

# Report of Irish Policy Conference 2024



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**7th Irish Policy Conference**

**15th & 16th April 2024**

**Grand Hotel, Malahide, Co Dublin**

**by workers  
for workers**

**Susan Fitzgerald**  
Regional Secretary

**Jeff Robinson**  
Chair, IEC

**Sharon Graham**  
General Secretary



## RECORD OF DECISIONS

Decision	Agenda Subject
Adopted	Conference Welcome by the Regional Secretary, Susan Fitzgerald introducing <i>Owen Reidy, ICTU General Secretary</i> to open Conference
Adopted	Chair's address
	Standing Orders
	Report #1 of Standing Orders Committee
	Obituaries
	Election of Tellers
Adopted	Irish Executive Committee Report
Adopted	Implementation of Motions (2022 IPC)
	Regional Secretary's address
	General Secretary's address
	EC Chair's address

***Please note the running order of motions was changed at conference and this change is reflected below in this report***

Decision	Agenda Subject/Motion No.	Submitted by
	<b>Trade Union, Employment &amp; Workers' Rights</b>	
Carried	Motion 1 Equality for low paid health workers	RI/11 Dundalk Branch
Carried	Motion 2 Union busting is disgusting	NI/B0008 Craigavon Branch
Carried	Motion 3 EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages and trade union rights	RI/102 Des Bonass Branch
Carried	Motion 4 Defending workers' rights in the construction sector	RI/National Construction Branch
	<b>Economy &amp; Industrial</b>	
Carried	Motion 12 Technician Commitment	RI/B5003 IOT Branch
Carried	Motion 13 Support the Steel industry Ireland	Eng,Manu,Steel/CPPT Regional Industrial Sector Committee
Carried	Motion 14 Strengthening our Reps' Structures	Graphical, Paper, Media, IT & Comms Regional Industrial Sector Committee
Carried	Amendment #2	Branch NI/B3010 Enniskillen
Carried	Motion 15 North West Economy	NI/B3001 Londonderry'Derry Branch
Carried	Motion 16 Driving towards a shorter working week	RI/90 Branch

	<b>Political &amp; Social Action</b>	
Carried	Motion 17 Organising to fight Austerity 2.0	Irish Executive Committee
Carried	Comp #1 Campaign for A Water Referendum : Water is a human right	RI/B5015 Right2Change Tom Stokes & Branch RI/87 Dungarvan Branch
	Motion 18 A public-led housing policy	Construction Regional Industrial Sector Committee
	<b>Pensions</b>	
Carried	Motion 19 Pensions must be protected	Retired Members' Committee
Carried	Motion 20 Pension Protection Fund - Campaign for Fair Indexation	Aerospace & Shipbuilding Regional Industrial Sector Committee
Carried	Amendment #3	Aerospace & Shipbuilding Regional Industrial Sector Committee
Carried	Motion 21 Pension support for Unite Members and Member based Pension Scheme Trustees and full time Unite Officials	Finance & Legal Regional Industrial Sector Committee
	<b>Public Services</b>	
Carried	Motion 24 For a progressive model of public service funding	Docks, Rail, Ferries & Waterways Regional Industrial Sector Committee
Carried	Motion 25 Access to GPs	Louth/South Down Area Activists' Committee
Withdrawn	Motion 26 Hospital Car Parking	Health (NI) Regional Industrial Sector Committee
Carried	Motion 27 Impact of Femp on Public Sector Pay, Conditions & Staff Retention	DOD, State Agencies (ROI) Regional Industrial Sector Committee
	<b>Equalities</b>	
Carried	Motion 5 ADHD assessments for young women	Regional Women's Committee
Carried	Motion 6 Hate and Division	Regional LGBT+ Equality Committee

Carried	Motion 7 Disclosure of a Disability	Regional Disability Equality Committee
Carried	Motion 8 Challenging Racism and Hate of the Far Right	Regional Black, Asian, Ethnic Minority Equality Committee
Carried	Motion 9 The far right is a threat to all workers	Irish Executive Committee
Carried	Motion 10 Working class unity against the far right	Dublin Area Activists' Committee
Lost	Motion 11 Equality and Neutrality in Places of Work	NI/B0011 Thales (23331) Branch
Lost	Amendment #1	NI/B0011 Thales (23331) Branch
	<b>Health &amp; Safety &amp; Wellbeing</b>	
Carried	Motion 22 Workers' right to protection	Passenger Regional Industrial Sector Committee
Carried	Motion 23 Menopause and menstrual health	RI/B5009 PTSB Branch
	<b>Environment</b>	
Carried	Motion 28 Worker-led climate action	Regional Youth Committee
	<b>Administration &amp; Membership Services</b>	
Withdrawn	Motion 29 Unite the union credit union to Ireland	Local Authorities Regional Industrial Sector Committee
Carried	Motion 30 Commit the union to run a campaign: assistance for low paid/unemployed members	NI/B0041 Branch

#### **Election of SOC 2026**

The following nominations were submitted and members were duly elected following adoption by Conference that the SOC can consist of 7 members for the 2026 Irish Policy Conference.

Michelle Byrne  
Edward Corbett  
Paul Guthrie  
Frances Hourihane  
Maggie Kobik  
Paul Madden  
Jeremy Saunders

Appendix 1 – Motions withdrawn

Appendix 2 – Motions lost

## **MOTIONS CARRIED**

### **Trade Union, Employment & Workers' Rights**

#### **MOTION 1**

##### **Equality for low paid health workers**

Conference notes that the sick leave paid to health workers was reduced during the recession. Workers originally were allowed 3 months' sick off in a rolling 2 year cycle. This rolling cycle was then increased to 4 years to save public money.

To-date the 4 year rolling cycle remains and is an extremely challenging situation for low paid workers who worked during covid with high reinfection rates.

This is encouraging presentism for those low paid workers who have used up their sick leave during the 4 year cycle, which will have a detrimental impact on their health in the long term. These workers are also leaving the sector for more favourable T&C's elsewhere.

Conference calls on the IEC to lobby the Government to reverse this cruel policy and to revert back to the original 2 year threshold to determine sick pay for health workers.

**Submitted by:** RI/11 Dundalk Branch  
**Proposed by:** Mary Brannigan, Regional Disability Committee  
**Seconded by:** Tony Dunne, Health (ROI) RISC

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#### **MOTION 2**

##### **Union busting is disgusting**

Conference expresses its concern at the growing use by bosses of shameful and unacceptable union busting tactics; both open and underhand.

It is increasingly common for employers to mount legal challenges in attempts to deny the right of workers to picket or protest; to challenge the legitimacy or accuracy of strike ballots; to seek injunctions against protests or to encourage industrial property owners to threaten legal action on pickets for trespassing on their property; to offer monetary inducements to workers to leave a union or to employ casual or scab labour to undermine strike actions. It is not simply limited to such behaviour but including subjecting members, and in particular workplace reps, to victimisation and even disciplinary action. Shamefully this has led to suspension and even sacking of reps who have been prominent in disputes.

We note that these despicable actions are increasingly common across the region. It is vital that our union acts to defend the right of workers to collectively organise in trade unions and to take industrial action, including strike action.

Conference calls upon the incoming Irish Executive to launch a campaign to secure legislative change outlawing such union-busting tactics. It further calls on Unite to engage with the wider Trade Union movement secure broader support for such a campaign by all trade union affiliates to both the ICTU and TUC.

**Submitted by:** NI/B0008 Craigavon Branch  
**Proposed by:** Thomas Hayes, Mid Ulster AAC  
**Seconded by:** Cheryl Haslem, Regional Women's Committee

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### **MOTION 3**

#### **EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages and trade union rights**

This policy conference notes the EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages which states that countries with lower than 80% collective bargaining coverage must present an action plan to the European Commission as part of its transposition of the Directive no later than November 2024. Ireland currently has a collective bargaining coverage of 34%. The Directive includes the following observations and references:

- “calls on Member States to promote social dialogue and collective bargaining with a view to wage-setting.”
- “In-work poverty in the [European] Union has increased over the past decade and more workers are experiencing poverty.” (This is true in Ireland where in 2009, there were 91,407 adults living in poverty who had a job. Despite an economic “recovery”, this had increased by more than 42,000 in 2021 to 133,627.)
- The recognition that “it is more difficult for workers with non-standard contracts to organise and negotiate for collective agreements.”
- “Member States with a high collective bargaining coverage tend to have a small share of low-wage workers and high minimum wages. Member States with a small share of low-wage earners have a collective bargaining coverage rate above 80%.” Ireland has among the highest prevalence of low pay in comparison with our EU peers, where one-in-five workers earn below the low-pay threshold. Only Germany has higher proportion of low paid jobs among our EU peer group.
- “An effective enforcement system, including reliable monitoring, controls and field inspections, is necessary to ensure the functioning of and compliance with national statutory minimum wage frameworks.”

Article 4 calls on member states to:

- “promote the building and strengthening of the capacity... to engage in collective bargaining on wage-setting;
- encourage constructive, meaningful and informed negotiations on wages between the social partners, on an equal footing, where both parties have access to appropriate information in order to carry out their functions in respect of collective bargaining on wage-setting; and
- take measures... to protect the exercise of the right to collective bargaining on wage-setting and to protect workers and trade union representatives from acts that discriminate against them in respect of their employment on the grounds that they participate or wish to participate in collective bargaining on wage-setting...”

While the Irish government has engaged with social partners including the trade union movement, the suggested proposals for the achievement of the above aims and objectives relies heavily on sectoral wage bargaining which we believe is inadequate.

It is the position of this conference that the best way to achieve the comprehensive aims and objectives of the Directive, including the increasing of collective bargaining coverage, tackling of low wages, establishment of decent work, reduction of poverty and the creation of a more

egalitarian society, is through wide-ranging improvements to our industrial relations legislation which empowers workers and their trade unions.

As such, this conference calls on Unite to campaign for:

- A statutory framework for trade union recognition
- The “right to access” for trade unions to conduct inspections and discussions with members and potential members in the workplace.
- Enhanced penalties for Union busting, including the alignment of penalties for Unfair Dismissals for Union activity to the levels associated with Whistleblowing legislation.
- Ensuring Trade Union Deductions at source are protected and by law.
- Reform of the 1990 Industrial Relations Act to remove restrictions on workers withdrawing their labour.
- Legislation to allow workers to access more hours at work when hours become available, as provided for by the EU Part-Time Workers’ Directive.
- The right for trade union activists to avail of trade union education facilities, including paid leave.

**Submitted by:** RI/102 Des Bonass Branch  
**Proposed by:** Therese Moloney, Dublin AAC  
**Seconded by:** Joe Conroy, Dublin AAC

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#### **MOTION 4**

##### **Defending workers’ rights in the construction sector**

As construction workers we are very clear that how this government and the bosses treat migrant workers is exactly how they would like to treat the rest of us.

We are under no illusion that bosses would like to see workers from other countries isolated, used and even abused in a push to drive down working conditions.

Unite is aware of cases where non-EU migrant workers have been employed ostensibly subject to collectively agreed terms and conditions, but have then had their actual wages significantly depressed by the employer deducting exorbitant fees for housing and transport.

We have well founded concerns that companies engaging in these practices may also attempt to make long-standing workers redundant and replace them with non-EU workers subject to the kind of exploitation outlined above.

Conference condemns these and other violations of migrant workers’ rights, which not only impact on the workers concerned and their families but leads to a race to the bottom for all workers.

Conference reaffirms its commitment to organising workers in the construction sector, making sure all our materials and arguments are accessible and relevant to workers of all countries.

Conference furthermore warns employers that any attempts to undercut terms and conditions, to undermine skilled trades, or to use ‘divide and rule tactics’ against any workers, will be resisted by Unite: we have, and we will again, mobilise members industrially to oppose such attempts.

We continue our work in the spirit of ‘An injury to one is the concern of all’.

**Submitted by:** RI/National Construction Branch  
**Proposed by:** Richard Howard, Dublin AAC  
**Seconded by:** P J Goold, Construction RISC

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## **Economy & Industrial**

### **MOTION 12**

#### **Technician Commitment**

Conference recognises the essential contribution of technical staff across the education sector.

Technical staff enable education and research in our Higher Education Institutes (HEI) and Research Centres and have shown great flexibility and perseverance in ensuring that education moved online during the Covid crisis.

Conference recognises that the Technician Commitment (TC) is an important international initiative to make technical professions more attractive and sustainable in the longer term, with key principles surrounding visibility, recognition, career development, and sustainability. The TC has signatories from over 110 HEIs in the UK (including Northern Ireland), and Australia. It is looking to expand into the Republic of Ireland and has been endorsed by the Higher Education Authority (HEA).

Technician Commitment areas are defined as:

**Visibility:** Ensure that all technical staff within the organisation are identifiable and that their contribution is visible within and beyond the institution.

**Recognition:** Support technical staff to gain recognition through professional registration and external awards schemes.

**Career Development:** Enable career progression opportunities for technical staff through the provision of clear, documented career pathways.

**Sustainability:** Ensure the future sustainability of technical skills across the organisation and that technical expertise is fully utilised.

Conference recognises that Unite represents many technical staff in the Education sector and, as such, believe it is essential that Unite are involved at all levels around the introduction of the commitment and take a proactive approach.

Conference mandates the IEC to take steps including, but not limited to, the following in order to enhance our impact in this area:

1. Unite publicly lends support to the introduction of the Technician Commitment in the Republic through its social media channels and other appropriate channels.
2. To develop a strategy to support and influence implementation of the Technician Commitment across Education. To agree a set of common principles which we expect all institutions to agree as a minimum engagement with the TC. These principles should be developed/refined through surveys of our members with technical roles and through engagement with technical reps in HEIs in other Unite regions.
3. To encourage local branches and workplaces to engage publicly and pro-actively with the



Technician Commitment locally to ensure they have an influence on its implementation.

Conference recognises that the Technician Commitment will soon be rolled out across the sector on an all-island basis and that if Unite do not engage meaningfully we will be left without influence, and without a voice in its implementation.

**Submitted by:** **RI/B5003 IOT Branch**

**Proposed by:** **Dermot Barry, Education (ROI) RISC**

**Seconded by:** **Tom Conroy, Education (ROI) RISC**

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### **MOTION 13**

#### **Support the Steel industry Ireland**

Conference calls for Unite to campaign to fight to save the steel industry which is in dire straits and on the brink of collapse with the lack of investment, high energy costs and the costs of transitioning to green steel production plus the dumping of cheap steel by China on the world markets. This affects our members in Ireland directly with both TATA and British Steel with sites in Lisburn.

We urge Conference and Unite to support this motion.

**Submitted by:** **Eng,Manu,Steel/CPPT RISC**

**Proposed by:** **Clark Davis, Eng, Manu, Steel/CPPT RISC**

**Seconded by:** **John Clark, Belfast AAC**

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### **MOTION 14**

#### **Strengthening our Reps' Structures**

This conference notes:

- Increasing union membership and density is the biggest organising challenge facing our movement
- The role of a rep is difficult and often thankless work and requires constant adaptation to fight back against attacks on terms & conditions as well as dealing with challenges faced with automation, A.I., deskilling, unorganised industries and the rolling back of trade union / workers' rights by bosses and politicians alike
- That there are considerable challenges in recruiting new reps, particularly in getting younger members to take steps forward into reps roles
- Increasing precariousness in work, attacks on terms and conditions and union-busting all contribute to difficulties for young workers and this adds to the challenges faced by a new generation of reps
- Attacks on facility time and other union facilities often result in many reps having to carry out their duties outside of working hours
- Childcare and family commitments make it difficult for reps with young families to attend training, constitutional meetings and to give the time required for their role
- In workplaces where the union has achieved significant wins and a combative approach has been taken by members and reps there has been increases in union membership and reps structures have been strengthened
- Reps are key in ensuring workplaces are "strike-ready" ensuring high membership density, workplace democracy where members have control over workplace decisions and that the union's agenda is pushed
- Sustainable and strong reps structures in workplaces are essential to union power in the workplace and working class power across society

This conference affirms:

- To make strengthening reps' structures across all workplaces a key priority for the region going forward
- That the key to doing so is to recruit a new generation of workplace reps who are well-trained and feel confident, supported and empowered to increase membership density, make their workplace "strike-ready" and secure wins for their members
- That every support and consideration should be given to reps with childcare or family commitments
- That union-busting, attacks on trade union / workers' rights and the rolling back of facilities by bosses must be defended against within and beyond the workplace gates

This conference resolves:

- That the Regional Secretary should establish a working group of leading reps from all Industrial sectors as well as Officers and Organisers where appropriate to review current supports available for reps, roll out new initiatives to assist in the recruitment and election of new reps and address barriers preventing workers from becoming reps
- That the region should establish a monthly communication/newsletter to be sent to all reps to help inform and assist reps. This should highlight wins, best practices and initiatives being taken in various sectors and workplaces to strengthen reps structures, improve trade union facilities and increase membership
- That the Education Department should develop a "new reps guide" for new and prospective reps to assist them in navigating the role and ensuring they feel supported from day one
- That the Education Department should deliver regular "refresher training" and "advanced reps courses" for Senior Reps that should go into detail on new challenges in the workplace (e.g. automation, union-busting etc), organising for maximum density and supporting new reps
- That the region should pilot a "Rep recruitment campaign" producing new materials on the role of a rep and seeking those to step forward to be distributed across all Unite workplaces where structures could be strengthened
- That the region establishes regular workshops as part of a "Reps recruitment campaign" for prospective union reps, advertised to all members to give an insight on the role and importance of various types of union rep, what it entails and signpost those interested into how they can step forward
- That the region should establish a Mentoring programme for new reps that pairs them up with more experienced or recently retired reps in order to develop them
- That the Young Members' Committee, Women's Committee and BAEM Committee should be encouraged to initiate campaigns with a focus on Young Workers, Migrant Workers and Women Workers stepping forward into reps roles

**Submitted by: GPM & IT RISC**

**Proposed by: Davy English, GPM & IT RISC**

**Seconded by: Robert McNeice, GPM & IT RISC**

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## **Amendment #2**

Add two new bullet points after, This conference resolves:

- To instruct the Regional Secretary without delay to investigate the establishment of a 24 hour hot line for reps to receive advice and guidance on workplace issues when they are unable to contact the relevant officer/legal representative.
- To investigate without delay the establishment of union offices in rural and smaller urban areas to assist the development of union organisation and reps.

**Submitted by:** Branch NI/B3010 Enniskillen  
**Proposed by:** Janis Krustins, Fermanagh & South Tyrone AAC  
**Seconded by:** Simon Carson, Eng, Manu, Steel/CPPT RISC

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## **MOTION 15**

### **North West Economy**

Conferences proposes that Unite include reference to the continuing economic decline of the North West Region in its overall economic policy for Northern Ireland.

This should point out the severe lack of employment opportunities for young school leavers.

The heavy reliance on the Public sector and Social Security affecting one in every three of working age, also that the cost of living has risen but that thresholds haven't ie to get legal aid or avail of warmer homes, free school meals or any schemes the threshold has remained the same.

Conference should continue to highlight the need for the promised spending on transport infrastructure and the expansion of Magee Campus.

These are the key to any future economic development and prosperity.

**Submitted by:** NI/B3001 Londonderry'Derry Branch  
**Proposed by:** Simon Carson, Eng, Manu, Steel/CPPT RISC  
**Seconded by:** Janis Krustins, Fermanagh & South Tyrone AAC

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## **MOTION 16**

### **Driving towards a shorter working week**

Conference reiterates Unite's policy to campaign for a shorter working week, and notes that this has become more urgent in the light of recent developments, including the accelerating climate emergency and a potential divide between workers who can avail of hybrid or remote working, and those who cannot.

We note in particular that workers in sectors such as public transport, retail and construction, which require workers to be physically present, have not benefited from developments such as remote or hybrid working; and that work in these sectors can be physically demanding and/or highly stressful.

Implementation of a shorter working week with no loss of pay, and no work intensification, would not only benefit workers and their families, but would reduce carbon emissions and congestion.

Noting that the campaign for a shorter work week will need to be rolled out sector-by-sector, Conference therefore urges the IEC to work with RISCs, to develop a political and industrial strategy to begin campaigning for a shorter working week, with no loss of pay or other entitlements.

**Submitted by:** RI/90 Branch  
**Proposed by:** Lee Waterson, Automotive RISC  
**Seconded by:** Richard Howard, Dublin AAC

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## Political & Social Action

### MOTION 17

#### Organising to fight Austerity 2.0

This Conference notes that workers who are still counting the cost of recession, as well as a global pandemic followed by the cost-of-living crisis, are now facing renewed austerity measures north and south, with effective cuts to the public services on which we depend both as workers and as public service users.

In the Republic, many public sector workers are still bearing the brunt of measures imposed after the 2008 financial crash, including reductions in annual leave, sick pay entitlements and pay rates for new entrants; as well as a health sector recruitment freeze which amounts to a real-terms cut in staffing given population increases.

In Northern Ireland, public services are experiencing economic shock therapy with brutal cuts impacting the most vulnerable. NHS waiting lists are at all-time highs; a range of public services especially those in health and social care are at risk of collapse due to staffing crises driven by low pay, overwork and the inability to compete with well-funded outsourced and privatised providers; and households face the threat of a range of stealth charges, while the over 60s and people with disabilities face the loss of free public transport.

Taken together, this onslaught of cuts, attacks and charges amount to ‘Austerity 2.0’, and come on the back of the real-terms pay cuts already endured by many workers in the public and private sector. As economies north and south slow down, governments and employers may seek to impose further hardship on working people.

Conference therefore mandates the IEC to engage in both political and industrial campaigns to defeat and reverse attacks on our public sector workers and public services, and to defend workers in the public and private sectors against further attempts by employers to use the wider economic context as an excuse to undermine their jobs, pay and conditions.

Where necessary and appropriate, the Executive should support and / or initiate the building of broad campaigns involving communities and progressive campaign groups to defeat these attacks and to secure proper funding of publicly-owned, universally accessible and democratically accountable public services.

**Submitted by:** Irish Executive Committee

**Proposed by:** Richard Howard, Dublin AAC

**Seconded by:** Gaye Partridge, Aerospace & Shipbuilding RISC

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### COMPOSITE #1

#### Campaign for A Water Referendum : Water is a human right

This Conference commends the actions of our members on their Industrial action and their commitment to maintaining domestic water services in public ownership.

Following a sustained campaign and series of “water movement” protests led by Unite and a group of Unions in 2016 on the public ownership of water in Ireland, the current Irish Government, as part of its programme for government, promised a referendum on the public ownership of domestic water services in Ireland.

Eight years on from a very successful campaign and following water services members' rejection of the Framework document which has inevitably led members employed in water services delivery across a significant number of Local Authorities having to take strike action in an effort, not only to protect their pay and conditions, but to apply much needed pressure on this government and to ensure Uisce Eireann and our water infrastructure is kept under public ownership and enshrined into our Constitution.

We again find ourselves in a situation similar to the aforementioned water movement and campaigns, whereby the reality and blatant failure of this government will inevitably again lead us on the road to paying for our water; we already pay for water in our taxes.

As workers and members of the public, and through our sheer determination, Conference demands and calls for an immediate requirement for a campaign to strengthen the pressure on the commitment made by government to name the date for the Referendum.

A referendum is needed to protect Water Services from any future attempt at privatisation, and to provide a constitutional guarantee of public ownership.

This conference commits to campaigning and leading that campaign to make a referendum on public ownership of water an election issue and a part of the next programme for Government.

**Submitted by:** RI/B5015 Right2Change Tom Stokes & Branch RI/87 Dungarvan Branch

**Proposed by:** Bernie Hughes, Community

**Seconded by:** Vivienne Farrell, Community

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## **MOTION 18**

### **A public-led housing policy**

This Conference notes that the ongoing housing emergency in the Republic of Ireland is not only impacting workers and their families, but is also facilitating those driving the politics of division who use the lack of housing and other vital services to pit working class people against each other.

Conference also notes that the ongoing reliance on the private sector to deliver housing has failed and will continue to fail to meet housing needs, serving only to boost developer profits.

This Conference therefore reiterates Unite policy that our union should play a leading role in the development of a major public housing initiative. In particular, this conference believes that such an initiative should be informed by the following principles:

- Direct labour coupled with insourcing of all local authority and public housing functions currently outsourced to the private sector
- Respect for the rights of the workers building our homes: housing must provide sustainable high-skilled union jobs
- Public land to be use solely for public housing
- Housing to be both rental and owner-occupied
- Rental housing to be based on the cost-rental model offering security of tenure
- Approved Housing Body schemes to be democratically managed by tenants
- All new housing to be accessible and adaptable according to 'lifecycle housing' principles
- Minimised climate impact when providing new housing, with infill housing and high-quality renovation of existing housing stock to be prioritised

A worker-centered housing initiative should be delivered through:

- A unitary state-led public home-building, renovation and retrofitting agency
- Rigorous social procurement policies for specialist/sub-contracted work
- The agency to have compulsory acquisition powers for derelict and vacant properties
- The new body to provide high-standard retrofitting with no upfront cost to the householder

The agency to be mandated to provide quality apprenticeships, and retain workers following apprenticeship – with particular focus on Green Construction Apprenticeships.

**Submitted by:** **Construction RISC**

**Proposed by:** **Willy Mangan, Construction RISC**

**Seconded by:** **Maggie Kobik, Dublin AAC**

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## **Pensions**

### **MOTION 19**

#### **Pensions must be protected**

This conference recognises that the income of Retired Members suffered especially as a result of the Irish Government legislation in 2011 which resulted in €2.4 Billion being deducted from Private Pensions over a 5 year period and also the FEMPI Legislation which had similar impact on Public Service Pensions.

This legislation remains on the Statute Book despite the fact that receipts of Corporation Tax have seen a massive growth since the early 2020's.

It is therefore crucial that the Trade Union movement as a whole begin to prioritise the campaign for removal of this legislation in order to guarantee dignity and financial security for today and tomorrow's pensioners.

For most retired members in the Republic of Ireland defined benefit pensions terms were cut and defined contributions pension returns are nowhere near what members could expect prior to the introduction of this legislation.

For Retired Public Servants, their pensions retain a link between the pay of serving Public Servants and our members in this area, request that this link be retained.

Conference recognises that the livelihood of Retired members North and South has suffered as a result of both the Irish Government legislation in 2011 and the current threat to the triple lock by the British Tory Government.

Conference calls on the Unite Irish region to lobby the Irish Government to repeal this legislation and make steps to reimburse Pension Funds which were adversely affected by this legislation. Also to continue our campaign to retain the triple lock protection for UK pensions.

**Submitted by:** **Retired Members' Committee**

**Proposed by:** **David Griffin, Retired Members' Committee**

**Seconded by:** **Anne Smith, Retired Members' Committee**

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## **MOTION 20**

### **Pension Protection Fund - Campaign for Fair Indexation**

Conference seeks to maximise the leverage and influence of Unite the Union through engagement with the wider trade union movement, and other interested parties, and to bring that influence to bear on legislators and government in order to affect meaningful change in PPF indexation.

We move that Conference adopts a policy which will pro-actively advocate for improved PPF indexation for our members and those of the wider trade union movement,

- **Legality:** Seek expert legal opinion as to the potential case for age discrimination regarding the zero inflation increase for pre-1997 accrual.

Note: there may be a legal precedent based on the outcome of the Hughes case. This required the PPF to remove the cap on PPF compensation, which was found to be unlawful on the basis of age discrimination.

- **Lobby for Legislative Change:** Work collaboratively with other unions and interested parties to garner support to advocate, campaign and lobby for policies that support fair and equitable PPF indexation.
- **Education and Engagement:** Provide educational materials and engage members in discussions about the importance of PPF indexation and its impact on their retirement security.
- **Establish a PPF Indexation Working Group** comprising members of other Unions and interested parties to work on the implementation of these advocacy efforts. The Working Group will provide regular updates to the TUC Pensions Committee and relevant committee structures within each union.

**Submitted by:** Aerospace & Shipbuilding RISC  
**Proposed by:** Eddie Corbett, Aerospace & Shipbuilding RISC  
**Seconded by:** Joe Passmore, Aerospace & Shipbuilding RISC

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### **Amendment #3**

At the beginning of the motion, insert the following text,

The Pension Protection Fund (PPF) was established by the UK government to provide a pensions lifeboat in the event the employer becomes insolvent.

- 5131 schemes, assets £1.3bn
- Paying compensation to 180,000 PPF members
- Strong financial position: £12.1Bn reserves, 156% funding ratio.
- Indexation only on post April 1997 accrual at CPI (capped 2.5%)
- PPF proposes an almost 50% reduction in employer levy.

**Submitted by:** Aerospace & Shipbuilding RISC  
**Proposed by:** Eddie Corbett, Aerospace & Shipbuilding RISC  
**Seconded by:** Joe Passmore, Aerospace & Shipbuilding RISC

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## **MOTION 21**

### **Pension support for Unite Members and Member based Pension Scheme Trustees and full time Unite Officials**

This conference calls on the Irish Executive Committee to raise awareness among members and commit the union to run a campaign on the importance of member's pension benefits, rights and entitlements.

This is particularly relevant now, as many of the pension schemes that our members belong to are coming under increasing threat from employers, to reduce benefits and entitlements.

Many of the workplace Pension Schemes that our members are members of have members-based Trustee/s. As this is a very important role in the administration and management of these schemes, we request that UNITE commit that our Region over the next 3 months, will start a process with the main aim of supporting and advising those member-based Pension Trustees and Unite Officers to include the establishment of a training programme for these trustees and Unite Officers.

**Submitted by:** Finance & Legal RISC

**Proposed by:** Concepta Barlow, Finance & Legal RISC

**Seconded by:** Shane McGuinness, Finance & Legal RISC

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## **Public Services**

### **MOTION 24**

#### **For a progressive model of public service funding**

Conference calls on the incoming Irish Executive to launch a campaign to demand adequate funding for public services through direct and progressive taxation in Northern Ireland.

On 20 September 2023, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Chris Heaton-Harris MP, wrote to the Northern Ireland Civil Service departments, directing them to launch public consultations on measures to support 'budget sustainability' and to raise additional revenue. In short, this amounts to the imposition of brutal budget cuts to public services already at breaking point and savage stealth taxes to working class people in Northern Ireland, who are already the lowest paid in the UK.

Proposals include imposing water charges; scrapping free prescriptions; the abolition or restriction of free and half-fare travel public transport; and increasing domestic and non-domestic rates. The full adoption of these policies is not even going to bridge the NI budget deficit claimed by the Secretary of State, but their adoption would hugely impact the lives of working-class people across Northern Ireland.

Unite the Union needs to be in the vanguard of the fight against the Tory-led attack on working people and the most vulnerable in our society.

Conference calls on the incoming Irish Executive Committee to launch a campaign including industrial action and wider political pressure, both locally and nationally coordinated with other trade unions, to secure:

1. government abandon their austerity plans and instead ensure adequate funding for public services to take account of rising need and inflationary pressures through the adoption of a progressive taxation regime: the closing of all tax-loopholes, the ending of tax avoidance measures used by the superrich and corporations, including offshore tax haven registration; and the



renationalisation of hugely profitable privatised services e.g. energy and water utilities;

2. reform of the 'Barnett formula' to fully factor-in social need to ensure adequate funding for public sector services in Northern Ireland; and
3. legislation to guarantee pay parity is maintained for public sector workers in all areas including, health care, education, public transport, local council and administration.

**Submitted by:** Docks, Rail, Ferries & Waterways RISC  
**Proposed by:** Adrian Kelly, Docks, Rail, Ferries & Waterways RISC  
**Seconded by:** Raymond Murphy, Passenger RISC

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#### **MOTION 25**

##### **Access to GPs**

Conference calls on the Irish Executive Committee to lobby both governments on the Island of Ireland for greater access to GPs. Since Covid it has become progressively more difficult to get an appointment with your GP and virtually impossible to get a face to face meeting with your doctor.

This then adds more pressure on the A&E departments of hospitals as people are then so frustrated at their inability to get an appointment/call back they then attend the over worked A&E departments.

**Submitted by:** Louth/South Down AAC  
**Proposed by:** Emmet McGrane, Louth & South Down AAC  
**Seconded by:** Tony Dunne, Health (ROI) RISC

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#### **MOTION 27**

##### **Impact of Fempi on Public Sector Pay, Conditions & Staff Retention**

Conference endorses a return to the principles of Public & Private Sector negotiations Pay to at a minimum keep pace with inflation.

As we are experiencing a period of high inflation, the Government policy on low rates of pay increases for Public Sector workers is unsustainable. Since 2018 average annual pay has increased in the Non Commercial Semi State Sector has been consistently behind Private sector and since 2021 behind the inflation rate. While Inflation has begun to abate workers have absorbed embedded inflation and have lost substantial buying power. This issue has put many workers into a difficult position when combined with the significant rises in interest rates. This resulted in Public Sector workers with effectively lowered spending power & disposable income and falling increasingly behind their private sector colleagues.

It is vital that Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (FEMPI) is immediately repealed so that any future negotiations between government and unions are carried out on the basis of normal industrial relations and without the unfair influence of emergency legislation that usurps normal industrial relations. We would also urge a return to sectoral negotiations at National Pay talks to allow negotiation and resolution of sectoral issues currently being frustrated by the employer side referring to DPER who have an effective veto backed up by FEMPI.

The pay rates in public sector are becoming a significant disincentive to attract key skills and with significant recruitment required to replace the large rate of retirements it is becoming increasingly difficult to secure the skills necessary to ensure public services that are adequate to serve the rapidly changing needs of service users. We are experiencing outsourcing by the back door as salaries offered to entry posts are insufficient to attract candidates and roles at that grade are being outsourced. Skilled roles are also an issue, as entry salaries are falling behind those available in the private sector. We are at the point where pay rates, scale flexibility and DPER policies supported by FEMPI are creating real medium term risks to a functioning public service in the medium term as incumbents retire and in increasing number leave.

This conference, therefore, calls on Unite to seek future pay rises at minimum for all workers at least in line with the absorbed inflation and the immediate repeal of FEMPI legislation, in line with Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) policy.

**Submitted by:** DOD, State Agencies (ROI) RISC

**Proposed by:** Dermot Barry, Education (ROI) RISC

**Seconded by:** Therese Moloney, Dublin AAC

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## **Equalities**

### **MOTION 5**

#### **ADHD assessments for young women**

This conference notes that ADHD is more commonly diagnosed in boys than girls, with girls often presenting later in late adolescence as their behaviour becomes more apparent. Girls with ADHD often go unnoticed, with many only realising later in life as adults that they have ADHD, particularly when they're in education or the workforce and therefore seek referrals for a diagnosis over the age of eighteen where there is little or no service in some of the HealthTrusts. Where there is a service consultants are inundated with referrals. Those who can afford the £1000.00 cost to go private then have to pay for private prescriptions to access their prescribed medication at a cost of £200 per month. This is because it is a class A drug and GPs are not prepared to honour the assessment as it needs to be referred through the NHS shared care scheme

In the Republic of Ireland, the HSE currently have only four Adult ADHD clinics and you must be living in a Community Health Organisation (CHO) catchment area to avail of the service. Access to the assessment and treatment is by GP referral to your local Community Adult Mental Health Team for initial screening, unfortunately those outside the catchment areas for this service must get the assessment done privately with costs of up to €1150.

Conference recognises the importance of diagnoses for some people to allow them to ask their workplaces about supporting their needs as a recognised disability. Often the extent of the needs and the suggested workplace accommodations are not known without a formal assessment and diagnoses.

Conference recognises the huge financial barriers that obtaining an official ADHD diagnoses as an adult can have on workers, particularly for those who feel it is impacting their job but feel the cost is too much for them to pursue the diagnoses. As many women already face the hurdles of gender pay gaps, over representation in low paid work, additional menstrual costs and unpaid labour in the home, this is an additional gender weighted cost women face.

Conference calls on the region to raise awareness of this issue, call on the abolishment of fees for ADHD assessments, and to lobby the government to address this concern which predominantly impacts young women more so as they haven't been diagnosed in earlier years.

Conference also mandates that a union resource be created on how to negotiate for disability accommodations in the workplace that specifically mentions ADHD accommodations.

**Submitted by:** Regional Women's Committee

**Proposed by:** Cheryl Haslem, Regional Women's Committee

**Seconded by:** Judith Hough, Regional Women's Committee

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## **MOTION 6**

### **Hate and Division**

Conference notes that hostility to trans people is increasing in the UK and Ireland and that an injury to one is an injury to all.

We note that wider society can be reflected in our workplaces and we cannot allow hate to brew. Hate towards any minority is only designed to cause division. Division in our workplaces doesn't benefit union members. Our workplaces must be united together to tackle bad bosses and to collectively fight for jobs, pay and conditions, including equality issues.

Conference calls on the Irish region's membership and IEC to:

- Continue to oppose all forms of prejudice and bigotry particularly prejudice and bigotry directed towards Trans people;
- Recognise the attacks on our community by the far right, especially in rural areas and calls on local members to support local pride and pride committee;
- Unite workplace rep training to include how to have workplace conversations to tackle hate/division.

**Submitted by:** Regional LGBT+ Equality Committee

**Proposed by:** Francis Loughlin, Community, YW & N4P RISC

**Seconded by:** Brendan Donnelly, Regional LGBT+ Equality Committee

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## **MOTION 7**

### **Disclosure of a Disability**

This conference notes that there is a reluctance from too many workers to disclose a disability.

People with disabilities should feel confident to disclose a disability to their employer, Union, GP, and other relevant services.

The legal definition of a disability is that a person has a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Conference calls on the IEC to encourage our membership to disclose and to make members aware of the benefits of disclosing a disability. This will enable them to be aware of legal protections and reasonable adjustments available to them.

**Submitted by:** Regional Disability Equality Committee

**Proposed by:** Andy Smyth, Food, Drink & Agriculture (NI) RISC

**Seconded by:** Mary Branigan, Regional Disability Equality Committee

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## **MOTION 8**

### **Challenging Racism and Hate of the Far Right**

Conference notes as expressed in the statement from Unite the Union, Ireland Region Black Asian Ethnic Minority Committee (BAEM), the horrific knife attack on school children and the

staff member in Dublin City Centre on Thursday 23 November 2023 had shocked the entire country. Our thoughts, our sympathy and solidarity were with the victims of this attack and their families in the first instance.

We were further shocked by the horrific scenes in the city centre later that day. Using the horrific stabbing incident and turning it into anti-migrant hate, a group of rioters have targeted public transport, various shops, and accommodation venues. They have burned public buses, a Luas train and cars. Chanting anti-immigrant slogans and claiming to protect the women and children of this nation against the “danger of migrants”, they have endangered the safety of people of Dublin.

We had also expressed our solidarity with the transport and all other public and retail workers who are affected by these far-right led attacks. We also express our solidarity with all migrants and minorities, who are fellow members of our society, and members of our Union.

Our Regional Secretary summarized it well: “Racism and division is a weakness our movement and class can’t afford – our answer must be unity and solidarity and a renewed effort to expose the lies of the far right and fight for decent homes and services for all.”

Europe has seen the worst during the rise to power of the far right and fascism. The slogan “Never Again” is a commitment never to go back to those days.

The trade union movement has a responsibility to be part of the struggle for unity and solidarity by taking a strong anti-racist stand against the hate and division of the far right and racist forces.

Ireland Today:

Ireland is changing fast. On one hand we have very diverse communities and workplaces North and South. On the other hand, we see the increasing dangers of far right and racist forces. Equalities is an important agenda in our Union. Workers in fear and anxiety caused by racism will be weakened and divided.

Growing the BAEM in Unite and Our Struggle Against Racism:

To fulfill our responsibility, we need to develop several strategic and practical steps and build on our proud work so far. With this in mind, conference calls for the following actions from the region:

1. In the new period we must strengthen our BAEM Committee in Unite and build more engagement with our BAEM membership. It is an area which needs improvement.
2. We are calling for two in-person meetings (North and South) organised by the BAEM committee with the aim of bringing our BAEM members together. Working with the relevant bodies within Unite, the BAEM committee will define and plan the details of these events. The success of these will rely on the support we will get from Unite Branches and their commitment to help building these events and encourage their members to attend.
3. Unite plays an important role in the trade union movement in relation to the equality agenda of our members and wider workers North and South. This motion calls for Unite to engage and where possible, actively participate in united front-based events and activities through its BAEM committee and anti-racism work.

4. To organise better and build internally and externally a stronger anti-racist stand, this motion also calls for establishing an anti-racist working group, composed of BAEM-Equalities members and others within our Union. It is key in modern day societies, North and South, that affected members are empowered to help driving this initiative in accordance with the “members’ led union” vision.

**Submitted by:**           **Regional Black, Asian, Ethnic Minority Equality Committee**  
**Proposed by:**           **Francis Loughlin, Community, YW & N4P RISC**  
**Seconded by:**           **Formally from the floor**

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## **MOTION 9**

### **The far right is a threat to all workers**

This Conference notes with concern the rise of far-right ideologies and right-wing populism, which is historically and currently associated with opposition to the rights of workers, and in particular opposition to workers’ right to organise democratically in trade unions and take collective action.

In recent years we have witnessed far-right threats to attack picket lines in Britain and far-right violence against union offices in Italy. There have been increased assaults on workers’ rights and collective bargaining in jurisdictions where the far right has attained power, including in Finland and Hungary.

In the Republic, we have witnessed far-right attacks on public libraries and library workers, and on ordinary working people during the ‘Dublin riot’ last November.

We further note that, while far-right ideologies and right-wing populism pose a threat to all workers and communities, particular groups in society are especially vulnerable, including women, migrants, ethnic minorities and members of the LGBTQI+ community. The growth and amplification of far right ideologies threatens the equality gains which have been hard fought for, including by the trade union movement.

Attempts by the far right to pit workers against workers, and communities against communities, must be met by working class unity, and the trade union movement must be central to building and reinforcing that unity.

Conference therefore mandates the Irish Executive Committee to:

- (1) Continue working with the wider trade union movement and civil society groups to prevent far-right ideologies taking hold in our workplaces and communities;
- (2) Ensure that our education programmes equip members to identify and effectively counter far-right narratives;
- (3) Provide training, such as stewarding training, to ensure that Unite reps are equipped to address attempts by far right actors to disrupt protests or other public events;
- (4) Ensure that all our union structures, in particular our equality committees, are fully resourced to support members being targeted by the far right;
- (5) Show practical solidarity with all workers targeted by the far right, whether in their workplaces or communities.

**Submitted by:** Irish Executive Committee  
**Proposed by:** Christopher Stewart, Regional Youth Committee  
**Seconded by:** Catherine Mallon, Belfast AAC

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## **MOTION 10**

### **Working class unity against the far right**

This conference notes the growth of far-right activity over the past number of years against the background of high levels of social exclusion and inequality domestically, and against the rise of the far right internationally.

Conference further notes that the far right attempts to exploit the real frustrations of some working class communities at an ongoing lack of services and resources in order to target other working class people – whether the residents of direct provision centres, migrant workers, library workers, members of the LGBTQI+ community, and many more.

The trade union movement can and must be a bulwark against the politics of division and hate.

This Conference therefore instructs the IEC to:

- Ensure that the ROI education programme includes a module designed to enable members to counter far-right talking points in communities and in the workplace;
- Provide support to communities working to counter the politics of division and hate;
- To be vociferous in its opposition to the far-right and those who spread hate and racism on this island;
- To increase the output of anti-racism materials to our membership;
- To mobilise our union for anti-racism/anti-far right solidarity rallies and to join forces in united fronts, where possible.

**Submitted by:** Dublin AAC  
**Proposed by:** Joe Conroy, Dublin AAC  
**Seconded by:** Amy Dwyer, Dublin AAC

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## **Health & Safety & Wellbeing**

### **MOTION 22**

#### **Workers' right to protection**

That this conference calls on Stormont to enact legislation aimed at preventing violent assaults on public transport workers as well as other frontline workers, also calling on Unite and Irish Congress of Trade Unions to run a campaign to protect Public transport workers and frontline workers against violent attacks in their workplaces and to highlight the unacceptable rise in these types of attacks.

Currently in the UK there is only specific laws aimed at preventing violent assaults on emergency service workers as well as legislation in Northern Ireland for conduct of persons at bus stations. We demand these laws are extended to cover all public transport workers onboard both buses and trains as well as all forward facing workers to ensure maximum protection against sickening and unacceptable violent attacks while carrying out our daily work and providing vital public services.

**Submitted by:** Passenger RISC  
**Proposed by:** Damien Doherty, Passenger RISC  
**Seconded by:** Raymond Murphy, Passenger RISC

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## **MOTION 23**

### **Menopause and menstrual health**

Conference notes the results of Unite's ground-breaking survey of members in Northern Ireland and the Republic showing that 43% of respondents had to take time off work due to issues relating to menstrual health or the menopause, while 28% had suffered financial impact from taking time off due to such issues; and that 95% of respondents would welcome a menstrual health support policy in their workplace.

Conference welcomes the fact that Unite has negotiated menopause and menstrual health policies in a range of workplaces, and is continuing this work.

Conference calls on the IEC to lobby governments to ensure that workplaces throughout Ireland are required to have menopause and menstrual health policies, including provision for menopause/menstrual leave.

In tandem with lobbying for legislative improvements, and bearing in mind the fact that only collective workplace organisation can ensure that equality policies are truly delivered, Conference calls on all sections of the union to prioritise implementation of robust workplace menopause and menstrual health policies.

**Submitted by:** RI/B5009 PTSB Branch

**Proposed by:** Susan O'Riordan, RI/B5009 PTSB Branch

**Seconded by:** Laura Kilgallon, RI/B5009 PTSB Branch

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## **Environment**

## **MOTION 28**

### **Worker-led climate action**

Conference acknowledges the escalating planetary emergency, namely the interlinked ecological and climate crises, is a real and growing threat to the security of all life on this planet, our home.

At least five of nine planetary boundaries have already been crossed, while the world is on the brink of multiple climate and ecological tipping points that will have disastrous, irreversible impacts on ecosystems and human society.

We are already seeing extreme weather events, such as floodings, wildfires and heatwaves becoming more frequent and severe. The effects on human life have been devastating, from increasing water scarcity and food insecurity to mass deaths and involuntary migration caused by flooding and heatwaves.

These events are having and will continue to have a greater impact on poor and working-class people across the globe: those who live in the most vulnerable regions, are least able to protect themselves and face spiralling costs in necessities such as energy, food and basic services as well as climate adaptation measures. And these are the very people who have contributed least to the problem.

There are class dynamics: on the one hand approximately 10% of the richest are responsible for up to 50% of the greenhouse gas emissions causing climate breakdown. On the other, ecology without class politics is simply gardening, as Chico Mendes, murdered Brazilian trades unionist said.

Overcoming this truly global crisis demands a restructuring of our ecodical capitalist economy and a major rethink in terms of how we utilise, manage, use and control the finite resources of our planet. Agriculture and food production, energy, industry, transport, finance, water, education and health care and public services will all need to be transformed if we are to successfully transition to a low-carbon, resilient future.

Whether and how this transition occurs – and who benefits from it – is something that cannot be left to chance. While the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient economy may be inevitable, whether it is just, is not putting the interests of workers and communities at the centre of ambitious climate action which will require planning, coordinated action and leadership from the trade union movement.

Conference therefore mandates Unite

- to draft an urgent report to assess the impact of Unite’s activities (such as procurement, travel, etc) on greenhouse gas emissions, exploring what mitigation measures can be put in place and updating policy, structures and actions to reflect this.
- to embedding regular political education about climate and ecological breakdown and solutions to these across all sectors and branches to ensure all Unite members are equipped with the most authoritative and current knowledge of our climate and ecological crisis and how workplaces and humanity can respond and deal with these existential challenges.
- To conduct research into how the ecological crisis will affect Ireland in general, working class communities and the labour market in particular (this will be vital to ensure a ‘just transition’)
- To support members to create alternative industrial strategy and plans for necessary transformation of high carbon industries such as energy and automotive while supporting wider campaigns that fellow members in other sectors can support.
- To plan for each sector across the union to create a just transition strategy for sustainable industrial transformation in their sector and to create a plan on how to apply these plans to workplaces.
- To create a resources toolkit for ‘greening’ collective grievances, negotiations including examples of best practice; templates; examples of issues that climate change will impact such as temperatures in the workplace etc; how to identify the impact of the climate and environmental energy in your workplace; identifying sustainability issues that need to be raised with management; how to carry out environmental audits; how to review and develop workplace environment policies and agreements; and awareness raising and promotion of green workplace practices etc.
- Lead on defining and then appointing Climate Action/Green/Environmental rep roles in each branch, workplace and committee.
- Regular training for these reps and for wider membership on how to plan and work towards a just transition in the workplace and our communities.

**Submitted by:** Regional Youth Committee  
**Proposed by:** Christopher Stewart, Regional Youth Committee  
**Seconded by:** Dermot Barry, Education (ROI) RISC

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## **Administration & Membership Services**

### **MOTION 30**

#### **Commit the union to run a campaign: assistance for low paid/unemployed members**

That Unite commit at the earliest opportunity to run a campaign for the lowest paid workers and those members unemployed within our union, who rely on claiming universal credit to exist, and who can be forgotten unintentionally, this benefit can only be claimed online. This union needs to look at ways of assisting our members who have no access to the internet and would find it hard to make the claim.

Conference therefore calls on the IEC to look urgently at how our members can be advised and assisted by setting up “clinics” in each of the Unite Offices in Northern Ireland where members can go for face to face help and guidance.

Conference also calls on the IEC to look into how this initiative could be rolled out to our members in the Republic of Ireland.

**Submitted by:** NI/B0041 Branch

**Proposed by:** Lucille O’Hagan, Health (NI) RISC

**Seconded by:** Rab Lavery, Belfast AAC

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **MOTIONS WITHDRAWN**

#### **MOTION 26**

##### **Hospital Car Parking**

This conference calls on the politicians across the island of Ireland to ensure parking for staff, patients and visitors is provided free. Political manipulation by Tory leaders in Northern Ireland are seeking to prevent free parking in Northern Ireland being introduced in April 24 as provided for in legislation passed in 2022. People should not have to pay to park at any health facility across the services.

**Health (NI) Regional Industrial Sector**

**Committee**

#### **MOTION 29**

##### **Unite the union credit union to Ireland**

Working class people face the greatest attack on our incomes in living memory. The UK and Irish governments, the banking systems in both jurisdictions, businesses and financial institutions are intent on putting more and more money into fewer and fewer pockets – by squeezing workers' pay and conditions.

Many workers are unable to access banking or other credit facilities and this is causing huge suffering – and that includes Unite members. Reps report Unite members resorting to desperate measures, borrowing from loan sharks or paramilitaries, attending food banks, cutting out "luxuries" like pension payments, dental work or doctor's visits.

While Unite the union's focus rightfully needs to remain on winning for members in the workplace – the Unite credit union can make a huge difference to our members and their families. Access to not-for-profit credit would open the door to members winning back their dignity and self-worth. The Unite credit union provides lower interest rates than the loan sharks and promotes a culture of saving for those expenses that arise every year.

Christmas in particular is an extremely stressful time, even more so for members on the picket lines. A dedicated savings scheme, or short term loan would do wonders for both striking members' morale and their mental health.

Unfortunately while members of Unite in Britain can benefit from membership of the Unite Credit Union – this service has not been extended to Ireland, north or south.

Conference calls for the incoming Executive Council to take steps to extend access to the Unite credit union to members in Ireland. It is vital that members here enjoy the same access to credit union services on the basis of equality with the rest of the union

**Local Authorities Regional Industrial Sector Committee**

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **MOTIONS LOST**

#### **MOTION 11**

##### **Equality and Neutrality in Places of Work**

Conference notes:

- In workplaces wherever our members are employed it is essential that neutrality and equality is practised, maintained and monitored. This is particularly true where workers' rights and protected characteristics are relevant.

Conference recognises:

- Workplaces must provide a welcoming environment to all workers, and visitors. Information notices, signage, displays and written communications and employer's presentations in workplaces must not be of such a nature or appearance as could cause offence. This applies to all workplaces across our region, and particularly so in the jurisdiction in N. Ireland where specific protections relating to religious affiliation and political persuasion apply, where the displaying of flags and emblems is concerned and Fair Employment legislation and Equality legislation is applicable.

Conference therefore resolves:

- To communicate and reinforce the message to branches and workplace trade union representatives, that they should be fully aware of the requirements for neutrality and equality in places of work, and that they should be alert to breaches.
- To ensure that workplace representatives and members are aware of the standards required, ensure that legal support and advice is available to workplace representatives where guidance is sought, and to reassure workplace representatives of support through Unite the Union where a challenge to employers has to be made for a potential breach.

**NI/B0011 Thales (23331) Branch**

#### **Amendment #1**

Delete the words "and neutrality" from the title of the motion

First bullet point, remove reference to neutrality and reworded to:

In workplaces wherever our members are employed it is essential that equality, the requirements for equal, non-preferential treatment of employees, is practised, maintained and monitored. This is particularly relevant where workers' rights and protected characteristics are concerned.

Third bullet point, 2<sup>nd</sup> line:

Delete the words "neutrality and"

after the word equality,

Insert "of treatment"

**NI/B0011 Thales (23331) Branch**



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