



Summary of decisions  
**of the July 2016  
Unite Policy Conference**

General Secretary: Len McCluskey  
Chair, Executive Council: Tony Woodhouse



**on**  
**your**  
side



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# Introduction

In July 2016 around 600 delegates, guests and observers gathered at the Brighton Conference Centre for Unite's fourth National Policy Conference in what I described in my opening address as "turbulent times".

We debated and made policy on a wide range of issues important to our members and their families. These included the need for an industrial strategy, protecting employment rights, cuts in public services, defence diversification and Trident, the environment and, of-course, the European Union.

During the week we heard experienced activists, first time speakers and young members talk with passion and insight about working life in Britain and Ireland today, as well as issues affecting wider society and the world. But we didn't just talk. Conference took decisions that provided a set of policies to shape our work over the next two years.

This booklet summarises the key themes and decisions of Policy Conference 2016 with particular focus on the action points agreed by delegates. I am sure it will provide an invaluable guide for members, activists and officers. It will be made available on-line as well as being circulated to members of the Executive Council, Regional and National Industrial Sector Committees, National Young Members Committee, National Retired Members Committee, and Regional and Equalities Committees.

The theme of conference was 'Unite - on your side'. We not only highlighted our successful work campaigning and supporting members on issues such as blacklisting in construction, protecting the NHS, fair tips for restaurant workers and working practices at Sports Direct, to name but a few, but showcased our 'Work, Voice, Pay' initiative: all examples of Unite at its best, getting a fair deal for workers and delivering for members.

I said in my closing speech to conference that the level of debate and breadth of subjects discussed speaks for Unite and who we are: the most diverse working class organisation in our nations. We debate difference and cherish unity. I also made clear the importance of working with a united Labour Party to take the fight to the Conservative Government to deliver a progressive alternative. We stand together, proud of our past and confident of our future. These policies will help us build that future.

**Len McCluskey,**  
Unite General Secretary

December 2016

# Economy

## The Financial Crisis and Banking Sector

Unite believes that despite causing the most severe financial crisis in living memory, the consequences of which continue to be felt by all in society, there is a risk of the banking sector returning to 'business as usual'. Unite demands a banking sector where the highest standards of ethics and professionalism underpin a strong, safe and successful financial system that supports the economy.

Unite supports urgent reform of the banking sector so that it meets the needs of society and the real economy and demands a properly resourced British Investment Bank which provides finance for infrastructure investment, support for vital UK industries as a step towards the long term goal of a publically owned and democratically accountable banking sector. Unite rejects the privatisation of the Green Investment Bank.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Call upon the Government to establish a full public inquiry into the banking industry, which must include representation from trade unions and civic society, and have the power to compel witnesses to speak under oath and impose criminal sanctions for failure to do.

## Strategic Plan for Manufacturing

Unite is concerned at the continuing decline of large scale manufacturing in the UK and deplores the Government's continual lack of a manufacturing strategy.

Unite supports a strategic plan for manufacturing in the UK which includes the development of a National Investment Bank for industry; support for our foundation industries; a skills system designed to avoid skill shortages and provide high quality apprenticeships; decent stable employment and support for SMEs and the supply chain.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Lobby to ensure that government funded research and development is linked to jobs and apprenticeships;
- Lobby employer-led groups to join in with this campaign;
- Report back on progress to the EC on a 6 monthly basis;
- Campaign to ensure that the Labour Party develops a strategic plan for manufacturing well in advance of the next General Election;
- In the absence of any serious support from the present government, encourage and support members in taking direct action to save threatened industry;

- Undertake a study to understand the current manufacturing capability in the UK and adopt a policy to campaign and lobby UK government and other interested parties to ensure that before any decisions are made and contracts agreed, we have maximised the amount of UK jobs, within manufacture, construction, service and fuel;
- Mount a major campaign for the Government to act responsibly by:
  - reversing its policy of non-intervention and accept its responsibility to actively support manufacturing by establishing a cabinet-level Minister for UK Manufacturing;
  - actively using public procurement to support UK workers and companies
  - if it is to be built in Britain, it will use British products and labour;
  - publishing a full list of public infrastructure contracts that are pending and show how British workers and companies will be prioritised for these contracts;
  - where strategically important industries are at risk, taking a stake and actively work to safeguard jobs and communities.

## Save Our Steel

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Campaign alongside all involved trade unions, grassroots organisations, and Labour Party representatives in support of the #SaveOurSteel campaign;
- Lobby the wider Labour Party to adopt all the #SaveOurSteel campaign's aims and objectives to support the UK steel industry;
- Work with our sister union the USW to combine the Stand for Steel campaign and the #SaveOurSteel campaign where common goals are identified.

## China and Market Economy Status

Unite calls on the European Commission to state clearly what options it will consider to address the issue of China's accession to Market Economy Status and to commit to unilateral retaliatory action wherever it appears there has been dumping of a commodity at below the cost of production.

Unite demands that the UK government is vigilant to the dumping of sub-cost commodities and makes clear what involvement it will have in the transition of China to a market economy.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Oppose any application for Market Economy Status by China unless and until China abides by structures that would stop dumping of manufactured goods on the UK and EU market;
- Lobby the UK & EU governments that should China be granted 'Full Economic Status' within the European Union economic safeguards are put in place to protect all our key foundation industries within the manufacturing sector of the UK and mainland Europe.

## Ownership and Regulation of the Transport System

Unite believes that extending public ownership throughout the rail and bus industry can create the conditions to begin to develop an integrated, accountable transport system and strongly opposes any attempts to privatise public transport further, in particular, the London Underground.

Unite recognises that the creation of the National Infrastructure Commission provides an opportunity to critically review issues of ownership and control of the UK transport system.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Lobby the Government, during its term of office, to nationalise the railways in England and Wales;
- Campaign against the privatisation of Network Rail;
- Call for the train operating companies to be progressively brought under public control as existing franchises expire;
- Lobby the Labour Party to include a commitment to take bus services into public ownership in its manifesto for the next General Election;
- Lobby the Government to include protections for bus workers' terms and conditions in the Bus Services Bill;
- Lobby the Government to ensure regulated bus services are properly funded;
- Produce a report identifying those elements as coming under public ownership and those under regulatory control.

## Investment in Transport Infrastructure (Northern Ireland)

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Call on Stormont to invest in transport and road infrastructure instead of engaging in scathing cuts.

## Supermarket Loss Leaders

Unite is concerned that loss leading by UK supermarket chains has created monopoly conditions in retailing food and drink, depriving large areas of local affordable food stores. Loss leading has driven down pay, terms of employment and working conditions within supermarkets, the distribution sector and the food and drink industry.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Campaigning to outlaw the practice of loss leading by UK supermarket chains and exposing the harmful long term dynamic loss leading creates for workers and consumers.

## The Real Living Wage

Unite believes all workers should earn enough to enjoy a decent life. The real Living Wage is a campaigning tool to achieve this for the lowest paid. Unite believes it is through a collective bargaining campaign across all sectors that Unite will achieve its ambition to bring equality and security to the lowest paid workers.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Lead a campaign to promote the 'Real Living Wage', as determined by the Living Wage Foundation;
- Endorse and lobby the Government for a Living Wage to be determined by an independent commission or agency such as the Living Wage Foundation;
- Campaign for an equalisation of the Living Wage for all ages;
- Research, identify and present information about how other protected characteristic communities are over represented within the low wage section of the work force;
- Campaign to ensure that all companies where Unite has recognition or influence in the UK adopt a minimum pay rate of the Living Wage for those workers who currently earn less than the Living Wage;
- Launch a campaign against pay discrimination based on age, and to pressurise the Government to bring up all minimum wages to the same rate, and for it to be illegal for any employer to pay differently based in age.

## Universal Basic Income

Unite notes the growing crisis of low pay, in-work poverty and precarity in the labour market. Unite believes that a Universal Basic Income has the potential to offer genuine social security to all while boosting the economy and creating jobs.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Campaign for a Universal Basic Income and eradicate poverty for all.

## CPI v RPI

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- A campaign to expose the unfairness and adverse financial hardship being suffered as a result of changes from the historical application of RPI (Retail Prices Index) to the, nearly always lower, CPI (Consumer Prices Index) (e.g. state benefits).

## Ireland – economics and politics

Unite believes that investment workers' incomes and living standards are the key to long-term growth and social prosperity. Goals should be a Decent Work Act encompassing the right to collective bargaining, the right of part-time workers for additional and stable working hours, statutory protection of Sunday premium and over-time pay and the extension of statutory collective bargaining in low-waged sectors; and the introduction of a Living Wage. Ireland needs a new social settlement – one that encompasses free and universal healthcare and education, combined with greatly enhanced social protection support for working people.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Work for progressive and trade unity among all the progressive traditions to advance an agenda for working men and women;
- Call on the NI Executive parties to reconsider their support for reducing corporation taxes and instead adopt a positive strategy for public investment and intervention for growth;
- Oppose cuts included in the 'Fresh Start' Agreement;
- Call on the Government in Westminster to provide adequate funding to recognise the reality of a society emerging from conflict in Northern Ireland, continuing to experience particular additional resource needs;

- Call on the Assembly parties to investigate means to secure additional funding for public services through alternative, progressive funding mechanisms and to seek the devolution of further revenue raising powers;
- Engagement with all the main parties to seek the adoption of proactive and progressive approaches to growing the economy and sustaining investment in public services, with a particular view to implementing the Living Wage, extending collective bargaining mechanisms, making the most of public procurement and collaborative approaches to restructuring public services to improve efficiency without compromising services or staff conditions.

Policies derived from Composite Motions  
#9, #10, #11, #12, #13  
and Motions 37, 47, 48, 49, 51, 54, 55  
as passed at the July 2016 Unite Policy Conference.



# Defence Diversification and Trident

Unite forms part of the broad labour movement, both in Britain and Ireland, and internationally. The core values of that movement have always included working for world peace and disarmament.

Unite is however a trade union, and as such the first claim on its priorities is always the protection and advancement of its members' interests at work. This includes of course the preservation of our members' jobs in a fast-changing and unstable economic environment, and the protection of the communities in which they live. Unite does not and never will advocate or support any course of public policy which will put at risk those jobs or communities.

Both these principles inform our position on the issue of the decision to order a successor to the Vanguard submarines for the Trident nuclear weapons system. This presents particularly sharp difficulties for Unite, and Labour more generally, in significant part because of the failure of successive governments of both parties to grapple with the issue of defence diversification in the post-Cold War world. It is only our members in the sector who have devoted significant time and energy to promote diversification initiatives. We condemn the last Labour government for having wound up the Defence Diversification Agency, and the subsequent Tory or Tory-led administrations for their inertia on the issue. This has already meant thousands of skilled jobs have disappeared across the sector, a situation exacerbated by the Government's failure to prioritise placing orders with British manufacturers. Unite will continue to "defend our spend" and press for the UK's defence budget to be spent in domestic factories sustaining jobs at home.

Unite welcomes the Labour Party Defence Review as a vital and serious contribution to UK Defence Strategy and, in particular, the renewed focus Jeremy Corbyn has placed on defence diversification, in the context of the priority he rightly places on world disarmament. Whatever decision is taken on Trident, defence diversification must be an urgent priority for the next Labour government and Unite will campaign to ensure that it is. Nevertheless, it is a fact that defence diversification is not going to be taken seriously by the present government. The possibility of new jobs of similar quality tomorrow will not support workers and their families and communities today.

Unite recognises the strength of arguments against Trident from a financial point of view, and from the perspective of an assessment of the actual contemporary threats to British security, such as terrorism. We also of course accept the compelling moral argument against the use of nuclear weapons which needs little elaboration as well as the UK's commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. But neither is there a moral case for a trade union accepting the obliteration of thousands of its members' jobs and the communities in which they live being turned into ghost towns.

Unite remains opposed in principle to the possession or deployment of nuclear weapons (including Trident) but our first duty remains to our members. Therefore until there is a government in office ready, willing and able to give cast-iron guarantees on the security of the skilled work and all the employment involved, our priority must be to defend and secure our members' employment.

***Unite is committed to:***

- Campaigning to secure a serious government approach to defence diversification, enabling Britain to play its part in nuclear disarmament and urges the Labour Party to give the highest priority to this aspect in its considerations.

# The European Union

Unite campaigned strongly for Britain to stay in the EU as being in the best interests overall of the union's membership, particularly in terms of job security and workers' rights.

Unite recognises the concerns felt by many Unite members and millions of other working people expressed in the referendum - over austerity, over their sense of powerlessness and over the abuse of the free movement of labour, amongst other issues. The referendum result was as much a rebuke to an out-of-touch political and economic elite as it was about the EU itself. However, those who led the "Leave" campaign clearly have no idea as to how to give effect to its result or cope with the economic consequences of the decision.

The people of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Gibraltar voted clearly to remain in the European Union, and Unite supports efforts to address the specific issues arising from "Brexit" in those countries. Unite believes that it is vital that there is no rush to trigger Article 50, and that the terms of "Brexit" reflect trade union input and trade union values. Working people must not pay the price for "Brexit". Unite would oppose a "Brexit" that reduces trade union rights, excludes Britain from the EU Single Market and fails to deal fairly with the difficult issue of the free movement of labour, which requires further debate in the trade union movement. We further need to ensure that the British and Irish governments do not launch a race-to-the-bottom in terms of social protection, workers' rights, and corporate tax and do not allow multi-national capital to play one government off against the other.

Working people must be given the chance to choose their path out of the crisis. This will demand new policy responses, not least to the deprivation and alienation caused by six years of austerity and thirty years of deindustrialisation, and we look to Labour to give a lead on meeting those challenges in the interests of working people.

## ***Unite is committed to:***

- Focus on three over-riding priorities in the immediate situation:
  1. The defence of Unite members' jobs, which might be threatened by the UK's exit from the European Union and its single market. This represents a particular threat in our manufacturing and finance sectors and across the public services. We must be ready to work constructively with employers and government to confront any job losses arising;
  2. The protection of those employment rights which depended on legislation or initiatives at the European Union level. It would be a betrayal of working people, however they voted, for any rights to be stripped from them by the Conservative government. We will work alongside the TUC and others to ensure that 'Brexit' is not carried through at the expense of workers' rights;

3. Opposing the racist backlash unleashed by the 'leave' vote and standing in solidarity with all peoples and communities threatened by abuse and violence from the far right. The upsurge in such racism is the responsibility of those Tory and UKIP politicians who conducted the "Leave" campaign in such disgraceful terms. We must highlight that the real responsibility for poor housing and a lack of decent jobs rests with the government, and not with migrant workers. We support the right of all EU nationals living and working in the U.K. to remain here.
- Work to strengthen its links with trade unions across Europe and with the ETUC in the fight against austerity and for social rights. We will never turn our back on our brothers and sisters abroad and remain fully committed to the international trade union movement;
  - Campaign for the Labour Party to organise a Europe-wide conference of trade union supported workers' political parties, trade unions and left social movements with the aim of constructing a programme for a Europe fit for working people.



# Global Solidarity and International

## **Campaigning to Defeat TTIP, CETA and TiSA**

Unite notes the major public disquiet about these treaties particularly the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) process and rejects attempts to rebrand ISDS as the Investment Court System.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Work closely with labour and social movement coalitions working for continued support for the labour and social movement coalitions opposing TTIP, CETA and TiSA;
- Support for John McDonnell's call for a review of Labour Party policy on new generation free trade agreements and to campaign for the Labour Party to make it policy to oppose TTIP and CETA at national and European level;
- Promotion of our policy within the union.

## **Workers Uniting**

Unite's global union with the United Steel Workers, Workers Uniting, has benefitted the two unions working in similar industries with global corporations.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Include news items and reports on Workers Uniting on the Unite website, Unitelive and in the Unite printed magazine so that the global solidarity work carried out can be understood by members.

## **Solidarity with USW members at National Grid**

Unite notes that 1,100 members of United Steelworkers (USW) Locals 12003 and 12012-4 in the United States bargaining with National Grid, a UK-based utility company that is a common employer with Unite.

National Grid's move to contract out many of these jobs needlessly endangers public safety and deprives local communities of good-paying jobs.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Support the members of USW Locals 12003 and 12012-4 as they organise to win a fair contract;
- Raise these concerns with the management of National Grid in the United Kingdom;
- If necessary, bring them to the attention of the company's shareholders at the Annual General Meeting.

## **BAEM Workers Internationally**

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Work to ensure full engagement, participation and input on issues that affect BAEM workers internationally;
- Work to ensure BAEM, women, disabled, LGBT and young members are fully represented on Unite international delegations;
- Ensure sectors with a high proportion of BAEM members are well represented on relevant industrial international delegations;
- Provide information on our affiliations and the importance of our international work;
- Organise around existing BAEM international frameworks or explore how Unite can lead to create them with other trade unions;
- Tackle race discrimination across Europe including applying for EU funding to coordinate and create structures for this purpose;
- Build international links with trade unions in other commonwealth countries;
- Continue to support the human rights and employment rights of migrant workers and help develop policies internationally;
- Lobby the Government to negotiate with all countries a bilateral and/or reciprocal agreement to protect social security rights including annual increases in pensions, for workers retiring abroad;
- Continue to raise awareness of health & safety issues and employment conditions of workers in Asian, African and Caribbean countries including lobbying governments for improvements and better support for workers.

## Palestine

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Continue to support Palestinian civil society's call for boycott, divestment and sanctions against the occupation, the apartheid wall and the illegal settlements;
- Support the campaigning work for justice and peace in the Middle East by organisations in the UK, such as Palestine Solidarity Campaign, aiming to end Israel's ongoing policies of ethnic cleansing and breaches of international law against the Palestinian people;
- Pressure the UK government to impose an immediate two-way arms embargo against Israel, and to ban the import of illegal settlement products and goods in line with its own FCO advice;
- Organising to send delegations of Unite members to Palestine to witness the situation first-hand;
- Support campaigns targeting companies complicit with Israel's illegal occupation and settlements, such as Hewlett Packard and G4S;
- Unless G4S ends its engagement with the occupation of Palestine:
  - not engage the services of G4S for its own purposes;
  - campaign for other public bodies, community organisations and trade unions against engaging the services of G4S;
  - ensure that all Unite's regional and local bodies are aware of this policy and are active in implementing it;
  - prepare a G4S briefing for all Unite supported MPs and councillors.

## Syria

Unite condemns the devastation and destruction that has been caused by the war in which has led to an enormous worldwide humanitarian refugee crisis with huge impacts on neighbouring countries. The escalation of the bombing of Syria by Britain and other countries has failed to resolve the situation or to ensure the safety of the people.

Unite recognises the brave efforts of Syrian health workers who continue to provide healthcare to those in need in the midst of a brutal war. Unite is extremely concerned about the long term health impact on refugees living in refugee camps across Syria and its neighbouring countries and in Europe.

***Unite is committed to:***

- Work with other organisations including the TUC to support the work of relief organisations working with refugees in mainland Europe;
- Support medical care and relief organisations supporting health structures and workers inside Syria such as the Syrian British Medical Society.

**Anti-War in the Middle East**

***Unite is committed to:***

- Oppose the bombing of Syria and attempts to increase military intervention in the region;
- Support serious diplomatic efforts and political processes by the UN, without preconditions and an end to all foreign military interference in Syria;
- Support attempts for a peaceful settlement in Syria and the defeat of Islamic State through the involvement of the people in the region themselves.

**Solidarity with the Kurdish population and all progressive forces fighting repression in Turkey**

Unite is gravely concerned at the actions of the Turkish government in relation to the Kurdish population and the massive assault on civil liberties in general.

***Unite is committed to:***

- Undertake all possible activities to strengthen Unite's solidarity work with the Kurdish people, in particular by:
  - affiliating Unite to the Free Ocalan campaign that is demanding the release of the jailed Kurdish leader and calling for the relaunch of a peace process;
  - examining the feasibility and possibility of organising delegations to the Kurdish areas of Turkey;
  - engaging and building stronger relations with trade unions and other progressive forces in Turkey;
  - submitting motions to the International and European Federations to which Unite is affiliated and calling on them to raise the issue and become more active;
  - building pressure in the UK and European Parliaments for more action to support the Kurdish population and civil liberties in Turkey.

## Latin America

Unite condemns the assassination of Berta Cáceres, the leader of the Lenca indigenous people in Honduras and reaffirms its solidarity with the people of Honduras and throughout the region.

Unite stands in solidarity with Brazil's former President Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff and joins with the International Trade Union Confederation, the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas and those Global Union Federations (GUFs) which have spoken out in solidarity with Lula and Dilma.

Unite stands in solidarity with the Los Mineros union, a Workers' Uniting affiliate in Mexico whose General Secretary lives in exile in Canada because of threats to his life.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Continue affiliation to and work with Cuba Solidarity Campaign and Venezuela Solidarity Campaign;
- Support the development of solidarity with the other countries of Latin America, particularly by Friends of Ecuador and Justice Mexico Now.

## Colombia

Unite condemns the ongoing threats, assassinations and imprisonment of unionists and political activists in Colombia.

Unite deplores the recent threats against Colombian union members, including death threats sent by paramilitaries to Eberto Dias Montez, the President of Unite's sister union FENSUAGRO, and denounces the continued presence of paramilitary groups in Colombia, the evidence of links between paramilitaries, the police and military and the repression of legitimate union activity.

Unite continues to call for the immediate release of political prisoner Huber Ballesteros, vice-president of FENSUAGRO, who was imprisoned on false charges in 2013.

Unite congratulates the excellent work of Justice for Colombia, especially its ground breaking peace campaign to build international support for the peace process. Unite celebrates the historic advances in the peace talks between the Colombian government and the FARC but reiterates the need for greater security guarantees for trade unionists and political activists.

***Unite is committed to:***

- Continue to lobby for the release of imprisoned FENSUAGRO leader Huber Ballesteros at all political levels;
- Continue to support the Workers Uniting/FENSUAGRO partnership agreement;
- Support Justice for Colombia (JFC) politically and economically, particularly in its Peace Campaign and Political Prisoner Campaign;
- Write to all regions and branches encouraging them to affiliate to JFC.

Policies derived from Composite Motions #24, #25, Motions 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, and Emergency Motion #7 as passed at July 2016 Unite Policy Conference.

# Campaigning Against Austerity

## Campaigning Against Privatisation

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Campaign to raise awareness within all sectors of Unite and the general public on the impact of cuts and privatisation in public services and actively organise and utilise its resources, including legal services, for the purpose of challenging the relevant commissioning bodies on:
  - accountability to the public;
  - transparency of operations;
  - meaningful consultation involving relevant stakeholders including the wider public making decisions based on evidence, accurately reflecting the consultation findings including the impact on other services;
  - explaining how decisions are made, demonstrating the above.

## **Austerity and Local Government Cuts**

Local and central government has been under concerted attack since the Tories took office in 2010.

Unite's strategy is to oppose the government's continuing austerity attacks and the privatisation and outsourcing of local authority services.

Unite welcomes the Labour Party's re-positioning as an anti-austerity party and Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell's commitment to an alternative economic plan, asking councillors to join in a national campaign against cuts and placing the responsibility for cuts firmly with the Tory government.

It is our expectation that Labour Councils will work closely with Unite, for example as outlined in the Local Authority Trade Union Pledge. Yet, Unite is clear that a campaign to protect a particular local service cannot be at the expense of others.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Work with Labour Councils and other trade unions to expose the Tory's policy of devolving the blame for cuts to local authorities;
- Campaign for adequate central funding for local service delivery and to safeguard local public services;
- Lobby to increase take-up of these options for councils increasing borrowing, especially for capital investments that could generate income, and not rule out any measure that can be applied;
- Hold councils to account about the level of reserves they have.

## Defending the NHS

Unite notes threats to the existence of a national service providing free health care at the point of use. Unite believes that the defence of our NHS is a key issue for all members and notes that the NHS is becoming increasingly fragmented, costly, and inequitable and that the state no longer takes responsibility for the nation's health. We need our health services to be comprehensive, transparent, equitable and affordable and believe the only way all these goals can be attained is through full public ownership.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Campaign to defend the NHS in particular to support NHS workers in improving working conditions, hours and staffing levels and reducing low pay;
- Call on other health unions and the TUC to co-ordinate widespread joint industrial action of health and other workers to strengthen the effect of such activity whenever possible;
- Organise solidarity in support of junior doctors;
- Call on the TUC to call, before the end of spring 2017, a national march in defence of an adequately and publicly funded, accountable health service;
- Call on the TUC to campaign for and organise a 24-hour general strike following that national demonstration;
- Campaign for the Labour Party to support Unite's NHS policies, with a pledge that a Labour government will reverse all privatisation and fully fund the NHS, run for need and not profit;
- Campaign for a Labour government committed to nationalisation of the pharmaceutical and medical supplies industries, with compensation based only on need, under democratic workers' control and management;
- Promote:
  - restoration of the NHS as an accountable public service;
  - reversal of 25 years of marketization;
  - re-establishment of public bodies and public services accountable to local communities;
  - removal of the NHS from EU competition law and TTIP via restoration of the NHS as a non-economic service of general interest;
  - the integration of health and social care through nationally accountable public bodies through publicly-owned service providers;
  - increased funding for both health and social care;

- properly funded intermediate care;
- campaign to defend and extend bursaries for health staff in training.

## **Support for Junior Doctors**

Unite condemns the shoddy bullying tactics used against junior doctors by this Tory Government to introduce a new contract.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Support the Junior Doctors' campaign and oppose any threats to the terms and conditions of health sector workers.

## **Housing and Homes for All**

Unite condemns the Government's failure to address the growing housing crisis and opposes the Housing and Planning Act.

We need public sector investment in new council house building on a massive scale as well as upgrading of the existing council housing stock. Public land should be used where possible to build a new generation of first-class council housing.

Unite condemns any local authority willing to engage in social cleansing through the eviction of tenants and the forced dispersal of working class communities from their homes, which are then replaced with luxury accommodation at exorbitant rents. Unite demands an end to this practice and calls on all Labour controlled councils to refuse planning permission and/or funding for any project which requires the demolition of existing homes unless the developer agrees to rehouse those tenants in the new development once complete, and on the same contractual terms, rent and service cost levels as before.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Campaign for:
  - a massive injection of public investment into a council building programme;
  - requirements on Local Authorities and Housing Associations to provide and maintain adequate levels of council housing supply including meeting the changing needs of disabled workers for adaptations to their homes at affordable rents;
  - available accessible and affordable housing for disabled people in a safe location, near family and friends with access to services including public transport;
  - an end to the right to buy scheme;

- rent controls and registration/licensing of landlords in privately rented accommodation;
- security of tenure for all those living in rented accommodation;
- an end to unfair housing benefit caps and other draconian benefits cuts such as the Bedroom Tax.
- Campaign to reverse the Housing and Planning Act and to work with the Labour Party to achieve its repeal;
- Call on councils and housing associations to unite in opposing the Act;
- Seek discussions with employers about the practical implications of the Act for our members;
- Be part of a national campaign demanding more decent, secure, genuinely affordable homes;
- Campaign for the end of backroom deals by luxury property developers and complete transparency in the planning application process and the end of the confidentiality of viability reports for new developments.

## Failure of Austerity

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Campaign against government austerity and spending cuts including using appropriate advertising.

## Defending our Libraries

Unite believes that libraries must remain run by local councils and staffed with a paid, professional staff, and congratulates members in Bromley and Greenwich for taking strike action to defend libraries.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Oppose all forms of privatisation, including through social enterprises, and the handing over of libraries to community groups to run with volunteers;
- Give maximum support to campaigns opposing library closures;
- Take a leading role in co-ordinating campaigns, including co-ordinated strike action.

Policies derived from Executive Council Statement #2, Composite Motions #1, #3, #4, #5 and Motions 16 and 138 as passed at the July 2016 Unite Policy Conference.

# Improving Health and Safety

## Mental Health

Unite is concerned at the treatment of workers with health problems such as stress related illness and other issues related to mental health.

Unite notes that stress and mental health problems are an increasingly common issue for reps and shop stewards in the workplace to deal with when representing members. Dealing with such difficult cases can, on occasions, have an impact on the rep representing the member, possibly to the detriment of the rep's own stress levels and mental health.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Commission a comprehensive review of all Unite's mental health policies and to implement changes to ensure that all policies are 'up to date' and 'fit for purpose' and ensure the following commitments are incorporated into any revised policy:
  - Unite to become an organisational signatory to the "Time to Change" pledge;
  - establishing an appropriate Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to help Unite employees access help, support, advice and guidance should they ever suffer from a mental health problem;
  - providing all workplace reps with suitable and sufficient training in dealing with mental health issues in the workplace;
  - establishing a support and advice network for elected representatives to
  - access when they are either suffering from mental health problems themselves or assisting a member with an issue related to mental health.
- Work to develop Mental Health Awareness training and a dedicated Mental Health First Aid Training Course as a core part of both the National and Regional Education Program;
- Incorporate a Mental Health Toolkit into all Unite Health and Safety resource packs;
- Work with the National Disabled Members Committee to campaign to raise awareness across the sectors to remove the stigma associated with mental health conditions in the workplace;
- Work to provide training for Mental Health First Aiders in recognised workplaces.

- Investigate the provision of a support service for Unite shop stewards;
- Where possible, Unite officers in companies where occupational health schemes are in place conduct a review in respect of mental health issues.

## **Bullying, Harassment and Wellbeing at Work**

Unite is aware that bullying and harassment in the workplace is a major cause of psychological health problems such as depression, anxiety or low self-esteem and that a comprehensive study established that LGB workers were two and a half times more likely to be bullied than their non-LGB colleagues.

Many workplace representatives across all sectors represent members suffering from some form of mental health problem on a regular basis and these problems are often caused by bullying and harassment in the workplace.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Provide appropriate training to all workplace representatives to increase awareness and to provide them with the necessary information to confidently represent members with mental health issues and provide additional support to assist representatives who may be dealing with a member who is suffering from a mental health illness;
- Ensure Unite becomes an organisational signatory to the “Time to Change” campaign;
- Raise awareness of the need to be inclusive in workplace policies. Communicate the Unite position on anti-LGBTQI harassment and bullying. Raise awareness of harassment and bullying of LGBTQI members and offer practical advice and support;
- Encourage LGBTQI members to be involved in the Unite LGBT structure;
- Provide advice and training to representatives on how to negotiate effective and suitable Mental Health Policies in their workplaces;
- Lobby government and the devolved administrations to ensure that UK legislation is fit for purpose and world leading in relation to worker mental health and continue to work with the Labour and Trade Union movement on its campaign to make bullying unlawful;
- Review the current Unite publications on harassment and bullying to ensure they are inclusive of LGBTQI people and produce a model standard set of procedures for making a complaint about harassment and bullying for officers and reps, and develop a web page on the union’s website to signpost members and representatives to appropriate support services in the community and provide general information on dealing with mental health issues in the workplace.

- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of anti-LGBTQI harassment and bullying procedures by protected characteristics in workplaces;
- Give a report on the outcome of this at the next Unite policy conference and regularly update the LGBT National Committee.

## Stress

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Raise awareness amongst union activists of the effect workplace stress has on members' health and wellbeing;
- Encourage safety representatives to pursue employers who do not currently undertake stress risk assessments within the workplace to do so;
- Start a campaign through all Equality officers and Health and Safety officers across all sectors to oblige their employer to abide to the requirements under an employer's duty of care;
- Requests that union health & safety reps report back via their recognised inspection sheets, whether or not stress risk assessments are being undertaken within our members' workplaces.

## Shift Working

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Include as a standard item on our safety reps training 'shift working and the possible impact to our members'.

## Fibromyalgia Awareness

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Create an information pack on fibromyalgia, its symptoms and how these may affect members in the workplace;
- Make this available to all members;
- Encourage reps to make employers aware of the condition so affected members are properly supported in the workplace.

## Food Standards and Hygiene

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Campaign against cuts in food standards and hygiene interventions;
- Publicise these cuts in union publications/leaflets and all other practical means;
- Campaign within the labour movement and other interested organisations for the next Labour Government to prioritise and reverse these cuts when in office.

Policies derived from Composite Motions #26, #27 and Motions 114, 115, 118 and 127 as passed at July 2016 Unite Policy Conference.

# Pensions

## Pensions and Retirement

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Continue to protect members' pensions and deferred pensions from any current or future legislation which seeks to cut members' entitlements;
- Campaign for a decent state pension system for all generations including:
  - strengthening links with the National Pensioners Convention;
  - lobbying the Government to ensure all existing and future pensioners receive a state pension set at 70% of the Living Wage outside London (as determined by the Living Wage Foundation);
  - calling for annual increases in pensions to be linked to the best of wages, CPI, RPI or 2.5%;
  - rejecting any further attempts to raise the state pension age.
- Encourage all branches with retired members to develop closer links with local pensioner/retired member groups including those linked to the National Pensioners Convention;
- Actively support 'Generations United'.

Policies derived from Composite Motion #31  
as passed at July 2016 Unite Policy Conference

# Industrial

## Sports Direct and Extension of Campaign

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Continue to support Sports Direct campaign including:
  - build relationships and influence investors and shareholders;
  - increase union density and start to build internal organisation;
  - move workers from precarious contracts into fixed hour permanent contracts;
  - move minimum pay bands to the real living wage;
  - implement the 'Fight for 5' agreement.
- Review its tactics to establish a best practice guide to be used in future campaigns;
- Establish the next major company to target in the campaign against precarious employment;
- When expanding this campaign into wider campaigns on precarious employment linking in with the 'Fight for Five' campaign.

## Collective Bargaining and National Agreements

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Build a sustained campaign to ensure that collective bargaining remains at the top of the union's agenda;
- Look into Unite's National Agreements in all sectors.

## Public Sector Redundancy Rules

Unite opposes the Government's so called "modernisation" of public sector redundancy rules.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Challenge myths and propaganda about "gold plated" public sector pensions and "massive" redundancy pay-outs;
- Organise joint action, involving all public sector workers in Unite, against proposals to cut redundancy and pension compensation;
- Work with TUC and affiliate unions on coordinated lobbies of parliament, demonstrations and industrial action, in defence of redundancy and pensions agreements.

## Organising Agency Workers

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- A robust strategy for the organising of agency workers.

## Decent Work

Unite young members launched 'Decent Work for All' campaign which concentrates on five principles which would ensure 'Decent Work for All'. These are:

1. A wage you can live on
2. Safe, secure work
3. Guaranteed hours each week
4. Training, development and career opportunities
5. A collective voice and union representation.

The 'Decent Work For All' Campaign has already challenged the notion that young people are not interested in trade unions.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Support and roll out the 'Decent Work For All' campaign;
- Encourage every sector to adopt the principles of the campaign and use it as a format for recruiting young members;
- Promote the campaign via affiliated bodies, particularly the Labour Party, and winning the argument for 'decent work for all' along these principles and policies that implement them.

## 'Partnership', 'Employee Participation' and Effective Workplace Organisation

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Develop effective education material and training tailored for reps in each sector with the following aims:
  - explain the dangers of 'partnership' to building effective independent organisation in the workplace;
  - tackle management ideologies and educate workplace reps about management strategies that seek to undermine independent workplace organisation;
  - equip workplace reps with a toolkit to deal with management techniques aimed at 'improving efficiencies' such as team working, performance management, performance related pay, and absence management.
  - integrate our opposition to 'partnership', 'employee participation' and management techniques into our existing and evolving organising strategy.

## **Challenge of the Digital Economy**

The accelerated capacity of automation and artificial intelligence now represents a threat to the security and availability of work in a way never previously experienced.

Unite will lead the way on this by creating policies that result in technology helping to create a better society and environment and is not just used as the ultimate cheap labour resource to only create redundancies.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Establish a working party across industrial sectors to monitor this threat to our members' (and future members') employment prospects;
- Implement an industrial strategy that includes a Manufacturing Combine to prepare the manufacturing sector for the serious impact that 'Industry 4.0' will have on employment and our members working conditions in the manufacturing sector.

## **Taxation on "Tool of Trade" Company Cars**

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Lobby HMRC with the aim of reducing the taxation applied to "Tool of Trade" company cars.

## Tax Reporting for Self-Employed

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Campaign against the added burden on the self-employed of quarterly updates to HMRC rather than an annual tax return planned from 2018.

## The BBC

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Campaign along with the Federation of Entertainment Unions to keep the BBC as:
  - a public funded broadcaster;
  - a national broadcaster committed to regional investment and programming;
  - a universal broadcaster committed to maintain a universal service funded by the licence fee or equivalent;
  - independent from Government committed to on screen diversity that reflects a modern UK;
  - a quality broadcaster committed to producing and commissioning high end drama and comedy;
  - a responsible broadcaster committed to fair pay and conditions for its employees.
- Oppose the proposal that transfers the cost of the 'over 75s free TV licence' from the Government to the BBC in 2020.

Policies derived from Composite Motions #28, #29 and Motions 128, 130,131, 132, 135, 141, 142 as passed at the July 2016 Unite Policy Conference.

# Equalities

## Precarious Work and Women

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Work to highlight the negative impact of precarious work on women;
- Help to implement gender equality measures across the labour market;
- Work with other sectors to shift policy to focus on the creation of quality jobs and an end to zero hours contracts;
- Take up the challenge of organising workers in precarious work alongside others in the trade union movement.

## Ensuring Equal Pay Implementation

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Raise awareness of the continued existence of the gender pay gap;
- Address the following:
  - pay discrimination that women still face when having children or asking for part time hours;
  - women are under-represented in management positions;
  - low paid women are disproportionately affected by cuts to jobs.
- Carry out a comprehensive equality impact assessment where cuts are being implemented.

## Creating Supportive Environments for Breastfeeding

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Promote and support effective workplace policies which accommodate mothers who wish to continue breastfeeding following a return to work.

## Childcare – Impact on Women’s Activism

Unite notes the huge drain on income that childcare has on parents and the difficulty our members can face accessing it and how participation in lay structures is limited for working parents and carers.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Campaign for affordable childcare places that meet the needs of parents and carers;
- Campaign against the rising cost of childcare;
- Ensure that conferences and committees are held at appropriate times to allow those with childcare needs to attend.

## **Stand Up to Racism Campaign**

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Support and publicise Stand Up To Racism's delegations to Calais and their other refugee activities;
- Consider donating and affiliating to Stand Up To Racism;
- Support Stand Up To Racism's national demonstrations;
- Encourage branches to affiliate to and to send delegates to conferences of Stand Up To Racism;
- Raise the need for urgent government action within our constitutional committees, and to raise the issue with members through our website, and through our communications and publications;
- Call for the Government in conjunction with other governments within the EU to offer places to people stuck in the refugee camps.

## **Immigration Act 2016**

Unite believes that the new Immigration Act will exacerbate problems of increasing discrimination against BAEM workers by introducing measures to criminalise undocumented migrant workers, restrict migrants' access to services, increase document checks, and withdraw support for failed asylum seekers and their children.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Raising awareness of the impact of the new Immigration Act;
- Highlighting key findings from this Act and its ideological attacks on BAEM people;
- Raising concerns with the Labour Party on the impact of the act on BAEM people, including work with the National BAEM committee to lobby MPs on the negative consequences of the Act;

- Campaign for a regularisation programme commitment from the Labour Party for undocumented workers;
- Developing adequate training and briefing on the new law;
- Building links with other Commonwealth groups such as international diaspora for Caribbean, Asian and African people;
- Re-enforcing a stronger campaign for migrant and immigrant workers including collecting data and evidence on the effect of the Act on migrant minorities and society at large;
- Engaging with the Regional and National BAEM committees on issues that affect BAEM nationally and internationally;
- Working closely with the union's Equality Department and empowering the BAEM Committee to campaign against the negative strategy embedded within the Act;
- Building international links with other commonwealth countries on common issues;
- Ensuring that all equality strands are represented in Unite's international campaigns and delegations;
- Campaign widely to challenge the idea that it is acceptable that all ordinary citizens shall be 'border guards' on everyone.

## **LGBT Rights in Jamaica**

Unite recognises the campaigns and commitments made in fighting for the rights of LGBT people globally. Much has been achieved but some Commonwealth countries, including on the Island of Jamaica, and some European countries have legislation criminalising individuals for being LGBT.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Contact trade unions in Jamaica with the intention of creating dialogue on how we can improve the lives of LGBT people;
- Lobby our MPs and Jamaican MPs;
- Promote awareness of what is happening to the LGBT community in Jamaica through our union;
- Work with support groups in Jamaica, other Commonwealth countries and European countries to educate the community and promote LGBT equality.

## **LGBT Survivor Pensions Equality**

Current legislation allows employers to pay survivor benefits to the same-sex spouse or civil partner only in respect of the pension accrued since the civil partnership legislation introduced in 2005. This enshrines inequality in the law and means that the same sex spouse or civil partner could receive a smaller pension than an opposite sex spouse would receive in the same circumstances. The same discrepancy also applies to women who accrued pensions before the Sex Discrimination Act and Equal Pay Act were passed.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Campaign for a change to the law to enshrine equality in survivor pensions, regardless of the gender or sexual orientation of the worker earning the pension;
- Workplace reps/shop stewards to negotiate agreements for employers to go beyond the legal minimum and offer genuine equality in survivor pensions for spouses of all workers, regardless of the gender or sexual orientation of the worker.

## **Transgender Rights**

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Work with Trans people and the trade union and labour movements to put pressure on the Government to implement the recommendations in the Government Review of Transgender Equality report as soon as possible.

## **Right to Receive Information in Accessible Formats**

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Lobby the Government to ensure Local Authorities allocate moneys for the production of accessible information and sign language interpreting;
- Raise awareness among members of the importance of providing accessible information to increase the independence of the individual and to question their work environment;
- Encourage best practice within Unite;
- Call on the TUC to encourage all unions to practice in the campaign and work with Unite.

## Equalities Monitoring and Self-Identification

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Build upon and report on the targeted equality monitoring campaign;
- Encourage LGBT and disabled workers to self-identify;
- National campaign around the importance of self-identification targeted to LGBT members;
- Reps and officers of branches and workplaces to do an Equality Audit;
- Use every opportunity to ensure equality monitoring is fully completed.

## Hidden disability and neurodiversity awareness

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Provide better education around disabilities and neurodiversity;
- Campaign on the issue of hidden disabilities, raising awareness of all disabilities, working with the membership equality strands and leading charitable organisations;
- Review education and resources.

## Equalities Training

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Equalities training course in each region help build capacity and confidence about equalities.

## Training and Support for Disabled Reps

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Offering an enhanced support network to disabled members in becoming and remaining a union rep.

Policies derived from Composite Motions #19, #20 and Motions 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 79, 81, 82, 83, 89 and 90 as passed at July 2016 Unite Policy Conference.

# Rights for Workers and their Unions

## Trade Union Act

Unite condemns the vindictive attacks placed on the trade union movement by the Trade Union Act, an attempt to further weaken trade unions' ability to organise and to strike.

Unite welcomes the TUC's commitment to "develop a comprehensive strategy which includes":

- giving maximum possible political, industrial and financial support to trade unions that may find themselves outside the law;
- building a mass movement to defeat these attacks;
- supporting workers taking joint/coordinated industrial action;
- a co-ordinated national day of action across the UK;
- defending any union attacked under anti-union laws.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- National and regional Disputes Units ensuring best practice and developing a Unite standard in our approach to running industrial action campaigns;
- A 'gold standard' of training for shop stewards, branch officials, officers and staff;
- A fit for purpose social media strategy and relevant training;
- A rapid reaction campaign strategy to defend union activists disciplined or dismissed for trade union activity;
- Consideration of a range of direct action techniques during industrial disputes and recognition campaigns;
- Work with other trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party and with Labour Party activists to ensure the Labour Party commits itself to:
  - support for defiance of the Tories' anti-union laws;
  - repeal of all Tory anti-union laws from 1979 onwards by the next Labour government.

## E-balloting for Industrial Action and Executive Bodies

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Campaign and lobby government to change existing legislation to allow trade unions to use digital and electronic media to conduct ballots for both internal union positions and industrial action ballots.

## Redundancy Rights

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Work with the TUC and the Labour Party to put pressure on the Government to make it harder for corporations to sack UK workers;
- Work with EWC members to campaign on this issue at EU level;
- Run a campaign to improve the redundancy severance pay.

## Agency Workers Directive and 'Swedish Derogation'

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Demand from the Government an immediate amendment to regulations and associated employment laws and practices that provide employers with legalised mechanisms to circumvent provisions contained within the European Agency Workers Directive;
- Demand that the Government ensure basic employment rights for all workers with a real living wage as set by the Living Wage Foundation;
- Demand the Labour Party adopts the above points as policy for the next general election;
- Work with other trade unions and TUC to explore legal challenges to the current interpretation and utilisation of the 'Swedish Derogation';
- Campaign and lobby to end this practice, develop a clear industrial campaign across all sectors and pursue an end to the exploitation of casual/agency labour.

## Blacklisting

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Calling for the next Labour Government to enact meaningful legislation that would outlaw any form of blacklisting;
- Campaign for any company with a history of blacklisting that has not demonstrated it no longer blacklists to be prevented from tendering for government contracts and removed from preferred supplier lists.

## Casualisation of Employment

Unite opposes the increased casualisation of employment in the UK. The legal default should be for all workers to have employed status with the onus on the employer to prove a person is genuinely self-employed. All workers should be entitled to trade union and employment rights granted to employees.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- A cross-sectoral campaign to educate workers who benefit from secure employment on the plight of those less fortunate, with the objective to defeat attempts to weaken the rights of workers across the UK using increased casualisation.

## Zero Hours Contracts

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Campaign and lobby government for zero hour contracts to be outlawed.

## Minimum Pay Rates for Working Anti-Social Hours

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Call on the Government to enact legislation so that the minimum hourly rate of pay for:
  - all work on Sundays and Bank Holidays is at double time;
  - all work over the worker's standard contracted working week or 37 hours, whichever is less, and all work on Saturdays is at time and a half;
  - all work between 7.00 pm and 7.00 am is at time and a half and if 1) or 2) above apply at time and a half of the enhanced rate stipulated in 1) or 2) above.

- Gain the support of other trade unions, the TUC, the Labour Party and all who will help ensure the necessary legislation is enacted.

## **Workers' Representatives on Company Boards**

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- The objective of half the board of all private companies with more than 2000 employees comprising of workers' representatives (and appropriate representation on boards of smaller companies);
- Lobby for legislation that mandates for worker representation on the board of all large British private companies;
- Lobby the Labour Party to adopt this objective as party policy.

## **Private Equity Ownership of UK Businesses**

Private equity ownership has played an increasingly prominent role in the economy in recent years acquiring more private businesses and reaching further into our public services. This growth is concerning as this often means instability for working people, asset stripping of important businesses and services, and secret governance. Private equity structures lack the transparency of public limited companies.

Unite is particularly concerned where private equity has moved into infrastructure and strategically important projects in search of a profit but has achieved this by stripping assets to then walking away.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Campaign to ensure:
  - a high level public enquiry into the expansion of private equity ownership in the UK;
  - measures to compel private equity companies to commit to longer term investment in businesses it takes over, and with respect to the stability of the supply chain;
  - measures to ensure that private equity companies operate in a transparent manner.

Policies derived from Composite Motions #33, #34, #35, #36 and Motions 56, 170, 171, 173, 178, 180 as passed at July 2016 Unite Policy Conference.

# Political and Labour Party

## Regional Devolution in England

Unite notes the significant and rapid developments concerning devolution and decentralisation in England including the Government's Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill and for combined authorities to have greater responsibility for areas including health, social care, and transport. Unite also notes announcements in the 2015 Spending Review/Autumn Statement concerning localisation of business rates and the ability of local councils to add 2 per cent to council tax to fund social care.

Unite supports the integration of health and social care, but both need proper public funding. The devolution of transport powers should not result in further damaging fragmentation of public transport networks nor compromise the need for a properly accountable and integrated transport system.

Devolution proposals need to be seen in the context of the Government's damaging programme of austerity and savage cuts to local authority funding. The business rate and council tax changes will not meet the funding gap and risk a 'race to the bottom' as authorities compete against each other.

In principle, Unite is not opposed to devolution. Properly accountable and resourced devolution can present opportunities. However, without certain safeguards there are threats posed by devolution such as:

- using devolution to pass responsibility for central government spending cuts to local authorities;
- the potential to weaken employment standards, terms and conditions, collective bargaining and national agreements;
- further fragmentation, outsourcing and privatisation of public services;
- increasing local and regional inequalities;
- problems with democracy and accountability and the democratic accountability of a devolved regional mayor.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Assess the potential impact of devolution within the Regions and particularly to develop a collective bargaining strategy, which includes a guide to action for union activists and members, to defend jobs and employment terms and conditions;
- Organise a special convention to examine the options and effects of devolution in the regions;

- Work with relevant groups, including unions, community groups, combined authorities and businesses, to ensure any moves towards local devolution promote a positive and progressive agenda. This to include:
  - a fair funding settlement for local authorities and sufficient resources for devolution to work;
  - properly funded public services;
  - a fully transparent, democratic and accountable process;
  - genuine stakeholder engagement – including trade unions and collective bargaining – in any new devolved bodies;
  - devolution to be part of an overall national economic development strategy that ensures a reduction in regional and local inequalities;
  - promoting secure and stable local employment;
  - retention of national collective bargaining;
  - supporting in-house services and opposing any moves to outsourcing and privatisation of services.
- Oppose any such proposals to implement regional devolution without a referendum of the electorate in that area;
- Oppose the concept of directly elected mayors without a mechanism of full democratic accountability.

## **Anti-Fascism**

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Organise in the areas, both geographical and industrial, that new entrants to this country seek employment;
- Survey members in areas shown to have exploited such workers, to gain intelligence as to whereabouts and issues requiring action;
- Use the talents that lie within our union (e.g. members of BAME group) to support those we target for organisation;
- Ensure that opposing the current rise in fascist activity is an agenda item throughout our structures;
- Ensure that support is put in place to assist local groups to take direct action in opposing fascist demonstrations.

## Labour Party Leadership

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Call upon all CLPs to urge their MPs to unite behind the democratically elected leader of the Party;
- Urge all concerned to re-double their efforts to ensure Jeremy Corbyn is elected the next Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

## Re-selection of Labour MPs

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Ensure democratic accountability and the rights of party members to select candidates that reflect their views and supports the need for mandatory reselection of Labour MPs in each Parliament;
- Support moves to bring more democracy into policy making by returning powers to the Party Conference.

## Constitutional Reform

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Continue campaigning against Conservative gerrymandering of the electoral roll and parliamentary boundaries;
- Campaign for votes at 16 for local, parliamentary, and European elections and all other statutory public ballots;
- Call for an elected second chamber in the UK and the abolition of the House of Lords made up of hereditary and appointed members;
- Work with the Labour Party to establish a system of list and constituency seats for the Euro elections.

Policies derived from Composite Motions #32, #41 and Motions 153, 159, 161, 162 as passed at July 2016 Unite Policy Conference.

# Social Action

## Defending Communities

Unite supports a thriving voluntary sector and genuine community control of local groups.

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Campaign to retain the sector's right to speak out on issues of economic and other injustice;
- Support campaigns such as the new 'Grants for Good' campaign which highlight the importance of grant aid in empowering community solutions;
- Campaign to ensure that there is a real Living Wage and that all third sector agencies pay it;
- Engage in the work being under taken by the Shadow Minister for the sector, in order to build an alternative policy framework;
- Continue to build links across members in the public sector, third sector, equalities committees and Unite Community branches to rebuild a decent social security system, with first class services in the public and voluntary sectors, which put service users and communities at their heart;
- Campaign for the retention and promotion of the JNC as the collective bargaining arrangement for 'Community, Youth and Play Workers'.

## A Commissioner for the Elderly

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Work with the Labour Party, TUC and National Pensioners Convention for the creation of a UK Older People's Commissioner post under a future Labour Government.

## Cold Weather Deaths

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Call on the Government to take seriously the statistics concerning deaths through winter cold, especially among the frail and elderly, and to take action to reduce deaths due to cold and poorly insulated homes by the end of this Parliament.

- Put pressure on the Government through lobbying and giving support to pensioner groups to ensure that these figures are reduced to zero in the lifetime of this Parliament.

## **'Unite in Schools'**

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Ensure that the 'Unite in Schools' programme is suitably funded, structured and supported throughout the regions and nationally.

## **HIV Support Services**

Unite recognises the importance of HIV services for individuals and for communities nationally and internationally. Under the pressures of Conservative government cuts, local authorities are cutting HIV services with no continuation plan or services in places to support communities.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Lobby government on behalf of all HIV service providers, and our members, standing up for all HIV support services and demand that there are no closures, or reduction in the level of support that these services are able to provide;
- A national campaign to raise awareness of HIV issues within the workplace and outside of it, highlighting the lives these organisations have saved and educating Reps on how they can best support members living with HIV.

## **Mobility Scooters and Insurance**

Drivers of mobility scooters are not required to have insurance or a licence. Unite is concerned that mobility scooter users may be vulnerable to costly claims in the event of accidents.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Call on the Government to look into the issue of insurance of people using mobility scooters.

## **Statutory Youth Service**

Unite believes that all young people across the UK should have access to a statutory funded, wide-ranging and universal youth service with ring-fenced

funding from central government which is delivered through local authorities working closely with schools and youth voluntary organisations.

***Unite is committed to:***

- Lobby Councillors and MPs to demand a statutorily funded, universally accessible youth service and to link up with their local #ChooseYouth campaign;
- Links with youth workers' branches to be made in reaching out to younger members.

## **Save the Equality and Human Rights Commission**

Unite believes that there will be major impacts of the cuts to the EHRC - particularly to victims of discrimination or human rights abuses who don't qualify for legal aid, can't afford tribunal fees, aren't a member of a trade union, and whose local law centre or CAB has closed.

Unite is deeply concerned at the increase of hate crime and racist incidents in the wake of Brexit and believes the EHRC has a crucial role in advising civil society and the police on how to address these issues and support victims of hate crime.

***Unite is committed to:***

- Call on Unite members to contact their MPs to ask them to sign the EDM and write to Nicky Morgan MP to stop the cuts to the EHRC;
- Back the campaign to save the EHRC.

Policies derived from Composite Motions #37, Motions 181, 182, 183, 187, 188, 189 and Emergency Motion #3 as passed at July 2016 Unite Policy Conference.

# Energy and Environment

## Public Transport as a Part of Our Greener Cities Agenda

Unite supports a thriving voluntary sector and genuine community control of local groups.

Unite applauds the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), and Unite's role within it, to push for public investment in public transport. In particular we applaud the joint protocol agreed between ITF and UITP (public transport employers' body) to promote public transport as a major contributor to a Greener Cities Agenda. Unite rejects the approach of the EU Commission whose neo-liberal dogma directs Europe towards even more competition and free markets in a failed ideological bid to achieve improved public transport.

Unite supports the re-regulation of local public transport services and for local government to have greater powers to implement this.

Unite applauds the 1 million Climate Jobs Campaign which seeks to offer a positive alternative to austerity by way of public investment in sustainable growth, to create good jobs, expand the economy and generate more tax income. A serious element of this strategy is the public investment in public transport.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Campaign for the expansion and development of public transport;
- Engage the Labour Party in this strategy and campaign at a European level to oppose the free market agenda of the EU Commission.

## Balanced Energy Policy

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Campaign vigorously for a balanced energy policy with government and opposition parties in order to secure our energy supply into the future;
- Campaign industrially and politically for any future UK Government to guarantee the long term security of energy supply by maximising the use of indigenous forms of power generation including tidal power, wind generation, nuclear power, gas and the use of British coal in coal fired power stations using clean coal technology and carbon capture systems where possible;
- Campaign for this policy to include green energy measures which includes tidal turbines and geothermal initiatives.

- Campaign to ensure that there are robust job opportunities with appropriate pay rates in every part of the energy industry;
- Campaign to ensure that all members affected by changing technology are provided with opportunities for training and redeployment;
- Put a relevant motion to Labour Party Conference.

## Public Ownership of Utilities

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- A national campaign to highlight the extent to which private ownership of utilities companies is to the detriment of both consumers and employees;
- Campaign for government to establish a modern day Central Electricity Generating Board and allow it to build with UK public money via 'energy bonds' if necessary, new, diverse generating capacity, fit for purpose, in the UK's long term interests and aligned with the union's energy policy.

## Fracking

Unite believes that all Unconventional Gas Extraction methods, including Underground Coal Gasification (UCG), Deep UCG and Coal Bed Methane extraction (CBM) should be included in Unite's policy opposing Hydraulic Fracturing (Fracking) and that the licensing powers for all such operations in Scotland should be devolved to Scotland.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Calls upon government at all levels to progress clear and unambiguous legislation to prevent any destructive and environmentally damaging extraction methods;
- Continue to protect the interests and jobs of these members and to seek to organise and represent workers engaged in fracking related work;
- Ensuring that robust health and safety procedures are in place for those workers working within this industry;
- Ensuring that there are minimum standards in place relating to pay, terms and conditions of employment for those workers within the industry.

## Action on Climate Change

Unite recognises that thanks to international trade union pressure led by the ITUC, the crucial Paris COP talks in December 2015 delivered an international agreement recognising the seriousness of the threat posed by climate change. Unite notes that whilst welcoming this important agreement, environmental experts are critical of the lack of commitment in the agreement to concrete action. Unite acknowledges the One Million Climate Jobs campaign<sup>1</sup>.

Unite welcomes Jeremy Corbyn's proposal for an Energy Commission to explore effective policy proposals to green our energy supply and reduce our carbon gas emissions.

### ***Unite is committed to:***

- Commit to research and future work on proposals for a Climate Diversification Agency with the aim of bringing green jobs to those workers at risk of losing employment through the phasing out of "dirty energy", and to work closely with Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party to make this a reality in the next Labour Government;
- Consider how to raise Unite's profile in this campaign;
- Develop a Just Transition programme which communicates with and involves our members in extractive and energy intensive industries;
- Take a lead in lobbying the Labour Party, the labour movement and other sympathetic social/political movements to adopt strong climate action policies;
- Playing a full and active part in Jeremy Corbyn's proposed Energy Commission, including of a 'just transition' and the need for serious work on job diversification to protect our members' jobs.

<sup>1</sup><http://www.climate-change-jobs.org/>

# Union Administration & Membership Services

## Support for Branch Secretaries

### *Unite is committed to:*

- E-mail notifications to Branch Secretaries for the following:
  - when members join or leave;
  - when members fall into arrears;
  - when members are placed into a branch or transferred;
  - any changes to member's details.

## Procurement by Unite

### *Unite is committed to:*

- A regularly updated approved list that details unionised companies for carrying out services;
- The companies the union uses prove that third parties they use are UK based and unionised;
- A list of approved print and media companies that are unionised and uphold agreements is supplied to the Labour Party and Party units;
- This policy enforced and monitored by nationally and regionally and reported to relevant committees.

## Fully Constituted Branches

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Members being placed into properly constituted and working branches.

## Emergency Motions

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Ensuring a route for Emergency Motions.

Policies derived from Motions 190, 192, 199 and 200 as passed at the July 2016 Unite Policy Conference.

# Where to get help

You never know when you might need advice with a problem at work. So it's good to know Unite is here to help.

If you know who your local branch rep is, contact them in the first instance. Or you can contact your Unite regional office for more information. Listed on the map are the main regional office details. Unite also has a wide network of district offices, one of which may be closer to where you live. You can find their details from the region's main office or on the regions sections of the Unite website [www.unitetheunion.org](http://www.unitetheunion.org)

If you need to email someone at Unite the formula is [firstname.lastname@unitetheunion.org](mailto:firstname.lastname@unitetheunion.org)

The union's headquarters is

Unite, Unite House,  
128 Theobalds Road,  
London, WC1X 8TN

Tel: 020 7611 2500

**Ireland**  
**Belfast Regional Office**  
26-34 Antrim Road,  
Belfast, BT15 2AA  
tel \*02890 020418  
(\*04890 when calling from the ROI)  
**Dublin Office**  
55-56 Middle Abbey Street, Dublin 1  
tel 01 873 4577





**Scotland**  
John Smith House,  
145/165 West Regent Street  
Glasgow G2 4RZ  
tel 0141 404 5424

**North East, Yorkshire and  
Humberside**  
55 Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BW  
tel 0113 236 4830

**North West**  
Jack Jones House,  
2 Churchill Way,  
Liverpool L3 8EF  
tel 0151 203 1907

**East Midlands**  
Unit 2, Pride Point Drive,  
Pride Park,  
Derby DE24 8BX  
tel 01332 548400

**Wales**  
1 Cathedral Road,  
Cardiff CF11 9SD  
tel 02920 394 521

**London and Eastern**  
33-37 Moreland Street, Islington,  
London EC1V 8BB  
tel 020 8800 4281

**West Midlands**  
Transport House,  
9-17 Victoria Street,  
West Bromwich B70 8HX  
tel 0121 553 6051

**South East**  
South East Regional Centre,  
Chalvey Road East,  
Slough SL1 2LS  
tel 01753 313 820

**South West**  
Tony Benn House,  
Victoria Street,  
Bristol BS1 6AY  
tel 0117 923 0555







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