**2019 National Delegate Conference**

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**Motions**

**1. Developing Organising Resources in Branches and Regions**

**Carried**

Conference recognises the major organising challenges facing branches and regions. Austerity, the continuing fragmentation of public service delivery as well as the loss of experienced activists through cutbacks, amongst other things, have contributed towards making the job of a UNISON activist ever more difficult.

Conference believes that to meet these challenges, the union needs to promote improved cooperation between branches and between regions to ensure that UNISON is more visible to the members and non members.

Conference congratulates those branches and regions that have pioneered initiatives to foster closer working and to increase the visibility of the union through resource centres, shop fronts, organising centres and mobile units.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Continue to support branch and regional initiatives to develop resource centres, shop fronts, organising centres, mobile units and similar initiatives;
2. Work with branches and regions to promote and develop more of such initiatives;
3. Consult with branches and regions on setting clear targets for the development of these initiatives on the basis of what will work best in each locality;
4. Continue to ensure that support is provided from the centre for the development and ongoing work of these initiatives;
5. Share best practice from regions and branches.

**2. Growing the Union**

**Carried as Amended: 2.1, 2.2**

UNISON as the biggest trade union should be congratulated on achieving growth in 2018. The whole union recruitment campaign demonstrated what can be achieved when all parts of the union work together. The Northern region believes the union should commit to this type of organising approach as a regular event. A core part of our strength as a trade union is our commitment to equality which is central to UNISON’s aims and objectives. UNISON is clear that equality can never be an afterthought and we must always keep equality on all agendas by employing different organising strategies to counter the myth that equality is no longer an issue.

Conference also needs to recognise that outsourced members working in hospitals, schools and universities, women, Black, disabled, LGBT and migrant workers predominately experience prejudice and discrimination and inequality sometimes on a daily basis.

Continuous and effective organising of those members is crucial to identify and find solutions that collectively resolve problems.

Furthermore, Conference notes that sectors of public services with future growth projections such as social care and under five’s education are predominantly female with endemic worker exploitation, low pay and insecure employment.

Conference welcomes and congratulates the work of the UNISON National Strategic Organising Unit on organising and supporting outsourced workers facing inequality in the workplace.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Ensure that whole union recruitment and organising initiatives such as Grovember become regular events and that good practice is shared;
2. Continue to strengthen the Joint Branch Assessments demonstrating partnership with branch and union staff also ensuring that adequate resources are available for organising around equality;
3. Continue to strengthen and develop strategies for reaching out and supporting workers facing inequality;
4. Proactively recruit and organise staff on private contracts with a view to getting union recognition and to campaign for improved pay and conditions.
5. Ensure that the National Organising Equality Strategy is imbedded in all aspects of Branch structures;
6. Explore the setting up of a UNISON Organising Academy to train and support new and existing activists.
7. Carry out research into future growth in public services employment including social care and under five’s education; followed up by adoption and roll out of whole union organising strategies for those sectors.

**8. Recruitment and Retention of Members**

**Carried**

Conference notes with pride the increase in UNISON membership during 2018 and commends the effort made by branches and activists towards this significant achievement in the face of unrelenting Tory cuts to public services.

Throughout the decade of austerity UNISON has managed to mitigate membership losses and recruit new activists through its key Meeting the Organising Challenge (MTOC) strategy, this involved deploying resources at all levels towards organising and wherever possible converting administration resources into organising resources. Another key point of the Organising strategy has involved the fighting fund, which has allowed branches to access critical organising support to recruit new members, identify potential work place leaders and train and mentor new stewards.

We recognise that membership growth has only been sustained due to the union’s campaign and organising agenda and investment in our MTOC strategies. Conference believes that UNISON must now work to ensure that the small but significant increase marks a watershed moment and the end of the years of decreases in member numbers.

Conference, however, notes with concern that future growth is still challenged by austerity which contrary to Theresa May’s statements has not gone away and it is only by targeting resources towards recruitment and retention that we can continue to challenge austerity policies from the bottom up. Austerity has not only reduced UNISON’s membership across all service groups but has crucially seen our activist base depleted through the redundancy/early retirement of many experienced stewards and branch officers. Government policy has therefore threatened the very existence of our union and continues to do so.

Conference therefore affirms that it is now vital to ensure adequate resources are allocated to ensure current levels of organising support are maintained in order to build on the successes of 2018, Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to ensure:

1. That recruitment and retention is a flagged as a key priority within local organising frameworks;
2. That branches and regions continue to work in partnership to identify areas in need of organising support;
3. That sufficient funds are made available to secure current levels of resources;
4. That branches, regional councils and committees continue to prioritise the recruitment, organising and retention of members as a key objective in their work plans and to discuss this as a standing item at their meetings;
5. That branches formulate a strategy, as part of any recruitment plan, to retain members who would otherwise leave the union.

**17. Suicide awareness training for stewards**

**Carried**

With the appointment by the government of a minister who is tasked with reducing suicide rates nationally, the need for all stewards to be trained in suicide awareness has never been clearer. Suicide is everyone’s business and touches families whatever their class, age, gender or family situation. Last year nationally 6,213 people completed suicide and the highest suicide rate was among males between the ages of 45-49, though there has been an increase in males between the ages of 25-34 in 2018 (Samaritans’ Suicide Statistics Report, 2018). We need to make sure all our stewards are aware of not only risk groups but how to signpost anyone they come into contact that might be having suicidal thoughts or at risk from suicide. We can empower our stewards to be able to support their members in accessing the correct support in a timely manner. We know from research that 3 out of 5 people have experienced mental health issues due to work (Samaritans’ Wellbeing in the City report, 2018), and work place stress is associated with significantly increased suicide risk (Schneider et al., 2011; Milner et al., 2017). As union representatives we will be dealing with many members who are experiencing pressure and stress caused by their working situation. Suicide is not inevitable, it is preventable. Early identification of suicidal thoughts and behaviour, and effective care for those at risk, are crucial in reducing the likelihood that an individual makes a suicide attempt or dies by suicide. We are not expecting our stewards to be experts, but we also know that they can be at the sharp end of members’ distress and giving them the correct tools to work with is key for them to feel confident but also be able to support members effectively.

Conference requests the National Executive Council to consider a short programme of training in suicide awareness, to be implemented nationally to empower our stewards with knowledge and the skills to identify and signpost members appropriately and effectively.

Conference believes this training will support our stewards in signposting our members to seek the best advice which could be potentially life-saving.This will also enable our stewards when reviewing policies and procedures within their own working environments to enable them to access this against risk of suicide.

**18. Young Member’s Facility Time**

**Carried**

Facility time is a fundamental right of trade unionists in the workplace. It ensures we support our members at disciplinaries, and that policies of the organisation's our members work for are scrutinised and negotiated effectively.

UNISON already provides brilliant resources for our branches such as the 'Facility Time, Guidance for branches' document most recently revised in 2017. It highlights clearly the rights of representatives to time away from their workplace to complete union duties, however it also tells us that 59.6% of branches responding said that facility time had come under pressure since 2010.

In workplaces where the trade union is recognised, trade union workplace representatives have a statutory right to paid time off for the purpose of carrying out trade union duties. This right applies to workplace reps, health and safety reps, union learning reps and information and consultation reps. However there is no statutory time off for other union reps, including young members officers and equality reps, to undertake trade union activities.

Representing members remains a huge priority for our union but in an age where discrimination is on the rise, highlighted in many reports from across the trade union movement, organising members in the workplace to fight against discrimination and turn the tide has never been more important.

We know that where our women’s officers organise, women feel empowered, when black members have time and space to organise, we challenge racism, where our young workers fight, they receive quality training and progress.

Although young members and equalities reps do not have a statutory right to paid facility time for union activities, in many workplaces good union negotiating can achieve facility time beyond the statutory requirements. The UNISON guidance for branches states that it is important to get employers to agree to recognise equality representatives and afford them the adequate facility time to carry out their roles.

It s also important that young members, and Black, disabled, women and lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender (LGBT) members, have access to those roles that currently attract statutory facility time. For example, more part time and job share branch roles could encourage part time women members and young members at the start of their careers to get involved.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

1. Survey branches to identify where facility time agreements have been negotiated and to ascertain what percentage of branch negotiated facility time self-organised groups and young members officers are assigned;
2. Develop clear guidance, working with the National Young Members' Forum to advocate the negotiating of facility time for Young Members Officers, sending this to every branch upon completion;
3. Explore ways of ensuring facility time is distributed in ways that allow young members and Black, women and LGBT members to participate fully in the union;
4. Campaign for a statutory right to facility time for equality reps;
5. Work with the National Young Members' Forum to analyse the anticipated success of 2019, the year of young worker's and develop this organising programme further into 2020 and beyond.

**19. Year of the Young Worker - Creating a Legacy For The Future**

**Carried as Amended: 19.1**

Conference welcomes TUC Year of the Young Worker and congratulates all of the work being planned nationally, in regions and branches to promote recruitment of young worker’s, improve participation of young worker representatives and highlight issues especially relevant to young workers.

It notes examples like those in Eastern region, where Eastern region Young Members Committee have designed and planned a programme of activities throughout the year, including “Uncomfortable YET” a region wide campaign to highlight harassment in the workplace and UNITY Festival to be held in Norfolk on the weekend of 30 August to promote trade unionism through music, the arts and politics.

Conference agrees there is an urgent need to bring more young workers into the trade union movement to help maintain and improve bargaining power and to ensure the building of sustainable union organisation. Evidence by the TUC shows that if by age 26 workers have not joined a trade union then in all likelihood they will not do so.

Statistics also tells us through the TUC Race Committee Equality Survey that Black people are underrepresented across the workforce it is therefore imperative that all such research findings are harnessed by UNISON and considered in all service groups in addressing how they can continue creating a legacy for the future for young Black workers in the year of the Young worker in UNISON.

Young Black members who are overrepresented in the precarious workforce, for example zero hours, part-time and short-term contracts, are less likely to receive facility time for new representation or union work”

Year of the Young workers provides the ideal opportunity to deliver an intensive young-worker focused programme of properly resourced recruitment, organising, and campaigning. A programme of events and campaigns involving the whole union not just Young Members and supported by the necessary organisation and financial resources.

Conference also recognises that Year of the Young Worker represents the start of a renewed longer-term commitment to developing young worker representation in UNISON and recognises that young Black members are an important part to the legacy of UNISON in the year of Young Workers. The undoubted progress being made will be lost unless we embed our commitments in future work plans thereby creating a legacy that will ensure we have a vibrant union now and in the future.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Encourage all parts of the union to use Year of the Young Worker to plan and deliver a programme of activities in 2019 aimed at recruiting, developing and supporting greater participation of young workers;
2. Review the effectiveness of activities delivered across the union in support of the TUC’s Year of the Young Worker;
3. Prepare and distribute a report detailing all such activities, drawing on lessons to be learned from the year, and use these to establish a future strategy to build on improving organisation of young workers;
4. Consider that organising young members should be a distinct and separate objective of the union in 2020, and review this each year.

**21. Towards a more inclusive Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Self-organised group**

**Carried**

Conference notes that the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) self-organised group (SOG) has always sought to be fully representative of its diverse membership, in line with UNISON’s rules.

It notes that the LGBT SOG works with inclusive, umbrella definitions of bisexual and transgender. Its bi network is for all members who feel attraction to more than one gender. Its trans network is for all types of self-identifying trans people; for people with trans backgrounds and members whose gender identity does not fit into the gender binary i.e. non-binary members.

However, despite these inclusive definitions some members who the LGBT group consider to be part of the group are put off. The LGBT group hears repeatedly that when members attend its meetings, they feel welcomed and included, but before they attend they had been unsure. This is particularly the case for members who do not personally use the label LGBT about themselves, for example people who identify as queer or pansexual. It is clear that there must be many others who are put off and never get over that barrier.

As requested by 2017 LGBT conference, the National LGBT Committee has undertaken consultation on making our LGBT SOG fully inclusive. This followed a motion from the National Young Members Forum highlighting the growth in the number of people, and young people in particular, identifying their sexual orientation and gender identity in many different ways beyond a binary definition, and expressing their preference to see the LGBT group move to organise on an LGBT+ (plus) basis.

Over 75% of the consultation responses, and all the regional group responses, were in favour of the proposal to change the group’s name to LGBT+, with comments such as “It's time for this change so that we are truly reflective of our membership and our potential members”; “this is an important next step in making our SOG more inclusive and to attract and maintain members to our union”; and “adding + is much more inclusive, and it avoids LGBT becoming a long and confusing alphabet”.

The National LGBT Committee therefore submitted a motion to 2018 LGBT Conference proposing that the group agree that its name should be changed, and that a rule amendment should be submitted to 2019 National Delegate Conference to seek approval to change the name of the LGBT group to the LGBT+ group. LGBT Conference agreed this motion.

Putting the "+" in the group’s name would not change its existing remit of being a SOG for all members who experience prejudice because of their gender identity or sexual orientation, but would demonstrate an inclusiveness beyond that conveyed by its current name so that people who the group considers to be members are not put off from participating.

The consultation also sought views on what the LGBT group should be doing to make the group fully inclusive and the responses are now being considered by the National LGBT Committee as part of its on-going work to improve its policies and practices.

Conference welcomes the continuing work of the National LGBT Committee towards making the LGBT SOG fully inclusive and representative of its diverse membership, and instructs the National Executive Council to:

1. Work with the National LGBT Committee to issue briefings/guidance to raise awareness of the remit of the group;
2. Continue its work towards making UNISON’s organisation, events, policies, systems and good practice advice inclusive of non-binary members;
3. Continue to work with the National LGBT Committee, service groups and other UNISON structures as appropriate to make sure that UNISON’s bargaining agendas and equality work fully reflect issues of concern to LGBT+ members.

**22. Smash the Gender Pay Gap**

**Carried as Amended: 22.1**

Nearly 50 years since the Ford machinists went on strike at Dagenham, the UK still has one of the worst gender pay gaps in Europe. Women effectively work for free for two months a year. As the largest UK women’s union, UNISON is uniquely placed to be the voice of women in public services on this issue.

Conference notes that Gender Pay Reporting came into force in April 2018 for UK organisations with 250 employees or more and although it is a relatively blunt tool it should be recognised as a new opportunity to engage with employers on a range of issues that we know affect the pay gap. Conference believes that smashing the gender pay gap must be at the heart of all collective bargaining if progress is to be made.

UNISON has over a million women members who make up nearly 80% of our union. It couldn’t be more important for UNISON that we are in the forefront of highlighting the impact of the gender pay gap and to call on employers and governments to take urgent action to smash this gap.

Whilst the formal requirement to report on pay is a welcome step that UNISON long campaigned for, Conference is of the view that the data and actions required are far too limited in scope.

Conference believes that UNISON should continue to call on the Westminster government to improve the current requirements. We must seek to improve on, and broaden out the data gathered. The data is only meaningful as a springboard for action if a requirement is placed on employers to break down the pay gaps for separate pay systems. To take two public sector examples, NHS data should be published separately for staff on Agenda for Change terms as opposed to the doctors’ and dentists’ pay scales. Equally, police forces should show the gap for police officers separately to police staff.

Conference also believes that pay gaps would benefit from publication for discrete job roles even when these share a common pay system. For example, in higher education, it is standard practice to analyse the gender pay gap for academics, manual staff, professional and support staff and technical staff separately as well as publishing the institutional pay gap. UNISON believes this is an example of good practice that should be incorporated into any proposed pay gap reporting requirements.

Conference considers that the current 250 employee reporting threshold should be lowered to 50 to enable better comparisons across the board. Contrary to initial government concerns, we do not believe this would be too onerous. In Scotland, the expectation is that organisations with more than 20 employees to report detailed data on gender pay. In Wales, the public sector equality duties involve detailed equality indicators for organisations with more than 150 employees.

UNISON should also campaign for more substantial commitment to enforcement and compliance. This is distinctly lacking in the current procedures and the only deterrent or punishment for non compliance appears to be a vague sense of shame.

Conference praises our local representatives who are working hard to promote and ensure equality proof pay spines in all workplaces. However, we also know that unequal pay is not the only factor affecting the gap.

Other issues that impact on women’s ability to compete and succeed on a level playing field to men include:

1. Poor recruitment practices - including the language used at advert and interview;
2. Unconscious bias;
3. Conscious bias;
4. Confidence / aspiration gap between men and women;
5. Caring responsibilities;
6. Part time pay/promotion penalty.

Conference believes that all of these are areas where UNISON is well placed to campaign and negotiate for improved policies and practices, both locally and nationally and through lobbying governments to support and champion change.

Conference is aware that pay gaps are also recorded for other protected characteristics and is dismayed at the disability, black women and ethnicity pay gaps in the UK and notes both the recent Westminster government consultation on ethnicity pay reporting and the recent TUC report on the disability pay gap.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Develop a broad campaign to combat and smash the gender pay gap in which UNISON will be a significant voice and champion for smashing the gap;
2. Bring together and review current research on the persistent and underlying reasons that contribute to the pay gap to inform branch guidance;
3. Work with service groups and self organised groups to produce negotiating guidelines to support Branches to negotiate local action plans to close the gender pay gap;
4. Work with relevant partners to share best practice and co-ordinate campaign activity;
5. Guard against any attempt to use outsourcing as a method of narrowing the gender pay gap and lend practical support to branches to support them to do the same;
6. Lobby the Westminster government, along with devolved governments, to champion measures that support employers to work towards closing the gap, to improve and extend the reporting mechanisms and to bring in measures that support women better in the workplace;
7. Call on the TUC to organise a national day of action for “Women’s Pay Day”, on or around International Women’s Day 2020 and/or Equal Pay Day. An 18.4 per cent wage difference means women must wait more than two months of the calendar year before they start to earn the same as men or work for free after Equal Pay Day to year end
8. Campaign for tougher sanctions for non-compliance and non-reporting;
9. Work through Labour Link, with the Labour Party, to help inform and shape their agenda on this issue for the next general election;
10. Persuade Northern Ireland politicians to implement pay gap reporting quickly, once a government is re-established.

**27. Rebuilding Collective Bargaining**

**Carried as Amended: 27.1**

Conference notes that the most effective mechanism for ensuring that workers delivering public sector services in the private sector are paid decent terms and conditions is for those services to be brought back ‘in house’.

However, where pay and conditions are determined only by market mechanisms, employer discretion and legal minimums, employees invariably do not get a fair deal at work and collective bargaining coverage is crucial.

Conference notes with concern that due to privatisation and outsourcing, a growing number of workers who deliver public services are not covered by existing collective bargaining and pay review body structures. Conference notes that where staff have been TUPE transferred to external employers, the European Court of Justice’s Alemo-Herron decision means that the new employer is not required to comply with dynamic changes to the transferred workers’ terms and conditions.

Conference supports the agenda to roll out sectoral collective bargaining developed by the Institute of Employment Rights (IER) and adopted in the Labour Party’s 2017 general election manifesto.

Whilst acknowledging that setting the boundaries for sectors will be a thorny issue, and subject to appropriate consultation with unions and employers, the IER suggest that the priority should be to establish machinery in sectors in which it is in the public interest to protect vulnerable workers and ensure stability. The sectors it cites as fitting this category include: adult social care, childcare, delivery riders and drivers, hotels/catering, retail, agriculture, taxis/private hire and cleaning.

Conference notes that this approach is broadly in line with UNISON policy. Previous motions passed at National Delegate Conference commit the union to promoting sector level collective bargaining to cover workers in social care and school support roles, so as to maximise the scope of collective bargaining across fragmented, multi-employer public services. Conference has also supported putting national agreements into public procurement, a process also known as fair wage clauses.

Whilst Conference fully supports the ideas set out by Labour and the IER, it also notes that there is still work to do to assist in the further development of the sector bargaining proposals. The union does, for example, need to work through how sector bargaining should sit alongside existing national agreements and pay review body arrangements. It also needs to reflect and respect differences in the devolved nations and regions. In addition, UNISON needs to ensure that it is sector bargaining ready, with recruitment and organising strategies in place enabling us to maximise membership growth and workplace organisation.

In order to take this work forward Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Work with Service Group Liaison Committee to develop the union’s policy on sector bargaining, in conjunction with devolved nations and regions;
2. Make plans for a recruitment and organising project to ensure that sector level bargaining in priority public services areas of social care and childcare is backed up with effective on the ground organisation;
3. Work with the TUC, STUC, Wales TUC and ICTU to help ensure an appropriately co-ordinated approach that delivers the revival of collective bargaining across the economy that working people so desperately need to see;
4. Consider the equality impact of the proposals, particularly their ability to close the gender pay gap;
5. Consult EPSU and learn from the struggle to defend collective bargaining from attacks across Europe;
6. Work with Labour Link to ensure that the UNISON’s experience and viewpoint on the sectors in which we organise is properly reflected in Labour’s next manifesto and subsequent Labour government policy;
7. Continue to resist outsourcing and argue for services to be brought back in-house.

**29. Apprenticeships**

**Carried**

Conference recognises that apprenticeships can be a useful tool that provides individuals with a real chance of gaining meaningful employment and addressing the skills gap in the workplace. The UK's skill shortage is costly, damaging to growth, and could worsen because the skills that we need are changing and this could be compounded as Brexit may also radically change the skills we have access to in the UK. Further, Conference is mindful that this year, 2019, is the year of Young People and youth unemployment in the UK is at an all time high.

In light of this, and the Brexit uncertainty, there is a growing concern of potential skill shortages in many areas in the UK economy being filled by apprenticeships as a form of cheap labour to replace more experienced staff or take up the jobs of more experienced staff who have left employment.

UNISON takes a positive view of apprenticeships but in the current economic climate, many employers are coming under pressure to find ways of cutting costs, and unscrupulous employers may be looking to exploit apprentices and to use them to replace establishment post on the cheap.

Conference we need monitor schemes within our workplaces, organise apprentices in our branches and continue to push to get employers to sign up to the UNISON Apprenticeship Charter’s standards.

With the launch of the Apprenticeship Charter it is recognised that UNISON has been working to ensure that all apprenticeships are well funded, high quality apprenticeships which lead to a meaningful job. This however, is not enough we need to work to get employers to sign up to our Charter. If we do this then we can contribute towards ensuring that apprentices have the protection they need.

Currently there is gender imbalance in apprenticeships that mirrors the gender disproportion seen in the workplace generally and Black people continue to be under-represented in key sectors of the economy.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Continue to develop a strategic approach on apprenticeships to ensure that they deliver positive outcomes for all;
2. Continue the campaign to get employers providing Public Services to sign up to the UNISON Apprenticeship Charter;
3. Campaign to ensure that candidates for apprenticeships are recruited from a wider range of under-represented or disadvantaged groups, such as those from Black and minority backgrounds and older workers;
4. Examine the barriers facing Black people looking to take up apprenticeships and work with employers on their recruitment strategies for apprenticeships.

**43. Violence and Aggression**

**Carried as Amended: 43.1**

Conference re-affirms its belief that violence and aggression against workers, whether physical, verbal or psychological, is not part of the job. Conference notes, and congratulates all those involved in the work across the union in the past year, in highlighting this as one of UNISON’s key campaigning issues.

It notes that UNISON has long campaigned for stronger legislation to protect its’ members from violent assaults. It therefore welcomes the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 which provided stronger tariffs specifically for all NHS Staff (who are involved in face to face interaction with the public including those members working in the private sector.) Emergency Workers, and Police Staff.

However it notes that all those UNISON members involved in face-to-face interactions with the public are at risk of violent assault, and therefore require the same legal protections as those covered by the above Act.

Conference notes the work of UNISON’s Community Voluntary Sector in drafting, and getting employers to sign up to, UNISON’s Violence at Work Charter. This provides clear standards that employers are expected to meet, and provides a model for all UNISON branches to consider in their discussions with employers.

Conference also notes that UNISON has led the way in producing guidance for Safety Reps and members explaining why violence at work should not be considered part of the job.

Yet despite all this good work violent assaults on UNISON members continues to rise. The government continues to starve the Health and Safety Executive and other inspection agencies of the resources needed to carry out robust proactive inspections in this area. Conference notes that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has recognised violence at work as a priority for inspections in the prison service, but not in other public services, despite the clear evidence of rising levels of assault in all sectors.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

1. Continue to promote UNISON Guidance, Charters and other resources through social media, bulletins to activists and members, and other media;
2. Build on the success of the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act in the campaign for greater legal protection, and robust tariffs, regarding assaults against all public services staff;
3. Lobby the government and 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;
4. Liaise with Labour Link to ensure that these measures are included in considerations for the Labour Party Manifesto at the next general election.

**47. Austerity and Public Safety**

**Carried as Amended: 47.1, 47.2**

Conference believes that a decade of Tory austerity has starved our communities of essential services, eroded the resilience of the public sector and removed vital safety nets. It has also made communities less safe and left vulnerable people without the help they need. Public services are a lifeline for the most disadvantaged communities and it is these communities that austerity has hit the hardest.

Conference notes that the House of Commons Select Committee on Home Affairs found that the police are being used “as the sole emergency service for mental health crises” in many areas because other public services are being hit by austerity. Conference believes that this is just the tip of the iceberg, with the NHS, the police and the criminal justice system left to pick up the pieces due to damaging cuts and austerity to mental health services, drug and alcohol services, youth services, housing and social services.

Conference also notes the 2016 NatCen report into the impact of austerity on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) workers and services users which was commissioned by the National LGBT committee, supported by the Campaign Fund. The report highlighted the impact of cuts on mental health services targeted at LGBT people, such as cuts to LGBT- specific counselling services which have resulted in increased waiting times and some longer term therapies being cut completely.

Far too many people with mental health conditions and/or drug and alcohol related behaviours end up in police custody, in probation or in prison when this simply exacerbates their problems.

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

Whilst PCSO numbers have been cut by 40% since 2010, the rest of the police staff workforce has fallen by 20% and police officers by 14% in the same time period.

This has led to a perfect storm where reduced police numbers struggle to contain the rise in serious and violent crime and keep communities safe.

In Scotland, the merger and centralisation of policing has seen jobs and services affected. Cuts to community wardens in local government have made parks and public places feel less safe and secure too.

Conference is alarmed that at a time when police forces are under pressure and the prison system is facing systemic problems, the government chose to split and part-privatise an award winning Probation Service in England and Wales.

According to Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation, the service is no longer providing effective levels of supervision, or community protection, and offenders are no longer being provided with rehabilitation.

To compound these problems, the UK’s housing crisis is worsening their plight. One of the major determinants of whether someone leaving prison will re-offend is whether they have housing to live in on their release.

All the evidence is that funding for housing for ex-offenders is woefully inadequate and the system of provision is broken.

Conference notes important recent research from UNISON that reveals the full extent of the damage done by austerity to youth services, with £400 million slashed from youth service budgets since 2010.

It has meant the loss of more than 4,500 youth work jobs and over 760 youth centres since 2012. The destruction has continued apace – since 2016, at least 160 youth centres have closed and nearly 900 youth worker jobs have been cut.

There have also been cuts to family social workers and youth offending team and support for children and young people’s learning and development at every critical stage from Early Years on. Areas like behavioural support, mentoring and special needs have been particularly hard hit. This has been a significant contributory factor to the increase in the number of young people excluded from mainstream schoolss.

All the research shows that life chances, especially of those from disadvantaged or challenging backgrounds, including the likelihood of being involved in violent crime, are in large measure shaped by these investments in early development. A decade of austerity has reversed previous progress.

Conference asserts that we will never know the true cost of this act of vandalism on the future of young people. The NatCen report also highlights that many LGBT specific youth services have disappeared due to cuts to council funding , with remaining services sustained by volunteers rather than professional staff. This leaves young LGBT people vulnerable and reduces their life chances.

Missed life chances and opportunities for disadvantaged young people will not appear on any Tory balance sheet.

Conference is deeply concerned that the cuts to refuges, shelters and charities are placing victims of domestic violence at risk of homelessness and further abuse from the perpetrator.

The funding crisis in social housing sector is making the situation for this highly vulnerable group even worse. A survey covering England and Wales last year by Women’s Aid showed that women and children were being forced into homelessness in order to escape violence.

Shockingly, the survey found 11.7% of women who responded were forced to sleep rough during their search for a refuge, including pregnant women and some had their children with them.

Almost half of women (46%) were forced to sofa-surf, some women sofa-surfed with their children. The survey found that one in ten gave up the search for a shelter and went back to the abuser.

A range of local charities such as Citizens Advice Bureaux and Victim Support have seen local authority grants cut for services that help victims of crime.

Austerity cuts have also seen specialist domestic abuse services for LGBT survivors cut.

Knife crime, in many areas, is on the rise and communities fear for the safety of their young people when they are away from home.

Conference asserts that a punitive criminal justice approach to crime and violence will be both ineffective and dangerous.

UNISON needs to sound the alarm when police force budgets are cut and neighbourhood policing is damaged, when probation and rehabilitation services are for sale, when vital services supporting those with mental health, drug and alcohol problems are slashed and when victims of crime are unsupported and young people’s life chances are determined by their class and ethnic background.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

1. Campaign to highlight the risks to public safety of cuts and austerity;
2. Promote the holistic role played by local public services in protecting and supporting communities;
3. Continue to highlight the link between police cuts and the rise in serious and violent crime;
4. Highlight and learn from positive approaches across the four countries of the UK;
5. Campaign for a social justice approach to criminal justice;
6. Further support our ‘Let’s Fix Probation’ campaign to raise awareness of the damaging split and part privatisation of probation services and the need for probation to return to local provision and local accountability;
7. Campaign to restore funding to youth services, including specialised LGBT youth services. ;
8. Continue campaigning for improved funding for mental health and an end to public health, including specialised LGBT mental health misuse services, and sexual and reproductive health services cuts, particularly in vital areas such as drug and alcohol services;
9. Campaign for sufficient refuge spaces to be provided nationally to ensure specialist support for survivors, including support for Black and LGBTmisuse services, and sexual and reproductive health services women, and for those with mental health, disability, substance misuse or language needs, and those with children;
10. Campaign to highlight the impact on cuts to support for children and young people’s learning and development on life outcomes, including the likelihood of being involved in violent crime, and for the reversal of those cuts.

**48. Gun and Knife Crime – Time to Stop the Senseless Killings**

**Carried**

The number of deaths as a result of gun and knife crime in London, and inner cities across the country, continues to make the news with the number of innocent lives lost seemingly increasing on a daily basis.

The right wing press claim that the situation is a result of ‘lawless Britain’ but the truth is much more straightforward – since the Tories came to power in 2010 their austerity agenda has seen billions of pounds slashed from public services leaving youth services, social services and policing, to name a few, cut to the bone leaving young people with nowhere to go, spending time on the streets and vulnerable to gangs.

For every 100,000 people in the capital, there were 137 knife offences in 2017-18, with separate figures, from the mayor's office, showing that young Black teenage boys and men were disproportionately affected, as both victims and perpetrators.

UNISON members are at the forefront of dealing with the impact of these crimes with our ambulance and NHS workers helping those that have been shot or stabbed, social services etc providing support in the aftermath to affected families with decreasing resources.

You cannot tackle these crimes without dealing with the root causes of social deprivation; inadequate and failing education; unemployment; lack of affordable, decent housing, low wages, inadequate skills and training and poverty even for those that are in work.

Conference notes that the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has adopted a range of measures to tackle gun and knife crime including creating the Violent Crime Task Force, the London Needs you Alive campaign aimed at young Londoners: providing youth workers in major trauma centres but as it is UNISON members that delivers these strategies and deal with the terrible aftermath of these violent crimes; we need a seat at the table.

Whilst gun and knife crime is not solely a young people’s issue, a significant number of those that lost their lives or were injured last year were young. In the year to October 2017, 59 per cent of gun crime offenders were aged 25 or younger. Young people also made up around a third of gun crime victims. In the first half of 2018 one in five of those cautioned or convicted for carrying a knife was under 18.

As UNISON and the trade union movement celebrate 2019 as the year of the young worker it is time to stop just talking about the issue and we, as Conference, agree it is time to stop the senseless killings and take collective action.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Work with the Mayor of London, and other elected mayors, appropriate local authorities, elected councillors and politicians within the regional government and health structures to share information, strategies and best practice on how to tackle gun and knife crime;
2. Develop a campaign highlighting the root causes behind ‘lawless Britain’;
3. Continue to campaign against cuts in funding for public services;
4. Work with the National Young Members Forum on a campaign that recruits young members and activists and works with the Mayor’s office and other bodies on this key issue.

**49. Fighting for an Accessible Welfare System**

**Carried**

Conference notes that eligibility and assessment processes for welfare benefits and public services are rapidly moving to online platforms. For example, applications for Council Tax Support, Housing Benefit, Access to Work, and Universal Credit almost invariably need to be made online. Conversely, Personal Independence Payments (PIP) can only be applied for using a paper form, with no online option available.

Some disabled people use assistive technology to access and complete everyday tasks. This can include screen and text readers, speech input software and alternatives to standard keyboards.

For many, the online process has simplified the task of filling in a paper application form, but for those who rely on assistive technology they can find that their local software is incompatible with the online form.

However, disabled people who do not rely on assistive technology can also find the forms daunting, and the questions intrusive.

Conference further notes that Black disabled people are often particularly impacted by digital exclusion. Low paid Black disabled workers and those on zero hours contracts or doing manual or shift work may not have the financial resources to invest in digital technology at home and may not have access at work either. With libraries facing cuts, often the only option is a costly internet cafe which may be unaffordable.

Although government has claimed there has been assistance available to complete Universal Credit online applications through the ‘Universal Support’ contracts it has entered into with local authorities, housing associations, citizens advice and some local charities, in reality this can amount to little more than explaining to applicants that they need to complete an online form and assisting them to do so, when maintaining a Universal Credit claim is dependent on a constant set of online interactions through their Universal Credit ‘journal’. Conference notes that the government has now awarded the contract for ‘Universal Support’ to Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland, which do not have a presence in every local authority area and that the strategic role of local authorities in ensuring that advice is available locally and the valuable skills, knowledge and experience of specialist local voluntary sector organisations has been ignored.

Moreover, it is not yet clear whether this change is simply cosmetic.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Lobby the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to invest in further ongoing and comprehensive support, in addition to the arrangements with Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland, including recognition and support for of the strategic role that local authorities have and funding for voluntary and community organisations who assist disabled people in making and maintaining Universal Credit online claims;
2. Lobby the DWP to provide paper forms and other methods of managing Universal Credit claims as a reasonable adjustment;
3. Campaign for all benefit application forms to be accessible, and available both online and as hard copy documents, and for British Sign Language interpretations of forms to be available.

**51. Intergenerational Commission Report**

**Carried as Amended: 51.1**

Conference rejects the proposals contained in the Resolution Foundation think tank’s report of the intergenerational Commission, chaired by Lord David Willetts (nicknamed Two Brains), titled “A New Generational Contract”.

Conference further rejects the myth of generational unfairness on which the report is founded, and which masks the fact that the real unfairness is based on wealth and class. Wealthy pensioners compared to poor pensioners; privileged young people compared to those young people struggling on minimum wage.

The Intergenerational Commission is a group set up by the Resolution Foundation which claims to be an independent think tank working to improve the living standards of those in Britain on a low to middle income. It does not define the upper limit of that range. Both the Foundation and the Commission are chaired by Lord David Willetts.

Conference notes that the General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) was one of the commissioners. The commissioners directed the commission’s analytical priorities and the policy recommendations in its report. The General Secretary was one of the speakers at the launch of the report. The TUC’s head of economic and social affairs served on the commission’s technical panel.

The Commission published a report in April 2018 giving its views on maintaining what it calls the intergenerational contract which it claims has been eroded in recent years because “Millennials” (those born between 1981 and 2000) have not seen their disposable income increase over that of the previous generation (generation X born 1966 to 1980) at a similar age.

The report claims that the UK’s ageing population means that public spending on health, care and social security will reach £24bn by 2030 and £63bn by 2040. It focuses heavily on measures to protect younger workers from funding these costs mainly by taking measures to transfer wealth from those who are retired or nearing retirement and also by taking wealth from retired and older people to fund health and social care.

The report’s ten key policy recommendations are as follows:

1. Increase public funding for social care by more than £2 billion from reformed taxation of property. There should also be an increase in property-based contributions towards care costs, but with strict limits so that no-one pays more than a quarter of their wealth towards their own care;
2. Introduce a £2.3 billion “NHS levy” via national insurance on the earnings of those above state pension age and limited national insurance on occupational pension income;
3. Boost employment security via: the right to a regular contract for those doing regular hours on a zero-hours contract; extended statutory rights for the self-employed; and minimum notice periods for shifts;
4. Introduce a £1 billion “Better Jobs Deal” that offers practical support and funding for younger workers most affected by the financial crisis to take up opportunities to move jobs or train to progress; and £1.5 billion to tackle persistent underfunding of technical education routes.. Both should be funded by 1p of the forthcoming corporation tax cut;
5. Make indeterminate tenancies the sole form of private rental contract, with light-touch rent stabilisation limiting rent increases to inflation for three-year periods and disputes settled by a new housing tribunal;
6. Replace council tax with a progressive property tax with surcharges on second and empty properties; halve stamp duty rates to encourage moving; and offer a time-limited capital gains tax cut to incentivise owners of additional properties to sell to first-time buyers;
7. Pilot community land auctions so local authorities can bring more land forward for house building, underpinned by stronger compulsory purchase powers; and introduce a £1.7 billion building precept allowing local authorities to raise funds for house building in their area;
8. Require firms contracting for self-employed labour to make pension contributions; lower the earnings threshold above which employees get auto-enrolled; and provide greater incentives to save among low-and-middle-earners by flattening the rate of pensions tax relief and exempting employee pension contributions from national insurance;
9. Develop a legislative framework for new “collective defined contribution” pensions that better share risk; and reform pension freedoms to include the default option of a guaranteed income product purchased at the age of 80;
10. Abolish inheritance tax and replace it with a life-time receipts tax that is levied on recipients with fewer exemptions; a lower tax-free allowance and lower tax-rates. Use the extra revenues to introduce a £10,000 “citizen’s inheritance” – a restricted-use asset endowment to all young adults to support skills, entrepreneurship, housing and pension saving.

There are also proposals to scrap the triple lock and to bring forward by seven years the proposal to raise the qualifying age for state retirement pension to 68.

These proposals if implemented would immediately result in a drop in living standards for those retired or nearing retirement which they would be unable to counter. As the Commission is not a government sponsored body it is not clear what the political response might be. Nevertheless it is concerning that the Commission is targeting the “easy” options rather than the “fat cats” in the private and public sectors being given over-excessive rewards in terms of salaries, bonuses, share options and the like which are out of line with the earnings of the rank and file.

None of these proposals does anything to improve the situation for poorer younger people, but are simply an excuse to squeeze more money out of the older generation. Older people have more than paid over many years for anything they get via national insurance contributions, taxes and their own contributions to occupational pensions, as well as the value of the work that they have performed for the benefit of the economy and the community.

Conference regrets that the TUC has appeared to be associated with these proposals and has, by and large, not taken opportunities to correct this impression.

Conference notes these proposals with concern and calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Liaise with UNISON’s National Retired Members’ Committee;
2. Work with UNISON’s Young Members’ Organisation and relevant service groups to develop alternative proposals with which to approach UNISON Labour Link, the National Pensioners Convention, Age UK, Age UK Scotland, the Scottish Pensioners Forum and any other relevant bodies and to use any opportunity and all means possible to reject the narrative that old people are robbing their grand-childrens' future;
3. Urge the TUC to make quite clear it does not support further rises to state pension age, scrapping the triple lock on basic state pension rises, levying national insurance on the earnings of workers over state pension age, levying national insurance on occupational pensions, or means-testing social care;
4. Oppose any government action to implement the proposals in the Commission’s report with an adverse effect on retired workers;
5. Resist any attempt to extract any more money from the older generation.

**58. Strengthening Maternity Rights**

**Carried**

Conference notes with deep concern research by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) that too many women continue to experience pregnancy and maternity discrimination in UK workplaces. According to the EHRC research, of the 3,034 employers surveyed:

1. 70% said women should declare up front about pregnancy during recruitment;
2. 25% said it was reasonable during recruitment to ask women about their plans to have children;
3. 28% said that protection from redundancy during ordinary maternity leave was unreasonable;
4. 27% felt pregnancy put an unreasonable cost burden on the workplace;
5. 17% felt pregnant women and mothers were less interested in career progression and promotion than other employees.

Given that employers felt able to disclose such discriminatory and unlawful opinions, it is unsurprising that the EHRC’s survey of 3254 mothers found that:

1. 77% said they had a negative or possibly discriminatory experience during pregnancy, maternity leave and/or on return from maternity leave.
2. 11% felt forced to leave their job;
3. 20% said they experienced harassment or negative comments related to pregnancy or flexible working from their employer/colleagues;
4. 10% were discouraged from attending antenatal appointments
5. 51% of mothers who had their flexible working request approved said they felt it resulted in negative consequences

Conference further notes and welcomes the work of the recent Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy consultation. This was informed by the key issues raised in the Women and Equalities Select Committee 2016 report and recently on the Taylor review of modern working practices.

Conference believes that tackling pregnancy and maternity discrimination is vital in challenging fundamental inequalities in our labour market. That this review does not go far enough in protecting and enhancing the rights of pregnant women and new mothers.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

1. Continue to highlight the rights of women whilst pregnant and on their return to work;
2. Campaign to maintain and improve anti-discrimination laws, maternity and parental leave and pay, health and safety rights which are currently derived from European Union directives if and when the UK leaves the European Union;
3. Campaign to ensure that pregnant women and new mothers working in the insecure economy have meaningful access to basic employment rights including attending ante-natal appointments, health and safety at work and paid sick leave;
4. Campaign to extend existing protections against unfair redundancy to cover notification of pregnancy through to six months after return to work;
5. Continue to work and campaign with Maternity Action to protect maternity rights at work and extend support to vulnerable and destitute women in our communities;
6. Enhanced rights to take effect at the point that the woman is placed at risk of redundancy.

**68. Nelson Mandela: Inspiring Future Generations**

**Carried**

Conference notes that 2020 will be the 30 year anniversary of the release of Nelson Mandela from captivity.

Conference believes that Mandela’s life, sacrifice and values are inspirational to us today in our struggle for justice and equality.

Conference notes with pride the role of trade unionists in the Anti-Apartheid movement and that Nelson Mandela is an honorary UNISON president.

Conference applauds the UNISON Black Members’ creation of an annual Nelson Mandela Award in 2015. The award recognises outstanding representation of black members within the union and more widely in society.

Conference notes that the Liverpool-based ‘Mandela 8’ organisation is creating a Nelson Mandela Memorial in Prince’s Park in Toxteth. The memorial will include features that symbolise aspects of Mandela’s life, and will include an educational facility. The aim of the project is to keep the memory of Mandela alive and to inspire and encourage the next generation.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Support the Mandela 8 Project in Liverpool and to make a donation of £5,000;
2. Support other projects and events that aim to celebrate the life and values of Nelson Mandela.

**77. PROGRESSIVE TAXES TO END AUSTERITY**

**Carried as Amended: 77.1, 77.2**

Conference notes that brutal austerity has continued to blight public services. Despite claims from Prime Minister Theresa May in her 2018 Conservative Party Conference speech that “support for public services will go up”, all public services have been pushed to – and in many cases beyond – breaking point.

Conference notes that during almost a decade of austerity, the Conservative government have paired savage cuts to the public sector with tax cuts for some of the wealthiest in society.

UNISON research shows that the 19,000 taxpayers earning more than one million pounds per year have between them gained £11.1 billion since the top rate of income tax was slashed by the Conservative government.

Conferences notes that the Resolution Foundation estimates demographic changes alone are set to increase the size of the current UK public sector by £36 billion a year by 2030, and £84 billion by 2040.

Conference notes that the latest official HMRC ‘tax gap’ estimate of £33 billion not collected does not take account of the taxes that are avoided by multinational companies such as Starbucks, Amazon and Google through overseas transfer pricing and other financial engineering. According to the Tax Justice Network, this tax avoidance could amount to £120 billion a year.

Conference further notes Tax Justice Network research estimating corporate profits equivalent to 0.9% of world GDP were shifted in 2012 and that between $21-$32 trillion of assets are stashed in offshore tax havens.

Conference believes that austerity must end immediately and spending cuts must be reversed, but this will not happen under a government which prioritises tax cuts over restoring public service spending to safe levels. Conference notes the Scottish Governments ability to vary Income Tax which is now being used to a limited extent.

Conference believes that an alternative economic agenda is needed, not just to defend public services but to help identify and build the public services of the future.

Conference believes that any alternative economic agenda must prioritise increasing the funding available to public services through a significant increase in tax revenues.

Conference believes that working people – especially public service workers – have been hit hardest by austerity, and should not be forced to bear these necessary tax rises. Tax rises should be focused on those individuals and companies with the greatest income and the greatest wealth.

Conference believes that UNISON must be leading the debate on progressive taxation, decent pay, quality jobs and sustainable growth as an alternative to the rampant free-market ideology of the current Westminster government.

Conference believes that nationalisation or renationalisation should be a major consideration in every sector of our public services. Recognising there is no absolute legal requirement for compensation to be paid at market value when services are nationalised we welcome the statement made by the Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell that “Parliament will determine the value of every industry and sector that we nationalise and bring back into the public sector.” In the meantime the threat of nationalisation should be used to ensure tax is paid on every public contract

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Campaign for a shift to more progressive taxation as the means of funding quality public services and properly placing the burden for doing so on those who can most afford it;
2. Ensure that UNISON’s public facing campaigning for decent levels of investment in public services explains how this can be paid for from progressive taxation;
3. Reaffirm UNISON’s commitment to increases in Corporation Tax and the top rate of income tax and the introduction of a “Robin Hood Tax” on trades of stock and shares;
4. Support research and campaigns on potential new sources of funding for public services – especially taxes on wealth and unearned income;
5. Continue to make the case that higher progressive taxation is necessary and positive as it funds better public services in a fair and transparent way for the benefit of everyone;
6. Support the end of the caps on local government council tax and to provide local government with fair funding for decent services and the freedom to raise extra revenue through a variety of sources when required;
7. Support the work of organisations such as the Tax Justice Network, Publish What You Pay, and the Fair Tax Mark that seek to promote corporate transparency, social responsibility and end tax avoidance by multinational companies and wealthy individuals;
8. Promote changes to the Public Contract regulations that would add the use of tax havens by company corporate structures or the failure to comply with (extended) country by country financial reporting as grounds for mandatory exclusion from invitations to tender.
9. Support and campaign for the nationalisation of the Special Purpose Vehicles (SPV’s) overseeing public contracts such as PFI deals in the NHS as a method of controlling public money being diverted offshore for tax evasion purposes.

**80. CURBING CORPORATE POWER**

**Carried**

Conference notes that the revenues of the three largest corporations in the world, including Wal-mart, were higher than the gross domestic product of 110 countries, 55% of all nation states and that 66 individual people own as much wealth as 3.6 billion people.

Whilst trade and investment agreements give corporations extraordinary rights that enable them to operate and accumulate gigantic profits across the globe, no binding international obligations that regulate their own conduct exists. This enables them to act recklessly and with impunity.

The resulting scale and impact of corporate operations across the world is causing untold harm to millions of people and the environment every day with no chance for justice: from land-grabbing and displacements to the contamination of water and soil, to the severe exploitation of workers’ and the loss of lives of human rights defenders protecting their fundamental human rights, livelihoods, freedoms and territories.

This is why UNISON wants full Parliamentary scrutiny oversight and approval for free trade agreements after Brexit. But not only this, Conference believes that the time for an international mechanism to regulate corporate power is long overdue.

Corporations must be made to identify environmental and human rights risks linked to business activities and take preventative action; international legal cooperation against corporations must be enabled; citizens need support to access justice for cases concerning irresponsible cross border operations; and the legal relationship between international courts that protect the rights of investors and governments that protect the human rights of their citizens needs to be clear.

Conference further notes that four years ago a United Nations General Assembly motion started a process to negotiate a Binding Treaty on Transnational Corporations with respect to Human Rights. Past efforts to create similar treaties have failed. Yet, despite the attempts of the EU (and especially the UK), USA and Australia to ‘kill’ the Treaty process, it has survived and the first draft text will be negotiated in October 2019.

Conference welcomes UNISON and Public Services International campaign efforts with civil society to keep the Treaty alive.

Conference believes that the Treaty represents a once in a life time chance to secure binding international rules that start to turn the balance of power, at last, in the favour of people over corporate profit.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Work with Public Services International to monitor the progress of the Treaty;
2. Campaign with UK civil society to raise public awareness of and action in support of the treaty;
3. Build support for the Treaty within Parliament and pressure the UK Government to change its position;
4. Support the UNISON Regional Councils in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to win backing for the treaty within the devolved administrations;
5. Advocate for the United Nations negotiations to make progress.

**96. EU Exit and Protecting the Peace Process**

**Carried**

Conference notes that at the time of writing, the UK is still set to leave the EU on 29 March but that the terms of its exit and whether it will exit at all remains very unclear. Conference believes that regardless of whether the UK has left the EU on 29 March under the terms of Theresa May’s deal, Article 50 has been extended, or a general election or second referendum has been called, protecting the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland and the Good Friday Agreement in all its parts must remain of paramount importance, be it during a transition period, an extension of Article 50 or any election campaign.

Conference believes that too many have reduced the impact of the UK exit from the EU on Northern Ireland to questions of how goods will move across the border, North and South. Conference believes that the UK exiting the EU presents much more serious and grave issues, negatively affecting the peace process, massively interfering in the day-to-day lives of our members, their families and their communities and in the delivery of public services.

Conference recalls the unwavering support this union has demonstrated for the peace process in Northern Ireland, including support for the Northern Ireland region in campaigning for the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and in all its campaigns calling for genuine power-sharing government and the full implementation of that agreement ever since. Conference believes that the UK exiting the EU undermines and threatens the agreement, as already seen by the collapse of devolved Government in Northern Ireland.

Conference further believes that exiting the EU threatens the key aspects of the agreement relating to equality of citizenship and parity of esteem, creating borders between communities that the Good Friday Agreement was meant to bring down.

Conference notes that whilst UNISON does not support Theresa May’s deal, it agrees that any deal between the UK and EU will only be possible if it includes a ‘backstop’ designed to protect the Good Friday Agreement, North-South cooperation and the all island economy on the island of Ireland. Conference agrees that our members in Northern Ireland need this insurance policy, which is designed to both keep an open border across the island of Ireland and mitigate the impact of an EU exit on the Good Friday Agreement and the peace process.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council, in conjunction with the Northern Ireland membership in particular, to:

1. Continue to campaign against a ‘no deal’ exit from the EU if Article 50 has been extended beyond 29 March;
2. Campaign for a bilateral British-Irish treaty that protects the rights of British and Irish citizens across these islands as part of the Common Travel Area and for the highest standards of equality of treatment for citizens in Northern Ireland regardless of their chosen identity;
3. Resist any attempts to remove or weaken the backstop if Article 50 has been extended and the Withdrawal Agreement has yet to be passed;
4. Continue to seek a future relationship between the UK and EU that builds upon and strengthens the protections set out within the backstop, which protects the Good Friday Agreement in all its parts and prevents a hard border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland;
5. Call for the establishment of an independent international body to monitor the implementation of the peace agreement and to ensure future decisions of both guarantor governments align with the provisions and intention of the Good Friday Agreement;
6. Through Labour Link, to press the Labour Party to take all actions necessary to protect the Good Friday Agreement in the context of the UK exit from the EU.

**97. Public services and EU exit**

**Carried**

Conference, on behalf of public service workers in the East Midlands and the rest of the UK, is horrified at how the UK Government has conducted EU exit negotiations so far. The turmoil in the Westminster Parliament does not give workers any confidence that their best interests are being served whatever deals or legislation finally emerges in the coming months or years ahead.

Conference recognises that UNISON's EU exit campaign, since the 2016 Referendum, has consistently prioritised the protection of public services and workers rights regardless of the political upheaval.

Conference believes the current EU exit agenda of the Conservative Party does not guarantee the protection of public services and UNISON members’ rights. Their free trade plans will not secure an economic deal that will deliver quality public services, free from harmful global liberalisation policies in the future.

The government’s EU exit agenda threatens our workers rights and must be stopped. A Tory Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the EU, and also other countries subsequently, would promote a new global race to the bottom in workers’ rights, consumer standards and environmental regulation and open up UK public services to the lowest bidder.

Conference further notes that UNISON has created its own six tests based on our annual Conference decisions to evaluate what we would like to see included in any future EU-UK deal to protect our members’ rights and public services:

1. Protect existing health and safety and workers rights through a level playing field of regulations, with a non regression clause, an enforcement mechanism and accessible dispute mechanism that enforces the adherence and future upgrade on these rights;
2. Protect public services from a bad economic deal that will prevent growth of the UK economy, continue public service austerity instead of increased funding, lower living standards and offer less training and skills opportunities for workers;
3. Keep UK public services out of global trade deals, maintain only the existing beneficial social provisions in public procurement regulations, expand the right to public ownership and the positive use of State Aid;
4. Safeguard rights, standards and regulations (e.g. employment, health and safety, consumer and environment) and any new EU measures in the future so that they cannot be weakened in the UK through any future trade deals with non-EU countries like the USA;
5. Maintain existing equality and human rights, EU citizen rights, EU freedom of movement;
6. Prevent a hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland, uphold the Good Friday Agreement and respect the devolution legislation of the Governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Public services, the voluntary and community sector and the UK nations and regions will particularly lose out financially when we exit. There will be no so called ‘deal dividend’ as promised by the UK chancellor in the 2018 autumn budget if the economy collapses.

The government’s own evaluation report published at the end of 2018 demonstrated that any type of Brexit deal will make us poorer. Their impact assessments predict that Britain’s economic growth will be lower over the next 15 years (growth will be reduced by 8% with a No-deal, 5% with a FTA and 2% with an EEA option). Most economic analysis shows that the knock to public finances will dwarf many times over any cut in our EU membership fee.

Conference further notes that the UKs £8 billion a year net contribution to the EU will not go to zero post Brexit because all parties have stated they will pay to stay in certain crime-fighting, science and student exchange programmes among other things. There have been no official announcements on what this will cost but it will certainly be in the billions – and so the saving on EU membership fee is likely to be pretty small.

Furthermore conference believes it is paramount that the UK amount from the European Structural and Investment Funds must be matched in its replacement with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), in order to support the UK economic goal of regional economic equality. Conference notes that the Local Government Association (LGA) has estimated the EU funding gap will be £8.4 billion after 2020.

Conference agrees that any Brexit deal must not leave workers worse off, living standards must not fall. The government must end austerity and provide a Brexit deal that can properly fund the NHS, social care, local government, transport, police, education and housing and investing in our communities. Public services and its workers must not pay the price for a bad deal or no – deal.

Conference also notes that Brexit will not only put financial funding for public services at risk but also with the ending of EU freedom of movement and the introduction of Settled Status for EU migrants it risks staff shortages in key public services like health and social care.

EU joiners in the UK have fallen by 17.6% and the number of EU leavers has risen by 15.3% in the 12 months since the EU referendum resulting in a net outflow of EU national from NHS employment.

The social care sector currently cannot survive without workers from EU countries working in its teams. Between 2011 and 2016, the number of EU nationals employed in social care grew by 68%, or 30,600 people.

A report by the Cavendish Coalition, which UNISON is a member of, found that the NHS could be short of 51,000 nurses, enough to staff 45 hospitals, by the end of the Brexit transition period. And in social care the sector is under considerable strain with a vacancy rate of 12.3% and will have to navigate a Brexit transition period in which a critical portion of its EU workforce considers it’s future if the government does not manage EU migration to make EU citizens feel welcome.

If we do not solve this social care crisis the knock-on effects to the NHS will be enormous. People who are best cared for in their homes or in the community will instead be forced to visit already over-crowded hospitals, putting yet more strain on the system.

Conference notes that UNISON has grave concerns about the Migration Advisory Committees’ (MAC) recommendations to the government to include a £30,000 a year minimum threshold in its post Brexit migration plans. This will limit the crucial source of valued social care colleagues. The care sector relies on lower paid colleagues who would be effectively cut off by a salary threshold of £30,000.

It would be irresponsible for the government to bring the shutters down overnight, especially to those in important lower-wage roles such as care workers, or to others performing vital services to the public but who are earning less than £30,000 a year, such as nurses.

Conference notes UNISONs work with the 3 million and Cavendish Coalition to ensure the process for registering for Settled Status is as easy and smooth as possible. The campaign by UNISON regions and branches to get public sector employers to pay for their settled status fee has gone from strength to strength. It reinforces the message that EU workers, alongside non – EU workers, play a valuable contribution in the delivery of our public services.

Conference calls on all parts of UNISON to remain vigilant in protecting on our rights and public services through the coming months, whatever emerges from Parliament.

Conference further calls on the National Executive Council to continue to:

1. Campaign for an EU exit deal that puts the protection and future growth of UK public services, equality and employment rights at its core;
2. Call for a general election to break the parliamentary deadlock;
3. Work with Labour Link and the Labour Party, parliamentary allies, TUC and EPSU and our key civil society alliances including the3million, Cavendish Coalition and the Brexit Civil Society Alliance (BCSA) to promote UNISONs six tests in any future final deal;
4. Campaign for a cast-iron guarantee from the UK government that its settled status programme for EU nationals will be honoured in the event of a no-deal Brexit to prevent a damaging staff shortage in health and social care services;
5. Campaign for the government’s future UK’s Industrial Strategy to address the EU funding deficit in a post Brexit local landscape and provide for public funded infrastructure initiatives for regional economic growth as well as funds for social cohesion and skills development in the local workforce.

**99. Disability History Month**

**Carried**

Conference believes that UNISON should celebrate Disability History Month on an annual basis.

Disability History Month was set up in 2010 to provide a platform to focus on the work that has been done to fight for equality for disabled people. Each year the month has a theme – for example, the 2018 disability history month ran from 22 November to 22 December and was themed around 'Disability and Music'.

Our local committees, branches and self-organised groups can organise activities for their members and non-members during the month to mark and celebrate achievement, to learn and to understand more about the issues facing disabled people.

These events can help educate and raise awareness about disability but can also be useful to highlight the work of trade unions to encourage membership, participation and activism.

This motion seeks to raise awareness of this annual event and encourage branches and committees to plan and promote events.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Encourage branches and regional Disabled Members Committees to set a budget, organise, promote and share information about events. This information should be available in all accessible formats, where necessary, including British Sign Language (BSL);
2. Produce materials for use in regions and branches;
3. Encourage promotion of Disability History Month by highlighting events that have been held and sharing information about these on our website and in union journals.

**100. Make 2021 the Year of Disabled Workers**

**Carried as Amended: 100.1**

Conference believes that one of UNISON’s strengths lies in its recognition of the value and unique experiences disabled people bring to the workplace and to our union. UNISON recognises that people are disabled by societal and environmental barriers rather than their medical condition.

Conference, commends the work of UNISON’s National Disabled Members Committee to raise the profile of its disabled membership across the UK and also commends its achievement in securing representation for disabled members on our union’s highest lay body, the National Executive Council.

Conference joins in the international condemnation of how the UK Government’s policies affect disabled people and the lack of progress towards fulfilling the obligations set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that the UK signed in 2009. In particular we share concerns relating to the persisting disability employment gap, the persisting wages gap, and concern that not enough is being done to ensure disabled people can gain and maintain employment.

Conference draws attention to Article 27 of the Treaty that places a duty on the UK government to create the conditions that promote equal opportunity for disabled people in relation to work and employment.

The UK government has committed to the employment of one million more disabled people by 2027 but this cannot be achieved through the current policy of penalising disabled people who are not in work. A 2018 Report by the House of Commons “People with Disabilities in Employment” noted that there would need to be an 18% rise in the employment of disabled people from current levels to meet that target. Conference is concerned about the potential for under-employment and lack of meaningful work and progression opportunities for disabled people which are both factors that contribute to disparity in wages.

Conference is concerned that the UK’s withdrawal from the EU could affect both the progress towards meeting the Treaty’s obligations and also the UK Government’s commitment to the employment target set.

Conference observes that there is no requirement for employers to report on the numbers of disabled people they employ or the disability pay gap. We need an understanding of how many of our members are disabled, the barriers they face and how austerity has impacted disabled people in the workplace if we are to provide our activists relevant training to support our disabled membership in the workplace.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to make 2021 the Year of Disabled Workers, in UNISON and to ask the TUC and other unions to support the initiative. As part of that Year Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work with the National Disabled Members Committee:

1. To develop and deliver events and activities to mark the Year of Disabled Workers that:
2. Celebrate the successes and contributions of disabled people in the workplace;
3. Challenge societal and environmental barriers to employing disabled people;
4. Showcase success stories and visible role models.
5. To undertake a survey of our membership to determine the number of members who self-declare as disabled and the barriers they face, and to report on the findings;
6. To undertake an audit of disability-related training available across UNISON and including training on specific health conditions (for example, dementia awareness) and to map the density of activists trained in each across each of our Regions and to report on the findings.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work with the Labour Link and other relevant groups to lobby Parliament and devolved governments to enshrine the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into law across the UK irrespective of the Brexit outcome.

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

1. To encourage branches to share experiences, both good and bad, to provide learning opportunities for our activists when supporting disabled members at work;
2. To encourage branches to press for meaningful work and progression opportunities for disabled members and progressive workplace policies, such as disability leave, to facilitate this.

**105. Tackling Racism at Work**

**Carried**

Conference condemns the continuing rise is racism and fascism across the UK. Conference believes that those who face racism should be at the forefront of the campaign for race equality and that our self organised structures are integral to this work.

Conference also believes that all members have a role and a responsibility to challenge racism and fascism wherever it emerges.

Conference believes that it is time for the union to deepen our already leading work against racism and fascism by ensuring that all levels of the union are fully equipped for the scale of the developing challenge.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to work with the National Black Members Committee to develop a specific training programme for all activists to enable the union to be better equipped to challenge racism and fascism in the workplace and in wider society.

**107. ABUSE IN CARE HOMES**

**Carried**

There is an increasing demand for care in the UK. The proportion of elderly people requiring care in the future will place even more demands on a service that is already struggling.

With year-on-year cuts to local councils, over 1.8 million people are already denied access to care. This will, as time passes, create an increase in the number of people assessed as being in critical need. It will also place a further burden on the NHS in the intervening period.

The private sector provision of care – whether residential, nursing or home care – will see growth as budget cuts hit local authorities and hospital trusts. Currently, approximately 80% of all social care is delivered by the private sector. Billions of pounds are spent on tendering processes – money that could be invested in hospitals and local services.

Many residential/nursing homes are no longer owned by local authorities, with the majority of home care outsourced. Private care homes often use untrained staff or staff with limited training and do not have the necessary ratio of carers to patients. The turnover of staff is high in these establishments.

Although there are many very good and caring staff working in this field, they are amongst the lowest paid. They struggle with the demands of patients and a lack of support from their managers, who themselves are often not trained in the effective management of care. There is frequently not enough staff to be able to afford the care, dignity and respect that should be given to elderly patients, particularly where the needs of patients are complex and time consuming. Stressful situations can lead to heightened incidents of verbal and/or physical abuse.

Although most care homes will display menus with choices, there is, in actual fact, little choice. Food is often scarce and not nutritional in its value to older people. Elderly and disabled people in the care system are not getting enough food and drink leading to hospitalisation due to malnutrition and dehydration.

A report “Where Does the Money Go?” shows how much the taxpayer is giving to private companies and how little actually reaches the individual needing care. It is not acceptable that these private companies can structure themselves in such a way as to lay the risk at the door of staff, patients and councils.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Challenge and raise awareness of the various financial structures which companies use which may place the elderly and vulnerable at risk;
2. Work to challenge practices that are against equality and human rights legislation including lack of procedures to protect residents from misappropriation of personal finances;
3. Seek to achieve a longer-term aim of reabsorbing the provision of care into the public sector.

**110. Review of the Devolution Protocol**

**Carried**

Post Brexit political scene merely heightens the constitutional debate in a “disunited kingdom” of growing civic nationalism and regionalisation, the unsettled will for political change, the growing plurality of politics, which will have further implications for government and governance.

In turn, these are issues of plurality and diversification for the trade union to address in policy, organisation and resourcing.

The more diverse models of procurement and contracting, leading to more private/not for profit/community employers to organise and service, to redefine local and sectoral bargaining.

The Scottish Parliament and other devolved administrations have enhanced powers since UNISON Conference 2004 approved the Devolution Protocol.

The Scotland Act 2016 has provided additional enhanced powers to the Scottish Parliament in areas of elections to the Parliament and local councils, taxation and welfare and social security, borrowing for capital investment, and devolved bargaining in the public services. All impacting upon UNISON Scotland’s engagement with Scottish Government, Parliament and its institutions.

The Scottish Government Fair Work Agenda and the previous trade union submissions to the Smith Commission, have raised the prospect of Devolved Employment Rights.

The bargaining and campaign environment is likely to get more complex in future, with greater devolution to nations and regions.

The more diverse models of procurement and contracting, leading to more private/not for profit/community employers to organise and service, to redefine local and sectoral bargaining, more regulation and practice work, not just for legal services.

Trade union learning, including Scottish Government support for Scottish Union Learning, is how we empower people through insight and confidence. It is also how we align values and build skills for change. Time off to attend formal trade union learning is increasingly difficult and creates a further challenge. We need to ensure our learning remains relevant to the aims of the union, aids the development of a culture to take us forward and is accessible.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to initiate a review of the Devolution Protocol (Rule D 2.11.5).

**118. Abolish NHS Car Parking Charges**

**Carried**

The exorbitant cost of car parking at hospitals and GP surgeries is putting an increasing financial burden on patients and carers, especially women who are traditionally the main carers for elderly family and children who need routine and regular appointments. For more serious ailments and long term stays in hospital, the cost become so expensive that it places additional pressures on families.

The Press Association has found that NHS Trusts made more than £226 million in 2017/18 from car parking charges and penalty fines and that most hospitals also charge for disabled parking. These costs are variable depending where you live, but the cost to carers living in the South East of England will usually be higher than most other regions. Hospital car parking charges in Scotland and Wales were abolished in 2008 but this practice has not been followed in England. Although car parking charges still exist in Northern Ireland, allowances for free parking have been made for patients receiving radiotherapy or chemotherapy treatment, renal dialysis and for next of kin visiting patients in critical care or a high dependency unit.

Charities such as MacMillan Cancer and groups such as the Patients Association have said that hospital car parking charges are morally wrong, especially for disabled patients and those who have to attend hospital for life saving treatment, i.e. radiotherapy. The Patients Association also stated that the claim from hospitals that car parking revenue is reinvested back into patient care and front line services is simply not true.

The economic value of the contributions made by carers in the UK is £132 billion a year. The majority of carers are fed up and angry with the government making money from their unpaid labour and that they actually have to pay (via charges such as hospital car park costs) in order to carry out their role. Conference believes that NHS England can do more to ensure that patients and carers are not made to pay what amounts to a financial penalty.

Conference believes that the government should take action to limit this unfair financial burden. Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work with Labour Link, National Self Organised Groups, Young Members and other committees and department and external agencies as necessary to develop a national campaign and lobby government for a review and cessation of car parking charges at hospitals in England as has been achieved in both Scotland and Wales.

**121. STOPPING SOCIAL INSECURITY**

**Carried as Amended: 121.1, 121.2**

The damning report of the United Nations Human Rights Rapporteur found that in the UK “14 million people, a fifth of the population, live in poverty. Four million of these are more than 50% below the poverty line, and 1.5 million are destitute, unable to afford basic essentials. The widely respected Institute for Fiscal Studies predicts a 7% rise in child poverty between 2015 and 2022, and various sources predict child poverty rates of as high as 40%. For almost one in every two children to be poor in twenty-first century Britain is not just a disgrace, but a social calamity and an economic disaster, all rolled into one.”

On Universal Credit the Rapporteur said that social support should be a route out of poverty, and a universal credit should be a key part of that process. Consolidating six different benefits into one makes good sense, in principle. But many aspects of the design and rollout of the programme have suggested that the Department for Work and Pensions and The Treasury are more concerned with making economic savings and sending messages about lifestyles than responding to the multiple needs of those living with a disability, job loss, housing insecurity, food poverty, illness, and the demands of parenting.

This is highlighted by the Government’s failure to honour the commitment that it made in the 2010 white paper that no-one would lose as a result of the introduction of Universal Credit.

Conference notes:

1. The £1,000 per annum increase in Universal Credit work allowance for families with children and disabled people;
2. The delay to the roll out of ‘managed migration’ – the moving of existing claimants of legacy benefits to Universal Credit;
3. The decision not to retrospectively apply the two child limit to Universal Credit claims made after 31 January 2019;
4. The decision not to ‘naturally migrate’ people in receipt of Severe Disability Premium and that they should only transfer to Universal Credit through the managed migration process to guarantee that they receive transitional protection, and the decision to mitigate the financial loss of those that have already been ‘naturally migrated’;
5. The High Court judgement (11 January 2019) that the Department of Work and Pension’s interpretation of regulation 54 (calculation of earned income) used in the calculation of Universal Credit entitlement is flawed (this refers to the issue UNISON describes as the ‘pay date effect’);
6. The proposed two week roll on of Employment Support Allowance (ESA),Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and Income Support (IS);
7. The removal, on fifteenth May 2019, of Pension Credit and pension-age Housing Benefit from couples where one partner is over state pension age and the other under that age. Dubbed ‘The Toy Boy Tax’, this change forces couples on to Universal Credit instead, typically making them £579 a month worse off.
8. The invitation to UNISON to participate in the stakeholder group to inform the design of the managed migration process due to our experience of state benefits;
9. That in January 2019 1.4m people were in receipt of Universal Credit and that that figure is expected to rise by a further 1.6m during 2019;
10. The research by the Resolution Foundation showing that 2.4 million families on legacy benefits will be better off on Universal Credit while 3.2 million will be worse off.

Conference objects to these punitive measures and notes both the concessions made so far and also the role that UNISON has played alongside the Work and Pensions Select Committee, the Labour, Liberal Democrat, Plaid Cymru, Green and Scottish National Parties and some Conservative MPs, the TUC, voluntary sector organisations such as Child Poverty Action Group, think tanks such as the Resolution Foundation, religious organisations and civil society at large in working to secure these changes.

Composite D, passed at NDC 2018, clearly set out the impact of planned changes to Universal Credit on UNISON members and disabled members in particular.

Conference believes that despite these changes Universal Credit created, by its design, a ‘hostile environment’ for people on low incomes; that Universal Credit remains fundamentally flawed; that as a ‘brand’ Universal Credit is now seen as toxic and has lost public confidence; and radical change is now required for the whole benefits system.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council working with Labour Link where appropriate, with MPs, MSPs, AMs and Councillors, with the TUC and other trade unions, with the voluntary sector, religious organisations and civil society organisations to continue to influence public opinion so that the implementation of Universal Credit is stopped. Fundamental changes for a modern social security system must include sufficient funding to support the multiple needs of those living with a disability, job loss, housing insecurity, illness, and the demands of parenting, be fair, provide a quality service that is quick to respond, easily accessible, delivered through an integrated national and local framework, and leaves people with dignity. The system itself must be administered in line with the public service ethos, based on compassion and inclusion, which is best provided in the public sector by a well resourced and adequately staff service.

The changes should retain the positive aspects – one claim, the extra support received by some groups of claimants, disregarding 100% of pension contributions, the use of digital technology (but with expanded choice in the ways to make a claim to prevent digital exclusion) and result in the launch of a modern social security system with a new title and vision.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to campaign for the implementation of Universal Credit to be stopped and for fundamental changes to be made, including:

1. Ending the five week wait for the first payment, making the first payment within 7 days of the claim so claimants have no need to take an advance and get into debt;
2. The extension of protection to those that ‘naturally migrate’ to Universal Credit to honour the commitment made in the 2010 White Paper;
3. The introduction of choice for claimants in relation to:
   1. Payment of the housing element to landlords;
   2. Payment frequency (weekly, fortnightly or monthly);
   3. Split payments;
4. Measures that ensure the financial independence of women;
5. The removal of all unnecessary Universal Credit sanctions including sanctions for failing to attend a jobcentre appointment or telephone call and specifically to remove sanctions for refusing to accept a zero hours contract or for leaving a zero hours contract;
6. Ensuring that UC payments equate to at least existing legacy benefit and tax credit rates, including all premiums payable for disability and restoring work allowances to at least the original position and increasing Universal Credit allowances so that they return to their real original value (in line with the Retail Price Index);
7. Repealing the two child limit;
8. Limiting the total amount that can be deducted for repayments of advances, overpayments of legacy benefits or third party debts to no more than 10% of the standard allowance element of the Universal Credit claim;
9. Varying the date on which the assessment period begins to avoid the pay date effect and fluctuating Universal Credit that prevent households from planning household finances;

j) Introducing a change that will average earnings across longer periods to reflect the reality that many employees, as well as self-employed people, have irregular earnings and varying pay cycles;

k) Ending the Bedroom Tax in both the housing benefit and housing element of Universal Credit;

l) Abolishing the Toy Boy Tax;

m) Removing the benefit cap on the total benefits per household;

n) Removing the freeze on benefit increases;

o) Reforming work capability assessments to take a person centred and holistic approach to claimants based on medical knowledge and specialist advice on labour market disadvantage and the barriers disabled people face.

**126. RESOURCING OUR BRANCHES - A UNISON PRIORITY**

**Carried as Amended: 126.2**

Conference notes that UNISON’s branches are of key importance in the provision of support for members and their responsibilities are ever increasing. The reduction of employers in national bargaining arrangements and the significant fragmentation of the workforce point to this trend.

Many branches now deal with hundreds of employers, receiving no consolidated facility time and no additional resource.

Conference notes that the topic of branch resourcing has been debated for many years but there is now a pressing need to ensure branches have sufficient stable and sustainable resource levels.

As demands on the whole union increase, consideration now needs to be given to how the union as a whole is funded, so that branches can be resourced in a way that better meets the union’s objectives and the needs of members with particular reference to direct organisational support for branches.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to ensure:

1. That a review of activity and expenditure at all levels of the union – national, regional and branch-level – is conducted to enable the prioritisation of union activity and expenditure with a view to redirecting additional resource to branches. This review will ensure that all UNISON spending, including the regional pool allocation, reflects the union’s agreed objectives, is based on sound financial governance and ensures the highest levels of financial probity;
2. This review will be lay-member led and will commence immediately following Conference and be completed within two years. The review will be conducted by a review group comprising 12 members of the National Executive Council and one representative from each region;
3. Until completion of the review and agreement by Conference, an amended scheme of funding will be effective from 1st January 2020, based on the following principles for increasing branch funding:
4. For branches with reserves at or greater than £16 per member, the current funding formula will continue to apply. No branch will receive a lower level of funding than under the current funding formula;
5. Branches with reserves less than £16 per member will receive an increase in the standard entitlement of total annual subscription income from 20% to 25%;
6. If a branch holds reserves under £16 per member, and an increase in the standard entitlement would take the branch above £16 per member in reserves, that branch will only receive that portion of the increase in the standard entitlement which would take them up to £16 per member in reserves.
7. That all additional percentage enhancements for branches with reserves below £16 per full member at the annual point of calculation will remain unchanged, except for ‘Number 12: Branches with Multiple Employers’ which will be amended effective from January 1st 2020 as follows:
8. The number of employers relevant for the calculation will be employers which are defined as independent legal entities which have 5 or more UNISON members;
9. Additional entitlements will follow these amended bandings:
10. More than 5 and less than 20: 0.5%;
11. More than 19 and less than 35: 1.0%;
12. More than 34 and less than 50: 1.5%;
13. More than 49 and less than 100: 2.0%;
14. More than 99 and less than 150: 2.5%;
15. More than 149 and less than 200: 3.0%;
16. More than 199 and less than 250: 3.5%;
17. More than 249 and less than 300: 4.5%;
18. More than 299 and less than 350: 5.0%;
19. More than 349 and less than 400: 5.5%;
20. More than 399: 6.0%.
21. If a branch holds reserves under £16 per member, and an increase due to their multiple employer entitlement would take the branch above £16 per member in reserves, that branch will only receive that portion of the increase which would take them up to £16 per member in reserves;
22. To align with the current branch funding formula, for branches with less than 501 members an absolute reserves base of £8,000 will be used instead of £16 per member;
23. That the Activity-Based Budgeting system of budget ‘top-ups’ agreed at National Delegate Conference in 2016 will be deleted, in favour of the funding increase set out in points 3-5 above.
24. That the Regional Pool, under lay member control at Regional level, can continue to provide additional funding allocations to branches in support of UNISON’s organising agenda. During the period of the amended scheme of funding which will be effective from 1 January 2020 (outlined at point 3 above), the total funding allocation to the Regional Pool will be protected at the 2019 level of funding allocation to the Regional Pool.

**EM1. Excluding Future Higher Education, Further Education and Sixth Form Staff from the Local Government Pension Scheme**

**Carried**

Conference opposes this government’s continued attacks on public sector pensions, the latest of which comes in the form of the recent consultation “Local Government Pension Scheme: Changes to the Local Valuation Cycle and the Management of Employer Risk” launched in May 2019, from the Ministry of Housing, Local Government and Communities.

These changes, if implemented, would allow Higher Education Institutions (HEIS), further education colleges and sixth form colleges to choose not to offer the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) to new staff.

When combined with the publication of the government’s "Review of post 18 education and funding” by Dr Philip Augar, published at the end of May 2019, it is easy to draw a line from the commentary on cutting costs relating to non-teaching activities, to that of providing a mechanism for education providers to reduce expenditure on pension costs. This potential restriction in scheme participation could substantially impact the LGPS and risk its future sustainability.

With scheme members working in local government, higher and further education, schools, community, housing, police and justice, private contractors, energy, and water, environment and transport, this is a significant cross-sector and cross-service group issue. Any detrimental change to the LGPS constitutes a major attack on the current and future living standards of hundreds of thousands of UNISON members and their dependents.

Conference opposes the plans because:

1. This is an attack on the pension rights of working people delivering public services;
2. Whilst initial figures suggest approximately 3% of LGPS membership is at risk it could grow to around 20% of the potential membership of the LGPS if later extended to all admitted and scheduled bodies;
3. This would lead to serious cash flow issues for LGPS funds and impact on local services through increased costs;
4. It would lead to a two tier workforce in pensions with new starters being offered inferior and less cost effective schemes;
5. If not challenged, it would discriminate against support staff, particularly women and low paid, and will lead to many retiring into poverty with a cost to the individual and state in the form of additional benefit payments;
6. This would undermine universities and colleges who decide to still provide access to the LGPS including HEIs and FE colleges in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland;
7. By not seeking the advice and views of the LGPS Scheme Advisory Board before consulting on this, the governance structure for the LGPS agreed by the government is undermined;
8. The proposed changes would potentially affect the future viability and security of the scheme;
9. UNISON is concerned that if this change proceeds that other groups of workers may, in time, also be excluded from accessing the LGPS or even forced out of the scheme altogether.

Conference recalls the UNISON policy set by the 2010 National Delegate Conference which required the “placing of the defence of the LGPS at the centre of a strategy to build unity across service groups and sectors and with other unions to oppose any proposed detrimental changes to pension rights”.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to coordinate a cross service group campaign against this proposal by:

1. Seeking support from employers to reject this proposal in the consultation which closes on 31 July 2019;
2. Working with the TUC and other unions to campaign against this proposal;
3. Lobbying MPs and Lords to oppose this and vote against any statutory changes to the scheduled status of HEIs and FE and sixth form colleges;
4. Considering all legal means to oppose and challenge this, including (but not limited to) service groups independently considering industrial action ballots through their own processes.

**COMPOSITES**

**COMPOSITES**

**Composites**

**A. Menopause and the Workplace**

**Carried**

Conference notes that around 3.5 million women aged fifty years and over are currently in employment in the UK.

Conference notes further that the employment rate for women in the UK has actually increased in the past few decades and women now represent nearly half of the UK labour force. This means that many more women are affected by symptoms of the menopause in the course of their daily activities, often to the detriment of their families, work and life in general. Menopause symptoms vary, with around 25% of woman suffering severe symptoms. One in a hundred women under the age of 40 experiences the menopause. It is no surprise that women going through the menopause find work difficult due to poor concentration, tiredness, poor memory, depression, feeling low, reduced confidence and particularly hot flushes which are all contributory factors. These symptoms can have significant impact on attendance at work, which can then be misconstrued as a performance issue.

Conference is clear that employers have responsibility for the health and safety of all their employees, and there are clear business reasons for proactively managing an age diverse workforce.

Conference notes that UNISON has produced guidance for its safety reps on menopause and work. According to the research from TUC, workplaces are not designed for menopausal women in mind. Often managers are male or younger; and women find it difficult to disclose their menopausal issues to them. Many women opt to work part time or leave work altogether because flexible working hours are not available. Women would find it useful to have information regarding the menopause or advice regarding how to cope with work and their employer.

Conference recognises that the menopause also affects some trans men and non-binary people, and that menopause policies and procedures need to be fully inclusive to meet the needs of all members affected by the menopause.

Temperature control in the workplace remains an important issue. The hottest issue is that managers don't recognise problems associated with the menopause, believing it to be a difficult subject. Managers need training on menopause related () leave and flexible working time arrangements; they need to provide appropriate uniforms.

The STUC launched a report last year on the impact of Menopause in the workplace. One of the conclusions was that of the 3,649 respondents 95% said they would welcome a model policy.

Conference congratulates South Lanarkshire Council UNISON branch for developing a menopause policy with their employers which is the first comprehensive policy of its kind in Scotland. It is vital that employers provide the support that women need within the workplace.

Conference also congratulates the Velindre and Public Health Wales UNISON branch, whose pioneering work with Velindre University NHS Trust has directly led to a policy document, backed by the Board, that will make the employer both menopause aware and supportive to its staff. This policy will include specific training for all managers, workshops for all staff, access to alternative therapies and pelvic health experts and the utilisation of the Menopause Cafe to enable all staff to talk about their menopause experience.

Conference believes we must use all our resources to challenge attitudes to the menopause, to ensure employers have procedures in place and to ensure that the workplace meets the needs of the menopausal woman.

Conference fully recognises that having over one million women members is unique in our trade union movement.

Conference let us lead the way on this issue. We have a duty to those members who are or will suffer from this condition. This can also be used as recruiting tool to show again that UNISON is at the forefront of campaigning for our members.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

1) Work with branches and regions to establish examples of good practice in the local areas;

2) Build on good practice to develop workshops to enable union reps to represent and negotiate suitable working conditions for members going through the menopause;

3) Work with Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) to produce training materials on menopause to branches and regions.

4) Consider working with the Menopause Cafe charity as a way to actively promote discussion and awareness of menopause with employers across the UK.

5) Develop a "Menopause - We Got This Covered” Charter to highlight and offer advice re good workplace practices to help during the menopause;

6) Fund the launch of this charter and encourage politicians at local and national level to highlight the issue of menopause.

**B. Sexual Harassment in the Workplace**

**Carried**

Conference notes that #MeToo has transformed the debate around sexual harassment and has enabled women and men to come forward. with cases being reported in the media more than ever before.

Conference acknowledges that anyone at any time can experience sexual harassment, but the statistics demonstrate that the overwhelming majority of victims are women.

Conference believes UNISON needs to ensure that the voices of working women are highlighted in the #MeToo debate, and that young women know UNISON can support them in cases of sexual harassment.

Conference acknowledges that sexual harassment in the workplace is not new. It can affect anyone. Generally perpetrators are those who are in a position of power or perceive they are.

Victims can feel powerless, ashamed, hopeless and scared. They often develop very low self esteem and this often leads them to avoiding the harasser, denying or downplaying the gravity of the situation, attempting to ignore, forget, or simply endure the behaviour.

Sexual harassment and attacks against women are not limited to the directors couch or behind film cameras. It takes place in ordinary work places. For too long women have felt disempowered by powerful male decision makers, men who literally hold your job in their hands. The very real fear of being scape-goated, ostracised or sacked means that women simply suffer in silence; they feel they have no other choice.

Conference is concerned to note that the Young Women's Trust found in 2018 that 24% of young women would be reluctant to report sexual harassment at work for fear of losing their jobs. A further 15% of young women had been sexually harassed at work and not reported it. Only 8% of women who experienced sexual harassment said they had reported the incident. 17% are worried they would be offered fewer hours if they reported sexual harassment.

Reporting levels of sexual harassment are believed to be shockingly low, yet it is a fact that a disproportionate number of victims are women and the majority of perpetrators are men.

Worryingly, 32% of young women said they did not know how to report sexual harassment in their organisation.

A study by the TUC in 2016 found that 52% of women had experienced unwanted behaviour at work including groping, sexual advances and inappropriate jokes. Among women and girls aged 16-24, the proportion reporting sexual harassment rose to 63%.

Around one in eight women reported unwanted sexual touching or attempts to kiss them at work, which the report's authors point out would be considered sexual assault under the law.

Almost a fifth said they had been harassed by their boss or someone else with authority over them.

But four in five women said they did not report the incidents to their employers, with many fearing that it would harm their relationships at work or that they would not be taken seriously.

Also, of those who had reported harassment to their employer, very few saw a positive outcome with nearly three quarters reporting that there was no change, and sixteen percent reporting that they were treated worse as a result.

A more recent survey by the TUC in December 2018 (Not Part of the Job) stated that there is evidence that suggests that harassment from third-parties is getting worse. All reports found that, in cases where the perpetrator of harassment or discrimination is not an employee, victims may be more reluctant to report the incident because there is a perception that it will not be dealt with in the same way as it would be if the perpetrator were another employee.

Prior to repeal in 2013, Section 40 of the Equality Act 2010 made provision for employers to be held liable in cases where the employer was aware of three incidences of harassment and had failed to take action to prevent reoccurrence. The coalition government removed this important protection as part of its 'red tape challenge', arguing that the protection existed elsewhere within the Act. In a twist predictable to many, the Court of Appeal in 2018 ruled that third-party harassment was not covered by alternative sections of the Equality Act 2010 (Unite the Union vs Nailard) and so it is essential that UNISON campaigns for Section 40 to now be reinstated.

Conference believes UNISON, as the union with over 1 million women, needs to lead the way with challenging sexual harassment, and empowering branches and young women members to do so. By developing innovative work in this area, UNISON can pioneer and champion unions as a place for support when sexual harassment occurs.

We must ensure that all activists and branch officers are equipped to support women who wish to report sexual harassment at work. This includes ensuring public sector employers have a public zero tolerance on sexual harassment and adequate policies in place developed to protect those who make claims.

Conference calls on the National Executive Committee to work with the appropriate UNISON committees, including Labour Link, to:

1) Publicly endorse and promote the #metoo and #timesup campaigns;

2) Make addressing sexual harassment a strategic priority with respect to the recruitment and organising of young women;

3) Work with the National Women’s Committee and the National Young Member's Forum to develop a ‘Call It Out!' campaign, aimed at young women in UNISON; liaising with appropriate external organisations such as NUS;

4) Work with appropriate bodies within UNISON to conduct research about women in UNISON and the sexual harassment they experience, in order to develop toolkits for branches that are reflective of the different sectors we represent;

5) Develop a toolkit for activists and branch officers that includes guidance on:

a) Negotiating a zero tolerance sexual harassment policy, with appropriate protections and safe reporting routes for victims with our public sector employers;

b) How branches should support members who report sexual harassment in the workplace;

c) Appropriate external bodies, that branches can signpost victims to, for expert support and counselling outside of the workplace;

6) Work with Learning and Organising Services to provide specific training for activists on sexual harassment in the workplace and how to develop workplace policies;

7) Work with Labour Link to raise with MPs the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace;

8) Campaign for the reintroduction of Section 40 of the Equality Act 2010 on 'third party protection';

9) Work with the London, East and South East TUC (LESE) and other public sector trade unions to develop a trade union campaign against sexual harassment in the workplace;

10) Work with the TUC and other public sector trade unions both in the UK and abroad to develop a global trade union campaign against sexual harassment in the workplace.

**C. Tackling Stress, Bullying and Harassment**

**Carried**

Conference understands the huge scale of harm being caused to members by work-related stress, including wrecked lives and relationships, debilitating mental and physical illness and sometimes, tragically, death. Such misery is often compounded by the insensitive treatment of victims by some employers who, far from acknowledging their own responsibility for causing excessive workplace stress, seek to punish the victims of their negligence.

Conference understands that work-related stress is a top concern of members. The 2018 TUC survey of safety reps confirmed that stress, bullying/harassment and overwork were the biggest three health and safety concerns.

Conference notes that stress is not an inevitability; it is a consequence of the way work is organised and the way people are managed. The solution lies in prevention, with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Management Standards approach to tackling stress, which refers to six primary causes:

1) Demands including workload;

2) The control people have in the way they do their work;

3) The support people get from line management and colleagues;

4) Relationships at work;

5) How well they understand what’s expected of them;

6) How change is managed.

One possible approach involves an anonymous staff survey, and then focus group discussion of the results leading to action plans to address the issues identified. It recognises that the solutions best stem from the people affected.

This approach involves and utilises full branch involvement and joint working with the employer, which significantly improves the effectiveness of the approach. It also builds staff and employer confidence, meaning it is possible to carry out a confidential survey which includes people’s names, jobs and team locations. It can build a much more accurate picture, identifying hotspots, where things are really bad, and the specific causes behind them, and also improve any survey response rates, focus group discussions, action plans, and monitoring of implementation. Bullying and harassment will be addressed along with all the other causes of stress such as violence at work.

Conference understands this solution will be valuable wherever stress is a serious problem for members, wherever high sickness absence rates are a serious concern of the employer and wherever they are willing to work with us. Where employers have had doubts over the Management Standards approach, this is an opportunity to show that, by working with us, they can be very effective.

Conference notes that experience from branches shows that this work:

a) Is a very real support to our members affected by stress;

b) Helps prevent the harm that stress can cause;

c) Helps develop partnership working with employers;

d) Demonstrates the union effect;

e) Represents a considerable opportunity for the recruitment of members and reps;

f) Will help improve our public services.

Conference understands that full branch involvement in tackling stress is a long-term commitment. Branches will need the appropriate financial and physical resources to help develop the capability and capacity required. Developing capability will involve the provision of training resources and mentors, to help develop the skills, knowledge and confidence required, whilst developing capacity will involve discussions with employers over the business case and the significant savings to be made from reduced sockness absence.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to grasp the opportunity to develop and support this work, to provide the necessary training, materials, advice and assistance to help make this approach available to all branches.

Building on work done to date, Conference calls specifically on the National Executive Council to:

i) Identify appropriate financial and physical resources to develop appropriate training resources and materials for branches;

ii) Identify appropriate financial and physical resources to develop and provide training for those involved with delivering training and assistance at regional level;

iii) Ask regions to fully back this work, providing the training and advice for Branches, electing or nominating a regional project lead, and facilitating the sharing of experience between Branches;

iv) Ask branches to consider leading on this development in their area, electing a branch project lead, and discussing it with employers;

v) Work with service groups, regions and branches with a view to ensuring that employers at local and national level may develop a greater understanding of how tackling stress more effectively will reduce costs and improve productivity, as well as improving the health of workers;

vi) Ensure that UNISON continues to lobby the government and Health and Safety Executive for clearer guidance and stronger enforcement action regarding the implementation of the Stress Management Standards;

vii) Campaign with the aim of establishing illness resulting from work-related stress as an industrial injury, acknowledging that stress is always a ‘process’ rather than ‘event’

viii) Work with Labour Link to ensure these issues and policy aims are given full consideration by the Labour Party as it develops its manifesto for the next general election;

ix) Give increased support to the UK Work Stress Network whose annual conference is an excellent opportunity for networking, learning and inspiration.

**D. The Crisis in Social Care**

**Carried**

Conference notes with alarm the ongoing crisis in social care and continues to be appalled by the cuts being made to vital social care services.

Conference notes that, although social care has been relatively protected compared to other council services, care spending per adult resident has fallen substantially since 2009-10.

Conference believes that the sector faces a perfect storm in which the impact of years of chronic underfunding has been worsened by increasing demand and the knock-on impact of cuts to other key public services, such as housing and welfare.

Conference is alarmed at the impact these cuts are having on UNISON members responsible for delivering services in such circumstances – care workers who are almost universally underpaid, largely undervalued and often exposed to exploitation.

And Conference notes with alarm that the needs of many of society’s elderly and most vulnerable people are not being met. Nearly ninety people die each day waiting for social care, with the government’s former pensions minister Baroness Altmann moved to comment that “every bit of our social care system is broken”.

Conference notes that there are now 8,000 fewer care beds than there were three years ago and that a record 1.4 million older people do not receive the level of care they need.

Conference believes that inadequate access to social care affects people right across society – whether those in direct need of care, those friends and family members providing unpaid care, or those working elsewhere in public services who are left to pick up the pieces when people are left without the support they need.

Furthermore, Conference asserts that were it not for the ongoing dedication and commitment of the social care workforce the sector would have imploded completely – but no more can the government expect to prop up a creaking system on the backs of UNISON members.

This has been supported by the Social Care Inquiry carried out by the Fair Work Convention in Scotland that evidenced a culture of zero-hours, unpredictable working hours and unstable earnings. The inquiry makes recommendations about how to realise fair work for social care workers by setting out what policy makers, commissioners and leaders in Scotland’s social care sector can and should do.

Conference notes the double jeopardy of social care cuts on the women who make up 80% of the social care workforce and who are both managing impossible workloads and filling gaps in provision when care for children and, increasingly, elderly relatives breaks down as a consequence of relentless cuts. Society still expects women to be the prime carer.

Conference recognises that there are differences in approach across the four countries of the UK. For example, Northern Ireland has had integrated health and social care since the 1970s; Scotland has had free personal care since 2002; and Wales recently moved to curb the use of zero hours contracts by ensuring that homecare workers are offered a choice of contract after three months of employment.

However, Conference notes that underfunding of social care is causing serious damage in every part of the UK. Children's social care, in particular, is under extreme pressure and UNISON disabled members are often service users who rely on social care services for assistance to stay in work and have a family life.

With an ageing population many older people including UNISON retired members are dependent on social care to enable them to have dignity in later life. Properly funded social care would also make it possible for people to remain in their homes.

Proper funding and major reform are long overdue, so Conference is appalled that the government has repeatedly delayed the publication of its Green Paper on care and support in England.

Social care has for too long been regarded as a poor cousin of the NHS and Conference wants to see a concerted push to begin to raise its profile and standing within society. Social care services complement the NHS and prevent both acute admissions and enable recovery at home.

As such, Conference believes that various piecemeal attempts made to prop up the current failing system will not cater adequately for the needs of our growing and ageing population.

Instead Conference wants to see a longer term, more ambitious vision of where social care should be in ten years’ time, with serious financial commitments to back this up, and a strict timetable for achieving change – as a way of shielding such plans from being blown off course by short term political or economic considerations.

Conference notes that a number of think tanks and Parliamentary committees have now come out in favour of making universal access to personal care free at the point of delivery.

Whilst recognising that it would not be achieved overnight, Conference believes that ultimately the goal should be to bring social care up to equivalent levels of equity and access as those associated with the NHS.

Conference accepts that this would be expensive, but believes that the ongoing failure to invest properly in social care by successive governments is purely a matter of political choice.

Conference notes, for instance, that even with the continuation of austerity policies for most of the public sector, the chancellor still managed to find £2.7 billion for tax cuts in his 2018 Budget – a policy that will predominantly benefit the better off.

Similarly, Conference notes recent work by the Resolution Foundation which found that government could raise as much as £7 billion a year by 2022 by making a series of relatively moderate adjustments to wealth taxes and subsidies, such as entrepreneurs’ relief and inheritance tax.

Conference is encouraged that organisations from across the spectrum – including the Local Government Association, health think tanks, and Parliamentary Select Committees – have all reached the conclusion that some form of taxation reform will be needed to deliver the resources that are so urgently required in the social care sector.

Conference also believes, however, that providing extra money is only part of the solution; there must also be accompanying changes to the way in which care is delivered.

Conference notes that the existing social care market remains completely dysfunctional: there is a hugely fragmented provider landscape in which some areas have hundreds of providers operating, many of which exit the market each year.

Conference believes that social care workers must be recognised as highly skilled professionals, entitled to decent pay and working conditions, proper support and supervision, high quality training and clear pathways for career progression.

Conference remains concerned that the vast majority of social care is no longer provided by the public sector, but recognises that this means thousands of UNISON members working in social care are now employed by private contractors or providers from the community and voluntary sector, predominantly these members suffer from low pay, poor terms and conditions, limited pensions and aggressive management behaviours.

Conference continues to believe that services such as social care are best provided by the public sector, while noting that there is also a need at many local authorities to rebuild the capacity of councils to deliver care themselves if contracts are to return in-house without endangering service users.

Conference notes the success of the Care Workers for Change campaign in the North West region, a large scale organising project which involved the active support and participation of branches. The campaign encountered consistent hostility from employers and developed a multidimensional approach combining workplace organising with political lobbying and community engagement. The campaign has achieved high levels of membership growth with 4,500 new members and 200 new care worker activists who are working to build their union in their workplaces. The campaign has won real material benefits for care workers through bringing pressure on councils to require that their commissioned providers allow access to trade union organisers and that they pay at least the real living wage.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to campaign with the Labour Party, campaign groups, charities and other allies inside and outside Parliament for the following:

1) social care to finally receive the proper funding it deserves, particularly from the 2019 spending review, as part of a longer term plan to ensure its equivalence to the NHS in terms of access to services and its status within society;

2) for such funding to be raised by collective rather than individual means;

3) for any spending boost to be accompanied by meaningful reform of service delivery to improve the system in the interests of its staff and those they care for – highlighting the current plight of care workers and service users, particularly women;

4) social care workers to be recognised as highly skilled professionals entitled to decent pay and working conditions, proper support and supervision, high quality training and clear pathways for career progression;

5) social care to remain an organising and recruitment priority for UNISON, complementing the union’s high-profile campaigns against injustice, privatisation and underfunding, and building on the successes and the lessons of the Care Workers for Change campaign in developing an effective strategy to organise care workers;

6) encouragement of targeted activity at selected high profile employers for campaigning activity in order to highlight the plight of our members working in the sector, including coordinated action up to and including lawful industrial action where branches are able to lodge legal trade disputes on members terms and conditions;

7) where a private sector provider is facing bankruptcy or liquidation, local authorities to be supported by central government to take over the running of homes in their area to ensure continuity both of provision and of employment for the staff in these homes;

8) to support care workers having a greater voice in the workplace and as part of the wider public debate; and

9) a universal social care system, based on public provision, paid for by general taxation and free at the point of need.

Conference also recognises that to achieve the above demands will require the replacement of this Tory Government with a Corbyn led Labour Government pledged to fund and provide for people's needs.

**E. Housing Crisis**

**Carried**

Conference recognises that high housing costs and affordability are among the biggest issues facing the workforce in the South East and nationally, and affecting where they can live, what they can access and what they can afford.

According to the National Housing Federation, there was a shortfall of over 85,000 homes in the South East between 2012 and 2016, the highest in the country after London. The average home is over £360,000, 12 times the average salary; and the average monthly rent is £994. Data reported by The Guardian found that 40% of houses sold under the Right to Buy are now in the private rented sector, tens of millions of pounds are being paid by local authorities to rent former council homes to house homeless families, and some councils have bought back their former homes at more than six times the amount they sold them for.

A report by the Office for National Statistics confirms that the South East has the worst affordability rating for median house prices compared to median earnings outside of London. A UNISON study also shows that saving money for a down payment on a property would take over 52 years in some parts of the South East, making it virtually impossible for a huge number of UNISON members to buy their own home.

Conference notes that the worsening affordability crisis is a result of funding cuts to the “affordable housing budget” and failed housing policies, which have meant that not enough social and truly affordable homes have been built, and have led to a drastic decline in the number of new social rent homes built nationally. As a result, private rents and house prices in many parts of the country have risen dramatically, often to levels which make housing completely unaffordable to our members. This has happened at the same time as welfare reform, which has reduced the support that working age claimants can receive with their housing costs. With rents outpacing wages in many parts of the country, public service workers are spending more than a third of their income on rent. As a consequence, low paid workers struggle to save for a house deposit, pay rent or other living costs. Many face financial hardship, poverty and even homelessness.

The shortage of genuinely affordable homes means that thousands of people are on social housing waiting lists. Thousands more are forced to live in overcrowded or unsuitable homes where they are exposed to health and safety hazards. For the people caught in the trap of ever increasing housing costs and stagnating wages, the stress put on all areas of life are all too real; the human misery of this expressed all too vividly by the scandal of homelessness doubling under the Tories since 2010.

Many towns and cities are out of reach for public service workers due to the rising costs of housing compared to wages. In the Private Rented Sector, where rents are unregulated and tenancies are insecure, research by Shelter shows that rents rose by 16% between 2011 and 2017 in England, compared to average wages which rose by only 10% over that period. The situation is worse in some areas, including Elmbridge, Surrey, where rents have risen by 21% while wages are down by 15%; and in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, rents are 19% higher while wages have dropped by 9%.

Conference is concerned that the high costs of housing, coupled with real term cuts to public service pay, tax credit and Universal Credit changes are blighting the lives of our members, as they struggle to find somewhere affordable to live. This is putting a further financial strain on our members, household budgets and eroding their living standards. More workers are spending a significant proportion of their income to meet housing costs, leaving less money for other household essentials and exposing them to hardship. Many workers face lengthy commutes to work, high costs of travelling and pressure on their work life balance because they simply cannot access social housing or afford a decent home near their place of work.

Conference also notes the impact of the decline in social housing on members affected by domestic violence. Research shows that in times of austerity and uncertainty, domestic violence is more prevalent. Anyone tied to their abuser due to the lack of social / affordable housing is not able to break the cycle of abuse easily. Far too often victims give up not only their homes but also their jobs to escape violence. Worse still, some remain in the abusive situation and put their lives at risk. It should be possible for victims of abuse who work in the public sector to be accommodated in neighbouring Council areas, both in respect of housing and their job even if this is on a temporary basis until longer term solutions can be found. However, the housing crisis means this is not possible.

Conference notes that in spite of the government’s pledge “to fix the broken housing market, it is not doing enough to help those on modest incomes access decent and secure housing. Conference is concerned that the government has failed to comprehend the ways in which social housing could be used to tackle the housing crisis. The government's housing policy remains focused on promoting home-ownership and encouraging the development of costly types of housing, including so called “affordable rent homes” priced at 80 per cent of market rates which are expensive and beyond the reach of the low paid, and helping the privileged to buy their own home through schemes such as the Right to Buy and Help to Buy. The government needs to take urgent action to address the housing crisis to ensure that the low paid have access to homes they can afford.

The Right to Buy and barriers to new council house building have resulted in reduced democratic accountability with the housing sector. This stealth privatisation needs to be reversed as a matter of urgency and Conference believes a massive council house building programme is essential to achieve this. Recent measures to provide housing associations with longer-term strategic partnership funding from 2022, to build more “affordable homes”, including social housing, and the scrapping of the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap, which prevented councils from borrowing to invest in new homes, are steps in the right direction. However, they are not sufficient to address the depth and scale of the crisis unless the Right to Buy is suspended, as in Scotland and Wales, and ultimately ended as soon as practicable, and councils are supported with significant grant funding to build more homes for people on modest incomes.

With household growth projected to be higher in the South East, London and parts of the midlands over the next decade and government funded social house building at an all time low, there is an urgent need for innovative, bold and radical measures to resolve the deepening housing crisis.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1) Continue to make the case for decent, secure, safe and affordable housing, particularly those provided directly by councils and housing associations, to ensure that there are sufficient homes for workers on modest incomes;

2) Work with Defend Council Housing, Homes For All and Axe The Housing Act to campaign for increased building of council homes;

3) Highlight the cost of housing in pay campaigns to ensure that our members have additional income to pay for their housing costs and campaign for £10 an hour minimum wage;

4) Produce a housing manifesto document setting out UNISON's policies on dealing with the housing crisis and use this to galvanise support for UNISON's campaign for improvements in housing policy.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to lobby the Westminster Government and devolved administrations where appropriate to:

a) Give councils and housing associations increased financial flexibilities to enable them to build more social homes at scale;

b) Establish a new definition of “affordable housing” linked to people's income not market prices, and scrap the so called “affordable rent homes”, which makes some social homes inaccessible to the low paid;

c) Reform the land market to make it cheaper and easier for local authorities to build new homes;

d) Set up a “Homebuilding Capacity Fund” to help councils to build capacity to deliver “a new generation of council homes”, to ensure that they have the resources to recreate architectural, design and engineering teams and modern direct labour organisations to boost house-building;

e) Introduce stronger measures to regulate the private rented sector, including indefinite tenancies, a system of rent caps to limit rent increases, and increased rights and protections for private renters to improve standards and affordability in private renting, as Scotland has done;

f) End the Right to Buy scheme as soon as practicable.

Further we believe that the above are only possible, provided that an incoming Labour Government makes a commitment to build 500,000 Council homes a year in conjunction, with other measures in the Labour parties Green Paper as part of a ten year housing plan, to resolve the crisis in housing once and for all.

**F. Cuba**

**Carried**

UNISON applauds the achievement by the people of Cuba in liberating their country and sustaining it as a beacon of socialism over the last 60 years - with remarkable achievements in health, education and culture - in the face of massive oppression by powerful northern neighbour the USA and other reactionary forces.

The Cuban revolution in 1959 swept away the rotten Batista regime and replaced it with a socialist government led by Fidel Castro. For six decades, the small Caribbean island nation of around 11 million people has stood firm against all attempts to invade, to overthrow and to blockade it out of existence. A short lived moment of hope for a change in US policy under President Obama has been replaced by yet more rhetoric and reaction under President Trump.

Conference notes that Cuba has some of the lowest illiteracy and child mortality rates and percentage of students in higher education in the region, plus greatly improved life expectancy rates. It also ranks among the top countries in the world for percentage of women MPs and sustainable human development.

Conference congratulates the Cuban people on the impressive achievements made in health care, education, social care and international solidarity during this time.

Conference applauds Cuba's outstanding international humanitarianism with 50,000 Cuban health professional working in 69 countries; emergency medical brigades providing vital support during natural disasters, notably the Haitian earthquake and West African Ebola outbreak; and sight restored to more than four million people as part of the Operation Miracle programme. Cuba's Latin America Medical School which celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2019 has also provided medical scholarships for thousands of working class students from Latin America, Asia, Africa and even the United States, free of charge, since opening in 1999.

UNISON has always supported the Cuban revolution and our fellow public service workers and trade unions there, notably through our support for the Cuba Solidarity Campaign (CSC) and the smaller but no less vital Scottish Cuba Solidarity Campaign (SCSC).

UNISON Scotland's International Committee was honoured in November and December 2018 to take part in the union's delegation to Cuba ahead of the 60th anniversary and also as part of the 80th anniversary of the Cuban TUC (CTC – Central de Trabajadores de Cuba).

Our delegates saw at first hand the hard won benefits for workers and their families in Cuba through meetings with trade unionists, women's organisations and local communities. Cuba today has 98% literacy - higher than most nations including the USA and far in advance of most 'developing' countries. Its education system and health service outperform many rich nations. Famously but still incredibly - despite the blockade - Cuban medical training and expertise is provided free of charge to developing nations throughout Latin America and now in Asia and Africa. Equal rights and pay for women is constitutionally guaranteed, and Cuban women's representation in government is higher than most countries - with majorities in many areas.

Conference expresses support for the right of Cuba to choose its own economic, social and political path and opposes the USA's illegal economic blockade.

Conference notes that these achievements have been made while Cuba has suffered under the inhumane US blockade for more than 56 years. While we welcome the reestablishment of diplomatic relations made under President Obama in 2014, the blockade is still very much in place. UNISON expresses serious concern at the return to the aggressive “Cold War” rhetoric and tightening of the blockade made against Cuba by the Trump administration which constitutes new and real threat, not just to the Cuban people, but progressive movements in the region as a whole.

Conference supports the UK government joining 188 other countries in condemning the US blockade at the UN general assembly in 2018. However, Conference believes the government should take concrete measures to sanction British organisations or companies that comply with extraterritorial US blockade legislation over UK sovereign laws. We note the recent example of this in the Open University ban on Cuba students and congratulate the Cuba Solidarity Campaign and the British trade union movement for its work to pressure the Open University to overturn this decision.

Conference agrees to support the proposal of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign to celebrate Cuba's achievements and strengthen links between British and Cuban trade unions in this anniversary year and agrees to provide publicity and support for events organised under the Cuba60 banner.

Solidarity with Cuba is ever more vital and can bring success, as shown for example by the campaigns to free the Miami Five, and to end discrimination against Cuban academics and students by the Open University. Solidarity is also vital so that Cuba can continue to stand with other countries in Latin America which face similar challenges from right wing populists funded and supported by the USA.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1) Congratulate the Cuban people, their government and trade unions on the 60th anniversary of their revolution and pledge to work to ensure their continuing and future successes.

2) Campaign for an end to the cruel and illegal blockade, and work to promote international recognition and support for Cuba from governments and parliaments in the UK, European Union and United Nations – and call on the USA to improve its relations with Cuba;

3) Campaign within the TUC to help develop a strategy designed to persuade the UK government to implement measures preventing UK based companies from complying with extraterritorial blockade legislation;

4) Ensure we continue to publicise the threats to the Cuban revolution amongst UNISON members via the union’s publications and press statements;

5) Work collectively through the TUC, the Scottish TUC, the Wales TUC and the Irish Congress of Trades Unions with sister unions to support Cuba;

6) Publicise details of CSC delegations to Cuba to all Branches and Regions on a regular basis, encourage regions and branches to visit Cuba in solidarity with the Cuban people and Cuban trade unions;

7) Encourage all Branches to donate to the Cuba 60 appeal to help fund the costs of organising events;

8) Invite representatives from sister unions in Cuba to visit the UK during 2019 which will include visiting Regions, Branches and workplaces, as well as organising an event involving the invitation of sister unions from Cuba, which Branches and Regions would be invited to participate;

9) Coordinate a UNISON delegation made up of activists from across the union to attend CSC's Unions for Cuba conference being held in the UK during November 2019 and encourage Branches ad Regions to send representatives to the event;

10) Encourage all branches and regions to display CSC's Cuba60 exhibition celebrating Cuba's achievements at appropriate events throughout 2019;

11) Give support to and campaign with the Cuba Solidarity Campaign and the Scottish Cuba Solidarity Campaign;

12) Encourage branches, regions and nations of UNISON to affiliate to the CSC and SCSC.

**H. Justice for the Windrush Generation**

**Carried**

Arriving in UK between 1942 – 1971 from the Caribbean islands, at the invitation of the then government, came the generation named the ‘Windrush Generation’. The name came from the MV Empire Windrush, which arrived at Tilbury Docks, Essex, on 22 June 1948, bringing workers from Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and other islands, as a response to post-war labour shortages in the UK.

The entry in to the UK ended with the 1971 Immigration Act, when Commonwealth citizens already living in the UK were given indefinite leave to remain. After this, a British passport-holder born overseas could only settle in the UK if they firstly had a work permit and, secondly, could prove that a parent or grandparent had been born in the UK. It was also not clear that citizens needed to change their Caribbean passport to a British one.

The way in which the Windrush Generation has been treated is truly appalling. They were invited to the ‘Mother Country’, as law abiding British Citizens, to help to rebuild Britain 70 years ago, post-Second World War. Having worked hard and delivered what they were invited to Britain to do, some returned of their own free will to their homelands, while others chose to remain. They came on the promise of equality, carrying the same passports as an individual born in the United Kingdom, Colonies and Commonwealth countries. They did not, however, realise that a ‘hostile environment’ awaited them.

Some of the Windrush Generation were heartlessly deported to places they left all those years ago. Others, often children of the Windrush era who came to Britain on the passports of their parents have been forced to stop working, without recourse to public funds. Cases are mounting up of individuals seeking NHS treatment, passports, jobs or housing only to find themselves having to prove their right to live in the country where they have been legally resident for more than 50 years, or risk being deported.

Traumatic stories have emerged of individuals being made homeless, jobless and refusal of medical treatment, after they failed to produce proof they were never given in the first place. A Londoner who been diagnosed with prostate cancer, was refused NHS medical treatment because his immigration status and billed £54,000.

Evidence that might have put a stop to this mistreatment is the landing cards that recorded arrivals from the Caribbean until the 1960s. These were destroyed by the Home Office in 2010.

In 2014, Theresa May, the home secretary produced a new immigration policy which created a hostile environment toward illegal immigrant by forcing landlords, employers, banks and NHS services to run immigration status checks. It also allowed people to be deported more quickly and avoid lengthy appeals processes. The policy was further extended in 2016 to enforce penalties to any employer who did not follow through with the new policy and further distress to those who cannot prove that they have rights to work/live in the UK.

The Tory government has created a racist hostile environment in which if you cannot prove you are British from specific paperwork you are in fact classed as an illegal immigrant and will be deported.

Conference condemns the Tory government’s actions as institutionally racist and holds Home Secretaries in particular, responsible for the many individual tragedies. Those targeted had their rights further eroded as the appeals process effectively made them guilty until proven innocent. They withstood the racism whipped up by politicians like Enoch Powell and stood through many ensuing struggles. They changed both the labour movement and society for the better. It is a betrayal and an insult that in retirement they have been told they don’t belong.

UNISON made submissions to the government’s Compensation Scheme and Lessons Learnt in October 2018 and made it clear that the government should seek to make this a non-contentious, helpful process to those who have been affected.

UNISON have also supported no cap on the compensation scheme, given the scale of the damage inflicted includes deportation, lack of access to vital cancer treatment, loss of home, loss of livelihoods and even loss of life.

UNISON will continue to work with Labour Link and the TUC to protect the rights of workers including migrant workers against exploitation from bosses, deportation and loss of access to public services such as health and education and all racist immigration controls.

We welcome the Movement for Justice’s ‘Widen Windrush’ Campaign to include the descendants and relatives of the Windrush generation who came to Britain as adults after 1973, in the government’s ‘Windrush Scheme’ thereby offering them a route to citizenship. At its launch Janet Daby MP, David Lammy MP, Eleanor Smith MP and Baroness Hamwee all spoke in support of this campaign.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to

1) To continue to support UNISON members who are part of the Windrush Generation to ensure their immigration status is settled;

2) Continue in raising awareness of the issues facing the Windrush generation in all UNISON media;

3) To build and strengthen alliances with other charities and organisation such as the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) who are supporting victims of immigration crisis;

4) Explore with Labour Link how Labour can support the call to reform the immigration system when it gets elected into government;

5) Request Labour Link seeks to ensure Labour's policy on immigration reflects UNISON’s position.

6) Campaign for a fairer immigration system that recognises the vital contribution migrants have made, and continue to make, to public services and UK communities;

7) Work with other Trade Unions and through the TUC Race relations Committee to continue to campaign against the hostile environment, and help establish a network of support for Black workers/members subject to these hostile policies;

8) Work with all appropriate campaign groups and stakeholders' including the Widen Windrush Campaign to challenge the racism of immigration legislation and its impact on the descendants of the Windrush generation;

9) Prepare and circulate information to all branches about the Windrush campaign, support available from the union for members affected, and how they can access this;

10) Work with the Movement for Justice Campaign and other affiliated organisations to campaign for the removal of ‘immigrant’ status of the Windrush generation and descendants in recognition of their British Citizenship, even before arriving in the UK.

**RULES**

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**Amendment to Rules**

**1. Schedule B Benefits of Members in Education**

**Carried**

In existing Schedule B 2.3 after “above” delete the full stop and insert “with the exception of holding office. Persons in this category of membership shall not be entitled to hold any office in the Union.”

**2. Rule B Union Democracy**

**Carried**

B 2.3

Delete “lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members” and insert “lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBT+) members”

And

D 5.1.4

Delete “lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members” and insert “lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus (LGBT+) members”

**3. Rule B Aims and Objects of the Union/Rule B Aims and Objectives**

**Fell**

**4. Rule C Obligations of Membership**

**Carried**

Delete current C 6.2 and replace with:

“C 6.2 Details of where the rulebook may be downloaded from the UNISON website will be provided to each new member when they join. Hard copies of the rulebook may be requested.”

**5. Rule C Membership/Arrears of Subscriptons**

**Withdrawn**

**9. Rule D Self-Organised Groups**

**Fell**

**10. Rule D Young Members' Organisation**

**Carried**

Insert a new rule after D 6.2.4:

“D 6.2.5 The National Young Members Forum may establish a national conference of young members from branch and regional groups."

**12. Rule G Branches Lost**

**13. Rule G The Branch Committee Lost**

**Lost**

**14. Rule G Branch Meetings**

**15. Rule G Branch Officers**

**Lost**

**16. Rule G Stewards**

**Lost**

**17. Rule G Health and Safety Representatives**

**Lost**

**18. Rule G Equality Representatives**

**Lost**

**19. Rule G Branch Meetings**

**Carried**

Insert a new Rule G 3.4.4:

"G 3.4.4 Agree any proposals for branch honoraria in line with the National scheme. Should the meeting be inquorate then these proposals should be considered by the Regional Council or the relevant delegated Lay body in the region.”

Renumber existing Rules accordingly.

**20. Rule G Branch Officers**

**Carried**

In existing rule G 4.1.6 insert after "branch secretary," "branch chair"

**21. Rule G The Branch Secretary**

**Carried**

In G 4.2.4 at the end of the sentence insert the following: “and the law with particular reference to the Data Protection Act 2018”.