, and has stated that he likes data because its much less regulated than physical assets and that:

"Technology is an alternative to politics - You can change the world without having to persuade people why' and 'get rid of government regulation of technology" and perhaps most chillingly in light of the recent findings about the role of racism in patient outcomes, he has said: "the problems of sexism and racism have been vastly exaggerated".

Conference firmly believes that we must not let the NHS be asset stripped for profit and particularly should not be handed to a company that does not share the ethos of our NHS and our public services.

Conference further believes there is no public health without public trust. Data safety and patient buy-in is vital. To get the best out of the data platform, patients need to

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

give consent to their data being used in this way. The NHS is a trusted institution and patients are much more likely to consent where the data stays within a publicly trusted institution. There are also concerns that the data will be skewed if disadvantaged groups, who historically have every reason not to trust government already, refuse to share their data because it will go to controversial companies.

Conference strongly believes that government needs to urgently commit to keeping the huge public asset of our NHS data, in public hands for the public good and to invest in the technology and skills required to provide this platform in-house before it is too late.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Raise awareness of this serious threat to our NHS with our members and activists and signpost to what they can do to oppose and challenge it;
- 2) Work, alongside the TUC and affiliated civil liberties organisations to oppose, reverse and lobby against asset stripping the NHS in this way;
- 3) Lobby the current UK government and devolved governments to commit to the following safeguards:
  - a) Any contract being awarded through an open and transparent process;
  - b) Ensuring data remains securely within the NHS;
  - c) Investing in the technology and skills required to undertake this work in-house;
  - d) Data only to be used to improve patient outcomes, benefit workers and ensuring that any financial value gained from data use is solely for the benefit of the NHS itself;
  - e) That patient data will not be used without 'informed consent' being sought first;
  - f) There being strong safeguards on privacy of patient data – not just 'pseudo privacy' (which can almost certainly be unpicked) but full privacy;
  - g) Follow the TUC Artificial Intelligence (AI) manifesto guidelines on using open-source technology so the data platform has full transparency and to avoid vendor tie-in meaning the NHS is stuck with a bad contract or bad contractors.

### *Housing Associations*

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Environment

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#### **48. The Climate Emergency Post COP27 and Decarbonising UK Public Services**

Conference records that in passing motion 93 last year, UNISON committed to significant engagement and activity on Climate change. UNISON is aware that the climate emergency is real, urgent and that dramatic changes are required by UK and global governments to address these issues. While conference understands that



## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

there are no jobs on a dead planet, a just transition to a greener economy is the only way forward for workers.

Conference understands that climate change affects the most disadvantaged people and communities the most and that those that are most harmed are also those with the least voice and the least power to change the situation. That is true globally but also within the UK. Women still take on a disproportionate burden of care giving – feeding, housing, and warming their families - all of which is becoming unaffordable directly linked to the global impacts of the climate crisis and, currently, people in poorer urban areas are disproportionately made chronically unwell from climate change related harms such as air pollution.

Climate change policy in public services is inextricably linked to policies on public health, the cost of living crisis, education and skills and almost all other areas of public policy.

Conference believes that, while individual action has a role to play in tackling climate change, collective action and social change are essential if man made climate change is to be tackled effectively and public services will be crucial to doing so. So will the right to protest be crucial, which is under threat from the Public Order Bill.

Public Services directly emit around eight percent of the UK's greenhouse gases and that is without including public transport. When you add in their influence on procurement, energy use, construction and social housing the impact is even bigger.

Conference notes that the governments' own Climate Change Committee concluded that the bulk of decarbonisation measures needed from public service organisations can, and should, happen in the next ten to fifteen years. That was two years ago and, given the amount of work required, that is a lot of work required in an increasingly short space of time.

Conference recognises that as well as an existential threat and challenge we must rise to, this is also an opportunity for genuine engagement. In response to government targets, many public sector employers realise they will need all hands to the pump to get there, including trade unions.

Conference also recognised that UNISON has members across all public services and that all are affected directly or indirectly by climate change, whether it is in the health service managing the increased health impacts of excess heat or pollution, or the Environment Agency where our members role is to respond to the floods and droughts and other direct environmental impacts that erupt up and down the nations on an increasing frequent basis, they are absolutely at the frontline of what this means in the UK and all sectors are working with massively reduced and inadequate funding.

Conference further notes that, following on from last year's Conference motion, UNISON once again supported a dedicated Green UNISON week at the end of September, supporting branches to engage on this issue locally, hosting Women's Environment Network workshops specially tailored to our members and a Green Webinar amongst other activities.

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

Importantly, as part of recognising the role UNISON members can play in greening the workplace and a just transition, the role of Environmental Officer has now been embedded in our rule book for every branch.

This is a vital recognition that UNISON members want to get involved on this issue and are well placed to shape and influence the necessary changes that public services must make to meet the UK government's own Net Zero targets.

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 needed to avoid temperatures rising by more than 1.5 degrees Celsius.

However, Conference also notes that the government are far from meeting the baseline funding commitments required to meet its own legal targets. At COP26, UNISON, published a fully costed set of measures for getting to Net Zero in public services by 2050. Getting to Net Zero in Public Services: The Road to Decarbonisation which made it clear that most of the measures need to be front loaded to be cost efficient and effective.

Conference believes public services can lead the way in getting the UK to net zero by 2050 if the government provides adequate funding and governance support between now and 2035. Without significant and immediate government funding, public services still reeling from a decade of austerity, will struggle to decarbonise.

Conference continues to support 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, engaging with employers, service users and elected representatives in developing inclusive Just Transition boards for all public service sectors.

Conference welcomes the Sunak government's overturning of the Truss government's proposal to allow fracking. However, it notes the decision to grant new licenses for gas and oil exploration in UK waters and for the go-ahead for a new coal mine in Cumbria. These decisions conflict with commitments to phase down the use of coal and against the scientific advice on keeping the rise in global temperatures below 1.5 degrees centigrade and against the recommendations of the International Energy Agency for no new gas or oil production.

Conference is proud to note that, once again, UNISON supported the UK and global trade union movement at the United Nations 27th Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP27). UNISON supported the International Trade Union Congress (ITUC) by participating in the UK's observer delegation to the conference and played an active role in the Climate Justice Coalitions' trade union initiatives by mobilising our members across the UK to take part in their Global Day of Action amongst many other activities, during the COP27.

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

Conference acknowledges that COP27 did deliver some positive developments - particularly on establishing a Loss and Damage fund and agreement to a work programme on Just Transition (including reference to 'social protections').

However, Conference also notes that progress was generally disappointing, leaving the target of keeping the rise in global temperatures below 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels 'on life support'.

Conference notes that most of the money spent on addressing the climate crisis in the past and in the future will be public money; to address mitigation and adaptation measures and for Loss and Damage. It is essential that governments at COP are pressed to ensure that this public money is accountable and that it delivers for the public good, provides publicly owned infra-structure and services and creates employment in new sustainable economies rather than being a source of profits for rich private corporations and financiers. It is also essential that global taxation policies are developed that ensure that it is those who have benefitted most from the climate damaging use of fossil fuels, the rich countries and corporations, who pay for the cost of climate funding, and that the burden does not fall on workers and the poor of the Global South. Conference believes that the indebted countries of the Global South should not be forced into more indebtedness whilst corporations' profit from the climate crisis.

Conference further notes that, as a powerful voice at the COP negotiating table, it is disappointing that the UK Government is not arguing that public services, rather than private equity, is the best vehicle for delivering necessary changes and that they are also silent on the need for labour and human rights being included in just transition plans.

Conference agrees that UNISON along with the TUC and wider trade union movement, has a key role to play in holding the UK government's feet to the fire on its own commitments both at home and globally. Conference also agrees that UNISON, working with PSI and its affiliates, can play a key role in shaping international trade union policy on climate, influencing the policies of the rich nations at COP28 and beyond, and develop greater solidarity with public sector trade unions, their civic allies and progressive governments in the Global South.

In recognition of the climate emergency, the role of trade unions, and particularly UNISON as the largest public service union, in getting to net zero, conference agrees that UNISON should continue play a key role in:

- 1) The international and national policy debates about the best and fairest way of achieving decarbonisation;
- 2) The civil society movements that will keep leaders and governments on track;
- 3) The social dialogue and workplace negotiations needed to deliver just transition across all workplaces.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

- a) Build on the momentum and climate focus gathered around COP26 and Cop 27 and continue to work closely with the ITUC, TUC, Scottish TUC, Welsh TUC, Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the Climate Justice Coalition;
- b) 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;
- c) Continue to promote UNISON's net zero report to relevant stakeholders. Including engaging and consulting on our key findings and recommendations with the governments, with the Labour Party via Labour Link and other political parties, to public service employers and relevant community and private contracted organisations delivering public services;
- d) Emphasis early action to help the UK achieve their targets;
- e) 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;
- f) Continue to support our Energy Service Group 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 where appropriate;
- g) Support the development of a green bargaining and negotiating agenda by ensuring appropriate support and training is available to enable Environment Officers (green reps) to fulfil their role and nationally campaign for dedicated facility time for green branch reps;
- h) 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;
- i) Continue to support the role of our members in the Environment Agency and SEPA recognising and exploring their expertise and potential for providing vital case studies on impact and best practice solutions for local initiatives;
- j) Maintain the national UNISON Green network database to ensure regular updates and contact on national green news and initiatives;
- k) Support each region to co-ordinate regional branch Environmental Officer network meetings and activities;
- l) Work with Young Members and Self Organised Groups on this agenda;
- m) At the earliest opportunity declare a UNISON Year of the Green Rep with all appropriate organising and operational support to highlight and amplify UNISON's response to the climate emergency;
- n) Develop an environmental framework and strategy for UNISON's internal organisation and operations with an interim report back to national delegate conference 2024;

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

- o) Oppose new coal mines, the issuing of new licenses for oil and gas exploration in UK waters and also oppose the financing of gas and oil exploration abroad;
- p) Continue to promote UNISON policy and guidance on pension funds developing fossil fuel divestment policies;
- q) Continue to ensure UNISON participation in future COPs, working with the TUC and PSI to promote policies that support the protection and provision of public services and public ownership.

*National Executive Council*

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### 48.1

In action point I), insert ", Retired Members" between "Young Members" and "and Self Organised Groups"

*Islington*

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### 49. Energy

Conference notes that energy prices increased significantly throughout 2022. According to the Office of National Statistics, electricity prices rose by 66.7 percent and gas prices by 129.4 percent from 12 months to January 2023.

The impact of rising energy prices is causing members of the community sector to write to an MP to ask the government to increase the mileage rate. Many members of the community staff are leaving as mileage costs become unaffordable.

The conference also notes UK's dependency on fossil fuels increases the urgent need to consider alternative energy sources. The forum remembered the queues at the petrol pumps and stores in February 2022. If the UK is committed to a green economy, action is needed.

Conference knows about alternative energy sources such as tidal, solar, biomass, and hot fusion.

A BBC website article with the headline 'Breakthrough in nuclear fusion energy announced' goes into how nuclear fusion works and how close we are to a fusion-powered future. There is hot fusion, but not all fusion is hot.

Conference is also aware that two electrochemists announced in a press conference in the USA in 1989 the cold fusion process that can give out excess energy. Other scientists commented about Tritium, which is a by-product of hydrogen.

Tritium was recorded higher than background levels in the World Trade Centre dust samples in 2001.

Conference believes this is the time to explore sustainable alternative energy sources.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to take the following actions:

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

- 1) To work with the National Energy Committee to undertake a thorough review into the extent of the impact of the energy prices on the members in different sectors in which we organise;
- 2) To conduct research into sustainable energy sources and technologies and their potential use in the public services, utilities, transport and the community and voluntary sector.

### ***Coventry and Warwickshire Combined Health Care***

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#### **49.1**

Add new point 3):

"3) Work with Labour Link to lobby for ongoing financial support for low paid and low income families and to use the exorbitant profits from oil and gas revenues to fund this annually until the cost of living crisis is over."

### ***North Northamptonshire Local Government***

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#### **Pensions**

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#### **50. Equal Pensions for Surviving Spouses and Civil Partners**

Conference notes that:

- 1) Most public service pension schemes pay pensions to widows of male scheme members in respect of contributions since 1972 or, in some cases, 1978;
- 2) As a result of a Supreme Court decision in 2017, the Walker case, scheme members' surviving same-sex spouses and civil partners, irrespective of gender, are now treated the same as widows of male scheme members; but,
- 3) In most schemes, widowers of female scheme members continue to be paid pensions only in respect of contributions since 1988.

Conference understands that an employment tribunal case in 2020, the Goodwin case, and a subsequent ministerial statement have affected the unequal treatment of such widowers but Conference is concerned schemes appear slow to amend their regulations or to alert their members to any new entitlement and any action they need to take.

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

- a) Seek to secure equal treatment of surviving spouses and civil partners in public service pension schemes;
- b) Seek to ensure advice is issued to UNISON members on their entitlement and how to claim it.

### ***City of Wolverhampton Local Government***

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#### **51. Islamic Pensions**

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

UNISON comprises members from many different backgrounds and is committed to fairness and diversity. We celebrate our diversity and that we are united by solidarity with each other. We have an ongoing commitment to increase our sense of fairness by enacting out values which are UNISON's declared values.

Conference notes the excellent work of branch, regional and national negotiators in influencing and directing the activities of pension funds to ensure they invest as ethically as possible and do not exclude members who have strong ethical and philosophical beliefs from participation.

Conference notes, in this vein, the existence of a barrier to the participation of some of our Muslim members in pension schemes which are based upon a financial system contrary to Islamic economic principles. These principles being, in brief, that a scheme cannot invest:

- 1) In industries such as alcohol, tobacco, gambling or weapons;
- 2) In a way that derives income from interest (seen as al-riba or "exploitative gains").

Conference notes that these members must choose between compromising their ethical standards to remain or join workplace pensions or incurring an effective financial penalty by withdrawing or declining to join an otherwise beneficial workplace pension. Their lack of options in this could negatively affect them and their families and put them at a disadvantage in comparison to their work colleagues.

Conference notes that:

- a) Members who find themselves unable to contribute to a workplace pension scheme can be significantly disadvantaged financially and that this is therefore an equalities issue;
- b) UNISON's current pensions guidance, as comprehensive and useful as it is, currently has little recognition of this as an issue potentially impacting our members.

Conference therefore instructs the National Executive Council to:

- i) Commission surveys and other necessary work to assess the number of members potentially affected by this issue;
- ii) Work with UNISON's pension unit to issue guidance to branches on bargaining on this at a local level with employers for all of the main varieties of pension schemes our members participate in including LGPS, the NHS pension scheme and common defined contribution schemes;
- iii) Identify and publish case studies of best practice – for example on negotiated improvements to investment strategies or on the provision of inclusive alternatives to main pension schemes;
- iv) Publicise this issue in website articles, newsletters and other media to build awareness of this often neglected issue amongst the wider public.

# 2023 National Delegate Conference

## UNISON FINAL AGENDA

*Birmingham University*

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Equalities

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### **52. Cost of Living Crisis and Black Workers**

Conference notes that everything is going up fast – 12 percent now but forecasts of upwards to 22 percent. However, the pay of many UNISON members has been effectively frozen for almost 12 years. We can't make ends meet!

We have a cost of living crisis because of the decisions made by political leaders and their friends running big business and financial institutions. We note how much money the rich have, and that we live in the sixth richest country in the world, yet more and more people are reliant on food banks, and are forced to choose between heating and eating.

In recent months our costs have gone up - fuel prices, food prices, transport, national insurance – as have the profits made by BP and Shell, the energy companies, MPs wages and billionaires bank balances.

Everything but our wages. The news continues to report of people struggling to get by, doing without essentials, whilst according to an article in the Times on ten ways to save money, one rich family have given up their £40,000 a year live-in nanny for a £10,000 au pair to help with their financial struggle. It really is a world of them and us.

Conference rejects the propaganda being put forward that workers' pay rises cause inflation. The inflation rises have many causes chief of which is the profiteering of many companies based on shortages of labour or supplies or the perversity of a market system artificially raising prices even when shortages do not apply in the UK such as energy.

The Governor of the Bank of England has been calling for wage restraint to protect the economy whilst continuing to amass a personal fortune with a salary of half a million pounds a year - making sure none of the wealth generated through inflation comes to our class!

This year we have seen shocking figures that show there is plenty of money for big pay outs for bosses and shareholders but nothing for our pay, funding our services and ensuring no one is left cold or hungry:

- 1) Rail Company Profits – Greater Anglia made £85 million profit from 2014-18 but chose not to reinvest it in services/infrastructure and instead paid out £61m to shareholders. There are similar stories from all the rail companies;
- 2) Energy Companies – EDF increased profits by three times those last year to £728 million, Scottish Power made £925 million profit, E.on increased their profits by two-thirds to £245 million – all in the first six months of this year;
- 3) Oil – BP profits £7 billion, Shell's profits rose to £10 billion both again in just half a year;



## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

- 4) BT boss Philip Jansen – his pay went up 32 percent this year, to £3.5 million. He is now paid 97 times more than the lowest paid BT worker, and 86 times the average paid BT worker. Earlier this year, BT opened a foodbank in one of its call centres – for its own staff. Members of the Communication Workers' Union now call him Foodbank Phil. He was already grossly rich – before coming to BT, he was Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Worldpay;
- 5) Network Rail CEO Andrew Haines –trousered almost £600,000 this year. The top 10 highest paid at Network Rail got a total of £3.68 million, at a time whilst they are advertising customer service assistant and station control assistant jobs for £20,000.

However, Conference notes the widening of the wealth gap between the richest and poorest. The gap between CEO income and workers' pay rose to 63:1 in 69 companies surveyed in 2021/22 financial year, an increase from 44:1 during 2020/21. In some companies it has risen to 100:1. In the period to 2019/20 this had been reducing. Surveys also showed that the Ethnicity Pay Gap had also fallen in some workplaces but was now back on the rise again. Black Workers continue to be over-represented in the lowest paid grades.

There is no mandatory monitoring of the Ethnicity Pay Gap. However, it is most likely that an increase in wealth at the top would lead to a widening ethnicity pay gap. This conference notes with concern a trend where the 'Cost of Living' crisis would be most severely felt by Black workers. There is plenty of money out there, our job is to be organised and make sure the money is used for decent homes, schools, hospitals, services and pay.

The National Black Members Conference supports UNISON policy of the nationalisation of the energy companies to nationalise rail, mail and transport and all other services that have been privatised, (with compensation to shareholders only based on proven need) to bring costs and prices down to an affordable level.

Conference believes the only way that our members, especially Black members, can stand up to the crisis is by taking action to win at or above inflation pay rises. TUC surveys have reported in the past that where there are proper collective bargaining arrangements covering workplaces, the ethnicity pay gap can be reduced completely. Conference believes that Black members will be at the forefront of the campaign to beat the 'Cost of Living Crisis'.

Conference therefore resolves to call on the National Executive Committee to:

- a) Work with Service Group Executives and Self Organised Groups to organise and fight against in-work poverty by supporting at or above inflation pay rises for all our members;
- b) Continue to pursue mandatory ethnicity pay gap data is published by all employers and in the meantime agrees to work with SGEs and Self Organised Groups to call on all employers and sectors within which UNISON organises to produce ethnicity pay gap data;

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

- c) Encourage all Black members to be involved in campaigning for at or above inflation pay rises and support Black Members to put themselves forward for activist positions at all levels of the union;
- d) Collate data to show the impact of high inflation on Black Workers and their families to provide material for publication in activist and other UNISON media;
- e) Support national and regional workshops for members to assist in raising the issues but also providing some help in dealing with household budgeting problems;
- f) Support young Black members to become active in all aspects of this campaign.

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

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#### **52.1**

Add new point e):

"Provide relevant materials to branches and regions that both highlight inequalities, and also the campaigns against racism inside and outside the workplace that we can learn from, for example where Black workers have organised and taken action against low pay or to come back in-house, or where branches and members have joined local and national campaigns against racism and inequality."

And then re-letter accordingly.

***Camden***

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#### **53. Ethnicity Pay Gap**

Conference believes that the ethnicity pay gap (EPG) is a major cause of in-work poverty experienced by Black workers and the cause of severe intergenerational inequality in Black communities.

Conference welcomes the moves made by the National Black Members Committee (NBMC) to highlight and campaign to close the gap.

The EPG is as high as 23.8 percent in London with huge regional variations across the UK.

In 2017, the government committed in its manifesto to ask large employers to publish information on their ethnicity pay gaps. (In 2018 only 11% of employers published their ethnicity pay gap, this percentage increased to 19% in 2021. Comparison of median pay at the TUC shows there is a gap of 11.7% between white and Black staff pay in April 2021).

The introduction of this important measure is needed to identify the disparities within the workforce and forces employers to be accountable.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Make closing the EPG a UNISON priority in the union's bargaining, organising and campaigning agendas;

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

- 2) Produce a UNISON toolkit to implement mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting and encourage branches to utilise it;
- 3) Use its influence within TUC to encourage all affiliate unions to make closing the EPG a key priority in the sectors they organise within;
- 4) Request that the union's Labour Link exercise its influence with the aim that Labour Party's manifesto for the next general election contains a commitment to create a statutory duty on all public service employers to annually report their EPG and take proactive steps to address detrimental disparities experienced by their Black workers.

***Cambridgeshire County  
Hertfordshire***

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### **53.1**

Insert three new paragraphs after end of fourth paragraph finishing "April 2021)."

"UNISON's national campaign in 2022-23 has been calling on UK governments to introduce mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting with meaningful action plans. The union has produced briefings for MPs and held several events to promote the campaign since the launch as follows:

- a) Produced briefing papers for MPs and the Lords for Westminster debates held in September 2020 and October 2020;
- b) Held a webinar in January 2021;
- c) A drop-in sign-up session in May 2022;
- d) Fringe event 'levelling up? Tackling racial disparities in June 2022;
- e) Roundtable parliamentary discussion in February 2023.

The focus of the current campaign will produce a UNISON 'call out' toolkit to support branches and service groups in support of future pay claims to ensure the ethnicity pay gap reporting is a priority in the union's bargaining, organising, and campaigning agenda.

UNISON has been given written assurances that the Labour Party manifesto for the next general election will contain a commitment to implement a statutory duty to all employers to annually report their ethnicity pay gap."

And then delete action point 2).

Re-number remaining action points accordingly.

***National Executive Council***

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### **54. 2023 Year of the Black Worker**

Celebrate 2023 as the UNISON Year of Black Workers.

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

Conference notes that we are half way through the UNISON Year of Black Workers.

Over the past two years we have seen the disproportionate impact of Black workers and communities being hit particularly hard during the pandemic.

Working on the front line, exposed to Covid-19, and in insecure jobs, Conference celebrates our Black members. A survey conducted by The Runnymede Trust, *Over Exposed and Under-Protected – The Devastating Impact of COVID-19 on Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in Great Britain*, highlighted that a number of groups, including Black people, are at a greater risk from Covid-19, given that they are “more likely to be working in key worker roles, less likely to be protected with PPE and more likely to live in multigenerational, overcrowded housing, so much less able to self-isolate and shield”. Black workers are particularly likely to be classed as key workers (34%) and workers from Black African backgrounds are more likely to be working outside of their home (41 percent), increasing their exposure to Covid-19.

All this layered on top of a history of institutional racism, which the Westminster government denies.

Conference therefore believes that this is the time to take forward UNISON’s vital work on race equality and make this ‘Year of Black Workers’ an opportunity to celebrate this union’s long history of achievements, to come up with practical steps for change, and to focus our minds on challenging racism in the workplace. It is only by having those broader conversations together about race that is deep rooted in society, that racism can be eradicated.

It is imperative that we look at the role that discrimination has in the workplace. An independent review by Baroness McGregor-Smith in 2017 found that:

- 1) In terms of opportunities for progression, 29 percent of Black Caribbean employees reported feeling that they have been overlooked for promotion because of their ethnicity;
- 2) In terms of top management positions, the Black and Black British group did particularly poorly over the period between 2007 and 2012, with the number of Black/Black British people in top management positions decreasing by 42 percent;
- 3) 30 percent of those from a Black background reported experiencing or witnessing racial harassment or bullying from managers in the last five years.

Conference notes that UNISON’s Year of Black Workers campaign is underpinned by the following Mission Statement: “Establishing Legacy to Generate Change”. Through this mission statement two main themes will be focused on: Legacy and Change as an overarching strategic intent of UNISON.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work with the National Black Members Committee to:

- a) Continue to promote the Year of Black Workers;
- b) Generate change and establish a legacy;

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

- c) Encourage all parts of the union to put on appropriate events;
- d) Work with all parts of the union to freshly consider their work programmes from a Black member perspective;
- e) Gather the Black member experience of work and public services wherever possible;
- f) To continue to campaign to close the ethnicity pay gap at work.

### ***Coventry and Warwickshire Combined Health Care***

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#### **55. Please Touch my Hair – Caring for Black Patients and Service Users**

Conference notes that the pandemic emphasised the lack of appropriate personal care for patients and service users with black skin and hair across health and social care. Normally, families would bring in products to use on their family members but during the pandemic they were unable to access the shops or could not bring in products, so the care inequalities were highlighted even more than usual. It was noticeable that health and social care staff avoided black hair or skin as they did not understand how to care for it and did not feel they could just ask.

The Bath Health branch has already been successful in working in partnership with their employer to train staff to be more aware of the needs of Black patients and how to care for them in a way appropriate to their own personal care regimes. Equality of care has started to become “the norm” in that employer and the branch Black Members officer has played a huge part in pushing this agenda forward and providing ongoing support and guidance to the employer.

Consideration needs to be given as a matter of course for all patients’ and service users’ physical care, taking into account their cultural needs and diversity. This care should be given as the “norm”, as has always been the case for white patients and service users across health and social care, to ensure equality across the board.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to work in partnership with health and social care employers providing patient and service user care to:

- 1) Provide equitable care to all taking into consideration their cultural and diverse needs;
- 2) Implement training and education for all staff on the care of patients/clients with different cultural and diverse personal care needs;
- 3) Agree to provide appropriate products for the care of Black patients/clients;
- 4) Ensure this personal care is highlighted to new staff at induction sessions and an awareness is written into induction procedures.

***Bath Health***

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#### **56. Securing the Legacy of the Year of Disabled Workers**

Conference notes the success of UNISON’s Year of Disabled Workers 2022 and places on record our thanks to all of our disabled members and activists who have

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

driven this success throughout our union. Through the year, we saw renewed focus on the experience of disabled members in our union, in the workplace and in society.

We used the year to highlight the important contribution our disabled members make to the union, to improve terms and conditions for disabled workers and to campaign for improved rights for all disabled workers.

Yet, with the Year of Disabled Workers now over, it is vital that the level of activity from last year does not end as the union moves onto the next initiative. We need to ensure that activism amongst disabled members increases and that disabled members are visible at all levels in our union.

Conference acknowledges that tackling systemic and ingrained discrimination against disabled workers will take more than one year and we need to use the success of the year of disabled workers to continue our work and secure a lasting legacy for our members in all areas of our union.

Conference believes that being disabled is not something to be ashamed of, and in a population where many more millions of people may end up disabled through ageing, accident or illness, we, as a union, need to promote the identity of disabled people as worthy, functioning, and capable members of society who, with the support of reasonable adjustments, are able to lead fulfilling lives both personally and within the workplace.

Disabled adults need to be seen as positive role models so that disabled children can have goals and aspirations, alongside their non-disabled peers, and by reclaiming the words disabled and disability we confront and challenge the negative connotations that many people associate with these words.

Conference therefore instructs the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with regional disabled members groups to fully evaluate the success of the year with an indicator of where activity has taken place and the range of stakeholders involved;
- 2) Work with regional disabled members groups to establish a programme of activities which build on the achievements of the year;
- 3) Work with service groups to follow up on the Year of Disabled Worker motions which have been passed by Service Group Conferences to deliver the bargaining agendas for disabled members;
- 4) Publicise UNISON's now regular online Disabled Members Officers and Contacts training to all branches and provide monitoring information for regions of attendees based on regions and service groups.

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

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#### **57. Make 2024 the Year of LGBT+ Workers**

Conference believes that one of UNISON's strengths lies in its recognition of the value and unique experiences lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBT+) people bring to the workplace and to our union and commends the work of

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

UNISON's LGBT+ committee to raise the profile of our LGBT+ members across the United Kingdom (UK).

Conference notes that some LGBT+ people still do not feel able to disclose their sexual orientation and/or gender identity at work for fear of discrimination. It is concerning that some employers are afraid to visibly speak out in favour of LGBT+ workers due to myths and misconceptions perpetrated by anti-LGBT+ and anti-trans groups.

Conferences notes the success of 2021, the Year of the Young Worker which raised awareness around the issues that young members face and 2022, the Year of Disabled Workers, raising awareness of the disability pay gap, disability employment gap, reasonable adjustments, accessibility passports and the importance of disclosure.

Conference notes that 2024 will be 50 years since the lesbian and gay network 'NALGAY' was set up in NALGO (national and local government officers' association), one of our predecessor unions. This was ground-breaking and helped to lead to the first lesbian and gay self-organised groups in a trade union.

When UNISON was formed in 1993, the lesbian and gay self-organised group was integral to the union structure and from the start the national committee had reserved seats for representatives of Black and disabled members. Over the years, we have seen our self-organised group grow from strength to strength, becoming a LGBT group and then in 2019, an LGBT+ group.

The LGBT+ group has been key to many campaigns to improve the rights of LGBT+ people within the workplace and wider society and we have witnessed milestones including the repeal of section 28, equalisation of the age of consent, and the introduction of civil partnerships and marriage for LGBT+ people. But there is still much more to do.

Conference calls on the national executive council (NEC) to make 2024 the Year of LGBT+ Workers in UNISON to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the formation of NALGAY. Conference believes that this will provide the opportunity to promote UNISON as the union for LGBT+ workers, raise awareness of LGBT+ rights throughout the union, challenge discrimination, and recruit and grow LGBT+ activists.

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

- 1) Develop and deliver a programme of events and activities to mark the Year that:
  - a) Raise awareness of LGBT+ rights and discrimination throughout the union;
  - b) Promote UNISON's work on LGBT+ equality;
  - c) Showcase the successes and contributions of LGBT+ members in the workplace and in the union;

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

- d) Encourage and support bargaining on LGBT+ rights and equality in the workplace;
- 2) Seek support from the Trades Union Congress and other unions for this initiative.

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

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#### **58. Westminster Blocking the Scottish Gender Recognition Reform Bill**

Conference notes that the UK government have taken the decision to use section 35 of the Scotland Act to block the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill.

The Bill was supported by our Scottish LGBT+ group who campaigned for the measures included in the Bill over a number of years and welcomed the legislation being passed by a large majority in the Scottish Parliament.

Conference is therefore disappointed that the UK Government has decided to block this legislation. We consider that it is unjustified and anti-democratic. It shows a similar level of contempt from the UK Government towards trans men and trans women that their predecessors showed towards Gays and Lesbians when they introduced section 28 in the past.

The GRR Bill was passed by a large majority of MSPs, including overwhelming support from the SNP, Labour, the Greens and the LibDems, and votes in favour from members of every political party. This was after the Bill went through the usual scrutiny process at the Scottish Parliament, including consideration of whether the parliament had the powers to pass the Bill, something that happens to all legislation at Holyrood. It also included serious and significant consideration of the impacts of the Bill, with hours of evidence taken by the committee in charge of it, as well as debates between all MSPs on proposed amendments to the bill.

The Bill would make important changes to the process that trans men and trans women can use to update the sex recorded on their birth certificates, making it much simpler and fairer than the one they must currently use. It would mean Scotland had a process much closer to the ones used in more than 30 countries around the world, that better protect trans people's human rights. This was achieved after years of campaigning and work, including trans people the length and breadth of Scotland being willing to share the stories of their lives and explain why these changes matter to them.

There have been opportunities throughout the parliamentary process, and indeed in the six years in which the Scottish Government and Parliament have been considering these issues, for the UK Government to raise any concerns that they have. The fact is that when Theresa May was Prime Minister, the UK Government supported reform of gender recognition – unfortunately their attitude towards trans equality has since become much worse. There are also less extreme options they could have used if they do have concerns, blocking a bill of the Scottish Parliament in this way has never been done in the 25 years of devolution.

It seems that the UK government have chosen to take the most combative and obstructive approach that challenges both a progressive decision of the Scottish Parliament that would improve trans men and trans women's lives, but also that



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challenges the authority of the Scottish Parliament to make laws in areas devolved to it.

We call on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Offer support to the Scottish LGBT+ Committee and UNISON Scotland in their response to the UK government's decision and offer solidarity to our Trans members who will have been shocked and upset by the decision of the UK government;
- 2) Write to the Secretary of State for Scotland, calling on him to reverse the decision to block the legislation.

*South Lanarkshire*

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### 59. Gender Recognition Reform Bill

Conference believes that these reforms are intended to make life easier for trans people, one of the most oppressed and victimised sections of society. For example, in a recent survey for Stonewall, 41% of trans men and trans women said they had experienced a hate crime or incident in the last 12 months due to their gender identity and 25% had said they had experienced homelessness. The UK government's own Equalities Survey found 67% of trans people had avoided being open about their gender identity for fear of a negative reaction. Furthermore according to Trans Murder Monitoring, between October 2021 and September 2022 there were 327 reported murders of trans or gender non-conforming people around the world.

Conference believes that:

- 1) This move by Sunak's government is an attack on the democratic rights of the people of Scotland and a further attempt to whip up 'culture wars' against an already demonised group, at a time when workers are increasingly fighting back against the cost of living crisis;
- 2) The rights of trans people do not conflict with the rights of other oppressed groups;
- 3) The trade union movement should defend the right to self-determination and the democratic rights of the people of Scotland, against an increasingly anti-democratic Westminster Tory government;
- 4) We need a united working class movement that fights against all forms of oppression and for fully funded public services;
- 5) Ultimately our rights and liberation will not be won through the courts, but through collective action and the fight for a different form of society;
- 6) We should stand in solidarity with our trans comrades and fight for a full ban on trans 'conversion therapy', to immediately scrap all barriers to legal self-identification of gender, for fully funded trans healthcare and our NHS and to stop the attacks on provision of puberty blockers.

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Conference resolves to instruct the National Executive Council to:

- a) Send our solidarity to our trans members;
- b) Support protests and struggles to defend and extend the GRA reform;
- c) Support the struggle for self-determination of the people of Scotland;
- d) Send this motion to all relevant union bodies as appropriate including other Labour movement bodies;
- e) Publicise this motion to all branch members.

### *City of Wolverhampton Local Government*

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#### **60. Gender Recognition Reform Bill**

Conference believes that these reforms are intended to make life easier for trans people, one of the most oppressed and victimised sections of society. For example, in a recent survey for Stonewall, 41% of trans men and trans women said they had experienced a hate crime or incident in the last 12 months due to their gender identity and 25% had said they had experienced homelessness. The UK government's own Equalities Survey found 67% of trans people had avoided being open about their gender identity for fear of a negative reaction. Furthermore, according to Trans Murder Monitoring, between October 2021 and September 2022 there were 327 reported murders of trans or gender non-conforming people around the world.

Conference believes that:

- 1) This move by Sunak's government is an attack on the democratic rights of the people of Scotland and a further attempt to whip up 'culture wars' against an already demonised group, at a time when workers are increasingly fighting back against the cost of living crisis;
- 2) The rights of trans people do not conflict with the rights of other oppressed groups;
- 3) The trade union movement should defend the right to self-determination and the democratic rights of the people of Scotland, against an increasingly anti-democratic Westminster Tory government;
- 4) We need a united working class movement that fights against all forms of oppression and for fully funded public services;
- 5) Ultimately our rights and liberation will not be won through the courts, but through collective action and the fight for a different form of society;
- 6) We should stand in solidarity with our trans comrades and fight for a full ban on trans 'conversion therapy', to immediately scrap all barriers to legal self-identification of gender, for fully funded trans healthcare and our NHS and to stop the attacks on provision of puberty blockers.

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

Conference resolves to instruct the National Executive Council to:

- a) Send our solidarity to our trans members;
- b) Support protests and struggles to defend and extend the GRA reform;
- c) Support the struggle for self-determination of the people of Scotland;
- d) Send this motion to all relevant union bodies as appropriate including other Labour movement bodies.

### *City of Wolverhampton Local Government*

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#### **61. Stop the Tory Attacks on Trans People!**

Conference notes:

- 1) The blocking of the proposed reforms to the Gender Recognition Reform Bill from the Scottish Parliament by the Conservative Westminster government under the use of Section 35;
- 2) That these reforms are intended to make life easier for trans people, one of the most oppressed and victimised sections of society. For example, in a recent survey for Stonewall, 41% of trans men and trans women said they had experienced a hate crime or incident in the last 12 months due to their gender identity and 25% had said they had experienced homelessness. The UK government's own Equalities Survey found 67% of trans people had avoided being open about their gender identity for fear of a negative reaction;
- 3) Furthermore, according to Trans Murder Monitoring, between October 2021 and September 2022, there were 327 reported murders of trans or gender non-conforming people around the world.

Conference Believes:

- a) This move by Sunak's government is an attack on the democratic rights of the people of Scotland and a further attempt to whip up 'culture wars' against an already demonised group, at a time when workers are increasingly fighting back against the cost of living crisis;
- b) The rights of trans people do not conflict with the rights of other oppressed groups;
- c) The trade union movement should defend the right to self-determination and the democratic rights of the people of Scotland, against an increasingly anti-democratic Westminster Tory government;
- d) We need a united working class movement that fights against all forms of oppression and for fully-funded public services;
- e) Ultimately our rights and liberation will not be won through the courts, but through collective action and the fight for a different form of society;

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

- f) We should stand in solidarity with our trans comrades and fight for a full ban on trans 'conversion therapy', to immediately scrap all barriers to legal self-identification of gender, for fully funded trans healthcare and our NHS and to stop the attacks on provision of puberty blockers.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- i) Support protests and struggles to defend and extend the GRA reform;
- ii) Support the struggle for self-determination of the people of Scotland;
- iii) Publicise our union's proud position of support for trans rights.

*University of Brighton*

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### **62. Stop the Tory attacks on Trans people!**

Conference notes:

- 1) UNISON's clear support for the rights of trans people and the welcome introduction of trans-ally training throughout the union;
- 2) The blocking of the proposed reforms to the Gender Recognition Reform Bill from the Scottish Parliament by the Conservative Westminster government under the use of Section 35;
- 3) That these reforms are intended to make life easier for trans people, one of the most oppressed and victimised sections of society. For example, in a recent survey for Stonewall, 41% of trans men and trans women said they had experienced a hate crime or incident in the last 12 months due to their gender identity and 25% had said they had experienced homelessness. The UK government's own Equalities Survey found 67% of trans people had avoided being open about their gender identity for fear of a negative reaction;
- 4) Furthermore, according to Trans Murder Monitoring, between October 2021 and September 2022 there were 327 reported murders of trans or gender non-conforming people around the world.

Conference believes that:

- a) This move by Sunak's government is an attack on the democratic rights of the people of Scotland and a further attempt to whip up 'culture wars' against an already demonised group, at a time when workers are increasingly fighting back against the cost of living crisis;
- b) The rights of trans people do not conflict with the rights of other oppressed groups;
- c) The trade union movement should defend the right to self determination and the democratic rights of the people of Scotland, against an increasingly anti-democratic Westminster Tory government;

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- d) We need a united working class movement that fights against all forms of oppression and for fully-funded public services;
- e) Ultimately our rights and liberation will not be won through the courts, but through collective action and the fight for a different form of society;
- f) We should stand in solidarity with our trans comrades and fight for a full ban on trans 'conversion therapy', to immediately scrap all barriers to legal self-identification of gender, for fully funded trans healthcare and our NHS and to stop the attacks on provision of puberty blockers.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- i) Work with UNISON's LGBT+ Self-Organised Group to send solidarity to our trans members;
- ii) Support protests and struggles to defend and extend the GRA reform
- iii) Support the struggle for self-determination of the people of Scotland.

*Salford City*

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Constitutional Reform

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### **63. The Constitution of the United Kingdom - Reimagined in the Interest of the Majority**

The question of the constitutional future of the United Kingdom is becoming more prevalent amongst society and UNISON members. In the previous decade, the UK has been embroiled in constitutional arguments – the Scottish independence referendum in 2014 and Brexit in 2016. However, it is not only these era defining events that call into question the current arrangements of the UK.

Conference welcomes both the UK Labour Party's publication of 'A New Britain: Renewing our Democracy and Rebuilding our Economy,' and Welsh Labour's 'Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales.' Conference this is evidence of the realisation that the UK must reform.

Evidence of the need for reform presents itself across the UK every day. Conference notes that the ever increasing wealth disparity in the UK, the increasing deprivation, child poverty and crumbling infrastructure. These issues are not unique to Wales, Scotland, or Northern Ireland. Nor are they being addressed, due to a combination of wilful inaction and centralised decision making.

The impact of policy making, and decisions taken at Westminster and Whitehall, are at best, disassociated, detached, and do not reflect the needs of the population. At worst, it is cynical, insular, and subject to currying favour with a fraction of the population for political gain.

Conference, democracy in the UK is at risk. Despite increasing support by the public for further devolution, power has in fact been further centralised and consolidated by the UK government.

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Furthermore, it is unknown to many that devolution is not constitutionally enshrined. Though in practice it is unlikely that devolution could be withdrawn by an instrument of parliament, the fact that such a tool exists is further illustrative of the folly of the current arrangements.

Conference observes that as a consequence of the current arrangements, the United Kingdom does not conduct itself in partnership. Moreover, the arrangement can falter on the whims of one individual at Westminster – Liz Truss’ steadfast refusal to engage with the First Minister of Cymru/Wales during her entire administration despite insistence from senior civil servants provides stark evidence of this.

The current arrangements also prevent citizens living under devolution arrangements properly holding elected leaders to account. Too often, it is convenient and politically self-serving to lay the blame for tough or unpopular decisions at the door of the UK government. Whilst in each case there will be truth in such claims to a varying degree, this does not, in any way exemplify a healthy, functioning democracy.

Conference notes that it hinders UNISON’s ability to campaign on strategic pay, terms and conditions issues as confusion and obfuscation over responsibilities and decision making by governments results in members disengaging and believing that the campaign efforts focused on the UK government are the greatest determiner of our outcomes.

Conference, put simply, the constitution of the UK and devolution, in its current guise is not working for the people of the UK whether you are from Aberystwyth, Aberdeen, Antrim or Accrington.

Conference calls on National Executive Council to:

- 1) Agree that the constitutional arrangements of the UK do not serve the interests of the majority of our citizens and there is a need to adopt a formal constitution based on a progressive form of federalist model.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- a) Commission research on the various models of federalism and present the findings of this research, along with recommended options of how federalism could be applied to the UK, to National Delegate Conference 2024.

### *Cymru/Wales Region*

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#### Civil Rights

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#### **64. Defend Our Right to Vote - Voter ID is Voter Suppression**

Conference is deeply concerned at the changes in the law surrounding the requirement for mandatory voter ID at all general and by-elections in the UK and many other elections in England and Wales as part of the Elections Act passed in April last year. Supposedly to prevent election fraud despite there being little evidence that this is a problem (for context, only six documented cases of ballot fraud were found at the last general election).

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Voter ID, as many have warned previously, will amount to voter suppression. It stands to disenfranchise millions, particularly already disenfranchised groups in society.

The UK Electoral Reform Society have actively campaigned against the need for this change and have stated that:

"The UK does not have a problem with voter fraud and currently people have high confidence in voting. Adding a major barrier to democratic engagement off the back of so few proven cases would be a sledgehammer to crack a nut."

Conference notes that, unlike in mainland Europe where everyone is issued with a mandatory ID card, here in the UK it is the disenfranchised who are unlikely to have acceptable voter ID. Many people who can't afford to go on foreign holidays don't have passports, and those that can't, or don't, drive don't have driving licences.

Conference further notes that it is well documented that such schemes disenfranchise already disadvantaged groups, having a particularly disproportionate impact on Black communities.

A 2021 Channel 4 study found that ethnic minorities were far less likely to return to a polling station if turned away for not possessing the correct identification; voter ID trials in Watford in 2019 backed up these findings.

Conference further notes that none of the listed items of acceptable ID are aimed at younger voters with many specifically targeting older voters leading to concerns about the government deliberately disenfranchising the younger generation.

LGBT+ groups have also expressed anger over the voter ID provisions because of the potential for trans people to be turned away if their photo ID does not match their current appearance.

Conference is alarmed at the lack of government information and awareness raising on this issue. Uncertainty about awareness of the new requirements is likely to lead to disenfranchised groups being denied their right to vote from as early as this May.

Further, councils are reporting that they have serious concerns about the necessary support being in place in time for the May 2023 local elections meaning that, in England, this year could bring chaos to vital local elections at a time when councils are already facing tough choices in all areas of service provision.

Conference is also appalled to note that, by the government's own estimates the scheme could cost up to £20 million per election. It is clearly unacceptable that with the current cost-of-living crisis, the government would consider spending millions of pounds of tax-payers money to prioritise putting up barriers to people taking part in our democracy.

This comes as part of a dizzying and sustained onslaught by this Tory government on our rights such as our right to protest, to strike and the continued threats to repeal the Human Rights Act that undermine so much of what public services represent and a base-line for our basic rights.

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

Conference agrees that these voter ID proposals are a deliberate attempt at voter suppression, will lead to chaos at our ballot boxes, has scary echoes of the international far-right's play book and should concern us all. Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work, alongside the TUC, WTUC, STUC and affiliated civil liberties organisations to continue to oppose, reverse and lobby against these draconian measures;
- 2) Work with Labour Link to influence the next Labour Party general election manifesto to commit to reversing this legislation;
- 3) Whist the law remains, to continue to campaign for other forms of ID to be acceptable such as student ID and non-photo ID;
- 4) Raise awareness of the new legislation amongst members and issue guidance on how to get access to currently acceptable forms of voter ID;
- 5) Seek advice from the National Black Members Committee on how best to target information at Black communities.

***Eastern Region***

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### **64.1**

After point 5) at the end of the motion add the following:

"Conference also notes that postal voting can be one of the routes to overcoming voter suppression in the short term, before the legislation requiring photo ID is reversed. If people are registered to vote by post, they are not required to present photo ID every time they cast their ballot. In addition, there is some evidence to suggest that people with a postal vote are more likely to vote. Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to put in place plans to encourage UNISON members to apply for a postal vote for forthcoming elections."

***Suffolk County***

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### **65. Raising Awareness of No ID Vote**

The recent Elections Act 2022 which has been passed by Westminster government introduces many changes around Electoral Matters. Perhaps one of the most controversial is the requirement to show photographic proof of identity at Polling Stations before you are allowed to obtain your ballot paper. This legislation also covers proxy voters (people appointed by you to vote on your behalf if you are unable to attend the Polling Station yourself). This will cover all voters in England and Wales for all elections and in Scotland this will apply only to Westminster Parliamentary Elections. In Northern Ireland there is already a need to provide photographic identification.

Given the importance of making sure every vote counts, UNISON must do all it can to highlight these changes in electoral law that have the potential to disenfranchise our members from the democratic process. We need to raise awareness of what forms of identification are accepted and how members can obtain free Voter Authority Certificates from their Local Government offices.



## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

The stakes have never been higher. We need to make sure our members are aware of the changes that are now in place in law, that way they can have the necessary documentation to be able to participate in the democratic process.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Committee to:

- 1) Develop and resource a campaign to ensure our members are aware of the changes arising from the Elections Act 2022.

***Renfrewshire***

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### **65.1**

After action point 1), at the end of the motion add:

"Conference also notes that postal voting can be one of the routes to overcoming voter suppression in the short term, before the legislation requiring photo ID is reversed. If people are registered to vote by post, they are not required to present photo ID every time they cast their ballot. In addition, there is some evidence to suggest that people with a postal vote are more likely to vote. Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to put in place plans to encourage UNISON members to apply for a postal vote for forthcoming elections."

***Suffolk County***

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Employment Rights

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### **66. Protect Workers' Rights and Promote Equality**

Conference notes that currently there is no right to strike in the UK. Our rights flow from Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

For at least four decades workers' rights and trade union rights have been attacked and curtailed by successive UK governments.

Uniquely employment and trade union rights in Northern Ireland are devolved and as a consequence of trade union intervention have avoided the most recent attacks on both by Tory governments.

Consequently, our members in Northern Ireland have been able to exercise their right to take industrial action, including strike action, without the same restrictions which have frustrated hundreds of thousands of members across other parts of the union. However in the absence of stable Government in Northern Ireland, and increasingly hostile interventions by the UK government on worker and trade union rights, the future is uncertain.

The consistent attacks on workers' and trade union rights have resulted in strong campaigns of resistance by UNISON and the wider trade union movement. However this has left little time for the development of our own vision of how to enshrine strong workers' and trade union rights in law.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work with the respective trade union congresses and devolved regions to develop model legislation enshrining

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

workers' and trade union rights, including the right to strike and the right to collectively bargain.

Conference further calls on the National Executive Council to campaign for the passage of such legislation including from the respective devolved Governments, working with trade union congresses and devolved regions.

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

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#### **67. Young Workers Draconian Pay and Impact of Cost of Living Crisis**

Conference condemns the unfair differential rates of minimum wage that negatively affect young workers. This year, in the midst of the biggest cost of living crisis for two hundred years, workers aged 21 and 22 can legally be paid £10.18 per hour and 18, 19 and 20 year old can be paid a pitiful £7.49 per hour. Many public service employers pay their young workers less than those aged 23 and over.

The poor pay many young people are having to exist on is particularly cruel in a society and economy ravaged by over a decade of Tory austerity. Inflation is over 10 percent, energy prices are more than double what they were a year ago, petrol prices are high and the cost of housing is also prohibitive. Young workers are finding themselves in a position where they are unable to heat their homes, cannot afford to feed themselves and their families and are having to turn to foodbanks just to survive! Young workers are burdened with the same costs as workers aged 23 and over so it is illogical that they have a lower rate of minimum wage.

Conference these young workers have to fulfil their job roles to the exact same professional standard, as older people have to. These young workers are being subjected to discrimination because of their age, which is unacceptable.

Conference instructs the National Executive Committee to:

- 1) Campaign for the eradication of differential rates of the statutory minimum wage base on workers' age;
- 2) Develop and implement a recruitment and organising strategy specifically targeting young workers.

***Essex***

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#### **68. Change Time Limits for an Employment Tribunal**

Conference the University of Derby UNISON branch are asking for a change from three months less one day to six months less one day to log an Employment Tribunal.

We believe it would be only right that our members have the time to be strong enough with our help to challenge Employers around Discrimination through ACAS/Employment Tribunal.

Conference therefore we ask National Delegate Conference to support this motion so that the National Executive Council can work with other unions to seek a change to this outdated and unfair employment law.

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

*University of Derby*

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International

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### **69. Defending and Improving Women's Rights Internationally**

Conference notes the words of United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, "Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is the unfinished business of our time, and the greatest human rights challenge in our world."

Conference believes that identifying, celebrating and increasing visibility of women's achievements worldwide can help forge equality and combat gender bias, and that collaborating with women activists in different countries across the World, based on a foundation of shared purpose, trust and appreciation, can impact positive change for women.

UNISON works with individual unions and global union federations to defend public services and fight against austerity around the world and works to defend human and trade union rights wherever they are under attack.

Conference believes that with over a million women in our union and as the UK's biggest women's organisation, UNISON can play an important role in helping to defend and improve women's rights in the workplace and wider society, internationally.

Conference congratulates the National Women's Committee for recent international work including understanding the potential global impact of the US Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v Wade*, removing a woman's constitutional right to abortion and for speaking out and defending abortion rights alongside American and Polish women activists. Also, for inviting women activists from Colombia and Turkey to speak with the National Women's Committee and wider women's membership about defending human rights, labour rights, peace and social justice.

Conference applauds the bravery of women in Iran for taking a stand and demanding an end to the mandatory headscarf and modest clothing. Conference condemns the repression of women who have been physically attacked and killed for fighting for their basic rights. We stand in solidarity with them as individuals and with the women's organisations that are supporting them.

Conference welcomes that the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Global Union Federations and Trade Unions across the world embark each November on 16 days of global activism. This is used worldwide to call for the elimination of gender-based violence and runs annually from November 25th (International Day Against Violence Against Women) to December 10th International Human Rights Day. The ITUC and the Trade Unions are calling on governments to guarantee a world of work free from gender-based violence and harassment. This right is enshrined in ILO (International Labour Organisation) Convention 190 (C190) and its effective implementation are crucial to eliminate gender-based violence and harassment at work. C190 was ratified in the United Kingdom in March 2022.

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

Conference believes there is more that could be done to strengthen international links with women activists and women's structures in trade unions and social organisations in other countries and calls on the National Executive committee to:

- 1) Work with the National Women's Committee and the UNISON's International Committee to identify new opportunities to build links with women activists and their structures in trade unions and social organisations internationally;
- 2) Continue to work internationally to defend abortion rights;
- 3) Continue to work with the International Committee and the National Women's Committee to provide solidarity with women who are on the front-line in demanding trade union rights, peace and social justice, specifically in Colombia and Turkey;
- 4) Work with the National Women's Committee to show solidarity with women in Iran and explore ways to help them fight oppression and discrimination;
- 5) Work with all other appropriate sections of the union to raise awareness of ILO C190 and to look at the feasibility of joining the 16 days of activism in November 2023.

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

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#### **70. Iran: Women, Life, Liberty**

Conference stands in solidarity with the women led, nationwide protests in Iran, in response to the brutal killing of Jina Mahsa Amini, who died on 16 September 2022, following her arrest by Iran's so called 'morality police'. We convey our deep sorrow at her death, and all those who have lost their lives in the pursuit of women's rights and freedom for the people of Iran.

Jina Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish woman, was arrested in Tehran on 13 September by the notorious 'morality police' for an alleged violation of Iran's repressive rules on women's dress. She was beaten and tortured and died three days later in hospital.

The Iranian authorities have responded with extraordinary brutality towards the women led protests which rapidly spread to over 150 cities and 140 universities throughout Iran. Security forces, including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard, have subjected protestors to live ammunition, sexual violence, beatings, arbitrary arrests and other inhuman treatment. At least 500 protestors, including 67 children, were known to have been killed by security forces by the beginning of January, with the true number believed to be significantly higher. At least 18,000 are known to have been arrested or disappeared, whilst many more had been beaten or injured.

Protests have taken place under the banner "Woman, Life, Liberty," reflecting protestors' demands for an end to the theocracy's harsh dress rules and other laws, which marginalise and discriminate against women.

Independent trade unionists and other human rights defenders have been detained for defending protestors, including teacher trade unionists who have protected

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

students protesting in schools, lawyers who have defended protestors and journalists who have reported on the situation. Women's rights defenders have been systematically targeted for leading the protests, with many arrested at the funeral of Mahsa Amini, and in the following months.

Conference condemns the use of the death penalty by the Iranian regime. Human rights organisations reported that in the first 20 days of 2023 authorities had executed at least 35 people, including Alireza Akbari, an Iranian-British national and protesters Mohammad Mehdi Karami and Seyed Mohammad Hosseini. At least 109 more protestors were at risk of execution, although the real number is believed to be far higher, as families of those at risk are forced to remain silent. Protestors have been denied the right to a fair trial by the Islamic Revolutionary Courts with no access to a lawyer and prosecutions based on forced testimonies, obtained through torture.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Support the calls of protestors for the government of Iran to repeal all laws which discriminate against women and girls and take measures to protect and uphold women's rights;
- 2) Call for the release and acquittal of all those who have been detained for participating in protests and justice for all those who have been killed, harmed or detained;
- 3) Write to the Iranian Ambassador to highlight to condemn the treatment of protestors and demand justice, freedom and women's and workers' rights;
- 4) Respond to attacks on independent trade unions by the regime and support trade union demands for decent work and human and workers' rights;
- 5) Provide resources for activists to campaign for women and workers' rights in Iran including calling on the UK government to take action in support of rights at the United Nations and other appropriate bodies.

***National Executive Council***

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### **71. Solidarity with Palestine**

Conference is deeply concerned by the continued erosion of human and workers' rights in occupied Palestinian territory. 2022 was the deadliest year for Palestinians in the West Bank, with at least 147 killed and over 9,500 injured by Israeli forces, according to the UN. There was also an increase in attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinians, with over 750 incidents recorded. Gaza remains a virtual prison for 2.3 million Palestinians, subjected to high levels of poverty and denied their rights, including to decent work and quality public services.

UNISON has consistently advocated for a two-state solution, with a viable Palestinian state alongside Israel, but recognises that the prospect of a two-state solution has been eroded by successive Israeli governments, including through the annexation of East Jerusalem, de facto annexation of Area C and the demolition of Palestinian homes and property. Conference is concerned that the 37th government

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

of Israel, headed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, has expressed its outright opposition to a two-state solution and has committed to further discriminatory measures to undermine Palestinian rights.

Conference vigorously opposes the Israeli government's proposal to formally annex the West Bank and accelerate its policy of 'de facto' annexation by expanding illegal settlements, restricting access to land and natural resources, displacing the Palestinian population and destroying Palestinian homes and property. We call on the UK government and the international community to uphold international law and recognise that the continued colonisation of Palestinian land is rapidly rendering unviable any Palestinian state alongside Israel.

Conference is deeply concerned by the visit by far-right Minister of National Security Itamar Ben Gvir to the Al Aqsa compound, Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount at the beginning of January 2023, which has widely been interpreted as an extraordinary act of provocation and a challenge to the longstanding status quo governing the sacred site, which is an important Palestinian national symbol. The ban on the display of Palestinian flags in public spaces, also ordered by the Minister of National Security, represents a further suppression of Palestinian identity.

Conference welcomes the decision of the United Nations General Assembly to request that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) provide an opinion on the legal consequences of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories. We express deep concern however, at the UK government's opposition to the decision.

Conference reaffirms UNISON's position that the systematic oppression of the Palestinian people constitutes the crime of apartheid under international law.

This is confirmed by numerous Palestinian human rights organisations and the Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem, in addition to Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian territories to the 49th session of the UN Human Rights Council. We support Amnesty International's call on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to consider the crime of apartheid in its current investigation into the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and its call on all states to exercise universal jurisdiction to bring perpetrators of apartheid crimes to justice.

Conferences calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Support the call for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to consider the crime of apartheid in its current investigation in the oPt;
- 2) Oppose the continued colonisation of Palestinian land, including de facto annexation and plans to formally annex the West Bank;
- 3) Work with the European Trade Union Network for Justice in Palestine and others to call for governments to take measures to end corporate complicity with the illegal settlements.

***Newcastle Hospitals***

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**72. We Need to Talk About Palestine**

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

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

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

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

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

Conference believes that corporations that do business in and with the settlements are contributing to a grave violation of international law, and welcomes the United Nations Human Rights Council database, listing some of the business enterprises involved in or with the illegal settlements. Conference calls on the United Nations to expand the database to include all corporations involved in and with the settlements and the violation of Palestinian human rights, and for the UK government to ensure that all corporate enterprises regulated by them cease doing business with the Israeli settlements or face sanction.

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

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

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

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

### ***Royal Victoria Hospital Belfast and Muckamore Abbey***

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#### **72.1**

Add new Point 8):

"Work with Labour Link to secure a commitment from the next Labour government to recognise Palestine as an independent State."

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

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#### **73. Palestine**

Conference notes that the Palestinian people continue to resist occupation, siege, exile and discrimination. International law affirms their right to struggle for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial occupation.

Conference is pleased to learn that, at the end of 2022, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly requested an opinion from the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences arising from the ongoing violation by Israel of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, from its prolonged occupation, settlement and annexation of the Palestinian territory occupied in 1967 including measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of Jerusalem and from its adoption of related discriminatory legislation and measures.

Conference is alarmed by reports of growing Israeli settler violence in the occupied West Bank and of the Israeli army's increasing use of lethal force including its use against children and journalists.



## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

Conference fears that, with Benjamin Netanyahu's return to power heading an Israeli government that includes elements regarded as even more extreme than before, Jewish Power and Religious Zionism, we now enter a period in which the position will get even worse.

Conference welcomes Amnesty International's report, "Israel's Apartheid Against Palestinians: Cruel System of Domination and Crime against Humanity", which sets out how massive seizures of Palestinian land and property, unlawful killings, forcible transfer, drastic movement restrictions and the denial of nationality and citizenship to Palestinians amount to apartheid under international law.

Conference observes all this is made possible by states' unwillingness to uphold international law or to exercise universal jurisdiction. Governments do not hold Israel to account. Corporations and institutions all over the world help Israel to oppress Palestinians. In response, Palestinians call upon civil society for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions. UNISON was among the first European trade unions to support this non-violent global citizens' response of solidarity with the Palestinian struggle.

Conference reaffirms UNISON's support for the work of the European Trade Union Network for Justice for Palestine including its calls for the UN Human Rights Council database of companies involved in or with illegal Israeli settlements to be expanded to include all such companies and for states to take measures to end corporate complicity with the illegal settlements.

Conference is concerned that Local Government Pension Funds (LGPFs) continue to invest what UNISON regards as its members' deferred wages in companies complicit in Israel's violations of Palestinian human rights. The Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), working with UNISON and other trade unions, has set up "LGPS Divest" and conducted research which found that the funds have £4.4 billion invested in companies it describes as "complicit in the oppression of Palestinians".

Conference commends UNISON's guide, "Palestine: Is your Pension Fund Investing in the Occupation?" and welcomes initiatives by UNISON in several regions calling on the funds to divest from companies on the UN database. As a result, the issue has been raised with the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF).

Conference is glad that greater opportunity for work with other unions has arisen since the Trades Union Congress (TUC) resolution of 2020 and the General Council's subsequent report, Justice for Palestine, which encourages affiliates to campaign for employers and pension funds to disinvest from and boycott the goods of companies which profit from the illegal settlements and the occupation, and for adequate investment screening and due diligence by pension funds so scheme members' money is not used to support Israel's violations of international law.

Conference believes LGPS Divest will be stronger if more trade unionists and more trade union organisations play a leading role and if we can achieve greater regional co-ordination.

But Conference recognises that, for this to succeed, first we must defeat the United Kingdom (UK) government's intention to submit to parliament an Anti-Boycott Bill

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

likely to threaten to stop public bodies, including LGPFs, taking ethical investment, purchasing and procurement decisions in the interests of workers and communities.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council, acting as far as possible with other unions, and where appropriate with PSC and other organisations, to:

- 1) Map work already happening on pension fund divestment and how UNISON members, branches and regions are involved;
- 2) Develop proposals to build trade union involvement and leadership, how UNISON members may be kept aware of UNISON policy and strategy, how to support them, and how they remain accountable;
- 3) Work with TUC, Scottish TUC, Wales TUC, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (and with respective UNISON regions) with a view to sustained work with LGPFs throughout the UK and with LAPFF;
- 4) Continue to work with the European Trade Union Network for Justice for Palestine; and,
- 5) Continue to support the Right to Boycott campaign.

### ***City of Wolverhampton Local Government***

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#### **74. Supporting Migrant Workers in Qatar after the World Cup**

Conference notes that the 2022 World Cup in Qatar could not have taken place without the mass exploitation of migrant workers who were subject to unacceptable health and safety conditions and employment contract that trapped tens of thousands in forced labour. It is estimated that around 6,500 workers died in the construction sector. Post-World Cup, thousands have been sacked, with pay outstanding, before the end of their contracts, and are now without a work visa. Many remain in debt and unable to return to their home country.

Conference notes the work of our International Committee in supporting the campaigns and lobbying efforts to enable the migrant workers in Qatar to access their rights.

This included supporting the “Show FIFA the Red Card” PlayFair Qatar campaign and working in partnership with the Building and Woodworkers International (BWI) global union federation to successfully demand changes to Qatar’s labour laws and their implementation, undertaking solidarity visits to Qatar, as well as holding talks with the English Football Association.

With pressure from the international trade union movement, Qatar made key reforms to its labour laws, including reforming the “kafala” tied visa sponsorship system where employers confiscate workers’ passports and have the power to agree or not for their employees to leave the country. However, this is not enough. Many employers continue to exploit and abuse workers with impunity and, in breach of the fundamental human right to freedom of association, trade unions are still not legal in Qatar.

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

In the run up to the World Cup, UNISON supported calls for a Migrant Resource Centre which would act as a place to safely educate the workers and support them to claim their rights. This remains a key demand.

Conference notes that Qatar intends to build on the success of the World Cup to be a regional and world sporting and tourist hub and so will continue to rely on millions of migrant workers. Therefore, the campaigns to support these workers must continue.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Write to the UK government to enjoin the government of Qatar to further step up its cooperation with global unions such as BWI, and other partners, in sustaining the work on labour reforms, including calling for trade unions to be allowed to legally organise and represent workers on a road map towards the full respect for freedom of association and collective bargaining;
- 2) Continue dialogue with sporting associations, including keeping the pressure on the UK Football Associations to keep Qatar in their own spotlight;
- 3) Write to all branches asking them to consider supporting the TUC Aid Appeal to assist migrant workers' legal and welfare assistance.

***South Lanarkshire***

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### **75. Defending Democracy and Workers' Rights in Brazil**

Conference notes that on 8 January 2023 supporters of the former far right president of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, stormed the Presidential Palace, the Brazilian Congress and the Supreme Court in an attempt to overthrow the democratically elected government led by President Lula da Silva and to reverse the results of the 2022 Brazilian elections.

Conference further notes that this was one more in a long series of attempts to overthrow or undermine progressive governments led by the trade union backed Workers' Party (PT). President Dilma Rousseff was impeached and removed from office by a congressional coup in 2016 which paved the way for Bolsonaro's election in 2018. Bolsonaro only won those elections because former president Lula da Silva had been barred from running after he was convicted on trumped-up charges of corruption, charges that were overturned by Brazil's Supreme Court in 2021.

Conference believes that despite the re-election of President Lula in 2022 democracy, the rule of law and the progressive advances made between 2003-16 remain at risk. Bolsonaro supporters make up the largest group in the Brazilian congress and control a number of key Brazilian states. President Lula needs to work with parties of the centre and centre-right to win votes in Congress.

Conference welcomes the fact that the attempted coup of 8 January failed and hundreds of thousands of Brazilians, led by the trade union movement, took to the streets of Brazil's towns and cities in defence of President Lula and of democracy.

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

Conference extends its solidarity to the Brazilian trade union movement and resolves to defend Brazilian trade unions, progressive civil society and political parties from the attacks of the far right.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Strengthen our links with the Brazilian affiliates of Public Services International and take or lead from them in relation to solidarity requests;
- 2) Work with the TUC, STUC and ICTU and the international trade union movement to highlight democracy and workers' rights in Brazil.

*Northern Energy*

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Europe

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### **76. The Retained EU Law Bill - an Attack on Workers' Rights**

Conference believes that the Retained EU Law Bill is a fundamental attack on workers' rights in the UK and the opening of the door by the Tory party to an Americanised hire-and-fire culture in our labour market.

It creates a countdown for the expiry of vital protections in the workplace by 31 December 2023, removing in one fell swoop over 4000 pieces of EU-derived legislation. This is an arbitrary deadline set by the UK government for itself. There have been concerns expressed by experts and civil servants that there is insufficient capacity to meet the practical challenge the Bill sets.

At risk, as an example, are:

- 1) The right to an entitlement of 20 days' annual leave;
- 2) Family friendly rights;
- 3) Protections from dismissal where employment is transferred/outsourced;
- 4) Maternity, pregnancy, part-time and fixed term worker protections;
- 5) Watering down of anti-discrimination legislation;
- 6) Health and safety in the workplace for pregnant women;
- 7) Sharps/needle stick regulations in the NHS;
- 8) Pension protections.

Conference asserts that these rights are the very foundation on which modern workplace rights are built.

Conference fears that even if the government were to give a commitment to extend the December 2023 deadline and to restate in full employment rights protections, this will not be sufficient. This is because the letter of the law has, over decades been illuminated by the decisions of courts and judges, especially UK courts. It is these

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

shared understandings, careful interpretations and judicial wisdom that will now also be lost.

If passed into law this Bill will deliberately wipe the slate clean and create confusion around the principle of precedent that UK common law is premised on.

It places ideological principles above the lived, practical needs of the UK. Workers and unions will have to re-litigate important principles all over again.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Campaign vigorously against this pernicious Bill both within Westminster and beyond;
- b) Raise awareness of the Bill and engage UNISON members in our campaign, working with self-organised groups and service groups;
- c) Work with the TUC, trade unions and civil society groups to raise awareness of the impact of the Bill on core workplace rights;
- d) Challenge and oppose through physical protests and on-line protests, organising meetings, and other means any attempt by the Government to water down or delete vital workplace rights;
- e) Work with Labour Link to seek repeal of this Bill (if it becomes an Act) from a future Labour government.

***National Executive Council***

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### **77. The Retained EU Law Bill – An Attack on Workers’ Rights Nobody Asked For**

Conference believes that the Retained EU Law Bill is a fundamental attack on workers’ rights and women’s rights in the UK and the opening of the door by the Tory party to an Americanised hire-and-fire culture in our labour market. An attack few in the North of England voted for in 2016 and subsequent general elections. Coupled with the ‘Fire and Re-hire’ as at P&O Ferries and the offer of deregulated and untaxed economic zones such as Freeports, the vision of far right think tanks and fundamentalist Conservative MPs becomes clearer.

The Bill creates a countdown for the expiry of vital protections in the workplace by 31 December 2023 – removing in one fell swoop over 400 pieces of EU-derived legislation. This is an arbitrary deadline set by the Westminster Government for itself. There have been concerns expressed by experts and civil servants that there is insufficient capacity to meet the practical challenge the Bill sets.

At risk are:

- 1) The right to an entitlement of 20 days’ annual leave (in addition to bank holidays);
- 2) Family friendly rights;

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

- 3) Protections from dismissal where employment is transferred/outsourced (TUPE regs);
- 4) Maternity, pregnancy, part-time and fixed term worker protections;
- 5) Watering down of anti-discrimination legislation and equal pay;
- 6) Health and safety in the workplace for pregnant women;
- 7) Health and safety regulations on chemicals usage and other workplace hazards;
- 8) Sharps/needlestick regulations in the NHS;
- 9) Pension fund protections;
- 10) and many more.

Conference asserts that these rights are the very foundation on which modern workplace rights are built.

Conference fears that even if the government were to give a commitment to extend the December 2023 deadline and to restate in full employment rights protections, this will not be sufficient. This is because the letter of the law has, over decades been illuminated by the decisions of courts and judges, especially UK courts. It is these shared understandings, careful interpretations and judicial wisdom that will now be lost.

If passed into law this Bill will deliberately wipe the slate clean and create confusion around the principle of precedent that UK common law is premised on.

It places ideological principles above the lived, practical needs of the UK. Workers and employers will have to re-litigate important principles all over again.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Campaign vigorously against this pernicious Bill both within Westminster and beyond;
- b) Raise awareness of the Bill and engage UNISON members in our campaign, working with self-organised groups, young members and service groups;
- c) Work with the TUC, trade unions and civil society groups to raise awareness of the impact of the Bill on core workplace rights;
- d) Fight against free trade zones such as Freeports that cut taxation streams for public services, reduce rights at work and reduce business regulation;
- e) Challenge any attempt by the Government to water down or delete vital workplace rights;
- f) Believe in a social Europe for workers in the long term built on solidarity, democracy, human rights and universal public services.

# 2023 National Delegate Conference

## UNISON FINAL AGENDA

*Northern Region*

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Northern Ireland

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### **78. The Northern Ireland Peace Process 25 Years On**

Conference recognises that 2023 marks the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. Conference recalls the repeated support our union has shown for the Agreement and the peace process in Northern Ireland.

Conference notes however that at the time of writing, Northern Ireland does not have a devolved government in place. Conference further notes that many of the commitments made within the Good Friday Agreement and its successor agreements relating to equality and human rights remain unimplemented.

Conference expresses concern that the UK government is currently proceeding with proposed legislation which risks undermining key commitments within the peace agreements on equality and human rights and the legacy of the past. These actions stand in stark contrast to their supposed commitment to uphold the peace agreement and further risk damaging the peace process itself.

Conference reaffirms support for our Northern Ireland region's stance on the need for not only restoration of devolved government, but of a government which functions on a rights-based agenda. The absence of such an agenda has deepened poverty and division over the past 25 years, particularly amongst groups and communities in greatest need. The cost of living crisis affecting all our members across the UK and in Northern Ireland is exacerbating an already critical situation.

Conference acknowledges the efforts of our activists and members in Northern Ireland in supporting the ICTU 'Workers Demand Better' campaign calling for action to be taken to address the cost of living crisis both by the UK government and devolved government in Northern Ireland. This activity by our members has included demonstrations, town hall meetings, and the longest period of sustained industrial action in the health service.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to continue to support the efforts of our members in Northern Ireland, including through ensuring strong application of the devolution protocol within the union; and providing the necessary resources to support the union's efforts, not only in peace building, but also in engaging with the respective governments and decision-makers on eradicating poverty and inequality, tackling division, protecting and improving public services, including through insourcing, and by putting social and economic rights at the heart of public policy and collective bargaining.

*Northern Ireland Region*

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### **Efficient and Effective Union**

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Industrial Action

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### **79. Taking Effective Action within the Straitjacket of Anti-Union Laws**

Conference condemns the worsening restrictions of the right to strike in Britain with the draconian Minimum Services Bill which gives the government the power to set

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

minimum service levels for border security, education, fire, health, nuclear decommissioning and transport services. This will empower employers to issue a 'work notice' which will identify the employees required to work during strike action in order to provide that minimum service level.

Conference reaffirms the basic principles for industrial action ballots strategy agreed in Motion 109 at 2022 UNISON National Delegate Conference.

Conference applauds the success of branches, sectors and service groups in winning ballot mandates and delivering industrial action notably in the Environment Agency, Higher Education, the National Health Service, in particular ambulance services.

Conference welcomes and supports creative strategies meeting with ballot success such as disaggregate ballots, targeted action and proceeding, where appropriate, to an industrial action ballot without a consultative ballot where a service group or sector considers it is strategically advantageous to do so and there is sufficient reason to be confident of delivering a legally compliant ballot that exceeds the Trade Union Act thresholds in Great Britain.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Devise and roll out across the 12 regions and nations, UNISON training courses for all activists on how to organise industrial action ballots and win disputes, adjusting where appropriate for devolved public services, bargaining and employment law regulations;
- 2) Examine and explore the organising methods used in both local and national trade union ballots that have surpassed the 50 percent ballot thresholds in Great Britain recent times;
- 3) Make recommendations on which methods of organising are key to holding successful industrial action ballots.

***National Executive Council***

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### **80. Industrial Action**

Conference recognises that whilst trade unions were able to block several proposed measures when the Trade Union Act came into effect in 2016, unfortunately it still included the 50 percent threshold for industrial action ballots which creates a significant challenge to successful industrial action, particularly as part of coordinated national campaigning.

This threshold is undoubtedly part of the Tory government's agenda to attack trade unions, workers, and their right to strike!

Conference congratulates those Higher Education and the London Ambulance Service branch, who have reached the threshold and secured a mandate for industrial action as part of national campaigns, all as disaggregated ballots.

Industrial action campaigns raise the profile of the union and provide increased opportunities to recruit new members and identify and encourage new reps to build a



## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

stronger union. This must be embedded as a key part of any branch industrial action strategy.

We note the disappointment and frustration for branches that did not reach the threshold after all the work put in to mobilise members to vote. Particularly as those members who did participate, voted overwhelmingly for strike action over pay during this cost of living crisis.

Post pandemic many workplaces have changed with more workers working from home and engagement previously in person now online. This poses significant challenges to organising industrial action campaigns, but also opportunities.

During the recent ballot in the NHS, new technology such as peer to peer text messaging and online phone canvassing made contacting, and engaging with, large numbers of members remotely much quicker and easier.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to liaise with relevant parts of the union to request a report evaluating the effectiveness of this new technology and how this may be developed in future organising and campaign strategies.

Recent industrial action ballots have highlighted the importance of all members ensuring their membership record is up to date.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to review existing processes and communications to encourage all members to check their details are up to date on My UNISON on a regular basis to ensure the union is ballot ready.

Conference notes that, despite members anger over issues such as the cost of living, it can be challenging for reps to encourage members to vote in industrial action ballots. Reasons for this vary from fear of reprisals by the employer, concern regarding loss of pay to confusion over postal ballots.

To try to counteract these, and work towards exceeding the threshold in future industrial action ballots, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Set up a working group to find out more information, tools/techniques and best practice from those branches that did reach the threshold;
- 2) Explore harnessing virtual briefings or a modular training course to support reps in creating 'Get Out the Vote' plans to increase turnout and in particular having one to one conversation with members encouraging them to use their vote.

As those branches that have secured a mandate, and taken strike action know, reaching the threshold is only part of the challenge in reaching a dispute resolution.

Conference therefore affirms the importance of joint monitoring of action by the branch and region, both during and after strike days so that best practice, and any lessons learnt, can be collated and feed into future strategy development.

***Greater London Region***

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### **81. Boosting Turnout in Industrial Action Ballots**

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

Conference applauds the courage and commitment of UNISON members who have taken industrial action during the previous year and places on record its thanks to the union for all the hard work that it has undertaken to ensure that action could go ahead.

Anti-trade union legislation, including undemocratic ballot thresholds, workforce fragmentation and the cost of living crisis have clearly made organising industrial action so much harder than in the past. This has been reflected in the failure to meet required thresholds in many places even where there are very clear majorities for action.

But despite the challenging context UNISON members have been able to mount industrial action across the UK and conference congratulates the union's activists, organisers and officers for the way they have developed new techniques and utilised technology to overcome the barriers.

Conference agrees that whilst an incoming Labour government will create a more level playing field by removing undemocratic ballot thresholds, ensuring higher turnouts in ballots is fundamental to successful industrial action.

Participating in consultative ballots, voting in industrial action ballots and taking strike actions are all vital forms of collective action that members can take to deliver improvements in their workplace. Many trade union members do not understand the power of collective action and more could be done to increase their awareness.

To these ends Conference agrees that it is important that the experience and insights gained from this period are utilised and built upon.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to establish a small review group comprised of representatives from regions, service groups, Self Organised Groups and the National Executive Council.

Conference welcomes regional lay member democracy and participation and therefore instructs the National Executive Council to not select the regional representatives on the review group but facilitate a process that enables the twelve regional convenor teams to select who will represent them.

The goal of the group should be:

- 1) Gather evidence on members experience of industrial actions ballots to understand barriers to involvement;
- 2) Review the effectiveness of different communication techniques and technologies in reaching members in relation to industrial action;
- 3) Develop effective campaign tools for boosting turnout in industrial action ballots across the union.

This work should begin as a matter of urgency.

***Eastern Region***

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

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### 81.1

Add new sixth paragraph:

“Conference believes that there is also potential to learn from our local disputes with private contractors too.”

Add new point 4) as follows:

“4) Consider evidence from our disputes away from the core local employer.”

### *Private Contractors’ National Forum*

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### 81.2

Add new points 4) and 5):

"4) Work with other trade unions such as the RCN, GMB, RMT, NEU and ASLEF to find out how these unions achieved the over 50% turnout and also the 40% yes to strike;

5) Explore how to use all social media platforms more effectively in each region and at a national level to increase member participation and achieve the yes vote."

### *North Northamptonshire Local Government*

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## 82. Boosting Turnout in Industrial Action Ballots

Conference is rightly proud of our UNISON members who have taken industrial action during the previous year and places on record its thanks to the union, our staff and activists, for all the hard work undertaken to ensure that action could go ahead.

Conference recognises that anti-trade union legislation, including undemocratic ballot thresholds, workforce fragmentation and the cost of living crisis have clearly made organising industrial action so much harder than in the past. This has been reflected in the failure to meet required thresholds in many places even where there are very clear majorities for action.

Conference also recognises that despite the challenging context, UNISON members have been able to mount industrial action across the UK and conference congratulates the union’s activists, organisers and officers for the way they have developed new techniques and utilised technology to overcome the barriers.

Conference agrees that whilst an incoming Labour government will create a more level playing field by removing undemocratic ballot thresholds, ensuring higher turnouts in ballots is fundamental to successful industrial action.

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Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to establish a small review group comprised of representatives from regions, service groups, Self Organised Groups and the National Executive Council. The goal of the group should be to:

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

- 1) Gather evidence on members experience of industrial actions ballots to understand barriers to involvement;
- 2) Review the effectiveness of different communication techniques and technologies in reaching members in relation to industrial action;
- 3) Develop effective campaign tools for boosting turnout in industrial action ballots across the union.

This work should begin as a matter of urgency.

### ***Newcastle Hospitals***

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#### **83. Beating the Ballot Thresholds to Win Better Pay**

Conference notes that:

- 1) This Tory government is once again seeking to make public sector workers pay for the latest economic crisis by restricting public sector pay even further when the cost of living continues to rise;
- 2) Prior to the latest cost of living crisis, pay across the public sector had fallen in real terms between 20% to 25% since 2010;
- 3) The pay crisis across the public sector means there is already a crisis in recruitment and retention of staff across many sectors, resulting in greater pressures on remaining staff;
- 4) UNISON research has shown that the government receives around 50% of the cost of public sector pay awards back, through increased direct and indirect tax revenues and reduced spending on benefits and tax credits.

Conference believes that:

- a) Imposing further real terms cuts in pay across the public sector can only exacerbate the staffing crisis caused by underpay and overwork;
- b) The current increase in inflation has largely been caused by an inflationary profit drive, most notably among energy companies;
- c) It is a political choice to restrict public sector pay further and such a choice will not resolve the inflationary pressures created by profit-led inflation;
- d) This government will only be forced to give decent pay awards to public sector workers if unions can demonstrate they can beat the ballot thresholds and call lawful industrial action, if necessary;
- e) Each branch and region need to beat the ballot thresholds if UNISON is going to be as strong as possible to win better pay;
- f) Each branch and region need to prioritise achieving the required turnout during any ballot period as their number one priority;

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

- g) A political leverage campaign can enhance the impact and success of any industrial action.

Conference therefore resolves to request that the National Executive Council:

- i) Seeks to ensure best practice on beating ballot thresholds, from across UNISON and the wider trade union movement, is shared with branches and regions;
- ii) Seeks to ensure each branch and region devise a plan of action to beat the ballot thresholds;
- iii) Seeks to ensure any industrial action across sectors in UNISON is co-ordinated wherever possible;
- iv) Seeks to ensure that any industrial action for better pay is co-ordinated with other parts of the public sector fighting for better pay, wherever possible;
- v) Devises political leverage campaigns to work alongside any disputes.

***Sandwell General***

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### **83.1**

At the end of point 2), add:

"We now have 'Pay Free Fridays' where compared to 2010, we work a day a week for free, and now they are coming for our Thursdays too."

After point b) add new point:

"c) It is not just energy companies that are profiting though. Last year, Nat West bank recorded profits of £5.1billion and paid the CEO £5.25million. After the Tories ended the cap, City bonuses now average more than the annual pay of our teaching assistant members. The rich are getting richer at our expense."

After point d) add new point:

"e) Over the last year, we have seen a massive increase in workers beating the ballot threshold and taking strike action over pay, from the RMT, CWU, NEU, EIS, UCU, Unite, GMB, Aslef, TSSA, PCS, RCN, CSP and BMA. Some of our members in Health and Higher Education have also taken strike action, and Local Government members are balloting. This has been an inspiration, and has forced the Tories to improve pay offers."

And then re-number the rest of the points.

Point iv) after "parts of the public sector" insert "and other unions"

***Camden***

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Branch Funding

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

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### **84. Effective Use of Our Union's Resources to Build our Industrial Action Fund and Capacity to Deliver Effective Industrial Action**

Conference notes the scale of the cost of living crisis facing UNISON members. There can be no doubt that our union, and the wider labour movement to which we belong, is engaged in a battle with a government determined to force workers to bear all the costs of their broken system, while their friends and donors reap all the benefits. In these circumstances, we need to be able to utilise all our power to defend our members, the services they provide and the communities they support. As a trade union, a key test of our ability to do so depends on the extent to which we can deliver effective industrial action. We have seen some brave and brilliant examples within our union of what we can achieve when our members come together to take industrial action, but we must recognise that we can do more, particularly when it comes to national disputes and coordinating action across branches. An effective union is one that can meet its challenges collectively and the biggest challenges we face can only be won by us acting in large numbers across regions, nations and service groups.

Conference also notes that in 2022 it passed Motion 109: 'Taking effective industrial action under current legal restrictions'. This committed our union to: investigating effective use of digital communications to maximise one to one conversations with members at all stages of balloting periods; developing a whole union approach to maximise resources dedicated to industrial action ballots, including ensuring UNISON is 'ballot ready' with continuous cleansing of member records; and ensuring member training and education programmes encompass how we can organise to overcome restrictive anti-trade union legislation.

Just as our branches face multiple challenges from the Tory's cost-of-living crisis to defend our members, branches have also faced the 'once in a generation' challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. This Conference recognises the incredible efforts made by branches to support our members during the pandemic. Wholesale adaptation of how we worked took place at speed. The flexibility of branches in delivering support, advice and organisation to members at this time showed what is best about our union. The contribution of every single part of our union is also recognised by this conference: when we pull together, our union can 'fight its weight' and act like the biggest union in the UK.

Conference also recognises another phenomenon of the Covid-19 pandemic which took effect in 2020 and 2021. This was the significant underspend of both branch and national budgets caused by the pandemic. Routine expenses incurred by branches and the national office did not occur. Giving only two examples, no physical national delegate conference took place in either 2020 or 2021; and branch committee meetings were largely virtual, reducing travel costs.

As a result, both branches and the national union added significantly to their reserves in 2020 and 2021. Our union's general reserves are intended to meet unexpected running costs that might be incurred over the course of a year. Conference accepts this definition of general reserves, and so accepts the distinction between other types of reserves set aside in industrial action and property funds. Conference affirms that the exponential increase of general reserves at either branch or national level is not an aim or objective of UNISON.

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

Conference accepts that members' subs are collected first and foremost to support and organise our members, so we can increase our density and power in workplaces and our communities. Members' subs lying dormant in bank accounts, being added to year on year and attracting negligible levels of interest, serves no purpose at a time of crisis for our members.

Conference further notes that in 2020, those branches which already had more than £20.40 per member in reserves (or £11,200 in total for branches with up to 500 members) added an additional £7,808,201 to their general reserves above the £20.40 per member level. In all likelihood this huge resource will never be used for members' benefit. In 2021 similarly, our branches which already had more than £20.40 per member in Reserves (or £11,200 in total for branches with up to 500 members) added a further £4,856,878 to their general reserves.

In 2020, our national union added £5,331,000 to its general reserves. In 2021, our national union further added £12,020,000 to its general reserves. Conference accepts however that only a portion of the national union's increase in general reserves were 'cash in bank' reserves: the greater portion of this increase in general reserves accumulated in these years were necessarily committed against future expenditure and investment in the union's infrastructure e.g., £4.2 million was set aside for the union's Digital Engagement Project to improve and coordinate our digital communication with members. 'Cash in bank' general reserves across the two Covid years of 2020 and 2021 equalled £5,125,000.

These substantial sums combined represent a huge opportunity. Conference agrees that some of those members' subs should now be put to use: to build our capacity to deliver effective industrial action. We know from experience that where we can demonstrate the ability to take effective industrial action our membership will increase as a result. Investment in strike capacity is therefore sound investment in the growth of our union and its income, as well as being vital to defending our members' terms and conditions and the services they provide.

Conference recognises that our National Executive Council has taken helpful first steps in 2021 and 2022 to modernise our national Industrial Action Fund. The National Executive Council's Industrial Action Committee has approved the increase of strike pay from £25 to £50 per day, payable from day one of action and not day four. However, Conference accepts we must make other changes now to bring UNISON's industrial action capacity into the twenty-first century. A significant increase in funds for the national Industrial Action Fund, alongside a refocussing of union resources towards delivering successful ballot outcomes will support this objective and send a signal to bad employers and this Tory government that UNISON means to defend its members during the cost of living crisis and beyond.

To this end our union should also use these additional resources to:

- 1) Ensure accuracy of the membership system including continuous, pro-active cleansing and checking of member and employer records (if we don't have the right data at the outset of a dispute we are already hampered in delivering positive ballot outcomes);

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

- 2) Provide additional resources to enable the national Strategic Organising Unit and twelve regions to develop dedicated disputes organising capacity;
- 3) Make additional capital investment in technological systems 'to get out the vote' – expanding the Movement system to be more responsive and allow for improved targeting of members;
- 4) Deliver a union-wide, mandatory 'strike ready' training programme over the next 12 months.

Conference affirms that the most significant challenges that we face can only be successfully overcome if every part of the union works together effectively. We are one trade union and so Conference wishes to see a 'whole union' approach taken to this essential task of developing our union's capacity to deliver effective industrial action. This would mean a principle of 'match funding' between branches, in this instance those with the very highest levels of general reserves, and the national union. The branches with the very highest reserves should contribute £5,125,000 to equal the cash in bank general reserves contribution from the national union of £5,125,000, totalling a sum of £10,250,000.

Conference therefore resolves to instruct the NEC to use the excess reserves identified from the national union and branches with general reserves above £113 per member at the end of the 2021 financial year to:

- a) Boost the finances available within the national Industrial Action Fund to allow for greater use of strike pay and to give confidence to members that their union can support them and to send a signal to bad employers and government that UNISON means to defend its members;
- b) Provide additional resources to ensure accuracy of the membership system including continuous, pro-active cleansing and checking of member and employer records;
- c) Provide additional resources to enable the national Strategic Organising Unit and twelve regions to develop dedicated disputes organising capacity;
- d) Make additional capital investment in technological systems 'to get out the vote' – expanding the Movement system to be more responsive and allow for improved targeting of members;
- e) Deliver a union wide, mandatory 'strike ready' training programme over the next 12 months.

For branches this will mean general reserves accumulated above the rate of £113 per member will be used to create a sum of £5,125,000 from branches to match £5,125,000 from the national union, which will total a £10,250,000 investment in our Industrial Action Fund and capacity to deliver effective industrial action. Following this transfer from branches with general reserves accumulated above the rate of £113 per member, such branches will maintain their general reserves at no less than £113 per member. No branch with less than 500 members will have general reserves of less than £11,200.



## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to monitor and review the implementation of this motion and provide a full report back to Conference in 2024.

*National Executive Council*

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### 84.1

Add new point f):

"f) Explore how to improve the quality of membership data retrieval for all service groups, self organised groups and branches and this data should be accessible to the regions so that they can create accurate organising and campaigning mailing lists for all branches."

*North Northamptonshire Local Government*

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Legal Services

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### 85. Celebrating and Promoting UNISON's Legal Services

Conference places on record its support for UNISON's award-winning legal services for the important support they provide for our members and the wider trade union movement.

Conference notes that this delivers immediate tangible benefits for members.

Between November 2021 and November 2022 UNISON secured £29m in personal injury settlements for members and members' families, settling just under 2000 claims.

In July 2022 UNISON secured a victory in the Supreme Court, ensuring 5.6 weeks annual leave for all workers with no pro-rata reduction.

In addition, Conference notes and applauds the way in which our General Secretary and National Executive Council has acted to bring strategically important legal cases that can benefit all working people. In December 2022 the High Court granted permission for UNISON to bring a legal challenge against the government to protect the right to strike. This will enable the union to challenge government regulations that undermine the right to strike by allowing companies to hire agency workers to cover for those taking industrial action.

Other examples include:

- 1) The representation the union was able to provide to a member in Wales which enabled UNISON to obtain a ground-breaking pair of judgments to prove an employer's attempt to force a reduction in annual leave entitlement by fire-and-rehire was unlawful;
- 2) The settlement that the union won against Greenwich Council after a five-year legal battle. This resulted in a pay-out for 500 low paid women cleaners, teaching assistants and school meals workers and opened the door for £90 Million of settlements in schools where workers did not receive correct pay for annual leave.

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

Conference agrees that whilst organising for and winning decent pay, providing representation in the workplace and effective campaigning are all part the union offer, UNISON's legal services are an important reason that members join and stay in the union.

Whilst respecting the autonomy granted by Rule K, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to ensure that the union's legal services are promoted widely across the union and given prominence in all recruitment materials and advertising.

***Kent Local Government***

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### **85.1**

In the final paragraph make two changes as follows:

Firstly after "widely across the union and" insert "where appropriate are"

Secondly, after "given prominence in" delete the word "all"

***National Executive Council***

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### **85.2**

Add new paragraph after the final paragraph:

"Explore with all of the communications teams how to include more statistical information about legal services successes in each region in terms of discrimination cases."

***North Northamptonshire Local Government***

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Finances

### **86. Expenses Whilst Undertaking Trade Union Activities**

Withdrawn by submitting body

***North Northamptonshire Local Government***

### **87. Out of Pocket Expenses**

Withdrawn by submitting body

***Hertfordshire***

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Services to Members

### **88. UNISON There for You and Digital Literacy**

Conference notes the success of UNISON There For You, especially when the Cost of Living crisis is causing hardship for so many UNISON members. Conference also notes that Winter Fuel and School Uniform grants as well as other financial support require members to complete an online application form. Conference is concerned that there are members within our union who do not have the capacity to fulfil that

## 2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

requirement and this may include some for whom the Cost of Living crisis is most acute.

Conference asks the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Explore ways that members who are not digitally confident can still apply for UNISON financial support;
- 2) Explore whether a digital literacy course can be provided to branches and the regional and national offices that will provide a basic overview of how to complete UNISON financial application forms as well as tuition on digital skills.

***Staffordshire University Branch***

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### 88.1

Add new points 3), 4) and 5):

"3) Support the UNISON College in creating a survey for all members about their online training levels and needs;

4) Provide the survey data to each branch to start discussing with all their employers how to provide digital and online related training access to their staff;

5) Explore how regions can support branches in providing members with IT equipment to increase their competence and confidence."

***North Northamptonshire Local Government***

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### 88.2

Add new point 3):

"3) And work with the There for You charity to explore ways of overcoming the issues raised in the motion."

***National Executive Council***

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## Rules

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### Rule C Membership

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#### 1. Rule C Honorary Life Members

##### C 2.7.1

Delete existing rule C 2.7.1 and replace with:

"Only existing members in full membership of the Union may be nominated for honorary life membership in recognition of their service to the Union, prior to the cessation of their full membership. In order to be awarded honorary life membership status, the member's branch, region or the National Executive Council should nominate the member for honorary life membership prior to their full membership ending. The National Executive Council will approve awards."

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*National Executive Council*

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Rule D Structure of the Union at National Level

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**2. Rule D Young Members' Seat**

D 2.5.1

Delete "will be aged 26 or under" and replace with "will be aged 30 or under"

Rule Q

Delete "YOUNG MEMBER means a member aged 26 or under." and replace with "YOUNG MEMBER means a member aged 30 or under."

*National Young Members' Forum*

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**3. Rule D Service Groups**

D 3.1.1

Replace the name "Police and Justice" with "Police, Probation and CAFCASS"

*Eastern Region Probation*

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Rule G Branches

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**4. Rule G Branch Organisation**

G 1.4

Delete existing G 1.4 and replace with new G 1.4:

"Each branch shall be permitted to hold 'on-line', 'virtual', 'hybrid' or 'in-person' meetings, to improve efficiency, participation, accessibility and the environment."

*SSE (England and Wales)*

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**5. Rule G Branch Meetings**

G 3.2

Insert new rule G 3.2:

"G 3.2

From 1 July 2023 any branch meeting, including Branch Committee; General Meetings and Annual General Meetings can be held in person, online or hybrid."

Renumber subsequent rules.

*National Executive Council*

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**6. Rule G Branch Officers**

G 4.1.1

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

Insert after "Women's Officer (who must be a woman)," add: "Black Members' Officer," "Disabled Members' Officer," "LGBT+ Officer,"

***North Northamptonshire Local Government***

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### **7. Rule G Branch Officers**

Insert new rule G 4.1.7:

"G 4.1.7

All Branch Officers shall complete the Union's mandatory data protection training within three months of being elected; and any subsequent annual refresher training."

***National Executive Council***

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### **8. Rule G The Branch Secretary**

G 4.2.4

Delete the current wording of existing rule G 4.2.4 and replace with:

"In conjunction with the Branch Committee, ensure that the branch observes Union rules and the law with particular reference to data protection legislation to ensure that members' personal data is processed compliantly and that all branch data breaches are reported to the Union's Data Protection Team."

***National Executive Council***

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### **Amendments Ruled Out of Order**

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Beyond Remit of the Conference

#### **Motion 4 Equality is UNISON Business**

Add new points 6) and 7):

"6) The National Black Members Committee should after each National Black Members Conference analyse branch delegates in terms of service groups;

7) The National Black Members Committee should use the analysis to discuss with relevant national service groups about how they can work together to increase attendance at all national service groups and national self-organised group conferences and events."

***North Northamptonshire Local Government***

#### **Motion 5 Increasing Participation of Lower Paid Women in Our Union**

Add new points 9) and 10):

"9) The National Women's Committee should after each National Women's Conference analyse branch delegates in terms of regions and service groups;

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10) The National Women's Committee should use the analysis to discuss with the relevant national service groups about how they can work together to increase attendance at all national conferences and events."

*North Northamptonshire Local Government*

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Conflicts with an Existing Rule

### **Motion 32 Fighting for the Future of Local Government**

Add new point h):

"h) Explore with all TUC structures, national organisations such as Child Poverty Action Group to assess what is the most accurate National Living Wage for all Local Government workers and once that is agreed, to create a joint lobbying and campaigning toolkit for all regions to use in discussions with all Local Government Associations."

*North Northamptonshire Local Government*

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Could Place the Union in Legal Jeopardy

### **Motion 17 Defend the Right to Strike**

In point f) add new sentence at the end:

"This includes supporting UNISON members who, if told by their employer that they are required to work on a strike day, decide to continue to exercise their right to strike and their right not to cross a picket line."

*Camden*

### **Motion 85 Celebrating and Promoting UNISON's Legal Services**

Not printed

*Camden*

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Introduces Substantial New Subject Matter

### **Motion 1 Organising to Win - Building Workplace Power through Participation**

Add new point 4):

"4) Encourage the use of the Branch Support and Organising Fund and, no later than National Delegate Conference 2025, bring forward proposals to increase the current 2% allocation in the context of a revised branch funding scheme."

*North West Region*

### **Motion 72 We Need to Talk About Palestine**

At the beginning of the motion add a new first paragraph as follows:

"Conference notes that the Palestinian people continue to resist occupation, siege, exile and discrimination. International law affirms their right to struggle for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial occupation."

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Following the existing third paragraph (which ends “Palestinian state alongside Israel”) add three new paragraphs as follows:

"Conference is pleased to learn that, at the end of 2022, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly requested an opinion from the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences arising from the ongoing violation by Israel of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, from its prolonged occupation, settlement and annexation of the Palestinian territory occupied in 1967 including measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of Jerusalem and from its adoption of related discriminatory legislation and measures.

Conference is alarmed by reports of growing Israeli settler violence in the occupied West Bank and of the Israeli army’s increasing use of lethal force including its use against children and journalists.

Conference fears that, with Benjamin Netanyahu’s return to power heading an Israeli government that includes elements regarded as even more extreme than before, Jewish Power and Religious Zionism, we now enter a period in which the position will get even worse."

Following the existing fifth paragraph (which ends “or face sanction”) insert five new paragraphs as follows:

"Conference is concerned that Local Government Pension Funds (LGPFs) continue to invest what UNISON regards as its members’ deferred wages in companies complicit in Israel’s violations of Palestinian human rights. The Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), working with UNISON and other trade unions, has set up “LGPS Divest” and conducted research which found that the funds have £4.4 billion invested in companies it describes as “complicit in the oppression of Palestinians”.

Conference commends UNISON’s guide, “Palestine: Is your Pension Fund Investing in the Occupation?” and welcomes initiatives by UNISON in several regions calling on the funds to divest from companies on the UN database. As a result, the issue has been raised with the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF).

Conference is glad that greater opportunity for work with other unions has arisen since the Trades Union Congress (TUC) resolution of 2020 and the General Council’s subsequent report, Justice for Palestine, which encourages affiliates to campaign for employers and pension funds to disinvest from and boycott the goods of companies which profit from the illegal settlements and the occupation, and for adequate investment screening and due diligence by pension funds so scheme members’ money is not used to support Israel’s violations of international law.

Conference believes LGPS Divest will be stronger if more trade unionists and more trade union organisations play a leading role and if we can achieve greater regional co-ordination.

But Conference recognises that, for this to succeed, first we must defeat the United Kingdom (UK) government’s intention to stop LGPFs, taking ethical investment, purchasing and procurement decisions in the interests of workers and communities."

## **2023 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA**

In the final paragraph, delete sub paragraph 5) (which begins "Support branches to campaign") and substitute:

"5) Map work already happening on pension fund divestment and how UNISON members, branches and regions are involved and what support they need to campaign for LGPFs to engage with the companies they invest in and to demand they end their involvement in the occupied Palestinian territory and in the violation of Palestinian human rights and, acting as far as possible with other unions, and where appropriate with PSC and other organisations:

a) To develop proposals to build trade union involvement and leadership, how UNISON members may be kept aware of UNISON policy and strategy, how to support them, and how they remain accountable;

b) Work with TUC, Scottish TUC, Wales TUC, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (and with respective UNISON regions) with a view to sustained work with LGPFs throughout the UK and with LAPFF;"

### ***City of Wolverhampton Local Government***

#### **Motion 12 A Health and Safety Response to a National Crisis of Stress and its Effects on Public Service Workers**

In the third paragraph delete: "the legacy of"

Add additional new paragraph after third paragraph:

"The Covid pandemic is not over, and experience has brought to the fore the issue of indoor air quality, particularly the need for monitoring air quality as well as ventilation and filtration systems. Campaigning for the good indoor air quality in our workplace and elsewhere continues to be an important part of our health safety. UNISON has signed up the "Covid-19 safety pledge" and should continue to publicise as part of our health a safety work."

Add the following additional point between point 5) and 6) and renumber accordingly:

"6) Campaign for Improved health and safety legislation to ensure all workplaces and other buildings, have adequate ventilation and/or filtrations systems and air quality monitoring. Work with Hazards Campaign and others to demand employers sign the "Covid-19 Safety Pledge";"

### ***Islington***

#### **Motion 37 Outsourcing and Procurement**

Add at the end of point 1): "this to include savings made by the nationalisation of Private Finance Initiative contracts;"

### ***Mid Yorkshire Health***

#### **Motion 44 Crisis in the NHS and Social Care**

Add new paragraph 7):



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"7) Continue to campaign for the nationalisation of all NHS PFI contracts and for the profits to be ploughed back into front line services."

*Mid Yorkshire Health*

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Negative Amendment

### **Motion 63 The Constitution of the United Kingdom - Reimagined in the Interest of the Majority**

In point 1) to delete the text after "majority of our citizens" to the end of the sentence.

*National Executive Council*

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Not Competent

### **Motion 45 Integrated Care Systems**

In the second paragraph, after "Health and Social Care Act 2012" remove:

"which previously forced CCGs to competitively tender for contracts, and that the proposed replacement, the Provider Selection Regime, could allow for contracts to be handed out without proper scrutiny."

and replace with:

"is welcome, it does not completely rule out the prospect of private operators continuing to win health care contracts."

Also, in point 4) remove following text:

"with Compulsory Competitive Tendering,"

*Northern Health and Community*

### **Motion 23 Opposing the Rise of the Far Right in Europe**

Original Motion Text:

#### 23. Opposing the Rise of the Far Right in Europe

Conference believes that one of the most important lessons of the last century is how the economics of despair can lead to the rise of the politics of hate, in the 1930's and 1940's leading to world war and genocide. Therefore, Conference is alarmed by the rise of neo fascist forces in recent elections in Europe.

Both Hungary and Poland have well-entrenched right-wing leaders in Viktor Orban and Andrzej Duda. They are now joined by the new Italian Prime Minister, Georgia Meloni. Her 'Brothers of Italy' Party received over 25 percent of the vote on a platform described as the most right-wing since Mussolini. Conference notes with concern that the far right is getting closer to power in other European countries.

In France, Marine Le Pen received 41 percent of the vote in the Presidential run off last year, up from 34 percent in 2017. In Sweden, a party with neo Nazi roots called the Sweden Democrats won over 20% of the vote in last year's election. Similarly, in Austria, Spain, the Netherlands and Serbia far-right parties have gained momentum

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at the ballot-box, fuelling division and discontent through their anti migrant and so called nationalist narratives.

Across Europe, there are significant proportions of voters who are sufficiently desperate and disillusioned with the failings of mainstream politicians to vote for the far right. Conference notes some similarities in the far right programmes, which are antiimmigrant and nativist, hostile to LGBTQ+ people, and sometimes emphasise Christian nationalism.

Conference is concerned that some groups are linked together internationally, with Hungarian political leaders being linked with the far right in the US, and an Italian terror cell being found to have links with the Ukrainian Azov battalion. Conference believes that in an economic climate where living standards are falling across Europe, it is important that mainstream politicians speak to the needs of working class people, and do not leave them prey to right wing ideology.

Insert Additional Text Here:

"Conference notes UNISON'S proud history of challenging racism and supporting and highlighting the active contribution our migrant communities make to our economy and our civil society. Conference further notes that in the UK:

- The Nationality and Borders Act (NABA) became law on 28 June 2022
- The Conservative government's continuing plans for offshore detention in Rwanda, and the Care4Calais and PCS union legal challenge that contributed to the halting of the first planned flight taking detained refugees to Rwanda.

The major protest outside the Royal Courts of Justice took place on the 5 September 2022, with a day of action called by the TUC, Care4Calais, Stand Up To Racism, PCS union, Refugee Council, StatusNow4All, Amnesty International UK, including UNISON, Unite, GMB, NEU, CWU, FBU, UCU, NASUWT, ASLEF, TSSA & BFAWU.

The Britain-wide TUC, Care4Calais and Stand Up to Racism local protests outside of London on Saturday 16 July 2022.

- That campaigning has been effective - such as the legal challenges by Care4Calais and PCS against 'pushbacks' in the Channel, and to stop the first scheduled Rwanda detention flight, and the mass actions in Peckham and Hackney in London and in Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow that have stopped immigration raids."

Original Motion Text Continues:

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work to challenge far right ideology through:

- 1) Education for members by including anti-fascism into our training for activists as part of the day job;
- 2) Continue and expand international trade union co-operation by reaching out to trade unionists across the globe and actively working together to challenge the far right threat;

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3) Work with anti-fascist organisations, including Hope not Hate and Unite against Fascism and Stand up to Racism, to secure accurate, up to date intelligence on the state of the modern far right, and tactics and strategies to challenge them;

4) Continue to engage in activity that challenges the far right in all areas of its activity. Eternal vigilance, zero tolerance leaving no scope for the far right to grow;

5) Develop trade union narratives on migration that enable trade unions, not bigots, to lead the discussion on the causes of problems that create angst that the far right exploit, without answers, whether unemployment, low wages, poor housing or other issues;

6) To defeat the politics of hate, we need to expose the malignance of the far right, but even more importantly to offer better answers, to offer hope that both mobilise those who oppose the far right, win over those who are complacent or undecided, and draw away those that the far-right target for support by isolating their activists as the extremists they are, without support.

Insert Additional Bullet Points:

"7) To continue to actively work with the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) to promote their specialist helpline for UNISON Black members.

8) To proactively support and promote the forthcoming Runnymede Trust seminar for migrant communities being held in Manchester."

*Manchester*

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Not Sufficiently Clear

### **Motion 1 Organising to Win - Building Workplace Power through Participation**

Add new point 4):

"4) All branches and regional structures add to their Branch Development Plans and Regional priorities a commitment to work together to hold Year of the Black Workers events in their branches and their regions."

*North Northamptonshire Local Government*

### **Motion 3 Building UNISON in the Private Sector**

Add additional points 11) and 12):

"11) All branches should add to their Branch Development Plans a commitment to create and implement with their employers a facilities agreement that gives these members paid time off for all their union duties;

12) All regional structures to review who is on the Regional Community Network so that low paid, young and Black members have a voice and can share with each other workplace issues."

*North Northamptonshire Local Government*

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**Motion 13 A Health and Safety Response to a National Crisis of Stress and Its Effects on Public Service Workers**

Add new points 4) and 5):

"4) Regions should provide branches with all information about successful legal outcomes using Health and Safety at Work legislation;

5) That regions explore how they can review welfare and health & safety impacts with branch officers and their members who are facing any form of discrimination in their workplaces, and assess how Health and Safety at Work legislation can be used to hold employers to account in terms of their duty of care."

***North Northamptonshire Local Government***

**Motion 20 Cost of Living**

Add new points 7) and 8):

"7) The National Executive Council to develop a joint cross trade union approach to highlighting the ongoing negative financial impact on all low paid and more and more working people across the UK;

8) Work with Labour Link to request that they lobby the government to provide ongoing financial support for energy bills for those on low incomes."

***North Northamptonshire Local Government***

**Motion 21 Tackling Child Poverty**

Add new points d) and e):

"d) The UK government must fund free school meals and provide access to free broadband and laptops for all eligible secondary school students up to the age of 18;

e) Work with Labour Link to request that they lobby the government to provide ongoing financial support for energy bill for those on low incomes."

***North Northamptonshire Local Government***

**Motion 23 Opposing the Rise of the Far Right in Europe**

Add new points 7) and 8):

"7) All branches must work with their employers to send out to all new employees the anti-fascist and anti-racism policies of the organisation;

8) All union meetings with members must reinforce that fascist and racist views or behaviours will be challenged and also highlight the consequences of those actions, and branches must send out weekly emails to all members advising on our union's policy against bigotry."

***North Northamptonshire Local Government***

**Motion 11 Death Repatriation Rights for Overseas Members**

In point 1) replace "a survey" with "research"

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Replace point 3) with:

“3) We advise the National Executive Council to keep the information up to date using the best methods available;”

Add new point 4) as follows:

“4) We ask the National Executive Council to promote the informal UNISON migrant workers network and encourage members to sign up.”

***National Executive Council***

### **Motion 28 A Vision for a National Care Service**

Add after point e):

"National planning for complex needs. A National Care Service will need to be democratically planned based upon the expressed wishes of service users and their advocates and fully utilising the expertise of care workers. Care workers, organised in trade unions, must have a leading role in developing a National Care Service."

***Merton***

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Superfluous

### **Motion 68 Change Time Limits for an Employment Tribunal**

At the end of the first paragraph add the word "claim" after "Tribunal".

***National Executive Council***

### **Motion 74 Supporting Migrant Workers in Qatar after the World Cup**

In the fourth paragraph, second sentence, delete “this is not” and replace with “it was never”

Third sentence start sentence with: “Before the World Cup, fledgling employment relations infrastructure meant”

Put “d” at the end of “continue”

In the fifth paragraph, first sentence, delete “In the run up to the World Cup,” and replace with “This is why”

Delete “supported” and replace with “still supports”

Second sentence, delete sentence “This remains a key demand”.

Add new sixth paragraph:

“Post World-Cup, Conference notes with deep concern how the promised legacy of lasting Decent Work has rapidly deteriorated as the Qatari Labour government immediately and abruptly ended its cooperation with some global trade union federations. This has left migrant worker advocates at great risk if they try to support the many migrant workers, especially those from Africa, who are left unable to find jobs or return home until they have paid off their debt.”

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In existing sixth paragraph, first sentence, delete “notes” and replace with “understands”

Delete “and so will continue to rely on millions of migrant workers.”

In point 3) after “supporting” add “migrant workers’ legal and welfare assistance through”

Delete “the”

Delete “Appeal to assist migrant workers’ legal and welfare assistance”.

***National Executive Council***

**Motion 36 Ending the Two Tier Workforce in Public Services**

Delete "TULO" and replace with "Labour Unions"

***West Mercia Police Staff***