



**Service Group Conference 2024**

**Final Agenda**

**16 - 17 June 2024**

**Brighton Centre**



# Conference timetable and order of business

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE GROUP CONFERENCE 2024

### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Doors to the conference hall will be open half an hour before each session commences. During lunchtime doors will be shut.

9.30 am – 5.00 pm (lunch will be taken between 12.30 pm and 2.00 pm)

#### SESSION 1 – SUNDAY MORNING

9.30 am – 12.30 pm

Announcements

Standing Orders Committee Report

Local Government Service Group Executive Annual Report – General

12.00 noon: Christina McAnea, General Secretary

#### Motions – Recruiting and Organising

No.	Title
8	Supporting and developing young members and activists within the UNISON Local Government Service Group  Amendment 8.1  Amendment 8.2

#### Motions – Equalities

No.	Title
4	Gender Pay Justice for Women  Amendment 4.1
2*	Year of LGBT+ workers – embedding LGBT+ equality in Local Government
3	Next steps for our work on the Disability Employment Charter - a bargaining approach
6	Black Social Workers face disproportional disciplinary and capability procedures
7	Council Bankruptcy and its Impact on Black Workers

1*	Make 2024 the Year of LGBT+ Workers in Local Government Workplaces Amendment 1.1
5	Tackling the exploitation of migrant workers Amendment 5.1

**Motions – Social Care and Social Workers**

No.	Title
11	A Real National Care Service Amendment 11.1
12	Organising LGBT+ workers in social care
9	Defending our Social Workers Amendment 9.1

**ANY MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS NOT REACHED IN THE MORNING SESSION  
WILL BE TAKEN AT THE END OF THE AFTERNOON SESSION**

## **SESSION 2 – SUNDAY AFTERNOON**

**2.00 pm – 5.00 pm**

**2.00 pm**

**UNISON Local Service Champions awards – short films and presentation to winners**

**Local Government Service Group Executive Annual Report – Sector Committee Reports (Section 5)**

### **Motions – Pay, Terms and Conditions**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
41	Workplace Violence
40	Maternity pay in Local Government
38	Erosion of T&C's, Pay and Protection
39	Stop charging disabled members to go to work
33	Living wage as part of a pay strategy
35	Demand that councils and other NJC employers recompense staff who have overpaid tax and NI due to lump-sum backpay from pay awards, and avoid future overpayments/impacts on benefits
37	Car allowance rates as part of our national pay negotiations
42	Food Standards Agency – Pay, Terms & Conditions

**ANY MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS NOT REACHED IN THE AFTERNOON SESSION  
WILL BE TAKEN AT THE END OF THE MONDAY MORNING SESSION**

## SESSION 3 – MONDAY MORNING

9.30 am – 12.30 pm

### Standing Orders Committee Report

11am - Guest Speaker: Sue Sanders CEO Schools OUT, Co-Founder LGBT+ History Month UK

Local Government Service Group Executive Annual Report – Local Government Finance and Service Delivery (Sections 2.1 – 2.4)

### Motions – Local Government Funding and Cuts

No.	Title
25***	Cuts and Funding Amendment 25.1 Amendment 25.2
26***	Council Funding is in Crisis
30	Pay and funding in local government Amendment 30.1
27***	End the collapse of local government
29***	Renew the call for fair funding to a new Government Amendment 29.1
32	Cuts in domestic violence services Amendment 32.1

### Motions – Pensions

No.	Title
45	Governmental meddling / coercion in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)
43****	Defending and improving our pensions
44****	Pension
48	LGPS – Survivor Pension equity now!

**ANY MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS NOT REACHED IN THE MORNING SESSION  
WILL BE TAKEN AT THE END OF THE AFTERNOON SESSION**

## SESSION 4 – MONDAY AFTERNOON

2.00 pm – 5.00 pm

**2.00 pm International Speaker: Lina Montilla Diaz, from Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT)**

**Local Government Service Group Executive Annual Report – Education and Children’s Services (Section 4)**

### **Motions – Education**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
20	Further Education Pay
13	Insource Children’s Trusts
15	A new negotiating body for school support staff Amendment 15.1
23	Organising in Education
16**	Schools Support Staff need our Support! Amendment 16.1
19	Preventing Violence Against School Staff
22	Organising outsourced workers in the college sector
17**	Crisis in our schools Amendment 17.1 Amendment 17.2
21	Improving stress levels in colleges
18	Impact of Ofsted on Support Staff Must be Acknowledged

## MOTIONS NOT PRIORITISED

No.	Title
10	Supporting the next generation of social workers
14	A New Negotiating Body for Early Years Workers
24	Cuts in Education and the Impact on Women & Children in Northern Ireland
28	Real investment in Local Government before S:114 becomes the 'new normal'
31	Housing budget cuts Amendment 31.1
34	NJC Pay Negotiations & Universal Credit: The Impact of Delays to Pay Negotiations on Low-Income Families
36	Campaign for a Pay and Grading Review
46	Governmental meddling / coercion in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)
47	Governmental meddling / coercion in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

\* Denotes possible composite

### Proposed Composites

<b>Composite A</b>	Motion 1, Amendment 1.1 & Motion 2 – Year of the LGBT+ worker, embedding LGBT+ equality into Local Government Workplaces
<b>Composite B</b>	Motion 16 & Motion 17 Amendments 17.1 and 17.2 – School Support Staff
<b>Composite C</b>	Motions 25, Amendment 25.1 and 25.2, Motion 26, Motion 27 and Motion 29, Amendment 29.1 – Local Government Cuts & Funding
<b>Composite D</b>	Motions 43 & Motion 44 – Defending & Improving our Pensions



## **1. Make 2024 the Year of LGBT+ Workers in Local Government Workplaces**

Conference welcomes the launch of the UNISON Year of Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender plus (LGBT+) Workers campaign for 2024.

2024 also marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of NALGAY, the lesbian and gay network in NALGO – the British trade union movement’s first LGBT+ organisation.

While many lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans plus (LGBT+) people have seen positive change in recent years, prejudice and discrimination continue to impact the lives of many LGBT+ people. This includes many people feeling unsafe and uncomfortable at work. For example, many LGBT+ people still do not feel able to disclose their sexual orientation and/or gender identity at work for fear of discrimination. It is concerning that some employers are afraid to visibly speak out in favour of LGBT+ workers due to myths and misconceptions perpetrated by anti-LGBT+ and anti-trans groups.

Conference is alarmed at the rise in violent and threatening protests at libraries and other public buildings against Drag Queen Story Time events. These events aim to engage children in a love of books, providing fun and interactive children’s shows with talented drag performers. Drag Queen Story Time shows that being different is not a bad thing. However, some of these events are being exploited by the far-right to further an agenda of hatred and division.

Conference believes that UNISON’s Year of LGBT+ Workers in 2024 will provide everyone in the local government service group with an excellent opportunity to take forward UNISON’s vital work on LGBT+ equality. We can do this by highlighting the experiences of our LGBT+ members, promote the important contribution they make to the union, raise awareness of LGBT+ rights, and continue to challenge LGBT+ inequality and discrimination in local government workplaces.

It will also provide us with an opportunity to focus on building our organising work to increase meaningful participation of LGBT+ activists, particularly young LGBT+ activists, who can provide a voice for others in the workplace.

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, all branches should run awareness campaigns within the workplace using UNISON’s LGBT+ materials, and where possible, support local LGBT+ Pride events.

Conference welcomes the ‘Trans Equality is UNISON business’ campaign, launched in July 2022, and the work done so far by the service group towards making all our workplaces trans inclusive, and places where Trans members feel safe to disclose their gender identity. It also welcomes the success of the Trans ally training being rolled out across the 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. It also shows that

by equipping members with knowledge and encouraging empathy, we can create more welcoming and supportive workplaces. The Local Government Service Group recognises that this work needs to continue and be built on in the coming year.

Conference also welcomes the growing success of the national LGBT+ committee's young LGBT+ worker campaign with over 200 young LGBT+ members so far in a network who are now getting involved in their branch and regional groups.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to work with the National LGBT+ Members Committee, and other parts of the union where appropriate to:

- 1) Release statements endorsing the Year of LGBT+ workers 2024 and build support for branches to make this campaign a priority part of their work plan and agenda;
- 2) Conduct a survey of local government members working in public libraries to gather information on their experiences of Drag Queen Story Time events and publish guidance on successfully and safely managing these events;
- 3) Continue to encourage branches, regions and sectors to negotiate on the LGBT+ workers' rights in collective bargaining; for this to include reference to the importance of using inclusive language in local government workplaces, agreements and policies, promoting the UNISON resources available to support this work;
- 4) Continue to promote the UNISON fact sheet 'How to be a Trans ally', encourage branch officers and members in local government to undertake trans ally training, and encourage branches to promote this with employers;
- 5) Work with local government employers to identify and share good practices that are currently in place which support the recruitment, retention, and progression of LGBT+ people in local government workplaces and careers;
- 6) Promote and encourage the use of UNISON LGBT+ guidance, fact sheets and the adoption of model policies including UNISON's trans equality model policy in local government workplaces;
- 7) Encourage LGBT+ members to participate and stand for election in their respective branch, regional and national local government service group executives/committees and as workplace stewards and other representative roles;
- 8) Support members in education to support trans young people in the light of government consultation, and explore working with other education unions to produce clear guidance on the rights of trans young people to support, respect and dignity and not to be outed to parents.

### ***Local Government Service Group Executive***

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#### **1.1**

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to work with the National LGBT+ Members Committee, and other parts of the union where appropriate to:

point 2)

After the word public, insert "and schools"

After the word guidance, insert “before the end of 2024”

Add a new point 3) and renumber accordingly

Hold an online/hybrid meeting of members working in libraries, and invite an officer from relevant branches to attend, to feed in to the survey and share experiences of how we can organise LGBT+/Drag Queen Story Time events, including how we can challenge both far-right opposition and decisions by employers not to hold or cancel such events.

**Camden UNISON**

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## **2. Year of LGBT+ workers – embedding LGBT+ equality in Local Government**

Conference notes that 2024 is UNISON’s Year of LGBT+ Workers and welcomes the opportunity that this provides to promote UNISON as the union for LGBT+ workers in local government, raise awareness of LGBT+ rights, challenge discrimination, negotiate LGBT+ inclusive policies and recruit and activate LGBT+ members in the service group.

The year highlights the important contribution our LGBT+ members make to local government, to improving employment conditions for LGBT+ workers and to campaigning more broadly on equality for LGBT+ people.

The LGBT+ self-organised group has been key to campaigns to improve the rights of LGBT+ people within the workplace and wider society and has played an active role 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 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.

We need to continue to encourage active recruitment and promotion of LGBT+ local government members and strive for LGBT+ representation at branch, regional and service group level. 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 local government service group. To achieve this, local government branches need to support local LGBT+ Pride events, run awareness campaigns within the workplace and make UNISON’s LGBT+ resources visible.

Conference believes that the Year of LGBT+ Workers can be used as a tool to negotiate with employers to improve inclusion in workplaces for LGBT+ members working in local government, for example, adopting trans inclusion policies.

Conference acknowledges that tackling systemic and ingrained discrimination against LGBT+ members 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 local government, and when negotiating with employers.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Promote UNISON's year of LGBT+ workers including at national and regional events;
- 2) Encourage local government branches to use days in the LGBT+ calendar to promote the work that UNISON does for LGBT+ equality;
- 3) Promote and encourage the use of UNISON LGBT+ guidance, fact sheets and model policies in local authority workplaces;
- 4) Work with the national LGBT+ committee to run a webinar on the Year of the LGBT+ workers for members in local government;
- 5) Promote and encourage participation in equality training, in particular the trans ally training.

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

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### **3. Next steps for our work on the Disability Employment Charter - a bargaining approach**

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. However, conference notes that there are still far too few local authorities signed up to the charter.

The Disability Employment Charter was founded because of the disadvantage that disabled people experience in the labour market and workplaces. This includes in local government employers, where UNISON surveys have consistently shown that our members still wait far too long for reasonable adjustments to be put in place. In fact, many local government workers never receive a response at all to their reasonable adjustment requests.

Disability leave is also shockingly rare in local authorities, with many of our disabled members having to rely on sick leave, annual leave or unpaid leave when they should be entitled to paid time off related to their impairment.

The charter outlines the actions that government needs to take to address the disadvantage disabled people encounter in their working lives, making key demands such as a two week deadline for responses to reasonable adjustment requests, a stronger right to disability leave, time off for trade union disability reps and mandatory publication of the disability pay gap.

Although the charter was originally conceived as a way of putting pressure on government, it is increasingly being used as a way of opening up a discussion with employers on workplace bargaining.

Some local government branches have used the 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 Service Group Executive to work with the National Disabled Members Committee to:

- 1) Continue to promote sign-ups to the Disability Employment Charter with local government branches, including developing and circulating a template motion for local authorities to adopt;
- 2) Provide guidance to local government branches on the arguments to make when seeking employer sign ups and on how the Disability Employment Charter can be used as a bargaining and negotiating tool to promote disability rights in local government workplaces;
- 3) Collate good practice of how local government branches have utilised the Disability Employment Charter to improve working conditions for disabled members.

***National Disabled Members Committee***

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#### **4. Gender Pay Justice for Women**

Women face low pay at work and low pension in retirement and the gap just doesn't seem to decrease.

The Financial Times reported in September 2023 that hundreds of councils face equal pay claims. Many of the biggest unitary authorities are facing equal pay claims. Women workers are lodging claims because their employers are failing to pay women equally to men. Further, few employers carry out equal pay audits to see whether their pay structures are still equality proof.

According to the Local Government Association (LGA), the gender pay gap in 2019 was approximately 5% across local government. The LGA said that "three-quarters of our workforce are women. And one key concern in this is that the main reason given by councils for this pay gap is that our predominantly female workforce is concentrated in more junior, lower paid jobs. This under-representation of women at senior level jobs at our organisations is a real problem for us and our communities in many ways."

The gap gets even greater for women who are Black; the Office for National Statistics published the fact that in 2022 Black, African, Caribbean or Black British employees earned less (£13.53) median gross hourly pay than white employees (£14.35), which has been consistent since 2012. The Office for National Statistics also said that when looking at the cumulative effect of pay-determining characteristics, the factors that had the greatest impact were occupation, qualifications, geography, age and sex.

The difference between men and women's accrued benefits in the Local Government Pension Scheme is 34.7% for benefits in the reformed CARE scheme and 46.4% for benefits in the legacy final salary scheme. Work carried out by the England & Wales Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board has identified that the gender pension gap in the LGPS is 40%.

The Equal Pay Act was passed in 1970, over 50 years ago. The Equality Act was passed in 2010, some 14 years ago and yet women have still not achieved equality in pay with men. It is time to end the disparity for women who work equally as hard as male colleagues. Time to break the glass ceilings into higher management and to ensure that women get the pay justice they deserve.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Call on employers to end the gender pay gap as part of annual pay claims;
- 2) Work with the National Women's Committee to refresh and relaunch the "Bridge the Gap" campaign;
- 3) Work with the National Women's Committee & Learning & Organising Services team (LAOS) to develop bitesize training on understanding the gender pay gap and how to develop meaningful action plans to close the pay gap;
- 4) Consider submitting a bid to the Campaign Fund to commission research to fully understand the causes of the gender pension gap and identify potential ways in which this could be narrowed;
- 5) Develop and promote negotiating guidelines to support branches and regions to negotiate local action plans to close the gender pay gap;
- 6) Develop and promote negotiating guidelines to support branches and regions to recognise equal pay cases;
- 7) Develop and promote negotiating guidelines to support branches and regions to encourage employers to carry out equal pay audits on a regular basis.

***National Women's Committee***

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#### **4.1**

add a new fifth sentence to the motion to read

As the largest organisation of women in the UK UNISON is in a unique position to be able to lead the fight for equal pay in Local Government.

Add new point 7 and renumber the rest

7) Work with the National Women's Committee & Learning & Organising Services team (LAOS) to develop training for branches on understanding and recognising equal pay claims.

***Birmingham UNISON Branch***

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#### **5. Tackling the exploitation of migrant workers**

Conference notes the findings of UNISON's report "Expendable Labour" published in November 2023 that found widespread and distressing exploitation of migrant workers in the social care sector. The report found workers exploited by care employers and left exposed by a government that should be protecting them. Given inadequate training, living in poor conditions and threatened with deportation if they speak out, the stark reality for many migrant workers in the UK is that they are under-protected by the employment rights framework and victimised by immigration rules.

Migrant care workers are frequently trapped in inadequate housing, paid rock-bottom wages for excessive hours and locked into unfair contracts. Many have paid colossal fees to take jobs in the UK. Some say they are unable to leave a location even when they're not on shift or are told to pay back huge sums to the company when they raise concerns about

their working conditions or service quality. Sometimes this is backed with threats of deportation.

Migrant social care workers covered by the Local Government Service Group are particularly vulnerable to this kind of ill-treatment because of the hostile environment. All a migrant worker has to do to slip into the clutches of the 'hostile environment' is for a worker to stand up for their basic rights at work. If they do so, and are then dismissed from their job by their unscrupulous employer, they will then face deportation in 60 days. This vulnerability is exploited by far too many ruthless employers.

This is a real danger in a sector with the level of employee churn that the social care sector has. It is a fragmented, privatised sector characterised by employers focussed on protecting profits, some of which is extracted from the sector for shareholder dividends. This is not only unethical and dangerous, but also unsustainable.

Proper resourcing and a long-term funding plan that significantly boosts wages is vital to support workers and service users alike. Conference strongly supports UNISON's campaign for a national care service (NCS) in England called 'Let's Make Care Work' and equivalent campaigns for an NCS in Wales and Scotland.

Until we win these changes, Conference believes that UNISON in local government must continue to challenge the exploitation of migrant workers in the care sector and across the labour market. This includes improving the support and oversight given by local authorities, who have an important role to play in stopping this exploitation. Care homes and care provided in people's homes is mostly paid for through council budgets and councils set policy for social adult social care in their local area (albeit under constraints from central government).

Instead of raising wages and improving conditions within the social care sector and strengthening migrant worker rights, the Westminster Government has sought to scapegoat and demonise migrant workers and refugees, reduce their rights and make them even more vulnerable to exploitation. Conference calls upon the Local Government Service Group to challenge this rhetoric and these actions and continue to support and organise migrant workers in local government.

Conference therefore calls upon the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Support the work of branches and regions in organising migrant workers with resources and advice;
- 2) Work with councillors and local authorities to raise awareness and tackle exploitation of migrant workers in the social care sector;
- 3) Continue to support and engage with campaigns for National Care Services across the UK;
- 4) Promote awareness of the free JCWI immigration advice helpline for UNISON members;
- 5) Campaign to improve the rights of migrant workers, working with the union's migrant worker network;
- 6) Campaign to dismantle the Hostile Environment.

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## 5.1

Add new paragraph 8:

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 & 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.

Add to end point 1)

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

Add to end of point 5)

including campaigning to scrap “No Recourse to Public Funds” policies and instead extend to all workers (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 UNISON*

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## **6. Black Social Workers face disproportional disciplinary and capability procedures**

Many social work students, felt greater discrimination on placements, stereotyped and told by supervisors their accents, attitudes and mannerism would hinder their progression. This all starts at the point that they become students. When you realise that the training is based on white middle class British population, you can understand why they feel so invisible during this process.

Conference, Black social worker students are less likely to successfully complete their programmes, and experience huge disadvantages putting them at greater risk of not completing their course. The situation gets even worse for women.

The reason for this is that they face greater barriers, discrimination, unable to progress or denied opportunities for professional development through lack of support and additional training.

Once qualified, there is a lack of support, they are overworked and burnt-out and there is lack of meaningful direction from their managers, with few mentors to help them with their futures.

Many social workers start their career late and are mature students juggling work and families whilst facing marginalisation and being undervalued. Women in particular face multiple challenges having to juggle caring responsibilities with studying.

This leads to dissatisfaction because the role is not real life related because Black women social workers are unable to discuss or address cultural topics and so feel a lack of inclusion and a feeling of segregation.



The consequence of this is for managers to act against Black staff, who face greater disciplinary or capability action than their white colleagues based on mistrust, misunderstanding and lack of knowledge about the real experience that Black women social workers face racism, discrimination, and abuse not just from colleagues but from their clients as well.

Conference, this must stop! And the way forward is to bring this out into the open and for employers to no longer be allowed to hide behind discriminatory practices and racist policies.

Conference it is time for those uncomfortable conversations to be shouted out loud and clear!

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Engage with all relevant governing bodies to raise the issues of diversity within training and the issues faced by Black social workers.
- 2) Produce guidance on challenging racial and sex discrimination in formal processes for branches and regions.
- 3) Work with Labour Link, the NEC and Self Organised Groups to lobby for better recognition of the challenges that Black women social workers face.

***National Women's Committee***

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## **7. Council Bankruptcy and its Impact on Black Workers**

Conference, local councils, have a legal duty and responsibility to manage their finances in a prudent manner.

Bankruptcy of a council can have severe implications for the economic stability and well-being of its employees, particularly those from marginalised communities such as Black workers; As we know, from various reports Black workers often face disproportionate challenges in the labour market, including higher rates of unemployment and underemployment, wage disparity, and limited career advancement opportunities.

The bankruptcy of a council can lead to budget cuts, layoffs, reduced services, and delays in payment, which can further exacerbate the economic disparities faced by Black workers.

Conference believes that ensuring fair treatment and equitable outcomes for all employees, including Black workers, is a fundamental principle that should guide the decision-making processes of local councils, in a situation of bankruptcy.

Conference also acknowledges that promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace is crucial to address systemic inequalities in wider society.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group to work with the National Black Members Committee to encourage all councils:

- 1) To recognise and affirms their commitment to promoting economic justice and equal opportunities for Black workers affected by council bankruptcy;

- 2) To take proactive measures to minimise the negative impact of bankruptcy on Black workers;
- 3) To prioritise the retention of diverse staff, including Black workers, during restructuring processes;
- 4) To provide job security and minimise layoffs, especially for Black workers;
- 5) To implement targeted training and professional development programs to enhance the skills and employability of Black workers;
- 6) To ensure that any necessary budget cuts or austerity measures are undertaken in a manner that does not disproportionately burden Black workers;
- 7) To establish a clear mechanism for the timely payment of wages and benefits to all employees, irrespective of their race or ethnicity;
- 8) To collaborate with community organisations, unions, and other stakeholders to develop and implement targeted programs and policies aimed at addressing the social and economic challenges faced by Black workers affected by council bankruptcy.

***National Black Members' Committee***

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## **Recruiting and Organising**

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### **8. Supporting and developing young members and activists within the UNISON Local Government Service Group**

Conference recognises the importance of recruiting and organising young workers within the local government service group. Sustainable recruitment of young workers is essential if UNISON is to maintain a strong and relevant presence within local government. Focusing on recruiting young workers will help UNISON to grow in strength in the coming years. As a trade union we have a vital role in protecting young workers and ensuring that their rights are respected.

Conference notes that recruitment of younger workers has been an area of strength in UNISON in recent years, but that young members are still under-represented as activists, including as workplace stewards and health and safety reps, branch officers, delegates to conferences, and members of regional and national committees.

It is essential that young workers are supported to take on activist roles within UNISON and to develop as activists. Young workers joining UNISON today are the union leaders of tomorrow. It is also important that young workers' voices are heard across the service group, so that their concerns form part of our bargaining and campaigning agenda.

Conference notes the rule change passed at National Delegate Conference 2023 redefining 'young members' in UNISON as everyone aged 30 and under. Conference believes this is an important opportunity to evaluate the service group's approach to young workers, identifying challenges and successes and sharing best practice to branches wishing to recruit and organise more young workers.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group executive to:

- 1) Work with the National Young Members Forum to evaluate the current situation regarding recruitment of young members and development of young activists across the local government service group;
- 2) Work with Regional Local Government Committees and Regional Young Member Forums to identify and share examples of successes and best practice in working with young members across the local government service group;
- 3) Review existing guidance on organising young workers in local government and consider whether this needs to be refreshed or developed;
- 4) Work with the National Young Members Forum to identify barriers to young members getting active in UNISON local government branches, and to develop strategies to address them;
- 5) Encourage regional Local Government Committees to establish mentoring schemes for young members, pairing young members with experienced activists in their regions;
- 6) Promote existing materials on recruiting, organising and supporting young members in the workplace, including the local government guidance on mentoring schemes for young Black members, the National Young Members Forum's report on 'Getting Active in UNISON', and other relevant materials;
- 7) Encourage branches to support young members to attend UNISON conferences and events either as delegates or visitors;
- 8) Recruit and organise young workers entering the workforce through apprenticeship degrees and graduate recruitment schemes;
- 9) Work with the National Young Members Forum to promote their campaigns and initiatives to young members in local government, and supporting their efforts to get more young members involved in the work and structures of the union.

***Local Government Service Group Executive***

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**8.1**

After action point 6, add new point 7:

Publicise and promote the take up of the mentoring scheme launched by the National LGBT+ Committee for young LGBT+ members.

After new point 7, add new point 8:

Encourage branches to use the scheme to assist in the recruitment and organising of young workers in local government and use the Year of LGBT+ Workers as a recruitment tool at all events they undertake.

Re-number action points thereafter.

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

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## 8.2

Add after 'group' in point 2); ' and to work with Local Government branches that ask for assistance to develop strategies and action plans to recruit young members and encourage more young members to get active in their branch;

**Surrey County (L)**

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## **Social Care and Social Workers**

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### **9. Defending our Social Workers**

Conference agrees that social work is tough profession. Years of underfunding, staff shortages and service cuts mean that social workers only see vulnerable people when they have already reached crisis point. That means a real struggle to deliver the help that's needed at the right time. That extra pressure has left morale at rock bottom, causes social workers to leave in droves and creates further problems for the dwindling number of employees left behind. The result has been a 'burnt out' social worker workforce.

Conference believes the safety of vulnerable children, adults and their families must be paramount and that can only be achieved with a strong and valued workforce. UNISON's social work manifesto aimed at governments, regulators and employers sets out our objectives on how to achieve this.

Conference notes that with over 40,000 members, UNISON is the largest trade union for social workers. Membership participation and local campaigns and organising are crucial. Conference applauds the strike action taken by Barnet, Brighton and South Gloucestershire branches on the unfair application of pay supplements across the social work workforce.

Conference further notes the Service Group Executive's work in 2023 to build up our social worker organisation. A members' seminar was held in September, which provided opportunities to network, learn and share experiences. In addition, workshops, webinars and training have been provided along with support for regions establishing social worker forums and networks.

Conference believes practice-based activity is essential to developing our profile as the union for social workers. Another social work seminar will be held in Autumn 2024, which will focus on what social workers need to practise critical/radical social work e.g. supervision, manageable workloads, time to build relationships, safe/supportive management cultures, decent investment in frontline social work services. UNISON has a role to advocate for this and support social worker members to do so. Social worker forums at branch, regional and national level can also play a vital role in allowing a space for social workers to discuss practice issues in a progressive environment.

It is important we maximise our recruitment of student social workers. UNISON's 2024 Organising Plan asks regions to at least double social work student recruitment and we must consider new ways of organising and involving them. Our offer to student social workers is based on what we can do for them once they graduate and are employed rather than while they are on their courses and placements and giving them a voice in UNISON as students. The Northern region's model of organising student social workers gives students access to a UNISON social worker representative who helps them with difficulties on their placements and courses.

Conference believes that the government, and a Labour Government if elected, should end outsourcing to private providers; recruit more social workers to replace those lost through stress and unsustainable working conditions; improve pay and conditions so as to improve retention; and provide working conditions that reduce bureaucracy, promote professional development and wellbeing, including regular professional supervision, and dedicated time for professional development, reflective discussion and peer support.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Continue to work with regions and branches to build our campaign to promote UNISON as the union for social work;
- 2) Continue to support regions in establishing social worker forums and networks;
- 3) Provide guidance and resources to support regions develop and grow student social work recruitment, including new student social worker resources;
- 4) Develop an organising campaign based on critical/radical practice that resonates with social workers and can be rolled out in regions and branches to tackle issues at a local level;
- 5) Provide guidance and support for regions and branches on social worker pay and grading;
- 6) Encourage regions and branches to promote attendance at the 2024 social worker seminar with social worker members;
- 7) Work with governments, local government employers, the Labour Social Workers Group and professional associations on policies to counteract serious recruitment and retention problems and keep skilled and experienced social workers in public services;
- 8) Provide support to branches where members take lawful industrial action, in line with all relevant legislation and UNISON rules, on pay issues.

***Local Government Service Group Executive***

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**9.1**

At the end of the 3rd paragraph add a new sentence:

“Conference recognises that Local Government no longer offers the best pay, terms and conditions for this professional group and the pay for social workers has fallen the furthest of any public sector profession.”

Under “Conference calls on the Service Group Executive”

At the end of 5) delete “,” and add

“with a view to social workers being encouraged to organise to raise their pay nationally and to use market factor supplements where this is not possible;”

Add a new point after 5)

- “6) Provide guidance and support for regions and branches to collect and share information about the extra things an employer might offer to its social workers such as offering to pay their registration fees and fund travel cards;”

Renumber all subsequent points.

***Barnet Local Government***

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## **10. Supporting the next generation of social workers**

With over 40,000 members, UNISON is the largest trade union for social workers and the support we can offer members is unrivalled.

Conference believes that student social workers represent the next generation of the profession. By recruiting them as students and introducing them to UNISON during their studies; maintaining contact; providing support; and, developing an organising approach to student social work recruitment, UNISON can significantly improve membership and our potential social worker activist base.

Conference therefore welcomes the focus on student social worker recruitment in UNISON’s 2024 organising plan and the materials that are being produced to support regions develop and grow social work recruitment.

In Durham, the branch has benefited from having four highly active social work stewards including the current Branch Secretary and Chair. Having an experienced social worker rep attend student inductions has been invaluable to promote the benefits of UNISON and offer guidance on the journey ahead for these students. As a branch we have almost 50 student social work members.

In addition, having existing social worker stewards allows the branch to directly support students who are having difficulties on their placements and courses from a social worker perspective.

This link further strengthens our offer to student social workers.

In order to support branches in increasing our numbers of social work students in 2024, Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Continue sharing best practice through the Social Care Forum;
- 2) Develop materials and training to encourage existing UNISON members who are social workers to take a more active role in their union - with a specific reference to supporting branch recruitment of student social workers;
- 3) Encourage regions and branches to develop and promote positive working relationships with Colleges and University Social Work/Social Care departments as well as closer links with Local Authority Social Work Academy and apprentices;
- 4) Look at methods to support the retention of student social workers after they graduate.

***Durham***

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## **11. A Real National Care Service**

Conference notes UNISON's support for National Care Services in Scotland, Wales and England. The Scottish and Welsh Governments are working on progressing this and the Labour Party have proposals for England.

However, conference notes that each of these proposals seeks to continue with a care sector dominated by private providers when it is the reliance on a private market in care that is, alongside chronic underfunding, that has contributed to the crisis in care that all 3 countries are suffering from.

The crisis in care, where quality care is diminished, where care packages are being rationed, staff are on poverty wages creating a crisis of recruitment and retention, where some private care companies are withdrawing from the "market" whilst others continue to milk profits, often through second and third tier ownership models, cannot be solved within a market model.

Conference notes UNISON Scotland's campaign to oppose the Scottish Government's National Care Service Bill that, as well as preserving the private market model of care proposed to remove councils' legal responsibilities to provide care and to transfer staff out of councils. The campaign has succeeded in protecting the position of councils and staff but remains unfit for purpose.

Conference welcomes UNISON Scotland commissioned report from APSE, Towards a Real National Care Service. This report, building on work undertaken by Cymru/Wales UNISON, outlines why the reliance on a private sector that is concerned with profit, that is not sustainable, and which holds down both staff terms and conditions and quality care is not the way forward. A Real National Care Service needs to be on a not-for-profit basis, with public sector, directly provided services, to ensure a sustainable care sector. It is also the only affordable way to ensure that staff pay, terms and conditions are raised.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Continue to support proposals for a National Care Service in each part of the UK that are based on a not-for-profit model led by council run directly provided care at home and care home services, and to oppose other proposals that seek to continue the reliance on for-profit private sector provision;
- 2) Develop proposals that allow not-for-profit voluntary and charitable organisations to continue to be active in the sector where they can bring additionality or specialist provision on a grant funded basis;
- 3) Engage with UNISON Scotland and UNISON Cymru/Wales on the lessons from their respective campaigns around National Care Services so as to better support them and to influence proposals in England.

***Scottish Joint Council Committee***

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### **11.1**

Insert new paragraph after paragraph 4

"Conference also notes and commends the UNISON commissioned Fabian Society Report "Support Guaranteed: a road map to a new national care service". We endorse the proposed launch date on 5 July 2028 – 80 years after the creation of the NHS - as an achievable and necessary target date for a service in crisis"

## **12. Organising LGBT+ workers in social care**

Conference notes that social care staff are amongst the lowest paid staff in local government.

Conference also notes that that the outsourcing and privatisation of social care has led to deteriorating services and the widespread exploitation of workers through low pay, zero hours contracts and attacks on our members' pay, terms and conditions while generating profits for hedge funds and shareholders.

Many members working in social care have little or no access to adequate training such as safeguarding.

Some members working in social care feel unable to organise in their workplace. There are many reasons for this, including the fear of losing their income, particularly if they are the main wage earners in their household. Local government branches find it difficult to access these workplaces due to their disparate nature and facility time agreements.

Many social care workers are from a migrant background, many social care workers identify as LGBT+. Some social care workers are from a migrant background and LGBT+. These layers of identity or intersectionality's further make it harder for these low paid workers to access UNISON.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Work with relevant sections of the organisation to provide guidance to branches as to best organising practice to address the needs of migrant LGBT+ workers;
- 2) Provide help and guidance to branches to use the updated LGBT+ bargaining factsheets to review employer policies and agreements with employers with a view to achieving best practice;
- 3) Promote self-organisation within UNISON to all members working within the social care sector.

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

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## **Education including Early Years, Schools and Further Education**

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### **13. Insource Children's Trusts**

This union/conference notes: -

- 1) The Conservative Government introduced Children's Trusts as a means of outsourcing control of children's social care from local authorities.
- 2) There is no evidence to show that removing children's social care from democratic local authority control automatically improves services.
- 3) One early trust, Doncaster, has returned to local authority control.



- 4) That the establishment of Children's Trusts still means all the funding commitments need to be found by the local authority.
- 5) The creation of Children's Trusts has been part of the Tories drive to marketise and privatise public services through the dogma that 'public' is bad.
- 6) That the last couple of decades has seen an increasing reliance upon market providers for both foster and residential placements of children, adding to the increasing cost pressures faced by local authorities.

This union/conference believes: -

- a) Children's social care should be provided for the needs of children. The profit motive should have no place in supporting vulnerable children;
- b) Democratic control by local authorities is more accountable than any newly created appointed board;
- c) Local authorities should have control over the expenditure they incur;
- d) Removing the profit element from providing both foster care and residential care will help reduce the financial burden of increasing demand upon local authorities.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to: -

- i) Campaign for all Children's Trusts to be insourced back into local authority control;
- ii) Work with Labour Link to campaign for Labour Party policy to reflect children's services should be delivered by local authorities, including insourcing those Children's Trusts currently outside local authority management.

***West Midlands Region***

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#### **14. A New Negotiating Body for Early Years Workers**

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.

This has the potential to have make childcare more affordable, but there are serious flaws and inequalities with the policies. The major beneficiaries of these changes may be those already using childcare, up to high salary levels, while households where one partner doesn't work, or not working enough hours, will not be eligible for this new entitlement. Disadvantaged and low income families and communities will benefit least from these reforms.

However, the policy announced by government lacked any vision for the early years workforce or any strategy for addressing the recruitment and retention crisis in the early years sector. Many nurseries already report that they unable to recruit and retain sufficient staff even prior to this expansion. The focus instead has been on increasing labour market activity for working parents, with limited emphasis placed on improving the quality of education and care for young children and making a difference to their long-term outcomes.

The government's proposal to trial £1,000 bonuses for recruiting staff in some local authority areas will not reverse low pay or retention.

The early years sector has traditionally been characterised by low pay, low status and poor conditions of service for the workforce. The recruitment crisis in early years can only be addressed by improving the pay and conditions of the workforce.

Across the UK the majority of nursery places are provided by the private and voluntary sectors, with only limited trade union membership and recognition. This has made it challenging for unions to organise in the sector, particularly in smaller providers.

With the increase in places funded by the public purse, there needs to be greater accountability for how this public money is being spent. It cannot be acceptable that public funding for early education is being syphoned off as profit by multi-national companies with 'tax efficient' structures while highly qualified staff are being paid the minimum wage.

Conference believes in universal provision for all children and families in early years and childcare.

UNISON believes that the government should create an early years and childcare sector wide negotiating body that includes unions and employers. The body could be responsible for setting:

- 1) Minimum levels of pay linked to qualification levels;
- 2) A clear career pathway for early years staff;
- 3) A right for all early years staff to access continuing professional development;
- 4) A simplified structure of qualifications, with a focus on improving standards and outcomes for children;
- 5) Trade union recognition arrangements.

Any provider receiving public funding for places would be required to abide by the recommendations of this body.

This Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- a) Campaign for a new negotiating body for early years staff that can improve the pay and conditions of the early years workforce;
- b) Work with the NEC, and other appropriate campaigning bodies, to popularise this demand and campaign for more funding, universalism and better rates of pay for the sector;
- c) Work with regions to run recruitment campaigns in, especially, the private, voluntary and independent sectors, and look for successful examples to build upon.

***Local Government Service Group Executive***

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## **15. A new negotiating body for school support staff**

Conference notes the Labour Party's announcement that it will introduce a distinct negotiating body for school support staff if it wins the 2024 general election. The last

Labour Government had begun the process of introducing such a body, but it was abolished by the Coalition Government before it had been established.

Conference strongly welcomes this announcement. Conference believes that any new negotiating body for school support staff should be guaranteed by legislation, and should cover England, Wales and Northern Ireland in line with the existing NJC for local government services. It should be based on the principles of better pay and improved career structures and opportunities for all school support staff.

The new negotiating body must be backed by proper funding, otherwise it risks failure.

The new arrangements should also consider model contracts, roll-out without detriment for all staff, a job evaluation and pay and grading structure, and 52 week contracts and pay for all staff.

The new arrangements must cover all schools, including academies.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Work with the Shadow Schools Sector Committee, NJC Committee and Labour Link to engage in discussions and negotiations with the Labour Party – and Labour Government if elected – to pursue a new school support staff negotiating body in line with the principles specified in this motion;
- 2) Work with the NEC, Shadow Schools Sector Committee, NJC Committee and regions to review whether the Service Group's democratic structures for schools members are fit for purpose once a new negotiating body is in place.

***NJC Local Government Committee***

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## **15.1**

Add a new point 2) and renumber existing 2) to 3):

- 2) Any final proposal following discussions and negotiations should be put to the school membership for approval before UNISON approves them;

***Surrey County (L)***

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## **16. Schools Support Staff need our Support!**

Conference notes that UNISON is the largest union for school support staff - representing over 250,000 members across the UK.

School support staff roles have changed considerably, and job descriptions and pay grades no longer reflect the additional responsibility and knowledge required to fulfil them effectively.

Inclusive settings mean more SEN children in each class. With the lack of school funding, the few teaching assistants available must support a number of these children at the same time. Children with more complex needs requiring highly trained and experienced support staff to enable them to access the curriculum and reach their potential.

The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic means that more young people need support with their mental health and emotional wellbeing. Our school members regularly report a

deterioration of classroom behaviour including being on the receiving end of violence and aggression from students.

Teaching Assistants have a starting salary from as little as £11.79 p/h and are mostly on term time only contracts. From April 2024 the National Living Wage will be £11.44 p/h. It is unacceptable that schools support staff are paid so little. Additionally, most support staff are only paid for their classroom time but often spend their unpaid breaks supporting the children and teachers. Many school support staff need to claim Universal Credit and/or use food banks.

Other jobs in the wider marketplace offering similar hourly rates of pay require less knowledge and experience and carry much less responsibility. A coffee shop barista can earn £10.42-£13.02 p/h. A cashier in a supermarket can earn from £10.23 p/h and is likely to receive discounts on their shopping. These contracts are offered on flexible bases by some employers too.

Schools are struggling to recruit new support staff and can't retain the staff they have. Some schools have rolling adverts for school support staff and cannot fill the vacancies. Instead, they must use agency staff whom are, ironically, paid more than their permanent colleagues.

We have to make our school members a priority. They occupy the largest share of our membership and we need to fight for better pay for them. School support staff play an integral part in the learning and wellbeing of children and young people in schools. These roles should be valued and remunerated appropriately.

Conference calls upon the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Lobby Government over schools funding – to include amounts specifically ringfenced to increase pay of support staff;
- 2) Campaign for re-evaluation of support staff roles;
- 3) Produce sample support staff job descriptions for national application;
- 4) Working in partnership with the National Schools Committee, National Joint Committee and the Labour Party to achieve these goals.

***Dorset***

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## **16.1**

After

Schools are struggling to recruit new support staff and can't retain the staff they have. Some schools have rolling adverts for school support staff and cannot fill the vacancies. Instead, they must use agency staff whom are, ironically, paid more than their permanent colleagues.

Insert

We know that there are academies that are refusing to recognise trade unions and do not follow NJC terms and conditions. Our members in these schools are often paid less than those members in schools that do follow NJC Pay Scales and have less favourable conditions regarding issues such as sick pay.

On point 2 add the following

- 2) and the creation of a strategy to ensure academies commit to following NJC terms and conditions for support staff.

***Bolton Metro***

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## **17. Crisis in our schools**

Conference believes:

- 1) That the government's real terms cuts to school funding have led to a crisis in education.
- 2) That this crisis was starkly demonstrated by the dire warnings from the Department for Education that some school buildings are now at risk of collapse due to them approaching the end of their designed life expectancy, and their structural integrity being impaired.
- 3) That this funding crisis has also led to a pay crisis in which many dedicated staff can simply no longer afford to work in schools anymore, with UNISON's Stars in our Schools Survey in November 2023 showing nearly half (46%) were looking for better paid work in sectors such as retail and hospitality. It is clear that schools are now being engulfed by a recruitment and retention crisis.

Conference also reiterates its continued opposition to the privatisation of schools in England through academisation.

Conference further believes:

- a) That this crisis is a direct result of the political decisions and austerity policies of successive Tory governments.
- b) That we need a government that will urgently invest in, and rebuild, both our school buildings and our schools workforce so as to ensure children are safe and have the highest quality education.
- c) That the Labour Party's commitment to reintroduce the School Support Staff Negotiating Body if it wins the election is an important step and will provide a vehicle for addressing the issues of chronic low pay, and underinvestment in the school support staff workforce.

Conference therefore calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- i) Work with other relevant parts of UNISON seek to ensure the Tory-made school funding crisis is a key part of the union's general election campaign;
- ii) Work with Labour Link to secure a commitment from any future Labour Government to increase school funding to address this crisis;
- iii) Specifically raise the issue of the unfairness of term time only (TTO) contracts and to campaign for the introduction of 52-week contracts for all school support staff;

- iv) Further develop our campaigning on pay / pay and grading for school support staff, using teaching assistants, as an example of a group whose pay needs urgent attention;
- v) Work with Labour Link to seek to persuade a future Labour Government to end academisation and bring existing academies back under local authority control.

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**Local Government Service Group Executive**

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**17.1**

Add new point v (and renumber accordingly)

"Support branches to organise local re-grading campaign that can address those support staff such as TA 1's and 2's that are relatively under-graded. This will include the production of organising guidance and template campaign materials."

**Wirral**

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**17.2**

Proposed amendments are:

After the end of 'Conference believes point 3)' add this point:

- 4) Children with special educational needs are being disproportionately negatively affected by the funding crisis in our schools. These pupils are particularly impacted by a lack of continuity of staff as schools rely increasingly on supply when they cannot recruit or maintain support staff. Schools may also resort to using fewer staff to support greater numbers of pupils with additional needs to cut costs. This is letting the most vulnerable children down and will have an impact on their families and the wider community as a whole.

After the end of 'Conference further believes point c)' add this point:

- d) The Government's minimum service level legislation may impact greatly on support staffs' ability to protect their pay, terms and conditions by making it illegal for them to take strike action.

After 'Conference therefore calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to: point v)' add this point:

- vi) Work with Labour Link to ensure a future Labour government repeals the minimum service level legislation.

**York City Branch**

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**18. Impact of OFSTED on Support Staff must be acknowledged**

Conference, stress caused by OFSTED has featured frequently in the news over the past few years, with reports on how the pressure of OFSTED has detrimentally impacted the health and wellbeing of headteachers and teachers in schools. But sadly, the impact a visit from OFSTED has on support staff is often overlooked.

When a school or academy gets 'the call' that OFSTED are coming in, support staff are just as vital to the preparations within school as teachers, which can include working

outside of normal hours to complete additional admin tasks, cleaning and maintenance and providing support to their teaching colleagues to ensure that everything is in order and ready for the inspection.

When OFSTED arrive, it is support staff that are expected to cover the classes when the teachers are called out of the classroom, with little acknowledgement on the impact this has on their other duties, such as providing crucial interventions to students. Sometimes, the teacher's meeting with an OFSTED inspector can and does overrun and this leaves support staff without sufficient work to deliver to their pupils. If this happens, support staff start to feel completely overwhelmed, and at times, out of their depth, especially if they have never had to teach a full class before.

Conference, we know that when there are budget cuts within schools it is support staff that are hit the hardest and are expected to do more with less staff. When OFSTED arrive this causes heightened stress and anxiety among support staff, many of whom are already balancing multiple demands in their roles. Apart from the impact on support staff's mental health, there is also significant impact on their physical health, too. Some support staff have admitted to not eating or sleeping, as the thought of an OFSTED visit weighs heavily on their whole being.

Conference, despite their invaluable contributions to the school community, support staff tell us that they feel undervalued and overlooked in the process because typically success with OFSTED is attributed to the work of the teachers and headteachers.

We call on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Work closely with the NEC, National Schools Committee, Regions, and Branches to raise the profile of the impact that OFSTED has on the health and wellbeing of Support Staff and carry out a survey of support staff members views on the effectiveness of OFSTED and impact on UNISON members;
- 2) Work through UNISON's structures and Labour link to seek to lobby relevant politicians in relation to reforms to OFSTED.

***South Tyneside Local Government***

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## **19. Preventing Violence Against School Staff**

Almost 14 years of austerity measures and continuing starvation of funds for public service have now taken its toll on all services which has left them with very few resources to provide the vital support all service users require and very much need. One of these services is Education.

Since 2010 we have had a continuation of year-on-year funding cuts for schools. We've seen a set of reforms introduced in 2014 which was meant to protect school's budgets and extend provision from birth for children and young people who have SEND that the tory government at the time claimed would give families greater choice in decisions and ensure their children's needs were properly met.

In the last 10 years we have seen public services and education funding cut to the bone that historically supported empowerment, inclusivity, and equality into communities, such as Sure Start Centres and a broad and balanced curriculum in schools to mention two that gave the previous cohorts of children / young people the springboard when they left school to, have a chance to climb the social mobility ladder as adults. This has been replaced with

no such support for children and parents at the start of their life and the curriculum has been narrowed to an extent where it no longer supports a proportion of children to experience success in their education which consequently affects their success later in life to thrive in adulthood.

The consequence of narrowing the curriculum and the impact cuts have inflicted on society, mean we are seeing a lot more mainstream schools with high numbers of children who have complex needs. In the past few years, we have seen a growing increase in violent incidents against school support staff. Since the new SEND reforms were introduced in Sept 2014 there's been very little direction for schools on how to deliver SEND provision in the setting. Also, with the reduction of an inclusive curriculum, means we have seen the children who once managed in schools at SEND Support status struggle significantly, which unfortunately has led to some of them disengaging in their learning or being permanently excluded or progressing through the EHC assessment process. Therefore, what staff and families are experiencing now is the following:

- 1) Lack of specialist schools. Especially in ASD provision. Sadly, the impact of this is leading to mainstream schools having a higher proportion of children and young people who have complex needs on roll at their school, which is challenging. As it is often not the appropriate learning environment for them with very little funding to provide the support the children and young people need;
- 2) School having to deliver a narrowed curriculum that not all children are able to access. (We need a broad and balanced curriculum so children can thrive, and their strengths can be harnessed for them to experience success in their education and then on into adulthood);
- 3) School budgets have been slashed which has led to experienced support staff having to leave the profession to secure other employment. Consequently, this has left schools to manage children / young people with complex needs, who require the adults to have skills at a level that can be responsive to their needs.

In 2016 UNISON surveyed 14,500 support staff in England, Wales and Northern Ireland which found:

- a) that more than half (53%) of TAs had experienced physical violence in the previous year;
- b) 20% of educational support staff (including librarians, technicians, administrative support, and catering staff) had also experienced violence;
- c) 85% said they had seen threats issued by pupils;
- d) 26% had experienced threats originating from parents.

Following on from the results of this survey UNISON commissioned research IN 2022 which is based on in-depth interviews with 16 teaching assistants who have experienced violence in England and Scotland. Dr Amanda Holt from the University of Roehampton carried out the qualitative research. Teaching Assistants told researchers they had been hit in the face, bitten, had objects thrown at them and received death threats, with incidents reported in primary and secondary schools. Their injuries included cuts, a black eye, a dislocated thumb, a broken finger, and torn ligaments, according to the University of Roehampton study.



Improving the reporting process around attacks, providing staff with medical and psychological support will support this skilled work force's emotional well-being and assure them that these incidents are being treated seriously and dealt with accordingly by school leadership. As well having policy and procedures in place for when these incidents happen.

Newcastle City Branch has been working with headteachers on how they can adopt UNISON's Model Policy and implement it in their schools supportively, consistently and with confidence. Several schools are happy to adopt this. As well as the policy the staff will have access UNISON advice and guidance for schools which will support the success in the implementation of the policy. The work with all schools continues for them to adopt UNISON's model policy and sign up to the Violence at Work Charter.

Conference, we call upon the Local Government Service Group Executive to support the campaign to have UNISON's Model Policy (Preventing Violence Against School Staff) adopted by every school in England by:

- i) Publicly endorsing and promoting the campaign for schools to adopt the model policy;
- ii) Encouraging other UNISON branches to collaborate with individual schools and MAT's on this campaign in adopting the policy;
- iii) Encouraging individual UNISON members to promote the campaign within schools they work in.

***Newcastle City***

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## **20. Further Education Pay**

Conference notes that the real value of pay in Further Education (FE) colleges has fallen dramatically by around 35% in recent years. Workloads have increased dramatically as staff numbers in FE colleges have decreased and like much of the public sector FE staff are having to do more for less.

Conference also notes that UNISON's strategy for pay in FE is based around the joint trade union pay claim submitted to the Association of Colleges (AoC). The AoC then make a non binding recommendation which individual FE institutions may or may not take any notice of.

UNISON has in recent years conducted consultative ballots at a national level over the pay recommendations made by the AoC and willingness of members to take industrial action to improve these offers. Other than the odd isolated exception this has unfortunately failed to deliver any significant improvement in pay within the FE sector.

Conference believes in the principle of a national joint trade union pay claim however the current process with the AoC is becoming increasingly irrelevant to members in the FE sector. Many FE colleges have long since departed from the 1 August pay anniversary date and have aligned their pay anniversary with the calendar year. The national consultative ballots are often taking place at a time when there is no discussion about pay at workplace and employer level. This combined with no organising and pay campaign on the ground it is no wonder that the results of the ballots and engagement have been disappointing.

Conference recognises that FE colleges generally sit within local government branches. Many branches have struggled to resource the level of organising and campaign activity required to deliver significant improvements in FE pay due to lack of activist time and competing priorities. Conference also recognises the attempts of the North West Region to recruit and organise differently in FE by forming a merged regional committee for FE, HE and Sixth Form.

Conference believes the current approach is not delivering for our members and we need to review if the approach is still fit for purpose. Conference would of course prefer, and reiterates its support for, sector wide collective bargaining in FE.

Conference therefore calls on the Service Group Executive to work with the National Committee for Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges to review UNISON's strategy for FE pay and to develop a new strategy if the current strategy is found to not be fit for purpose. The Service Group Executive should ensure that input is sought from key stakeholders including branches containing FE colleges, UNISON activists in FE and UNISON members in FE.

***North West Region***

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## **21. Improving stress levels in colleges**

Conference knows that stress and mental health problems are commonplace in many modern workplaces, including in colleges. Stress makes people nearly three times as likely to leave their jobs, temporarily impairs strategic thinking and dulls creative abilities.

In the 2023 UNISON Keeping in Touch survey, members reported that their number one concern was stress and anxiety that was brought on by their work. They reported being unable to switch off at home, having sleep problems, poor physical health, strain on their relationships and lower productivity. And yet, every employer tells us that they have policies and procedures for dealing with stress. But where is the evidence that any individual perks, such as wellness sessions or on-site gyms, work effectively to reduce long-term stress?

Stress in the workplace needs to be tackled at source. Support staff need fair and decent pay, fair treatment and respect, job security, learning and progression and healthy workplaces.

We have a wealth of resources available, developed over many years, to support our members and all UNISON negotiators look to secure policies that support staff who are experiencing poor mental health, stress anxiety and depression. What needs to happen now is a focus on making work in colleges something to look forward to in the morning, not something that we learn to cope with. 63% of respondents to our survey told us that their level of job satisfaction had declined in the past year. All of the pay claims submitted across FE have sought some element of workload and/or wellbeing improvements. This good work must continue and be accompanied by a deeper focus on the need for good, well-paid work in the college sector to ensure that support staff have jobs they are genuinely enthused by and afford them a good standard of living.

Conference therefore calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Develop a campaign around making the college sector an engaging and rewarding place to work;

- 2) Ensure that tackling workload is a part of every pay claim;
- 3) Work with the TUC/WTUC/STUC/ICTU on the 'Great Jobs Agenda'.

***National FE & 6th Form Colleges Committee***

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## **22. Organising outsourced workers in the college sector**

Conference believes that all public services are best delivered in public sector institutions by workers who are well-paid and respected for the jobs that they do. We know, however, that a combination of cost-cutting and marketisation in the Further Education sector has led to a proliferation of services in colleges being delivered by private contractors. Some of these are working for wholly-owned subsidiaries, some for arms-length organisations and some for specialist services, such as cleaning and catering. In the vast majority of these employers, their employees receive worse pay, worse pensions and worse terms and conditions, such as inferior sick pay and holiday pay, than their directly-employed counterparts.

Conference believes that all public sector workers should benefit from the improvements in working conditions brought about by union recognition and collective bargaining. To achieve this, we must improve membership density in contracted-out services in colleges; we do this by ensuring workers know what we can do for them. Organisers need resources to fight against outsourcing, campaign for insourcing, identifying new reps amongst outsourced workers and recruiting new members. Reps to feel empowered in their role to pursue collective bargaining issues and as well as supporting individuals.

The experiment to increase the role of the private sector in providing public services has failed in the college sector. In November 2022, the government in England admitted that the incorporation of FE of the past 25 years had been wrong and brought all colleges back into the public sector. Now we must fight to ensure that everyone who works in a college in the UK is directly employed by the public sector, beginning by securing improvements in the terms and conditions of those currently employed in contracted-out companies.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Carry out an in-depth mapping exercise to identify the true extent of private sector provision in the FE and 6th form colleges sector across the UK;
- 2) Continue to campaign for all services to be delivered in-house, as the ultimate aim, by resisting moves to outsource services and campaigning for contracted-out services to be brought in-house;
- 3) Develop a strategy to recruit and organise workers in private sector companies in colleges;
- 4) Advise and support branches on campaigns and strategies to support contracted-out workers in colleges;
- 5) Strive for union recognition and collective bargaining in contracted-out organisations;
- 6) Organise sessions for reps in contracted-out services at national and regional seminars, webinars and events;

- 7) Advise and support branches to campaign for annual cost of living wage rises for outsourced workers in the FE sector as they do for directly employed workers within the sector.

## ***National FE & 6th Form Colleges Committee***

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### **23. Organising in Education**

The education system has continued to fragment due to the expansion of Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) across different local authority areas, multiple private early years providers and a lack of national pay bargaining within Further Education.

All parts of the education sector have also seen chronic underfunding and a lack of long-term government strategy that has left staff significantly demoralised. UNISON's Stars in our Schools Survey in November 2023 showed 46% of school support staff were looking for better paid work in sectors such as retail and hospitality. This demonstrates the recruitment and retention crisis facing schools due to stagnant wages and high workload.

A lack of investment is also evidenced in the state of school buildings, which received national media attention due to RAAC. It is estimated that over a third of the nation's school estate is now past its working life; this will clearly not be resolved by the School Rebuilding Programme's rebuilding or refurbishing just fifty schools a year.

A high-visibility campaign for better funding and investment in education is therefore an essential pillar in our organising strategy to demonstrate that UNISON is the voice for education – across support staff in schools, early years, further education and sixth form.

Conference welcomes additional resources that are available to focus on increasing our activist base within MATs through Branch Support and Organising Fund (BSOF) projects and 'One UNISON' Organising to Win priorities.

In the Northern Region, this has resulted in a comprehensive base organising strategy across six MATs in the region together with regular reports so that outputs can be measured, reported and learned from. Since September 2023, 108 school visits have been conducted across 125 targeted schools, significantly increasing our number of workplace contacts and ensuring our membership density has risen. The aim is to have networks of stewards across these MATs to enable strategic wins to improve pay and conditions for UNISON members. Ensuring MATs remain NJC aligned; have trade union recognition agreements; pay into local authority facility time budgets; and have active reps are key priorities for the region.

Pressure is also increasing on MATs where they have different terms and conditions within the same employer due to different geographical boundaries - this means they will eventually seek to establish a single pay and grading structure. Conference believes our union must ensure we have a strategy in place to support branches with job evaluation negotiations so UNISON takes a lead role.

Advances in measuring outcomes and mapping data produced through BSOF and Organising to Win can equally be applied within early years and further education to help strengthen our approach to improve the density of membership and activists across the whole of education.

In seeking to strengthen our ability to campaign and organise effectively across education, conference calls on the Local Government Service Group to:

- 1) strengthen the fight against cuts to education funding, working with National Schools and FE and 6th Form Committee on a comprehensive, high visibility campaign highlighting the need for increased funding in education;
- 2) develop more effective alliances with a range of outside organisations, such as the various local government associations, school and college leaders, Early Years Alliance and political parties, to help secure equitable funding;
- 3) continue to campaign for national Further Education pay bargaining;
- 4) continue to campaign for all schools to be NJC aligned and collate this data so that it can be monitored and MATs targeted for campaigns;
- 5) support regions in conducting a skills audit for job evaluation expertise across local government branches and roll out job evaluation training where needed (focused on schools) to ensure we are best placed as a union to respond to this work;
- 6) continue with the benchmarking of terms and conditions for private sector outsourced education staff to campaign on improvements to terms and conditions through either local authority contracts, bringing the services in-house or accredited Real Living Wage status; and
- 7) continue to promote the use of BSOF Organising projects within education sectors as a further organising resource.

### ***Northern Region***

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## **24. Cuts in Education and the Impact on Women & Children in Northern Ireland**

Conference recognises that the cuts in the Northern Ireland Education budget will have the most detrimental impact on children and young people. It will impact children and young people who have the least, and who require increased social investment and funding in support services to ensure that they have a fair chance to achieve.

Conference notes many of these cuts are to programmes and initiatives borne out of the covid-19 pandemic which represented crucial recognition that investment was urgently required to ensure that disadvantaged pupil's opportunities were protected.

UNISON members across hundreds of schools were particularly appalled at:

- 1) An end to Free School Meal Payments during holiday periods ('Holiday Hunger Scheme') which provided 96,300 children with £27 a fortnight;
- 2) An end to Happy Healthy Minds Programme;
- 3) An end to Engage Programme;
- 4) An end to the Digital Devices scheme;
- 5) An end to the Baby Book scheme;
- 6) 28 New school projects paused;
- 7) A 40% cut to Free Period Products budget;

- 8) A 50% cut to the Shared Education budget;
- 9) A reduction in Nurture funding from £70 million to £62 million;
- 10) An end to schools coaching programme run by Irish Football Association (IFA) and Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA);
- 11) An end to funding available to Young Enterprise NI;
- 12) A depletion of funding available to Extended Schools (ES);
- 13) A significant shortfall in resource for pupils with SEN.

Conference notes UNISON NI members call on the newly restored devolved government to reverse these cuts and provide funding to ensure all programmes are fully restored.

Conference calls on the UNISON Local Government Services Group Executive to support UNISON members in Northern Ireland, negotiating in our workplaces and at regional level to ensure all cuts are reversed.

***UNISON Northern Ireland***

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## **Local Government Funding and Cuts**

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### **25. 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 £3.56bn in 2024/25 and a cumulative funding gap of just over £7bn 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% between 2009/10 and 2019/20, before partially recovering. However, in 2021/22 it was still 10.2% below 2009/10 levels. The fall in spending power is largely because of reductions in central government grants. These grants were cut by 40% in real terms between 2009/10 and 2019/20, from £46.5bn to £28.0bn (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 pandemic. Even including Covid grants, the fall in grant income was still 21% in real terms between 2009/10 and 2021/22; without, the fall was 31%.

Councils in Cymru/Wales were collectively facing budget pressures that required an extra £720m for the financial year 2024/25 just to stand still, whereas in Scottish councils

collectively reported that they needed an extra £932m on top of last year's financial settlement in order to provide the same levels of service in 2024/25.

Conference is clear that our ambition for the future of council funding cannot just be limited to dealing with the immediate funding gaps that councils are facing for the coming years. UNISON has been documenting the damage to services that years of savage funding cuts have created, and the results are shocking. The number of public libraries directly provided by local councils from 2010 to 2023 has fallen by 1,376 (a 35% reduction) whilst 1,219 youth centres have closed in the same time period. Alongside this, over 1,400 children centres have closed in the same period.

Whilst these problems cannot be reversed overnight, the damage that has been done to local government in terms of job losses and service cuts cannot be forgotten and must be reversed. Conference supports the call for massive re-investment in local government from the centre, along with longer term and fairer funding models. We also continue to support a positive vision for local government which recognises the fantastic work local government staff do and roots local public services in an ethos of democracy, equality and public ownership.

Conferences welcomes UNISON's continuing campaign on local government funding over the last year, including: our council cuts website, which once again led to thousands of emails being sent by UNISON members to national politicians across the UK calling for more funding, alongside our widespread lobbying work. UNISON worked productively with outside bodies including SIGOMA in demanding more council funding and directly lobbied politicians throughout the year. Meanwhile, direct support was provided to branches whose councils were facing extreme financial challenges and high-quality local council finance training was again made available to activists across the UK. All this work should continue, working with other campaigning organisations when appropriate.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Continue to 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) Develop a lobbying strategy aimed at influencing politicians locally, regionally and nationally, including exploring the possibility of holding a national lobby of parliament or demonstration alongside other unions;
- 3) 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;
- 4) Work with UNISON's policy team, devolved regions and external key allies like the TUC to articulate how council funding should be reformed in order to make it fairer, as part of the ongoing work on developing a positive vision for the future of local government;
- 5) Raise awareness about the importance and contribution of local government workers to our society through a series of high-profile campaign actions (for

example the Local Service Champions campaign) and provide opportunities for UNISON members and members of the public to lobby for more council funding;

- 6) Conduct a further Freedom of Information request and use the data to update the Council Cuts website to illustrate the scale of the funding gap faced by councils across the UK and encourage people to lobby national politicians for more council funding;
- 7) Produce a detailed summary of cuts across the UK since 2010, with data on the level of cuts, highlighting key services that have experienced cuts, and a section on the victories that have been won in defeating cuts or bringing services back in-house, saving jobs and services;
- 8) Continue to provide high quality local government finance training to help branches across the UK to understand, interrogate and influence their local council's budgetary process;
- 9) Where possible, co-ordinate those branches that have balloted members and take lawful industrial action, in line with all relevant legislation and UNISON rules, in response to the impact of fundings cuts, for example job losses or cuts to terms and conditions, so as to bring campaigns together and increase members' collective strength.

#### ***Local Government Service Group Executive***

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#### **25.1**

add new point 4 and re-number the rest

- 4) Work closely with branches in Councils that are likely to issue or have issued section 114 Notices to assist them to build broad public campaigns for extra funding.

#### ***Birmingham UNISON Branch***

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#### **25.2**

Insert new paragraph 6 and 7:

Conference notes that there is enough wealth in society to redress the funding shortfall. Globally, there are more billionaires than ever before. The worlds' richest person, Bernard Arnault who owns the majority holding of LVMH, has an estimated fortune of \$233 billion, up 10% from last year.

This is replicated in the UK, where the 10 richest people have a combined fortune of £207.8 billion. The FTSE 100 companies made over £250 billion of which £85 billion was paid in Dividends to Shareholder in 2023. We further note there appears to be little action to recover £10 billion fraudulently claimed from the COVID Recovery Fund. Had the wealthy been properly taxed over the last three decades, then there would be funding for our public services.

After the final paragraph and before Conference calls on the SGE points, insert new paragraph:



In particular, as we approach a general election and the likelihood of a Labour government, the campaign to increase taxing the rich and using the increase in public funds for council services is imperative.

## **26. Council Funding is in Crisis**

Conference condemns the actions of successive Conservative Governments over the last decade that has resulted in local authorities facing an existential crisis.

For years, UNISON and the Local Government Association have been calling for a sustainable long term funding settlement and updated distribution mechanism to allow councils to actively support their communities.

Instead, councils are having to contend with single year settlements when trying to make medium and long-term spending decisions and the 'fair funding' review of local government - promised since 2016 - continues to be kicked further into the long grass.

Conference believes the latest last-minute £600 million uplift represents little more than sticking plaster by a government panicked by several councils going bankrupt before the general election. The amount on offer barely scratches the surface and does not sufficiently deal with spiralling social care costs (such as child social care, which is up by 36% per person since 2010-11). The Local Government Association has argued a figure closer to £1.6bn was required to plug the funding gap.

In the Northern Region, Durham County Council's allocation of the £600 million for 2024-25 will be £5.880 million. This will only reduce the amount of reserves they are using for 2024-25 to £3.720 million. The base budget pressures for this local authority in 2024-25 are a staggering £51.797 million.

The Institute for Government Figures show that, even with the additional funding, the core money available to councils will remain 10% lower than in 2010-11. The situation is simply unsustainable.

In response to the dire funding situation, councils face difficult decisions around increasing council tax as it is a regressive levy, disproportionately impacting on lower income households. According to recent calculations by the IFS for 2019, council tax bills for the poorest 10% in England accounted for one tenth of take-home pay. For the richest 10%, it was just one-fiftieth. During a cost-of-living crisis raising council tax therefore increases the burden on some of the most vulnerable.

Conference believes that over a decade of austerity and failure to meet rising costs represents, not only a complete abandonment of local authorities, but a conscious act of vandalism by a government that does not value public services.

Councils are on the brink of collapse and only fairer funding models and long-term reinvestment will address this.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) further strengthen the campaign against cuts to local government funding and make the case for sufficient, fair, long-term funding;

- 2) continue to utilise Freedom of Information requests to update the Council Cuts website to support lobbying activity;
- 3) continue to raise support amongst the general public by putting across the damaging human consequences of cuts to services alongside demonstrating the value of all local government services;
- 4) make further training available to activists on local government funding and challenging council budgets;
- 5) continue to raise the profile of local government workers with initiatives such as 'Local Government Champions' to promote the importance of- considering a career within local government to the next generation of local government workers; and
- 6) work with politicians at all levels to get them to take effective action to end cuts to local government services.

## ***Northern Region***

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### **27. End the collapse of local government**

Every year the crisis in local government finance impacts on the services we provide, leading to withdrawal of services and outsourcing. Staff have seen terms and conditions deteriorate, withdrawals from LGPS pension schemes, redundancies. Workloads, stress and burn-out all increase.

Conservative and coalition rule from Westminster reduced funding for local authorities in England by over 10% between 2009/10 and 2021/22 at the same time demand for services such as children's and adult care have increased both due to austerity and an ageing population, inflation has added further costs and the priorities for local government have increased.

In Autumn 2023 it was reported that county councils in England would face a total of £4bn funding deficit over three years.

Removal of proper grant funding has led to council's investing or borrowing to provide services. UK council's borrowing has increased to a combined £97.8bn, equivalent to around £1,400 per person.

Government has failed to provide funding for equal pay and its own National Living Wage, (the additional costs to keep up with the NLW to county councils is over £230m) and the government fails to recognise any differential impact of its reduced spend on local government on any groups that share a particular protected characteristic.

An increased number of councils have reported to government that their expenditure is about to exceed their income by issuing a 114 notice under the Local Government Finance Act 1988 – indicating they are effectively bankrupt.

Fourteen councils have issued section 114 notices since the Local Government Finance Act 1988 became law. Hillingdon and Hackney councils were the first and second to do so, in 2000. In 2018 Northamptonshire issued two notices, since then seven councils have issued another ten notices.

Conference believes we need a national plan to support those branches where underfunding has led to financial crisis and calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Work alongside the Labour Link to lobby Labour to commit to increased financing for local government, based on the needs of our members;
- 2) Joint lobbying at the Chancellor's budget, during consultations on local government finance and at other opportunities with sister unions to increase funding of local government;
- 3) Seek to ensure that increased support is available for branches and our members in councils, who are likely to face urgent cuts which are often devastating to branch committees.

***Eastern Region***

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## **28. Real investment in Local Government before S:114 becomes the 'new normal'**

Conference notes that the number of councils issuing 'section 114' notices and declaring effective bankruptcy is steadily climbing. Fourteen councils have issued section 114 notices since the Local Government Finance Act 1988 became law. The East Midlands remembers Northamptonshire County Council issuing a Section 114 notice in 2018 which felt like a highly unusual occurrence. However, since 2020 there has been a steady stream of councils issuing 114 notices with Birmingham and Nottingham being the most recent cases.

This conference believes that many other councils will follow councils like Birmingham and Nottingham if there is not a significant injection of funding from national government. When a section 114 notice is issued, the council is legally forced to stop all but essential spending which is in effect another way of making cuts.

In the first half of the 2010s the coalition government imposed sharp cuts on local authorities: between 2009/10 and 2021/22, funding for local authorities in England fell by 10.2% in real terms. At the same time demand for services - particularly children's and adult social care - increased substantially. And, more recently, the cost of providing services has risen markedly too, especially during the current bout of inflation.

Councils and UNISON members have been underfunded, underpaid and undervalued by the Government for far too long.

This conference requests the Local Government Service Group Executive to :

- 1) Raises concerns with the Local Government Association and national government about the need for urgent action on local government funding before more councils are forced to submit Section 114 notices;
- 2) Organises a campaign across local government branches to fight for no cuts in jobs and services , and to oppose increases in council tax to compensate for cuts in government funding;
- 3) Works with Labour Link to demand fair funding for public services, with the view to providing immediate support to struggling Local Authorities upon the election of a Labour Government;

- 4) Provide support to branches fighting against Section 114 notices so they are equipped to campaign against cuts to jobs and services.

## **29. Renew the call for fair funding to a new Government**

Conference notes that despite government propaganda local government funding remains completely insufficient. The Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee published a report estimating a funding gap of £4bn over the next two years. Other estimates suggest £7bn is required to restore funding to 2010 levels. Multiple local authorities have issued Section 114 notices and many more are on the verge of doing so. Even more local authorities have announced huge levels of cuts in expenditure to ensure a balanced budget.

This situation was not inevitable, rather Conference believes this is a direct result of 14 years of misguided government policy towards local government. The areas of greatest need and those with the highest levels of deprivation have generally suffered the worst from cuts to funding.

Conference notes the collective efforts of UNISON to highlight the issue of the underfunding of local government. Conference believes the reality of the last 14 years is the government were not remotely interested in listening to UNISON's arguments despite having the power to fairly fund local government as was evidenced in January 2024 when some last-minute lobbying by Conservative MPs resulted in a further £600m in addition to the funding outlined in the provisional local government settlement for 2024/25.

Conference notes that there will shortly be a general election. The Labour Party has stated they will move to multi-year funding settlements for local government and ensure funding is directed to areas that most need it. There are no assurances from the Labour Party regarding increasing funding to local government. Conference does not believe that multi-year under funded settlements are enough.

Conference believes that money to properly fund local government can be found. Fairer taxation of wealth could generate billions of pounds each year, for example taxing capital gains tax at the same rates as income tax could generate £12bn-16bn a year.

It is imperative that UNISON do not ease off on our calls for increased and fairer funding for local government. If anything, Conference believes we should increase our lobbying of politicians especially in the event of a Labour general election victory.

Conference therefore calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Develop a clear plan of support, advice and solidarity to any branches dealing with a section 114 notice; and
- 2) Work with UNISON's Labour Link, in the event of a future Labour Government, to lobby for;
  - a) emergency funding for local government to address the immediate funding gap,
  - b) restoration of local government funding in real terms to 2010 levels; and

- c) increased and fairer funding of local government based on UNISON's existing policy positions.

## ***North West Region***

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### **29.1**

After the second paragraph insert the following:

"Conference further notes that central government no longer provides additional funding for areas where there are a higher than average number of disabled people. This leads to additional cost pressures on social care. The 2% precept the government expect councils to add to council tax bills to fund adult social care not only falls woefully short of funding the additional resources needed to deliver good quality and reliable social care for older and disabled people, but, in that council tax is a regressive tax, also penalises those on the lowest incomes, who are often the people who are most likely to use these services.

Additionally, the move away from a central funding formula to councils relying on business rates puts councils in the most deprived areas of the country at a substantial disadvantage. Councils are seeing any potential income from business rates falling year on year as more and more businesses close due to the disastrous economic management of a Tory government that has overseen the worst cost of living crisis in living memory. While affluent Tory strongholds may thrive as a result of this policy, more deprived areas, which invariably have higher numbers of disabled people, suffer.

Add new action point 2c as follows:

"a return to a centralised funding formula that does not rely on local business rates but instead takes into account the different cost pressures councils face including where there are a higher than average numbers of disabled people relying on social care."

Renumber the remaining points.

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

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### **30. Pay and funding in local government**

Conference notes that the cost of living crisis across the UK continues. While the rate of inflation has begun to fall, the prices of food, energy and housing continue to increase. Because the prices of essentials are rising faster than other goods, it is the lowest paid who are affected the most by continued inflation.

At the same time, the councils and schools that employ most UNISON members in local government are experiencing a funding crisis. UNISON's own research revealed a £3.57 billion funding gap in local government in Great Britain for 2024/25, while councils and schools are being increasingly forced to make incredibly difficult decisions in order to set balanced budgets. When councils' budgets are in such a bad state that Section 114 notices are needed, there is a very real threat to our members' jobs.

In Northern Ireland, members have been forced to take industrial action in response to the failure to implement the pay and grading system that is essential if members are to be paid fairly.

Conference believes that the employers we negotiate with must make decent pay offers, and the government must step up and fund them.

Conference further believes that when we deliver on pay, we recruit more members and activists. To do this, we need to ensure we are strong in negotiations and are prepared to take effective action, within all relevant legislation and the UNISON Rule Book.

Conference welcomes the successful national industrial action ballot results achieved in the SJC and CQC sectors in 2023. In both cases this led to improved pay offers that members voted to accept. Conference also welcomes the increased national turnout in the NJC ballot, despite the failure to pass the 50% turnout threshold in most significantly-sized employers. The 'Movement' system for member contact clearly has massive potential to assist our efforts in reaching 50% turnouts in more places, alongside face to face organising. Conference also strongly welcomes the variety of work being done across UNISON on improving ballot turnouts.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Ensure our sectors have a strong voice in the 'Winning for the future – industrial action in UNISON' project, designed to improve our ability to use ballots and collective action within our bargaining cycles;
- 2) Work with the sectors within the Local Government Service Group to build balloting-to-win strategies, which we can use to inform decisions about how we run ballots and take lawful action, in line with all relevant legislation and the UNISON Rule Book. This should include options for how we structure our ballots and disputes and consideration of occupational or service targeting, and working through each sector to optimise the use of mobilisation methods and tools including the Movement digital canvas system;
- 3) Support sectors, regions and branches in submitting pay claims which seek to achieve real terms pay increases for members and demand that the real value of pay begins to catch up following years of deterioration;
- 4) Lead a strong campaign for more council and school funding specifically for pay from central government, seeking to work with Labour Link, the Local Government Association, the Welsh Local Government Association, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Northern Ireland Local Government Association to help broaden the appeal of this campaign;
- 5) Continue to work with sectors, regions, the Service Group Liaison Committee and the 'Winning for the future – industrial action in UNISON' project to explore all possible ways of achieving successful ballot and negotiation outcomes;
- 6) Where we do ballot for action, in line with the UNISON Rule Book and all relevant legislation, work with sectors to ensure the Movement member participation system is optimised, and ensure that they consider a range of options with regard to balloting, including whether to target particular groups, whether to ballot on an aggregated or disaggregated basis, and using consultation results to help inform decisions about balloting.

***NJC Local Government Committee***

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### **30.1**

Insert new paragraph 5:

Conference also notes that because of years of privatisation, many of our Local Government members work for private companies with council contracts. Organising members on those contracts and fighting for pay rises so that wages are comparable with directly-employed staff, is an important part of campaigning for those services to come in-house. The Camden traffic wardens winning a £5,000 (18%) pay increase by taking indefinite strike action highlights how this can be possible.

Conference calls on the SGE to, add new point 4) and renumber accordingly:

Work with branches that have had winning disputes such as Camden and Leicester City to analyse how they organised and won, and share the findings with other Local Government branches and regions.

***Camden UNISON***

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### **31. Housing Budget Cuts**

Cuts to housing budgets are having significant consequences for our members, who are already suffering as a result of the cost of living crisis.

Over the past number of years, we have seen this workforce depleted resulting in additional pressures for housing workers, a rise in absence and many leaving the service. This has also meant for many having to lone work putting them in dangerous situations.

The lack of community mental health services has also played a significant part in contributing to the uncertainty housing workers face on a day-to-day basis.

The Scottish Government have announced that they will slash the affordable housing budget. A report from a Holyrood committee raised significant concerns on its impact on poverty and the economy.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation have said this decision is 'baffling' amid the wider housing crisis and the cut is a hammer-blow for tackling poverty and homelessness.

This conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Raise the profile of the cuts to housing and impact on our members.
- 2) Lobby all Governing UK bodies to reverse the funding cuts and invest in our housing services.
- 3) Establish guidelines/advice for housing workers around lone working and the impact of additional work pressures.
- 4) Liaise with the National Health & Safety Committee to issue advice on work risk assessments and how they can be used.

***UNISON Renfrewshire***

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### 31.1

Add point 5) Recognise that women are disproportionately affected by the housing crisis, work with the Local Government Housing Forum and the Housing Associations Committee to promote the UNISON housing campaign and circulate the “Through the roof” briefing to all regions.

*National Women's Committee*

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### 32. Cuts in domestic violence services

Domestic abuse affects women of all classes, ages, races and religions as well as lesbian, bisexual and transgender women.

Domestic violence can be a particular concern for disabled women.

According to researchers, more than one in four women in the UK will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime. Abuse can occur in many forms, it can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional, and includes controlling or coercive behaviour. It can also include stalking, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and so called ‘honour crimes’, as well as online or digital abuse.

Domestic violence is a matter of the gravest concern for the Local Government Service Group: many members will have been (and continue to be) affected by it, and many members are involved in providing services or support to the victims of domestic violence, as a part of their job.

Domestic abuse is one of the most extreme forms of oppression a woman can experience, and its effects can be devastating on all aspects of life. Domestic violence can impact the ability of those experiencing it to work effectively, and consequently, affect their job prospects and security. Domestic violence threatens the lives and health and safety of victims.

Before the pandemic, refuges and services for victims of domestic abuse were already severely under-resourced, and in many areas failing to keep up with demand after successive rounds of funding cuts. The Covid-19 pandemic further worsened this, leading to a sharp increase in domestic abuse, financial abuse and other gender-based violence.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), although domestic violence may originate in the home it can spill over into the world of work. For this reason, the ILO Convention 190 (C190) recognises that employers can help to recognise, respond and address the impacts of domestic violence on the workplace.

Conference applauds the National Women’s Committee for organising a webinar to mark the International Day to End Violence Against Women and Girls in November 2023 and inviting women activist speakers from Mexico, Ecuador and Australia to speak with UNISON members about domestic violence within workplace settings and championing the integration of C190 provisions into collective bargaining discussions.

Conference notes the major role UNISON played in ensuring that new legal protections for those suffering domestic became law in 2021 after years of campaigning.



The Domestic Abuse Act requires tier one local authorities in England, through a new statutory duty, to support domestic abuse victims and their children in safe accommodation and give priority to homeless victims.

However, funding remains largely inadequate. A significant portion of funding for support services for victims of domestic violence comes from local authorities' budgets. Research by Women's Aid found that 59% of local authorities had cut their funding in real terms in 2019/20. The reduction in funding has led to increased job insecurity for many members of the Local Government Service Group.

The government pledged an additional £185 million funding for support services for victims of domestic violence by 2024-25 in the 2021 Autumn budget, an increase of 85% from spending in 2019-20. However, the sector has warned that this sum is not sufficient to address demand. According to Women's Aid, an annual investment of £409 million is needed to fund domestic abuse services.

Violence against women remains widespread with devastating impacts on victims, survivors, and their families. The government must commit to secure, long-term funding for specialist violence against women and girls' services to enable victims access the necessary support required.

Conference also acknowledges that men can also be the victims of domestic violence.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to work with the National Women's Committee to:

- 1) As a part of the Service Group's ongoing campaign against local government cuts, highlight the cuts for funding domestic violence services as a specific and priority issue of concern, raising it with politicians and in the media and social media, to strengthen the campaign for proper funding for these services;
- 2) Work with the Labour Link Committee to campaign for more funding for specialist support for violence against women and girls' services;
- 3) Remind UNISON local government branches of the UNISON resources on ending violence against women and girls and supporting those experiencing or recovering from domestic abuse and violence;
- 4) Call on UNISON local government branches to raise these issues with their employer to ensure that local government employers are providing the best possible support to their employees affected by domestic violence and that there are good domestic abuse policies in every local government workplace;
- 5) Work with local government branches, and all other appropriate sections of the union, to raise awareness of ILO C190;
- 6) Campaign for domestic violence services that have been outsourced to be brought back in-house.

***Local Government Service Group Executive***

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### **32.1**

Add a sentence to the 11th paragraph after 2019/2020.

With many councils such as Birmingham facing bankruptcy this situation is only likely to get worse.

Add a sentence to 1)

After "cuts for funding domestic violence services" add

such as those being lost in Birmingham

Then continue the sentence.

***Birmingham UNISON Branch***

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## **Pay/Terms and Conditions**

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### **33. Living wage as part of a pay strategy**

The real Living Wage, as calculated by the Living Wage Foundation, is now £12 an hour across the UK and £13.15 in London. Unlike the government's own so called 'national living wage', the Foundation Living Wage is calculated using the actual cost of living.

During this cost of living crisis, the Foundation Living Wage is a crucial measure when we look at local government pay rates. On the NJC pay spine, pay points 2, 3 and 4 all now fall below the £12 an hour UK Foundation Living Wage rate.

Conference reiterates the service group's commitment to achieving a minimum pay rate of £15 an hour across local government.

As recently as 2023, the NJC employers had to delete pay point 1 just to keep above the legal minimum. This sort of bargain basement pay is hardly aspirational and puts local government pay in line with supermarkets and other high street retail jobs. This is unacceptable and sends entirely the wrong message to local government staff and those who local authorities want to recruit.

UNISON benchmarks against the Foundation Living Wage in our pay claims, and if employers met our claims in full they would meet the Foundation Living Wage for an entire bargaining group. But despite employers making offers that routinely fall below the Foundation Living Wage, there is no reason that individual local government employers cannot seek their own local accreditation – and many have now done so.

Over 150 local authorities are now Foundation Living Wage accredited – including Birmingham, Norwich, Manchester, Camden, York, Aberdeen and Cardiff Councils to name a few. And across the wider economy, there are now almost 7,000 employers accredited as Foundation Living Wage employers.

Conference believes that this is a good start, but we can go much further. There are many more local authorities that could and should become accredited. With the right resources and materials to build a local campaign around, many branches should find themselves pushing at an open door.

We call on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Ask sectors, regions and branches to continue to make the Foundation Living Wage a key part of their pay claims, and to ask regions to work with branches to identify

target employers to focus on each year, so as to increase the number of employers that pay the Foundation Living Wage;

- 2) Produce new local government-specific living wage resources for branches and activists;
- 3) Maintain a UNISON list of Foundation Living Wage accredited local government employers;
- 4) Produce a Foundation Living Wage template campaign plan for branches to use in their local campaigning.

***Local Government Service Group Executive***

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### **34. NJC Pay Negotiations & Universal Credit: The Impact of Delays to Pay Negotiations on Low-Income Families**

Conference recognises the work of the NJC negotiators on pay claims each year. However, Conference also notes that in the last two years the pay claim has not been agreed until November, and the 2021 pay claim was not settled until February 2022, meaning that the majority of members in local government did not receive their pay increases until December for 2022 & 2023, and had to wait until March 2022 for their 2021 increase. This has profound implications for our low-paid members in particular, as receiving their back-pay as a lump sum means their Universal Credit payment for the period in which they receive it becomes zero. Alongside this, many of these low-paid members will also risk the loss of other payments, such as Council Tax Support and Cost of Living Payments.

Conference believes that the length of time being taken each year to settle the NJC pay claim is failing our lowest-paid members and causing them financial hardship. Conference therefore calls for the Service Group Executive to work with the NJC negotiating team to expedite a swift resolution to pay claim negotiations so that local government members receive future pay increases in April or as soon thereafter as possible, in order that low-paid members do not suffer financial detriment.

***Lincoln UNISON (L.Gov.)***

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### **35. Demand that councils and other NJC employers recompense staff who have overpaid tax and NI due to lump-sum backpay from pay awards, and avoid future overpayments/impacts on benefits.**

In the last two years in particular, pay awards have not been approved and implemented until later in the year due to struggles over pay. Therefore, months of backpay has been paid in one lump sum. For many part-time staff, this means that for that one month only, they hit the threshold to pay tax and National Insurance that they wouldn't usually be eligible to pay.

It also severely impacts those workers eligible for benefits, namely Universal Credit, who assess and pay UC on a month by month basis and this lump sum has resulted in members gaining in pay but losing similar in benefits. Also, in some instances, by reducing/halting childcare costs and housing benefit payments.

These issues will have affected thousands of members nationally. It must be ensured that tax is returned to our members either through their wages or at the end of the tax year. However, NI payments are non-refundable and it puts members in a very precarious

position regarding benefits. Council's should therefore ensure back-pay is staggered over several months, as per staff needs.

In light of the financial difficulties many of our members are facing, the initial response from some councils (in 2022) was 'that lessons have been learnt'. However, no lessons were learnt as they carried on with exactly the same approach in 2023! Members have never received the money missing from their salaries back, which they should not have had to pay out in the first instance. Payrolls have deducted, without members' express knowledge or permission, a payment for NI that they are not eligible to pay and are refusing to refund it or compensate members for their loss of pay.

One member in South Gloucestershire Council reported that the amount taken from their backpay is equivalent to around 7% of the total backpay for them and would make a significant difference to their incoming budget. Due to the incompetence or lack of forethought by Payroll, they should not be expected to just accept this loss. The whole issue could easily have been averted by splitting the backpay into two payments, over November and December for example.

On behalf of members and colleagues that have been affected by this gross error, councils have a duty of care to look after their staff. For this to occur and be dismissed so quickly doesn't appear to be 'caring' whatsoever. Particularly during a cost-of-living crisis.

UNISON represents its members in negotiation and bargaining, and campaigns for better working conditions and pay. On behalf of members and colleagues, UNISON should represent us, taking this further to negotiate for these unfair deductions to be returned to our members, or compensated for by the employer who took them unfairly.

This motion therefore calls on conference to resolve that UNISON Local Government Service Group nationally:

- 1) Urgently write to councils and NJC employers to resolve this issue, getting money paid back to staff who have overpaid tax/NI;
- 2) Campaign for the money to be recompensed, raising it as a national issue to put pressure on councils/NJC employers.

***South Gloucestershire***

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### **36. Campaign for a Pay and Grading Review**

Conference applauds the determined efforts of union members in Northern Ireland over the last year to win pay justice. Our members in education support services have pushed through a period of political instability and absence of devolved government to finally get their demand for a pay and grading review on the agenda.

The return of an assembly and appointment of an Education Minister has renewed expectation that the review will be fully funded and pay improvement secured.

The application of NJC pay scales and job evaluation outcomes have been contested for years.

UNISON has targeted long pay scales, collapsed differential and undervalued posts for review and pay improvement.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to send a message of solidarity to UNISON members in Northern Ireland.

***UNISON Northern Ireland***

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### **37. Car allowance rates as part of our national pay negotiations**

Unison and other unions were told in 2022 that the local government employers would not negotiate on car allowance rates. The employers told us this was now a local issue despite the rates being part of the Green Book.

Mileage rates have not changed since 2011 and have been significantly eroded by inflation. UNISON estimate they have been eroded by 38% since 2011. This means our members are subsidising their employers to do the job. Our members should not be made poorer when doing their job.

Conference calls on the SGE to liaise with our NJC negotiators for the 2025/26 local government pay talks with a view to negotiating a fair and justified settlement for our members that fully reimburses them for the costs they incur and specifically that an increase in mileage allowance forms a core part of our pay claim.

***Wirral***

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### **38. Erosion of T&C's, Pay and Protection**

Since the establishment of the Scottish Joint Council and National Joint Council agreements, our members have seen significant decline in their terms and conditions, pay and protection arrangements. This may also be the case in other local government bargaining areas.

The decline has resulted in a post code lottery across all local authorities – this calls into question the entire national bargaining structure.

This conference believes that we must act now to establish in the SJC, NJC and other bargaining areas, where possible a national set of terms and conditions and protection provision for all local authority workers.

This conference recognises that there is a need for local determination in some areas where recruitment or retention is a problem, and that branches can seek to improve upon national conditions through local bargaining, however employers have exploited local arrangements to attack terms and conditions and protection arrangements, making cuts by stealth.

Every worker deserves to be treated fairly without fear of losing their job or being forced to accept detrimental changes. These actions disproportionality impact on women and the lowest paid.

This Conference calls upon the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Create a data base of terms and conditions variations across employers;
- 2) Issue a statement condemning these erosions and call for changes with the aim of raising local terms and conditions and protection arrangements up to a national minimum standard;

- 3) Support both SJC and NJC Committees to take forward a plan to address this national crisis through the bargaining structures;
- 4) Work with other bargaining groups where similar issues are prevalent.

### ***Scottish Joint Council Committee***

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#### **39. Stop charging disabled members to go to work**

Conference is concerned that disabled members in local government are being penalised for using their cars to travel to and from work and for work purposes.

Disabled workers often have no option but to use their cars for work as public transport is either inaccessible or inappropriate for their needs.

Current NJC mileage rates for a casual car user based on travel of less than 8,500 miles per year are:

46.9p for cars with and engine sized between 451 and 999cc

52.2p for cars between 1000 and 1199cc

65p for cars over 1200cc

These rates have not been changed since 2010 but this is made worse as some local authorities refuse to pay anything other than the lowest mileage rate even if the car used has an engine that is above 1200cc.

They often use green travel policies or the need to reduce carbon emissions to justify only paying the lowest mileage rates without any consideration of the impact on disabled workers.

Disabled workers often need to use larger cars or wheelchair accessible vehicles for disability related reasons. These cars are rarely, if ever, below 999cc and often over 1200cc. Ever increasing fuel prices mean that disabled local government workers are effectively being charged to use their car for work purposes.

Although some UNISON branches have successfully negotiated increases in mileage rates or payments at the higher levels it should be noted that some of this benefit is lost in tax as HMRC rates have not increased since 2011.

An increasing number of local councils are also introducing parking charges for Blue Badge holders including in car parks at council buildings. Some disabled local government workers who have Blue Badges are being charged over £1,000 a year to park at work.

Evidence shows that it costs some disabled local government workers who travel to and from work by car almost double the amount a non-disabled local government worker pays. This means disabled local government workers are being charged just to attend work.

Conference believes that disabled workers play a vital role in local government. They provide an insight into local communities that help council's deliver services that reflect the needs of their residents.

It is time for councils to recognise the valuable contribution disabled people make rather than penalising them for working.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to work with National Disabled Members Committee to:

- 1) Write to all local government branches to identify local councils whose policies have a negative impact on disabled members because they:
  - a) Fail to pay the correct cc mileage rate to disabled employees who use their car for work purposes;
  - b) Charge disabled employees who are Blue Badges holders to park at work.
- 2) Collect evidence of the financial hardship faced by disabled members in local government due to the policies referred to in action 1;
- 3) Write to all local councils who fail to pay the correct cc mileage rates and or charge disabled employees to park to:
  - i) Remind them of their duty to make reasonable adjustments to policies, practices and procedures for disabled employees;
  - ii) Request that they pay the correct cc mileage to people who need to use a car with a car with a higher cc engine for disability related reasons;
  - iii) Remove parking charges for disabled employees who are Blue Badge holders.
- 4) Raise these issues through national bargaining structures;
- 5) Circulate UNSION's guide to Bargaining on Mileage Rates to branches and regions.
- 6) Work with Labour Link to lobby elected representatives in the UK and devolved governments for an urgent increase in HMRC mileage rates to reduce the tax burden on employees who need to use their car for work purposes.

***National Disabled Members Committee***

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#### **40. Maternity pay in Local Government**

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. Local government employees that have at least one year's continuous local government service at the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth, and return to work for a period of three months after maternity leave, will be entitled to statutory maternity pay and occupational maternity pay as follows:

6 weeks at 90% of full pay, 12 weeks at 50% pay plus Statutory Maternity Pay and 21 weeks on statutory provision.

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 the National Joint Council Joint Trade Union side calling for better maternity pay conditions for local government employees, and welcomes UNISON's recent call for statutory maternity pay to be doubled.

Conference believes that maternity pay conditions being in line across public sector organisations will have a significantly positive impact on women, parents and wider society.

Conference asks the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Assess and review maternity pay rights (and related pay entitlements such as paternity and adoption pay) within the local government service group in comparison to other public sector employers;
- 2) Work with UNISON's local government sector committees to seek to improve maternity pay and other parental rights through bargaining;
- 3) Promote existing maternity and paternity pay agreements and statutory entitlements to young members across the local government service group;
- 4) Encourage local government branches to promote existing locally negotiated family-friendly policies to young members in local government, such as flexible working arrangements, adoption leave, carers' leave and shared parental leave;
- 5) Work with the National Women's Committee to promote UNISON's work challenging and addressing maternity discrimination to young members in the local government service group, and share existing resources on maternity, paternity and parental rights;
- 6) Consider producing guidance for members in the local government service group on family friendly policies and parental rights in the workplace.

***National Young Members' Forum***

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#### **41. Workplace Violence**

Conference notes the significant increase in workplace violence and aggression against our members, everyone has the right to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence. We urgently need action to strengthen legal protections, employer actions and enforcement activity to better protect workers exposed to violence and aggression.

There has been a significant increase in violent incidents among our members across Scotland, particularly in Education and Social Work services.



The UNISON Scotland 2023 Workplace Violence report, highlights:

- 1) The report registered a total of 54,684 violent incidents taking place against public service staff in the year to 31 March 2023;
- 2) The total number of violent incidents was 31% higher in 2023 than the previous year, with an additional 12,931 violent incidents reported;
- 3) Almost two thirds of the total in 2023 (65%) involve violence against local authority staff;
- 4) Violent incidents against council staff rose by over 50% year on year;
- 5) Schools and nurseries account for between 80-98% of all violent incidents reported by councils in 2023 with most of these involving education support staff such as Pupil Support Assistants.

The report also indicates clear issues with incident reporting procedures, lack of awareness and proper policies, and lack of up-to-date training and development for staff in these vital areas, including lack of proper de-briefs for staff following a violent incident.

The need to have accurate and reliable systems for reporting all violence against public sector workers remains. Without this, truly effective measures to overcome and eliminate the problem will not happen. This year's findings highlight continued inconsistencies in reporting by public service employers, including amongst registered social landlords, who were part of our survey for the first time. The differences in reported violence are significant and due to the absence of/or inconsistency in recording of incidents by employers.

The lack of proper enforcement action by the HSE is also a major concern. The impact of cuts to public services and cost cutting measures has led to more violent incidents across all the sectors our members work in. We expect employers to be doing more to tackle these issues.

Conference acknowledges the vital work done by our branches to tackle workplace violence and harassment, the work on the violence charter and campaigns by service groups on National strategies around violence & safety at work. Government & the HSE are not doing enough.

We call upon the SGE to lobby the UK Government and the health and safety regulators to fully recognise the issues including:

- a) Effective inspection, enforcement and appropriate sanctions on employers who fail to protect workers;
- b) HSE to prioritise inspections regarding violence against all staff as a priority for proactive inspections, and greater resources to be diverted to all proactive health and safety enforcement activity;
- c) Consultation with trade unions on measures to tackle work related violence at both national and local level.

Update resources to support branches to organise around workplace violence and aggression; including specific guidance on:

- i) De-briefing procedures;
- ii) Challenging Risk Assessments;
- iii) Incident Reporting;
- iv) Training, instruction & supervision.

**Scotland Region**

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## **42. Food Standards Agency – Pay, Terms & Conditions**

Conference notes that our members employed in England, Wales and Northern Ireland by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) work tirelessly to ensure the public eats safe and clean meat, dairy and seafood. Our membership is not getting any younger, so we must widen our reach to attract other roles within the Agency.

Conference also notes the contributions of members employed by the contractor Eville & Jones towards protecting the UK from unsafe and unclean meat.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to continue to defend our members' terms and conditions by:

- 1) Negotiating for higher wages for our members through collective bargaining;
- 2) Increasing our profile within the meat and food sector through press communications;
- 3) Opposing attempts to undermine the roles of our members working in food by promoting the Protect Our Food campaign to decision-makers by holding events and using social media and digital communications;
- 4) Organising in new areas of the FSA to maintain membership and recruit in non-traditional roles;
- 5) Organising pay and pension webinars to inform, consult and support our member's terms and conditions;
- 6) Benchmarking FSA pay grades against other equivalent regulatory roles;
- 7) Opposing privatisation and deregulation of meat hygiene inspection.

**Food Standards Agency Committee**

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## **Pensions**

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### **43. Defending and improving our pensions**

Conference notes that with the roll out of auto-enrolment pensions since 2013, more than three-quarters of current workers are now contributing to a workplace pension.

Conference notes with concern that with the closure of most good quality defined benefit (DB) pension schemes in the commercial private sector, only a quarter of current workers are members of DB schemes. These workers are concentrated in public services.

Conference reaffirms our service group's commitment to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The scheme provides a decent and secure retirement income for workers in local government, and Conference believes that it is sustainable for the long term.

Conference opposes efforts by some employers to worsen pension arrangements for local government workers, including those providing outsourced council services. We are alarmed by moves by some employers including housing associations, education providers and charities to end provision of the LGPS to workers.

Conference believes that, in contrast to DB schemes, most defined contribution (DC) schemes fail to provide workers with decent and secure pensions. Over the next ten years, a worker on the median average salary in local government could expect to accrue four times more pension entitlement in the LGPS than they would build up in a DC scheme that uses the statutory minimum employer and employee contributions (3% and 5% respectively). A worker also takes on more risk in a DC scheme, and few DC schemes provide the ill health retirement, redundancy, and death benefits that the LGPS provides to members. Reduction in access to the LGPS marks a major worsening of employee terms and conditions and we must oppose and mitigate the effects of these employer offensives against our members' living standards in retirement.

Conference notes with deep concern government actions to secure greater influence over the investment decision-making of local government pension schemes. The Economic Activities of Public Bodies (Overseas matters) Bill before Parliament would prevent pension funds from responding to the views and priorities of local residents in their investments. Plans announced by the chancellor in the Autumn statement to press ahead with interference in fund investment, although this was rejected by most respondents in the government's consultation, are also of deep concern to members. The monies in pension funds belong to members, not the government. Conference believes the governance arrangements ensuring accountability to locally elected councillors, guided by fiduciary duty, and supported by boards involving member representatives, must be defended.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Campaign for the continuation of DB provision for workers in local government, through highlighting the sustainability and fairness of the LGPS and its role in the recruitment and retention of local government workers;
- 2) Work with Labour Link to seek to ensure continuing support for the LGPS from an incoming Labour Government;
- 3) Work with the UNISON Pensions Unit in producing bargaining guidance and campaign materials for branches and organisers facing an erosion in the access of members to the LGPS, so as to help maintain and expand the coverage of the LGPS;
- 4) Launch a strategic targeted campaign to improve existing DC pension provision through highlighting the inadequacies of schemes, calling for higher employer contributions, and alleviating individual risk through exploring collective DC arrangements;
- 5) Campaign to maintain the freedom of pension funds to invest in a way that reflects both the ethical views and material interests of scheme members, working with Labour Link and the NEC to campaign for continued full local democratic control of

LGPS investments, and working with the Pensions Unit to brief activists involved in scheme governance on these issues.

### *Local Government Service Group Executive*

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#### **44. Pension**

Conference notes:

That the LGPS Funds have all been growing steadily over the past decade, with many funds now in excess of 100% funding.

That commentators (such as the Local Government Chronicle) recognise that the majority of that growth is due to long term reductions in liabilities (despite last year's large CPI uprating of pensions in payment and CARE accounts).

That those decreased liabilities are in part due to a mixture of the rise in life expectancy tailing off and the impact of the changes to benefits, most notably the removal of the Rule of 85 (early retirement) option which, combined with rising LGPS and State Pension ages (particularly for women), sees many low paid members working much longer and retiring older and therefore being less time in pension payment.

That a number of funds (particularly in Scotland) have recently chosen to respond to fund surpluses and pressures to the employers' revenue budgets, by reducing employer contributions, either drastically, allegedly for a short period, (Strathclyde) or less drastically on a longer-term basis (Tayside). Some employers may target the whole surplus as theirs to claw back, although funds are still required to make decisions independently based on actuarial advice.

That the UK has one of the worst state pension provisions in Europe.

That UNISON has led on measures to improve scheme funds through, for instance, the successful campaign for investment cost transparency and the efforts to reduce costs of fund management through pooling.

Conference believes:

That pensions are deferred wages and these funds are our members' current and future pensions.

That there should be no race to the bottom in workplace pensions and that LGPS pension funds are not slush funds for struggling councils.

That left unchallenged, funds may be influenced by councils wishing to use them as an easy source of savings.

That funds and fund managers have not suddenly become masters of investment and so cannot claim credit or ownership of improved funding levels.

That valuations of the LGPS schemes use a formula which does not reflect the real financial position of funds, and so fund surpluses do not feed through into improved benefits for members.

Conference requests that the Local Government Service Group Executive works with our representatives within the relevant structures of the LGPS (Scheme Advisory Boards, fund boards etc.), branches and the wider local government membership to:

- 1) Campaign against employer attempts to claim fund surpluses resulting from reduced member benefits (and actuarial consequences of them) as theirs to make savings from through contribution cuts;
- 2) Demand that actuarial reports make clear what proportion of funding improvements in local funds and the scheme as a whole, since the mid-2000s, are attributable to reductions in scheme benefits and knock-on effects of those;
- 3) Campaign for a review of scheme benefits to look for improvements, particularly in the area of early retirement options and/or early retirement actuarial reductions based on the funding improvements identified above;
- 4) To develop and distribute information and learning for members to improve their knowledge of how the scheme and LGPS pension funds work and why we must defend them;
- 5) To ensure that this work does not cut across any existing or future campaigns around ethical investment of funds.

### ***Scotland Region***

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#### **45. Governmental meddling / coercion in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)**

Conference notes ongoing endeavours by HM Government to manoeuvre the LGPS to serve its own political objectives.

This goes back to October 2016 when the then chancellor, George Osborne told the Conservative Party conference of his intentions in relation to the LGPS and this included his aspiration that the LGPS invests in the nation's infrastructure.

More recently on the 10 July 2023 Chancellor Hunt's Mansion House Speech took this worrying agenda several steps further by indicating:

- 1) plans to compel LGPS pools to raise their investment level to at least 10% of funding to private equity;
- 2) that the government intends to amend regulations to require funds publish plans to invest up to 5% of their assets under management in projects supporting levelling up, and update these every three years;
- 3) a further consultation of the 83 funds on mergers of separate LGPS funds.

One merger has already occurred. On 1 April 2020 Northumberland County Council Pension Fund merged into Tyne and Wear Pension Fund. The prospects of further mergers being taken forward could result in just one fund, say for the south-west and west of England or that the number of pools maybe reduce or both.

The potential vulnerabilities of fewer LGPS funds, or indeed pools, arguably come to the fore when related to events in September 2013 when the government announced its plans

to privatise the Royal Mail. Its pension scheme: the Royal Mail Statutory Pension Scheme (RMSPS) was a funded scheme like the LGPS i.e. funded by contributions from workers and the growth in the scheme's assets.

During his 2012 budget speech, Chancellor George Osborne announced that the government would be absorbing the £28 billion worth of assets held by the pension scheme, which it could use to pay down the national debt. Could this be a fate awaiting an LGPS rendered vulnerable by there being fewer separate entities and a freedom to pursue its fiduciary duty to invest in the best interest of scheme members fettered by governmental regulation?

A particular and serious dilemma resulting from Brexit has been placed at the door of the LGPS by the government in its 11th July 2023 consultation: "Local Government Pension Scheme (England and Wales): Next Steps on Investments". The consulting department being the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Within paragraphs 88 to 90 of the consultation the objective of the government is to see LGPS funds diverted into venture capital and growth equity related to levelling up. This will include infrastructure! There is no mention in the consultation of the drivers for this. But it is this: Pre Brexit the European Investment Bank (EIB) financed some of the most critical infrastructure projects in the UK. Post Brexit the UK has lost access to EIB finance!

In an attempt to offset this the UK created or expanded 4 development banks to try and replace the lost investment. However, they have only been able to replace a third of the EIB investment.

Cue the LGPS and the reason for including Question 12 in the consultation!

Do you agree that the LGPS should be supported to collaborate with the British Business Bank to capitalise on the Bank's expertise?

What is going on here? Conference notes:

- a) the evident reluctance of the government to capitalize its development banks so that they can replace the lending capacity of the EIB;
- b) the government's intent to see LGPS funds backfill the lack of capital in their own development banks;
- c) the government's disregard towards the management of risk within the LGPS (evidenced by the mention of venture capital, which is at the risky end of the investment spectrum);
- d) and the government's apparent disregard towards the fiduciary duty carried by the LGPS, to act in the best interests of its scheme members.

Any change since? Conference notes:

The Autumn Statement contained the government's response to the consultation. The government appears to have largely ignored its consultation and is proposing a series of non-mandatory requirements in line with their initial position! This included setting a direction towards fewer pools, revised guidance to implement a 10% allocation ambition for investments in private equity and to require funds to set a plan to invest up to 5% of assets in levelling up the UK, and to report annually on progress against the plan. In an attempt to reduce a barrier to bringing these developments into being a leading pensions

publication has learned that the government is looking at whether the law on fiduciary duty needs to change.

Concerns therefore remain about the government's proposed use of powers to advance its agenda. The LGPS exists to pay members' pensions, not to deliver on government investment policy. In this context Conference argues there is no place for sitting back and awaiting developments which could have serious impacts for trade union members with a stake in the LGPS.

Conference therefore calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to liaise with the National Executive Council and Labour Link, to work with local UNISON regions and branches, and encourage the Trades Union Congress and Trades Union Councils to call on the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to respect the objectives and freedom of the Local Government Pension Scheme to invest in the best interests of its scheme members only, its existing fiduciary duty, and to respect the existing pooled structure within which individual LGPS funds determine their investment priorities.

### ***Haringey UNISON Local Government (M)***

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#### **46. Governmental meddling / coercion in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)**

Conference notes ongoing endeavours by HM Government to manoeuvre the LGPS to serve its own political objectives.

This goes back to October 2016 when the then chancellor, George Osborne told the Conservative Party conference of his intentions in relation to the LGPS and this included his aspiration that the LGPS invests in the nation's infrastructure.

More recently on the 10 July 2023 Chancellor Hunt's Mansion House Speech took this worrying agenda several steps further by indicating:

- 1) plans to compel LGPS pools to raise their investment level to at least 10% of funding to private equity;
- 2) that the government intends to amend regulations to require funds publish plans to invest up to 5% of their assets under management in projects supporting levelling up, and update these every three years;
- 3) a further consultation of the 83 funds on mergers of separate LGPS funds.

One merger has already occurred. On 1 April 2020 Northumberland County Council Pension Fund merged into Tyne and Wear Pension Fund. The prospects of further mergers being taken forward could result in just one fund, say for the south-west and west of England or that the number of pools maybe reduce or both.

The potential vulnerabilities of fewer LGPS funds, or indeed pools, arguably come to the fore when related to events in September 2013 when the government announced its plans to privatise the Royal Mail. Its pension scheme: the Royal Mail Statutory Pension Scheme (RMSPS) was a funded scheme like the LGPS i.e. funded by contributions from workers and the growth in the scheme's assets.

During his 2012 budget speech, Chancellor George Osborne announced that the government would be absorbing the £28 billion worth of assets held by the pension scheme, which it could use to pay down the national debt. Could this be a fate awaiting an

LGPS rendered vulnerable by there being fewer separate entities and a freedom to pursue its fiduciary duty to invest in the best interest of scheme members fettered by governmental regulation?

A particular and serious dilemma resulting from Brexit has been placed at the door of the LGPS by the government in its 11th July 2023 consultation: "Local Government Pension Scheme (England and Wales): Next Steps on Investments". The consulting department being the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Within paragraphs 88 to 90 of the consultation the objective of the government is to see LGPS funds diverted into venture capital and growth equity related to levelling up. This will include infrastructure! There is no mention in the consultation of the drivers for this. But it is this: Pre Brexit the European Investment Bank (EIB) financed some of the most critical infrastructure projects in the UK. Post Brexit the UK has lost access to EIB finance!

In an attempt to offset this the UK created or expanded 4 development banks to try and replace the lost investment. However, they have only been able to replace a third of the EIB investment.

Cue the LGPS and the reason for including Question 12 in the consultation!

Do you agree that the LGPS should be supported to collaborate with the British Business Bank to capitalize on the Bank's expertise?

What is going on here? Conference notes:

- a) the evident reluctance of the government to capitalize its development banks so that they can replace the lending capacity of the EIB;
- b) the government's intent to see LGPS funds backfill the lack of capital in their own development banks;
- c) the government's disregard towards the management of risk within the LGPS (evidenced by the mention of venture capital, which is at the risky end of the investment spectrum);
- d) and the government's apparent disregard towards the fiduciary duty carried by the LGPS, to act in the best interests of its scheme members.

Any change since? Conference notes:

The Autumn Statement contained the government's response to the consultation. The government appears to have largely ignored its consultation and is proposing a series of non-mandatory requirements in line with their initial position! This included setting a direction towards fewer pools, revised guidance to implement a 10% allocation ambition for investments in private equity and to require funds to set a plan to invest up to 5% of assets in levelling up the UK, and to report annually on progress against the plan. In an attempt to reduce a barrier to bringing these developments into being a leading pensions publication has learned that the government is looking at whether the law on fiduciary duty needs to change.

Concerns therefore remain about the government's proposed use of powers to advance its agenda. The LGPS exists to pay members' pensions, not to deliver on government investment policy. In this context Conference argues there is no place for sitting back and awaiting developments which could have serious impacts for trade union members with a stake in the LGPS.



Conference therefore calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to liaise with the National Executive Council and Labour Link, to work with local UNISON regions and branches, and encourage the Trades Union Congress and Trades Union Councils to call on the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to respect the objectives and freedom of the Local Government Pension Scheme to invest in the best interests of its scheme members only, its existing fiduciary duty, and to respect the existing pooled structure within which individual LGPS funds determine their investment priorities.

**Cornwall LG**

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#### **47. Governmental meddling / coercion in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)**

Conference notes ongoing endeavours by HM Government to manoeuvre the LGPS to serve its own political objectives.

This goes back to October 2016 when the then chancellor, George Osborne told the Conservative Party conference of his intentions in relation to the LGPS and this included his aspiration that the LGPS invests in the nation's infrastructure.

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#### **48. LGPS – Survivor Pension equity now!**

The Local Government Pension Scheme currently discriminates against all those members that are single, unmarried and those that don't have children. The pension schemes provides for a survivors pension only to children, civil partners or spouses at the rate of 160th per qualifying year. Anyone that falls outside this categories are unable to claim this part of the pension.

The death in service award can be given to any beneficiary as nominated by the pension holder. But what can't be done in the scheme is for a person to nominate someone to be their survivor. Members of the Local Government Pension Scheme pay the same proportion into the scheme but only a few see the full benefits.

This means some members are over paying in to the scheme as they can't receive the full benefits.

This is a reductive scheme that fails to recognise peoples life choices or their sexuality and it needs modernising now.

People that are asexual are not covered under the Equality Act 2010 and are therefore unable to claim the legal protection under that act against this discrimination. Like any sexual orientation people don't choose to be what they are. The world is already stacked against single people, with people having to pay more not to be in a relationship. They are unable to share the living costs in the same way couples do.

Private sector landlords are more hesitant to let to single people due to fear of loss of income. In the Eastern region and London particularly it is nearly impossible for a lower paid worker to afford housing cost on their income, meaning people are forced to share accommodation with strangers or friends.

In death people should be able to decide where their money goes and who it goes to.

We call on conference to direct the Local Government Service Committee to:

- 1) Research the number of members that are affected by not being able to access a survivors pension from the LGPS;
- 2) To form a Campaign to allow pension holders to assign their survivors to anyone in the same way as they do for their beneficiaries;
- 3) To support and push forward a campaign at a national level to get Asexuality recognised and therefore protected as a sexual orientation under the Equalities Act 2010.

***St Albans City & District***

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#### **Amendments Ruled Out of Order**

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Beyond Remit of the Conference

#### **Motion 21 Improving stress levels in colleges**

Conference therefore calls on the Service Group executive to:

Amend No 2

Ensure that tackling workload is a part of every pay claim, take measures to mitigate increased workloads, ensuring a balance between workload and staff wellbeing.

Add No 4

Develop materials for branches to adopt strategies to address the threat of redundancies, to highlight the benefit of ensuring job security for support staff, which not only improves OFSTED ratings but also benefits students.

Add No 5

Develop material to support colleges and branches to campaign to provide staff access to college counselling services to help support mental health and wellbeing.

National FE & 6th Form Colleges Committee

***Bolton Metro***

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Could Place the Union in Legal Jeopardy

**Motion 25 Cuts and Funding**

Not printed on the advice of the legal officer

***Nottingham City UNISON (L Gov)***

**Motion 25 Cuts and Funding**

Not printed on the advice of the legal officer

***Hackney Local Government (M)***

**Motion 25 Cuts and Funding**

Not printed on the advice of the legal officer

***Surrey County (L)***

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Introduces Substantial New Subject Matter

**Motion 32 Cuts in domestic violence services**

In paragraph 2 change 'disabled women' to read 'disabled people'. Then add the following:

"According to Office of National Statistics (ONS) data 1 in 7 disabled adults (14.3%) experience domestic violence or abused compared to 5.1% of non-disabled people. While 17.9% of disabled women and 9.2% 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 domestic abuse as they rely on the perpetrators to survive.

Disabled people are abused for 50% longer before they tell anyone. And even when they do report it more often than not they will have nowhere to go. Just 1% of women's refuges are fully accessible for disabled women. There are no accessible refuges for disabled men who experience domestic abuse."

Add new action point 4 that reads:

“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.”

Remember the remaining action points.

***National Disabled Members Committee***

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Not Sufficiently Clear

**Motion 5 Tackling the exploitation of migrant workers**

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 Metro***

**Motion 2 Year of LGBT+ workers – embedding LGBT+ equality in Local Government**

Amend 1&2 by adding.

1. 9) LISTEN to and ENGAGE with members regarding LGBT+ issues in the workplace via assistance from toolkits.
2. 6) LISTEN to and ENGAGE with members regarding LGBT+ issues in the workplace via assistance from toolkits.

***Bolton Metro***

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Superfluous

**Motion 19 Preventing Violence Against School Staff**

Insert new action point 2:

Support work aimed at getting schools to adopt UNISON's Model Policy and supporting work to counter all forms of violence and harassment against staff.

Re-number action points thereafter.

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