COLLECTIVE POWER WINS

8th Irish Policy Conference

22nd & 23rd June 2026

Grand Hotel, Malahide, Co Dublin

Report of the IPC

Susan Fitzgerald
Regional Secretary

Francis Loughlin
Chair, IEC

Sharon Graham
General Secretary

RECORD OF DECISIONS

Decision	Agenda Subject
	Conference Welcome by the Regional Secretary, Susan Fitzgerald introducing *Owen Reidy, ICTU General Secretary* to open Conference
	Chair's address
Adopted	Standing Orders
Adopted	Report #1 of Standing Orders Committee
	Obituaries
	Election of Tellers
Adopted	Irish Executive Committee Report
Adopted	Implementation of Motions (2024 IPC)
	Regional Secretary's address
	EC Chair's address *(Day 1)*
	General Secretary's address *(Day 2)*

Please note the running order of motions on the Final Agenda was changed prior to conference and this change is reflected in this report

Decision	Agenda Subject/Motion No.	Submitted by
	Organising	
Carried	Motion 1 Organising in the Health Sector	Irish Executive Committee
	Economy & Industry	
Carried	Motion 2 Industrial Revival Now: Jobs, Skills, and Strategy	Aerospace & Shipbuilding RISC
Carried	Motion 3 Company Accounts	RI/National Construction Branch
Carried	Motion 4 Public Procurement	Construction RISC
Carried	Motion 5 Solidarity action by agency workers	Local Authorities (NI) RISC
	AI, Automation & Technology	
Carried	Motion 6 AI : A Threat to Workers	Irish Executive Committee
Carried	Motion 7 Communication makes us stronger and sharing makes us smarter	Education (ROI) RISC
	Trade Union & Employment Rights	
Carried	Motion 8 End discrimination of young workers through subminimum wages	CYWN4P RISC

Decision	Agenda Subject/Motion No.	Submitted by
Carried	Motion 9 Remote Working for Cross-Border Workers	RI/0774M Irish Life (Indoor) Branch
	Equalities	
Carried	Motion 10 Toxic and Unsustainable Sanitary Products	Regional Women's Committee
Carried	Motion 11 Increasing Women's Representation in Unite Workplace Leadership	Docks, Rail, Waterways & Ferries RISC
Carried	Motion 12 Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and SEN	Belfast Area Activists' Committee
Carried	Motion 13 Protection Against Discrimination on the Basis of Socio-Economic Status	RI/Unite Waterford Branch
Carried	Motion 14 The rise of racism and racist attacks in Ireland	Regional BAEM Committee
	International	
Carried	Emergency Motion No. 1 Boycott Apartheid	Dublin AAC
Carried	Motion 15 Conscientious Objection	RI/B5003 IOT Branch
Carried	Motion 16 Enact the Occupied Territories Bill	RI/102 Des Bonass Branch
Carried	Motion 17 Defending Human Rights of Palestinians	NI/B0019 Community & N4P Branch
	Health & Safety	
Carried	Motion 18 Physical Assaults, Verbal Abuse and Threats on workers dealing with the public	Translink Metro NI/B0005 Branch
Carried	Motion 19 Support for people using legally prescribed medical cannabis	Regional Disability Committee
	Environment & Energy	
Carried	Motion 20 Creating a Greener, Cleaner, Expanded and Accessible Public Transport Network	Passenger RISC

Decision	Agenda Subject/Motion No.	Submitted by
Carried	Motion 21 Energy prices and cost of living	Energy & Utilities (ROI) RISC
	Public Sector	
Carried	Motion 25 Abolition of the Pension Levy	Irish Executive Committee
	Pensions	
Carried	Motion 26 State Pensions in the ROI	RI/0327 Dundalk Branch
	Motion 27 Give pensioners financial stability — do not penny-pinch!	Craigavon Branch NI/B0008
	Union Administration & Member Services	
Carried	Motion 28 Enduring Power of Attorney	Regional Retired Members' Committee
	Political & Social Action	
Carried	Motion 22 Peace and Militarisation	RI/0308M Education & Research Branch
Carried	Motion 23 Housing as a Core Issue of Collective Bargaining	Regional Youth Committee
Carried	Motion 24 Decriminalisation of Sex Work	Regional LGBT+ Equality Committee

Election of SOC 2028

The following nominations were submitted and members were duly elected following adoption by Conference:

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

MOTIONS CARRIED

ORGANISING

Motion 1

Organising in the Health Sector

This conference notes that Unite represents over 100,000 members working across all occupations in the health sector across Britain and Ireland. As well as organising workers employed by the NHS and HSE, Unite organises workers in private health and social care settings, such as health care assistants in the ROI, and in publicly funded non-statutory bodies.

Health and care workers across Ireland are facing increased pressures due to ongoing staffing shortages, with Unite members in both Northern Ireland and the Republic highlighting the impact of staffing shortages on both patient services and staff wellbeing. Vacancies continue to remain unfilled while the demands on our health services are increasing due to demographic changes, with the result that health and care workers at all levels are being asked to do more with less.

Unite and the trade union movement have been to the forefront of defending our health services in the interests of workers and patients.

- In Northern Ireland, following a threat of industrial action in October 2025, Unite members won pay parity with their NHS counterparts elsewhere – an outcome which will address the recruitment and retention crisis, helping ensure safe staffing levels

- In the ROI Unite is part of the ICTU group of healthcare unions representing HSE workers. It was only due to the threatened work-to-rule by unions including Unite in 2025 that the HSE re-engaged with unions on staffing levels, but progress has fallen short of what is required.

- As well as defending pay and conditions, Unite has faced down outsourcing threats – most recently in the ROI National Ambulance Service

Strong unions are key to defending and improving conditions in our health services, yet fewer than half of all those working in health and care across the island are currently members of a trade union.

Unite in health means better terms and conditions for workers, a strong voice for safe staffing levels and against outsourcing and privatisation, and ultimately better health services.

This conference therefore instructs the IEC to develop new and innovative organising strategies aimed at growing our union in the health sector throughout Ireland.

Submitted by: **Irish Executive Committee**
Proposed by: **Janet Taylor, Health (NI) RISC**
Seconded by: **Willie Mangan, Construction RISC**

ECONOMY & INDUSTRY

Motion 2

Industrial Revival Now: Jobs, Skills, and Strategy

Conference recognises that manufacturing remains a cornerstone of Northern Ireland's economy, providing skilled, stable jobs and strengthening local communities. We note that two iconic employers, Harland & Wolff and Spirit AeroSystems, are at transformative moments in their long-standing histories and continue to play an essential role in our industrial landscape.

The Aerospace and Shipbuilding sector has significant potential for long-term growth. To make the most of this opportunity, we need to see a more interventionist approach from Government focused on:

- Skills development, including engineering and emerging technologies;
- A commitment to quality apprenticeships that are properly funded, relevant and accessible;
- Investment in retraining and upskilling to ensure the existing workforce is equipped for the future;
- Removing potential barriers to future expansion.

It's also clear that growth in these sectors brings wider benefits, particularly for local suppliers, subcontractors, and SMEs that depend on strong manufacturing industries.

This is a critical moment to reverse decades of decline and rebuild Northern Ireland's industrial base. Yet there is concern that current government policies — and the priorities of arms-length bodies — do not, in reality, support manufacturing. There's a real risk that focusing only on narrow, so-called "high growth" sectors will neglect strategic industries that offer sustainable jobs, innovation, and long-term economic value.

If action is not taken now, future employment opportunities are under threat.

Conference therefore calls on the Executive Committee to:

1. Urgently launch a lobbying campaign to push government and relevant agencies to prioritise manufacturing, especially in aerospace and shipbuilding;
2. Demand a coherent industrial strategy that supports core industries and avoids fragmented policy-making;
3. Promote investment in skills, infrastructure, and workforce development, with workers at the heart of planning;
4. Work with allies in the trade union movement and beyond to hold the Government to account and secure the future of quality jobs in Northern Ireland.

Submitted by: **Aerospace & Shipbuilding RISC**
Proposed by: **Joe Passmore, Aerospace & Shipbuilding RISC**
Seconded by: **John Dickson, Aerospace & Shipbuilding RISC**

Motion 3

Company Accounts

Conference notes that employers can avail of different exemptions to avoid filing full accounts, and that this limits workers' ability to accurately judge a company's performance.

Conference further notes that company accounts and related documents are not free to access in full online.

Conference therefore instructs the Irish Executive Committee to lobby government for a new Freedom of Business Information Package which would:

- Reduce the turnover threshold from €15 million to €1 million allowing companies to avail of the exemption from filing full financial statements.
- Abolish the exemption available to Non-Designated Private Unlimited Companies which merely requires them to submit an auditor's report with their annual return.
- Make all company accounts free to access online through the Companies Registration Office or another suitable publicly maintained online portal.

Submitted by: **RI/National Construction Branch**
Proposed by: **Willie Mangan, Construction RISC**
Seconded by: **Richard Howard, Construction RISC**

Motion 4

Public Procurement

This conference notes that public procurement offers a powerful policy lever with which to drive up working conditions in the construction sector. The National Development Plan alone envisages €275.4 billion, or over a quarter trillion Euro, of public capital investment out to 2035.

Conference therefore calls on the Irish Executive Committee to develop a campaign for a new public procurement framework in the Republic of Ireland which would:

- Make all public contracts with a value exceeding €100,000 contingent on the contractor recognising trade unions for collective bargaining purposes.
- Sub-contracting chains to be limited to one or, in the case of exceptional and justified cases where a sub-contractor is demonstrably required to perform a specific, time-limited task requiring specialist skills not otherwise available, a maximum of two sub-levels.
- Labour-only subcontracting to be prohibited altogether.
- A publicly available non-compliance register to be maintained of those companies which refuse to engage in collective bargaining or have been found to be in breach of labour rights, and those companies to be precluded from bidding for public contracts for a period of five years.

Submitted by: **Construction RISC**
Proposed by: **Willie Mangan, Construction RISC**
Seconded by: **Pj Goold, Construction RISC**

Motion 5

Solidarity action by agency workers

Conference congratulates the Birmingham city council bin workers on their historic strike. Their fight to defend pay and conditions has exposed the rotten role of the Labour party and showed the way forwards to millions of workers across these islands.

We extend our congratulations to the agency workers brought in to do the work of striking workers who also voted to take strike action. The news that agency workers were striking alongside the bin workers reaffirmed the basic solidarity that lies at the very heart of our movement. For all those who have struggled with legal barriers over agency workers joining a strike – it is a shining example of what is possible under a fighting union leadership.

The legal barriers to collective solidarity action by workers in the UK and Ireland are completely unacceptable. It is the inherent right of every workforce to democratically decide to stand in solidarity with others. That right should not be subject to legal constraints, let alone banned.

Conference calls on the incoming Executive Council to deliver a course of education to officers, organisers, and activists on how best to organise solidarity among workers in a strike, including among agency workers. The Executive Council is also mandated to launch a campaign to secure legislation reversing the ban on secondary industrial action and reaffirming the collective right of workers to take solidarity industrial action. We stand stronger when we stand together.

Submitted by: **Local Authorities (NI) RISC**
Proposed by: **Barry Boyle, Local Authorities (NI) RISC**
Seconded by: **Stephen Green, Local Authorities (NI) RISC**

AI, AUTOMATION & TECHNOLOGY

Motion 6

AI : A Threat to Workers

This conference believes that, if unchecked and not subject to democratic control, the accelerating development of AI (artificial intelligence) represents a threat to workers:

- A threat to jobs due to AI replacing or degrading existing roles
- An equality threat, due to the disproportionate impact of AI on roles currently performed by vulnerable groups of workers
- A social and political threat, due to the potential for manipulating AI inputs into public discourse and falsifying information
- An economic threat, due to the potential of AI investments being over-valued and subject to boom-bust cycles

These threats can only be contained through new models of industrial democracy coupled with national controls, and Conference mandates the Irish Executive Committee to campaign industrially and politically for:

- Collectively negotiated agreements governing the use of AI at enterprise and workplace level, including equality impact assessments
- Statutory employer duties covering the collection, handling and use of data as well as the roll out of artificial intelligence and other technologies replacing workers in safety critical areas where worker or public safety are at risk
- The establishment of Future of AI and Technologies Commissions at national level involving trade unions, employers, research councils and academics, tasked with finding solutions to genuine concerns over the rapidly developing and increasing use of AI

Submitted by: **Irish Executive Committee**
Proposed by: **Amy Dwyer, Dublin AAC**
Seconded by: **Craig Malloy, Belfast AAC**

Motion 7

Communication makes us stronger and sharing makes us smarter

Conference in today's digital age, unions must adopt personalized communication techniques to stay relevant and effective. This involves leveraging data to tailor interactions and meet our individual member needs precisely.

Personalised messages help members feel valued and understood, enhancing loyalty and participation. Using tools like "membership analytics," unions can create customised communication strategies that strengthen connections with existing and potential members.

Members are 77% more engaged when communication content is personalised and relevant to their interests.

Personalised communication is not just about technology but also understanding the diverse personas within the union. Developing communication strategies that are both adaptable and specific fosters a cohesive union community ready to embrace new challenges. By committing to a personalised approach, unions empower members, ensuring their voices are effectively heard and amplified across the union landscape.

Social media platforms offer dynamic avenues for unions to reach both current and potential members effectively.

To extend union outreach and strength, leveraging these digital tools is imperative. From Instagram to LinkedIn, unions can fortify their presence by sharing compelling narratives that resonate with target audiences, enhancing perceptions and driving engagement. In a world increasingly dominated by digital interaction, these platforms can serve as powerful vehicles to disseminate union ideals and activities, engaging members and potential recruits with up-to-date, relevant content.

Moreover, social media provides a cost-effective method to build a vibrant union community. Regular interactions, tailored content, and engaging multimedia can deepen tie between and with members who may otherwise feel disconnected, creating stronger allegiance and support for union initiatives.

Ultimately, embracing social media enables unions to spark meaningful conversations and draw in next-generation members, who predominantly interact through these channels. This strategic approach ensures unions are not only heard but are also able to inspire action within the digital landscape, fostering a sense of inclusion and connectedness that transcends traditional methods, driving membership growth and lasting influence.

Conference calls on the IEC to immediately establish a subcommittee to scope and identify the requirements of a social media platform that will build a vibrant union community and project the Union's profile within the digital landscape going forward.

Submitted by: **Education (ROI) RISC**
Proposed by: **James Cotter, Education (ROI) RISC**
Seconded by: **Louise Collins, Education (ROI) RISC**

TRADE UNION & EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

Motion 8

End discrimination of young workers through subminimum wages

Conference notes the continuing discrimination of young workers north and south through the existence of government sanctioned subminimum wages. As trade unionists, we believe that workers should be paid a fair wage that recognises the immense value of their labour and allows them to support themselves and their families to have healthy and fulfilled lives.

The National Minimum Wage in the Republic of Ireland is currently €14.15 per hour. A young person under 18 is entitled to only 70% of that (€9.90 per hour), 18-year-olds are entitled to just 80% (€11.32 per hour) and 19-year-olds entitled to only 90% of the full rate (€12.73 per hour). First year craft apprentices fare worse, with rates at a shameful €7.67 per hour, which is just over 50% of the adult minimum wage.

In Northern Ireland, the National Minimum Wage is £12.21 per hour but 18 to 20-year-olds are entitled to just over 80% of that receiving only £10.00 per hour. For those aged 16 and 17 it is less again at just £7.55 per hour, equating to just over 60% of full National Minimum Wage. The apprentice rate also begins at just £7.55 per hour.

The whole point of minimum wage legislation is that it acts as a safety net to prevent people from falling into poverty. Conference recognises that the current minimum wage rates across the island fall far short of what is needed to survive. That a young worker, who carries out the exact same role as their colleague, is paid less for their labour is completely unacceptable. These poverty rates are causing further economic hardship for a section of workers who should be protected under equality legislation which sets age as a protected category. There is no justification for this current discrimination, it must end.

Conference calls for the IEC to further Unite's efforts to end pay discrimination by establishing a campaign specific to Ireland, which calls for the abolishing of subminimum wages for young people and lobbies both governments to bring the minimum wage for apprentices and workers aged under 20 in line with the wider workforce.

Submitted by: **CYWN4P RISC**
Proposed by: **Michael Sheehan, CYWN4P RISC**
Seconded by: **Barney Doherty, Belfast AAC**

Motion 9

Remote Working for Cross-Border Workers

Conference notes that cross-border workers who live in one jurisdiction on the island of Ireland and are employed in the other are prevented from working remotely due to existing tax and regulatory arrangements. This situation leads to unequal treatment of workers, avoidable and unnecessary commuting, increased personal costs, and negative environmental impacts. Remote and hybrid working arrangements are now an established and accepted feature of modern working life across many sectors. The absence of a bilateral framework represents an unnecessary barrier to fair employment practices and the achievement of climate commitments.

Conference calls on Unite to:

- Lobby the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to agree a bilateral framework that enables remote working for cross-border workers without adverse tax or social insurance consequences.
- Work with ICTU and other trade unions to pursue coordinated all-island advocacy on this issue and to keep members informed of progress.

Submitted by: **RI/0774M Irish Life (Indoor) Branch**
Proposed by: **Amy Dwyer, Dublin AAC**
Seconded by: **Dara Basketfield, Finance & Legal RISC**

EQUALITIES
Motion 10
Toxic and Unsustainable Sanitary Products

Research has shown that sanitary pads and tampons sold in the UK and Ireland contain toxic metals like lead and arsenic, endocrine-disrupting chemicals, and toxic pesticide levels 40 times higher than the legal limit for drinking water. Despite the fact that these chemicals have been linked to increased risks of reproductive and hormonal diseases such as endometriosis, infertility and cancer, there is currently no statutory requirement for full ingredient labelling or independent safety testing.

These products are also overwhelmingly single use and non-degradable. PFAS (complex synthetic chemicals known as 'forever chemicals') and plastics are heavily used in sanitary products which can take centuries to break down, contributing to landfill and plastic pollution.

While the EU is moving towards wider PFAS restrictions and stronger chemical transparency rules, the UK and Ireland have no dedicated standards governing menstrual products. Although safer and more sustainable products already exist, where products are provided free in workplaces, schools and community settings they are generally the cheapest, plastic based options. This undermines both the menstrual health of our members and Unite's environmental goals.

Conference notes that Unite's Period Dignity campaign has had a real impact in terms of changing attitudes and improving workplace access to period products.

We now call on the Irish Executive Committee, recognising that dignity also means access to products that do not expose women and girls to harmful chemicals and toxins or contribute to landfill waste, to broaden our Period Dignity campaign to include the demand for toxin-free and sustainable menstrual products. Specifically, Conference calls on the IEC to:

- lobby governments in Dublin and Westminster, and the NI executive, to:
    - introduce mandatory ingredient disclosure on product packaging (and hazard warnings where necessary)
    - implement a ban on PFAS and other high-risk chemicals in sanitary products
    - set a clear timetable to phase out single use non-biodegradable plastics in this sector

- negotiate on the introduction of workplace agreements that

    - provide non-toxic, plastic free alternatives (or the adaptation of current workplace policies to this effect)
    - introduce a supportive menstrual health policy in line with Unite's Period Dignity Campaign including mental health education and support for women and girls to move towards safer, environmentally responsible products.

Submitted by: **Regional Women's Committee**
Proposed by: **Lucille O'Hagan, Health (NI) RISC**
Seconded by: **Angela Flynn, Regional Women's Committee**

Motion 11

Increasing Women's Representation in Unite Workplace Leadership

This Conference calls on the Irish Executive Committee, supported by the relevant union departments, to develop and implement a national campaign across Ireland to actively encourage and recruit more women to become Shop Stewards and Health & Safety Representatives.

During the 2025–2026 pay negotiations at Translink, Unite was represented by approximately 25 Shop Stewards, collectively representing over 4,500 workers, yet not a single Shop Steward present was female.

This disparity is not isolated and highlights a wider issue of under-representation of women in workplace representative roles across sectors that were traditionally/historically male dominated.

This campaign should work with Regional Women's Committees and Equalities structures to identify barriers that prevent women from stepping forward and to develop strategies to overcome them. It should also include:

● Raising awareness among members of the importance of women's representation.
● Targeted outreach and recruitment initiatives.

● Tailored training and confidence-building opportunities for women interested in taking on these roles.

● Promoting the benefits of having a representative structure that reflects the workforce.

● Showcasing positive role models and success stories of women in union rep roles.

Submitted by: **Docks, Rail, Waterways & Ferries RISC**
Proposed by: **Glenn Crawford, Docks, Rail, Waterways & Ferries RISC**
Seconded by: **Adrian Kelly, Docks, Rail, Waterways & Ferries RISC**

Motion 12

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and SEN

This conference notes:

- In the North, 1 in 17 children have a diagnosis of ASD.
- A further 17,205 children are awaiting assessment, confirmed by the Health Minister.
- According to Autism NI, waiting times for assessment can take up to five years.

- Studies show early intervention can be crucial for a child's cognitive, behavioural and communicative development.
- The EA plan to construct more Special Provision in Mainstream (SPiM) units is a short-term solution unsuitable for the problem that exists. The focus should be on resourcing more provision in SEN Schools where many children can thrive and reach their full potential through a tailored curriculum and onsite specialists such as Speech and Language and Occupational Therapy. It has also come very late, leaving children waiting for units to be built for placement and leaving some children yet to be granted places.
- There is also a chronic lack of spaces in respite facilities, as shown in BBC Spotlight Documentary 'I am not okay', to offer support and respite for families with children who have severe autism and behavioural problems, leaving many families on the brink.

This conference concludes:

- The Executive in the North has failed those with ASD, particularly children and many are being left behind.
- More funding and resourcing are desperately and urgently required in both Health and Education. This will be necessary to both tackle the backlog for those awaiting diagnosis and to create adequate and suitable education places in SEN schools to allow all children to reach their full potential and lead their best lives. It will also lift a burden off of parents who must run the stressful gauntlet of obtaining diagnosis and a statement of SEN, parents who simply want the best for their children.
- The Executive must properly resourced respite services with adequate capacity to help families with children who have complex and severe needs.

Finally, this conference calls on Unite:

- To set up a campaign as soon as possible aimed at the executive, to hold them to account for their failings and ensure a fair and just path forward for individuals with ASD and their families.

Submitted by: **Belfast AAC**
Proposed by: **Craig Malloy, Belfast AAC**
Seconded by: **Rab Laverty, Belfast AAC**

Motion 13

Protection Against Discrimination on the Basis of Socio-Economic Status

Conference notes discrimination based on low income, employment status, accent, address, and perceived social status is widespread in Ireland. Conference also acknowledges the well documented links between poverty and discrimination, including access to employment, public amenities, housing, and public participation.

The continuing cost of living crisis is pushing more households into economic hardship. The intrinsic link between poverty, social exclusion and discrimination means more people will face barriers due to low income.

There is currently no legal provision against discrimination based on socio-economic status of individuals.

Conference believes that current equality legislation should be amended and strengthened to include protections based on socio-economic status.

Conference calls for the IEC to adopt a position of support for a tenth protected ground for discrimination and to lobby for its inclusion in equality legislation.

Submitted by: **RI/Unite Waterford Branch**
Proposed by: **Becky Ryan, LGBT+ Equality Committee**
Seconded by: **Gillian O'Brien, Education (ROI) RISC**

Motion 14

The rise of racism and racist attacks in Ireland

This conference recognises the pivotal role that unions play in combatting racism, hate and discrimination in workplaces and communities.

We note that the politics of hate and division has fuelled attacks on Black Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAEM) workers and communities north and south. A survey published by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission in August 2025 found that 66% of BAEM respondents had experienced racism in the last year. Meanwhile, Amnesty International has labelled 2025 'A year of hate and fear' in Northern Ireland, as figures from the PSNI show racist crimes have hit a record high.

For years, workers and communities on this island have been struggling through crisis after crisis – housing, health and the cost of living to name just a few.

This conference believes that these crises are due to ongoing policy failures by governments, and we emphatically reject attempts to scapegoat minority groups for these failures.

BAEM workers are at the sharp end of the hate and misinformation spread by those who wish to divide us, and our members who are migrant workers have been repeatedly attacked over recent years. A recent survey of Unite members who are migrant workers in the UK painted the harrowing reality faced by for our union sisters and brothers, with almost 50% having experienced racism, discrimination and/or unfair treatment at work.

Conference recognises the urgent need to support our BAEM members and their families from hate fuelled attacks they experience daily. Unite must increase its anti-racism work across the island and continue building on the work of all union and community activists who have been fighting against racism for many years.

This conference instructs the IEC to:

- Research trends in industrial sectors with high numbers of BAEM workers to ensure the union is knowledgeable on and connected to the key issues impacting BAEM individuals
- Work with the Unite BAEM Officer and other regions to ensure recruitment activities are efficient and impactful

- Work proactively with genuine cross-community organisations who are campaigning to secure and strengthen the rights and safety of BAEM people and all those who are targeted by the politics of hate, especially our migrant and LGBT+ sisters and brothers, and support local anti-racist and anti-fascist campaigns and actions
- Further develop tools and guidance for reps and members supporting them to critically engage with social media content and headlines, and to engage meaningfully with others to address and combat the rise of fascism in workplaces

Submitted by: **Regional BAEM Committee**
Proposed by: **Barney Doherty, Belfast AAC**
Seconded by: **Rebekah Corbett, CYWN4P RISC**

Emergency Motion No. 1

Boycott Apartheid

Conference condemns the ongoing oppression of the Palestinian people. Since the cease fire was announced in October 2025, upward of 631 Palestinians were killed in Israeli military operations while Israeli authorities continue to block humanitarian aid efforts.

According to the Palestine Olympic Committee over 1,000 members of Gaza's sports community; players, coaches, referees and staff have been killed since October 2023. Israel has also damaged and destroyed Gaza's stadiums and sports facilities.

Conference believes that the Nations League football fixtures between the Republic of Ireland senior men's football team and Israel serves to sportswash, normalise and enable apartheid and genocide and it should not take place.

Conference believes that the health and safety of workers is of paramount importance and this fixture will place players, fans, staff, and workers at the football ground, at airports, on the transport system, in shops and bars and on the streets at risk. Moving the match to another location does not remove this risk, it just exports it and places the burden on workers in another country.

Conference calls on the FAI to completely cancel both fixtures between Ireland and Israel. Conference also calls on our Union to write to the Minister for Sport expressing our concerns about the inappropriateness of playing football with a nation engaged in genocide and the occupation of Palestine.

Submitted by: **Dublin AAC**
Proposed by: **Amy Dwyer, Dublin AAC**
Seconded by: **Mike Lovett, Dublin AAC**

INTERNATIONAL

Motion 15

Conscientious Objection

Conference welcomes the Irish Congress of Trade Unions statement on how workers in Ireland should not be placed in unconscionable situations of facilitating trade with Israel or handling Israeli goods while the genocide in Palestine continues.

In the words of Congress General Secretary Owen Reidy:

"The Irish public is horrified by Israel's genocide in Palestine. With the UN's deadline looming, it's time for the Irish government to step up and represent the public's outrage. We saw South Africa treated as a pariah state during the apartheid era, we must now see the same for Israel.

While Ireland has made diplomatic efforts within the EU, the failure to implement real sanctions means some trade union members fear being complicit in Israel's violence.

We would not be surprised if some of these develop into flashpoints of conscientious objection by some workers.

As a movement, we are clear: we will not be found wanting in protecting our members where an employer seeks to discipline or dismiss a worker in such circumstances."

Conference notes the deteriorating geo-political situation, ongoing genocides in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and elsewhere, the rise of far-right ideologies, and the erosion of human and workers' rights worldwide. Conscientiously objecting may become a more common issue facing workers in these times of turmoil.

Conference calls on the IEC to:

- Affirm Unite's commitment to the ICTU statement in an email to members
- Advise members on existing Unite motions around BDS and Palestine solidarity
- Establish a subcommittee to investigate further areas where members may be placed in unconscionable situations and may need similar protection
- Inform and train reps on the issue of conscientious objections and provide guidance on negotiating conscientious objection clauses and policies within workplaces

Submitted by: **RI/B5003 IOT Branch**
Proposed by: **Dermot Barry, Education (ROI) RISC**
Seconded by: **Gillian O'Brien, Education (ROI) RISC**

Motion 16

Enact the Occupied Territories Bill

This conference condemns the continuing genocide by Israel against the Palestinian people which to date has resulted in over 70000 Palestinian deaths and thousands more maimed, the majority civilians and children.

Conference calls on the Government of the Republic of Ireland to enact into law without further delay the Occupied Territories Bill banning all trade in goods and services from Palestinian territories illegally occupied by Isreal under International Law.

Submitted by: **RI/102 Des Bonass Branch**
Proposed by: **Michael Sheehan, CYWN4P RISC**
Seconded by: **Becky Ryan, LGBT+ Equality Committee**

Motion 17

Defending Human Rights of Palestinians

This conference deeply regrets that since the ceasefire in Palestine beginning on 10th October 2025, Israel has launched 800 attacks on Gaza, killed 400 Palestinians, and continues to block the free flow of aid into Gaza (Al Jazeera).

Conference condemns the ongoing process of settler colonialism in the West Bank that has seen thousands of Palestinian families displaced, evicted and expelled from their homes.

Conference deeply regrets that the British and Irish governments remain complicit in this genocide, through the supply of weaponry to Israel, allowing munitions and troops to pass through our airports and airspace and giving political and diplomatic cover to Israel.

Conference affirms its support for the people of Palestine in their struggle to end this apartheid regime and establish their right to self-determination.

Conference notes that Israel has been accused of multiple egregious human rights violations, including war crimes, by an independent UN Commission of Inquiry, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the International Association of Genocide Scholars.

Conference therefore:

- calls on the union to immediately begin an internal review of its contracts and use of suppliers that are complicit in, or profit from, Israel's apartheid regime - with a goal of severing business ties with such suppliers by the end of 2026.
- calls on the Executive Council and union officers to lobby government to ensure that public procurement laws and guidelines are fully human rights compliant, and that no public money should be used to fund Israel's ongoing genocide in Palestine.
- calls on union officers to regularly encourage branch members to attend public events and demonstrations calling for an immediate end to the conflict.

Submitted by: **NI/B0019 Community & Not for Profit Branch**
Proposed by: **Rebekah Corbett, CYWN4P RISC**
Seconded by: **Barney Doherty, Belfast AAC**

HEALTH & SAFETY

Motion 18

Physical Assaults, Verbal Abuse and Threats on workers dealing with the public

Members of UNITE across many sectors:
Public Transport
Hospitality
Retail
Emergency and Hospital staff
Public Service
Education staff

Conference notes:
These workers deal with the public as part of their work. Daily these workers face physical assaults verbal abuse and threats. Many members suffer physical injuries and many more suffer mental stress. This causes members to be off work on the sick and others to leave their jobs. When people responsible for these actions are prosecuted the punishments are not a deterrent. In one case a man got the same sentence for assaulting an employee as he

did for attempted criminal damage. We have employers and management telling us it's part of the job.

This Conference calls on UNITE:
To engage with elected representatives to push for stronger action against people who assault verbally abuse or threaten staff carrying out their work. We also call on unite to engage with employers and management to put in place and stringently enforce zero tolerance policies for protecting employees from assaults verbal abuse and threats or intimidation.

Submitted by: **Translink Metro NI/B0005 Branch**
Proposed by: **Mervyn Adair, Passenger RISC**
Seconded by: **Craig Malloy, Belfast AAC**

Motion 19

Support for people using legally prescribed medical cannabis

This conference notes that medical cannabis has been legal on prescription in the UK since 2018 and is available under specific programmes in Ireland.

An increasing number of workers and Unite members may be prescribed medical cannabis to manage chronic health conditions, including but not limited to chronic pain, endometriosis, epilepsy, MS, PTSD, ADHD and anxiety.

Many employers lack awareness or understanding of medical cannabis, leading to inconsistent workplace policies, discrimination, or unfair and illegal disciplinary action.

Medical cannabis patients continue to face stigma and confusion in the workplace despite acting entirely within the law and under medical supervision.

This conference believes that Unite has a responsibility to defend the rights of members who are prescribed legal medical cannabis-based medicines.

Employers must be better educated about the legal status of medical cannabis, how it works, and how they can support patients while maintaining safe and inclusive workplaces.

Existing workplace policies on drugs and alcohol must be reviewed to ensure they do not inadvertently penalise medical cannabis patients.

This conference calls on Unite to

1) Develop and promote guidance to support members who are medical cannabis patients in the workplace.

2) Campaign for the inclusion of medical cannabis in equality and occupational health policies across all sectors Unite represents.

3) Lobby with relevant government departments and health authorities in the UK and Ireland to produce official informational leaflets for employers outlining their responsibilities in relation to prescribed medical cannabis

4) Create educational materials to raise awareness of medical cannabis and dispel myths and stigma and promote training sessions and webinars for Unite reps, health and safety officers, equalities officers and HR professionals on the rights of medical cannabis patients.

5) Work with medical cannabis patient advocacy groups such as The Cannabis Industry Council to ensure Unite policy is informed by lived experience and prioritises patient dignity, autonomy, and safety.

Submitted by: **Regional Disability Committee**
Proposed by: **Dara Basketfield, Finance & Legal RISC**
Seconded by: **Andy Smyth, Regional Disability Committee**

ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY

Motion 20

Creating a Greener, Cleaner, Expanded and Accessible Public Transport Network

Northern Ireland's public transport services have been starved of vital investment for decades. In 2013 Stormont removed the fuel rebate payment whereby VAT on fuel was automatically repaid to the publicly-owned Translink. This was never restored – although the payment, renamed the 'Bus Services Operators Grant', continued elsewhere in UK where it is paid to 'for profit' bus companies.

Stormont has further reduced funding for public transport by 16% since our last conference. As a result, Translink is now warning that its cash reserves will fall below the level needed for working capital needs raising the possibility of the company becoming insolvent in a liquidity crisis.

Stormont's austerity policies are forcing the only publicly-owned bus and rail operator on these islands to choose between raising fares, cutting services or squeezing its workers. Instead we demand investment to expand and improve services to reach all parts of our community, to lower fares to enable a 'modal shift' to greener transport (as required by Stormont's Climate Act) and improved pay to end the current staffing shortages.

Conference calls on the IEC to launch a campaign to demand the restoration of the fuel rebate, to include the higher payments for renewable fuels as in other parts of the UK. We demand a greener, cleaner, expanded, disability-accessible and cheaper bus and rail service operated by a publicly-owned provider that properly rewards its workforce.

Submitted by: **Passenger RISC**
Proposed by: **Mervyn Adair, Passenger RISC**
Seconded by: **Ally Hutchinson, Passenger RISC**

Motion 21

Energy prices and cost of living

That this policy conference notes

- the Irish Congress of Trade Union's Nevin Institute research entitled 'Ireland's electricity prices over time' published in November 2025
- the trend identified since the 1990s whereby increases in electricity prices have far outstripped price increases in other goods and services
- that Ireland's electricity has gone from being the most affordable in western Europe to being the most expensive during this timeframe

- that this radical change coincided with the de-regulation of the electricity market which at the time was promised to usher in cheaper energy prices
- that workers in the energy sector have not been beneficiaries of this rate of price increases as their salaries have by no means risen commensurately over the same period
- that the Nevin Institute research concludes that the role of natural gas in the price setting mechanism is a significant contributory factor in Ireland being an outlier

That this policy conference concludes that

- the measures advocated in this research including lessening Ireland's reliance on natural gas are supportable and in the interests of our membership as a whole from a cost and environmental perspective
- such measures need to be taken with due consideration for our members in the sector, the protection of jobs and a genuinely just transition as renewable energy sources displace natural gas

Therefore the policy conference resolves that

- Unite the Union on this matter within the structures of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions will correctly represent the interests of members and working people as a whole for whom energy prices represent a significant component of their cost of living pressures as well as the interests of members in the sector and lobby for both these aspects to be reflected in Irish Congress of Trade Union policy and statements.

Submitted by: **Energy & Utilities (ROI) RISC**
Proposed by: **Ian Killgallon, Energy & Utilities (ROI) RISC**
Seconded by: **David Gallagher, Energy & Utilities (ROI) RISC**

PUBLIC SECTOR

Motion 25

Abolition of the Pension Levy

Conference notes the continuing existence of the unjust and regressive 'pension levy' (Additional superannuation contribution) imposed on public sector workers as a temporary austerity measure in 2009 and made 'permanent' a decade later in 2019. This is a tax, targeted at public sector workers initially as a temporary measure during an economic crise. Public sector workers were not responsible for that crisis. Conference calls on Unite to campaign for the abolition of this unfair pension levy.

Submitted by: **Irish Executive Committee**
Proposed by: **Cora Martin, Health (ROI) RISC**
Seconded by: **James Cotter, Education (ROI) RISC**

PENSIONS

Motion 26

State Pensions in the ROI

Conference agrees that the qualifying age for Old Age Pension in ROI be reduced from 66 years of age to 65 years of age.

Submitted by: **RI/0327 Dundalk Branch**
Proposed by: **Dave Griffin, Retired Members' Committee**
Seconded by: **Damien Murphy, GPM & IT RISC**

Motion 27

Give pensioners financial stability — do not penny-pinch!

This conference agrees to demand that the government's Treasury Department raises the threshold at which tax is paid on workplace pensions. Many members have worked all their lives and paid into workplace pensions to ensure financial security in retirement, yet the current tax threshold penalises them for that forward planning. The 20% tax imposed on even modest workplace pensions is adding unnecessary financial strain on people on fixed incomes during a deep cost-of-living crisis. As people age, their needs increase not only to heat, light and feed themselves, but to meet rising health and care costs.

Our members contributed greatly throughout their working lives and deserve dignity and financial stability. The current approach, which protects state-pension-only retirees while taxing those with small workplace pensions, is inconsistent and unfair. We believe both groups deserve genuine protection.

We urge the Irish Policy Conference to support this motion and for Unite to lobby the government to review and significantly raise the threshold at which workplace pensions are taxed and to stop penny-pinching from those who have already given so much.

Submitted by: **Craigavon Branch NI/B0008**
Proposed by: **Michael Fonceca, Local Authorities (NI) RISC**
Seconded by: **Orla Daly, Local Authorities (NI) RISC**

UNION ADMINISTRATION & MEMBER SERVICES

Motion 28

Enduring Power of Attorney

This conference recognises that it is important that workers heading for retirement know the benefits of staying a member of the union in Retired Members Plus (RMP). Unite membership includes benefits such as a free will service and assistance in drafting Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA) documentation. However, awareness among members of the need for, and assistance relating to EPA documentation is low, and the detail of such assistance is not clearly outlined.

With the rise in numbers of individuals suffering from Alzheimer's and Dementia, it is imperative that members have the opportunity to protect themselves and their families with an EPA. An EPA is a necessity where one is facing a nursing home stay.

This Conference calls upon the Unite Executive to enter into discussions with their nominated solicitors with a view to providing members with a uniform and economical legal service in drafting and setting up an EPA for both members and their spouses.

Submitted by: **Retired Members' Committee**
Proposed by: **Dave Griffin, Retired Members' Committee**
Seconded by: **Rosalind Morecombe, Retired Members' Committee**

POLITICAL & SOCIAL ACTION

Motion 22

Peace and Militarisation

Conference expresses its concern about the trend in Ireland towards increased militarisation recognising that it necessarily involves a diversion of public funds and investment away from public and social provision.

Conference calls for proper pay and conditions for our Defence Forces.

Conference calls for proper staffing levels to ensure defence equipment is available at all times.

Conference calls for a greater emphasis on diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions and bring an end to conflict.

Conference, while recognising that Irish neutrality has been diluted over recent years, reiterates its pro neutrality policy and calls upon the Irish Executive of Unite the Union to:

Oppose any attempt to bring this country into any military alliance such as NATO and any embryonic EU military force;

Support the continuation of the Triple Lock governing the deployment of Irish military personnel abroad and

Engage with the Irish government urging them to utilise the good offices associated with Ireland's neutral status and enunciated in Article 29 of the Irish Constitution to promote diplomatic solutions through "adherence to the principle of the pacific settlement of international disputes by international arbitration or judicial determination."

In pursuit of this policy conference calls upon the Irish Executive of Unite the Union to work alongside other bodies in defence of Irish neutrality and in particular, in defence of the Triple Lock and against increased militarisation in the EU.

Submitted by: **RI/0308M Education & Research Branch**
Proposed by: **Dermot Barry, Education (ROI) RISC**
Seconded by: **Cora Martin, Health (ROI) RISC**

Motion 23

Housing as a Core Issue of Collective Bargaining

This Conference Notes:

- That the cost of housing is one of the single biggest drivers of the cost-of-living crisis for workers across Ireland, North and South where gains made by pay deals are eroded by rising rents, housing insecurity and energy costs.
- The growing role of community-based organising, including tenants' unions, in winning concrete improvements on housing conditions, affordability, and security.
- That Unite already has an established working relationship with community and tenants' unions, including the Community Action Tenants Union, building on previous policy motions and ongoing collaborative activity.

- The existing working relationship in other regions between branches and tenants unions (e.g Unite Hospitality with Living Rent in Glasgow)

This Conference Recognises:

- That collective bargaining must evolve to address social issues that directly impact workers' ability to live and work with dignity.
- That housing is a workplace issue, as unaffordable or insecure housing undermines pay, health, stability, and workforce retention.
- The existing experience of community and tenants' unions in Ireland, including CATU, in collectively negotiating with public and private landlords,

This Conference Believes:

- That UNITE Ireland should actively integrate housing demands into collective bargaining agendas where relevant.
- That trade unions should continue building strategic alliances with tenants' unions and community organisations to strengthen workers' collective power beyond the workplace.
- That housing justice and workers' rights are inseparable, and that collective bargaining strategies must reflect this reality.

Conference therefore mandates UNITE Ireland:

- To conduct research into the impact of housing costs, rent insecurity, and energy poverty on workers' pay, living standards, workforce retention, and collective bargaining outcomes across sectors in Ireland.
- To embed regular political education on housing costs and their relationship to collective bargaining across branches and sectors, ensuring members and representatives are equipped to address housing as a workplace issue.
- To build upon Unite's existing housing resources and member guidance, by developing clear tools and training to support workplace representatives in integrating housing issues into collective bargaining and negotiations, including linking housing costs, rent insecurity, and energy poverty to pay claims, conditions, and workforce retention in collaboration with CATU
- To support and resource training for workplace representatives and negotiators on housing, cost-of-living pressures, and workplace community bargaining strategies.
- To maintain and further develop structured engagement with tenants' and community organisations, building on existing collaboration, sharing organising methods, and supporting collective bargaining strategies to strengthen worker led power beyond the workplace.
- To allocate appropriate staff time, educational capacity, and organisational resources to deliver the commitments of this motion.
- To report back to the next UNITE Ireland policy conference on progress made in integrating housing into collective bargaining strategy, education, and negotiations.

Submitted by: **Regional Youth Committee**
Proposed by: **Michael Sheehan, CYWN4P RISC**
Seconded by: **Dara Basketfield, Finance & Legal RISC**

Motion 24

Decriminalisation of Sex Work
Conference notes:

1. Most sex workers are women, and many are LGBT+ people. Many people are driven into prostitution by poverty, discrimination and limited economic alternatives.

2. Selling sex itself is not illegal in Ireland, but many laws criminalise associated activities and this puts sex workers at greater risk of violence and deprives them of basic rights. Trans, migrant, BAEM and street based sex workers are particularly targeted for violence and arrest.

3. The Nordic Model approach of criminalising the purchase of sex, in place across Ireland, has caused even greater harm to sex workers. There was a 92% increase in violent attacks against sex workers post the introduction of this law in the South.

4. Sex workers working together from the same property for safety can be prosecuted for 'brothel keeping'. This law is disproportionately used against migrant sex workers.

5. When sex workers receive criminal records for offences relating to their work, this can bar them from finding other employment, keeping them in the industry.

6. Sex workers are increasingly organising alongside other workers within the trade union movement, including in Unite.

7. Following research which demonstrates its benefits, many human rights organisations now support the full decriminalisation of sex work including Amnesty International, Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women; Human Rights Watch; UNAIDS; the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health; Transgender Europe; ILGA-World; UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls; and the World Health Organization.

8. Decriminalisation has been introduced with verifiable improvements in sex workers' health and safety in Aotearoa/New Zealand and most recently in Belgium where sex workers won labour rights, including pensions, maternity leave and the right to refuse clients – strengthening workers' hands to fight workplace exploitation.

Conference believes:

1. Sex workers are workers. Like other workers, they are working to support themselves and their families. They are also workers who face disproportionate levels of violence and exploitation in their workplace – both on-street and in premises.

2. Violence and exploitation are increased by direct and indirect criminalisation. Current laws mean that sex workers are unable to legally work together to increase safety, and are discouraged from reporting crimes committed against them for fear of being arrested themselves.

3. The Nordic Model has failed to protect sex workers in Ireland. Criminalising clients does not stop prostitution, or decriminalise sex workers but does put them at increased risk.

4. Law and policy on sex work should be based on evidence rather than personal feelings and should centre the safety of sex workers. Accordingly, full decriminalisation holds the greatest promise to improve sex workers' safety, health and wellbeing.

5. Decriminalisation means that sex workers can report rape, trafficking and other violence without fear of self-incrimination.

6. Sex workers need to be able to collectively organise against exploitation and to improve their working conditions. Criminalisation is a barrier to doing this effectively.

7. Sex workers know their own needs as workers and their voices should lead on issues that affect them. They should be supported in their demands for decriminalisation and labour rights.

8. Unite's policy of organising every worker regardless of sector or status must apply to sex workers.

Conference resolves:

1. To support and campaign for the full decriminalisation of sex work in Ireland.

2. To support the unionisation of sex workers and to respect their demands for labour rights and to improve their working conditions, including occupational safety and health.

3. To campaign to end poverty as a way to reduce the number of people who are pushed into sex work for survival.

Submitted by: **Regional LGBT+ Equality Committee**
Proposed by: **Becky Ryan, LGBT+ Equality Committee**
Seconded by: **Janet Taylor, Health (NI) RISC**

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