



**Young Members'
Conference Swansea
29 November to 1 December 2024**

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

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MOTIONS ADMITTED TO THE AGENDA

1. YOUNG WOMEN AND THE COST OF HOUSING

Conference notes that the UK's housing system is in a state of crisis. There is an under provision of homes; more than one million dwellings have planning permission but are not being built while 3.8 million people need social housing in Britain.

The housing market sees housing as an investment, and not a home. This has led to a housing market driven by private development and profit, which in turn has made housing increasingly unaffordable.

UNISON carried out a survey of more than 2,600 public service workers in the UK in 2023. The survey found that housing costs have increased for 63% of workers which is more than three in five workers.

Conference notes the UNISON's research report on housing, "Through the Roof" which shows that women are at the sharp end of the housing crisis. Most women responders to the UNISON survey which the report is based on are on low pay and are struggling to afford rising rents/housing and living costs.

It also shows that the rapid rise in housing costs, especially rents, combined with low pay, means that women are most at risk of poverty. As a result, many are struggling to manage financially, and are cutting back on food and essentials.

Economic struggle is a growing reality for UNISON members in both part-time and full-time roles, including cleaners, clerical staff, social care workers and teaching assistants – the majority of whom are women. Low paid workers, living in rented accommodation are most at risk. Those affected include greater numbers of women, Black, LGBT+ and young workers.

The high cost of housing disproportionately affects young workers, many of whom are in the early stages of their careers and earning lower wages.

Young workers also face immense financial pressures due to student loan debt, rising living expenses, and stagnant wages, exacerbating the struggle to find affordable housing.

The housing crisis not only affects an individual's well-being but can also impact productivity and workforce stability, as long commutes and housing insecurity can lead to stress and decreased job performance. Access to affordable housing is a fundamental right and essential for the well-being and economic stability of young workers.

Conference calls on the National Young Members' Forum to work with the

National Women's Committee to:

1. Highlight the housing issues facing our members, especially women, Black, LGBT+ and young workers who are mostly impacted by the housing crisis
2. Work with Labour link to continue to raise rental issues that include insecurity, lack of affordability and accessibility with the government.
3. Promote the work of UNISON's Housing Campaign and "Through the Roof" briefing document to all regions and branches.

National Women's Committee

2. A FAIR DEAL FOR YOUNG APPRENTICES

Conference applauds those employers who provide their apprentices with a good introduction to their working life, offering a generous benefits package and high quality training and offering a clear pathway into employment.

Regrettably not all apprentices are in this position. Many experience poor quality training opportunity and poverty wages. The lowest hourly wage for an apprentice is currently only £6.40, only 53% of the living wage foundation recommended living wage. According to the low pay commission one in four apprentices are paid less than their NMW age rate – whether that is the National Living Wage or the 18-20 year old rate.

This is not enough to enable a decent standard of living for a person of any age.

We recognise that UNISON has previously campaigned for better working conditions for apprentices by introducing the apprenticeship charter, however we feel more should be done, especially in regards apprentice wages.

Conference deplores that current living wage accreditation does not require employers to pay the living wage to apprentices and calls upon the national young members forum to:

1. Work with other relevant areas of the union to lobby the living wage foundation to take account of apprentice wages when considering accreditation.
2. Work with regions, service groups and Labour Link to highlight the issues faced by young apprentices and to campaign to improve their wages to at least national living wages and to improve working conditions for our youngest members.

Yorkshire Humberside Region

3. STOP PERIOD POVERTY

Period products aren't free and accessible in the UK, which means that many people can't afford or access them. 'Period poverty' means being unable to access sanitary products and having a poor knowledge of menstruation often due to financial constraints.

Period poverty has increased because of successive years of austerity and the cost-of-living crisis.

In May 2023 the Guardian reported that despite the scrapping of the 5% VAT rate on Tampons in 2021 prices had continued to rise and in many cases by much more than the rate of inflation.

Conference notes that according to statistics gathered by the group Bloody Good Period, 1 in 5 women and people who menstruate are struggling to afford period products.

Conference also notes that an estimated £3.3 billion worth of workdays are lost to period inequity each year.

Action Aid states that in 2023 22% of 18–24 year olds were affected by period poverty and there was an 8% rise in those affected by period poverty.

In the UK, 1 in 10 girls can't afford to buy menstrual products, while 1 in 7 have struggled to afford them, according to a representative survey of 1,000 girls and young women aged 14-21 by Plan International UK.

Conference believes menstrual health and access to sanitary products is a workplace issue for young workers.

Conference calls on the National Young members Forum to

1. Seek to work with the UNISON National Labour Link Forum to campaign for a Labour government to make it mandatory for employers and schools to provide access to period products as a health, safety and wellbeing issue
2. Seek to work with the UNISON National Executive Committee to encourage branches to hold a stock of period products that are accessible to UNISON members, similar to the national Red Box project.
3. Seek to work with the UNISON national There For You committee to investigate ways that financial support can be given to members struggling with this issue
4. Encourage young members officers to raise this with their branches and make sure that branches have access to the contact details of charities that support this cause and make sure they are accessible to members

Eastern Region

4. ONE WAGE FOR ANY AGE

Conference notes that across the UK hourly minimum wage rates differ based on age.

Conference notes that the current National Living Wage (£11.44 per hour) only applies to those aged 21 and over, with those aged 18 – 20 and those under 18, but of at least school leaving age, receiving differing reduced minimum wage rates.

Conference further notes that apprentices receive an apprentice rate if aged under 19, or aged 19 and over and in the first year of their apprenticeship.

Conference is mindful that low pay is prevalent amongst young workers.

Conference believes that it is wrong that young workers, undertaking the same work as older colleagues, working for the same employers, are paid at a reduced rate based on their age.

Conference recalls UNISON's #OneWageAnyAge campaign against age differentials in the minimum wage which sought to abolish these age bands and supports ongoing efforts to achieve this goal. Conference further recalls UNISON's support for a real living wage, calculated and based on the real cost of living. Conference believes that, with the recent change of UK Government, it is now time to intensify these campaigns to address low pay amongst young workers.

Conference therefore calls on the National Young Member's Forum, working with the National Executive Council, service groups, and devolved regions to renew the campaign to abolish age bands in minimum wages and secure fairness for young workers.

Northern Ireland Region

5. SUPPORT FOR YOUNG SINGLE MOTHERS

Conference believes that it is imperative that the union takes proactive steps to support and empower young single mothers in the workforce. The union should recognise the vital role that this group of workers play in the workforce and acknowledge the unique challenges they face.

The increasing number of young single mothers in various sectors highlight the need for specific policies and initiatives to ensure they are more active in the union, and that their well-being, job security, and professional growth is also looked after.

Conference applauds the union for its relentless campaigns on equal pay and several other campaigns to help workers fight for fairness and equality in the workplace and beyond.

However, to engage women who are young single mothers, there is need to:

- a. Ensure that young single mothers are adequately represented in union leadership and decision-making bodies.
- b. Establish targeted training programs that equip young single mothers with skills and qualifications necessary for union leadership and career advancement.
- c. Continue to promote flexible working arrangements, including homeworking options and part-time positions, to help young single mothers balance work and family responsibilities.

It is beneficial to foster a supportive and inclusive environment for young single mothers, ensuring that they have the resources and opportunities needed to thrive both personally and professionally. This will not only benefit young single mothers but also contribute to a more equitable and resilient union and workforce.

Conference calls on the National Young Members' Forum to work with the National Women's Committee to:

1. Continue to advocate for and promote flexible working and work-life balance
2. Consider setting up support groups within the union to provide mentorship, counselling, and peer support for young single mothers
3. Improve the representation of young single mothers in UNISON's leadership and decision-making structures.
4. Encourage branches and regions to make available information on how young people can have access to creche for their children or claim back the cost of childcare from their branches and regions when attending UNISON meetings and events to enable wider participation of young single parents.

National Women's Committee

6. CELEBRATING THE YEAR OF LGBT+ WORKERS AND YOUNG LGBT+MEMBERS

Conference welcomes the achievements of UNISON's year of LGBT+ workers, which was celebrated up and down the country in many ways. This year was used to celebrate all our achievements and highlighted the continued discrimination faced by LGBT+ communities. One of the central objectives of the national LGBT+ committee's year of LGBT+ workers campaign was to increase young member activism throughout UNISON's LGBT+ self-organised group (SOG).

The young LGBT+ network currently has over 300 members, with an active WhatsApp group and regular meetings throughout the year. These meetings have provided young LGBT+ members with a space to raise issues that are important to them, find out more about how they can be

involved in UNISON and navigate the often-complex UNISON structures.

This year, some members of the national LGBT+ committee have been trained on how to be a mentor and have established mentor/mentee programme with the young LGBT+ members' network. The aim is to establish 10 mentor/mentees, with regional LGBT+ SOGs also taking part.

As great as these achievements are, conference acknowledges that there are many young LGBT+ members in UNISON that are not in the network. We need to continue to publicise this network. This network should also look to further embed itself within the existing work of both national young members forum and the national LGBT+ committee and assist where appropriate.

As we come to the end of the year of LGBT+ workers, it's vital that we continue to push for greater inclusion for young LGBT+ members within our union and make those voices heard.

Conference calls on the national young members forum to work with the national LGBT+ committee where appropriate to:

1. Continue to promote the young LGBT+ network and encourage young LGBT+ members to be part of the network
2. Continue to advocate for the roll out mentoring training between national LGBT+ committee members and the members of the young LGBT+ network
3. Look for opportunities to hold joint events around issues of importance for young LGBT+ members

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender+ Committee

7. UNISON YOUNG MEMBERS PROMOTE TRADE UNION AWARENESS AMONGST YOUNG PEOPLE

Conference notes that the trade union movement faces huge challenges in respect of membership and activism. The Trade Union Congress noted in 2020 that only 14.1% of young workers aged 20-29 are trade union members.

Successive anti-union legislation has made it increasingly difficult to recruit and campaign and therefore reduced the profile of trade unions amongst young workers.

A key barrier in recruiting young workers into trade unions is a lack of awareness, education and previous exposure to trade unions prior to entering the workforce.

Conference notes the work of the Unite in Schools programme which "brings experienced activists into schools, colleges and universities to inspire the next generation of the union movement." This programme

features educational sessions and a suite of online resources in order to engage with young people about trade unions.

Conference believes that young people should be made aware of the trade union movement from an earlier age. The lack of knowledge about the benefits and history of trade unions hinders young people's participation and engagement in union activities and wider politics.

By educating young people about trade unions, we can empower them to advocate for their rights and strengthen the union movement. Some members of the East Midlands Young Members' Forum have already undertaken outreach initiatives by coordinating activities with local Students' Unions and schools. We believe this is the way forward in educating young people about trade unions and that this should be promoted to the whole of the UK.

Conference believes that young members in UNISON are well-placed to promote trade union awareness in schools, universities and colleges as they are closer in age to students in these institutions and therefore better able to relate to them.

Conference calls upon the National Young Members' Forum to:

1. Encourage regional young members' forums to engage with local schools, colleges, universities and students' unions to offer outreach activities to young people to educate and promote the trade union movement.
2. Support the creation of a bank of resources to facilitate these outreach activities.
3. Work with the National Labour Link Forum to advocate for the inclusion of the history of the British trade union movement in the History curriculum and practical information about trade unions and employment law as part of the Citizenship curriculum for Key Stage 4.
4. Consider sending a motion to the Higher Education Service Group conference highlighting the role that young members can play in promoting trade union awareness in universities.

East Midlands Region

8. REVIEWING REDUNDANCY POLICIES WITHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Conference notes the ongoing and impending budget cuts within local government across the UK, recognising that, as of September 2023, 86% of UK councils anticipated a budget gap, with a national cumulative deficit of £7 billion by 2025/26. At present, many employers are committed to a policy of no mandatory redundancies and favour service cuts instead of staffing cuts.

Conference notes that the current economic model is failing local governments. Councils are being cut to the bone with many looking to privatise public services in order to maintain a legal budget. Conference agrees that this is simply unacceptable and we cannot stand by as our youth centres, schools, and leisure and culture facilities are cut or put into private hands. Conference notes the Scottish Trade Union Congress' paper "Raising Taxes to Deliver for Scotland". Although this paper focuses on Scotland, the basic proposals of tax increases and new taxes on those with the broadest shoulders are ones that can and should be applied across the UK.

However, it is clear that once there are no more services left to cut, the focus will shift to the workforce. Conference highlights that employers may use a 'last in, first out' policy as part of the selection process for redundancy. Conference agrees that this technique is not necessarily discriminatory in its nature, however, it is likely to predominantly affect young workers, given that they simply haven't been in the labour market as long as some colleagues have.

Conference asks that:

1. The National Young Members Forum works with the National Local Government Service Group Committee to request a review and reassessment of all local authorities' redundancy policies to determine whether length of service is an appropriate determining factor in selecting employees for redundancy;
2. The National Young Members Forum conducts an audit on which local authorities have signed up to the 'Respect Your Youth' young workers' charter;
3. The National Young Members Forum supports calls for a report to be commissioned looking at revenue raising levers UK, devolved, and local governments can use to reverse 14 years of austerity and in order to prevent local governments reneging on no redundancy policies.
4. The National Young Members Forum uses all available means to support local governments to push back against decades of cuts to their budget.

Scotland Region

9. A YOUNG MEMBER'S STAND AGAINST PUBLIC SERVICE CUTS

Conference notes the effects that cuts to our public services are having on Young People.

Youth services have been slashed over the last 14 years; there is a rise in poor mental health amongst young people – with one in three people aged 18-24 now having symptoms of a mental health disorder – whilst our services decline. Young people are continuing to be brutalised by a justice

system that focuses on punishment and protection for property rather than prevention and rehabilitation.

This conference recognises the perilous state of many of our public services after 14 years of Tory misrule. It is estimated that the NHS has a shortfall of £5 billion. Our surveys show that Local Government has a funding gap of £3.5 billion for this year, and many other services are in a similar situation. Conference notes that the new Labour Government has, so far, only committed to increasing funding to public services if the economy grows – and at the time of writing this motion, the Labour Party Chancellor has confirmed a series of spending cuts, with more to be revealed in the upcoming October budget. This will lead to a further deterioration of public services and could increase the pressure particularly on our young members.

The wealth of the UK could easily meet the needs of our public services if it was collectively owned and democratically planned and used for the benefit of all. If that wealth is kept in private ownership our public services will continue to face cuts and closures. It will leave services starved with increasing staff shortages by effectively underpaying those providing the service.

Our Young Members disproportionately face the double burden of reducing services and having to deliver them with unsafe staffing levels, low pay and attacks to terms and conditions.

This conference resolves to call on the National Young Members Forum to:

1. Produce a report on the impact of austerity on Young Members in time for next year's National Young Members Conference,
2. Work with the Labour Link Committee to campaign for the Labour Government to increase funding for all public services,
3. Work with all Service Groups to campaign for a policy of 'No Cuts' to our public services and to fight for the funding needed to bring services back to pre-2010 levels.

West Midlands Region

10. BUILDING YOUNG ORGANISERS IN UNISON BY ENGAGING IN YOUTH MOVEMENTS

Conference notes as part of our Organising to Win strategy, students and apprentices are being prioritised for recruitment and retention in our union, which stands to benefit UNISON, our young members and our trade union movement.

We have seen recruitment and organising success with student movements from UNISON branches supporting those causes, such as University of Warwick branch who formed a staff-student coalition Warwick Stands with Palestine demanding the University to divest from arms

companies and invest in student staff welfare. By encouraging trade union workers to support youth movements in climate action, in anti-racism, in LGBT+ liberation, and just transitions to green and ethical jobs, these branches are ensuring that trade unionism is relevant to the next generation, and that our negotiating and bargaining experience and organising power is at the front and centre for strengthening our working-class interests.

Conference concludes that coalitions between UNISON branches and global youth movements are critical organising spaces and opportunities that engage young members, students and apprentices. That these coalitions sharing knowledge on organising, the support of our members and learning from them in turn are pivotal areas for our union to be working in.

This conference resolves to:

1. To call upon the National Young Members Committee to ensure learnings of successful UNISON branch staff and student coalitions are preserved and shared to create the legacy of young members and members in UNISON.
2. To call upon the National Young Members Committee to support Young Members Forums in our regions and devolved nations to engage, support and learn from youth movements in the country and across sectors.
3. To call upon the National Young Members Committee to work with Regions, branches, Service Groups and other Self Organised Groups for a more supportive and proactive approach to youth movements that are of import and in line with UNISON policy to their students, young members, and apprentices.
4. To call upon the National Young Members Committee to feedback Young Members' wins in organising and desires to strengthen our organising power through Youth Movements to UNISON's Organising to Win framework and report back.

West Midlands Region

11. RECRUITING, EDUCATING AND TRAINING YOUNG ACTIVISTS TO ENSURE UNISON'S FUTURE

Conference notes the successes of the Organising to Win strategy in increasing recruitment and retention.

Conference also welcomes that in 2023, UNISON saw net membership growth, particularly in the strategic campaigns prioritised by Organising to Win.

Conference notes that of 2023's new joiners 15% were young members, up from 13% of new joiners in 2022.

In light of this, conference supports the continued development of the union into an organising union with a focus on increased membership participation.

However, conference notes that UNISON continues to face some challenges when it comes to increasing participation from Young Members. Our activist base is ageing, and the average age of a UNISON activist is over 55.

Conference believes that the UNISON must prioritise the recruitment, participation and development of Young Members into union activism. Failure to address the demographic ageing of our activist base could lead to catastrophic outcomes for the union in the near future as much of our activist base reaches retirement age.

Conference believes that there is more that branches, regions and Learning and Organising Services can do to help to address this issue.

Conference believes that more can be done in branches to integrate Young Members by ensuring that young activists are properly utilised and encouraged to take on key branch duties wherever appropriate. The provision of shadowing and mentoring is essential and should be provided to all activists when requested. UNISON regions should support branches to encourage the development of young activists.

Conference recognises the significance of trade union education and training, it is key that education is accessible to young members, especially as they begin their journey within UNISON.

Conference believes that more can be done to address the specific issues faced by Young Members. Resources could be developed that focus on how to be meaningfully involved in UNISON as a young person and what training opportunities can help Young Members develop into senior activists.

Conference call upon the National Young Members Forum to:-

1. Support the implementation of the Organising to Win strategy and its roll out across regions and branches.
2. Request that any data on the recruitment and retention of young activists is provided to the Forum for analysis and discussion.
3. Identify successes in developing and embedding young activists within their branches and promote best practices throughout UNISON.
4. Work with UNISON's Strategic Organising Unit and Learning and Organising Services, to review the accessibility and appeal of training and education available to young members.
 - i. If needed, consider creating additional workshops, resources, and materials to support the development of new young activists within

UNISON, considering the issues that young members face getting and staying involved in the union.

5. Provide support and encouragement for branches to help them identify the barriers that prevent young members from getting and staying active.

6. Work with regional Young Members Forums to support young activists to be active in their branches.

North West Region

12. CELEBRATING THE YEAR OF LGBT+ WORKERS AND CONTINUING THE FIGHT FOR LGBT+ RIGHTS

Conference notes the success of UNISON's year of LGBT+ workers in 2024. Throughout the year, both the contributions of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Plus (LGBT+) people to the trade union movement and the exceptional work of UNISON to support its LGBT+ members have rightly been championed. Conference particularly welcomes the continued growth of the young LGBT+ network and the involvement of young members at events across the year. Young people are more likely to identify as LGBT+ and LGBT+ rights are consistently a high priority for young members in UNISON.

2024 also marks 50 years since the lesbian and gay network 'NALGAY', the first of its kind, was set up in one of our predecessor unions the National and Local Government Officers' Association (NALGO). UNISON's LGBT+ self-organised group has since fought for LGBT+ rights within the workplace and wider society including the repeal of section 28 and the introduction of civil partnerships and marriages for LGBT+ people. UNISON has also continued its fight for trans equality, through pushing workplaces to adopt the model trans policy and delivering trans ally training sessions across all regions. Trans equality remains a key issue for young workers, with younger people more likely to have a trans identity, and 80% of gender diverse people being aged under 30.

However, many LGBT+ people, particularly young people, do not feel able to disclose their sexual orientation and/or gender identity at work for fear of discrimination. The last Conservative government fostered an environment of hostility towards our trans and gender-diverse comrades through their hateful speeches and rollback of trans-inclusive policies, all whilst hate crimes against the community continued to rise.

Conference hopes that the new Labour Government will not follow the pattern of the Conservative government, and expresses concern at the recent comments from the Secretary of State for Health concerning the ban on puberty blockers for young trans people. UNISON's work to fight for our LGBT+ members must continue well after this year, and we must continue to hold the new government to account.

Conference calls on the National Young Members Forum to:

1. Continue to work with the National LGBT+ Committee to promote and develop the national young LGBT+ members network
2. Encourage young members to participate in the LGBT+ committee mentoring scheme.
3. Encourage regional young members forums' (RYMFs) to support their regional LGBT+ Self Organised Groups with attending local Pride events, emphasising that Pride should be political and prioritising community driven events.
4. Encourage RYMFs to arrange Trans ally training sessions.
5. Continue to champion the contributions of LGBT+ members to our union, through social media and distributing resources from the LGBT+ committee to our RYMFs.
6. Promote UNISON's work to fight for LGBT+ rights globally, particularly around solidarity with Palestine and UNISON's long standing affiliation to ILGA World.
7. Work with Labour Link to continue to fight for Trans rights.

National Young Members Forum

13. ORGANISING YOUNG WORKERS

Conference notes that Motion 3 "Organising and Training to Win Ballots and Disputes" from the National Young Members' Forum (NYMF) was resoundingly passed by National Delegate Conference (NDC) 2024, instructing the National Executive Council (NEC) to continue implementing the 'Organising to Win' strategy with young members as a priority and to work with the NYMF on engaging young members. Conference notes that the last year has seen a high level of organising and bargaining in UNISON. The 'One UNISON' campaigns of 'Pay Fair for Patient Care' and organising initiatives in English multi-academy trusts in particular have contributed to net growth of membership as well as increasing engagement of activists and stewards.

Conference notes that out of all new members in 2023, 15 percent were young members. This represents a proportional increase from 13 percent of joiners in 2022 and 10 percent in 2021. However, conference notes the still worrying trend towards decline in the activist base in the union, with the average UNISON activist being 57 years old. Conference believes that, in order to ensure the sustainability of our union, recruitment and training of our young members are key priorities.

Conference recognises the importance of strategic and base organising in order to bargain successfully, win disputes, and develop a strong activist base in the union. Conference further recognises the need for education

amongst our members, and particularly young members, in building for successful legal industrial action. Conference notes that, in the last few years, many young members were balloted within their branches for the first time in their lives, and many young members took part in workplace campaigns.

Conference welcomes continued resourcing and support of UNISON's 'Organising to Win' strategy to increase member participation and education, as well as the greater focus on young members set by NDC 2024.

Conference calls upon the NYMF to work with the NEC to:

- a) Promote UNISON membership to young workers across public services;
- b) Promote awareness of the bargaining gains achieved by UNISON in recent years;
- c) Identify successes in developing and organising young activists and promote best practice across UNISON.

Conference further calls upon the NYMF to work with Regional Young Members' Forums (RYMFs) to:

- a) Support young members in becoming more active within their branches, including taking on branch officer roles such as Union Learning Representative;
- b) Identify any barriers to young members taking part in branch campaigns or industrial action;
- c) Identify any barriers to young members taking part in wider union structures;
- d) Provide educational opportunities for young members around industrial action and workplace organising;
- e) Support young members, especially those in key sectors such as social care or multi-academy trusts, in becoming active within their RYMFs and other regional and national structures.

National Young Members Forum

MOTIONS RULED OUT OF ORDER

Beyond Remit

AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS

According to ONS statistics the median salary for 18-21 year old in the UK is £22,932 and for 22-29 year olds is £30,316.

The ONS also state that under 30s earn approximately 25% less than those over 40.

The harsh reality of renting in the UK for young people has been revealed by a report by Zero Deposit which highlights that just 7% of the rental market is affordable for under-30s.

The ONS Average UK private rent increased by 8.9% in the last 12 months with average rent reaching £1293 per month in England

According to gov.uk the average age for someone in a private rented accommodation is 41 years old

Young people have long accepted that buying a house will be always out of there reach. Now we are having to accept that renting is no longer affordable either

Conference calls on the National Young Members Forum to continue to campaign for more affordable housing that is available to buy and social housing under direct control of local councils.

Conference further calls on National Young Members Forum to seek to work with the UNISON National Labour Link Forum to ensure that a Labour government:

- 1, Maintains its manifesto commitments to expand the availability of affordable housing
2. Defines “affordable” in a way which reflects the challenges and pressures experienced by young workers in public services
3. Empowers local councils to set rent controls
4. Improve minimum standards for all landlords – whether private sector, housing associations or local authorities.

Eastern Region

#METU AND LOOKING INWARDS TO SAFEGUARD YOUNG WOMEN MEMBERS

Conference notes that between 2022 and 2023 more than 1 million crimes were recorded against women and girls. This gendered violence has been described by

the National Police Chief's Council as an "epidemic", which accounts for 20% of all recorded crime in England and Wales.

This conference notes that Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is largely perpetrated by men, often those in positions of power and control. Conference also notes that male perpetrators are often not held to account and largely go unprosecuted for these crimes, with the National Policing Statement for 2024 estimating that 1 in 20 people in the UK will be a perpetrator of a VAWG-related offence. Rape crisis state that in 2023 68,387 rapes were recorded by police but by year-end charges had been brought in just 1,778 cases. The number of subsequent prosecutions is even slimmer.

This conference notes that VAWG does not exist in a vacuum. According to a government report released in 2020, 29% of workers experienced sexual harassment in their workplace or work-related environment in the last 12 months. Crucially, a 2023 Trade Union Congress poll showed that for young women this rate increases to almost two-thirds. Moreover, the Young Women's Trust report that 1 in 4 young women believe they would lose their job should they report sexual harassment.

This conference notes the Monaghan and Carr reports, undertaken by GMB and the Royal College of Nursing respectively. Both reports highlight a culture of bullying and misogyny, with widespread sexual harassment within their respective unions.

This conference also notes that an independent enquiry carried out by the Fire Brigades Union earlier this year found that 30% of Women and Black members had been sexually harassed by a fellow member in a union context, with 30% of perpetrators being officials of some kind, either at branch or workplace level.

The formation of #MeTU has broadened the focus of VAWG within the trade union sphere. We need to look inwards, to challenge ourselves and do better for our members. A trade union exists to protect all of its members. We cannot do this in UNISON if 70% of our members aren't safe, seen and heard.

This Conference calls upon the National Young Members Forum to:

1. Survey all Young Members in UNISON about VAWG and sexual harassment, both in work and within UNISON.
2. Use the findings of the above survey to produce literature regarding VAWG, sexual harassment both in work and in UNISON, and how to challenge it.
3. Liaise with UNISON Learning and Organising Services to produce literature and training on how to be an active bystander.
4. Work with other bodies from across the union, including the NEC and Self-Organised Groups, to:
 - i. Take appropriate action in response to the findings of the aforementioned survey

- ii. Review current disciplinary and complaints processes for internal complaints and improve support available for survivors during the process.

East Midlands Region

REVIEWING UNISON'S USE OF THE TERMINOLOGY BLACK

Conference notes that despite the definition of 'Black' produced by UNISON in 2013, there continues to be a question about the use of this terminology for young members within our workspaces, communities and within Branches.

UNISON defines Black as:

"Black is used to indicate people with a shared history. Black with a capital 'B' is used in its broad political and inclusive sense to describe people in Britain that have suffered colonialism and enslavement in the past and continue to experience racism and diminished opportunities in today's society. "

While we completely agree and respect the idea behind this statement, it's also worth keeping in mind that historically, in the UK the term Black has been used routinely in anti-racist campaigns starting in the 70s. This means that we are using terminology that is 54 years old which has not been updated to accurately represent its members.

We have found through conversations with other young members and colleagues that those who do not identify as Black within society according to their skin tones therefore do not feel reassured or accepted when using this terminology within UNISON spaces, despite its broader and more inclusive definition.

Conference notes that UNISON also states "language changes and evolves but terminology is always important in terms of intention and direction." UNISON's own definition tells us that language is ever changing. Conference, we believe it is time for change.

We understand that using the term 'Black' creates unity in fighting against oppression that is deeply rooted in racism. Reviewing this terminology to more accurately represent its members would strengthen the unity and engagement of young members in UNISON.

Conference calls on the National Young Members' Forum to work with the National Executive Council to resource and conduct a review of the use of terminology 'Black' within UNISON by way of:

1. A survey of all UNISON members that identify as 'Black', by UNISON's definition, to ascertain their experiences/feelings when:
 - i. Being addressed with this term

- ii. Engaging in UNISON 'Black Member' spaces and events
- iii. Speaking with members and non-members regarding 'Black' Members

Based on the results of the all-member survey, work closely with the National Black Members' Committee and regions to consider ways in which Black Members' spaces can become more inclusive to manage any concerns highlighted, and make sure that the National Black Members' Committee are appropriately resourced to carry out any needed changes.

Conference believes that this terminology requires a review to ensure it accurately represents the people it's trying to represent. UNISON is a union that has equality at its heart and is committed to breaking down the barriers that exist to Black Members' participation in our structures. UNISON prides itself in being a champion of inclusivity and equality, but how can it be inclusive if it is using terminology that does not accurately represent all of its current Black members?

South West Region

Not Competent

URGENTLY REEXAMINE THE CASS REVIEW

Not printed.

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender plus Committee

SECURING THE FUTURE FOR UNISON – PREPARING OUR YOUNG MEMBERS

Conference notes that the Young Members are a valuable, but often under-utilised resource within the union.

According to the Department of Business and Trade in 2022 the largest demographic of trade union membership is over 50. The same report indicates that under 25% of union members are aged below 34.

This appears to be reflected within the democratic structure of our union. Few Young members are encouraged to develop into any other branch roles other than young members officer.

Succession planning is often neglected, causing issues for the branch when long-serving officials step down.

According to the TUC on their 'reaching young workers' webpages less than 1 in 20 union members are aged between 16 and 24 and over half of union reps are 50 and over, which means over the next 10 to 15 years we will lose over half our reps.

Conference believes that UNISON would benefit from encouraging young members to take up activist roles within branches by providing a dedicated skill based training and mentoring programme for the future leaders of the union.

Conference asks that the Young Members Forum work with other relevant areas of the union, in particular UNISON college and encourage branches to engage and encourage young members to participate by, for example negotiating paid time off for such training.

Yorkshire - Humberside Region

PALESTINIAN SOLIDARITY

Not printed.

Northern Ireland Region

SUPPORTING DECRIMINALISING SEX WORK

Conference notes sex workers are often marginalised people who have been let down by the state/government. People living in or escaping poverty, disabled people navigating a harsh and unfair benefits system, single mothers, migrants, working-class students, women, LGBT+ people, and young people.

Conference believes the current law of partial criminalisation is dangerous. Conference notes the law penalises safety measures. To avoid a soliciting charge, street workers work apart from each other out of sight and away from safety. Any two or more workers who work together for safety can be charged with brothel keeping. Criminal charges are a barrier to employment for sex workers should they wish to leave the industry. Sex workers vulnerable to criminalisation are less likely to access healthcare services and disclose their sex worker status. Sex workers routinely face discrimination from financial institutions. Sex workers face barriers to unionisation due to criminalisation.

Conference notes decriminalisation of sex work is supported by human rights organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, UNAIDS, the World Health Organization, Terrance Higgins Trust, Sisters Uncut, The UN Working Group On Discrimination Against Women and Girls, and the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women. Unions such as UNISON NI, Royal College of Nursing, GMB, UCU, CWU, ASLEF, Equity and Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) all support the full decriminalisation of sex work in the UK.

Conference believes sex workers are workers and members of our communities. Sex work is a result of poverty, and the current laws perpetuate a cycle of poverty. Fair and equal treatment of sex workers, often the most marginalised of workers, is vital and benefits all of us. Promoting sex workers' rights helps disrupt cycles of poverty in our communities. Conference believes full decriminalisation of sex work is an issue of concern for young members.

Conference believes full decriminalisation is essential for sex workers' safety, public health, women's rights, LGBT+ rights and workers' rights. This is a particularly important cause in the year of the LGBT+ worker.

Conference therefore instructs the National Young Members Forum to raise this issue with the National Executive Council (NEC), and resolves to work with the NEC, the National Women's Committee, the National LGBT+ Committee, and other relevant UNISON bodies, to

1. Support the full decriminalisation of sex work
2. Support the unionisation of sex workers and their demands for labour rights, safety and fair working conditions

3. Campaign against any attempt to further criminalise sex work
4. Provide training and learning materials regarding full decriminalisation of sex work, working with organisations that have expertise on the topic

South West Region

RADICAL CHANGE IN THE RENTED SECTOR

Conference notes the significant impact of insecure housing on young people and the urgent need for radical change in the rented sector. The private rented sector (PRS) constitutes the most precarious form of housing – it is within this sector that rents are highest, and the quality of accommodation is lowest. Young people are more likely to live in private accommodation than any other age group in the UK which places them at greater risk of experiencing insecure, unaffordable, and poor-quality housing.

Workers' struggles and tenants' struggles are intrinsically linked, with those in precarious work more likely to be impacted by precarious housing. A 2023 survey of UNISON members found that those on low pay were most at risk of destitution due to rising housing costs. This is an issue that disproportionately impacts young members, many of whom are on low pay.

Not only do private tenants face greater housing costs in proportion to their income than those in other tenures, but they are more likely to struggle to afford these costs. The financial burden our members in the PRS face is unsustainable, with almost a third spending 60% or more of their total household income on housing. The quality of housing is also a concern for private tenants, with disrepair and poor maintenance most prevalent in the PRS.

Home ownership is often presented to young people as the end goal and the only alternative to renting privately. Despite this, home ownership is increasingly inaccessible for young people which forces them into insecure private tenancies. We must consider an alternative narrative that campaigns for truly affordable housing for people – not private profit, and the significant expansion of social housing provision nationally.

Conference recognises the significant work carried out by tenants' and community unions across the UK: as we organise in our workplaces, we must also support tenants organising within their communities. These unions successfully campaign and organise around key housing issues while simultaneously providing member representation to secure material improvements for private and social tenants alike.

Conference instructs the National Young Members' Forum to:

1. Work alongside tenants' and community unions regionally to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, including through the delivery of workshops and training sessions for our members on topics related to housing and tenants' rights.
2. Promote affiliation with tenants' and community unions to branches where possible as a means of further supporting members with housing issues.
3. Lobby to include as part of UNISON's housing campaign, a comprehensive

system of rent controls for the private rented sector and the significant expansion of social housing provision, and to ensure young members' voices are well represented on housing issues.

4. Ask the National Executive Council to include the promotion of tenants' and community unions as part of UNISON's housing campaign nationally.

Scotland Region

CUBA VIVE – END THE BLOCKADE ON HEALTH

Conference notes that:

Cuba's commitment to health for all has helped the country achieve world-renowned health services for its people despite 62 years of an illegal US blockade.

These achievements are currently under threat due to a combination of the COVID-19 pandemic, global economic crisis, climate change, extra sanctions imposed by the Trump administration, and inclusion on the US's State Sponsors of Terrorism (SSOT) list, which has taken a terrible toll on the health service.

Cuba's dedicated health professionals struggle with limited resources to treat patients. Items that are in plentiful supply in the UK, from surgical supplies to paracetamol, are increasingly hard to come by or cost significantly more. Some health indicators have declined, leading to an increase in preventable deaths and suffering.

Between 2019 and 2022, Cuba's infant mortality rate rose from 5 per thousand live births to 7.5. Cuban doctors face severe shortages, adapting larger catheters for infants with renal failure and lacking appropriate drugs for childhood cancer. Additionally, 20,000 families awaiting diagnoses of genetic diseases cannot receive adequate care due to restrictions on US components in medical technology.

Despite these challenges, Cuba's commitment to internationalism continues. The country sent doctors to 45 countries during the COVID-19 pandemic and trains medical students from the global south, including 144 Palestinian students currently studying at Havana's Latin American Medical School.

Cuba's inclusion on the SSOT list threatens its international health programmes and domestic healthcare provision.

Conference welcomes the Cuba Vive medical appeal launched by the Cuba Solidarity Campaign and UNISON regions in January 2024, which aims to raise money to send containers of life-saving medical aid to Cuba.

Conference instructs the National Young Members Forum to:

1. Encourage young members to support and donate to the appeal.
2. Raise awareness and encourage support by publicising and distributing appeal

materials to young members.

3. Lobby regional international committees to send delegates on the Young Trade Unionist May Day Brigade to Cuba, so more young trade unionists can witness the Cuban reality firsthand.

4. Promote the #OfftheList campaign to remove Cuba from the US State Sponsors of Terrorism list.

5. Encourage young members to affiliate their branches to the Cuba Solidarity Campaign.

North West Region

ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION, & RETENTION OF APPRENTICES

Conference notes that the engagement and retention of Young Members can be challenging. However, engaging with young apprentices can often present attentional challenges, with there often being little to no education on what a Union is, while also feeling that their employment is tentative. Despite the fact there are approximately 135,000 Young Members in UNISON, only 1,911 of these are apprentices (1.42%) and have been entered on WARMS, and it is possible that this information is not up to date or accurate.

According to public sector apprenticeship targets, 2.3% of public sector employees should be apprentices. According to the most recent UK Parliament report on apprentices in England alone, the majority of apprentices for the academic year 22/23 were under the age of 25, while there is a very similar story in Wales, with meaning that there are a significant number of Young Workers who are without representation.

Conference notes that the quality of apprenticeships offered often varies across different sites within the same employer. UNISON is keen to push employers to take a strategic approach so that there is consistency across all apprenticeships. UNISON's Apprenticeship charter details the rights that all apprentices should have, along with the responsibilities of employers to the apprentices that they employ. These include providing a safe and healthy working environment and payment at the rate for the job. Conference notes that further effort is required to encourage and support employers in engaging with and implementing the charter.

On UNISON's apprenticeships page, there are a large number of resources, including a model apprenticeship agreement, and toolkit for negotiators and reps. Our Apprentices in Health page also explores the issues facing apprentices in Health, in more detail. UNISON Learning and Organising Services have developed a course for branches and reps who would like to support apprentices through a mentoring scheme, covering a wide range of topics.

Conference calls for the National Young Members Forum to:

1. Work with regions and service groups on campaigning activities to encourage

our apprentices to be active in our union, and speak on issues that affect them in their workplace

2. Work with regions to promote UNISON in colleges and 6th Forms where possible to recruit apprentices prior to starting employment and inform them of their workplace rights

3. Work with regions, service groups, and NEC to develop a yearly campaign dedicated to recruitment and engagement with Apprentices.

4. Work with relevant service groups to identify how many employers have signed onto UNISON's Apprenticeship Charter and Encourage more employers to sign up

5. Work with UNISON College to promote UNISON Mentoring for apprentices training across every region in order to engage with apprentices more effectively.

6. Work with branches to survey apprentices on how best to engage with them, as well as any issues that they are currently experiencing for more targeted support.

Cymru/Wales

PROPOSED RULE CHANGE TO ORGANISATION OF YOUNG MEMBERS STRUCTURES

Young members know all too well the unique obstacles we face in our workplaces, from low pay to poor conditions and precarious contracts; our generation of workers is being sold short. The gains made by our movement, the labour movement, have been rolled further back by 14 years of Tory rule.

We have entered the workforce in a time of particular crisis, with public services decimated, councils, schools and hospitals all facing shortages, cuts and bankruptcy.

Young members therefore need structures capable of fighting for the changes we need to transform our workplaces and beat back the onslaught on our rights.

The creation of National and Regional Young Members' Forums and the National Young Members' Conference was a step forward for our self-organisation in the union; providing the opportunity to organise with others in their region across workplaces.

However, many young members are concerned that the structures meant to empower our young activists are instead stifling us. We face unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles and incomprehensible structures, differing from those in the rest of the union.

Where young members' forums could be a key area for galvanising and organising a new layer of activists we are instead seeing activists demotivated by lack of activity.

One barrier is having to be involved in a regional structure, as well as branch, to be active in young members, be a delegate or submit a motion - limiting the number of delegates, motions and discussion.

This conference believes that young members should be a self-organised group alongside the LGBT+, women's, black members and disabled members groups and recognises the need for a rule change to that effect. We believe that this will provide young members with a stronger democratic mandate within the union to and empower us in the fights on pay and conditions.

We recognise that this conference is unable to change the rule unilaterally and therefore instruct the NYMF to:

1. Consult with the NEC regarding the following proposed rule change:

Amendment to Rule D Self organised groups

D2.5.1

Point 2: delete “regional young members’ forums or National Young Members’ Forum” and replace with “regional or national SOG”

D 5.1 insert a new bullet point number 5 after 4. LGBT+ members: “5. Young members

Delete D6 (D6.1 and D6.2) and re-number following sections accordingly

Delete the following:

D1.7.7

D1.10.4 “the national young members forum” on both occasions

D3.4.6 point 8

D3.4.11

F.4.3.3 delete “and Young Members Forum”

F 4.4.3 delete “and Young Members Forum”

F 4.4.4 delete “and Young Members Forum”

F5.1 point 4 delete “and Young Members Forum”

P 1.3.5 delete “and Young Members Forum”

2. If this change cannot happen, consult the NEC on a rule change aligning Young Member structures with SOGs - creating branch groups and granting branch representation at Young Members conference.

3. Refer the relevant rule change to NDC for voting.

Northern Region

YOUNG WORKERS NEED A RADICAL LABOUR GOVERNMENT

Conference welcomes an end to 14 years of destructive Tory Government, and believes that young workers need a Labour Government that will promote the radical change needed to save our public services, defend human rights and rebalance power and wealth to the working class.

Conference notes that UNISON is the largest affiliated trade union to the Labour Party, with seats on Labour’s National Executive Committee and representation at Labour Conference and in other Labour policymaking forums.

Conference notes that UNISON policies passed at Conference call for concrete, vital and urgent policy changes from the Government, including to:

1. Suspend arms sales to Israel, recognise a viable, continuous Palestinian state, ban trade with illegal settlements, and support the prosecution of violations of international law by the International Court of Justice (2024 NDC)
2. Scrap the two child benefit cap (2019 NDC)
3. Oppose increases in military expenditure and invest this money in public services and infrastructure (2024 NDC).
4. Reverse cuts to domestic abuse services (2024 NDC).
5. Introduce “Zane’s Law” to address the crisis of contaminated land (2024 NDC).
6. Repeal Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act and further repeal all other anti-trade union laws (2023 NDC)
7. Commit to rebuild the NHS rather than expand the use of the private sector (2023 NDC)
8. Abolish Section 21 evictions, end Right to Buy, impose rent controls or a fair rent system (2023 NDC).
8. Build at least one million new council homes, reinstate life time tenancies for council and social housing tenants, lift the bedroom tax, and provide suitable sites to respect the traditions and rights of Gypsies, Travellers and Barge-dwellers (2018 NDC).
10. Campaign for the National Care Service to be fully funded, universal, free at the point of delivery, with sectoral bargaining, services delivered by democratically elected councils, and no place for for-profit providers (2023 NDC).
11. Implement a social justice approach to criminal justice, and reverse cuts to services including drug and alcohol, domestic abuse and youth services (2019 NDC).
12. Reverse the requirement for mandatory voter ID (2023 NDC).
- 13 Reform the Gender Recognition Act to improve rights and protections for trans people (2022 NDC).
14. Introduce Proportional Representation (2022 NDC).
15. End criminalisation of sex work and oppose the Nordic model (2022 NDC).
16. Introduce full Statutory Sick Pay linked with the Real Living Wage (2022 NDC).
17. Implement robust corporate taxation to fund public services (2015 NDC).
18. Enforce a statutory duty for all public service employers to report and take steps to reduce their ethnicity pay gap (2023 NDC).

If implemented, these policies would make a significant difference in the lives of young people, including young workers, across the UK.

Conference calls on the National Young Workers Forum to:

1. Work alongside the Unison LabourLink Committee to promote the implementation of UNISON policy by the new Labour Government.
2. Work with Regional Young Members’ Forums and Self-Organised Groups to continue to publicly campaign for the implementation of UNISON policies by the new Government.

Northern Region

Withdrawn by Submitting Body

SUPPORT FOR YOUNG SINGLE MOTHERS

Duplication of above motion

National Women's Committee

ENHANCING ENGAGEMENT OF YOUNG MEMBERS THROUGH TECHNOLOGICAL INVESTMENT

Conference notes the pivotal role that young people play in the future of our union, it is essential to adopt strategies that effectively engage and involve them in our activities. In today's digital age, technology presents a powerful tool for communication, education, and engagement. Investing in new technology can help bridge the gap between young members and the union, fostering greater involvement and commitment.

Engaging young members through technology not only meets them where they are but also equips them with the skills and knowledge necessary for active participation in union activities. By investing in better technology, we can ensure that our union remains relevant, dynamic, and inclusive for future generations.

Conference calls on the National Young Members Forum to raise these issues with National Executive Council to campaign for the correct resources to be allocated to support and:-

1. Assess Technological Needs:

i. Conduct a comprehensive survey among young members to identify the technological tools and platforms they find most engaging and useful.

2. Invest in Modern Technology

i. Allocate funds to upgrade our current technological infrastructure, including but not limited to mobile-friendly websites, interactive apps, and social media platforms.

ii. Introduce hybrid options and virtual events to facilitate greater participation from young members, especially those who may face barriers to attending in-person meetings.

3. Develop Educational Resources:

i. Create and distribute digital resources, such as e-learning modules, video tutorials, and podcasts, focused on union education, workers' rights, and professional development.

4. Enhance Communication Channels:

- i. Establish and maintain active social media channels tailored to young members' preferences, ensuring regular updates and interactive content.
- ii. Implement a robust communication strategy using email newsletters, SMS alerts, and develop a mobile app to keep young members informed and engaged.

5. Promote Digital Skills Training:

- i. Offer training sessions for young members on how to effectively use digital tools for union-related activities, including organizing, advocacy, and communication.

6. Evaluate and Adapt:

- i. An annual review to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented technological tools and strategies, seeking feedback from young members to continuously improve our union's approaches.

Conference resolves that the above measures will enhance the involvement and engagement of young members and build a much stronger connected union that reflects the needs and aspirations of all its members and supports the long-term sustainability of the union.

South West Region