

2024 National Delegate Conference UNISON FINAL AGENDA

29th National Delegate Conference

Brighton Centre

18 June - 21 June 2024

This publication contains the motions, amendments to motions and amendments to rule for the 29th 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.

Organising and Recruitment

Organisation and Development

1. Organising to Win. Building on Success and Consolidating Change

Organising to Win is the national organising strategy of the union. It provides a vision of a stronger UNISON and a plan to increase member participation, build a bigger and more representative activist base, and achieve sustainable membership growth.

2023 saw a high level of organising, campaigning and bargaining activity, supported and promoted by multiple teams across the union to ensure maximum impact. Ambitious national base organising plans included "One UNISON" priority campaigns of NHS "Pay Fair for Patient Care", English Multi Academy Trusts, and devolved nation social care. A high profile pay campaign in England and Wales local government, strike action in Scotland schools and early years providers and strike action across Northern Ireland were amplified by paid advertising and press and social coverage. All contributed to growth in:

- 1) Membership. Net membership growth was achieved for the second consecutive year;
- 2) Member Recruitment. Over 209,000 new members joined in 2023. An increase of 13 percent on 2022 and 47 percent on 2021;
- 3) New Activists. 4,097 new stewards, health and safety representatives (H and S) and union learning representatives (ULR) were appointed in 2023. An increase of 56 percent on 2022;
- 4) Activist Training. 1,648 stewards were Employment Relations Act (ERA) trained in 2023. An increase of 38 percent on 2022. Training also increased for Health and Safety and ULR representatives.

To consolidate, and build on these achievements, implementation of the Organising to Win strategy over the past year has included:

- a) Resourced Social Care organising projects in each of the devolved nations;
- b) Coordinated Multi Academy Trust organising campaigns targeting 607 schools in 21 employers across every English region;

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- c) 29 active “Pay Fair for Patient Care”, Health Care assistant re-banding campaigns across the union;
- d) Over 50 Branch Support and Organising Fund (BSOF) funded organising projects underway;
- e) Extensive sectoral research to inform future organising priorities;
- f) Launch of the UNISON migrant worker member network;
- g) Online welcome events for every social care joiner in 2023;
- h) New guidelines to achieve Trade Union Act compliant ballots and deliver successful local disputes;
- i) The UNISON Organising Framework re-written for 2023;
- j) New UNISON Equalities and Organising Impact Assessment tool and guide;
- k) Monthly Organising to Win, tools and training webinars delivered and recorded for staff and activists;
- l) A new suite of best practice UNISON organising templates and guides;
- m) A new best practice Branch guide for effective organising communications.

Conference recognises the considerable progress achieved and the challenges that remain. Record recruitment has also seen record numbers of leavers, for a number of reasons, which threatens to take the union out of growth. Alongside this, present levels of participation and activism threaten longer term union organisation and are not yet sufficient to deliver collective action across large national service groups.

Conference recognises that full implementation of the Organising to Win strategy is a process, and continued progress relies on active Branch and Regional engagement in the Organising to Win tools, techniques, and activity in support of agreed national organising priorities.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to continue the resourced implementation of the Organising to Win strategy, with a particular 2024 focus on:

- i) Regional and service group annual organising plans to ensure ongoing sustainable growth in membership, participation, and activism;
- ii) Development of new tools and techniques to improve member retention;
- iii) Launch of an “active member” role, with pathways to further activism;
- iv) Promotion of the UNISON College and the role of Union Learning Representatives;
- v) Review and update all activist training to ensure consistent best practice organising content;

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- vi) Continued engagement with the national industrial action project to ensure best practice organising techniques are embedded in future strategies for winning national ballots and disputes’;
- vii) Collaboration with the national communications team to promote organising and campaigning work of the union and continue to build on membership and activist growth;
- viii) A fundamental review of the Organising Framework for 2024/5;
- ix) Develop Branch guidance and training to align organising and bargaining at a local level to increase member terms and conditions and secure improved union facilities;
- x) Review existing UNISON guides and resources to ensure consistency with the Organising to Win strategy;
- xi) Continue to improve organising data insight and reporting;
- xii) Ensure continued resourcing of 2024 “One UNISON” organising priorities of devolved nation social care, English multi academy trusts, and NHS pay fair for patient care campaigns;
- xiii) Ensure a consistent and high standard of training is delivered throughout the organisation.

Conference recognises the Branch Support and Organising Fund (BSOF) as integral to the resourcing of priority organising activity. Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to work with regions to review any BSOF surpluses and ensure maximum resourcing of “One UNISON” priority campaigns, including piloting of paid release and / or secondment of activist teams to work alongside UNISON Branches to deliver priority organising activity.

Conference recognises that the Organising to Win vision of a stronger union will only be realised with the active engagement of branches, and calls upon the National Executive Council to work with all branches to:

- A) Promote Organising to Win best practice by encouraging all activists to access the new organising guides, webinar recordings, templates, and tools contained on the UNISON Organising Space;
- B) Give active organising support to any “One UNISON” campaigns that covers members of the branch;
- C) Regularly monitor and review the Organising Framework and other branch organising plans to raise UNISON’s profile and deliver effective base organising activity to increase member recruitment, retention, participation, and activism at the workplace level.

Organising success requires ongoing reflection and evaluation. Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to continue to monitor and evaluate outcomes against activity to ensure continuous improvement of the UNISON organising approach based on evidence of what works.

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National Executive Council

1.1

Insert new point vi):

"vi) Promote Regional Organising events such as the North West Skills For Strength, now in its tenth year, that attracts hundreds of activists every year to have a full day looking at organising methods and successes. Skills For Strength seeks to share good practice across our union by inviting representatives from other regions."

Renumber the remaining action points accordingly.

North West Region

2. 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 social care homes, working in our hospitals, waste management companies or for private contractors providing schools meals, all of our members, regardless of the type of employer, deserve the very best of support from UNISON.

UNISON must ensure that the voices of the outsourced workforce are represented at all levels of democratic structures to maximise our industrial strength with 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 workplace organisation. This will ensure that members are represented and supported and engaged in relevant campaigns such as the Us2 pay campaign.

To achieve this we need a network of well trained, motivated and engaged workplace activists. Unfortunately too many members working for private employers do not have a UNISON activist in their workplace or even in their employer. In private contractor workplaces it is crucial to have a mechanism to network locally, regionally and nationally to get support and mentoring.

The majority of UNISON members working in the private sector are in branches that are primarily focussed on the issues relating to the larger public sector employers. UNISON must ensure that the voices and issues of private contractor members are heard in branches, in our regions and at a national level.

UNISON's work in private employer workplaces should be led by members working for those employers, mentored and supported by branch officers employed by public sector employers and branch employed staff.

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;

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- 2) Deliver a campaign focussing on the 'Year of the outsourced worker' to amplify the challenges experienced by private sector members and ways in which UNISON can support organising workers;
- 3) 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 workplaces such as care homes.
- 4) Consider if the Organising Framework process effectively supports branches to devote sufficient resources to members in the private and community sectors;
- 5) 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;
- 6) 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;
- 7) Ensure all regions resource and support regional structures for members working for private contractor employers;
- 8) Review the make-up of all our branch, regional and national structures to ensure that members working for private contractor employers are represented in all our decision-making forums and develop ways of delivering this;
- 9) Implement an activist development programme that aims to ensure that members working for private contractor employers are fully equipped to tackle the specific challenges of those members working in smaller often less well organised workplaces;
- 10) 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;
- 11) 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

2.1

Insert after the fifth paragraph:

"Where this has been successfully done, as with the traffic wardens in Camden, it has reaped significant results – high membership density, stewards in every workplace and four successful rounds of strike action that have all won substantial

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pay rises. This culminated in a £5,000 pay increase last year after 59 days of indefinite strike action. Wins like this also make bringing the service back in house more likely."

Camden

3. Organising and Training to Win Ballots and Disputes

Conference notes that in January 2024 UNISON joined the protest in Cheltenham against the Tories' new Minimum Service Levels Act 2023, and a day of historical strike action took place in Northern Ireland.

Conference notes that the last year has seen a high level of organising and bargaining in UNISON. The 'One UNISON' campaigns of 'Pay Fair for Patient Care', organising initiatives in English multi academy trusts, and fair pay for social carers have contributed to growth in membership, member recruitment, new activists and increase in stewards.

Conference notes that in 2023 there was a net membership growth. Out of those joiners 15 percent of them were young members. This is an increase in young members and a proportional increase from 10 percent of joiners in 2021 and 13 percent in 2022. However, conference notes the still worrying trend in the activist base in the union, with the average age of a UNISON activist being 57 years old.

Conference believes that in order to ensure the sustainability of our union, training and recruitment and training of our young members is key to ensuring the survival of our union.

Conference notes that in the last few years many young members were balloted within their workplace branches for the first time in their lives.

Conference recognises the importance of trade union education and training to:

- 1) Make members involved in disputes aware of the statutory requirements around balloting for legal strike action;
- 2) Give members the tools and knowledge to support and take part in successful bargaining and campaigns in their branches.

In particular, conference recognises the need for education to be available to young and new members taking their first steps in UNISON.

Conference recognises the importance of strategic and base organising in order to bargain successfully, win disputes, and develop a strong activist base in the union. Conference further recognises the need for education amongst our members, and specifically young members, in building for successful legal industrial action.

Conference therefore welcomes continued resourcing and support of UNISON's 'Organising to Win Strategy' to increase member participation in our union, recruitment and training of our young members.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

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- a) Continue to support the implementation of the Organising to Win strategy, with the recruitment of young activists at its heart;
- b) Work with the National Young Members Forum to promote the importance of UNISON membership to young workers across public services, and to emphasise the bargaining gains achieved by UNISON in recent years;
- c) Work with the National Young Members Forum to identify successes in developing and organising young activists and promote best practice across UNISON;
- d) Liaise with UNISON's Learning and Organising Services, and other relevant parts of the union, to review the training and education available on industrial disputes and lawful industrial action;
- e) If necessary, consider developing further workshops, resources and materials aimed at educating young and new members about:
 - i) How lawful strike action is decided upon and balloted for;
 - ii) How structures within UNISON operate and coordinate more generally;
 - iii) What UNISON members' employment rights are, whilst taking part in legal strike action.

National Young Members' Forum

3.1

Add new point f):

"f) Provide support to Branches to identify all Young Members and what their barriers are to taking part in industrial action."

North Northamptonshire Local Government

4. Strengthening UNISON's Commitment to Organising Excellence

UNISON boasts a proud history of tirelessly advocating for the rights and wellbeing of public service workers in the United Kingdom. Throughout the decades, our union has been at the forefront of defending the interests of our members and championing the values of fairness and justice.

However, the landscape in which we operate has evolved dramatically over time. After a decade of austerity, we find ourselves in an era marked by profound changes in the public services sector, encompassing shifts in employment structures, government policies, and the ever-evolving needs and expectations of our diverse workforce. As the challenges facing our members continue to transform, we must adapt and innovate to ensure that our role remains effective and impactful.

The role of organising within UNISON stands as paramount. Organising is not merely a tactical approach; it is the cornerstone of our union's ability to represent, empower, and ultimately enhance the lives of public service workers. It is through organising that we harness the collective power of our members to effect positive change in their workplaces and communities.

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Nonetheless, the statistics reveal a sobering reality. The past decade has seen a structural decline in UNISON's membership numbers, coupled with a concurrent decrease in our activist base. These trends serve as a stark reminder that our traditional approaches to organising need re-evaluation. To confront these challenges head on, we must embrace a new and transformative approach to organising, one that is adaptive, strategic, and responsive to the changing needs of our members.

The success and sustainability of UNISON in the future hinge upon our ability to recommit to the principles of organising. We must recognise organising not merely as a means to an end but as a fundamental strategy for securing the rights, benefits, and wellbeing of our members in a rapidly evolving world. Our union's strength lies in our collective power, and organising serves as the vehicle through which we consolidate and leverage that power to achieve our mission.

As such, we stand at a pivotal moment in our union's history, where reaffirming our commitment to organising is not only a strategic imperative but a moral obligation. By embracing this renewed dedication to organising, we can equip ourselves to navigate the challenges of today and tomorrow, ensuring that UNISON remains a powerful advocate for the rights and interests of public service workers across the United Kingdom.

Conference believes:

- 1) Organising is the lifeblood of our union and a cornerstone of our ability to represent, empower, and improve the lives of public service workers;
- 2) The challenges facing our members have evolved significantly over the years, and our organising efforts must adapt to address these changing needs;
- 3) A robust and effective organising strategy is essential for UNISON to remain relevant, influential, and successful in achieving its mission;
- 4) The decline in membership and activism, as highlighted in the baseline assessment, underscores the urgency of adopting a new approach to organising;
- 5) A union's strength lies in its collective power, and organising is the means by which we consolidate and harness that power.

Conference calls upon UNISON's National Executive Council to:

- a) To commend the union's commitment to the principles of organising, which are fundamental to our success;
- b) To recognise that organising is not merely a tactic but a fundamental strategy for securing the rights and interests of our members in a constantly changing environment;
- c) To affirm that a revitalised focus on organising is essential to the future success and sustainability of UNISON;
- d) To support the development and implementation of the new national organising strategy, as presented in the Organising and Recruitment Strategy Development

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(ORSD) project's report, which was unanimously endorsed by the National Executive Council in May 2023;

- e) To acknowledge the importance of the ten key goals outlined in the national organising strategy, which are designed to enhance UNISON's effectiveness in achieving its objectives;
- f) To emphasise the urgency of a comprehensive review of activist training and development to equip our members with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to implement the new organising strategy successfully;
- g) To support a continued and increased commitment of resources over the coming years to achieve the ambitious growth targets set by the union;
- h) To commend the Branch Support and Organising Fund as a vehicle for transformation;
- i) To encourage continuous review and evaluation of the organising strategy's effectiveness, with a focus on celebrating and promoting successes to build member confidence and engagement;
- j) To pledge our unwavering commitment to building a bigger and stronger UNISON, reflective of the diversity, values, and aspirations of the public service workforce, and dedicated to providing expert advice, support, and empowerment to its members through community, solidarity, and effective collective activity.

East Midlands Region

4.1

Add new point k):

"k) To proactively develop organising plans for under-represented members in Branches and Service Groups."

North Northamptonshire Local Government

5. Organising to Win

Conference welcomes the new UNISON-wide Organising to Win (OtW) strategy that aims to build the union by ensuring the adequate planning and resourcing of organising priorities, increasing member participation, achieving sustainable membership growth and expanding the activist base.

In Northern Ireland the strategic organising model, championed by the OtW, was successfully utilised during 2023 to help the region achieve record recruitment of nearly 11,000 new joiners, 10% yearly growth, and an all-time high full membership figure of 51,000 members.

The OtW 'One UNISON' priority devolved nations social care campaign, and our Branch Support and Organising Fund Projects, have also delivered high levels of recruitment, new activists and real improvements in the terms and conditions of some of our most vulnerable and poorly treated members in private sector companies providing public services.

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UNISON regions and branches must also ensure that effective plans are in place that prioritise and integrate a full range of supportive recruitment, organising, bargaining, campaigning and member engagement strategies and activities.

In Northern Ireland these have included effective partnership working between branches and the staff team; our pay campaigns in health and education and for a living wage across all sectors; our challenges to privatisation, unsafe staffing and service closures; our public policy campaigns including our Free School Meals for All campaign; challenging cuts to government funding to the community and voluntary sector; and the development of the UNISON College NI as a key organising resource.

Such activity will be mirrored in all other regions of UNISON and will be central to the union's plan to continue to build a powerful union.

Conference recognises, however, that the opportunities presented by OtW will only be fully realised if it is supported at all levels of the union and calls on the National Executive Council to ensure that full resourcing is available across all the relevant OtW campaigns and workstreams.

Northern Ireland Region

5.1

Insert new sixth paragraph (after the paragraph that starts, "In Northern Ireland..."):

"In Scotland the Regional Plan has seen effective campaigning and successful industrial action ballots and strike action in Local Government, Further Education and Higher Education, utilising modern organising tools and lay activists and staff working to deliver positive outcomes; building membership and recruiting activists in social care; organising around violence in schools and pay grading in the NHS."

Scotland Region

6. Challenging the Exploitation of Migrant Workers

Conference is deeply concerned about the exploitation of migrant workers in the UK, particularly in the social care sector. Acute underfunding, a refusal to address workers' pay and the absence of meaningful reform has left the social care sector in crisis. Care workers are overworked, underpaid and struggling to plug the gaps in a sector desperately short of staff. A rise in overseas recruitment has been fundamentally important to meeting these staffing challenges across health and social care. However, migrant workers have been left doubly vulnerable because of conditions in the social care sector interacting with punitive immigration rules.

Care worker exploitation is rife, irrespective of migration status. But add in the even greater power unscrupulous employers have over migrant care workers and the conditions for the most extreme and disgraceful practices have been created. Migrant care workers, sponsored by their employer, are often unable to leave exploitative situations and find work elsewhere. Irresponsible care employers know this and seek to extract money and working hours from them, often in clear breach of the law. Care workers who whistleblow are often victimised, dismissed and then left destitute and at risk of deportation.

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The interaction of the terrible underlying conditions of that sector with our immigration system has led to unnecessary suffering by migrant social care workers.

Rather than support migrant workers, the Government has sought to make the rules even more punitive and exploitative, ending the ability of care workers to bring their children and spouses with them. Conference believes that separating families and isolating workers from the right to a family life is not only inhumane but will also worsen the exploitation migrant workers experience.

Conference welcomes the work done at all levels by UNISON to respond to this challenge, especially by branches and activists to challenge exploitation and injustice, support migrant worker members from destitution and the threat of deportation. This work has been supported by the provision of free immigration advice through the helpline run by JCWI (Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants). This invaluable service has supported members dealing with the hostile environment, ever-changing immigration rules, employers using visa conditions to exploit workers and more. It has also supported branches and activists dealing with complex immigration rules affecting workplace rights.

Conference also welcomes the launch of a new migrant worker network, a new informal network which enables the union to improve our communication with migrant worker members and strengthen our organising and recruitment activity.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Raise awareness of, and promote, the new migrant worker network;
- 2) Support the work of branches and regions in organising migrant workers with resources and advice
- 3) Continue to support and promote awareness of the JCWI immigration advice helpline
- 4) Campaign to improve the rights of migrant workers, working with the union's migrant worker networks;
- 5) Continue to campaign against the "Hostile Environment" approach to immigration policy.

Eastern Region

6.1

After fourth paragraph ending "...will also worsen the exploitation migrant workers experience." Add...

"Conference recognises that the majority of migrant workers in the care sector are women. The government's punitive approach has a disproportionate effect on women migrants generally, and Black women specifically. This impact is exacerbated by the fact that women, as the primary carers at home, are often forced to bring elderly relatives, or young children with them. There are verified reports of traffickers targeting women in abusive relationships to exploit their desperation to leave their countries of origin, only to find themselves victims of modern slavery.

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There is further evidence to suggest that some employers in the sector are complicit."

Add action point 6):

"6) Work with the National Women's Committee and other relevant body to campaign for the reform of social care."

National Women's Committee

6.2

After point 5) insert new points 6), 7) and 8):

"6) Review the UNISON model employer policy for the recruitment, support and retention of migrant workers to ensure that its application would protect migrant workers from discrimination and exploitative practices by employers and extends to partner recruitment agencies and commissioned providers;

7) Explore whether the model employer policy can be strengthened to make commissioning bodies, such as NHS trusts and local authorities, the "sponsor of last resort" for migrant workers employed by commissioned providers to protect their visa status from insecure employment and potential victimisation for whistleblowing or union activity;

8) Develop organising and campaign strategies and resources to win implementation of such policies, establish and lead a national campaign opposing the punitive Health and Social Care Worker visa, and build a stronger UNISON organising base of migrant worker members."

National Executive Council

6.3

In the third paragraph, after the first sentence that ends: "...unnecessary suffering by migrant social care workers." Add:

"Unscrupulous employers are empowered to exploit migrant workers, not only by precarious and employer dependent visa conditions, but also by "No Recourse to Public Funds" and related policies that deny migrant workers equal access to the safety net of social security and social housing. Conversely, workers are empowered by free movement and universal access to social security, which grant us more security to stand up for ourselves."

At the end of point 2) add:

"including identifying major languages other than English spoken among the workforces in which we organise, and making resources, including key recruitment and campaign materials, available in those languages."

At the end of point 5) add:

"including:

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- a) Campaign to scrap “No Recourse to Public Funds” policies and instead extend to all residents (including migrants and asylum applicants) day-one equal access to work, social security and universal free childcare, to be paid for by taxing the rich and big business;
- b) Campaign for the UK both to re-enter Europe’s free movement area, and to extend free movement with countries and regions beyond Europe, with the goal of equal free movement for all workers. This will include pressing for reciprocal free movement to be included in all future trade deals with other countries;
- c) Campaign to create a simple process enabling any UK resident, regardless of immigration status, to gain permanent residency."

Camden

6.4

Add new point 6):

"6) Develop Branch Action Plans to identify how many migrant workers Branches have in workplaces and identify any potential discrimination cases."

North Northamptonshire Local Government

7. Organising for Equality

Conference expresses its deep concern that whilst working people did not cause the cost of living crisis, it is they who pay for them through attacks to their wages, job security, public services and benefits.

What is even more concerning is that yet again we see a disproportionate impact on women, Black workers, disabled, LGBT+ and young workers when austerity hits.

Clearly the current economic model is broken, but made all the worse because of structural, social and institutional discrimination.

Conference agrees that whilst we need to ensure that wider societal equalities issues are addressed through government action and legislation, a collective bargaining agenda that delivers concrete results and good agreements dealing with priority issues for women, Black workers, LGBT+ and young and disabled workers can make a real difference in the workplace and also have a wider impact on disadvantaged communities.

Conference further notes that union equality reps are essential to delivering this strategy, working alongside stewards, and having a seat at the negotiating table.

Conference calls for the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with Learning and Organising Services, self organised groups and the Bargaining Information Unit to provide support to branches negotiating on equalities issues;
- 2) Support the TUC campaign to lobby the government for the introduction of statutory rights for training and paid time off for union equality reps.

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Housing Associations

Education and Training

8. Union Learning is Central to Skills and Development for UNISON Members and Activists

Learning is fundamentally central to supporting our activists and ensuring that they receive the best training and support; learning is also vital for our members to develop personally and professionally; and learning is key to supporting wider growth and productivity through ongoing training or developing new skills.

Conference recognises that learning is central not only to building our activist base but it is key in building participation amongst our members and potential members in organising campaigns and in widening participation.

Conference also recognises that unions are integral to ensuring that any future government policy on providing future skills, such as Artificial Intelligence and green skills, to promote growth and productivity, is accessible to all workers.

Whilst employees (with some qualifying factors) have a statutory right to ask for paid time off work for training or study, this alone does not help the skills agenda. However, where we have learning agreements with employers, we have been able to provide a framework to utilise this right and support staff to undertake paid time off for training.

In addition, the East Midlands region have seen success in engaging with employers through promoting learning charters. A learning charter is a signed commitment to supporting staff learning and development through working with Union Learning Reps (ULRs). Where there is no learning agreement with an employer, a learning charter may act as the first step and be a useful tool to engage with employers on a local level.

Union Learning Reps (ULRs) play a vital role in developing learning in our workplaces, supporting individuals, and providing wider growth through skills and development. They are activists that are entitled to statutory paid time off to undertake this role and relevant training. The role includes:

- 1) Promoting the value of learning with employers and members;
- 2) Linking relevant learning to organising and bargaining campaigns
- 3) Arranging learning and training;
- 4) Supporting learners, mentoring and following up after training;
- 5) Supporting workplaces in ensuring employees have the right skills;
- 6) Widening and increasing participation.

In embedding learning in the workplace, learning agreements and learning charters can be a valuable tool for ULRs in engaging employers.

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Conference notes the need for a renewed focus on ULRs as a key activist role in organising and branch activity.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- a) Refresh and develop learning resources and guidance on learning agreements and learning charters;
- b) Track and review where we have current learning agreements with major employers and seek to revitalise their use;
- c) Maximise the bargaining and organising potential in existing learning agreements, by working with service groups, Learning and Organising Services and regional learning leads;
- d) Provide guidance and support on developing learning agreements or developing learning charters with employers where there is no recognition or where it can outline a local application of a national agreement;
- e) Encourage branches and ULRs to support members to request paid time off for training, both collectively and individually;
- f) Promote the role of ULRs and their active involvement in organising campaigns and branch activity;
- g) Encourage learning to be a standing item on branch meeting agendas.

National Executive Council

8.1

In the third paragraph, the phrase "...on providing future skills, such as Artificial Intelligence and green skills, to promote..."; add "environmental awareness and" between "Intelligence and" and "green".

After the fifth paragraph insert new paragraph:

"Cymru/Wales region has been successful in engaging employers that have been resistant to trade union engagement previously, utilising learning as a way to reach staff, and start a learning conversation. As a result, those employers are now actively engaged with the union, membership in those workplaces has increased, and retention of UNISON membership has improved."

In point 2) after "campaigns" add "supporting recruitment and retention;"

YMLAEN - FORWARD

9. Supporting Black Members Experiencing Racism

Despite UNISON's continued efforts to tackle racism in public service workplaces, continued reports from the Police, Probation, NHS, and others demonstrate that significant changes are still required before equality for Black workers will ever materialise.

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Conference condemns the slow pace of change in too many workplaces and the exclusion of Black workers from discussions about what reforms are necessary.

Although an immediate change to reflect what is required to deal with institutional racism will not happen overnight, a concerted effort can be made to not only consult us on proposals but also to involve us in the decision-making process. This means being an effective part of the process to generate the required change that continues to inhibit the progress of Black people.

Conference applauds initiatives such as UNISON Eastern's Anti Racism Charter which requires employers to commit to ensuring Black workers are central to all negotiations on how to deliver anti-racist workplaces and monitor and evaluate progress. In the Year of Black Workers UNISON adopted and encouraged take-up of this initiative across the union as a UNISON priority activity.

UNISON has made tremendous strides forward in holding employers to account for racism in the workplace and their responsibility to make efforts to have an anti-racism working environment. Much effort has been made to help reps understand how best to support our members in identifying racism, prejudices, micro aggression, and unconscious bias.

However, these achievements have also demonstrated that further development is needed to establish best practice in this area.

Conference believes training should be provided for branch officers and stewards to better equip them to be part of the solution. This will enable branch officers and stewards to help our members fight and win fairer workplaces.

We feel it is time for UNISON to progress in developing methods to better protect Black members in the working environment – instead of mainly focusing on supporting Black members after the painful experience of racism. This is a great opportunity to accelerate change and deliver an inclusive working environment.

Conference resolves that the National Executive Council working with UNISON College Learning and Organising Services help to:

- 1) Identify experienced trainers at a national and regional level who can deliver training to members focussed on better protecting Black members in the workplace and helping them fight for and win fairer workplaces by working proactively with employers.
- 2) Create specific training resources which will educate and promote branch officers and stewards to access this training in their branches.

National Black Members' Committee

10. Strengthening Support for Union Stewards and Introducing the Industrial Partnership Learning Fund

Conference believes that union stewards form the backbone of the labour movement, empowering workers to secure fair wages and better conditions. conference also identifies an urgent need to recruit a new, diverse generation of stewards and demands that the government provides more robust support, as evidenced by the Wales Social Partnership Act.

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Facility time for trade union duties is limited and frequently overlooks stewards in the Community Service groups and private sectors. Yet, facility time is crucial for reducing disputes and avoiding resorting to legal redress. Moreover, UNISON's green reps contribute significantly to helping the government meet its environmental net-zero targets.

Conference welcomes the Labour Party's commitment to repeal existing restrictive trade union laws and introduce paid facility time for equality reps.

To fill the void left by the abolition of the Union Learning Fund, conference proposes the creation of an Industrial Partnership Learning Fund. This fund would go beyond skills development to facilitate a constructive relationship between employers, unions, and employees. It aims to contribute to a more skilled and adaptable workforce while offering unions a structured platform for affecting workplace and public service improvements.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to build support services for UNISON representatives/stewards;
- 2) Continue to grow our steward base in number and diversity;
- 3) Promote the value of facility time in UNISON communications and to politicians at all levels;
- 4) Advocate for the establishment of an Industrial Partnership Learning Fund to support adult learners and foster collaboration between unions and employers;
- 5) Press for the revision of ACAS guidelines to ensure adequate time off for union duties, irrespective of the sector;
- 6) Expand and promote the role of equality reps.

Isle of Wight Local Government

11. Learning at Work

Conference believes that one of the major benefits UNISON offers members is learning at work that helps develop skills during employment that help both the employee and the employer. Employers should therefore be promoting access to learning for their staff and having branch education officers together with Union Learning Reps are integral to promote this.

In City of Sunderland Local Government Branch, our Education Officer has pioneered digital touchdown zones with the support of Sunderland City Council. There are now nine sites where staff can access computers principally within operational roles refuse, cleaning and grounds maintenance. Additionally, there is also a fully equipped IT suite which can help support digital skills within the workplace.

Other learning opportunities promoted through last year include working at home information, WEA courses, TUC Education online learning, menopause information, council learning provision, health and wellbeing and mental health provision and UNISON's very own learning provision.

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This work also helps us recruit and retain more members as they see the benefit of UNISON in terms of their personal develop and promotes the opportunity to become Union Learning Reps.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Promote the use of model learning agreements within service groups;
- 2) Continue to promote learning at work as a recruitment and organising tool;
- 3) Assist in the sharing of good practice of branches across the union.

City of Sunderland

12. Lay Tutor Training - More Opportunities to Develop Activists

Conference notes that activist education is paramount to effective organising in the trade union movement. It will also know that the limited availability of activist training courses coupled with challenges activists acquiring time off on the specific dates offered can be problematic.

In years past, the use of lay tutors was an incredibly useful way to deliver localised activist training to local activists. The lack of lay member tutors that could deliver UNISON training is hindering further development of our activists and hindering our ability to serve the membership.

Regularly offering lay tutor training across our regions would increase our ability to train substantially more activists at a fraction of the cost due to the reduction in travel and overnight expenses.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with Learning and Organising Skills to reintroduce widespread lay member training.

Norfolk and Suffolk Police

13. Mental Health First Aid

As a result of the Covid19 pandemic, cost of living crisis and cuts to jobs and services, there has been a significant increase in poor mental health reported as the main reason for absence.

The wellbeing of our members and activists is of the utmost importance to our union and we must act now.

Calls for mental health support services have also increased in our workplaces and communities, although we often find that they have been cut, overstretched or removed altogether.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council:

- 1) To introduce a programme of Mental Health First Aid Training, which should be delivered through our learning and organising for activists;

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- 2) Raise awareness of the challenges mental health have in a workplace context and strengthen our advice on risk assessments and what support is available;
- 3) Produce specific materials for a campaign to reverse cuts to mental health services and allocate the necessary resources that can be used across all four nations.

Renfrewshire

13.1

After action point 3) insert new action point 4):

“4) To encourage branches to work with employers to seek to introduce Mental Health First Aider programmes.”

National Executive Council

Constitutional Matters

14. 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 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 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

15. Treating our Members With Dignity and Respect

Police and Justice staff are well established members of our union and have been for decades. Police and Justice members work in very difficult circumstances both protecting the public and enforcing the law. The needs of these members are no different to that of other service groups. These members support our union and act with dignity and respect.

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At previous Conferences there have been offensive and ill-informed comments that have caused offense to Police and Justice members present. These remarks have often gone unchecked, leaving Police and Justice delegates feeling deflated and isolated.

All members of UNISON should be treated with dignity and respect in line with the rules of our union. Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to maintain proceedings in the spirit of the aims, objectives and rules of our union and to challenge inappropriate comments when they occur.

Leicestershire Police

Lay Structures

16. Preventing Burnout

Since Covid 19 hit we have seen an increase in mental health related illnesses. Rising long term absences from work through depression and anxiety. Increased workloads through job reductions, greater workload demands and stresses on us along with the cost-of-living crisis.

Approximately one in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year. One in six will experience anxiety or depression each week. 2023 saw an increase of 46 percent in urgent referrals to mental health crisis teams. One in five people have suicidal thoughts. One in 14 self-harm. One in 15 attempt suicide and 115 people die from suicide in the UK each week. 700,000 people take their own life each year, that is one person every 40 seconds according to the World Health Organisation.

Now in 2024 the UK has officially fallen into recession after the energy crisis of 2022/2023 and the ongoing cost of living crisis continues to have its impact on the UK economy. With nearly 10 million people in the UK in debt, there is an estimated £2.4billion of energy debt alone. This continues to add and be a major contributing factor in mental health related illnesses.

Nine percent of employees are currently experiencing thoughts of suicide or self-harm. Female employees are twice as likely to seek mental health support, whilst 75 percent of all suicide deaths in the UK are carried out by men. Employees experiencing financial stress are twice as likely to experience thoughts of suicide or self-harm.

With the above being major contributing factors, stewards are supporting more and more members experiencing financial difficulties and mental ill health. Whilst trying to be the support the members so desperately need this takes its toll on upon the stewards' mental health and wellbeing.

We have spoken many times about flexible working and the right to disconnect but as we all know whilst we are completing our duties voluntarily, we are doing this due to compassion and a love for the trade union, our day seldom falls within a 9 to 5, we so often put the needs of our members before our own needs.

Many workplaces have Employee Assistance Programmes but Stewards fear using these services due to protecting the privacy of their members.

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So much of the existing training provisions for trade union stewards focuses upon supporting that of the members but not that of the stewards providing the support.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to work with Learning and Organising Services and other relevant structures within the union to:

- 1) Introduce guidance, support and training on supporting stewards' mental health and preventing burnout as part of stewards training;
- 2) Make Mental Health training and Mental Health First Aider training more freely available both nationally and regionally;
- 3) To report back progress at National Delegate Conference 2025.

South West Utilities

16.1

After action point 2) insert new action points 3) and 4):

“3) Encourage branches to engage employers on their specific mental health support and training offer;

4) Promote existing Mental Health training and encourage branches to work with employers to seek to introduce Mental Health First Aider training programmes;”

And renumber accordingly.

National Executive Council

Negotiating and Bargaining

Bargaining

17. Maternity Pay and Related Parental Rights

A survey conducted in 2023 by Censuswide found that many young people in the UK were considering delaying or deciding not to have children. More than half cited financial reasons as the number one reason for this.

Conference notes that statutory maternity leave in the United Kingdom is issued for up to 52 weeks. While the UK offers a longer period of maternity leave than many countries, its statutory entitlement to maternity pay is less impressive. Conference notes the 2022 report by the employment platform Boundless, which ranked the UK's maternity pay as one of the lowest entitlements in Europe.

Conference further notes previous reports on maternity pay in the UK, including a 2019 report by UNICEF which found that the UK was one of the least family-friendly countries in Europe. Ranked on a number of factors, including paid parental leave, support for breastfeeding, and affordable childcare and preschool education, the UK came 28th out of 31 European countries assessed.

In 2017 the Trades Union Congress described the UK as being “in the relegation zone when it comes to decently-paid maternity leave”, with only Ireland and Slovakia (at the time) ranking lower for provision of “decently paid maternity leave”.

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Conference believes this long-standing pattern of low maternity pay in the UK must be addressed and reversed. With the cost-of-living crisis and ongoing inflation it is clear to see that the current maternity pay provision does not sufficiently cover everyday costs.

This can have a toll on the financial independence of women who will inevitably find themselves having to rely on partners, families, or personal savings to get by. This impacts household finance and can lead to an outdated typically male 'breadwinner' concept re-emerging in dual income households. This can add to the pressure of having a new baby and put strains on relationships and wellbeing within families.

Furthermore, pregnancy serves as a risk factor for domestic violence and financial disempowerment can leave women trapped in desperate situations.

Conference welcomes UNISON's recent call for statutory maternity pay to be doubled. Conference believes that improved maternity pay and related parental terms and conditions across the public sector, as well as improved statutory rights, would have a significantly positive impact on women, parents and wider society.

Conference asks the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to campaign for improved statutory maternity pay and for better maternity and paternity pay and rights, including by working with UNISON's National Women's Committee and organisations such as Maternity Action (and other relevant campaign groups in line with UNISON's values and principles);
- 2) Work with UNISON's service groups to support local and national bargaining initiatives for improved contractual rights to maternity and paternity pay and related parental rights and conditions, and promote bargaining successes in this area;
- 3) Work with the National Women's Committee to promote UNISON's work challenging and addressing maternity discrimination, and share existing resources on maternity, paternity and parental rights;
- 4) Work with Labour Link to encourage the Labour Party to commit to improving maternity and paternity pay and other parental rights, including a commitment to fully-funded universal childcare in its manifesto for the next election;
- 5) Promote UNISON's work in campaigning and bargaining for improved maternity pay to young members in UNISON.

National Young Members' Forum

18. Artificial Intelligence

Conference, Artificial intelligence (AI) is a rapidly developing technology that has the potential to transform and improve the quality and efficiency of delivery of processes and services in the public sector.

AI can also create new jobs and roles in all public sectors and can also enhance the skills and capabilities of existing workers, by providing them with new tools and insights to improve their practice.

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Conference, it also has to be recognised that Artificial intelligence (AI) poses a number of threats to the UNISON members, where employers can look to use AI to replace workers rather than using AI to aid productivity.

Conference, one risk is Job Automation: AI technology has the potential to automate various tasks that are currently performed by humans. This could lead to significant job displacement, particularly in public services where there are routine tasks such as administration which are traditionally carried out by women. Workers in these roles may find their jobs eliminated or gradually reduced, affecting their income and job security.

Another risk is Skill Relevance: AI-powered automation often requires workers to possess new and more advanced skills to remain competitive in the job market. Individuals who lack these skills or are unable to adapt may find it challenging to secure employment or may face downward pressure on their wages and overall working conditions.

AI could exacerbate wage inequality. As automation takes over certain jobs, the demand for skilled workers in AI-related areas may increase, leading to higher wages for those with the necessary expertise. On the other hand, workers in jobs that are easily automated might experience a decline in job opportunities and stagnant wages.

The implementation of AI may widen the digital divide between workers who have access to technology and those who do not. Workers without access to digital tools or training may struggle to adapt to AI driven work environments, facing exclusion and potential job loss.

With the advent of AI, companies collect and process vast amounts of personal data to train and improve AI algorithms. This raises concerns about data privacy and security for unionised workers, as their personal information might be at risk of being mishandled or accessed without their consent.

AI driven technologies can affect traditional unionised work structures. Companies may employ non-unionised workers to leverage AI capabilities or bypass collective bargaining by relying on algorithms and automation. This erosion of union power could weaken worker protection and bargaining positions.

Conference to address these threats and protect UNISON members, it is important for UNISON negotiators, policymakers, and employers to collaborate on initiatives like reskilling and upskilling programs, negotiating protections for affected workers, ensuring data privacy regulations, and promoting AI ethics and responsible implementation.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) To approach the government to campaign and work with them on a comprehensive and coordinated approach to prepare the workforce, industry and all organisations for the adoption and implementation of AI. This approach should involve education, training, regulation, governance, and evaluation;
- 2) Involve and engage all stakeholders, including affiliated trade unions, policymakers, and researchers, in the development of a policy for use and

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deployment of AI. This should ensure that AI is aligned with the values, needs, and preferences of the workforce and users;

- 3) Prepare UNISON briefings on the effects of AI for the workforce and a guide on negotiation with employers on this issue.

Yorkshire and Humberside Region

19. Artificial Intelligence and Data Use in the Public Services

Conference notes that Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning and automated decision-making are terms that refer to a wide range of technologies used across the private and public sectors.

AI and new digital technologies are transforming how public services are delivered, how people work and how they are managed. They have the potential to improve services, streamline processes and even improve equality, but, without proper scrutiny transparency and regulation, they may also lead to discrimination, de-skilling and potential job loss.

Conference believes that workers need to be involved every step of the way to ensure AI and digitisation doesn't become a drive to the bottom for ethical provision of public services and treatment of workers.

Conference has many concerns about the current direction of travel of AI and data use in the UK.

Conference is particularly concerned that AI-powered technologies are now making "high-risk, life changing" decisions about workers' lives. These decisions include line-managing, hiring and firing staff. AI is being used to analyse facial expressions, tone of voice and accents to assess candidates' suitability for roles. Left unchecked, the TUC, amongst others, has warned that AI could lead to greater discrimination at work across the economy.

Conference is therefore concerned that the lack of worker voice and transparency in introducing new technology used to make decisions that directly affect them is wholly unacceptable.

Equally, Conference cannot ignore the potential threat to jobs and skills as new technology is introduced. New technology and AI is likely to change the roles we undertake and potentially, in some cases, threaten to replace some of the jobs we do.

Further, conference believes that public data use is also a vital issue in this debate. Public trust is vital for the necessary engagement and consent required for public services to be maintained and delivered. AI often relies on access to large, and highly sensitive, data sets which, appropriately regulated, can reap huge rewards for the public good. However, such large data-sets are also considered to be highly valuable public assets.

Conference is clear that all public sector assets, including data assets, must be kept within the public sector and used exclusively for the good of the public sector and not used as bargaining chips in private finance initiatives.

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As with the necessary changes to the status quo that climate change has brought, any changes introduced by a willingness to embrace the positive aspects of AI and digitalisation in public services must have the workforce, and therefore, trade unions at their heart and any transition to new ways of working must be fair and just. The benefits of AI must be shared with workers and workers must be protected from any erosion of skills or jobs. Transparency and consultation must be at the heart of these changes and must be backed by legislation.

TUC polling published last year revealed that a clear majority want stronger regulation of new technology at work:

- 1) Seven in ten (72 per cent) workers fear that without careful regulation, using technology to make decisions about workers could increase unfair treatment (compared to 61 per cent 2020);
- 2) Eight in ten (82 per cent) now support a legal requirement to consult before introducing monitoring (compared to 75 per cent in 2020);
- 3) Eight in ten (77 per cent) support no monitoring outside working hours, suggesting strong support for a right to disconnect (compared to 72 per cent in 2020).

Employers must disclose to workers how AI is being used in the workplace to make decisions about them and every worker should be entitled to a human review of decisions made by AI systems so they can challenge decisions that are unfair and discriminatory.

Conference notes that the government's own committees have recently raised concerns about the impact of AI on public services. The seven pillars of standards expected of those who act on the public's behalf (introduced by Lord Nolan in 1995) are honesty, integrity, objectivity, openness, leadership, selflessness and accountability. They are the basis for codes and rules guiding conduct and decision making across the public sector. However, the Committee on Standards in Public Life have recently raised concerns about AI posing a threat to three of these principles in particular: openness, accountability, and objectivity.

And yet the Tory government have still refused to put in place the necessary "guardrails" to ensure that these standards are met, let alone to safeguard workers' rights.

Conference is particularly alarmed at the Data Protection and Digital Information Bill which is already setting a worrying direction of travel. The Bill will dilute important rights, currently guaranteed under GDPR, that:

- a) Provide workers with protections against automated decision making (this is often decision making by AI);
- b) Give workers and unions a say over the introduction of new technologies through a specific impact assessment process.

It is essential that public services and employment law keeps pace with the AI revolution.

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Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- i) Lobby government and all political parties to reinstate lost GDPR protections on consultation and automated decision making, to introduce robust new regulation requirements on AI and Data use in the public sector;
- ii) Continue to work closely with the TUC, STUC, ICTU and WTUC in furthering the joint union work in this area, notably the TUC AI manifesto and draft legal framework for workers' rights in the introduction of AI and digitisation;
- iii) Review our activist training and information materials to ensure that Branches are supported in recognising the issues and challenging the introduction and implementation of AI and data use where appropriate to do so at a local level;
- iv) Continue to support initiatives that seek to ensure that public data assets are kept within the public sector and not sold for commercial purposes (e.g. The Foxglove campaign to retain NHS medical data within the NHS).

Isle of Wight Local Government

20. Artificial Intelligence a Gift or a Curse

Conference, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the way we live our lives and inevitably will have significant consequences within our working lives too.

Conference, we recognise the value of AI and as recently highlighted by PWC, AI alone could add an estimated £232billion to the UK economy by 2030. The introduction of new technology in the workplace can help to improve work for staff and make it fairer, safer, faster, less monotonous, more productive. However, it is essential to recognise that new technology in the workplace will also put jobs at risk.

Concerningly, the World Economic Forum has estimated that artificial intelligence will replace some 85 million jobs by 2025 and PWC estimates that by the mid 2030's up to 30 percent of jobs could be automatable.

Conference, we know that the introduction of new technology at work is often made without a clear and reasoned justification provided by the employer. Sometimes the justification given is disproportionate to any need. And too often new technology is introduced in the workplace by employers outside of any collective bargaining process.

As a trade union, we must be prepared to respond to these risks appropriately and ensure that in areas where AI technology is adopted, this is not to the detriment of UNISON members.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with regions, service groups and self organised groups to build a body of evidence showing how AI technology is being used in workplaces currently and use the results to create a campaign to highlight the impacts;
- 2) Work with the TUC, the WTUC, the STUC and the ICTU, Labour Link and other like-minded organisations to develop progressive guidance and policy for managing the use of AI in the workplace;

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- 3) Develop resources and update bargaining guides for branches and regions to best equip them to support members in the ever-changing environment of AI technology in the workplace.

South Tyneside Local Government

21. Menstrual Health – Menstrual Disorders a Workplace Issue

For years now we have been talking about menopause and it is great to see that workplaces are adopting better policies to protect members during the menopause. Whilst this is a major step forward workplaces are still backwards when it comes to menstrual disorders. There are multiple menstrual disorders affecting members on a regular basis.

These disorders are:

- 1) Menorrhagia - heavy bleeding;
- 2) Amenorrhea - absence of periods;
- 3) Irregular menstrual bleeding;
- 4) Dysmenorrhea - painful periods;
- 5) Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) - physical and psychological symptoms;
- 6) Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) - more severe than PMS.

Whilst there are many different causes of these disorders it can be down to hormone imbalances and other factors like PCOS, Endometriosis etc, having one or more of these disorders can seriously impact members and disabled members at work.

According to CIPD.org.uk around 80 percent of the menstruating workforce will experience period pain at some point with PMS symptoms affecting around 75 percent. Research has found that two thirds of women experience a negative impact at work due to menstruation symptoms and more than 53 percent had been unable to go into work at some point due to their symptoms. For a small minority 4 percent this was the case every month.

Despite menstruation being a normal part of life, and the prevalence of menstrual health challenges, these issues are often shrouded in taboo and silence in the workplace. When asked whether they had told their manager that the reason for not being able to go into work was because of their menstrual cycle, CIPD research found that around half of employees (49 percent) said they never tell their manager it is related to their menstrual cycle.

This taboo is linked to broader societal attitudes around menstruation and menstrual health issues, but also because dedicated menstruation and menstrual health policies and provisions remain rare. Research found that two-thirds (67 percent) of employers said there is no support available.

Offering appropriate support in the workplace can make people feel included, offer dignity and reduce embarrassment. It can increase employee attendance and legitimise absence where this is needed.

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

- a) Liaise with branches and identify any public service employers that have adopted supportive workplace policies and practices on women's health issues generally and specifically menstrual health;
- b) Create a model menstrual leave policy that is separate from current leave policies and encourage branches to negotiate its adoption by employers;
- c) Campaign to de-taboo menstrual health and to get people talking "not all periods are the same".

Cambridge City and South Local Government

21.1

After the first paragraph after the list of disorders insert a new paragraph that says:

"The Equality Act 2010 says that a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities. The impact doesn't need to be every day or even every month but it would need to happen regularly and have lasted or be expected to last for 12 months or more. Conditions related to an individual's menstrual cycle, such as menorrhagia, dysmenorrhea and PMS, could meet the definition and the individual affected will be entitled to reasonable adjustments. This could include changes to sickness absence policies, special leave policies or changes to working arrangement such as being allowed to work from home."

Insert new action point c) as follows:

"c) Work with National Disabled Members Committee to develop guidance on requesting reasonable adjustments for menstrual related conditions."

Renumber the final action point.

National Executive Council

22. Baby Loss Policies – We Deserve the Gold Standard, Not the Bare Minimum

Please note, in this context, when we refer to Women, the term encompasses women and pregnant people.

Pregnancy loss affects many women with around 20 to 25 percent of pregnancies ending before 12 weeks. It can be devastating to women and their partners, both emotionally and physically. We as a union should encourage compassionate and appropriate support.

Despite the prevalence of pregnancy loss, there remains a significant disparity around attendance management policies for pregnancy losses of less than 24 weeks gestation when compared to pregnancy related illness in an ongoing pregnancy. This disparity exacerbates an already challenging experience and further marginalises those who are already vulnerable.

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In some maternity policies, it can state that employees who suffer a miscarriage are subject to normal attendance management policies rather than exempted as with other pregnancy related issues. This means we are left with a situation where a woman absent suffering from pregnancy complications such as morning sickness for example will not trigger the attendance policy as this is protected by legislation but one who is absent following the loss of her baby will.

Findings from a report commissioned by the charity Pregnant Then Screwed showed that 22 per cent of women who had experienced pregnancy loss and disclosed it to their employer then went on to suffer unfair treatment following it.

Conference is aware that Black women are at even greater risk of pregnancy loss and that this can be exacerbated when accompanied by hidden disabilities such as sickle cell disease which increases risk of spontaneous miscarriage and prolongs recovery periods following pregnancy loss.

Conference, this disparity is fundamentally unfair.

Conference, in some policies there seems to be no provision at all for women absent after undergoing a termination of pregnancy. Women suffering the emotional and physical aftermath of termination should not need to explain the nature of their loss or justify their choices in order to expect the same compassion and support as with any other pregnancy loss.

Pregnancy loss whether through miscarriage, termination of pregnancy, ectopic pregnancy, or during IVF can be devastating to women both emotionally and physically but let us not forget about their partners. While they may not be suffering the physical symptoms, their loss is still felt deeply. Watching someone you love suffer and wanting to be there to support them while also processing the shock of your own loss can be profoundly traumatic. Too often, these members are expected to leave their partner at home, put on a brave face and return to work as if nothing has happened or be left facing sickness meetings and sanctions. We believe that by talking about baby loss openly and honestly and providing appropriate support and leave from work for pregnant people and their partners we can help each other feel less alone.

Conference notes that there should be clarity across all public sector workers around pregnancy loss to protect our members from this disparity and potential discrimination.

UNISON's model policy is the gold standard, with provisions for paid time off for partners and the pregnant person following a lost pregnancy.

In the government response to the Independent Pregnancy Loss Review July 2023, it sets out that the NHS should be a "leading example" in offering excellent bereavement support and leave to staff and recommend up to ten days paid leave for the pregnant person, and five days for the partner for any pre 24 week pregnancy loss. It also clearly states that this should be 'floor not a ceiling' so we should be encouraging compassionate care rather than the bare minimum legally required.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

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- 1) Work with all the relevant structures in our union to map current policy with a view of implementing UNISON's model policy across all service groups through local agreements and staff sides;
- 2) Work all relevant structures in our union, including Labour Link, to promote this issue for our members, to ensure all our members are protected by appropriate, sensitive, and fair workplace policies during this distressing time, without differentiating between miscarriage and other types of pregnancy loss such as termination of pregnancy;
- 3) Work with the National Black Members' committee and National Women's committee to gain a deeper understanding of the differential impact on Black women and highlight the potential for additional discrimination.

Notes: The Equality and Human Rights Commission says that sickness absence related to a miscarriage should be treated in the same way as pregnancy related sickness.

The Equality Act Section 18: a person discriminates against a woman if they treat them unfavourably because of the pregnancy or because of illness suffered by them as a result of it.

South Tyneside and Wearside Health

22.1

Add new point 3) and renumber accordingly:

"3) Support and encourage Branches to negotiate with employers to implement comprehensive and progressive workplace Pregnancy Loss Policies;"

Wirral

23. Better Bereavement Leave

Conference notes that we are all likely to experience the difficult and stressful experience of losing a loved one, yet many workers are obliged to take unpaid or annual leave due to bereavement and some even miss the funerals of their loved ones. Presently in the UK, statutory entitlement to leave after a bereavement is restricted to parents after the death of a child under the age of 18. Some employers may provide time off for the death of a dependent but this is not statutory and may vary from employer to employer.

Conference further notes that the current system leaves the decision with the employer and does not account for those not considered a dependent.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to campaign for enhanced bereavement leave policies including:

- 1) Improving the statutory right to bereavement leave and widening this to close friends and members of the community;
- 2) Studying existing examples of good practice such as those used by individual organisations or other nations.

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West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Transport

24. Four Day Working Week

The fight for decent working hours has always been at the heart of union campaigning. Trade unions fought for an eight hour day in the 19th century and a two-day weekend in the 20th. In the 21st, it is time to take the next step and win a four-day week with fair pay for all. The four day week is a reduction in the standard working week for the same pay and benefits.

Today we are living through another time of rapid industrial disruption, with the explosion of AI and automated management systems. However, as we saw with the industrial revolution, Capital is grabbing more of the gains and as workers we are being short changed.

The results of the world's biggest ever four day working week pilot which took place in the UK found that:

- 1) Almost every company (92 percent) that took part has decided to continue with the four-day week after the pilot;
- 2) The vast majority of companies were satisfied that business performance and productivity was maintained;
- 3) Over the six month trial period, stress and burnout for employees both significantly declined with 71 percent of employees reporting lower levels of burnout;
- 4) Reported levels of anxiety, fatigue and sleep issues decreased, while mental and physical health both experienced improvements;
- 5) Measures of work-life balance improved. Respondents found it easier to balance their work with both family and social commitments, and were more satisfied with their household finances, relationships and how their time was being managed;
- 6) There was a substantial decline (57 percent) in the likelihood that an employee would quit, dramatically improving job retention;
- 7) There was a 65 percent reduction in the number of sick days.

The increasing evidence shows that a four day work week can lead to increased productivity, improved mental and physical health, better work-life balance, and reduced CO2 emissions.

Conference calls on The National Executive Council to:

- a) Advocate for the benefits of a four day work week to employers, policymakers, members, and the wider public;
- b) Develop resources and guidance to support branches and members in negotiating for a four day work week;
- c) Collaborate with our Service Groups, trade unions and campaigns, advocating for a four day work week;

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- d) Work with Labour Link and lobby for legislative and policy changes to facilitate the wider adoption of a four day work week.

Dorset

24.1

Between second paragraph starting “Today we are living...” and third paragraph starting “....The results of the” insert new paragraphs:

“Achieving a reduced working week for those delivering public services sets a precedent for wider societal change, benefiting not only UNISON members but the UK workforce as a whole.”

“A concerted effort across all service groups within UNISON is crucial for achieving a significant, widespread shift towards a reduced working week for those delivering public services.”

“The evidence base for a four-day working is growing. The results of research undertaken in Wales – where a reduction of the working week has been investigated in social partnership – and a pilot in Scotland supports in principle the move to a four day working week.”

At the beginning of the paragraph beginning “The results of the worlds” insert: “Additionally,” at the beginning of the sentence and alter “The” to “the”.

Action point b) Delete and replace with: “develop a comprehensive strategy that builds on the research in Wales and pilot in Scotland, to develop resources and guidance tailored to the unique needs and challenges of UNISON’s service groups to support branches and members in negotiating for a four day work week;”

Insert new action point e):

“e) establish a working group to coordinate efforts and share best practices for advocating a reduced working week for those delivering public services.”

Insert new action point f):

“f) Seek to work with likeminded organisations in the furtherance of the introduction of a reduced working week for public services within the UK with no loss of service delivery.”

CWM Taf Morgannwg Health

Health and Safety

25. Enough of Rack and Ruin - Safe and Healthy Workplaces Now!

Conference notes that 2024 marks 50 years since the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 came into force, and that there should be no reason for someone’s place of work to pose a risk to their health and wellbeing. Especially from risks of structural collapses, exposure to toxic and hazardous materials such as asbestos, thermal discomfort, and the associated risk to health from virus transmissions, mould or damp conditions as a result of poor ventilation and heating systems.

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Conference also notes and commends the work undertaken by UNISON and other trades unions, which has highlighted how many public buildings constructed after the second world war (such as hospitals and schools) were built using cheaper non-standard construction methods, including the now infamous Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC). Many of these buildings were only designed with an intended service life of approximately 30 years. However, even after evidence identified that there was a growing safety and failure risk with the materials used, many have remained in use well past their intended design life with efforts taken to patch up and repair them rather than replace them with newer more energy efficient and sustainable buildings.

Following a decade and a half of austerity and funding cuts, it is not just pay that has suffered. Cuts to maintenance and refurbishment budgets have also been made across both the public and private sector, either to prioritise the delivery of essential public services, or maintain profit margins by continuing to delay new investment. This has meant that it has become harder and more costly to maintain aging estates with the expectation that those working in or using these buildings will just have to accept a poor working environment. Some employers have even chosen to reorganise workspaces without appropriately consulting workers while redesigning the space, resulting in further issues such as trailing cables, poor lighting and overcrowding, and potential access issues, which may even fall short of meeting legal health and safety requirements, such as those outlined in the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992.

Additionally, rather than address the known risks of deadly asbestos within the fabric of buildings, the government chose to ignore recommendations made in July 2022 by the cross-party Work and Pensions committee report, which supported its removal, instead choosing a leaving it 'in situ' approach rather than commit to its removal. Despite evidence which has shown that it would be safer and a better use of public money to remove it now rather than later.

Combined with an ideology of austerity, the UK has been subject to both deregulation and defunding of enforcement bodies like the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), with a view that employers and companies should be left to police themselves. As a result, it has often fallen to health and safety reps to seek to hold employers to account for their failures to meet health and safety requirements, with this sometimes being hampered by employers' lack of willingness to share information despite them being under a legal duty to do so.

Therefore, Conference believes enough is enough, and that our members and those using the services they provide should no longer be expected to accept substandard working environments and buildings in a state of rack and ruin with the continuing risks from asbestos, ceilings being propped up, buckets collecting rainwater from leaky roofs, and discomfort in extremely hot summers and cold winters.

Therefore, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Develop a campaign (seeking to work with the TUC and other bodies) which highlights:
 - a) The current state of the buildings and conditions our members are expected to work and deliver services in;

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- b) How investment and renewal in more environmentally sustainable buildings would be better use of public money and support the creation of jobs;
- 2) Seek to work with the TUC and other bodies to campaign for:
 - a) The creation of national databases for asbestos and buildings constructed with non-standard building materials like RAAC which are now considered to have reached the end of their life span and are at risk of sudden collapse;
 - b) A change in legislation, which further expands on the existing duties on employers to provide information of health and safety risks that employees and non-employees may face, to explicitly require them (or the building's duty holder) to develop and keep up to date a full building safety information file (similar to that required already required for all new building and renovations within the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015), which has clear and accessible information on:
 - i) Construction methods, location and fire ratings and intended service life of material used;
 - ii) Servicing and maintenance arrangements specified by the designer, suppliers or manufacturer;
 - iii) Information relating to heating and ventilation specifications in each area;
 - iv) How damage to a building should be managed;
 - v) And the process for reporting concerns;
- 3) Continue to build on the current work begin undertaken by UNISON and the TUC, to campaign for the full implementation of 2022 Work and Pensions select committee recommendations on asbestos, including setting a deadline for the removal of asbestos from non-domestic buildings within 40 years;
- 4) Seek to develop new materials and training courses which:
 - a) Supports members and further develop activists to better understand how to raise any concerns about the buildings and conditions they are asked to work in;
 - b) How to appropriately challenge their employer when they feel the employer is seeking to inappropriately use health and safety to justify inaction such as the refusal of reasonable adjustments;
 - c) Encourages branches to actively see how they can use health and safety issues to recruit and organise around.

National Executive Council

26. Campaign for Maximum Working Temperature and Climate Hazards Health and Safety Training

Conference notes that since April 2023, workers in the UK have been battered by more extreme weather events, from a June heatwave which saw temperatures in posties' vans soar to 45 degrees centigrade to over six "named" storms which

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resulted in loss of life, long term evacuations from flooded homes and the closure of road and rail links across the country. Yet through this mayhem our members were out their delivering vital public services.

Conference recognises that climate hazards are a growing feature for all our workplaces. There is a critical need for a trade union campaign to secure mandatory climate hazards in the workplace health and safety training, the production of appropriate risk assessments by employers, seasonal workplace PPE, and annual reporting across all employers. There is an essential need to set legally binding maximum working temperatures.

To support our members and the people who rely on us UNISON and the trade union movement across the UK must work to identify these climate health and safety hazards and to campaign to make sure employers are including these hazards in workplace risk assessments, providing appropriate PPE to our members and co-authoring annual reports with health and safety reps which monitor and learn from climate hazard workplace responses.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign with the UK TUC and the TUC's of the devolved nations for a specific maximum working temperature law, including the ability to withdraw labour if workplace temperatures surpass 30 degrees celsius (27 degrees celsius if doing strenuous work in PPE);
- 2) Engage fully with our members, public and private sector employers for the adoption of workplace based climate hazards risks assessments reviewed annually;
- 3) Review, update and provide training to workplace health and safety reps on the need for climate hazards resilience in the workplace resource;
- 4) Campaign for amendments to the health and safety legislation to support the mandatory use of workplace climate hazards risk assessments and publicly available annual climate hazards review reports by employers and trade union health and safety reps.

***Aberdeenshire
South Lanarkshire***

26.1

Delete existing point 3) and replace with:

“3) Encourage members to engage with employers on including climate hazards in risk assessment processes and provide the necessary training required to protect workers from this workplace risk;”

National Executive Council

27. Organising to End Workplace Bullying and Harassment

The right to dignity and respect at work is core to UNISON's objectives and values. However, according to the TUC around a third of people are bullied at work.

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Bullying can be described as unwanted offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or a misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or causes harm. Workplace bullying can make daily working lives intolerable and cause significant ill health.

A failure to tackle workplace bullying is a breach of an employer's legal duty to provide a safe and healthy working environment. When it relates to a protected characteristic, bullying becomes unlawful harassment. Research by TUC, UNISON, and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development all highlight that workers with protected characteristics are more likely to experience bullying and harassment.

UNISON has a good range of resources to support regions and branches to tackle workplace bullying and harassment with employers and to support affected members. But as long as workplace bullying, and harassment persists, there is more we can do.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to support and resource a whole union campaign for a zero-tolerance approach to workplace bullying and harassment including:

- 1) A review of existing UNISON materials on bullying and harassment to ensure they are relevant and up to date;
- 2) New branch and regional guidance on providing individual support, and where appropriate, a collective response, to workplace bullying and harassment;
- 3) Short, accessible "don't stand by" training to build the confidence of UNISON members and activists to stand up to inappropriate and harmful conduct in the workplace;
- 4) A template employer anti bullying and harassment charter, and branch campaign pack for branches to engage members in campaigns to win and enforce a zero tolerance approach to bullying behaviours in their workplace;
- 5) National communications that promote UNISON's aims and values and individual and collective support for those who experience bullying behaviours in public service workplaces.

North West Region

28. 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

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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 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;
- 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) 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;

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- 8) 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;
- 9) 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;
- 10) Work with Hazards and Stress Network to raise awareness of these issues across a broader network of organisations and civil society.

Lancashire Police

29. Modernising UNISON's Trade Union and Health and Safety Representatives Credentials

Having a photographic Identification card (photo ID) is mainstream in modern society, up there as being one of the items that you don't leave home without, alongside keys and a mobile phone. A photo ID card is more than just an accessory you carry around with your photo on it, it serves a much greater purpose than that, as people use it for several reasons, including identification, security and access to items or venues such as a club.

Carrying a photo ID card can make your life much easier and ensure that you can be identified when necessary, while their value in society cannot be emphasised enough. If you live in the civilised world, it would be fairly difficult to do the things you want to without photo identification, as you would be unable to prove who you are in the security fuelled world we live in.

Having a photo ID card is important for many reasons in modern society, with some common examples of these being:

- 1) Security – businesses have been using photo ID cards to effectively implement security measures to prevent criminal activity. Giving their employees photo ID cards helps them to identify who their employees are while restricting the chances of thieves and fraudsters;
- 2) Identity – a photo ID card is one of the most effective ways of proving your identity, as you are unable to replicate someone else's appearance;
- 3) A photo ID card gives you a sense of belonging to an organisation.

Conference, it's time to recognise those individuals who perform these professional roles with professional credentials.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to introduce photo ID for our Trade Union and Health and Safety representatives. These volunteers support our members in the difficult times in their employment and ensure our members work in a safe environment.

Hackney Local Government

Pay

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30. Sector Level Bargaining and Fair Pay Agreements

Conference notes the clear link between the falling share of national income that finds its way into workers' wages and the decline of collective bargaining across the UK. This trend was set in train during Thatcher's assault on trade unions and the pursuit of flexible labour market policies during the 1980s. In countries that did not pursue this path, wages have held up and workers are significantly better off than their counterparts in the UK. Collective bargaining remains the single defining feature of industrial relations in some of Europe's most successful economies. Sector level bargaining is also beneficial for equalities and closing pay gaps.

In this context Conference welcomes Labour's commitment included in the New Deal for Working People to introduce Fair Pay Agreements as a step towards reversing the decades-long decline in collective bargaining coverage. Under their plan, worker and employer representatives would be brought together at sectoral level to negotiate fair pay agreements. These would establish minimum terms and conditions, binding on all employers and workers in the sector. These would include, but not be limited to, working time, pay and pensions, holidays, training, work organisation, diversity and inclusion, health and safety, and the deployment of new technologies.

These initial proposals have been followed up with a Labour National Policy Forum commitment to introduce in government the first fair pay agreement in adult social care. Following its introduction, a Labour government at Westminster would be committed to a review to assess the potential for extending fair pay agreements to other sectors, with an emphasis on sectors where low pay and poor terms and conditions are most prevalent.

Conference welcomes the work that UNISON has subsequently undertaken with the TUC and other affiliated trade unions to develop these proposals further, so that they can be implemented as quickly as possible after the General Election. There are lessons to learn from the Fair Work Convention in Scotland and the Social Partnership Act in Wales. A further important lesson from New Zealand is that it's important to do as much of the groundwork as possible before a change of government. There the incoming Labour government had committed to sector level collective bargaining but lost office before it got to properly implement the policy.

Conference further notes that in addition getting the policy development side of sector level bargaining right, we need to ensure that we have a complementary organising strategy. One risk is that without stronger membership and organisation on the ground, sector level bargaining will end up like wages councils. In this scenario there is a risk that the resulting fair pay agreements are weak, difficult to enforce and not properly representative of the priorities of the workforce who are covered. Whilst conference acknowledges that bringing this new initiative to fruition will take some time, it's important that the policy and UNISON's involvement in it, is developed in a way that enables and promotes a journey towards full collective bargaining.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to work with the TUC and the Labour Party, through the Labour Link, to develop policy on sector level bargaining and Fair Pay Agreements, taking

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account of devolution in public services and working with WTUC, STUC and ICTU where appropriate;

- 2) Ensure the introduction of sector level bargaining in adult social care is factored into a future UNISON Organising to Win programme if Labour forms a government at Westminster;
- 3) Work with service groups on all aspects of this motion and in particular to identify further relevant sectors in which sector level bargaining will address poor conditions and low pay.

National Executive Council

30.1

In the second paragraph between "holidays," and "training," add "occupational sick pay schemes,"

Add at end of second paragraph:

"Conference also recognises the need for a minimum level of occupational sick pay as part of any Fair Pay Agreements."

Islington

Campaigning

Campaigns

31. Time to Invest Now - Don't Make Public Service Workers Pay the Price of Austerity!

Years of under investment and cuts have led the UK to be a poorer place.

Conference therefore notes with concern the growing issue of employers passing on costs to their staff as a consequence of cuts.

Uniforms, mandatory training, shadowing, criminal record checks, mandatory professional accreditations, annual registration fees, car parking and using a car to make visits are all essential for staff to be able to do their jobs, provide a good service and keep their community healthy and safe.

However, far too many workers are being charged for the very essentials they need to go to work. This can add up to thousands of pounds taken from workers' wages every year, leaving workers out of pocket just for doing their jobs.

UNISON's report, "Driven out of work" shows that one in five frontline public service workers use a car to do their jobs. For example, visiting patients, providing care, keeping vulnerable children safe, doing housing repairs or ensuring water supplies safe all require staff to drive hundreds of miles to do their jobs. But out of date mileage rates mean these vital staff are thousands of pounds out of pocket. Conference is dismayed that the average local government or NHS worker who drives daily is losing more than £6,000 a year.

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Conference notes that the UK economy is fifteen years into economic decline, and this has cost the average worker £10,700 a year according to new research from the Resolution Foundation. Taxes are at a record high while investment in public services is at rock bottom, and the UK suffers from the highest income inequality of any major European country. Middle income workers in the UK are now 20 per cent poorer than their peers in Germany and 19 per cent poorer than those in France. For those on lower incomes the picture is even worse, with UK workers being around 27 per cent poorer than their German and French counterparts. Workers need to see genuine pay rises, not docked wages for essential workplace costs.

Conference highlights that, exacerbating this, the biggest costs are often passed onto those least able to afford them. Recent UNISON research on criminal record checks shows that more than four in five (85 percent) of public service workers requiring criminal record checks earn below the average wage in the UK, with two in five of them seeing their wages deducted to pay for it. Similarly, UNISON's research on mileage rates shows that public service workers required to do a car for their job, and therefore left out of pocket by out-of-date mileage rates, earn on average just £22,499 - significantly below the UK average. Conference is concerned that budget cuts, low pay the costs of working are pushing essential workers into financial hardship and poverty.

Conference is clear: it is wrong for employers to pass costs onto their staff. When something is essential for a job to be done well, safely or to the employer's standards, it should always be the employer who foots the bill.

Conference notes that it doesn't have to be this way and applauds the efforts of UNISON activists across the country to challenge unfair costs of working. Conference also notes that many local successes where branches have secured local wins such as temporary uplifts to mileage rates, reversal of fees for criminal record checks and campaigns against car parking charges.

Conference also notes that the reason given by employers to activists challenging these costs being passed on is too often the wider austerity that has seen public service budgets slashed.

Conference demands a new economic strategy for the UK, one which ends austerity and delivers higher growth, better jobs, fairer redistribution and increased investment in world class public services across the whole country. Conference also demands action to tackle the deep regional inequalities that hold much of the country back. Local and devolved governments are best placed to work with local communities to generate better jobs and fairer economic growth, but the slashed funding, cuts and the lack appropriate powers are holding them back.

Conference believes that investment in public services is key to delivering higher growth and lower inequality, and that a growing economy rooted in fairness is the only route to rescuing public services. Conference agrees with the Resolution Foundation's Economy 2030 report that the quality, not just the quantity, of taxes is critical to achieving growth and tackling inequality. Conference recognises that our tax system is out of date, with council tax based on three-decades-old property values, inheritance tax reliefs too easily abused, people on the highest incomes paying unjustifiably low rates and the entire system failing to keep pace with the need to transition to net zero. Conference believes that we need both higher and

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better quality taxes, shouldered by wealth and other forms of unearned income, not just earnings.

Conference believes that it is important that alongside excellent campaigns in workplaces it is essential that UNISON is also working to change the laws and regulations at national levels in Westminster and devolved administrations to protect workers from these unfair charges and deductions, as well as making the case for greater investment in public services paid for by fairer, more progressive taxation, and being part of the conversation about achieving equitable, sustainable growth.

Conference therefore calls for the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Ensure that the case for investment in all our public services is heard loud and clear in the coming likely election period by:
 - a) Continuing to support branches fighting cuts;
 - b) Support activists and members to engage in the public debates about how to achieve economic growth and wide scale benefits of investing in our local public services, using where appropriate the Resolution Foundation report's findings and recommendations.
- 2) Progress policy development and campaigns on the costs of working including:
 - a) Collect evidence of the financial hardship incurred by our members working across public services as a result of the costs of working being passed onto workers;
 - b) Continue to lobby the UK Treasury to increase out of date mileage rates in line with the real costs of using a vehicle for work;
 - c) Campaign against essential costs of working being passed onto staff, including car parking, uniforms, mandatory training, shadowing, criminal record checks, mandatory professional accreditations, and annual registration fees;
 - d) Develop policy proposals that would ban the unfair costs of working being passed onto workers, and work with regions, service groups, Labour-Link and the Campaign Fund where possible to call for legislative change in Westminster and the devolved administrations preventing employers from passing on essential workplace costs to their staff;
 - e) Work with UNISON College to develop training for activists and branches to challenge unfair costs of working in their workplaces;
 - f) Undertake further investigation into whether unfair costs of working leave low paid and insecure workers earning below legal minimum levels or not.
- 3) Continue work on progressive taxation to fund public services and ensure fair, sustainable growth in every region by:
 - a) Continue work to develop options for more progressive taxation to better fund public services and shift the tax burden from working income to unearned wealth and corporate profits, drawing on the Resolution Foundation's report;

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- b) Work with the TUC, WTUC, STUC (who have already issued their own taxation report) ICTU and other likeminded organisations to explore the case for fiscal devolution to improve growth and productivity in every city and region of the UK, develop progressive alternatives to council tax, and continue to make the case for central government investment to fund public services based on need, underpin growth and tackle regional inequalities.

National Executive Council

31.1

Insert after paragraph commencing "Conference demands a new economic strategy for the UK..":

"Conference notes with concern that an ever increasing share of public finances are being directed to military expenditure with Government Ministers pressing for it to rise to 3 percent of GDP by 2030 (an additional £157Billion)."

Add at end:

"3c) Oppose increases in military expenditure which will be at the expense of much needed investment in public services and infrastructure."

*National Young Members' Forum
South Derbyshire Healthcare*

32. Don't Make Us Pay to Go to Work

Conference notes with concern the growing issue of employers passing on costs to their staff. Uniforms, mandatory training, shadowing, criminal record checks, professional accreditations, car parking and using a car to travel are all essential for staff to be able to do their jobs, provide a good service and keep patients and the community safe.

However, far too many workers are being charged for the very essentials they need to go to work. This can add up to thousands per year, leaving workers out of pocket just for doing their jobs. For example, UNISON's report, "Driven out of work", shows that the average NHS worker on Agenda for Change mileage rates who drives two hours per day is losing more than £6000 per year because they are not reimbursed for the actual cost of driving.

Conference highlights that the biggest costs are often passed onto those least able to afford them. Recent UNISON research on criminal record checks shows that more than four in five (85 percent) of public service workers requiring criminal record checks earn below the average wage in the UK, with two in five of them seeing their wages deducted to pay for it. Similarly, UNISON's research on mileage rates shows that public service workers required to do a car for their job, and therefore left out of pocket by out of date mileage rates, earn on average just £22,499, significantly below the UK average. Conference is concerned that the costs of working are pushing essential workers into financial hardship and poverty.

Conference is clear: it is wrong for employers to pass costs onto their staff. When something is essential for a job to be done well, safely or to the employer's standards, it should always be the employer who foots the bill.

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Conference notes that it doesn't have to be this way, and applauds the efforts of activists across the country to challenge unfair costs of working.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council for action as follows:

- 1) To help Regions and Branches to collect evidence of the financial hardship incurred by our members working in public services as a result of the costs of working being passed onto workers;
- 2) As a matter of urgency to develop bargaining guidance to enable branches and activists to campaign on this issue;
- 3) The National Executive Council to:
 - a) Work with all service groups impacted by the unfair costs of working to promote national campaigns on the cost of working;
 - b) Include fair mileage, criminal record checks, uniform, training, shadowing, car parking, accreditations and other essential costs of working in campaigns;
 - c) Work with UNISON College to develop training for activists and branches to challenge unfair costs of working in their workplaces;
 - d) Work where possible with service groups, Labour Link and the Campaign Fund to call for legislative change in Westminster and devolved administrations, preventing employers from passing on essential workplace costs to their staff;
 - e) Undertake further investigation into whether unfair costs of working leave low income and insecure workers earning below legal minimum levels.

Staffordshire Community Health

33. End Child Poverty!

Conference believes that it is a national scandal that two in five babies, children and young people in the North East are growing up in poverty.

Eradicating child poverty was rightly at the forefront of Labour policy in 1997 but fourteen years of austerity have left progress in tatters. The Conservative government has failed by a country mile to meet the 2020 targets set out in the Child Poverty Act. IFS analysis showed that relative poverty reached more than double its 2020 target rate and absolute poverty rose more than five times the 2020 target.

Child poverty is rising, with some areas seeing particularly large increases. The rate of child poverty in the North East of England increased by nine percentage points in the seven years between 2015 and 2022.

Conference notes that in-work poverty has sharply increased. The majority of people in poverty live in a working household, including children. A shocking 75 percent of children in poverty are in working households. Meanwhile, cuts to the benefits system have left gaping holes in the welfare safety net plunging hundreds of thousands more children into hardship.

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If work is to be the best route out of poverty, the government must do more to get pay rising alongside strengthening workplace rights, tackling the rising cost of essentials, and fixing the UK's broken benefits system. Conference applauds the Labour party's proposals for a New Deal for Working People, a plan to make Britain work for working people by strengthening rights in the workplace to raise wages and improve working conditions.

Conference is proud that UNISON has recently affiliated to Let's End Poverty, a diverse growing movement of people, communities, faith groups, charities and businesses united behind a vision for a UK where poverty can't keep anyone down. Conference believes that we must organise in every community to ensure ending poverty is at the top of political agendas and that no-one looks the other way while children grow up homeless or hungry.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Make ending poverty a priority issue in national campaigning and ensure that it is a core plank of UNISON's campaigns in any future election;
- 2) Promote opportunities to get involved in Let's End Poverty, encourage branches and regions to affiliate, and support low paid members to play a leading role in campaigning against poverty;
- 3) Continue to call for the cruel two-child limit to be abolished and work to develop proposals for a fairer welfare safety net that does not punish children or impoverishes families;
- 4) Campaign for universal free school meals, free breakfast clubs and holiday hunger programmes, and support school catering staff to share their frontline experiences of supporting young people who come to school hungry;
- 5) Continue to champion the need for stronger workplace rights and higher wages by campaigning for a real living wage of at least £15 per hour and encouraging members to get involved in promoting Labour's New Deal for Working People;
- 6) Survey members on their experiences of low pay and in-work poverty and ensure the union's campaigning work reflects their lived experience;
- 7) Support UNISON's charity There For You by encouraging members and branches to donate and signposting advice and grants to members who may be struggling.

Northern Region

33.1

Add after sixth paragraph and before "Conference calls....."

"No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF) and related policies deny migrant workers equal access to the safety net of social security and social housing. Residents subject to immigration control are also excluded from significant elements of the existing public support package for childcare. The Migration Observatory estimates that the number of people subject to NRPF has sky rocketed from approximately 1.5 million at the end of 2020, to approximately 2.6 million by the end of 2022. In 2021

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Citizens Advice found that 81 percent of people with NRPF were behind on at least one essential bill – four times the rate of the general population. Almost a quarter already could not afford to heat their homes, and a fifth had experienced homelessness or housing insecurity.

Conference believes that, social security, public services and all measures to protect against poverty must be extended equally to everyone who lives in this country. Conference welcomes hard-won campaign victories including the extension of free school meals to children of families with NRPF, upon which we can build."

Add new point 8):

"8) Campaign to scrap "No Recourse to Public Funds" policies and instead extend to all residents (including migrants and asylum applicants) day-one equal access to work, social security and universal free childcare, to be paid for by taxing the rich and big business."

Camden

34. Tackling Child Poverty

Conference notes that most workers in the UK continue to face falling living standards due to the ongoing cost of living crisis.

Conference is appalled that this continues to manifest itself in ever growing levels of food and fuel poverty, as well as larger numbers of homeless people.

Conference believes that the most glaring example of how this is affecting the population lies in the escalating levels of child poverty.

Conference notes with dismay the fact that in the world's fifth richest country there are four million children living in poverty. There have also been reports of thousands of babies and toddlers falling sick because they live in damp homes. And UNISON members in schools report having to regularly buy food and uniforms for the children they work with.

Conference is particularly alarmed that two thirds of children in poverty have at least one parent in employment, which shows the failure of pay levels to keep pace with inflation in recent months and years.

Conference recognises that the union has worked with a wide range of campaigning groups challenging child poverty across all regions. Conference welcomes UNISON's recent affiliation to Let's End Poverty, a growing movement of communities, charities and businesses seeking a UK where poverty does not hold anyone down.

Conference notes that Northern Ireland remains without a cross-governmental Anti-Poverty Strategy based on objective need, despite the legal obligation to produce such a strategy. Conference supports our Northern Ireland region's ongoing campaign, alongside the trade union movement and wider civic society, for a comprehensive Anti-Poverty Strategy to be a priority for the new Executive.

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Conference believes it is essential that we mobilise in each community to make ending poverty a top priority for local politicians, devolved Governments and the UK government.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign for urgent measures to eradicate child poverty through higher incomes and proper living standards, such as against the two-child limit;
- 2) Continue working for decent pay rises across the public, community and private sectors as part of the campaign to improve our members' standard of living;
- 3) Work with community groups and coalitions such as Let's End Poverty and to battle the scourge of child poverty;
- 4) Support devolved regions in their ongoing campaign activities against child poverty, such as the Northern Ireland region's campaign for universal, nutritious, free school meals for all.

Northern Health

34.1

After eighth paragraph and before "Conference therefore calls on...." add new paragraphs:

"No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF) and related policies deny migrant workers equal access to the safety net of social security and social housing. Residents subject to immigration control are also excluded from significant elements of the existing public support package for childcare. The Migration Observatory estimates that the number of people subject to NRPF has sky rocketed from approximately 1.5 million at the end of 2020, to approximately 2.6 million by the end of 2022. In 2021 Citizens Advice found that 81 percent of people with NRPF were behind on at least one essential bill – four times the rate of the general population. Almost a quarter already could not afford to heat their homes, and a fifth had experienced homelessness or housing insecurity.

Conference believes that, social security, public services and all measures to protect against poverty must be extended equally to everyone who lives in this country. Conference welcomes hard-won campaign victories including the extension of free school meals to children of families with NRPF, upon which we can build."

Add new action point 5):

" 5) Campaign to scrap "No Recourse to Public Funds" policies and instead extend to all residents (including migrants and asylum applicants) day-one equal access to work, social security and universal free childcare, to be paid for by taxing the rich and big business."

Camden

35. Time to End Poverty in the UK

Conference believes it is a moral outrage that poverty is allowed to grow and fester in the UK. Serious hardship is no longer a rare occurrence with the costs of living

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rising, housing costs out of control, pay stagnating and public services cut to the bone.

Conference is deeply disturbed by the findings of research by the End Child Poverty Coalition showing that the West Midlands is the UK's child poverty capital with a third of children below the breadline. The Tory government has driven the UK's economy into the ground, and it is ordinary people paying the price.

The research shows that working full time is not enough to protect households from struggling, and working more hours is not a solution anymore. Conference believes we have to make work pay by increasing the minimum wage and giving public service workers a proper pay rise. Conference also believes the welfare safety net is broken. The two child cap needs to be scrapped and our welfare system must be reformed to offer an effective safety net for those in need.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Make ending poverty a key UNISON campaign, calling for higher pay, and end to the cost of living crisis and reform to benefits so no one falls through the gaps;
- 2) Campaign for universal free school meals so children are not going to school hungry;
- 3) Champion the Labour party's New Deal for Working People and do all it can to implement the measures in there as soon as possible so that workers have better pay and better conditions;
- 4) Call for significant increases to the minimum wage, to at least £15 per hour;
- 5) Campaign for universal free childcare so parents can go back to work and children from deprived backgrounds can access the benefits of early education;
- 6) Call for the two child limit to be scrapped;
- 7) Encourage every region to affiliate to Let's End Poverty, a national movement united behind a vision for a future where poverty doesn't exist in the UK.

Staffordshire Community Health

35.1

Add after the third paragraph and before "Conference calls .." add new text:

"No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF) and related policies deny migrant workers equal access to the safety net of social security and social housing. Residents subject to immigration control are also excluded from significant elements of the existing public support package for childcare. The Migration Observatory estimates that the number of people subject to NRPF has sky rocketed from approximately 1.5 million at the end of 2020, to approximately 2.6 million by the end of 2022. In 2021 Citizens Advice found that 81 percent of people with NRPF were behind on at least one essential bill – four times the rate of the general population. Almost a quarter already could not afford to heat their homes, and a fifth had experienced homelessness or housing insecurity.

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Conference believes that, social security, public services and all measures to protect against poverty must be extended equally to everyone who lives in this country. Conference welcomes hard-won campaign victories including the extension of free school meals to children of families with NRPF, upon which we can build."

Add new action point 8):

"8) Campaign to scrap "No Recourse to Public Funds" policies and instead extend to all residents (including migrants and asylum applicants) day-one equal access to work, social security and universal free childcare, to be paid for by taxing the rich and big business."

Camden

36. The Cost of Living Crisis and New Mothers

Conference is shocked to read in Maternity Action's new report, "A Perfect Storm", that mothers are having to choose between: feeding themselves or feeding their families, feeding their families or heating their homes. The report, based on survey responses from nearly 1,500 women, found that 71 percent of women worried a lot about money while pregnant or on maternity leave. Nearly 60 percent had to return to work earlier than they wanted to, and before they were physically or emotionally ready, because they simply could not afford to remain on maternity leave for their full entitlement period. This prevents many women from continuing to breastfeed because they are unable to combine this with returning to work.

Current maternity and parental statutory pay equates to less than half of the National Living Wage. The sudden drop in income faced by women on maternity leave is causing hardship, distress, and poor mental health all of which have been shown to impact negatively not only on the women themselves but also on their babies' development.

Migrant and asylum-seeking mothers, already at high risk of poverty and destitution, have faced increasing restrictions to their entitlements to benefits and services. Benefits such as Universal Credit, Sure Start Maternity Grant and Best Start Grant are largely restricted to those with settled status. This leaves women facing extreme financial hardship at a time when they most need support.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to campaign and support:

- 1) All Branches, Equalities, and Women's officers, with information and resources to promote awareness of the impact of the cost of living crisis on pregnant women and new mothers;
- 2) Maternity Action's campaign calling for the government to:
 - a) Raise maternity payments and expand eligibility;
 - b) Support women to access entitlements and remain in work;
 - c) Improve support for asylum seeking and migrant women.

Suffolk Area Health

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37. Minimum Wage

One Minimum Wage fits all.

Conference, the National Minimum Wage Act 1998 established different minimum wage rates for workers based on age groups. Meaning currently (at the time of writing) if you are under 23 the minimum wage you are entitled to will be less than colleagues 23 and over. Worse still, the younger you are the wider the differential in your hourly rate.

From April 2024, workers aged 21 and over will be entitled to the National Living Wage but the age-based disparity for those under 21 is stark with the hourly rates as follows:

- 21 and over: £11.44
- 18 to 20: £8.60
- Under 18: £6.40
- Apprentice: £6.40.

Conference, the existence of age based minimum wage rates perpetuates unfairness and reinforces discriminatory practice in the workplace, as workers are not compensated equally for their labour and skills. Paying workers in such a way suggests that your productivity and success is defined by age, when we know this simply is not the case.

Conference, our personal circumstances, responsibilities, and our living costs are not determined by our age and so age-based minimum wage rates will only perpetuate poverty among younger workers and exacerbate financial hardship limiting their ability to meet basic needs.

UNISON's evidence to the Low Pay Commission in 2023 highlighted that paying people of different ages, who are doing exactly the same job, a different wage is a blatant injustice which costs the employer in terms of retention, morale and motivation of young staff.

Conference, age based minimum wage rates should have no place in our society, and not only should there be one rate of minimum wage suitable for all workers regardless of age, but this should be set at the Real Living Wage.

Conference, we ask the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with Labour Link and Labour MPs to lobby the government to commit to the abolishment of age based minimum wage rates and ensure that Labour continues to prioritise this when in government;
- 2) Work with the relevant structures in our union to keep members informed about this campaign.

South Tyneside Local Government

38. Campaign to Increase Mileage Rates

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Conference is fed up with being left out of pocket for fuel, insurance and other costs when having to use a car to work. Thousands of workers have to drive to do their jobs, but mileage rates have not kept up with the costs of driving. Staff are essentially subsidising their employees every time they make home visits, travel between offices, make site visits, drive to environmental inspections or provide health care in the community.

This can add up to thousands per year, leaving workers out of pocket just for doing their jobs. For example, UNISON's report, "Driven out of work", shows that the average public service worker who drives two hours per day is losing more than £6000 per year because they are not reimbursed for the actual cost of driving.

Conference highlights that the biggest costs are often passed onto those least able to afford them. UNISON's research on mileage rates shows that public service workers required to do a car for their job, and therefore left out of pocket by out of date mileage rates, earn on average just £22,499, significantly below the UK average. Conference is concerned that the costs of working are pushing essential workers into financial hardship and poverty.

Conference believes that it is wrong for employers to pass costs onto their staff. Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to campaign for HMRC to increase mileage rates;
- 2) Develop campaign materials to support branches to campaign for higher mileage rates;
- 3) Write to the Treasury making the case for higher mileage rates and encourage service group executives to share the letter with employers;
- 4) Work where possible with service groups, Labour Link and the Campaign Fund to call for a change to the law that prevents employers from passing on essential workplace costs to their staff and ensures mileage rates always reflect the real cost of driving;
- 5) Undertake research into other areas that workers are left out of pocket for workplace essentials such as uniforms, training, car parking, criminal records checks, accreditations, travel time and work shadowing.

Suffolk County

38.1

In the action points:

- 1) after "increase mileage rates" insert "for cycling and vehicles and the introduction of walking mileage rates;"
- 2) after "Develop campaign materials to support branches to campaign for higher mileage rates" add "for cycling and vehicles along with the introduction of rates for walking"

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3) after "Write to the Treasury making the case for higher mileage rates" insert "for cycling and the introduction of a walking rates" before "and encourage service group executives to share the letter with employers;"

4) delete the word "driving" at the end and replace with "travel and transport;"

5) after "Undertake research into other areas that workers are left out of pocket for workplace essentials such as uniforms, training, car parking" insert "travel and transport," before "criminal records checks, accreditations, travel time and work shadowing."

Sefton Local Government

39. Domestic Abuse: Access for All

Conference is appalled that two women are killed each week from domestic abuse and many women and children are stuck in abusive situations due to the fact that they cannot access a refuge space.

The reduction in refuge provision for women and children throughout the UK is not only adding to the death of women and children each week it is also creating access problems for women and children.

It is not right that a woman should have to give up her employment to be able to access a safe space in refuge. This is due to the high supported accommodation costs which leaves it an unaffordable choice for women and children in abusive situations. Whilst housing benefit covers some of the cost if you are working this can still leave a large sum of rent for the refuge space to be paid.

It is also not right that due to cuts, women and their children sometimes have to move across the whole of the UK to access refuge spaces and many employers are reluctant to keep jobs open for staff unless they are a national company that can move staff. This leaves the woman with no other option but to access benefits when they should be able to continue to work whilst in a place of safety. Whilst this is sometimes needed for safety reasons, this is not always the case.

A woman should not have to give up her home or her employment due to abuse, there should be funding available to ensure that a woman and her children can be safe and be able to remain in their employment.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Challenge the government on the domestic abuse issue and push for access for all;
- 2) Set up a campaign about 'Access for all' in refuges, challenging the equality of provision for all regardless of income or status;
- 3) Inform and encourage regions and branches to talk to and challenge their own Local Authority, supported housing provision within the local authority to provide funding for refuge spaces for working women to access;
- 4) Encourage branches to write to their Local MP's/MS's/MSP's to push for funding to be provided for working women in refuge.

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National Women's Committee

39.1

Add new second paragraph as follows:

"Conference is further concerned about the number of disabled people, including disabled women and children, who experience domestic abuse and violence. According to Office of National Statistics (ONS) data one in seven disabled adults (14.3 percent) experience domestic violence or abuse compared to 5.1 percent of non-disabled people. While 17.9 percent of disabled women and 9.2 percent of disabled men report experiencing domestic abuse or violence, we know that the actual numbers are likely to be much higher as disabled people are less likely to report the abuse as they often rely on the perpetrators to survive. Disabled people also experience abuse for 50 percent longer before they tell anyone. And even when they do report it, more often than not, they will have nowhere to go. Just one percent of women's refuges are fully accessible for disabled women and there are no accessible refuges for disabled men who experience domestic abuse."

Add new action point 3) that reads:

"3) Work with National Disabled Members Committee and Labour Link to raise awareness of the lack of accessible domestic violence services for disabled people and campaign for funding to help domestic violence refuges to be made accessible;"

Renumber the remaining action points.

National Disabled Members' Committee

39.2

Add new point 5) as follows:

"5) Work with service groups on bargaining support for securing access to workplace paid domestic abuse leave."

National Executive Council

40. Zane's Law

Conference notes that current UK regulations with regard to toxic waste disposal and the danger to human life, to our environment and to the planet as a whole, from both historic landfill sites and currently approved landfill sites operating the 'dry tomb' principle, are dangerously inadequate. Especially so, in the face of climate breakdown, with rising sea levels, increased rainfall, and flooding.

Over the last 30 years, successive UK governments have watered down European legislation on contaminated land to favour politically connected land-owning and developer lobbies over their responsibility to the environment and to life on Planet Earth.

At the 51st regular session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva (Sept/Oct 2022), a proposal to enact a human right to a clean environment was tabled for discussion, to include a mandate for strong action on contaminated land. Only the UK and the USA declined to sign up to this vitally important measure.

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In 2014, seven year old Zane Gbangbola died, and his father was paralysed with a diagnosis of hydrogen cyanide (HCN) poisoning, during catastrophic flooding in the UK. Flood water passing through a historic landfill site, known to the authorities to contain toxic gasses, carried Hydrogen Cyanide gas into Zane's home, detected at high levels by the Fire and Rescue Services and Specialist HAZMAT teams. The storms that resulted in flooding across the country were the first stated by a UK Prime Minister as being caused by Climate Change.

Following an emergency COBRA meeting, held on the day Zane died, David Cameron's government deliberately spun this tragic event as a 'carbon monoxide poisoning' to cover up the facts known at the time. This 'official' version would be the determination of Zane's long delayed Inquest, at which no information held by public agencies about multiple, local, contaminated landfill sites was deemed worthy of consideration by the Coroner. An Inquest that further stripped Zane of his Human Rights Act (HRA) rights under Article 2, removing rights of investigation into his death. Zane was denied a Jury, and Legal Aid for legal representation was also denied, witnesses and evidence were also denied. The BBC TV News further exposed Hydrogen Cyanide was detected multiple times, there was no carbon monoxide, and there was 'political pressure' to determine carbon monoxide; the BBC referenced Public Health England FOI's which further highlighted that the local hospital was overwhelmed with unwell people.

'Zane's Law' proposes measures to begin to address the crisis of contaminated land in the UK. Publicly launched at COP26 by Zane's parents and Natalie Bennett at a Truth and Justice event, hosted by Jeremy Corbyn, Natalie has since been promoting 'Zane's Law' in the House of Lords.

British TV and Media are increasingly reporting communities injured by living in proximity to landfill, this is a ticking time bomb international communities are addressing. Just this year, ten years since Zane's death, the family's house was once again flooded with overspill water from the unregulated landfill site behind their home.

Conference fully supports the Truth About Zane Campaign's call for 'Zane's Law' which, in line with the Environment Act 2010, would require:

- 1) That every local authority must keep a full, regularly updated register of land that may be contaminated;
- 2) That these registers of land be accessible and available for inspection by the general public;
- 3) That local authorities be responsible for fully inspecting any land registered that may be contaminated and remediating it if necessary;
- 4) That local authorities be responsible for inspecting previously closed landfill sites and remediating them if necessary;
- 5) That the government take responsibility for providing the necessary funds for Local Authorities to meet these new requirements.

We call on the National Executive Council to:

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- a) Consider awarding Zane's parents honorary life membership of UNISON;
- b) Affiliate to the Truth About Zane campaign;
- c) Publicly support the call for an independent panel inquiry into the death of Zane Gbangbola;
- d) Publicly support the call for Zane's Law to be adopted into statute.

*South East Region
Surrey County*

41. Justice for the Victims of the Windrush Scandal

Conference remains extremely concerned about the UK government's approach to providing redress for the victims of the Windrush scandal.

Conference notes the findings of the Windrush Lessons Learned Review led by Wendy Williams which concluded that the UK Home Office had shown "ignorance and thoughtlessness" on race throughout the scandal, that immigration regulations were tightened "with complete disregard for the Windrush generation" and that officials had made "irrational" demands for multiple documents to establish residency rights.

While the government initially confirmed an action plan to deal with the 30 recommendations from the inquiry, Conference is appalled that in 2023 the then home secretary, Suella Braverman, decided to abandon several of these commitments, including strengthening the powers of the immigration watchdog and running reconciliation events with Windrush families.

Conference therefore congratulates UNISON for securing the right to join the judicial review of the government's decision to renege on these inquiry recommendations, working alongside members of the Windrush generation.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Keep up its pressure on the government to deliver proper compensation and other forms of redress for the Windrush generation;
- 2) Continue to fight against the racism experienced by members of the Windrush generation and UNISON members working across our public services;
- 3) Highlight wherever possible the central role that the Windrush generation played in helping to build the UK welfare state after 1945 and the vital part that migrant workers continue to play in keeping our essential services running.

North Wales Health

42. Justice for Workers Suffering from Long Covid

We call on the National Executive Council:

- 1) To develop and lead an urgent campaign to ensure our members suffering Long Covid are able to access meaningful compensation for the loss of their employment;

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- 2) To develop and lead an urgent campaign to ensure members suffering Long Covid can fairly access ill health retirement through their pension schemes;
- 3) To ensure this matter is clearly incorporated in to UNISON's broader work on the various Covid public inquiries;
- 4) To develop and share an updated guide for branches on representing members with Long Covid.

Staff working in front services throughout Covid made and continue to make huge sacrifices to deliver essential services. In doing so they experience higher exposure to the Covid 19 virus, while others in society were able to follow strict lockdown rules designed to protect them and reduce exposure to the virus. We are painfully aware of members, friends and colleagues who died and suffered serious illness working on the frontline of the pandemic.

Many thousands of front line workers continue to suffer from Long Covid following infection in the workplace. Increasing numbers of these workers have faced capability processes following prolonged illnesses, and many have seen their contracts terminated or have taken ill-health retirement, due to the continuing impact on their health and ability to work.

Due to the inadequacy of our laws around personal injury, industrial injury and the particular way Covid 19 is transmitted, many members impacted by Long Covid have been left without a clear route to compensation for the loss of their health and employment. Workers seeking ill-health retirement have struggled to access pension benefits, due to a lack of fair and consistent treatment of Long Covid cases when placed against pension scheme criteria.

We must not allow the sacrifices and courage of these workers to be forgotten, and we must support them when they call for justice.

NHS Glasgow Clyde and CVS

42.1

Delete point 1) and replace with:

“1) Continue to highlight the issues facing our members with Long Covid at the UK Covid 19 Inquiry, including needing urgent routes to claim compensation for loss of employment and to support branches to raise these issues with employers;”

National Executive Council

Public Services

43. More Powers and Funding for Local Services

Local government funding is in a dire state. Council budgets are precarious with many local authorities effectively bankrupt and many more on the brink. As demand for services increases, central government grants have dropped by 40% in real terms between 2009/10 and 2019/20, and despite temporary COVID funding, grants have continued to decline. UNISON freedom of information requests show that councils across England, Scotland and Wales have a collective funding shortfall of £4 billion.

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Conference notes that the impact of these cuts has not been felt equally everywhere. The Prime Minister himself boasted about changing the funding formulas to take money out of deprived urban areas and give it to wealthy towns instead. Institute for Government research proves this to be true: cuts have fallen more heavily in the more disadvantaged areas.

Conference notes that:

- 1) Councils in the North East have been disproportionately damaged by austerity, with a hole in local government finances across the North East exceeding £133 million;
- 2) The funding attached to proposed devolution deals, including the North East deal, does not fill the gaps left by the government's austerity programme;
- 3) 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;
- 4) 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 is clear: essential services cannot run on thin air. It is time to bring in genuinely needs based funding now to avert the looming crisis in councils and communities across the country.

Conference believes that local government needs the funding and powers to be able to invest in public services, create good local jobs, tackle the climate crisis and grow their local economy. This means needs based funding, so that people can access services when they need them, councils can repair the damage wrought by fourteen years of austerity and money can go into proactive and preventative work to improve lives and strengthen communities. This also means more and better devolution. Conference believes devolution must be bottom-up, not negotiated in backrooms and behind closed doors. Devolution should draw power from the centre, not reduce the power of local communities or force regions to compete with each other for funding.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Campaign against harmful cuts to councils in the North East and across the UK;
- b) Write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up to raise UNISON's urgent concerns about local government finances;
- c) Work with the TUC, the WTUC, the STUC and the 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) Support regions and branches in England to engage in local discussions on devolution deals and share resources for activists to use for local campaigns.

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Northern Region

44. Local Government Financial Crisis a Broken System

In recent reports, almost one in five councils across England are in extreme financial crisis with Chief Finance Officers likely to need to issue Section 114 notices due to the lack of funding to keep services running.

The Local Government Association estimates councils across England will face a £4 billion funding gap over the coming two years. This is an increase on UNISON "Save our Services" bulletins which projected a funding gap of £1 billion in 2023/24.

The Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (LUHC) Committee published a report calling for the government to fix the £4 billion hole in council funding arrangements for 2024/25 and reported the risk of further councils in England facing bankruptcy. The report states "there is an out of control financial crisis in local councils across England".

Since 2010 austerity has seen council funding massively cut by the Tories, with some authorities losing over 80 percent of the funding - along with a decrease in workforce and the delivery of public services this has left many councils in utter disarray.

We are constantly told that there is not enough money for public services, but the pandemic showed that the Tories could spend billions on dodgy PPE contracts and track and trace systems. This meant that some of their friends and families got rich quick whilst working class people faced cuts and shortages. The money has always been there in society for properly funded public services, but we need the political will too.

Financial pressures, cuts, increase in demand, costs of service provision, energy costs and more have taken their toll on both the quantity and quality of the public services our members can deliver. The cost of living crisis in more recent years has led to an increased demand in children and adult social care and has seen rising homelessness, along with the impact of inflation and the cost of services.

The costs involved in the delivery of services for children and young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) and home school transport in particular have increased. The government needs a full review of the education, health and care (EHC) plan system and finances to ensure that all children and young people with SEND have access to the services they need.

Well-run councils are stretched beyond breaking point and if the funding gap continues it will only get worse and councils will have no option but to either consider plugging the gap with a capitalisation loan, using significant reserves or effectively go bust.

Therefore, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to develop and adopt the following recommendations as part of a campaign for increased local government funding:

- 1) A national coordinated campaign with sister unions to call on Local Government Association regional bodies to develop a public focus on a fair funding formula;

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- 2) To build and develop a campaign on the long-term impact of funding across all local authorities and the communities that rely on their services;
- 3) To organise and coordinate a national demonstration and rally to coincide with the Autumn Statement, jointly led by councillors, trade unions, service users and community groups;
- 4) To develop more resources for branches around the impact of Section 114 Orders, capitalisation orders and the potential support in negotiating strategies.;
- 5) Work with the NEC, Labour Link and all other relevant bodies in UNISON to ensure all avenues to lobby LGA are followed;
- 6) Increase pressure on central government through UNISON campaigns for a fairer funding formula across local government;
- 7) Develop a coordinated media campaign across the union bringing branches together.

Havering

44.1

In point 3) delete “to coincide with the Autumn Statement” and add after “national demonstration” the words: “in the Autumn on a Saturday”

National Executive Council

45. Cuts and Funding

Conference is appalled at the ongoing funding crisis in local government, which is now resulting in an existential threat to the future of many councils across the UK. Extensive UNISON research from last autumn revealed that councils across the UK were facing a funding shortfall of £3.56billion in 2024/25 and a cumulative funding gap of just over £7billion for 2025/26. On a regional basis, Scottish councils collectively faced the largest funding gap per head of population at £121, followed by Cymru/Wales at £112 per person.

A combination of extreme levels of funding cuts from central government and growing demand for a range of services are the heart of this seemingly never-ending crisis. Well over 30 councils from across England, Wales and Scotland have indicated that they are getting worryingly close to declaring effective bankruptcy. This is on top of the growing number of councils that have recently issued section 114 such as Nottingham and Birmingham.

According to the Institute for Government, local council ‘spending power’ in England, the amount of money authorities have available to spend from government grants, council tax and business rates, fell by 17.5 percent between 2009/10 and 2019/20, before partially recovering. However, in 2021/22 it was still 10.2 percent below 2009/10 levels. The fall in spending power is largely because of reductions in central government grants. These grants were cut by 40 percent in real terms between 2009/10 and 2019/20, from £46.5billion to £28.0billion (2023/24 prices). This downward trend was reversed in 2020/21 and 2021/22 as central government made more grant funding available to local government in response to the pressures of the

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pandemic. Even including Covid grants, the fall in grant income was still 21 percent in real terms between 2009/10 and 2021/22; without, the fall was 31 percent.

A number of councils have highlighted that they are likely to join councils like Birmingham and Nottingham in issuing section 114 notices: including Somerset, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, Bradford, Middlesbrough, Oxfordshire, Hampshire and Durham. A new piece of analysis by Grant Thornton has said that 20 percent of councils are at risk of financial failure within 12 months without additional income or more spending cuts. That figure increases to 25% by the end of next year and rises to 40 percent of all councils within the next 5 years. Well over 30 councils from across England, Wales and Scotland have indicated that they are getting worryingly close to declaring effective bankruptcy.

The government has powers to introduce Commissioners into Local Authorities that issue Section 114. Such Commissioners can take decision making authority or under the threat of doing so enforce savage cuts in local authority spending.

In Birmingham eight Commissioners were appointed for five years and are paid £1,100 a day (the Lead Commissioner £1,200) for a minimum of three days per week, plus expenses such hotel accommodation. All paid for by Birmingham city Council.

Under pressure from the Commissioners Birmingham Council agreed to cuts of over £300 million over two years slashing Adult and Children Services, Youth Services, Libraries and Homeless Services and other services to vulnerable citizens. These cuts include nearly 850 redundancies and deleting hundreds more of vacant posts.

The cuts will also impact on the Health Service and the Community and Voluntary sector putting them under greater pressure.

Conference calls on the National Executive to:

- 1) Campaign strongly for proper recognition of local government services, calling for the investment needed to provide services and safeguard jobs, an end to the austerity politics which cause cuts to services, job and pay, and for local government funding to be significantly increased alongside a fairer system for distributing the funds and longer term settlements;
- 2) Generate a range of political activity in parliaments across the UK calling for more funding for council services, working with Labour Link to impress upon the need for any future Labour Government in Westminster to look to rebuild the important range of public services that councils provide back towards 2010 levels;
- 3) Campaign against using Commissioner's to replace decision making by local councils;
- 4) Organise a national demonstration in London on a Saturday in the autumn of 2024 to call for fair and restored funding for local government.

Birmingham

45.1

Add new point 5):

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“5) Work with Labour Link to demand that the incoming Labour Government immediately underwrite the debt incurred by Councils resisting cuts and fully fund Local Government.”

National Executive Council

46. GIVEITBACK: A Unique Opportunity to Fight Back Against Cuts to Local Jobs and Services

Conference notes that 13 years of austerity policies and funding cuts has left local government in existential crisis, with dozens of councils either declaring bankruptcy or in danger of not being able to present balanced budgets. Conference also notes that these cuts and policies have knock on affects across all public service providers, particularly in health, the NHS, and the charitable and voluntary sectors.

To fight back against this steady and disastrous decline, we need the public to not only fully understand the tragedy of what they have already lost in terms of local jobs and services – but also to feel they have the agency and motivation to join the fight back. To achieve this we need actions that grab people’s attention, are innovative and bold, and where we aren’t afraid to engage with people’s emotions and beliefs.

Having thriving residents that engage with the local economy and culture requires decent public services and public service workers who are paid enough to live with dignity. By joining their voices with local councils, businesses and employers, community groups, religious leaders, campaign groups and neighbourhoods, UNISON branches can show that the fight for public services is one that everyone and every sector has a stake in.

With £20,000 of funding from UNISON’s National Campaign Fund Brighton and Hove UNISON is doing just that by delivering a radical local action called Give It Back Brighton and Hove. Through the production of a life sized graveyard installation, where each gravestone marks a local service or job lost because of council funding cuts, we are making local people aware of what has been taken from them in a way that is impossible to ignore. GIVEITBACK then capitalises on this engagement by encouraging people to add their signature to an open letter to government, spread the word through social media networks, and share their ideas for how their city could be transformed if the money taken from local budgets by government (in Brighton and Hove’s case, over £110m) was returned.

One of the key outputs of GIVEITBACK is the production of a toolkit which other branches can use in partnership with their local authority and communities to run their own local graveyard actions. Just imagine the incredible impact that could be made by graveyard installations being produced up and down the country, causing conversations on social media, provoking debate and raising awareness in a completely new way. Imagine, too, a future opportunity to bring these graveyards together and demonstrate in the most stark and powerful way, what we have lost collectively through over a decade of contempt for local government and its workers.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to support this motion and work with regional committees and the national campaign and press teams to:

- 1) Embed GIVEITBACK as a template for direct action as part of UNISON’s national Save Our Services Campaign;

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- 2) Share the GIVEITBACK toolkit produced by Brighton and Hove UNISON And Arke Marketing Agency with branches so they can express an interest in joining a national network of actions;
- 3) Give comms and press support to help those branches that carry out GIVEITBACK actions as part of the Save Our Services to make sure their actions are amplified;
- 4) Give this immediate priority as the next general election is likely to be a key focus for actions and many more councils will declare bankruptcy if funding is not substantially improved in time for 2025/26 budget setting.

The role of trade unions is not to mitigate the distressing effects of the managed decline of local government but to organise and fight so that local government can once again be focussed on the delivery of excellent and comprehensive public services and excellent jobs. GIVEITBACK installations and actions have the potential to do just that. Please support this motion.

Brighton and Hove Unitary

47. Public Service Investment

Conference notes the devastating impact that austerity has had and continues to have on public services right across the UK.

Conference asserts that such disinvestment harms both workers and service users, and that damaging funding decisions made in Westminster have devastating consequences for communities in each of the UK nations.

For example, austerity has done huge harm to our local council services and the NHS. The UK has fallen significantly down international league tables when it comes to overall investment, the number of hospital beds available and the size of key parts of the healthcare workforce.

Conference is particularly alarmed at the plans signalled by the Westminster government's most recent autumn statement that yet another round of painful cuts is on the way.

Conference notes that this comes despite a growing body of research evidence on the damage that is being done to our services and our population by the austerity that began after the 2010 general election.

Conference is clear that our local councils, hospitals, social care services, schools and colleges have all been hugely affected by cuts and they cannot take any more.

We have seen in the past year that many of our school buildings are in a state of disrepair and crucial parts of the NHS estate require urgent capital investment.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Highlight the ongoing damage being done to public services across the UK as a result of funding decisions taken by the Westminster government;

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- 2) Work with UNISON service groups and other parts of the union to illustrate the impact of austerity and cuts on the workforce and the services they deliver;
- 3) Continue campaigning for increased investment in our essential services that support patients, pupils and other service users;
- 4) Emphasise the desperate need for improved capital spending to improve UK public service building and infrastructure.

Ceredigion County

47.1

Amend point 4) to read:

"4) Emphasise the desperate need for improved capital spending to create cleaner, greener and healthier UK public service buildings along with essential infrastructure."

Sefton Local Government

48. Procurement and Outsourcing

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 Act, 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 Act are far reaching and indicate the type of country that Tories want to create.

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.

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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 this also has challenges if those staff going back ‘in house’ retain poorer terms and conditions than colleagues.

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) To work with the National Private Contractors Forum (NPCF) to build our activist capacity in outsourced employers;
- 4) To work with the National Private Contractors' Forum to target contractors for local and/or national recognition drives;
- 5) Support our service groups and branches make annual pay claims for contracted staff;
- 6) Support our service groups and branches make claims for improved sick pay, pensions and annual leave;
- 7) Be aware of procurement developments in the devolved nations.

Private Contractors National Forum

48.1

Add new action point 8):

"8) Run alongside these actions a campaign to bring privately contracted services back in house."

Camden

49. Outsourcing and Procurement

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Conference notes that decades of relentless outsourcing has resulted in the wholesale transfer of hundreds of thousands of jobs from local councils, NHS trusts, police authorities, universities, colleges, schools and utility services to external providers, to the private sector and 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 normally 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 their being able to offer a cheaper tender in order to win contracts and take profit out of the public sector.

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, terms and conditions are eroded, with many staff finding themselves being forced 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 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 also has a chilling effect on the local economy. The dots are not 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, amongst many others, Barts Health, Kings College London and Neath 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 worst 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.

Firstly, the government has introduced a Procurement Act 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 re-

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started 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.

Thirdly, 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. The Welsh Government published its Insourcing Toolkit in December 2022.

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

Conference agrees that it is 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;
- 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.

Isle of Wight Local Government

50. Childcare

Conference notes that according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the UK has the most expensive childcare and early years education in the developed world. Analysis of government data from 2018 by Save the Children 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, the pay gap will remain stubbornly wide,

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and that women's work will often be part-time and low paid to fit around caring commitments or unable to afford or access childcare and so give up paid work.

The cost of living crisis and reduction in wages and benefits have hit women and children the hardest, with women having to make the choice between skipping meals or buying their children's school uniform. Conference is concerned that childcare costs on top of rising household bills are putting working parents, but particularly women, in an impossible position.

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.

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 Wales, and over half a parent's weekly pay in Scotland.

Childcare is becoming more expensive for families, yet wages for childcare workers remain stubbornly low, additional childcare places have not been created, and many settings struggle to stay open. Despite this, there is a huge amount of money in the sector. There were £57 million worth of transactions in 2021, an increase of 54 percent on 2020 and more than 7 times more than 2019 according to Knight Frank.

In the spring budget of 2023 the government announced a substantial increase in the offer of free places in early education in England as well as an expansion of wrap around school childcare. The consequence of this has the potential to have make childcare more affordable to many thousands of working parents, but there a number of very serious flaws and inequalities with the policies both for children and families using the new funded entitlements and for those working in early years and childcare.

The contribution made by the government to pay for pre-school childcare is estimated to increase from 50 percent to 80percent by 2025 following the expansion. But the major beneficiaries of these changes may be those already using childcare, and households who are not working, where one partner does not work or not working enough will not be eligible for this new entitlement meanwhile households will a joint income of up to £200,000 can benefit.

Disadvantaged and low incomes families and communities will benefit least from these reforms and the risk is creating an even greater attainment gap between poorer and wealthier families.

Conference notes that although the government responded to high profile campaigning including by UNISON in the run up to the 2023 Budget by increasing eligibility for 'free' early years childcare and education hours, significant increase in provision requires expansion of the early education and childcare workforce and development of the skills and experience of workers.

The childcare/early years sector remains in crisis. Conference is concerned that recent research from the University of Leeds "Retention and return: delivering the expansion of early years entitlement in England", reported that around half (48 percent) of nursery respondents are considering quitting their job in the next 12 months and even more nursery staff (57 percent) are considering leaving the early

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years sector altogether. The research also showed that almost 50,000 new professionals will be required in 2024 and another almost 50,000 again in 2025. Yet, no political party has committed to a workforce plan.

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 believes that moves away from universalism and for a greater proportion of funding to be linked to narrow definitions of “working families” risks creating greater inequalities.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Undertake research into the impact of privatisation and private equity in the childcare market, develop policy proposals to safeguard UK childcare from financialisation, and develop proposals to boost the maintained nursery sector;
- 2) Lobby and campaign ahead of the UK General Election for an incoming new Westminster 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. Campaign too for Westminster to increase the funding available to devolved governments to invest in childcare in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- 3) For the longer term, lobby and campaign for wholesale reform of childcare/early years provision and development of a sustainable high quality early education and childcare system that provides:
 - a) Fully funded universal childcare from the point of need;
 - b) Flexible so women who want to work can and so that shift patterns are accommodated;
 - c) Good pay, terms and conditions for the staff that deliver it;
 - d) High quality education for all children;
 - e) Adequate provision for disabled children and those with special educational needs;
- 4) Work with Labour Link to ensure that reforming childcare is a key priority for the Labour party;
- 5) Consider growing our membership in early years and securing trade union recognition in more settings as part of the Organising to Win strategy;
- 6) Work with appropriate bodies within the union on demands on union recognition, collective bargaining to recognise and organise the early years and childcare work force.

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National Executive Council

50.1

Add an additional point 7):

"7) Work with the National Women's Committee on a campaign for affordable childcare to ensure that Women members' requirements for childcare are acknowledged, identified, and included as part of the work on flexibility."

National Women's Committee

51. 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 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

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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 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 percent 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;

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- 4) Campaign to keep existing children's centres open, brought back into the public sector where possible and fully funded.

*Cheshire Police
Torbay Health*

52. National Care Service Campaigning and the NHS

Conference is deeply concerned about the deteriorating state of adult social care across the UK.

In social care, Conference asserts that a toxic combination of years of chronic underfunding and an under-regulated, deeply fragmented market system are responsible for producing this prolonged crisis in the sector.

Conference notes with alarm that evidence of this crisis can be seen in the fact that hundreds of thousands of elderly and disabled people are not receiving the levels of support they need, while extractive providers continue to bleed profits from the system.

Conference notes that the crisis is also evident in the continued mistreatment of the care workforce: employment in the sector is frequently insecure and largely underpaid, often illegally so; while proper sick pay remains elusive for thousands of care workers, along with decent training and progression opportunities.

Conference is particularly concerned at the targeting of migrant workers, both in terms of the impact this will have on these workers and their families, but also the damage it will do to our health and care services, which depend on migrant workers for their survival.

Conference is unsurprised that vacancies in social care are still above 150,000 in England alone, with more than a quarter of the workforce leaving their jobs every year.

There are also huge numbers of NHS vacancies and, although the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan (for England) was finally published in 2023, it does not include social care and the chances of the NHS being able to implement it with such restricted funding are limited.

Furthermore, Conference is alarmed at the worsening state of the NHS over the past year, with ever lengthening waiting lists, widening health inequalities and an increase in reports of patients coming to harm.

Conference notes that despite adult social care contributing more than £50bn to the UK economy, it continues to be seen purely as a burden on the government purse rather than a vital part of boosting growth.

Conference therefore endorses UNISON's campaigns to highlight the importance of social care and boost its standing. The NHS remains one of the UK's most cherished institutions and Conference welcomes the union's campaigning for a national care service that would bring social care closer to parity with related services in healthcare, going beyond the short-term and piecemeal solutions repeatedly offered up by Westminster governments.

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Conference notes that such campaigning has had to take different forms in the different UK nations.

For instance, Conference notes that in Scotland the union has had to campaign against the Scottish government's deeply flawed version of a national care service, and that this work succeeded in bringing about a pause in the proposed legislation, as well as leading to controversial plans to remove statutory duties from local authorities being scrapped.

And Conference welcomes the fact that in Cymru/Wales work is progressing with the Welsh government on proposals for a pay and progression framework for the workforce, and that in December 2023 an initial implementation plan for a national care and support service was published.

Conference also congratulates the union for its "Let's Make Care Work" campaign for a national care service in England.

Conference is particularly encouraged by the Fabian Society's "Support Guaranteed" report, funded by UNISON's Campaign Fund, that seeks to lay out the detail and building blocks for a national care service.

The report outlines the need for immediate action in areas such as the workforce but also a longer-term process to build sustainable change, moving away from the current market system.

Conference notes that the report has already been influential and that its principles have been accepted by the Labour party. However, the need for a National Care Service must be a priority and not delayed until at least a second future Parliament.

On the NHS, Conference reiterates its policy from National Delegate Conference 2023 that the NHS model must be supported but that there needs to be a change away from underfunding and privatisation. And that, during an election year, these demands need to be raised louder and bolder, including with the regional and national activities outlined in motions at National Delegate Conference 2023.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to demand proper funding increases for adult social care and the NHS across the UK;
- 2) Intensify the union's campaigning against the use of profit driven providers and private equity companies in social care;
- 3) Highlight the importance of the care sector to the UK as a potential driver of economic growth;
- 4) Campaign for a credible workforce strategy, and an end to the exploitation of social care staff and the targeting of migrant workers;
- 5) Continue to make the case, with governments and opposition parties across the UK, for UNISON's version of a national care service;

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- 6) Intensify the union's campaigning for a national care service to be created within five years as part of UNISON's wider general election work;
- 7) Continue to work with other organisations in the sector who are also demanding change; and
- 8) Work with Labour Link to restate UNISON's opposition to market mechanisms and the need to prioritise the rebuilding of the NHS rather than an expansion in use of the private sector, as well as restating the union's call for vastly increased funding.

National Executive Council

52.1

At the end of sixteenth paragraph: "The report outlines the need for immediate action in areas such as the workforce but also a longer-term process to build sustainable change, moving away from the current market system." add a new sentence as follows:

"Conference also endorses the proposed launch date contained within this report for a National Care Service of 5 July 2028 (the 80th anniversary of the launch of the NHS)."

Wirral

52.2

Introduce new 3) and renumber accordingly:

"3) Campaign for all future National Care Service workers to be employed on public sector contracts with access to public sector pensions."

Mid Yorkshire Health

53. Towards a Real National Care Service

Conference notes the ongoing crisis in Social Care across the UK.

Conference further notes that the Scottish government have announced their support for a National Care Service but put forward legislation that will not deliver a national care service worthy of the name.

Conference notes "Towards a Real National Care Service" the report by Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) sponsored by UNISON Scotland.

This report builds on a previous APSE report commissioned by UNISON Cymru/Wales and outlines a model of a national care service that is not for profit and summarises the case for the direct public delivery of social care and sets out the initial steps we can take towards this. It shows why direct public service delivery is both affordable and necessary and aims to begin a serious conversation about a UK national strategy for achieving this.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

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- 1) Promote and embed the principles of the APSE report "Towards A Real National Care Service" as a starting point for further work in developing a model for the sort of national care service that we can support and the country needs throughout UNISON;
- 2) 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;
- 3) 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.

Scotland Region

53.1

In point 1) after "Towards A Real National Care Service" add the following:

"and the UNISON commissioned Fabian Society report 'Support Guaranteed'"

National Executive Council

54. National Care Service

Conference believes we can only secure the future of social care through a long term plan which would prevent new contracts being given to care providers who do not meet high standards.

Conference believes the answer to the challenges facing social care is a National Care Service.

Conference believes that will require a workforce well prepared for the care needs of today and the future. The establishment of a Fair Pay Agreement for adult social care in England, empowering social care trade unions to negotiate fair pay, terms, conditions, staff benefits, and training, would be a critical first step.

Conference further believes that care providers should be forced to demonstrate financial sustainability and responsible tax practices, value their staff, ensure all social care workers are paid fairly for what they do and deliver high quality care for service users.

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Conference calls on the National Executive Council to continue campaigning for the creation of a National Care Service based on these values which would benefit every family in the country, prioritising the social care workforce and rewarding them for their work.

North Yorkshire

55. 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;

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- b) Saving bus routes at risk of being axed;
- 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.

***Somerset Local Government and Community
South Tyneside Local Government***

56. Tory Cuts to Police Funding Harms Community Safety

A decade of Tory austerity has starved our communities of essential services, eroded the resilience of the public sector and removed vital safety nets. Long term underfunding and cuts to key public services has made communities less safe and left vulnerable people without the help they need.

Conference asserts that the most effective and least damaging way to tackle crime happens long before a crime is committed. Public services such as pre-school enrichment programmes, Sure Start family centres, addiction treatment, decent stable housing, therapeutic support, mental health services and properly resourced trauma informed support are just some of the value for money investments that can reduce crime and improve the health and potential of the nation.

Reduced capacity across public services means more work for the police, the NHS and the criminal justice system. The disastrous privatisation and centralisation of the Probation Service by the government in 2014 has left probation with a critical workloads crisis.

Conference believes policing is a vital service which is used by all sections of the community.

Conference further believes that deep cuts to the police service has led to the erosion of neighbourhood policing and the important role of the police community support officer (PCSO), key to building trust with communities and for policing by consent.

Boris Johnson's declaration to fund, nationally, an extra 20,000 officers may have appeared to be a positive step in reality it has resulted negatively on Police Staff. Police staff are the trained people behind the Police officers, they investigate the technical crimes, they do the research that enables Police Officers to make arrests. Police Staff roles are varied and their often behind the scenes work, is not seen or recognised for the value that it brings. When you make a call to the Police, the first person you talk to is very likely to be a staff member, they record details, decide on the type of response required, they will do background checks and ensure the right resource is assigned. These people are just the start of the process and are trained in depth to deal with just about every eventuality.

Due to binding targets on police officer numbers, spending on officer recruitment has meant a shortfall in funding for police staff and PCSOs, leaving police officers filling

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jobs formerly done by staff. This has been compounded by large budget deficits in forces across England and Wales and in Police Scotland. This has taken police officers away from their core crime fighting role and has led to a decimation of PCSO numbers and neighbourhood policing.

Conference notes that PCSO numbers have been significantly cut since the election of Conservative led governments in 2010. According to Home Office figures the full-time equivalent numbers of PCSOs in England have fallen by 51.8 percent between March 2010 and March 2023. This is 8,392 PCSOs.

PCSOs were introduced because police officers, by the nature of their role, are not able to spend the time in communities necessary to build long term confidence and trust. This is even more relevant today when police officer resources have been stretched to breaking point, PCSOs have kept neighbourhood policing alive. Substantial investment to rebuild the numbers of PCSOs in our communities is key to ensuring people feel safe in their neighbourhood.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Raise awareness of the impact of the loss of Police Staff jobs has on the whole of the community and campaign to highlight the risks to public safety of cuts and austerity;
- 2) Work with the Police and Justice Service group to campaign to save police staff jobs;
- 3) Campaign to restore funding to neighbourhood policing and restore the importance of the role of PCSOs and police staff;
- 4) Campaign to restore funding to youth services;
- 5) Campaign to restore the Probation Service as a community service, with local democratic oversight and management;
- 6) Continue campaigning for improved funding for mental health and an end to public health cuts, particularly in vital areas such as drug and alcohol services.

Eastern Region

57. Insource School Kitchen Staff

Conference notes:

- 1) The marketisation of providing meals in our schools means that many school kitchen staff face the prospect of TUPE transfer every few years;
- 2) That some kitchen staff are being TUPE transferred from one private provider to another, some without admitted body status into the Local Government Pension Scheme;
- 3) With concern that school kitchen staff can often find themselves removed from National Joint Council (NJC) pay, terms and conditions;

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- 4) With further concern that school kitchen staff can find themselves leaving the local government pension scheme;
- 5) With the cost-of-living crisis the provision of at least one hot nutritional meal to all school children has never been more vital.

Conference believes:

- a) School lunches should be provided for the best nutritional needs of children, not for the profit of the provider;
- b) Profits by private providers are often made at the expense of staff terms and conditions, and the quality of the meals provided;
- c) Removing the profit element from providing school meals will both help improve school meal nutritional standards and the terms on which school kitchen staff are employed;
- d) All school staff should be part of NJC pay, terms and conditions
- e) All school kitchen staff should be able to be members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- i) To conduct research into how many school kitchen staff have been removed from the LGPS and the NJC;
- ii) Campaign to ensure the insourcing of the school meals service and an abandonment of the tendering process becomes the policy of the Labour Party through working with Labour Link;
- iii) Campaign for all school kitchen staff to be directly employed by their school or local authority.

West Midlands Region

58. Restoring Funding to Fire and Rescue Services

There has been over a decade of damaging cuts in local government which has had a huge effect on fire and rescue services.

The sector in England lost 30 percent of its central funding from Westminster between 2013 and 2020. Despite small improvements in funding in the past few years, England's fire and rescue services are still short just over 1500 essential support staff, 12,000 firefighters and £300million central funding for fire and rescue services. In 2023 the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service announced £11million of cuts when they had already lost £57m of funding over the last decade. Welsh fire authorities also lost £7.5million of government grants last year, leaving services with huge budget gaps to fill.

Fire and rescue support staff are a key but often overlooked part of the fire and rescue service. Technicians, fire safety officers, driving instructors, administrators

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and many others work tirelessly alongside fire fighters and control room staff to keep businesses, communities and members of the public safe.

Years of cuts have had a major impact on fire and rescue support staff. They are often the first in line for redundancies and previous UNISON surveys have shown the majority of our members are struggling with increasing workloads and increasing levels of stress at work.

Fire and rescue services are not immune to the ongoing funding crisis in local government caused by soaring inflation and energy costs. They are in clear need of an urgent injection of funding and a government commitment to restore funding to 2010 levels in order that high quality and resilient services can still be provided to the public.

Under funding fire and rescue services through central and local government is particularly short-sighted and a false economy in the face of the impact of climate change. Fire and rescue staff are working to prevent loss of life, loss of property, and render humanitarian aid to the public through the aftermath of increasing numbers of wildfires, flooding and extreme weather. This area of work will only continue to increase as the climate crisis deepens and fire and rescue services need funding to build their resilience to meet this challenge.

As the largest trade union for fire and rescue support staff, it is essential that we campaign for their voices to be heard in the wider campaign for better funding for public services.

Conference is clear that cuts to fire and rescue services endanger the safety of all UNISON members – this is a citizenship issue.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign for the Westminster government to restore fire and rescue funding to 2010 levels;
- 2) Support the work of the Local Government Service Group Executive campaigning against fire and rescue cuts;
- 3) Raise awareness about the important work that fire and rescue support staff do within the fire and rescue service;
- 4) Support the Fire Brigades' Union's campaign for fire and rescue service funding as outlined in the Firefighter's Manifesto and explore ways to develop a stronger campaigning relationship with FBU.

Suffolk County

59. Restoring Funding to Fire and Rescue Services

There has been over a decade of damaging cuts in local government which has had a huge effect on fire and rescue services.

The sector in England lost 30% of its central funding from Westminster between 2013 and 2020. Despite small improvements in funding in the past few years, England's fire and rescue services are still short just over 1500 essential support

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staff, 12,000 firefighters and £300m central funding for fire and rescue services. In 2023 the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service announced £11m of cuts when they had already lost £57m of funding over the last decade. Welsh fire authorities also lost £7.5m of government grants last year, leaving services with huge budget gaps to fill.

Fire and rescue support staff are a key but often overlooked part of the fire and rescue service. Technicians, fire safety officers, driving instructors, administrators and many others work tirelessly alongside fire fighters and control room staff to keep businesses, communities and members of the public safe.

Years of cuts have had a major impact on fire and rescue support staff. They are often the first in line for redundancies and previous UNISON surveys have shown the majority of our members are struggling with increasing workloads and increasing levels of stress at work.

Fire and rescue services are not immune to the ongoing funding crisis in local government caused by soaring inflation and energy costs. They are in clear need of an urgent injection of funding and a government commitment to restore funding to 2010 levels in order that high quality and resilient services can still be provided to the public.

Under-funding fire and rescue services through central and local government is particularly short-sighted and a false economy in the face of the impact of climate change. Fire and rescue staff are working to prevent loss of life, loss of property, and render humanitarian aid to the public through the aftermath of increasing numbers of wildfires, flooding and extreme weather. This area of work will only continue to increase as the climate crisis deepens and fire and rescue services need funding to build their resilience to meet this challenge.

As the largest trade union for fire and rescue support staff, it is essential that we campaign for their voices to be heard in the wider campaign for better funding for public services. It is vital that all parts of the fire and rescue service work together to call on Westminster to properly fund fire and rescue services so that they are well equipped to deal with existing and foreseeable future threats to public safety.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign for the Westminster government to restore fire and rescue funding to 2010 levels;
- 2) Produce updated fire and rescue branded materials to support UNISON's campaigning against fire and rescue cuts;
- 3) Produce a report on the impact of cuts on fire and rescue support staff;
- 4) Support branches and regions to use a fire and rescue cuts campaign to recruit and organise members;
- 5) Raise awareness about the important work that fire and rescue support staff do within the fire and rescue service;

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- 6) Support the Fire Brigades' Union's campaign for fire and rescue service funding as outlined in the Firefighter's Manifesto and explore ways to develop a stronger campaigning relationship with FBU.

Norfolk County

60. Our Universities in Crisis

Conference notes:

- 1) Decades of tuition fees and marketisation imposed on higher education and those who study and work in it, has been a disaster. Higher education workers who teach, research or provide essential administrative, technical and support services have seen their pay and working conditions driven down, as have all public sector workers who have not successfully fought back to resist this onslaught;
- 2) Competition for students has created rich and poor universities, but all institutions, across all UK nations, are facing a significant decline of income, as a result the £9,250 maximum fee for undergraduates failing to keep up with inflation, and/or due to the falling value of government funding;
- 3) The government is in the process of starving universities of finances, with the more prestigious institutions now heavily reliant on astronomical fees charged to international students to subsidise other activity. Many universities are downsizing or forcing through "managed decline", with destruction of courses, research capacity and essential mental health and advice services being cut, along with the jobs of our members;
- 4) Students are running up massive debt, and in many cases, struggling to survive, working instead of studying to pay extortionate rent and living costs;
- 5) Without a significant increase of financial resources going into the sector, some universities face the very likely prospect of bankruptcy;
- 6) That is not to say that all universities are on the verge of collapse. Many are anticipating problems by trying to cut jobs and courses, making remaining staff work harder for less;
- 7) The ideology of competition between universities for students and research contracts has, in part, destroyed the principle of higher education as a public service, available to all;
- 8) Many other countries invest in education at all levels since it is recognised that the public good of a well educated population is beneficial to all. A semi privatised education system only benefits the rich with the resources to access it.

Conference believes:

- a) Higher education should be a public service, available to all and free of charge, without the duplication and waste of competition between universities;
- b) Tuition fees should be abolished, and students should receive living grants which rise with inflation;

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- c) Universities should be properly nationalised and under the democratic control of elected staff, students and the wider community.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- i) Campaign for free education at all levels, highlighting UNISON's policy of opposition to tuition fees;
- ii) Emphasise the importance of higher education and research as a public service, benefiting all of society;
- iii) Lobby current and future UK and devolved governments, through Labour Link and other appropriate channels, to fund higher education properly through general taxation across all nations.

University of Brighton

60.1

Replace point c) with:

“c) universities in England should be properly nationalised with guaranteed independence and brought under public ownership with public funding and democratic management by staff, students and wider community.”

National Executive Council

61. 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 are 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 2025 National Delegate Conference with explicit support for the public ownership of all development land, and the nationalisation of housebuilding and development companies, such that house building is directed towards housing need and not towards profitability.

Hounslow Local Government

Health

62. The NHS and the New "Insourcing"

Conference remains deeply concerned about the under funding of our health service across the UK.

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Conference notes that for patients this has meant increasing numbers are finding themselves waiting for months or even years to get the treatment they need.

Conference further notes that in different parts of the UK various approaches, often involving the private sector, are now being used to try to bring down these waits for care.

Conference notes that the latest initiative being deployed by the NHS is “insourcing”, but not insourcing that involves bringing outsourced services into the NHS. This version of “insourcing” involves a private operator being brought in to provide work on NHS premises, as a way of seeking to get extra patients treated. Conference notes that versions of this approach have already come to light in the NHS across England, Cymru/Wales and HSC (Health and Social Care) in Northern Ireland.

While the desire to provide services to patients who may be in desperate need of operations or other procedures is understandable, Conference reiterates its belief that the best way to do this is to provide proper investment for our NHS.

Conference remains resolutely of the opinion that ever-escalating waiting lists are not the fault of the NHS itself, but of years of UK government under funding. Indeed, Conference notes that the 2010s were the most austere decade in the 75 year history of the NHS.

Furthermore, Conference notes that so far little is known about the companies involved in running these operations or their employment models. So Conference is concerned to make sure that staff are not adversely affected by the use of any such models and that the quality and safety of patient care is maintained.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Reiterate UNISON’s opposition to the inappropriate use of the private sector in delivering services to NHS patients;
- 2) Establish how widespread “insourcing” is across the UK, by seeking information from the union’s English regions and UNISON Scotland, Cymru/Wales and Northern Ireland;
- 3) Work with research organisations to examine the companies involved;
- 4) Investigate the potential impact on healthcare staff of any such operations.

Down Education

Environment

63. The Climate Emergency - Why it Matters to UNISON

Trade unions are indebted to the young people across the globe whose campaigning has brought this vital issue to the top of our political and bargaining agendas.

The legally binding commitment to get public services to Net Zero by 2050 is essential but inevitably comes with increased pressures on all services to make the necessary changes - some of which are already being implemented. This will mean

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that, in the public sector, climate change adaptations and mitigations will increasingly form part of our organising and bargaining agendas.

That more than 2500 civil society organisations including Public Services International (PSI), the first global trade union movement to do so, 700 parliamentarians, 101 Nobel Laureates and 100 sub-national governments and cities around the world have endorsed the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty (FFNPT), and that a bloc of 12 countries, including major coal producing nation Colombia, are seeking a negotiating mandate for FFNPT.

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 notes that the:

- 1) The UN Secretary General has said we are in a new era of global boiling with unprecedented extreme weather impacting every part of the globe with increasing frequency;
- 2) The International Energy Agency (IEA) states that to stay below the Paris Climate Agreement of 1.5 degrees celsius fossil fuel use must reduce by 25 % this decade and we cannot develop any new fossil fuel sites;
- 3) Working class in the UK and globally are already being impacted by the terrible consequences of climate change, through loss of lives, livelihoods, food, access to water, housing and accommodation, forced migration, unbearable working conditions and an intolerable burden on emergency services;
- 4) The Tory government has done little to safeguard workers or people from the impacts of climate change and, far from it, is advancing a narrative that seeks to make a virtue of weakening its commitments;
- 5) The Labour party began an election year pledging to spend £28billion a year on green investment. However, by February this had been reduced to £15billion, with Keir Starmer saying that “fiscal rules come first”. However, there are no fiscal rules on a dead planet.

Conference recognises that UNISON has members across all public services and that all are affected directly or indirectly by climate change and that this impact will only increase over the coming years. Examples of direct service group related impacts include:

- a) Our Care Sector members - Our Care workforce is having to adapt to mitigations on transport that they can ill-afford as well as an increased workload in managing the increased health impacts on the people they care for;
- b) Our Schools and Further Education members;
- c) The costs of heating and cooling ancient school buildings is impacting on all budgets whilst in FE, climate change was a central part of this last year’s pay claim precisely because our members there are facing a huge overhaul of service

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delivery to meet the necessary skills training the government needs to mitigate climate change;

- d) Our members in the in the health service are having to manage the increasing workload from the health impacts of excess heat or pollution as well as large scale transition planning to greener ways of working;
- e) Our Energy members – National climate commitments to reduce reliance on fossil fuels will inevitably mean a transition to renewable energy sources. Our members in energy are rightly demanding a central seat in all discussions about the impacts of that transition away from fossil fuels. UNISON is clear that the transition must be fair, and our energy members need to be represented at every stage of any transition arrangements that will affect their jobs and skills;
- f) Our members in Environment Protection - responsible for responding to the floods and droughts and other direct environmental impacts that erupt up and down the nations on an increasing frequent basis with reduced funding – they are absolutely at the frontline of what this means in the UK.

These are just some examples of areas affected with similar changes planned for cleaning our water, greening transport and environmentally sustainable housing as further examples of how necessary climate change related mitigations are affecting areas of our membership.

Conference also 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.

Impact on Women - 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.

Impact on Disabled Members - Disabled people rely on cars more than other groups, this raises issues of affordability and accessibility for the transition to greener transport. Charging points for electric vehicles are being built that are unusable by Disabled drivers and create obstacles for Disabled pedestrians. Disabled people are less able to evacuate safely when an environment related disaster strikes such as flooding or fire and many health conditions are exacerbated by extreme temperatures or pollution.

Impact on Black members - As has been demonstrated by the ULEZ debates, Black members, and people in poorer urban areas, are disproportionately made chronically unwell from climate change related harms such as air pollution.

Impact on Retired members - Older people are less able to cope with the extremes of temperature caused by climate change and the inherent energy costs of trying to manage them.

Impact on Young members - Young people are not only victims of climate change, bearing the brunt of an uncertain and precarious future, they are also valuable contributors to climate action.

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And LGBT+ members are not immune – the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), is clear that all socially marginalised groups are disproportionately impacted.

Conference believes:

- i) We need a rapid transition away from oil and gas to prevent catastrophic climate breakdown;
- ii) Failing to take urgent measures to transition away from fossil fuels puts jobs at risk from sudden climate events or their economic consequences and foregoes opportunities to build in a timely way the larger skilled workforce needed across the whole economy without which decarbonisation cannot happen;
- iii) Inequality and declining standards of living for working class people are explicitly locked into a fossil-fuelled market economy and austerity policies;
- iv) The costs of transition to a decarbonised economy and society must not fall on those least able to pay;
- v) Transition policies must be generated by state investment;
- vi) A truly Just Transition leaves no one behind and includes vital recognition that public sector jobs are an integral part of a green future and must be invested in to raise pay and conditions to be seen as attractive employment opportunities in a zero-carbon economy.
- vii) We must resist attempts aimed at using climate to divide working people; this only serves elites and distracts us from our common interest in jobs and a secure future;
- viii) Political posturing on net zero policies does not help our class and we must fight for policies that address climate change and environmental degradation rooted in economic and social justice;
- ix) Trade unions and workers in all sectors are central to transition plans;
- x) Workers in other countries are our allies.

In recognition of the climate emergency, the role of trade unions, and the impact on members, conference agrees that UNISON should continue to play a key role in:

- A) The social dialogue and workplace negotiations needed to deliver just transition across all workplaces – including supporting our own members and activists to engage on these issues locally;
- B) The international and national policy debates about the best and fairest way of achieving decarbonisation;
- C) The civil society movements that will keep leaders and governments on track.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

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- I) Recognise and embed Climate Change as part of its wider organising strategy;
- II) 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;
- III) Support each service group and sector committee to development a green bargaining and negotiating agenda at every level of the union;
- IV) Update the Code of Good Branch practice to include the new Environment Officer role;
- V) Support each Region to co-ordinate regional branch Environmental Officer network meetings and activities;
- VI) Continue to pursue all outstanding, or ongoing, actions from the 2022 National Delegate Conference motion 93;
- VII) Work with the Labour Link to campaign for the reinstatement by Labour of the pledge to spend £28billion each year on green investment;
- VIII) Work with appropriate bodies to build combines within and across sectors, at the level of branches as well as nationally and globally, to develop common industrial strategies that contribute to a 'whole economy' approach to decarbonisation, including engagement with community and climate justice groups;
- IX) Agree a UNISON year of Climate Activism by no later than 2026 with all appropriate organising and operational support to highlight and amplify UNISON's response to the climate emergency and the role of the Environment Officer within branches;
- X) Continue to work internationally to support the Global South and to ensure that a just transition for all is achieved for the public good and not private profit;
- XI) To endorse the call for a FFNPT and engage with the Labour Party, via Labour Link, and other political parties to highlight UNISON's support for the next UK Government to endorse the call for a FFNPT.

And to campaign for:

- a) Policies to address climate change and environmental degradation that are in the interests of workers and communities, and a plan for the forms of bargaining and industrial action to achieve them;
- b) Negotiated transition plans that guarantee protection for all workers in all sectors of the economy including across all equality strands, and as a minimum should cover jobs, wages, pensions, training and skills and trade union rights;
- c) Public ownership of key sectors such as energy, water, transport, mail, broadband, education, health and social care;

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- d) A fair and progressive taxation system, accessing the wealth of one of the world's richest countries without asking working people to pay for a crisis they did not create;
- e) A National Climate Service to plan, coordinate, fund and ensure education/training for the workforce necessary to undertake the rapid and wide scale transformation to a decarbonised economy;
- f) Workers and their unions being directly and immediately engaged with government in designing and defining what the decarbonised industries and their workforces of the future look like;
- g) Solutions to the climate crisis that are in the interests of workers and communities, not capital.

National Executive Council

63.1

Insert after action point b):

"c) A specific Maximum Temperature Law, including the ability to withdraw labour if workplace temperatures surpass 30 degrees Celsius (27 degrees Celsius if doing strenuous work in PPE);

d) Amendments to Health and Safety legislation to support the mandatory use of workplace climate hazards risk assessments and publicly available climate hazards review reports by employers and trade union health and safety representatives."

Re designate the remaining points as e) to i).

Scotland Region

64. Climate Action

Conference affirms that climate change is a class issue and a trade union issue.

Conference notes that the:

- 1) UN Secretary General has said we are in a new era of global boiling with unprecedented extreme weather impacting every part of the globe with increasing frequency;
- 2) International Energy Agency (IEA) states that to stay below the Paris Climate Agreement of 1.5 degrees celsius fossil fuel use must reduce by 25% this decade and we cannot develop any new fossil fuel sites;
- 3) Working class in the UK and globally are already being impacted by the terrible consequences of climate change, through loss of lives, livelihoods, food, access to water, housing and accommodation, forced migration, unbearable working conditions and an intolerable burden on emergency services;
- 4) UK government is doing little to safeguard workers or people from the impacts of climate change and, far from it, is advancing a narrative that seeks to make a virtue of weakening its commitments.

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Conference believes:

- a) We need a rapid transition away from oil and gas to prevent catastrophic climate breakdown;
- b) Failing to take urgent measures to transition away from fossil fuels puts jobs at risk from sudden climate events or their economic consequences and foregoes opportunities to build in a timely way the larger skilled workforce needed across the whole economy without which decarbonisation cannot happen;
- c) Inequality and declining standards of living for working class people are explicitly locked into a fossil-fuelled market economy and austerity policies;
- d) The costs of transition to a decarbonised economy and society must not fall on those least able to pay;
- e) Transition policies must be generated by state investment;
- f) We must resist attempts aimed at using climate to divide working people; this only serves elites and distracts us from our common interest in jobs and a secure future;
- g) Political posturing on net zero policies does not help our class and we must fight for policies that address climate change and environmental degradation rooted in economic and social justice;
- h) Trade unions and workers in all sectors are central to transition plans;
- i) Workers in other countries are our allies.

Conference agrees to fight for:

- i) Policies to address climate change and environmental degradation that are in the interests of workers and communities, and a plan for the forms of bargaining and industrial action to achieve them;
- ii) Negotiated transition plans that guarantee protection for all workers in all sectors of the economy including across all equality strands, and as a minimum should cover jobs, wages, pensions, training and skills and trade union rights;
- iii) Public ownership of key sectors such as energy, water, transport, mail, broadband, education, health and social care;
- iv) A fair and progressive taxation system, accessing the wealth of one of the world's richest countries without asking working people to pay for a crisis they did not create;
- v) A National Climate Service to plan, coordinate, fund and ensure education/training for the workforce necessary to undertake the rapid and wide scale transformation to a decarbonised economy;

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- vi) Workers and their unions being directly and immediately engaged with government in designing and defining what the decarbonised industries and their workforces of the future look like;
- vii) Solutions to the climate crisis that are in the interests of workers and communities, not capital.

Further, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to build groups within and across sectors, at the level of branches as well as nationally and globally, to develop common industrial strategies that contribute to a 'whole economy' approach to decarbonisation, including engagement with community and climate justice groups.

Bristol

65. Climate Emergency

Conference notes that the:

- 1) UN Secretary General has said we are in a new era of global boiling with unprecedented extreme weather impacting every part of the globe with increasing frequency;
- 2) International Energy Agency (IEA) states that to stay below the Paris Climate Agreement of 1.5 degrees celsius fossil fuel use must reduce by 25 percent this decade and we cannot develop any new fossil fuel sites;
- 3) Working class in the UK and globally are already being impacted by the terrible consequences of climate change, through loss of lives, livelihoods, food, access to water, housing and accommodation, forced migration, unbearable working conditions and an intolerable burden on emergency services;
- 4) UK government is doing little to safeguard workers or people from the impacts of climate change and, far from it, is advancing a narrative that seeks to make a virtue of weakening its commitments.

Conference believes:

- a) We need a rapid transition away from oil and gas to prevent catastrophic climate breakdown;
- b) Failing to take urgent measures to transition away from fossil fuels puts jobs at risk from sudden climate events or their economic consequences and foregoes opportunities to build in a timely way the larger skilled workforce needed across the whole economy without which decarbonisation cannot happen;
- c) Inequality and declining standards of living for working class people are explicitly locked into a fossil-fuelled market economy and austerity policies;
- d) The costs of transition to a decarbonised economy and society must not fall on those least able to pay;
- e) Transition policies must be generated by state investment;

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- f) We must resist attempts aimed at using climate to divide working people; this only serves elites and distracts us from our common interest in jobs and a secure future;
- g) Political posturing on net zero policies does not help our class and we must fight for policies that address climate change and environmental degradation rooted in economic and social justice;
- h) Trade unions and workers in all sectors are central to transition plans;
- i) Workers in other countries are our allies.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to campaign for:

- i) Policies to address climate change and environmental degradation that are in the interests of workers and communities, and a plan for the forms of bargaining and industrial action to achieve them;
- ii) Negotiated transition plans that guarantee protection for all workers in all sectors of the economy including across all equality strands, and as a minimum should cover jobs, wages, pensions, training and skills and trade union rights;
- iii) Public ownership of key sectors such as energy, water, transport, mail, broadband, education, health and social care;
- iv) A fair and progressive taxation system, accessing the wealth of one of the world's richest countries without asking working people to pay for a crisis they did not create;
- v) A National Climate Service to plan, coordinate, fund and ensure education/training for the workforce necessary to undertake the rapid and wide scale transformation to a decarbonised economy;
- vi) Workers and their unions being directly and immediately engaged with government in designing and defining what the decarbonised industries and their workforces of the future look like;
- vii) Solutions to the climate crisis that are in the interests of workers and communities, not capital.

Conference further calls on the National Executive Council to work with appropriate bodies to build combines within and across sectors, at the level of branches as well as nationally and globally, to develop common industrial strategies that contribute to a 'whole economy' approach to decarbonisation, including engagement with community and climate justice groups.

York City

66. A Tipping Point In The Climate Emergency - We Need To Act Now

Conference reaffirms that the climate emergency is real and that time is running out to achieve the necessary changes required to get to Net Zero by 2050.

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The year 2023 may be remembered as the start of a big change in the climate system, amid signs that some systems are tipping toward a new state from which they may not recover.

Conference in 2022 supported funding our public services to tackle climate change but the challenge is broader. Governments need to do more and public service and energy workers need to be at the table.

Conference recognises that climate change affects all workers as citizens but it is also having an increasing adverse effect in our workplaces. The impacts are being felt everywhere and go way beyond the increased health impacts of extreme weather events such as heat and floods.

Conference welcomes the work the National Executive Council has done in reviving the UNISON green reps network and calls on them to:

- 1) Lobby the UK government to recommit to their climate commitments and to introduce a Just Transition Commission with dedicated ministerial oversight and representatives from all stakeholders including unions;
- 2) Lobby devolved governments and to learn from the Scottish Just Transition Commission;
- 3) Continue lobbying employers and governments for facility time for green reps;
- 4) Hold a green reps seminar in 2024 or early 2025;
- 5) Lobby for a plan to offer carer workers cheap green travel options;
- 6) Support mobilisations in Big Green Week and at COP29.

Lothian Health

Pensions

67. Smash the Pension and Benefits Gap for Part Time Workers!

Recent TUC analysis has found that women are more than twice as likely as men to miss out on being in a workplace pension scheme. They are also more likely to suffer from a huge pensions income gap.

This is due to the impact of the gender pay gap, the unequal division of caring responsibilities, historic issues with the National Insurance (NI) system and continuing gaps with pensions auto enrolment.

Women are more likely to be in low paid and part time jobs, across several employers.

Conference notes that the National Insurance system operates in a way that discriminates against part time workers with multiple employers. These workers are more likely to be women, Black or disabled or with caring responsibilities, and those working in lower paid workplaces, less skilled, or in the gig economy.

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The National Insurance system does not reflect the changing world of work and fails workers with multiple employers where each contract's weekly or monthly pay falls below the Lower Earning Limits (LEL) and workers therefore pay few if any NI contributions over many years. This leaves many such workers without entitlement to contributions related state benefits, and without entitlement to the full state pension. Contributory benefits can therefore be unavailable to part time workers in multiple jobs with low pay and low hours.

Two workers earning the same total income in a year, one with a single employer and the other with several jobs, may find that one contributes to and is entitled to contributory benefits and pension while the other is not.

Effectively, the National Insurance system directly discriminates against part-time workers, which would be unlawful for an employer.

If a worker wants to buy missing years of NI contributions, the amount required is a flat rate of just above £800 per year, again discriminating systematically against part time low paid workers: women, Black and disabled workers in particular. They are required to contribute the same lump sum for each missing year that a millionaire would be required to contribute for each missing year! There is no sliding scale.

Although employers are now required by law to enrol workers into a pension automatically, 1.4 million women earn less than the qualifying threshold of £10,000 a year or more. Almost one in nine women are in jobs where their employers do not have to enter them into a workplace pension, while the figure is less than one in twenty for men.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to work with the TUC and to:

- 1) Raise awareness of the gender pension gap and the pay and employment gaps that are the root cause of pension disparities, campaigning for improving childcare and social care, extending shared parental leave, and strengthening rights to work flexibly without being penalised;
- 2) Campaign for a fundamental overhaul of the National Insurance system so that it is fairer and corrects the current discrimination against the lowest earners in multiple employment;
- 3) Research the extent of those affected and campaign in light of the findings for those workers (including low paid, disabled, Black and women workers) to be included in pensions auto-enrolment and to increase statutory minimum employer contributions.

South West Region

67.1

After the third paragraph insert as follows:

“The gap in pension entitlements affecting disabled people is less well understood, despite many of the same, and some additional, reasons for the gap in disabled people’s income in retirement.

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Disabled people already experience a 15 percent pay gap compared to non-disabled workers, often due to part-time working. Disabled people are also less likely to be able to access the labour market in the first place with less 54 percent in employment, compared to 82 percent of non-disabled people. This equates to a disability employment gap of almost 30 percent. With disabled households on average facing more than a thousand pounds extra a month in living costs due to their impairment, many disabled workers cannot afford to make pension contributions.

This all leads to a disability pension gap which is likely to be even higher than the pay gap alone. Pension Policy Institute data shows that disabled people have less than 36 percent of the average pension pot of non-disabled people.

It is also important to consider the combined impact of the disability, gender and ethnicity pay gaps on our members.”

Add additional action point and renumber accordingly:

“2) Consider commissioning research on the disability pension gap and use this as a basis of a campaign to address the issues faced by disabled workers in different types of pension schemes, while stepping up our campaign for better access to reasonable adjustments, the key driver of the disability pay and employment gaps.”

National Disabled Members’ Committee

67.2

In point 2) add after “for a fundamental” add the words “and progressive”

National Executive Council

68. Work Till We Drop? – Resist Further Attacks on the State Pension Age (SPA)

Conference is clear that the recent Tory government open deliberations on increasing the State Pension even further, potentially to 71, must be resisted as a cruel and counterproductive attack on the health and wellbeing of older workers.

Conference notes that the government’s own advisors admit that by age 70, only 50 percent of adults in England and Wales are now disability-free and able to work.

Conference further notes that one of the reasons cited for the need for a rise is low birth rates - wilfully ignoring that it is the government’s own woeful level of childcare support that prevents people who want to have more children from being able to afford it.

Conference understands that many people are choosing to work longer, either through choice or necessity as pension provision has fallen and the cost of living and supporting family has increased. However, this conference is concerned is about those people who feel they have to work beyond their capability and who may end up, after giving years of service in work, retiring due to incapacity and unable to enjoy their retirement in good health.

Over the past decade we have seen unprecedented changes and reductions to the pension promise. This has led to widespread anxiety about what people are planning

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for and how they can manage both their own and their employers' expectations in the longer term, when the goal posts seem to change so often.

Conference believes that, as well as being inherently unfair, raising SPA is entirely counterproductive. The proposals say they are based on affordability but appear to wilfully refuse to acknowledge the obvious and inherent knock-on costs of raising the SPA such as:

- 1) Health Impacts - Recent research has shown that the additional burden of forcing people to work beyond their own personal capacity 'would also accelerate the rate of health decline' in many people, to a point of requiring their own care and dependency on the public purse prematurely. Relying on the NHS to pick up the cost of premature health decline or on Employment Support Allowance for incapacity rather than a pension for those who don't make it to the SPA are simply examples of robbing Peter to pay Paul;
- 2) Value of unpaid caring – Older people provide unpaid childcare to over 40% of families at an estimated value of £7.3 billion and that is just childcare. A recent Care UK report showed a staggering increase in the value of all carers' support to the UK economy since 2001, almost doubling from £68 billion to £132 billion. This is a particular issue for women who still predominantly take up caring responsibilities;
- 3) Impact on the younger generation – lack of trust in any pension promise and affordability will mean that young people will not be saving for their own retirement and that will have its own impact on future pension funding.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Continue to engage on any reviews of the State Pension Age with the aim of campaigning to resist any move to raise it further;
- b) Work with the National Retired Members Committee, other trade unions, the National Pensioner Convention, and other relevant organisations in support of this work;
- c) Engage with the Labour party via the Labour Link on reducing the State Pension Age back down to at least 65.

Essex

69. 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 certain circumstances, 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,

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- 3) In many schemes, widowers and surviving male civil partners of female scheme members continue to be paid pensions only in respect of contributions since 1988.

Conference notes the judgement of the Employment Tribunal in *Goodwin v Secretary of State for Education* (case number 1308506/2019) made on 30 June 2020. The tribunal declared that:

“by providing for a survivor’s pension which is less favourable for a widower or surviving male civil partner ... than for a widow or surviving female civil partner of a female scheme member ... the Teachers’ Pension Regulations 2010 directly discriminate because of sexual orientation ...”.

Following that judgement, a ministerial statement by Steve Barclay, then Chief Secretary to the Treasury, on 20 July 2020, stated:

“The government has concluded that changes are required to the teachers’ pension scheme. (...) This difference of treatment will also need to be remedied in those other public service pension schemes where the husband or male civil partner of a female scheme member is in similar circumstances. Departments responsible for the administration of affected schemes will consult on and take forward changes as soon as possible. Schemes will notify their members of changes and any action they need to take.”

Conference is concerned that, although the Teachers’ Pension Scheme and the Scottish Local Government Pension Scheme appear to have made, or be making, the necessary changes, many other public service pension schemes appear slow to do so or to alert their members to any new entitlement or any action they need to take.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- a) Seek to secure equal treatment of surviving spouses and civil partners in public service pension schemes;
- b) Seek to ensure that schemes issue early notification to members on their entitlement and any action they need to take.

City of Wolverhampton Local Government

70. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's Mansion House Reforms

Conference is reminded that in his speech to the 'great and good' of the City of London at the Mansion House on 10 July 2023, Jeremy Hunt, the Chancellor of the Exchequer outlined reforms "to boost pensions and increase investment in British businesses" and that he (along with Nicholas Lyons, the then Lord Mayor) had supported an agreement between nine of the UK's largest Defined Contribution workplace pensions committing them to the objective of allocating assets "to unlisted equities by 2030".

Among the Chancellor's proposals, Conference notes:

- 1) For the Local Government Pension Scheme, a consultation to be launched on setting an ambition to double existing investment in private equity. Indeed in last

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Autumn's statement the government appears to have ignored the responses to the consultation;

- 2) The consultation proposed a deadline of March 2025 for all LGPS funds to transfer their funds into LGPS pools and setting a direction that each pool should exceed £60 billion of assets;
- 3) A call for evidence on the possible role of the Pension Protection Fund in productive investment;
- 4) The intention of exploring "how we can support pension trustees to improve their skills". This raises the spectre of Robert Maxwell manipulating the trustees of Mirror Group Newspapers;
- 5) Protectionist rules inherited from our time in the European Union to be abolished;
- 6) The government will encourage the establishment of new Collective Defined Contribution which would invest more effectively by pooling assets.

Additionally, Conference is asked to note that following the Financial Services and Markets Act 2023 passing into law, the government has repealed many pieces of "unnecessary" retained EU law for financial services, simplifying the UK's regulatory rulebook.

Although the government has claimed that the proposals would benefit present and future pensioners, Conference is sufficiently concerned that it instructs the National Executive Council to liaise with the four TUCs of the UK (as appropriate), as well as other unions and representatives of workers whose pension funds will be affected by these proposals, with the aim of creating as united an opposition as possible with the unanimous view that the pension funds are for the benefit of the scheme members and not to deliver on government investment policy (no matter the hue of the government).

Haringey Local Government

Equalities

71. LGBT+ Rights

Conference notes:

- 1) UNISON's strong support for trans rights and welcomes the introduction of trans ally training across the union;
- 2) The blocking of proposed reforms to the Scottish Gender Recognition Reform Bill by Westminster Tories. These reforms were intended to make life better for trans people who are amongst the most oppressed and victimised members of society. The government's own Equalities Survey found 67% of trans people avoided being open about their gender identity because they feared a negative reaction. This move by Sunak's government is an attempt to whip up 'culture wars' against an already demonised group, at a time when workers are fighting back against the cost of living;

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- 3) That in December 2023, the Tories produced new guidance for schools on youth transitioning. This guidance is extremely concerning as it creates barriers for young people who are gender-questioning who would want to speak to their teachers in confidence. As well as attempting to prescribe how children and young people can identify, and that “there will be very few occasions in which a school or college will be able to agree to a change of pronouns”, the guidance states that, “Schools and colleges should engage parents as a matter of priority, and encourage the child to speak to their parents”. However, this is guidance, not policy;
- 4) The DfE’s Keeping Children Safe in Education makes clear that “In order to fulfil this responsibility [safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children] effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.”;
- 5) Stonewall explains in its guidance for schools that “regardless of their age, a person’s status as trans is private. Schools and colleges should not disclose information – such as details about a transition – that could reveal somebody’s trans status to others, including parents or carers, staff, and anyone outside the school, college or setting. You may only share this information where there is a safeguarding risk, or if a child or young person has given their permission for specific details to be shared.”.

Conference further notes:

- a) Events like Drag Queen Story Time have been targeted by far right and nazi groups like Turning Point UK, who have organised repeated protests outside the events;
- b) These protests have on the whole been met with larger counter demonstrations supporting the hosts, workers and story tellers. However, we cannot be complacent and assume this will always be the case, successful protests require organisation;
- c) Trans Day of Remembrance on 20 November and Trans Visibility Day on 31 March. Both of these are important days to highlight both the attacks trans people face and the campaign for trans rights.

Conference believes that:

- a) The rights of trans people do not conflict with or reduce the rights of other oppressed groups. We stand in solidarity with our trans comrades and fight for a ban on trans conversion therapy, to end all barriers to gender self-identification, for fully funded trans healthcare;
- b) It is a council and school’s duty to ensure that their students’ and young people’s welfare is always the highest priority;
- c) While we of course involve parents and carers where practical, where appropriate, and where necessary, we know that there are times when this is not advisable, and sadly sometimes not even safe;

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- d) In an election year, it is clear that the Tories will scapegoat LGBT+ and particularly trans people if they believe it will win them votes;
- e) Abandoning gender self-identification as a policy in 2023 by the Labour Party was a step back in the fight for LGBT+ liberation;
- f) Trans women are women, trans men are men and non-binary people exist and should be respected.

Conference resolves to call on the National Executive Council to:

- i) Work with the LGBT+ committee and other appropriate bodies in UNISON to support protests and struggles to defend and extend trans rights. This includes investigating what activities and publicity can be organised on Trans Remembrance day and Trans Visibility Day and supporting trans ally training;
- ii) Work with the Labour Link committee to develop the best way to campaign for LGBT+ rights and liberation within the Labour party;
- iii) Work with the LGBT+ committee and other appropriate bodies in UNISON to develop guidance and support for our members working in libraries, schools and other roles where they are facing increasing transphobia and homophobia, particularly where hosting Drag Queen Story Time has been opposed;
- iv) Work with the LGBT+ committee, Regions and other appropriate bodies in UNISON to continue to support, publicise and attend Trans Pride events.

National Executive Council

72. Year of LGBT+ Workers – Embedding LGBT+ Equality in Our Union

Conference notes that we are halfway through celebrating the Year of LGBT+ Workers and welcomes the opportunity that this provides to promote UNISON as the union for LGBT+ workers, raise awareness of LGBT+ rights throughout the union, challenge discrimination, and recruit and activate LGBT+ members.

The year highlights the important contribution our LGBT+ members make to the union, to improving employment conditions for LGBT+ workers and to campaigning more broadly on equality for LGBT+ people. Over the years the LGBT+ group has played a key role in campaigns to improve the rights of LGBT+ people within the workplace and wider society and particularly active in 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.

Most recently, the national LGBT+ committee has launched its trans equality campaign, and within that, helped to create the successful trans ally training across our union. This helps members to better understand the issues our trans, non-binary and gender diverse members face and how to be allies to them. We are proud of how many members have taken part in this programme and how many trans, non-binary and gender diverse members have become activists because of this work. It also shows that by equipping members with knowledge and empathy, we can facilitate more welcoming and supportive workplaces.

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As a trade union, we need to continue to encourage active recruitment and promotion of LGBT+ members in UNISON and strive for LGBT+ representation at all levels of leadership. By fostering diversity in leadership, we not only provide role models for LGBT+ members but also bring diverse perspectives to decision-making, benefiting the entire union.

To achieve this, branches need to support local LGBT+ Pride events and run awareness campaigns within the workplace and making UNISON's LGBT+ materials visible.

Conference acknowledges that tackling systemic and ingrained discrimination against LGBT+ workers will take more than one year. Conference further recognises the need to use the success of the year to continue our work and embed the work on LGBT+ equality in all areas of our union.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work with the appropriate parts of the union to:

- 1) Continue to promote UNISON's year of LGBT+ workers including national and regional events;
- 2) Evaluate the success of the year with an indicator of where activity has taken place and the range of stakeholders involved;
- 3) Encourage regions and branches to use days in the LGBT+ calendar to promote the work that UNISON does for LGBT+ equality;
- 4) Establish a programme of activities which build on the achievements of the year;
- 5) Promote and encourage the use of UNISON LGBT+ guidance, fact sheets and model policies in public service workplaces;
- 6) Work with service groups to follow up on the motions which have been passed by Service Group Conferences to deliver the bargaining agendas on LGBT+ rights and equality in the workplace;
- 7) Promote and participate in equality training, and in particular the trans ally training.

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender plus Committee

73. Step Up the Fight for Trans Rights

Conference notes:

- 1) That thousands of people have attended vigils for Brianna Ghey and that the people who violently murdered trans teenager Brianna have been found guilty;
- 2) The ongoing vilification of trans people by the Tory government and their backers in the press have created an atmosphere where trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming and all LGBT+ people feel at risk;
- 3) That following the passing of the Gender Recognition Reform Bill by the Scottish Parliament and the subsequent blocking using Section 35 by the United Kingdom

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government, the Supreme Court has sided with the decision of the UK government;

- 4) Between October 1 2022 and September 30 2023 that 320 trans and gender non-conforming people have been murdered according to the Trans Murder Monitoring Report;
- 5) That the proposals outlined in the Tory guidance for schools would make life harder for trans and non-binary school students, and that spokespeople for the Labour Party have given their backing to the guidance.

Conference believes:

- a) That the Supreme Court verdict is a further attack on trans people and an attempt to undermine the democratic rights of people in Scotland, an attack on the right to self-determination;
- b) That the Tory attacks on trans people, are part of attempts to whip up 'culture wars' and to divide working class people, and that, to build unity between our members and all working class people, our union has a duty to stand by our trans members and the wider community;
- c) In the context of a looming General Election, we will not allow trans people to be used for point scoring by reactionary politicians from any political party or organisation;
- d) The rights of trans people do not conflict with the rights of other oppressed sections of society;
- e) That trans healthcare should be fully and publicly funded, accessible and free, and that there needs to be a full ban on so-called 'conversion therapy';
- f) We need to play our part in a mass, united, working class movement that stands for equality, liberation, high quality public services and against all forms of oppression and discrimination.

Conference agrees to instruct the National Executive Council to:

- i) Fight for more workplaces to adopt UNISON's trans equality model policy;
- ii) Ensure that the union's Trans Ally training is rolled out to more reps and members;
- iii) To support our members working in education when confronted with the new anti-trans guidance
- iv) To fight against gender based violence and divide and rule policies wherever they emanate from and to mobilise our union to support the struggle for trans rights at protests and demonstrations.

Wirral

74. More LGBT+ Allies in our Workplaces

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As we mark that 2024 is the Year of LGBT+ Workers it is crucial that we all as members play our part to be an ally.

There has been much positive change in attitudes over the past decades, for example the growth in the number of towns and cities which participate in Pride Celebrations across the UK. However, unfortunately for our LGBT+ members they still do not live in a world free from prejudice and fear. There is so much more work to be done.

The Rainbow Map produced annually by the ILGA-Europe benchmarks countries from zero percent to 100 percent on a range of different criteria hate crime, hate speech, discrimination, harassment, family rights. It paints an extremely bleak outcome for the UK. The UK has dropped down to 17th place in the ranking. This is due to the increased rise in hate crime against LGBT+ people, anti-trans views in both mainstream media and on social media, lack of progress on banning conversion therapy.

So, what can we do to help to improve the lives of LGBT+ workers within our Union? We can encourage more of our members to become a LGBT+ Ally. This coupled with the role within our Branches of the LGBT+ Branch Officer can try to do all we can to make a positive difference to the working lives of our LGBT+ members. We need to play our part to ensure that there is a positive legacy ensuring more inclusive workplace policies and that any behaviours that are anti LGBT+ are challenged and eradicated. Let us all play a part to support and stand by our LGBT+ members. Remembering that an injury to one is an injury to all. We need to see a positive difference to the working lives of our LGBT+ members.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Produce a Tool Kit to encourage more members to become LGBT+ Allies and promote the recruitment of LGBT+ branch officers;
- 2) Encourage branches to actively participate in events for the remainder of this historical year.

Renfrewshire

75. Next Steps for Our Work on the Disability Employment Charter

Conference is proud that UNISON is one of the founding members of the Disability Employment Charter which now has over 160 organisations signed up to it, including trade unions, disabled people's organisations, public service employers, charitable organisations, and private sector employers.

The Disability Employment Charter was founded because of the disadvantage that disabled people experience in the labour market and workplaces. Disabled people are less likely to be employed than non-disabled people. The employment rate of disabled people is 53 percent compared to 82 percent of non-disabled people. This difference is known as the disability employment gap and has consistently stood at a rate of around 30 percentage points. This gap is due to a number of factors including disability discrimination, failure to make reasonable adjustments, inaccessible workplaces and structural ableism.

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Those disabled people who despite these barriers manage to get a job then face a pay gap which sees them paid almost 20 percent less than non-disabled employees. On top of this, according to recent research by disability charity Scope, disabled people incur on average approximately £1,000 in additional disability associated costs. This works out at about 63 percent of their household income after housing costs are included. The cost of living crisis has compounded the poverty experienced by disabled people.

The Disability Employment Charter outlines nine actions that the government needs to take to address the disadvantage disabled people encounter in their working lives, asking for:

- 1) All employers with 250 plus employees to publish data annually on the number of disabled people they employ as a proportion of their workforce; their disability pay gap; and the percentage of disabled employees within each pay quartile;
- 2) Increase to disabled people's access to employment programmes and apprenticeships; increase the scale, quality and awareness of supported employment programmes and supported internships; and increase the provision of tailored careers advice to disabled people;
- 3) Reform of Access to Work (AtW) including removal of the AtW support cap; ensuring application/renewal processes are efficient, personalised, and flexible; entitle disabled jobseekers to 'in principle' indicative awards; facilitate passporting of awards between organisations and from Disabled Student's Allowance to AtW; and increase awareness of AtW support;
- 4) Reform of Disability Confident requiring employers at Disability Confident Levels 2 and 3 to meet minimum thresholds regarding the percentage of disabled people in their workforce; and remove accreditation from employers that do not move up within three years from Level 1 to Levels 2 or 3;
- 5) Leveraging government procurement ensuring award decisions for all public sector contracts take into account the percentage of disabled people in the workforce of tendering organisations; require government contractors to work towards a minimum threshold regarding the percentage of disabled people in their workforce; and take failure to achieve this threshold into account in future contract award decisions;
- 6) The government to require employers to notify employees on decisions regarding reasonable adjustment requests within two weeks; make the option to work flexibly from day one the legal default for all jobs; introduce stronger rights to paid disability leave for assessment, rehabilitation and training; and fund an increase in Statutory Sick Pay to the European average;
- 7) The government should require employers to consult and negotiate with disabled people and their representatives on disability equality matters; and provide trade union equality representatives and disability champions with statutory rights to time off to perform their role;
- 8) The government should create a 'one stop shop' portal to provide information, advice and guidance to employers on recruiting and retaining disabled people, and to disabled people on their employment rights;

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- 9) The government should take into account increasing disability prevalence in calculating the disability employment gap, and use the 'prevalence corrected' employment gap measure in monitoring national progress on disability employment.

The charter is primarily a campaigning tool that calls on government, rather than employers, to take the kind of legislative and cross-sectoral action that is needed to radically improve the rights of disabled people in the workplace. Employers are asked to sign up to it to show that they want government to take action and to show that they disagree with the Conservative government's usual argument that employers see stronger workers' rights as a "burden on business" or "red tape".

However, some disabled members have reported that their employers have agreed to the principles of the disability employment charter but are reluctant to sign up as the call is on the government to take actions. It is important that we support those branches in making the argument to their employer while also seeking other ways in which the charter can be used, including when it comes to workplace bargaining.

Some disabled members report that their branches have used the Disability Employment Charter as a bargaining and negotiating tool to improve working conditions for disabled members; with employers reporting on the make-up of the workforce, reporting on disability pay gaps, increasing employment opportunities for disabled people, incorporating commitments to disability equality in the procurement process and providing reasonable adjustments more quickly.

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

- a) Continue to encourage regions, branches and service groups to promote employer sign-ups to the Disability Employment Charter;
- b) Provide guidance to branches on the arguments to make when seeking employer sign-ups and on how the Disability Employment Charter can be adapted for use as a bargaining and negotiating tool to promote disability rights in the workplace;
- c) Collate good practice of how branches have utilised the Disability Employment Charter to improve working conditions for disabled members.

National Disabled Members' Committee

76. Stop Tory Attacks on Disabled People's Income and Independence

Conference notes the Conservative government's publication of "Transforming Support: The Health and Disability White Paper" in March 2023. This put forward new plans to make disability benefits dependent on eligibility for Personal Independent Payments (PIP) and removed rights of appeal against some benefit decisions. The government announced the implementation of these plans in the Chancellors Autumn Statement in November 2023.

The Conservative government claims these changes to welfare benefits will help more disabled people and people with health conditions to start, stay and succeed in work. However, conference believes the opposite is true and that the key changes will push disabled people further into financial hardship, at a time when we are already experiencing the sharp end of a cost of living crisis.

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In his 2023 Autumn Statement the Conservative Chancellor claimed these changes would help more disabled people work from home. However, in reality these changes will penalise disabled people who are not able to do this, while pushing others into low paid, isolating jobs without access to reasonable adjustments. Conference believes that threatening disabled people with benefit cuts if they cannot work from home is no way to address the issues disabled workers face, including chronic lack of access to reasonable adjustments.

Conference notes that the Conservative government has presided over 14 years of policies that have punished disabled people through cutting disability premiums and introducing unfair work capability assessments, conditionality, and sanctions. Even for those disabled people in work, the disability pay gap is worse than it was a decade ago and in 2022 stood at a shocking 17.2 percent or £3,700 less a year than non-disabled workers. Added to this, the Conservative government's National Disability Strategy was found to be unlawful and based on an unlawful consultation.

It is perhaps only to be expected that the white paper was mainly a collection of small-scale pilots and re-announcements, while its key proposals are about making more disabled people work longer hours, whatever the pay. This is dressed up as ending work capability assessments but in fact it will make matters worse, with individual job centre advisors now being able to decide whether you are entitled to benefits or whether you instead need to find work or work more hours than you currently do. The system is likely to be even more unfair than work capability assessments, with no appeal against discretionary decision making by job centre advisors.

Conference believes that making Personal Independence Payments (PIP), and Adult Disability Payment in Scotland, the qualifier to exempt you from looking for work and work related activity is just a ploy to force more disabled people into work whether or not they are ready for it, and to pay them less money in Universal Credit. In any case, we know that PIP is not a fair system and UNISON's 2018 report "Punished for going to work" makes clear that it needs to be reformed.

Conference strongly believes making work coaches the sole decision maker on ability to work is a retrograde step. Work coaches are not disability specialists and the DWP should not be using them to make life-changing decisions about disabled people.

This new approach from government also changes the nature of PIP, so it is simply about covering the additional costs of being disabled and not about fostering independence. This is a crucial difference and suggests government are trying to get away with a lower cost service that is about disabled people simply surviving rather than thriving.

Conference believes these changes will drive disabled people further into poverty, compounding the ongoing impact of the cost of living crisis. Disabled people already live on lower incomes as we are more likely to work part-time or be in low paid jobs. With the added cost of increasingly expensive electricity for vital equipment such as dialysis machines, drip machines, oxygen, and medicine dispensers, as well as additional costs for dietary specific foods not easily found at a food bank, disabled people do not need further attacks on welfare benefits that help us to survive.

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Conference notes that UNISON General Secretary Christina McAnea wrote to the Chancellor in November 2023, strongly objecting to these changes where she stated “If this government is serious about helping disabled people in the workplace, it needs to tackle the root cause of what makes working life so difficult for so many of them. Threatening benefit cuts or accusing disabled people of “not doing their duty” achieves nothing.”

Conference therefore instructs the National Executive Council to work with the National Disabled Members Committee to:

- 1) Seek appropriate opportunities to widely publicise these changes to the benefits system and their negative impact on disabled people’s income and independence;
- 2) Work through UNISON Labour Link to lobby the Labour party to develop a realistic and supportive plan to reform the welfare benefits system so that it puts the needs and independence of disabled people at its heart;
- 3) Seek to ensure the experience of disabled people is included in UNISON’s work on the cost of livings crisis, including through the Labour Link.

National Disabled Members’ Committee

77. Securing the Legacy of the Year of Black Workers in 2024 and Beyond

Conference following the success of UNISON’s Year of Black Workers 2023 (YOBW23), the National Black Members Committee (NBMC) wish to place on record our thanks to all of our activists made this campaign such a success across our union. Throughout the year we saw a renewed and focussed approach to challenging racism and the experiences of Black workers in the workplace and wider society.

UNISON’s long history to create and ensure the structures of representation in UNISON, was recognised, and reinforced as we highlighted the important contribution our Black members make in the union, to improve pay and conditions through our ethnicity pay gap campaign and our anti-racism charter which continue to call for improved equality rights for Black workers.

Conference acknowledges that tackling systemic institutional racism, which is ingrained in many workplaces, and wider society, continues to cause serious, life changing harm and mental anguish to Black members. This will require more than one year to address.

As 2023 ended, Black members recognised that it was vital that the level of activity from 2023 and renewed energy to address racism is not diluted as we move into the next phase of initiatives and campaigns in UNISON in 2024.

Conference, we need to ensure the activism created amongst members in UNISON continues and Black members are more visible at all levels of our union to ensure the mission statement of ‘establishing legacy to generate change’ is a reality and not a figment of our imagination.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

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- 1) Support national and regional Black members self organised groups to fully evaluate the success of the 2023 Year of Black Workers with an indicator of where activity has taken place and the range of stakeholders involved;
- 2) Continue to work with national and regional Black members groups to establish a programme of continued activity to build on the achievement of the YOBW23;
- 3) Follow up on motions passed at previous national, service group and self organised groups conferences to deliver the bargaining agendas for Black workers.
- 4) Engage with national, regional groups and Labour Link to establish a programme of continued activity to secure the mandatory reporting on ethnicity pay gaps across sectors;
- 5) Publicise ongoing work, campaigns, and achievements of National, Regional Black Members groups via UNISON social media forums and UNISON website, which will be disseminated across all regions and as many branches as possible in the union;
- 6) Report back to the National Delegates Conference in 2025 through the annual report on the continue activities, initiatives, and bargaining campaigns.

National Black Members' Committee

77.1

After the third paragraph, add a new fourth paragraph:

"It has become apparent that in the run up to a general election, the Tories will escalate their attempts to divide us so that they can cling on to office. They continue to use racism and the scapegoating of refugees to do this, particularly with the racist Rwanda deportation scheme. Part of our legacy is to increase our campaigning against this, and to build unity amongst our members against such racist policies."

Camden

78. The Legacy of the Year of the Black Worker 2024

Conference congratulates UNISON on the decision to make 2023 the Year of the Black Worker, from celebratory events up and down the country, to Black leadership training, to tangible initiatives like tackling the Ethnicity Pay Gap. Throughout the year we saw a collective focus on the experience of Black members in society, the workplace and in our own union.

The Year of the Black Worker was an opportunity to both celebrate the contribution and achievements of Black Workers across the public sector as well as to also highlight and campaign on the continued deplorable racism and discrimination faced by Black Workers every day. The theme also challenged us to take this beyond 2023 and to establish legacy to generate change.

Conference notes a survey by UNISON in London of 1,000 black workers in 2023. This revealed that only 30 percent felt their employer took race equality seriously. Additionally, half of those surveyed (51 percent) also said they had witnessed or been a victim of racial discrimination at work, and 53 percent said they believed race

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had prevented them from progressing in their career. Yet with the Year of the Black Worker now over, Conference recognises that there is still work that must be done, and we must build on the success and the momentum of the Year of the Black Worker in order to not lose focus on tackling these core issues.

Black Workers continue to face discrimination and racism in the workplace across the public sector, there is still no mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting and many employers continue to refuse to engage on this important issue. A recent TUC report on Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures showed that Black employees earn £13.53 median gross hourly pay, significantly less than White employees who earn £14.35.

The ongoing cost of living crisis continues to disproportionately impact Black workers across the public sector. An Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) report on the treatment and experiences of lower paid Black workers in health and social care found that the practice of outsourcing has led to disproportionately worse outcomes for Black staff, including discrimination, a pattern replicated across the public sector. UNISON members employed by outsourced, private or community sector employers are also less likely to have benefited from UNISON's national pay bargaining wins in 2023.

Conference acknowledges that tackling systemic and institutional discrimination against Black workers cannot halt after 2023 and we need to use the building blocks that we have put in place in 2023 to tackle these core issues and must ensure that the issues that Black Workers face form the heart of our bargaining agenda and pay campaigning, only through decent pay awards, local and national, and continuing our fight for insourcing and against outsourcing can we continue to make a real difference.

Conference welcomes the UNISON Anti Racism Charter as a way of embedding the legacy of the Year of the Black Worker, the charter sets out clear and tangible policy changes and equality auditing measures that will make an immediate impact for Black workers whilst also making a clear statement that it is not good enough for employers to only be 'not racist', they must be actively anti-racist. It commits organisations and their leaders to having a clear and visible race equality policy, as well as a programme of anti-racism initiatives such as training for all staff.

It also includes promoting a diverse workforce, addressing the impact of racism on staff wellbeing, and regularly reviewing strategies to improve racial equality, diversity, and inclusion so the organisation can reflect the communities it serves. The Charter is only a starting point, through continuous monitoring of progress being made we can further improve the lives of Black workers.

Conference also recognises that we must continue the legacy of the Year of the Black Worker by seeking to strengthen fair representation within the union as well, with more Black Members officers in branches and thriving Black Members Regional Self Organised Groups, as well as more Black activists at every level in the union as we grow the next generation of leaders.

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

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- 1) Work with regional Black members self organised 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 Black members self organised groups to establish a programme of activities which build on the achievements of the year;
- 3) Work with service groups to continue to ensure tackling the Ethnicity Pay Gap is at the heart of their bargaining, organising and campaigning agendas to deliver for Black members;
- 4) Publicise UNISON's equalities training to all branches and provide monitoring information of attendees based on regions and service groups;
- 5) Encourage all branches to ensure employers are called on to sign up to the Anti-Racism Charter and monitor progress and implementation;
- 6) Continue to work with all parts of the union to improve Black representation at every level and to develop future Black leaders, particularly focussing on young Black members.

Greater London Region

79. Securing and Sustaining the Legacy of UNISON's Year of Black Worker

Conference reaffirms that:

- 1) In employers across our service groups Black members are facing job losses, impaired access to training, discrimination, bullying and restricted career development;
- 2) For too long employers have made public commitments to tackle race discrimination but have failed to convert words into action;
- 3) The best way to deliver race equality in public services is for Black workers to join UNISON and then lead the union's negotiations with the employer;
- 4) Black members self-organisation exists to create space and opportunities to identify their own priority issues and the best ways to deliver progress;
- 5) The union's rule book commitment to fair representation requires the lay leadership of each branch to be reflective of its membership.

Conference celebrates all the achievements of UNISON's Year of Black Worker in 2023. In particular the Anti Racism Charter has become an essential tool to for branches to embed anti racism in negotiations with employers. The charter contains a clear list of actions for employers to work on that will address issues of institutionalised racism. Conference applauds the work of Black Members in the Eastern Region who created the Anti Racism Charter and first launched it on the UN Day for Elimination of Racism in March 2022.

Conference is resolute that the union's determination to deliver anti-racist workplaces across the public services did not end on 31 December 2023.

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Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- a) Work with the National Black Members Committee and evaluate the impact of Year of Black Worker;
- b) Maintain a list of all employers that have signed the charter and collate information on what progress has been achieved within these employers. This information must be made available to branches and regional Black Members Self Organised Groups;
- c) Request that UNISON's Labour Link Committee continues to work to ensure that measures to address the ethnicity pay gap are in Labour's manifesto at the general election.

Conference further instructs the National Executive Council to write to all branch secretaries and remind them that:

- i) If Black members are under-represented on the branch committee, proactive action must be taken to identify, develop and elect new Black activists;
- ii) Black members should always be involved, if not lead, negotiating and bargaining on race equality issues.

Essex

80. Delivering the Race Equality Act

Conference notes the important motion passed last year on closing the ethnicity pay gap (EPG).

Conference welcomes the work that the union has carried out over the last year to highlight the ethnicity pay gap issue and to continue the union's campaign for mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting with meaningful action plans.

Conference notes that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reports that between 2012 and 2022, Black, African, Caribbean or Black British employees were the only ethnicity group to be consistently earning less than White employees.

We note the success of the UNISON's Year of Black workers and UNISON's "Fair Pay for Patient Care" campaign in addressing the ethnicity pay gap in the NHS.

The 2023 National Delegate Conference noted that the EPG was a major cause of in-work poverty experienced by Black workers and the cause of severe intergenerational inequality in Black communities.

Conference also welcomes Labour's announcement that if it were to win the General Election it would introduce a race equality act that would extend the full right to equal pay that now exists for women to Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) workers for the first time.

The change, which would also cover disabled people, would mean that equal pay claims on the basis of ethnicity and disability would be treated the same as those made by women who, under the existing law, have more stringent protections.

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Conference notes that the Act would also protect against “dual discrimination”, where people face prejudice because of a combination of protected characteristics as set out in the 2010 Equality Act.

A Black woman who faces sexism and racism or a Muslim woman abused for wearing a headscarf, for example, would be able to bring one discrimination claim, rather than one for each protected characteristic.

Labour has said this would have broader benefits for different groups of people, including women experiencing discrimination during the menopause, as well as easing backlogs in the tribunals system.

The new Act would also place a duty on public services, including the NHS, police, schools and councils, to collect data and report on staffing, pay and, where relevant, outcomes, by ethnicity.

Conference notes the importance of campaigning to ensure that these proposals are developed in a such a way as to deliver the best possible outcomes for UNISON members, their families and their communities.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with Labour Link to ensure that the introduction of a Race Equality Act meets our members’ aspirations for fairness and equality and is introduced as soon as possible;
- 2) Publicise these important proposals to members;
- 3) Work with self organised groups and Learning and Organising Services to develop an organising plan to ensure that that the new measures included in the Act are properly realised and implemented in workplaces, once they have been enacted in law.

***Bromley NHS Trust
South London and Maudsley***

81. Ending the Stigma and Discrimination Related to Endometriosis

Endometriosis is a condition that can affect anyone who is born with a womb. It is a long-term condition that can seriously impact the lives of women, non-binary people, trans men and those who experience ‘disorders of sexual development’, intersex people. It is the name given to a condition where cells similar to the ones in the lining of the womb (uterus) are found elsewhere in the body. These cells react in the same way to those in the womb in that they build up and then break down resulting in bleeding. Those cells found in the womb are able to leave the body as a period, but with endometriosis, the blood has no way of leaving the body.

In the UK it is estimated that around 1.5 million people are living with endometriosis, with an average diagnosis time in the region of 8 years. Endometriosis UK has stated “it is vital that Governments, society, the NHS and workplaces wake-up and recognise the symptoms and impact endometriosis can have, and afford those with the condition the support and access to treatment they need to manage their symptoms.”

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Research into endometriosis is limited at best, and the symptoms of the condition are often played down by the medical profession, healthcare providers and employers alike.

Symptoms can include chronic pain, pain in the pelvic area, severe period pain, excessive bleeding, fatigue, depression, bloating and nausea, bowel problems and in some cases infertility. This is not an exhaustive list.

Treatment is limited, and for some, they are unable to live fulfilling lives and remain in work due to their condition. Pain medication can help to relieve the symptoms but is not always effective. Hormone therapy can also help to alleviate symptoms but is not helpful for everyone. Surgery can involve removing endometriosis tissue but does not provide a long-term solution. For some, a hysterectomy with the removal of the ovaries is a last resort however this is not guaranteed to prevent further endometriosis tissue from developing. Simply put, we don't have a cure.

For too many of our members, their treatment by employers is simply not acceptable. Those who suffer endometriosis may have increased sickness absence due to the frequent cycle of their condition. All too often, employers suggest reduced working hours as a reasonable adjustment whilst other options may not be explored. Everyone who experiences endometriosis will know their condition better than anyone and we need to engage with them in guiding UNISON in to how we best support their needs.

UNISON is committed to equalities, we have an obligation to play our part in challenging both the stigma and discrimination related to endometriosis.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with the National Women's Committee, National Disabled Members Committee and National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender plus (LGBT+) Committee in developing a strategy to highlight the condition of endometriosis;
- 2) Work collectively with the Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) to provide specific advice on the condition of endometriosis and highlight why this is a workplace issue;
- 3) Develop a factsheet with LAOS, National Women's Committee and National LGBT+ Committee to provide guidance on how to best support those who suffer from endometriosis, including options for reasonable adjustments;
- 4) Encourage regions and branches to become familiar with literature that is developed as a result of the first three actions.

North Cumbria Northumberland and Tyne and Wear Health

82. The Menopause - An Equality Issue

UNISON South Yorkshire Police branch notes that despite its widespread impact, the menopause is not currently recognised under The Equalities Act 2010 as a protected characteristic, leaving our members without legal protection against discrimination.

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The menopause affects 100 percent of our members in one way or another whether that be women, men living with women going through the menopause and the trans community. Despite its prevalence and severity it remains overlooked in legislation. This lack of recognition leads to unfair treatment and discrimination in various aspects of life including employment. Some employers do have local agreements in place for provisions to be made for the menopause however this is not mandatory in law.

By including the menopause in the Equalities Act 2010 we would be taking an important step towards acknowledging its significant impact on individuals' lives. It is time for change. It is time for our laws to reflect reality and protect all individuals from discrimination based on their health conditions.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to lobby Parliament to affect meaningful change by including the menopause in the Equalities Act 2010.

South Yorkshire Police

Constitutional Reform

83. 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.

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.

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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 Delegate Conference 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 2025.

Cymru/Wales Region

83.1

Insert new penultimate (tenth) paragraph after "...the greatest determiner of our outcomes.":

"Conference believes that the regions of England are poorly served by the current ad-hoc and inconsistent pattern of sub-national governance. Since George Osborne's first devolution deals the intention of the centre has been that sub-national institutions should follow the old, failed orthodoxy of supply-side economics and competition for global capital investment. Instead, we need democratic sub-national institutions that have the legitimacy, authority, powers and resources to pursue different economic policies, to stand up to business interests and reflect the wishes and needs of people in the places they serve."

Insert new point 2):

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"2) Agree that reimagined constitutional arrangements should involve consistency, with all areas covered by legitimate, democratic, well-funded sub-national institutions that can pursue policies that reflect the wishes and needs of their populations."

Amend action point a) to read:

"a) Commission research on the various models of federalism, including the possible introduction of regional assemblies in England, and present..."

North West Region

83.2

In point 1) to delete the text after "majority of our citizens" to "Conference instructs"

National Executive Council

Employment Rights

84. Challenging Discrimination and Neo-colonialism in Immigration Rules and Regulations

Conference notes that low staffing levels have a significant impact on the ability of the National Health Service to adequately meet up with the nation's health service demands. As a trade union, we are extremely conscious of the shortages (particularly nursing) that exist in the NHS, Social care and private health sector, these shortages are being covered by recruitment of overseas staff.

Conference notes with concern that these migrant workers who come to work in the UK are exposed to poor treatment and exploitation most of which are facilitated by repressive immigrations policies, rules, and regulations fraught with clauses that are only reminiscent of the gory features of human slavery as it happened in the stone ages. Not only do these policies/regulations leave them susceptible to exploitation, but they are also designed to keep these valued staff in subservience and modern slavery, Conference is not unawares of the "divide and rule" tactic of the Tory government which aims to pitch migrant workers against other working population of this country. This is evident by the recent announcement by the Prime Minister that this government plans to pay for wage increase by further increasing already neck breaking costs of Visas and other associated immigration fees. We must demonstrate that a people united cannot be defeated and stand with these highly valued professionals many of whom are our members.

A few examples of such policies include but are not limited to:

- 1) Cap on additional hours: many employers are unable to provide enough hours for their staff and these staff thus require additional hours from another employer to enable them to earn enough to meet up with the cost of living. Unfortunately, however, the Home Office tinkers with their abilities to do these additional hours at her whims and caprices thus subjecting these workers to untold hardship;
- 2) Access to public funds: despite paying tax (sometimes duplicated as in the case of IHS) and contributing to National Insurance, migrant workers do not benefit from some of the services these pool of money funds when sometimes they are faced with challenges of financial crisis under the guise of means testing;

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- 3) Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR): the bottlenecks around obtaining ILR by migrant workers is such that staying and working in the UK is fast becoming less and less attractive and these valued staff are being forced to find alternatives in more welcoming environments.

The implications of this on NHS and our health sector is that these staff are now actively considering emigrating the UK to countries who entice them with better immigration policies and a more welcoming atmosphere. It is now fast becoming a norm to see employers from Canada, Australia and US conducting job fairs/recruitment events in UK cities (London, Birmingham, Manchester etc.). The UK will soon be added to the list of countries on WHO's red list if this trend continues unchecked.

Conference appreciates the work UNISON is doing to defend and protect these group of workers through the UNISON migrant workers' network and more recently the Overseas Nurses' Network. There is, however, a need to take further imminent actions to stop the efflux of these valued staff.

Conference, therefore, calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Lobby and work with service group executives, all of UNISON's regions and self organised groups, Migrant Workers' Network, Overseas Nursing Network and other relevant structures of UNISON as well as other organisations and allies, including the TUC to recognise discriminatory, repressive and unfriendly immigration policies as a form of racism and inequality, to work against this form of practice;
- b) Lobby and work with service group executives, all of UNISON's regions and self organised groups, Migrant Workers' Network, Overseas Nursing Network and other relevant structures of UNISON as well as other organisations and allies including the TUC to launch a campaign for change in regulations that are discriminatory, repressive and unfriendly immigration policies and regulations in order to ensure retention of our highly valued overseas professionals;
- c) Lobby and work with service group executives, all of UNISON's regions and self organised groups, Migrant Workers' Network, Overseas Nursing Network and other relevant structures of UNISON at all levels, to continue organising and engaging migrant workers, with the view of exploring their visa conditions and how these immigration policies affect them and their decision to either stay or leave for better alternatives;
- d) Work with service group executives, Migrant Workers' Network, Overseas Nursing Network, and other relevant structures of UNISON at all levels, to reaffirm UNISON's commitment to stand in support of migrant workers and speak out against the government's announcement of planning to further increase cost of Visas and other immigration expenses in order to foot the wage bill;
- e) Continue to support the good work of UNISON Migrant workers' network and the recently established Overseas Nurses' Network as they strive towards making work and immigration conditions more conducive for overseas recruited staff and migrant workers;

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- f) To encourage, empower and support all of UNISON's Black Members' self organised groups and Branches to continue organising and engaging migrant workers, with the view of exploring their visa conditions and how these immigration policies affect them and their decision to either stay or leave for better alternatives.

South West Region

85. Migrant Workers

Conference, all migrant workers working in the UK are relocating to the UK to fill skill gap shortages, particularly in health and social care. The latest government's migration plans, which include stopping overseas workers from bringing their families to the UK, spell total disaster for the NHS and social care. Migrant workers were encouraged to come to the UK because both sectors are critically short of staff. Hospitals, care homes and council social services departments simply could not function without them. There are global shortages of healthcare staff, social workers and care staff and there is concern that migrants will now head to more-welcoming countries, rather than be forced to live without their families in the UK.

Workers from abroad have sold everything they own to come here and care for people. But instead of receiving decent pay and conditions, and being treated with dignity and respect, the UK government is letting employers get away with terrible practices that should be consigned to history.

Conference, the UNISON produced report called 'Expendable Labour', details shocking treatment of migrant care workers in the UK care system. The report found the ultimate abuse of workers. Brought over here on false promises of a better life and charged dodgy fees that cost them their homes and savings. Some find they are either overworked on 80 hours a week or given too few hours to survive off. Given inadequate training, living in poor conditions, and threatened with deportation if they speak out. To top it off, Tory ministers are demonising migrant workers by blaming them for all the country's woes.

Conference we ask that the National Executive Council agrees to:

- 1) Campaign for visa extensions which would allow care workers more time to seek employment with a new sponsor when they are unable to stay in their original employment;
- 2) Ensure migrant workers receive equal pay to British workers doing the same job and must be paid at least the national minimum wage.

Yorkshire and Humberside Region

86. Supporting Asylum Seekers and Refugees into Sustained Employment

Conference, in the year ending September 2023 there were 75,340 asylum applications in the UK. 38,761 people were granted refugee status as a result of an asylum claim. At that time, 165,411 asylum seekers were still awaiting their initial decision. In the same year, 112,431 were offered safe and legal humanitarian refugee routes (e.g. Ukraine Scheme visas, Afghan Scheme, resettlement, etc.).

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The London Assembly (2023) reports that 51 percent of asylum seekers granted leave to remain are in work, compared to 88 percent among economic migrants, and it takes a generation of residency in order to close that gap.

Asylum seekers are prohibited from working in the UK unless the asylum decision has been delayed for at least 12 months from the date of the application, through no fault of the applicant. They live off a meagre £7 per day pending a Home Office decision to give them refugee status. If permission to work is granted the job must be on the Shortage Occupation List.

Asylum seekers who have been given the right to work while awaiting the outcome of their application and refugees both face significant recruitment challenges. The recruitment processes and practices in our workplaces may create additional barriers due to inherent assumptions within workplace policies and procedures that job applicants are from the UK.

Routine aspects of our recruitment processes can disadvantage these groups: providing passport proof of identity (for asylum seekers) as this is retained by the Home Office, protracted timescales for checks while the Home Office confirms with the employer the right to work, difficulties providing references, large employment gaps, difficulties demonstrating UK qualification equivalency, difficulties passing pre-employment tests, affording fares to travel to interviews, having internet and phone access, etc.

That is just to get into employment, where there are ongoing challenges faced in relation to training, understanding tax and their payslips, setting up a bank account, obtaining a National Insurance number, etc.

For some, English may not be a first language and even where it is, there may be differences in rules for grammar, vocabulary, etc. that can lead to miscommunication and may cause tension.

While some services (for example Citizen's Advice, Migrant Help etc. can assist and signpost, employers themselves could do more to ensure that these issues are considered within the recruitment and selection process to prevent disadvantage.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Develop an asylum/refugee recruitment good practice guide that branches can refer to as a baseline checklist to ensure employers' recruitment and selection, employee induction and training policies considers and mitigates against the range of barriers these two groups may face;
- 2) Lobby the UK and devolved governments to develop an employability strategy that will successfully support these two groups into sustained employment;
- 3) Lobby the UK and devolved governments to provide ring-fenced funding for bespoke employability courses for these two groups to help them secure employment;
- 4) Work with Labour Link to promote these policies within the Labour Party.

South Lanarkshire

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87. Justice Should Not Be A Luxury

Conference reiterates its pride in UNISON members, activists and staff for the successful campaigning last decade which culminated in the Supreme Court ruling in 2017 the Employment Tribunal fees scheme introduced by the Conservative/Liberal Democrat government was unlawful.

It is with disappointment but no surprise to see the current Conservative government introduce a new public consultation in January 2024 with the clear intention of reintroducing claimant fees for Employment Tribunals and Employment Appeal Tribunals.

The proposal to set fees of £55 for each tribunal will act as a barrier to accessing justice as was seen following the initial introduction of such fees in 2013. In the first twelve months following their introduction the number of submitted claims fell from 59,000 to 23,000 and at their lowest to 18,000. Even in 2023 following UNISON's outstandingly successful campaign to abolish such fees the number of submitted claims stood only at 33,000 with it likely part of that reduction being due to a belief that fees still apply.

Employment Tribunal claims do not attract legal aid, it is almost unheard of that costs are awarded even when successful, five percent of all successful claims are awarded £200 or less and a number of societal and cultural barriers remain to the taking forward of such claims. The introduction of a fee on top will discourage more people from accessing justice.

It is particularly worrying the consultation document welcomed views on introducing higher levels of fees than the ones initially proposed. There is little doubt the introduction of fees will quickly lead to significantly higher charges under a Conservative government.

Bad employers will continue to try and treat employees badly and our trade union will do everything in its power to prevent that but the introduction of employment tribunal fees will mean it is those employees who will have to pick up the bill for challenging bad employers. Employment tribunal fees will discriminate against the low paid and those already vulnerable. This Conference is clear that justice should never be a luxury.

Conference asserts its opposition to the introduction of any claimant fee for employment tribunals and instructs the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Publicise and campaign against the introduction of employment tribunal fees;
- 2) To work with Labour Link in such publicity and campaigning and to seek a commitment from a future Labour government to repeal any introduction of such fees within the first term of a Labour government.

Lothian Health

International

88. Palestine and Israel: Justice, Rights and a Viable Solution

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Conference condemns the devastating war between the Israeli government and Hamas and the killing of tens of thousands of civilians, the vast majority of whom are women and children.

The indiscriminate bombardment and ground attacks have displaced most of the population of Gaza and damaged or destroyed the majority of homes. Critical infrastructure and essential public services including health, education and water and sanitation have been decimated, resulting in a public health catastrophe.

At the beginning of 2024 just 13 of Gaza's 36 hospitals were partially operational, despite severe shortages of health workers, essential medical equipment and supplies and access to fuel, food, clean water and sanitation. Hundreds of health workers have been killed in the conflict and many health facilities damaged or destroyed. The targeting of health workers, patients, health facilities and ambulances are serious violations of international law which conference utterly condemns. Conference welcomes UNISON's appeal to support the emergency response of Medical Aid for Palestinians and the Red Cross and encourages branches to continue supporting this critical work.

Vast areas of Gaza are no longer recognisable, with homes, services and entire neighbourhoods turned to dust. The rebuilding of Gaza following the conflict must be centred on the right to public services and decent work and not a return to the poverty and denial of rights of previous decades.

Conference condemns the collective punishment of the people of Gaza and calls for an immediate comprehensive permanent ceasefire, an end to the siege of Gaza and full access to humanitarian assistance.

By mid February over 1.5 million people were crowded into Rafah, more than six times the usual number. The Norwegian Refugee Council described it as a "gigantic refugee camp". Israeli attacks on Rafah and other areas look likely to be horrific with UN aid chief Martin Griffiths saying "military operations in Rafah could lead to a slaughter".

We have already seen the brutal killing of Hind Rajab as she cried for help to paramedics, and whose colleagues were killed trying to rescue her. As a trade union we must throw our full might behind the campaign for a ceasefire and for justice.

UNISON condemns the indiscriminate bombing of Gaza and reaffirms its call for a permanent ceasefire and full access to humanitarian assistance. We reiterate our condemnation of the heinous crimes by Hamas on 7 October and call for the immediate and safe release of all hostages. UNISON also condemns any victimisation and harassment of Jewish and Arab anti war protestors in Israel. We condemn the use of sexual violence in war on any side.

The horrific violations of international law committed by the Israeli government, Hamas and other armed groups in Gaza, Israel and the West Bank must be investigated and prosecuted by the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice. Conference calls on the UK government to support the International Criminal Court's ongoing investigation into the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, request that the crime of apartheid is considered, and respect the independence of the court.

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Conference is concerned that whilst the International Criminal Court investigates allegations of war crimes the UK government continues to grant licences for the sale of British weapons to the Israeli government. Conference notes the Palestinian trade union call to halt the sale and funding of arms to Israel and related military research. We call on the UK government to take immediate measures to suspend the arms trade with Israel and urge Iran and other states to end the transfer of weapons to Hamas and other armed groups.

The people of Gaza have been subjected to a tight land, sea and air blockade for the last 17 years. The isolation of this narrow, highly populated strip of land has resulted in high levels of poverty and one of the highest rates of unemployment in the world.

Essential public services were on the brink of collapse before the latest escalation due to the blockade, repeated offensives and underfunding. Healthcare facilities regularly faced critical shortages of essential medical supplies and permits for patients to access specialist care in Palestinian hospitals in East Jerusalem were regularly denied. At least 98 percent of the water from the aquifer under Gaza is unfit for human consumption, resulting in water borne diseases being the main cause of child mortality.

Conference reaffirms its longstanding demand for a viable Palestinian state. The UK government must recognise Palestine as a sovereign state and call for the United Nations to recognise Palestine as a full member state as a first step to achieving this. Only an internationally supported, just political solution, in line with successive UN resolutions, which provides for a viable, contiguous Palestinian state, alongside Israel, where both states live side by side within secure and recognised borders, will achieve justice and rights for the people of Palestine and Israel.

Conference recognises that the prospect of a two state solution has been significantly undermined by the continued de facto annexation of the West Bank, particularly under the Netanyahu led government. In the first six months of 2023 the government of Israel approved 12,855 new settlement units in the West Bank, according to Peace Now. Settlement activity has increased further during the conflict, including the establishment of new settler outposts. The demolition of Palestinian owned homes and other property also increased during 2023, with 1,128 structures destroyed and 2,249 Palestinians displaced in the West Bank, according to the United Nations.

Since 7 October Palestinians in the West Bank have been subjected to increased limits on their right to freedom of movement. The deterioration in economic conditions has led to a loss of 32 percent of employment. The situation has been exacerbated by the cancellation of work permits for thousands of Palestinians who worked in Israel and the suspension of the transfer of tax revenues to the Palestinian Authority by Israel. Conference welcomes UNISON's work with partners in Israel and Palestine, including MAAN and Kav LaOved, to organise and support Palestinian workers in the illegal settlements.

Palestinians in the West Bank have also experienced a significant increase in attacks by Israeli settlers. In 2023 the United Nations recorded 1,225 settler attacks, of which 370 took place after 7 October. Whilst the UK government has introduced a ban on those responsible for settler violence from entering the UK, it has failed to restrict trade with the illegal settlements. Conference notes that the settlements are

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illegal under international law and undermine human and workers' rights and the prospects of peace and a two-state solution. We call on the UK government to ensure respect for international law by prohibiting trade and other activities with the illegal settlements.

In the absence of a ban on trade with the illegal settlements, Conference reaffirms its support for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions, as a legitimate and peaceful way to put pressure on the Israeli government to bring an end to the occupation and the repression of the Palestinian people and comply with international law. Conference condemns attempts by the Conservative government to restrict BDS and welcomes UNISON's work to oppose the Economic Activities of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign for a comprehensive permanent ceasefire in Israel and Palestine, an end to the blockade of Gaza, full access to humanitarian assistance and the immediate and safe release of hostages;
- 2) Call on the UK government to take measures to uphold international law including suspending the arms trade with Israel, banning trade with the illegal settlements and supporting the prosecution of violations of international law by the International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice;
- 3) Call on the UK government to recognise Palestine as a sovereign state, urge the United Nations to recognise Palestine as a full member state and implement credible measures to facilitate an internationally supported, just political solution, in line with successive UN resolutions, which provides for a viable, contiguous Palestinian state, alongside Israel;
- 4) Work with the Labour Link to secure a commitment from the next Labour government to recognise Palestine as an independent state;
- 5) Continue providing practical solidarity in support of the rights to decent work and quality public services, including through work with trade unions and Palestinian and Israeli human rights and workers organisations, Medical Aid for Palestinians and the Palestine Solidarity Campaign;
- 6) Encourage branches and members organising around Palestine in their workplaces and encourages them to mobilise for both national and local protests.

National Executive Council

89. Justice for Palestinians – No Impunity for State Terrorism

Conference notes the horrific escalation of violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian Territories since 7 October 2023 in which 1200 Israelis and more than 30,000 Palestinians have been killed, including 13,000 children.

Israeli airstrikes across Gaza, targeting civilian infrastructure have caused massive destruction and severe damage. This includes the targeting of dwellings, schools, universities, sanitation facilities, health facilities (including hospitals, clinics, and ambulances), mosques, churches, and media offices. Hundreds of healthcare workers have been killed and many more have been injured. According to British

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doctors returning from Gaza with Medical Aid for Palestinians, the healthcare infrastructure is being intentionally destroyed. Conference condemns the deliberate targeting of healthcare workers and the healthcare system in Gaza which constitute serious violations of international law.

Conference notes that in 2018, the UN Special Rapporteur for the Situation of Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories had declared Gaza to be “unliveable”. Since October 7, the Israeli government has severely tightened its already crippling siege of the Gaza Strip, completely cutting off supplies of water, food, electricity fuel, medicine and other necessities to 2.3 million Palestinians. This amounts to collective punishment, considered to be a war crime under the Geneva Convention.

Over 85 percent of the population of Gaza have been driven from their homes and displaced into poorly equipped refugee camps following Israel’s ordering of 1.2 million people to immediately leave their homes in northern Gaza and flee south. It is our firm belief that mass displacement is regarded by international jurisprudence as both a war crime and a crime against humanity.

In the occupied West Bank, Palestinians are being subjected to a brutal military lockdown. The lockdown has been coupled with lethal Israeli military raids, including airstrikes, on villages, towns and refugee camps which have killed over 350 Palestinians since October 7. Hundreds more have been wounded and Israeli forces have arrested over 6,000. Over 25 percent of those killed were children. Whole Palestinian communities have been forced from their homes by armed settlers with support from the Israeli military.

Hundreds of experts in international law and genocide studies have warned that Israel is committing genocide in the Gaza Strip. Israeli Professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Raz Segal, has called Israel’s assault “a textbook case of genocide”. Conference notes the ‘Statement of Scholars in Holocaust and Genocide Studies on Mass Violence in Israel and Palestine Since 7 October’ and the 16 November warning from 36 UN experts calling on the international community to prevent genocide against the Palestinian people.

Conference notes the proceedings instituted by South Africa against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ): ‘The Application of the Convention on the Prevention of and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip’. Conference welcomes South Africa’s request for the ICJ to urgently implement provisional measures including ordering Israel to cease military actions to prevent possible “irreparable harm” while the case is being determined. We express disappointment however, at the UK government’s lack of support for South Africa’s case.

Conference expresses its deep concern at the UK governments continued granting of arms export licenses for weapons sales to Israel and calls on the government to suspend all arms trade with Israel.

Conference condemns the UK government’s attempt to undermine and restrict Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) and the Right to Boycott and welcomes UNISON’s work to oppose the Economic Activities of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill.

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Conference reaffirms its commitment to Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions, as an effective and peaceful method to pressure Israel into upholding international law and bringing an end to the occupation.

Conferences calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign for an immediate and permanent ceasefire; an end to the siege of Gaza including the full restoration of water, electricity and communications; immediate access to comprehensive humanitarian aid including food, water and medicines; and the safe release of both Israeli hostages, and Palestinians held in Israeli prisons;
- 2) Call on the UK government to recognise Palestine as a sovereign, independent state and put pressure on the UN to recognise Palestine as a full member state;
- 3) Call on the UK government to suspend the arms trade with Israel; ban all trade with illegal settlements; and support the prosecution of violations of international law at the International Criminal Court (ICC) and International Court of Justice (ICJ);
- 4) Continue to support and develop Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaigns, including promoting UNISON's campaign to divest from Local Government Pension Schemes to branches and regions;
- 5) Campaign to reaffirm the Right to Boycott and oppose the UK government's Economic Activities of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill;
- 6) Continue to support the work of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) and encourage regions and branches to affiliate.

North West Region

89.1

Point 1), final sentence, insert "wrongfully" after "Palestinians". Add ", including under administrative detention" after "prisons". To read "and Palestinians wrongfully held in Israeli prisons, including under administrative detention;"

National Executive Council

90. Justice and Rights for Palestine

Conference condemns the devastating escalation of violence against civilians in Gaza, Israel and the West Bank since 7 October 2023, and calls for an immediate comprehensive ceasefire, full access to vital humanitarian assistance and an end to the blockade.

Conference believes that armed conflict will never provide a solution to the occupation of Palestine. Only internationally mediated peace talks, leading to a viable Palestinian state alongside Israel and the full implementation of successive UN resolutions, will ensure justice and rights for the people of Palestine and Israel.

On 7 October Hamas launched a brutal attack on civilians in southern Israel, killing over 1,200 civilians, injuring 5,400 and kidnapping 240, including Israelis and migrant

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workers. Conference condemns this heinous attack and fully endorses UNISON's calls for the safe release of all hostages.

The Israeli government's brutal and indiscriminate bombing campaign and ground incursion has devastated Gaza, killing many thousands of civilians, displacing the majority of the population, destroying homes, infrastructure and critical public services. Gaza has been changed beyond all recognition, with entire neighbourhoods turned to dust. Conference sends its condolences to all those who grieve for loved ones who have been killed during these atrocities.

The tight land, sea and air blockade, imposed by the Israeli government in 2005, and successive bombing campaigns have had a devastating impact on the economy and the lives of the people of Gaza, undermining their rights to health, decent work, water and sanitation and freedom of movement.

Gaza's health system was already on the brink of collapse before 7 October 2023, with severe shortages of essential medical supplies, equipment and specialist provision. Underfunding, the blockade, restrictions on access to Palestinian hospitals in East Jerusalem and the impact of previous escalations have severely undermined the right to health.

The siege and bombing of Gaza and attack by ground forces has further exacerbated the health crisis, with hundreds of health workers killed and bomb damage, attacks and fuel shortages placing the vast majority of hospitals out of use. Conference condemns these attacks and calls for health facilities, patients, ambulances and health workers to be protected in accordance with international law. Furthermore, Conference calls for all war crimes committed to be fully investigated and prosecuted by the International Criminal Court.

The health system has also struggled to respond to tens of thousands of additional patients, many of whom have been permanently disabled. Destruction to water and sanitation services has also contributed to the increased transmission of waterborne diseases. Conference welcomes UNISON's support for Medical Aid for Palestinians and the Red Cross' response to the crisis and encourages branches to contribute to the appeal.

The displacement of the majority of the population of Gaza and severe additional restrictions on access to water, food, electricity, fuel, telecommunications, and essential medical supplies, imposed by the Israeli government, had severely worsened the humanitarian crisis. Conference condemns the collective punishment of the people of Gaza by the Israeli government, which will do nothing to end the occupation and bring about peace.

Conference is concerned at the further deterioration of the situation in the occupied West Bank, where there has been a significant increase in attacks by settlers and the Israeli military and further restrictions on freedom of movement. Palestinian workers have been particularly affected, with many losing their livelihoods. Conference welcomes UNISON's support for the MAAN Workers' Association and Kav LaOved to organise and support Palestinian workers who face extraordinary levels of exploitation in the illegal West Bank settlements.

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Conference reiterates its grave concern at the demolition of Palestinian property and the expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, which contributes to the de facto annexation and colonisation of Palestinian land and is rapidly undermining the prospect of a viable Palestinian state alongside Israel. Whilst the United Nations and most governments and international bodies have condemned the illegality of the settlements for decades, the UK government has failed to support the International Criminal Court's right to prosecute war crimes perpetrated by the Israeli government.

Conference reaffirms its support for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), as a legitimate and peaceful way to put pressure on the Israeli government to bring an end to the occupation and the repression of the Palestinian people. Conference condemns attempts by the Conservative government to restrict BDS and welcomes UNISON's work to oppose the Economic Activities of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to campaign for a comprehensive ceasefire in Israel and Palestine, full access to humanitarian aid in Gaza and for an end to the blockade;
- 2) Encourage branches to support the work of Medical Aid for Palestinians and the Red Cross to support the right to health;
- 3) Ask our General Secretary to call on the UK government and all parliamentarians to:
 - a) Urge Hamas and the Israeli government to respect human rights and international law;
 - b) Urge Hamas to safely release all hostages;
 - c) Support the investigation and prosecution of all war crimes by the International Criminal Court;
 - d) Call for renewed talks to end the occupation and in support of a viable and contiguous Palestinian state alongside Israel.

***Greater London Region
Housing Associations***

91. Women and Children of Gaza

Conference is outraged that the far right Israeli Security Minister called for women and children to be shot. During a cabinet meeting on Monday 12 February.

According to media reports on 13 February, Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir stated "We cannot have women and children getting close to the border anyone who gets near must get a bullet in the head". During a debate with Israeli military, Chief Herzl Halevi on the army's "open fire" rules at the cabinet meeting on Sunday - Halevi did not argue with Ben-Gvir over the ethics of shooting Palestinian women and children but rather claimed that it might need some more "friendly fire" incidents.

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Conference, women in Gaza exhibit remarkable resilience and strength despite facing unique challenges shaped by the geopolitical context of the region. The complex socio-political landscape has often impacted their daily lives, but these women continue to play pivotal roles in their families and communities.

Women in Gaza confront a myriad of challenges, including limited access to education, economic opportunities, and healthcare. The ongoing conflict and blockade have intensified these difficulties, making it crucial to address the specific needs of women in the region. Every day, 180 women are giving birth without water, painkillers, anaesthesia for caesarean sections, electricity for incubators or medical supplies. Mothers mix baby formula with contaminated water, when they find it, and go without food so that their children can live another day.

News report has shown women and young children carrying rucksacks and gathering their belongings following Israeli attacks on hospitals. Hospitals must be considered a safe place.

Their resilience is to be admired but it will not be enough to save them with an army that often appears to shoot first and ask questions later.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Condemn the statement made by the Israeli Security Minister on 12 February 2024;
- 2) Work with the International Committee to provide solidarity with women who are on the frontline in demanding trade union rights, peace, and social justice, in Gaza;
- 3) Work with the National Women's Committee and other Self Organised Groups to show solidarity with women and children adversely affected by the conflict in Gaza and explore ways to help them fight oppression and discrimination;
- 4) To develop an impactful campaign to raise awareness of the adverse impacts and to highlight the appalling conditions being endured by women and children in Gaza;
- 5) Demonstrate solidarity and support by lobbying the future government through national Labour Link to ensure all humanitarian aid arrives at the place most needed.

National Women's Committee

91.1

Delete first and second paragraphs and replace with:

"Conference condemns comments reportedly made by the Israeli National Security Minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, on 11th February 2024 that "we cannot have women and children getting close to the [Gaza] border... anyone who gets near must get a bullet." Conference also condemns his statement on 12 February calling for the suspension of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

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According to UN Women at least 9,000 women in Gaza had been killed by the beginning of March, with many more believed to be under the rubble. The World Health Organisation has warned of an imminent famine, with children dying of malnutrition and disease. Severe shortages of food and water are having a severe impact on 160,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women, whilst mothers, who are often responsible for sourcing food and water are the most likely to go without food and water to feed their families.

Conference condemns the widespread use of sexual violence, including rape, during the conflict and stands in solidarity with all women affected by sexual and gender-based violence."

And add new point 6):

"6) Call on the UK government to restore and increase funding to UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency)."

National Executive Council

92. Support for the people of Gaza

Conference condemns the indiscriminate bombing of Gaza and reaffirms its call for a ceasefire and full access to humanitarian assistance.

Conference also notes that with the level of destruction the people of Gaza will need aid and support for many years to help rebuild basic services and institutions.

Conference also notes the response of UNISON members and branches in providing material and vocal support to the people of Gaza in recent months.

Conference believe that while we support efforts to aid the people of Gaza and help them rebuild we must also continue to work to pressure the Israeli state to continue support for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign.

We stand firm with the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign. We condemn those who would say that supporting attempts to use sanctions to isolate the violent and oppressive Israeli state as being motivated by antisemitism rather than humanitarianism and solidarity. Our union is and always will be opposed to antisemitism and our ongoing support for the BDS campaign is fully in line with UNISON beliefs, values and policies.

Conference urges UNISON branches to continue their support for Medical Aid for Palestine and the Red Cross.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to support efforts for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign against the Israeli state;
- 2) Promote educational initiatives within our branches to raise awareness about the history and complexities of the Palestine-Israel conflict;

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- 3) Work with other organisations and groups to support humanitarian efforts in the region, with the goal of alleviating the suffering of Palestinians and promoting peace;
- 4) Make a further donation to Medical Aid for Palestine and encourage branches to do so as well.

Scotland Region

92.1

Insert after first sentence:

"We condemn the heinous crimes by Hamas on 7 October and call for the immediate and safe release of all hostages."

Replace fourth and fifth paragraphs, beginning "Conference believe", with:

"Conference believes that while we support efforts to alleviate the suffering of the people of Gaza and bring about peace and the rebuilding of Gaza, we must also continue to support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign.

UNISON was one of the first trade unions in Europe to support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign to apply pressure to the Israeli government to end the occupation, respect the rights of Palestinians and bring about peace. We condemn the repeated attempts by the Conservative government to restrict BDS, including the Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill and welcome UNISON's work to oppose the Bill. We reject attempts by the government and others to define BDS as inherently antisemitic and welcome the UNISON and Hope not Hate briefing on understanding antisemitism and Islamophobia in the context of Israel and Palestine.

We reiterate our demand for the UK government to suspend the arms trade with Israel and the UK-Israel trade and partnership agreement until the Israeli government ends the occupation and respects human and workers' rights."

Replace text of point 1) with:

"1) Continue to oppose attempts by governments and others to restrict BDS and continue to use targeted BDS to apply pressure to the Israeli government to end the occupation, respect the rights of Palestinians and bring about peace."

National Executive Council

93. Solidarity with Palestine

Conference notes:

- 1) UNISON published the guide to activists 'Talking about Palestinian Rights' in December 2021. Whilst the history of this area is complex, this document outlines the rights of the Palestinian people that have consistently been denied to them;
- 2) UNISON supports activists to highlight the plight of the Palestinian people in Gaza, the West Bank, and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and their human rights that are being restricted such as freedom of movement, decent work,

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health, education, clean water and sanitation. The document also outlines some of the key issues of international law relating to the occupation and successive UN resolutions.

Conference believes:

- a) The actions of Hamas on 7 October 2023 are to be condemned. There is no acceptable reason for the killing, maiming and kidnapping of innocent civilians. There must also be condemnation of the Israeli government's historical and ongoing actions. These include the firing on unarmed Palestinian protesters and on Mosque worshipers and on children in the streets. The internment and torture of Palestinian civilians including children in Israeli prisons under administrative detention should also be condemned. These actions have been recorded recently and historically across the Israeli state. The occupation, the illegal settlements and blockade of the Palestinian territories also must be condemned.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- i) Support and defend the calls for an immediate ceasefire and the end to the occupation of Palestinian territories;
- ii) Support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement including calls for an embargo on the supply of weapons and military technology to Israel;
- iii) Oppose attempts by the government to legally restrict shows of solidarity with Palestine, such as legislation banning BDS campaigns;
- iv) Encourage branches and members to organise around Palestine in their workplaces and encourage them to mobilise for both national and local protests;
- v) Continue to oppose all forms of discrimination including antisemitism, racism and Islamophobia.

East Sussex Area

94. Time to Stop Buying Products Made in Workplaces Riddled With Forced Labour and Union Busting

Conference delegates have had enough of being forced to wear uniforms and PPE, eat food and use computers and medical tools that are made with forced labour and in workplaces where unions have been busted.

Conference has noted that, according to the International Labour Organisation, the number of workers trapped in private sector forced labour rose from 16 million in 2016 to 17.3 million in 2023. It further estimates that approximately four million people, are trapped in state imposed forced labour.

Conference has also noted that according to the International Trades Union Confederation (ITUC), nine out of ten countries violated the right to strike in 2023; 77 percent of countries excluded working people from the right to establish or join a trade union; and eight out of ten countries violated the right to collective bargaining.

Conference further notes that China is the world's largest exporter of manufactured goods. Systemic forced labour systems using Uyghur forced labour now exist to feed

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the supply chains of more than 17 global industries from cotton to PPE and electronics to solar energy. In Hong Kong, the 2021 National Security Law led to the shutting down of the independent Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions whose leaders were either arrested or forced into exile.

However, Conference is aware that it is not just in China that these practices take place: a recent review by the United Kingdom government in 2023 found that over a fifth of NHS suppliers providing items including surgical instruments, gloves, gowns and face masks are at “high risk” of using modern slavery. It is of no surprise that in countries such as Malaysia, Myanmar and Bangladesh, infamous for forced labour, union busting is also enabled.

Conference believes forced labour cannot thrive in unionised workplaces. But with a government that praises a voluntaristic approach to corporate accountability in global supply chains and deliberately ignores union busting, it’s no surprise that hundreds of thousands of pounds thrown at ending forced labour has failed miserably.

The UK has gone from global leader to global laggard. Germany, France, Norway and the European Union have all passed human rights and environmental due diligence laws that hold corporations to account for harming people and the planet and other countries are likely to follow.

Where complaints of force labour have been made, in the USA, customs officials increasingly use a Tarriff Act to stop shipments of products. These import bans have led to improvements in the lives of workers, pressed companies to conduct better due diligence and catalysed international policy changes and labour reforms. Migrant workers in Malaysia and elsewhere were able to recover at least 200 million dollars in back wages and recruitment fee reimbursements. Canada, Mexico and the European Commission are also considering similar policy approaches.

Conference welcomes UNISON’s support for Baroness Hornsey’s Private Members Bill which would create a UK Act similar to a draft Act UNISON has developed with its partner, the Corporate Justice Coalition, to prevent human rights and environmental abuse in private and public supply chains and hold those who fail to do so, to account.

Conference believes that the UK government must aspire to global leadership and pass the Act but also go further by legislating an import ban on goods made with forced labour and from workplaces in which unions have been busted.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to campaign for the UK government to pass a Business, Human Rights and Environment Act, a human rights and environmental due diligence law covering the private and public sector, to prevent harm to people and the planet and hold those that fail, accountable;
- 2) Work with Labour Link to hold the Labour party to its National Policy Forum commitment to “Assess the best way to prevent environmental harms, modern slavery and human and labour rights abuses in both private and public sector supply chains including effective due diligence rules”;

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- 3) Campaign for a law that bans imports into the UK made from forced labour and/or in union-busted workplaces;
- 4) Support members to ask questions about where their workplace products have been made, put the issue on the bargaining table and if necessary, refuse to use the products;
- 5) Support independent trade unions in countries where forced labour and union busting are present and support ex-trade union activists from Hong Kong who have fled to the UK;
- 6) Campaign for the public sector to use worker driven supply chain monitoring as a tool to help end union busting as well as forced slavery.

National Executive Council

95. Solidarity with Ukraine and its Labour Movement

Conference notes the devastating damage inflicted since the full scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022. Ukraine was poor before the war, with a per capita GDP of \$3,700 (one third of the poorest EU state); last year GDP fell by 30%. Unemployment is estimated by the IMF to be 19.4 percent.

Six million people (15 percent of the population) have fled Ukraine, five million have been internally displaced.

The Kyiv School of Economics reports (October 2023) that 1,700 secondary schools, 1000 nurseries and 586 higher education institutions have been damaged or destroyed, as have 1,223 medical facilities, including 384 hospitals and 353 pharmacies.

Conference believes the international labour movement has a duty of solidarity with the people of Ukraine, as with all peoples suffering imperialist invasion and oppression, and with its labour movement, fighting both the Russian invasion and the neoliberal policies of the Zelensky government.

Conference strongly endorses the decision of our delegation at TUC Congress last September to vote for the resolution in solidarity with Ukraine and its labour movement, which was passed overwhelmingly.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council:

- 1) To actively support Ukraine's struggle for liberation from Russian imperialism; immediate withdrawal of all Russian troops from Ukraine; and the struggles of trade unionists, socialists, etc in Ukraine and Russia for workers' rights, social provision and democracy as well as Ukraine's right to self-determination;
- 2) To organise campaigning on this basis, including:
 - a) Strengthen links with unions in Ukraine;
 - b) Provide details of Ukrainian trade unionists who will speak at branch, regional and national events;

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- c) Holding online and real-world events to educate members about these issues;
- 3) To affiliate to the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign and encourage branches etc to do likewise.

South Lanarkshire

Northern Ireland

96. In Pursuit of a Just and Sustainable Peace in Northern Ireland

Conference commends the huge effort of our members across health, social services and education support services in Northern Ireland in taking sustained industrial action for pay justice in the absence of devolved Government. Conference recalls the major cuts to public services that have been imposed in Northern Ireland by the UK Government in the absence of the institutions at Stormont.

Conference notes that the UK government has acknowledged for the first time that Northern Ireland public services are underfunded compared to need and have been on a downward funding spiral over many years. Conference agrees that the UK Government must ensure that sufficient, sustained funding is available for public services in Northern Ireland, on the basis of need.

Conference acknowledges the recent restoration of devolved government in Northern Ireland. Conference agrees that now devolved government has been restored, it must deliver for our members, their families and their communities. Conference reaffirms its support for the implementation of the commitments made within the peace agreements on equality and human rights and calls on the new Executive to function within a rights-based framework.

Despite paying lip-service to the 25th anniversary of the peace agreement, the UK government has systematically undermined its commitments on equality and human rights, its commitments on dealing with the legacy of the past and its obligation to support a sustainable peace through proper resource allocation.

Conference recognises that the Northern Ireland region has a comprehensive agenda setting out priority actions the new devolved government must take. Conference recalls that the vast majority of Government functions affecting our members are devolved in Northern Ireland.

Conference continues to support UNISON Northern Ireland in its programme of action with the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly, the UK government and Irish government to secure rights and justice for our members. Conference calls on the National Executive Council to ensure that this support is matched by the full implementation of UNISON's devolution protocol; the fair allocation of resources; and the exercise of UNISON's extensive influence with any incoming Labour government to ensure that it delivers on the obligations which the current UK government, as guarantor of the peace agreement, has reneged upon.

Northern Ireland Region

Decentralisation

97. Empowering Our Regions: a Call for Devolution to Protect Public Services

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Conference recognises the severe and ongoing impact of austerity policies and planned cuts to public services across the United Kingdom, which have inflicted significant damage on the well being and fabric of our local communities.

Conference is concerned that these cuts have wide ranging consequences, affecting various vital public services such as healthcare, education, social care, public safety, and environmental services, often leading to diminished standards and accessibility.

Conference acknowledges the critical financial challenges faced by local councils, exemplified by Nottingham City Council's recent Section 114 notice due to their inability to balance their books. This alarming situation underscores the urgency of addressing the current state of funding for our essential public services.

Conference believes public services are the lifeblood of our society, providing essential support and resources that touch every aspect of our daily lives, and their preservation is paramount.

The centralisation of power and decision making in Westminster has contributed to a lack of flexibility and responsiveness in addressing the unique needs of our diverse regions.

The austerity driven cuts to public services have not only strained service providers but have also disproportionately impacted the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our communities.

It is imperative to explore alternative funding solutions to address the crisis in public services, and devolution to the regions and nations of the UK, including the English regions, offers a viable and democratic approach to better serve our communities.

Devolving more power and resources to the nations and regions would enable more effective and tailored management of public services, fostering local solutions and greater accountability.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council:

- 1) To advocate strongly for a fully funded policy of devolution from Westminster to the nations/regions, including the English regions, as a means to empower local communities and to better protect public services;
- 2) To call for a comprehensive review of the current centralised governance structure, assessing the potential benefits of greater regional autonomy in decision-making and resource allocation;
- 3) To highlight the urgency of adopting a fair and equitable funding formula that supports regional governments in meeting the diverse and evolving needs of their communities;
- 4) To emphasise our unwavering support for the Nottingham City UNISON and the other council trade unions as they struggle to provide essential services and jobs;
- 5) To emphasise the importance of local government as a catalyst for democratic engagement and a key player in addressing the specific needs of regional communities;

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- 6) To commit the union to a sustained, proactive campaign for devolution to the regions, working collaboratively with fellow trade unions, community organisations, and stakeholders;
- 7) To engage in public awareness initiatives, including petitions, rallies, and media campaigns, to educate and mobilise the public in support of regional devolution as a solution to protect public services;
- 8) To forge alliances with other trade unions, civil society organisations, and sympathetic political leaders who share our vision of devolution for a more responsive and accountable governance structure;
- 9) To actively pursue opportunities for constructive dialogue with government officials and policymakers at all levels, advocating relentlessly for the interests of our members and the communities they serve.

East Midlands Region

Efficient and Effective Union

Industrial Action

98. The Right to Strike

Government proposals in effect will ban the right for workers to raise genuine concerns concerning pay and working conditions through strike action.

The new law is insisting on Minimum Service Levels, during strikes in areas where our members work.

Ambulance, Border control and some passport workers will be affected, but this law can be extended, to include, other hospital workers, schools, further and higher education.

For example ambulance workers must ensure "cases that are life threatening or where there is no reasonable clinical alternative to an ambulance are kept at a level that would be there, if the strike was not taking place on that day". This at a time when the Tories have continually underfunded the NHS, undermining staff morale and creating staff shortages. Meaning that it is not strikes that cause staff shortages but government policies.

A recent TUC survey found that one in five workers or 5.5 million are at risk of losing their right to strike under the Strikes (Minimum Service Level) Act.

The right to strike is fundamental. It is vital for the balance of power in the workplace.

We must defend it at all cost, we must defend this right, we must not stop defending this right. We must protect the voice of workers. UNISON is already challenging this Act, it must continue to do so. UNISON members should not wait for employers to use this proposed Act.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with other trade unions to campaign for the repeal of the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023;

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- 2) Campaign that the National Labour Link Committee works to ensure that the Labour Party has a manifesto commitment to repeal the legislation.

Suffolk County

98.1

Add at end of point 2):

“and also the Trade Union Act 2016 within the first 100 days of a new Labour government at Westminster.”

National Executive Council

Finances

99. Mileage Expenses for UNISON Members

Conference notes that the HMRC has not changed the current rate of 45p per mile since the beginning of the 2011 tax year. This means that the mileage rate has been static for 13 years. The price of fuel, however, is far from static and has risen exponentially since 2011. Similarly, the cost of maintaining a car has also increased. Conference notes that the 45p rate does not cover the expense of using a car. This could make attending UNISON events too expensive for many members as well as putting pressure onto activists when they are using their cars to support members and for members driving for work. This is a particular concern in the current cost of living crisis which potentially disproportionately impacts many of our members, including our Black, Disabled, Women, LGBT+, Young and Retired members.

In the hope that by the time this motion is heard we have had a general election and now have a new Labour government, Conference asks the National Executive Council to work with Labour Link to lobby the Transport Secretary to work with the HMRC to increase mileage rates.

If not, Conference asks the National Executive Council work with Labour Link to lobby the shadow Transport Secretary to work with the HMRC to increase mileage rates.

Staffordshire University

Resources

100. Think Again - Fund UNISON Welfare Properly

Conference is extremely angry and disappointed by this National Executive Council decision to cut its funding to our charity 'There for You' UNISON Welfare.

Conference is well aware of the significant financial challenges the union, with union facing a significant deficit budget that has meant that regions have all received nil/zero funding for this financial year, impacting on the work that they are committed to undertaking for our members, taken funds out of the unions reserve, in the hope of closing the gap that has appeared under their watch.

But, Conference cannot and accept the decision of the National Executive Council to cut the funding to its own charity by over £100,000, our charity that our members rely on in desperate times, our charity that this National Executive Council extol as one of

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its crowning glories, our charity that ensures that children have school uniforms through its School Uniforms Grant program, our charity that ensures our vulnerable members are able to heat their homes through its Winter Fuel Grant programme, our charity that helps women and children flee domestic abuse by assisting with rent deposits and white goods, our charity that does so so much more.

Conference, our 'There for You' charity now needs you to stand up for it and say 'enough is enough' we need proper funding and we need it now.

Conference therefore calls on this National Executive Council to:

- 1) Think again and reinstate the donation to UNISON Welfare;
- 2) Work with the UNISON Welfare Board of Trustees and Officers to ensure that our charity can undertake and continue its work without any reduction of its services or criteria;
- 3) Encourage branches and regions to donate to UNISON 'There for You'.

Lancashire Police

Services to Members

101.Ethical Sponsorships – Our Duty to Our Members

Conference notes that UNISON has a responsibility to its members to ensure all corporate alliances with third parties are ethical. Sponsorship partnerships may be beneficial, advertising the UNISON ethos and potentially leading to an increase in membership; they can however, be extremely damaging if the partnered organisation turns out to be unscrupulous or the sponsored event unfolds with less than favourable results.

Entering into sponsorship partnerships with companies and events whose business models adversely contribute to the health and wellbeing of those in our communities should therefore be questioned.

Conference, a simple internet search will show various UNISON sponsored horse racing days and individual races at racing events. Far from drawing our members attention to the dangers of gambling, we are seemingly encouraging our members to participate.

Public Health England (PHE) summarised the impact of gambling as follows:

- 1) The UK has one of the biggest gambling markets in the world, generating a profit of £14.2billion in 2020; research has shown that damage associated with gambling is wide-ranging and is not only harmful to the individual gambler but also their families, close associates and wider society;
- 2) The highest rates of gambling participation are among people who have higher academic qualifications, people who are employed, and among relatively less deprived groups;
- 3) However, with addictive gambling the socio-demographic profile of gamblers appears to change and reflects people who are unemployed and those living in

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more deprived areas suggesting that harmful gambling is related to social inequalities;

- 4) Gambling and the risk of gambling related harm are known to affect both psychological and physical health;
- 5) The most severe impacts of problem gambling are felt most by immediate family members. Almost half (48 percent) of people affected by a spouse or partner's gambling reported a severe negative impact. This was followed by people affected by the gambling of a parent (41 percent) and the gambling of a child (38 percent);
- 6) Financial harm resulting from gambling debt invariably creates relationship problems, physical and mental health problems, and crime;
- 7) Physical and mental health issues, including suicide risk, are significantly higher among adults with gambling disorders compared to the general adult population.

From the humanitarian aspect, horse racing is far from a harmless sport where the animals are willing participants who thoroughly enjoy the thrill, the truth is that behind the scenes lies a story of immense suffering. These highly intelligent animals are subject to being routinely whipped to perform and thoroughbred horse deaths directly resulting from a racing event currently run at around 200 horses a year.

Conference, horse racing is an intrinsically cruel and exploitative industry, which fails to take care of horses when they are deemed to no longer be of use; we should not romanticise the so-called 'sport of kings'.

Because of the impactful and negative influence that gambling is shown to cause and because of the inevitable suffering to the horses we as a union should question our association with it.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Provide clear guidelines on ethical sponsorships;
- b) Include restrictions on partnerships with organisations or events that are not in the public interest.

Norfolk and Suffolk Police

Conference Administration

102.Environmental Impact Attending Conference

Conference notes a motion submitted to UNISON 2005 National Women's Conference, raising concerns over the remote geographic location of some conference venues being selected for national conferences. This motion noted: "Whilst accepting that any location chosen should have a good standard of facilities we are concerned that the remote geographic location of some conference venues chosen, for many Scottish and Irish and North of England branches, provides for travelling difficulties and can extend periods away from home for activists with family commitments. We note that self-organisation is normally deemed a trade union activity, which means no paid time off for delegates, unless they have a sympathetic

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employer. The additional travelling time can also create problems in getting time off to attend with a three day conference requiring, on occasion, five days away from home."

A review of National Delegate Conference venues since 2010 shows those held in person (ie pre/post Covid restrictions) are still dominated by geographically remote locations on the south coast of England (70 percent).

This does not only have implications for cost and time, but also the environmental footprint of delegate travel. In the midst of the climate emergency, UNISON should be ensuring carbon costs attached to national conferences are as low as possible by choosing venues that are accessible by sustainable travel options.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Carry out a review of the carbon costs associated with recent NDC venues, including a breakdown of mode of travel (ie air, rail etc);
- 2) Revisit the suitability criteria used when selecting venues for national conferences to ensure the carbon costs associated with conference travel are given high priority;
- 3) Look at the possibility to be able to run conferences in a hybrid way (Teams, in person).;
- 4) Look into carbon offsetting for travel.

Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Schedules

Schedule E Political Fund Ballot

1. Schedule E Political Fund Ballot

In paragraph 2 delete:

"Lower Ground Floor, Fleetbank House, 2-6 Salisbury Square, London, EC4 8JX"

Replace with: "8th Floor, Windsor House, 50 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0TL"

In paragraph 6 a) delete:

"a) the person satisfies the conditions which are for the time being specified by the Secretary of State pursuant to section 75 (2) of the Act or is a person specified in an order made under that section (the conditions and the persons specified by the Secretary of State were, at the time of the adoption of these rules, contained in The Trade Union Ballots and Elections (Independent Scrutineer Qualifications) Order 2002 (SI 2002/2267) – available at www.hmsso.gov.uk);"

replace with:

"a) the person satisfies the conditions which are for the time being specified by the Secretary of State pursuant to section 75 (2) of the Act or is a person specified in an order made under that section. The conditions and the persons specified by the

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Secretary of State were, at the time of the adoption of these rules, contained in The Trade Union Ballots and Elections (Independent Scrutineer Qualifications) (Amendment) Order 2017 (SI 2017/877) – available at www.legislation.gov.uk;

In Paragraph 25 delete:

“The scrutineer shall at all times take all reasonable steps to secure their safe custody so as to minimise the risk of any contravention of the requirements imposed by or under any enactment of these rules or the occurrence of any unfairness or malpractice”

Replace with:

“The scrutineer shall at all times take all reasonable steps to secure their safe custody of the returned envelopes and voting papers so as to minimise the risk of any contravention of the requirements imposed by or under any enactment of these rules or the occurrence of any unfairness or malpractice.”

Throughout Schedule E:

Delete “his/her” replace with “their”

Delete “he/she has” replace with “they have”

Delete “him/her” replace with “them”

Delete “his or her” replace with “their”

Delete “his” replace with “their”

Delete “she/he is” replace with “they are”

Delete ‘he/she is’ replace with ‘they are’

Delete “he/she declined” replace with “they declined”

Delete “he/she considers” replace with “they consider”

Delete “his independence” replace with “their independence”

National Executive Council

Rules

Rule C Membership

2. Rules C, D, E, G, H, I, K, M, P and Schedules A, B, C, D in the UNISON rule book

Delete ‘she/he’ and replace with ‘they’

Delete ‘she/he has’ and replace with ‘they have’

Delete ‘she/he is’ and replace with ‘they are’

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- Delete 'he/she is' and replace with 'they are'
- Delete 'she/he was' and replace with 'they were'
- Delete 'she/he shall' and replace with 'they will'
- Delete 'she/he meets' and replace with 'they meet'
- Delete 'she/he resigns' and replace with 'they resign'
- Delete 'she/he thinks' and replace with 'they think'
- Delete 'she/he considers' and replace with 'they consider'
- Delete 'she or he has' and replace with 'they have'
- Delete 'she or he intends' and replace with 'they intend'
- Delete 'she or he may' and replace with 'they may'
- Delete 'she / he admits' and replace with 'they admit'
- Delete 'she / he objects' and replace with 'they object'
- Delete 'she/he denies' and replace with 'they deny'
- Delete 'she/he claims' and replace with 'they claim'
- Delete 'she/he does' and replace with 'they do'
- Delete 'she/he wishes' and replace with 'they wish'
- Delete 'he/she declined' and replace with 'they declined'
- Delete 'he/she considers' and replace with 'they consider'
- Delete 'her/his' and replace with 'their'
- Delete 'her or his' and replace with 'their'
- Delete 'his/her' and replace with 'their'
- Delete 'his or her' and replace with 'their'
- Delete 'her/him' and replace with 'them'
- Delete 'her or him' and replace with 'them'
- Delete 'him/her' and replace with 'them'
- D 2.5.1.2 delete 'has' and replace with 'have'
- D 3.5.7 delete '(s)he meets' and replace with 'they meet'

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delete '(s)he was' and replace with 'they were'

M 5 (f) delete 'by reason of her/his accepting office' replace with 'by reason of them accepting office'

M 7.3 delete 'she/he had had' and replace with 'they have had'

National Executive Council

Rule D Structure of the Union at National Level

3. Rule D Regional Representatives

Rule D 2.2.1

Under the sub paragraph heading "Less than 100,000"

Remove: "1 male"

And replace with: "1 general"

Under the sub paragraph heading "100,000 or more and less than 150,000"

Remove: "1 male"

And replace with: "1 general"

Under the sub paragraph heading "150,000 or more"

Remove: "1 male"

And replace with: "1 general"

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender plus Committee

4. Rule D Service Groups

Rule D 3.1.1

Replace the name "Police and Justice" with:

"Police, Probation and CAFCASS"

Eastern Region Probation

Rule G Branches

5. Rule G Stewards

Insert a new bullet point under rule G 5.3: "6 complete the Union's mandatory data protection training within three months of being elected; and any subsequent annual refresher training."

National Executive Council

Rule M Financial and Legal

6. Rule M Data Protection

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Delete the current wording of existing rule M 6.2 and replace with: "For the avoidance of doubt, each branch and its members must abide by the data protection principles and requirements embodied in data protection legislation."

National Executive Council

7. Rule M Data Protection

Delete the current wording of existing rule M 6.5 and replace with: "Data protection legislation refers to all applicable privacy and data protection laws relating to the processing of personal data and the privacy of electronic communications, in force in the UK including the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR); the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018); and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (PECR), and any laws that replace, extent, re-enact, consolidate, or amend any of the foregoing."

National Executive Council

Amendments Ruled Out of Order

Conflicts with an Existing Rule

Motion 44 Local Government Financial Crisis a Broken System

Add new point 8):

"8) Support all councils to use all legal means in their power to avoid making cuts and working alongside trade unions and community based campaigns for increased central government funding, especially calling on Labour councils with their historic links with the trade unions to lead campaigns."

Add new point 9):

"9) To work with the National Executive Council to get legal advice on how to pursue lawful industrial action in a national trades dispute of local government workers against cuts to jobs, pay, or terms and conditions of employment resulting from funding decisions made by the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities."

Hackney Local Government

Could Place the Union in Legal Jeopardy

Motion 98 The Right to Strike

Add before "Conference instructs":

"This union notes that TUC passed policy to oppose the Strike (Minimum Service Levels) Act and agreed a strategy of mass opposition, including non-compliance, industrial action and non-cooperation to make such laws unworkable.

We recognise that the right to withdraw our labour and to respect picket lines is a founding principle of the labour movement."

Add at end:

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"3) Work with the TUC to carry out this policy including support for any demonstrations they may call;

4) Support any members who may be disciplined for taking part in legitimate strike action."

Cheshire and Wirral Community Health

In Breach of the Agreement on the Political Fund

Motion 33 End Child Poverty!

Insert new action point after 5): "Hold the Labour Party to account so that the New Deal for Working People is fully implemented as a priority under a Labour government."

National Young Members' Forum

Introduces Substantial New Subject Matter

Motion 2 Building UNISON in the Private Sector

Add new point 12):

"12) Support Branches to scrutinise modern slavery breaches against UNISON members by all private contractors."

North Northamptonshire Local Government

Motion 31 Time to Invest Now - Don't Make Public Service Workers Pay the Price of Austerity!

Add before "Conference therefore calls for the National Executive Council to:"

"Conference believes that the ability to organise and take industrial action is one important tool in fighting cuts and austerity and winning improvements for workers.

We recognise that the right to withdraw your labour and to respect picket lines is a foundation of our labour movement."

Add new points at the end:

"4) Work with the TUC and other unions opposing all anti union laws;

5) Investigate how to improve our advice to members who do not wish to cross picket lines of other unions, and to consider how unison can give advice, and best represent any member who chooses not to cross a picket line."

Cheshire and Wirral Community Health

Not Competent

Motion 1 Organising to Win. Building on Success and Consolidating Change

Add new point D):

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"D) All Regional Council Annual General Meetings to provide an update from all Branches on their Organising Framework Plan successes with regional comparisons provided at future National Delegate Conference starting from 2025."

North Northamptonshire Local Government

Motion 31 Time to Invest Now - Don't Make Public Service Workers Pay the Price of Austerity!

Add new point 3 c):

"c) If there is a change of government, request the National Executive Council to encourage the Labour Link structures, both regionally and nationally, to proactively promote all of the actions in this motion for them to encourage the Labour Party to use changes to non-doms to fund those actions."

North Northamptonshire Local Government

Motion 52 National Care Service Campaigning and the NHS

To ask the SGE to work through the Labour link and the national policy forum to seek an incoming Labour government to commit to reversing immediately the inhumane migrant workers visa rules. This will help with the current health and social care crises and stop the exploitation that UNISON's "Expendable labour: the exploitation of migrant care workers" report clearly outlines, and ensuring we comply with the European law of human rights that workers have the rights to family life in the country they live and work in.

Bolton Metropolitan

Motion 53 Towards a Real National Care Service

A national care service for Wales, which showed the private is a barrier to improved social care services and that people receiving care as well as care workers are being let down by commissioning outsourcing the need to turn a profit and years of underfunding. Also the work Cymru/wales has done to publicise the cic tar report extract profits through care home real estate. In seminars with council leaders and politicians explaining the billions of pounds extracted from the care system profiteering and financing property the reliance on private care home landlords charging ever increasing rental payments pushes up the social care costs.

APSE'S report for UNISON Scotland outlines a model of national care service that is not for profit

Insert new point and end of motion

Call for independent enquiry into the role of private equity and corporate finance in the provision of social care in the UK.

North Wales Health

Motion 63 The Climate Emergency - Why it Matters to UNISON

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Add new point h) Therefore we need a socialist government to take over the commanding heights of the economy including the banks and run them under democratic working class control and management to prevent climate catastrophe.

Hackney Local Government

Motion 88 Palestine and Israel: Justice, Rights and a Viable Solution

Not printed.

Portsmouth City

Motion 88 Palestine and Israel: Justice, Rights and a Viable Solution

Solidarity with progressive forces in Israel for peace and justice

Conference notes the ongoing Israeli assault on Gaza and the increase in settler violence in the West Bank.

Conference opposes the war and Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and supports a political settlement based on equal rights for Israelis and Palestinians, including an equal right to self-determination.

Conference further notes:

- The work of Standing Together (Naqef-Ma'an/Omdim be'Yachad), Israel's grassroots Arab-Jewish social movement, which fights against war, occupation, and racism, and for social justice and equality. Since the start of the last round of violence, Standing Together has formed "Arab-Jewish Solidarity Committees" in mixed cities, to mobilise both Palestinian and Israeli residents to take action against incitements to racism by far-right figures in the Israeli government. Standing Together has also organised protests against the war, calling for a ceasefire agreement and the return of hostages. A protest they co-organised on 18 January in Tel Aviv was the largest public mobilisation in Israel against the war since it began.
- The establishment of the UK Friends of Standing Together network, aiming to promote and build support in the UK for Standing Together's work.

Conference believes that social change within Israel itself is vital for winning lasting equality and justice in Israel/Palestine, and that we should directly support the work of those fighting for this.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to publicise the work of the UK Friends of Standing Together network and to hear a speaker at an NEC meeting.

Nottingham University

Not Sufficiently Clear

Motion 27 Organising to End Workplace Bullying and Harassment

Add new point 6):

"6) Provide the numbers of bullying and harassment cases supported by all Branches annually to National Delegate Conference from 2025 onwards."

North Northamptonshire Local Government

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Motion 45 Cuts and Funding

Add new points:

"2) Campaign for rebuilding the important range of public services that councils provide, back towards 2010 levels, reversal of the cuts, writing off council debts and the restoration of government funding and councils' ability to spend to pre-austerity levels;

3) Support councils to use all legal means in their power to avoid making cuts and to work alongside trade unions and community based campaigns for increased central government funding, especially calling on Labour councils with their historic links with the trade unions to lead campaigns."

Renumber points accordingly.

Surrey County