Summary of decisions of the July 2014 Unite Policy Conference
## Contents

- Introduction by Len McCluskey, Unite General Secretary 5
- Economy 7
- Environment 12
- Equalities 14
- Global Solidarity & Peace 20
- Health & Safety at Work 26
- Industrial 31
- Organising & Campaigning Against Austerity 36
- Pensions 38
- Political & Labour Party 39
- Social Policy 43
- Trade Union & Employment Rights 51
- Union & Membership Services 56
In July 2014 around 600 delegates, guests and observers came together in my home town of Liverpool for Unite’s third National Policy Conference.

Over five days 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 2014 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, and Regional and Equalities Committees.

We debated and made policy on a wide range of issues important to our members and their families. These included the precarious nature of the ‘flexible labour market’ including zero hours contracts; the crisis in housing; the dismantling of our National Health Service, and much else besides.

During the conference we highlighted the themes of ‘jobs’, ‘homes’ and ‘health’. But we also identified a fourth theme: ‘hope’. As I said in my speech to conference, a strong union is the only hope for millions of our citizens, and Unite is here to give hope. Not only are we the first and strongest line of defence for people at work, but we are extending the reach of the labour movement beyond the workplace.

But I also made it clear that the most important challenge facing Unite over the eleven months following conference is evicting the ruinous Conservative coalition from office and ensuring a Labour Government at the 2015 General Election. We have so much we can take pride in from our past. But we also have to make the future for ourselves. These policies will help us fight this government and work with Labour for a progressive alternative.

Len McCluskey,
Unite General Secretary
December 2014
Economy

A central role for public ownership

Energy and utilities

Unite believes that a publicly-owned and publicly accountable national energy corporation, incorporating the grid as an integral component, would be best placed to plan for and serve Britain’s vital long-term energy needs, with cross-subsidies where necessary and appropriate and any financial surpluses returned to the public purse, and providing secure and well paid employment for energy sector workers.

Unite believes utilities including energy, gas, electric and associated distribution and generating network, water and the postal system should brought back into full public ownership. Any board to be made of at least 50% of employees elected by the employees, the board and senior management should receive no more than 6 times the pay of the lowest paid employee, and any bonus to be shared equally between employees and be no more than 5% of income with all remaining profit to be re-invested in that industry. No political party can be in a majority position on any board or senior management structure.

Unite is committed to:

- Work with the next Labour Government and conduct a massive campaign to try and ensure that Britain’s energy and utilities industry and Royal Mail should be returned to public ownership.

Transport

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. Buses should be brought back under local authority control with adequate funds to be run as a service for people.

Unite is committed to:

- The immediate lobbying of the Government for the need for trains and buses to be brought back into the public domain;
- Campaign for the Labour Party to include in its manifesto for the 2015 General Election commitments to bring the railway industry and bus transport back into public ownership; reverse the funding cut to the Department for Transport and Transport for London; and for the next Labour Government to re-nationalise railways and the rest of the transport sector, which was privatised by successive Tory Governments.
**Collective bargaining**

Unite believes it is a disgrace that Britain fails to honour its obligations under ILO Conventions 87 and 98 to promote collective bargaining. The huge and growing gap in income between rich and poor in Britain is at least in part due to the collapse in collective bargaining and the ease with which wealthy employers and rich corporations can maximise profits on the basis of wage exploitation.

Unite welcomes the Labour Party's commitment to uprating the Minimum Wage and extending the principle of the Living Wage, but this will only deal with very worst cases at the bottom of the labour market.

**Unite is committed to:**

- Campaign for Labour policy to include the active promotion of collective bargaining as the best and most effective means of regulating wages in the economy, ensuring fairness and respect at work and helping to narrow the unacceptable gap in wealth between rich and poor.

**Industrial democracy and common ownership**

Unite has a proud history of advocating workers’ involvement and control and believes that such moves present an opportunity to reinvigorate discussions on increasing industrial democracy.

Unite recognises the challenges and dangers, particularly if the focus is on employee representation rather than trade union representation and if employee involvement schemes are used by employers to bypass and weaken trade union involvement in consultation and negotiation structures.

The position of the trade union movement on this issue should be based on the need for:

- An extension of trade union involvement in collective bargaining, including the promotion of recognition and sectoral bargaining;
- Full access by trade union representatives to all relevant company information, including financial information;
- The election of trade union representatives, elected by and accountable to workers in the workplace, to company/industry forums and boards;
- The recognition that an extension of accountable forms of public and common ownership is linked to advancing industrial democracy.

**Unite is committed to:**

- Ensure that meetings and educational courses are convened, involving workplace reps in all sectors and areas of our union, to consider the further development of strategy on industrial democracy and common ownership.
**Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP)**
Unite is extremely concerned about the possible negative consequences that could stem from TTIP, the free trade agreement being negotiated between the EU and USA. In particular, European workers would be set in direct competition with the lower labour standards of the USA, and European workers and consumers exposed to products that currently would not meet the environmental or health and safety standards of the EU.

Unite is also extremely concerned that there is a complete lack of transparency about the process and progress of the negotiations and that there is an almost total exclusion of civil society, trade unions and national parliaments from the negotiating process.

**Unite is committed to:**
- A clear position of outright opposition to TTIP and will join with other civil society organisations in mobilising to fully oppose TTIP.

**Manufacturing and British goods**
Unite believes that protecting manufacturing jobs and the niche support functions associated with them is vital to the health and wellbeing of our members and their families.

**Unite is committed to:**
- Lobby the Westminster Parliament, the Irish Parliament and all devolved administrations and raise awareness amongst our members of the continued threat to UK and Irish manufacturing jobs;
- Lobby government to push, encourage and, if necessary, legislate Multinational Companies, government and public departments to buy British goods to support British workers.

**Apprenticeships**
Unite believes that the UK Government must focus on the continuing need for highly skilled apprentices and apprenticeship schemes across the manufacturing sector. This needs to be both government and employer backed with the Government providing financial support and employers providing training in conjunction with outside bodies that not just meet the company’s needs but provide transferrable skills for the world of work.

**Unite is committed to:**
- Lobby government to ensure there are enough high quality sustainable apprentice places in the manufacturing sector;

**Bogus self-employment**
Unite believes that following the Chancellor’s 2013 Autumn Statement on bogus self-employment, it is important to have direct labour in all our workplaces as, otherwise, this reflects the instability of National Agreements plus the effects it has on the economy through the lack of tax and national insurance contributions.

**Unite is committed to:**
- Look into the issues of bogus self-employment, direct labour and national agreements and report back to Unite members.

**Limited liability**
Unite notes that the current law requires limited companies to maximize financial returns to shareholders, preventing them pursuing more important goals such as the good of their employees or the protection of the ecological system. Unite believes that radical reform of the law allowing limited liability is needed.

**Unite is committed to:**
- Initiate a debate across the trade union movement on the question of limited liability, its implications for trade unionists, and the movement’s strategy with regard to it.

Policies derived from Executive Statement ES1, Composite Motions C1, C2, C3, C4, C5 and Motions B13, B16, B17, B25, B26, B27 and B28 as passed at the July 2014 Unite Policy Conference.
Environment

Global warming and renewable energy

Unite believes only government intervention can ensure that big business and the energy companies provide the investment necessary to deliver a sustainable renewable energy programme that moves away from the current reliance on fossil fuels and towards a low carbon economy.

Unite is committed to:
• Campaign for an immediate annual windfall tax on energy companies, with the money raised invested in renewable energy;
• Campaign for profits from energy companies to be re-invested in renewable energy with target dates set for the energy produced from renewables, with an aim to produce 75 per cent of energy from renewables by 2030. If energy companies are unwilling to meet these demands then they be nationalised to ensure a sustainable energy policy;
• All new build homes to be fully energy efficient with built-in solar panels, or other means of renewable energy, capable of maximising energy production;
• Appropriate financial incentives to improve home and business insulation and progress towards zero-emission status including through the use of solar energy, heat pumps, and feeder tariffs;
• Ensuring businesses audit their energy use to be as efficient as possible;

Policies derived from Composite Motions C6, C7 and Motion D7 as passed at July 2014 Unite Policy Conference.

Hydraulic fracturing

Unite notes growing international opposition to hydraulic fracturing (fracking) from both local communities and unions and that the Government continues to aggressively pursue a policy designed to promote hydraulic fracturing.

Unite is committed to:
• Make members aware of the dangers of fracking, actively oppose fracking, to use its influence to prevent fracking operations, advise members not to work on fracking sites nor deliver materials to such operations;
• Support and lobby for a moratorium on all ‘fracking’ activities across the UK;
• Encourage the Labour Party and Labour controlled councils to take actions formally opposing the application of hydraulic fracturing technology within the UK;
• Request Regional Committees support local anti-fracking groups’ activities;
• Encourage members of the union to support campaigns against ‘fracking’ and to link up with local campaigners;
• Support calls for taking profit out of energy production and distribution and favour the public ownership and democratic control of the energy industry with the direct input of local communities and trade unions in decisions on creating a balanced and sustainable energy policy.

Green jobs

Unite notes the threat from climate change and believes that combating climate change requires governmental and inter-governmental co-operation, major investment in public works, and an emergency emission reductions scheme. Tackling climate change, especially through the creation of climate jobs, is of immediate relevance for trade union members and their families.

Unite is committed to:
• Consider affiliation to, support and publicise the work of the Campaign against Climate Change Trade Union Group (CaCCTU UK)\(^1\) and encourage branches to send delegates to its Trade Union Group;
• Co-fund and distribute the “1 Million Climate Jobs” campaign pamphlet\(^2\) as an informative basis for consultation by Unite representatives with local employers as part of initiatives for greening the workplace;
• Campaign against climate change and highlight the devastation that it causes;
• Work more closely and as a priority with the International Trade Union Confederation.

\(^1\) http://www.climate-change-jobs.org/about  
\(^2\) http://www.climate-change-jobs.org/
Equalities

Equalities and union education
Unite believes that education is essential to dealing with discrimination and prejudice.

Unite is committed to:
- Ensure that all educational courses are equality proofed and promote the importance of equality within our Union;
- Equality Impact Assessment training to be included as part of the Regional training programme.

Equality monitoring
Unite aims to ensure that the diversity of our membership is reflected in our representation across the union. Equality monitoring is vital to provide accurate information.

Unite is committed to:
- Developing a targeted ethnic monitoring campaign at branch, workplace, regional and national levels, working with regional BAEM Committees;
- looking at various methods to communicate with members on how to update their records.

Migrant workers
Unite recognises the contribution made by migrant workers and their families to the economy and society in Britain, is opposed to the exploitation of vulnerable migrant workers to undercut local labour, and supports positive actions to address concerns which create unity rather than division among working people.

Unite is committed to:
- Directing Union departments and the Labour Party to strengthen the rights of migrant workers in the UK and to ensure that, in the light of the Agricultural Wages Board (AWB) abolition, companies do not undermine the local employment market;
- Direct Union departments and the Labour Party to bring forward legislation that a company employing migrant workers will provide employment policies and health & safety policies in their own languages;
- Adequate funding for educational initiatives designed to integrate migrant workers and their families into our society while respecting and valuing their own cultural identity;

Trade unions seeking agreements with agencies to guarantee equal terms and conditions for temporary workers;

An end to pay and employment discrimination against migrant workers by employers and agencies which undermine terms and conditions for all workers;

Full and equal employment rights from day one for all, including through mandatory pay audits and strict enforcement of the national minimum wage.

Attacks on migrants
Unite condemns the right wing media frenzy designed to whip up fear about an influx of immigration, especially in the light of relaxation of controls on migration from Romania and Bulgaria to other EU member states from 1st January 2014. Unite also condemns the Coalition Government for capitalising on this fear with new rafts of legislation aimed to make life even worse for migrants to the UK.

Unite demands the Government stop pedalling misinformation when official statistics show that immigration would be beneficial to the UK and calls on leading politicians of all parties not to whip up racial tensions by pandering to anti-immigration sentiment in the false hope of winning support of voters away from UKIP.

Unite is committed to:
- Campaign amongst our members, the community and in the media to make the link between racism, fear of immigration and the deregulation of our labour markets;
- Link with and support the campaigns by Hope Not Hate and Unite Against Fascism to explain and oppose the racism, xenophobia and far-right policies of UKIP, including their opposition to trade union organisation, in the lead-up to and throughout the General Election 2015;
- Re-enforcing the call for collective bargaining to be accepted once more as the best means of regulating pay, distributing income and stopping the race to the bottom which is the real reason why employers are encouraging low cost labour to migrate to this country.

Single assessment for disability benefits, services and schemes
Claiming disability benefits and services in the UK can be both challenging and frustrating for those faced with what amounts to a barrage of tests and assessment in order to access benefits and services.
Hate crime continues to blight the lives of too many people. Unite places equality at its heart and calls for consistency across different types of hate crime, providing both enhanced sentencing provisions and the extension of aggravated offences to include disability, sexual orientation and broad transgender identity.

**Unite is committed to:**

- Continue to address hate crime, including hate based on multiple protected characteristics;
- Publicise the story of Steven Simpson and others experiencing hate crime to raise awareness about the importance of identifying, reporting and prosecuting hate crime;
- Encourage regions and branches to highlight the issues around hate crime, including the impact of dual/multiple protected characteristics, local support and third-party reporting agencies, and support given to reps, organisers and officers to tackle and prevent it;
- Develop training programmes and educational materials to foster social inclusion of groups who identify with one or more protected characteristics and challenge cultures of discrimination and violence in our communities;
- Apply the principles contained herein to all areas of its activity where practical and appropriate to do so.

UK Equal Rights Framework and Union Equality Representatives

Unite condemns the ConDem Government for repealing sections of the Equality Act 2010 aimed at protecting workers from discrimination and harassment and attacking institutions such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The current Government is systematically dismantling the equal rights framework within the UK.

Unite supports the development of Union Equality Representatives and believes that equality reps need a framework of support.

**Unite is committed to:**

- Statutory recognition for Union Equality Representatives, pressing the case with the current Government as well as a manifesto commitment for a future Labour government;
- Campaign for employment rights from day one, continue to oppose the use of zero hour contracts by employers, abolition of fees for employment tribunals and for collective rights to organise and negotiate through a trade union for better pay, terms and conditions;
- Develop a Unite manifesto for equal rights, employment rights and collective bargaining in order to rebuild our machinery for equality.

Black youth unemployment

**Unite is committed to:**

- Demand that the Government urgently sets up a Taskforce made up of community representatives, trade union leaders and faith leaders to consult with young black people, voluntary sector, community and faith organisations, etc. to produce recommendations to address the alarmingly high unemployment rates among young black people;
- Urge the TUC to organise a National Conference, made up of young people, politicians, police, public sector leaders, youth forums, business leaders, etc. to urgently consider and develop strategies to create employment opportunities for all young people;
- Lobby MPs and local councillors to develop local strategies with the private and public sectors to urgently address the problem of high employment rates of all young people with a particular focus on tackling the disproportionate impact of unemployment of Black and Asian young people.
Ongoing monitoring with an appropriate system to produce an Annual Equality and Diversity Audit Report;

Suitable mechanisms for National Committees, Equalities and Industrial, to feed back to the Executive.

Older women and employment
Unite is concerned at the lack of discussion regarding the role of older women in the workplace and the barriers and discrimination that they face from employers.

Unite is committed to:
- support a one day workshop across Unite on this issue to educate activists and older women on their rights at work;
- continue to have an input into the Commission on Older Women to highlight older women’s employment experiences and ensure they are taken into consideration;
- support and have input into all future events that are organised in relation to older women.

Equality issues in the workplace
Austerity measures are having a disproportional effect on the most vulnerable in society, such as disabled people, women and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups.

Unite is committed to:
- Equipping our representatives with the knowledge required to deal effectively with equality issues in the workplace by providing support through local courses on equality law and related issues;
- Raising awareness of the impact austerity policies and attacks on employment rights are having on the most vulnerable of society;
- Calling for government action in providing opportunities through job creation and apprenticeships for all workplaces.

Equality of opportunity and diversity in Unite
Unite values the diversity of its employees and equality of opportunity throughout the union.

Unite is committed to:
- Carry out an Equality Audit of employees;
- Annual reporting that will include starters and leavers, plus internal movement of staff;
- Develop and promote a recruitment and career development strategy that enshrines the principles of equality and diversity;
- Constructive and practical measures that encourage and enable applicants and employees from under-represented groups to progress;

Policies derived from Composite Motion 8 and Motions E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, E6, E7, E8, E12, E13 and E14 as passed at July 2014 Unite Policy Conference.
The European Union

Britain’s relationship with the European Union is likely to be a central issue at the next General Election, both because of the rise of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and David Cameron’s pledge to hold an “in/out” referendum if re-elected.

Unite therefore believes that the movement needs to give the most careful consideration to its policy towards the EU in order to avoid losing ground on this issue. Labour must give no ground to the racist anti-immigrant rhetoric of UKIP, and must expose the ‘Tories’ capitulation to xenophobia and right-wing media attacks on the EU.

Unite maintains the view that Britain is better off within the EU than it would be if we left – such a departure could have a dramatic negative effect on manufacturing investment in particular. It would also deprive British workers of the continuing social protections offered by EU legislation in many areas, including workplace equality and family-friendly rights, protections which neither Tory nor “New Labour” governments would have been likely to have introduced at a UK level.

However, the current austerity and neo-liberal policy direction of the European Commission has imposed great suffering on the people of Ireland, Greece, Spain, Portugal and elsewhere, and has seriously diluted the social policy agenda which was once one of the EU’s attractions for the labour movement. Mass unemployment has been imposed on countries within the Euro-zone in particular. In addition, EU directives and court judgments have significantly weakened workers’ rights, undermining collective bargaining and wage levels in the name of “labour market flexibility”, as well as promoting privatisation of public economic assets and services.

A policy which combines uncritical support for the present working of the European Union while denying any opportunity for a referendum on Britain’s membership is thus likely to be an electoral millstone for Labour at the General Election.

Unite is committed to:

- Calling on the Labour leadership to urgently reconsider its approach to the question of a referendum on Britain’s membership of the EU, on the grounds that this issue can never be resolved except on the basis of a clear democratic mandate;
- Making it clear that Unite would, on the balance of advantage at present, argue for a vote for Britain to stay in the EU in such a referendum while also campaigning against the neo-liberal agenda being promoted from Brussels.

Workers Uniting

Unite welcomes the continuing development of our global union with the USW3, Workers Uniting4 and the initiatives to bring together lay union reps and officials from Unite & USW and campaigns on trade union rights, equalities, union organising and the EU-US Free Trade Agreement.

Unite is committed to:

- Increase the wider involvement of our memberships through more regular and updated information on Workers Uniting being published in union publications and social media;
- Regular exchanges of lay union reps in companies and sectors where both unions have representation and involvement;
- Develop a common response and approach to multi-national companies and to pursue a policy of establishing joint collective bargaining in companies where our unions have members and representation.

Israel and Palestine

Unite restates its commitment to existing policy on Palestine and the active involvement of the union at regional, national and international level at ending the Israeli occupation and bringing about a just and lasting peace. The siege on Gaza must be lifted and the Palestinian people in Gaza must be able to travel and interact freely with neighbouring states.

Unite believes that the continuing arrest, detention and torture of Palestinian children, in contravention of international law and human rights treaties, is part of a deliberate policy to criminalise and intimidate the general Palestinian population.

Unite is committed to:

- Raise awareness, build support, campaign and lobby for a free and independent Palestine;
- Highlight the suffering, and support the Palestinian population in Gaza living under siege; Palestinians living in the West Bank who are seeing their land illegally seized by Israeli settlements and are forced to navigate checkpoints to go to work, school and hospital; and in Israel, where they are treated as second class citizens and subject to racist laws;

3 http://www.usw.org/
4 http://www.workersuniting.org/
Latin America

Unite is concerned at the inability of many intended visitors seeking support and solidarity to obtain entry visas to the UK such as Andrés Arauz, Ecuador’s Vice Minister for Economic and Social Development in June 2014.

Cuba, Venezuela and Ecuador are regional leaders in promoting an alternative to US imposed neo-liberal policies contained within the Free Trade Area of the Americas treaty.

Unite supports the PSUV government of Nicolás Maduro and the CBST trade union confederation in the struggle against the extreme right wing attempting a new coup d’état in Venezuela. Unite believes that support for progressive Latin America is best channelled through the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign and Friends of Ecuador.

Unite is committed to:

- Continue its supportive work with solidarity groups such as Venezuela Solidarity Campaign and Friends of Ecuador which will alert the union to issues with visas for appropriate action.

Columbia

Unite condemns the persecution of Colombian trade unionists and political activists, deplors that 26 members of union backed Patriotic march, Colombia’s largest opposition movement, were killed in 2013 and many imprisoned, and condemns the smear tactics of government representatives.

Unite congratulates the Colombian movement on the mass strikes of July and August 2013, and condemns the brutal state response in which 16 activists were killed and hundreds detained.

Unite supports the courageous work of the Patriotic March to promote peace and social justice in Colombia, celebrates the peace process taking place between the Colombian Government and the FARC, and supports civil society’s demands for inclusion, a bilateral ceasefire and security guarantees.

Unite congratulates the excellent work of Justice for Colombia\(^5\) (JFC) on its campaigning on trade union and human rights, and for its groundbreaking peace campaign.

Unite is committed to:

- Continue to lobby at party political, parliamentary and government levels;
- Continue to support the Workers Uniting/FENSUAGRO partnership agreement and its human rights project;

Yarmouk refugee camp

Unite notes the humanitarian crisis in Syria, in particular the situation in Yarmouk refugee camp where Palestinian refugees have fled the siege. The remaining civilian population have suffered inhuman conditions resulting in hundreds of deaths.

Unite is committed to:

- Utilise Unite campaign resources in conjunction with Palestine Solidarity Campaign to bring the plight of Yarmouk refugee camp to members and the wider Labour movement;
- Lobby MPs and government offices to campaign for protection of Humanitarian Aid Agencies and access to the Yarmouk Refugee Camp;
- Demand the UN enforces its commitment to Resolution 194 which asserts the rights of Palestinians to return to their land.

\(^5\) http://www.justiceforcolombia.org/
Unite is committed to:

• Campaign for:
  o Government, European Union and the various awarding bodies to oppose the granting of any major events (such as the Olympics and the World Cup) and the awarding of major government and European contracts for any projects in countries who actively discriminate, punish and kill LGBT people;
  o Member states to honour the principles of the Commonwealth Charter to decriminalise homosexuality;
  o International Laws prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity;
  o Enforcement of legislation against threats and violence, and to protect LGBTI people from hate crimes;
  o Government consultation and dialogue with LGBTI organisations;
  o The equal rights of LGBT people in Russia and Qatar, which will be future hosts of the football World Cup;
  o The Government to treat LGBT people who seek asylum in this country with dignity and respect and not force them back to countries where they will suffer persecution or death.

Cuba

Unite recognises that despite the suffering the USA’s illegal and inhumane economic blockade has caused, Cuba has made massive achievements in health, education, and social services for its people. Unite applauds Cuba’s international solidarity throughout the world. Unite supports the right of Cuba to choose its own economic, social and political path and opposes the blockade, EU Common Position and policies which isolate the island.

Unite recognises that the Miami Five have been in prison for over 15 years. Despite the release of Rene Gonzalez last year, the other four remain in US jails. Unite acknowledges the work of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign 6 (CSC) against the blockade of Cuba and its defence of the Miami Five.

Unite is committed to:

• Affiliate to the Cuba Solidarity Campaign (CSC) and encourage regions, branches and individual members to affiliate to/join CSC;
• Support, publicise and participate in campaign events organised by CSC – in particular to support the ongoing Voices for the Five campaign coming out of the International Commission in March and to support and publicise its initiatives;
• Explore and work to promote this policy in relevant wider labour movement bodies in which the union is represented, especially to encourage sister unions globally also to campaign for an end to the blockade and for freedom for the Miami Five.

Iraq

Unite is committed to:

• Oppose any involvement of the UK in military intervention over the current crisis in Iraq.

Campaigning Against LGBT Discrimination Internationally

Unite is appalled that over 40 Commonwealth nations still criminalise homosexuality (they account for more than half of the world’s countries where same-sex relations are illegal) and that attacks on LGBT people occur in countries other than the Commonwealth.

6 http://www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/

Policies derived from Executive Statement ES3, Composite Motions C11, C12, C13, Motions F1, F2, F11 and Emergency Motions #1 and #2 as passed at July 2014 Unite Policy Conference.
Protection for sick workers
Unite is appalled at the increasing trend of workers who are sick being forced to attend work as a result of employer pressure and draconian policies. Unite is concerned at the increasing discrimination against disabled workers whose employers use the Bradford Factor for triggering disciplinary action due to sickness absence.

Unite believes employers need a better understanding of their legal responsibilities with regards to the Equality Act and reasonable adjustments for disability. Unite believes absences from work due to disability should never form part of a workers’ sickness record, and, under no circumstances, be used to influence decisions relating to promotion, pay, references or selection for redundancy. Employers should monitor sickness absence data to identify and reduce work related factors that contribute to ill health rather than as a disciplinary tool.

Unite is committed to:
• Call for an end to the practice of sick workers being forced to attend and that ‘injured at work’ should have a recognised and protected status;
• Call for an end to the practice of penalising workers for sustaining a ‘no fault’ injury;
• Mount a campaign to highlight this problem;
• Fight to eradicate the use of the Bradford Factor in the determination of sickness absence for disabled workers;
• Campaign for a statutory right to Disability Leave;
• Establish (no later than the end of 2015) a model sickness absence procedure which concentrates on genuinely supporting absent employees and does not manage absence to arbitrary sickness absence triggers.

Health and safety and casualisation
Unite believes the use of non-permanent labour and upsurge in casualisation in the ports has been recognised as directly leading to serious injury for many years.

Unite is committed to:
• Call upon the Labour Party to stop the dangerous practice of casualisation in the ports exposing workers to danger and to develop legislation to protect port workers.

Removal of strict liability
Unite condemns the attempt by the ConDem Government to further attack the right of working people to be safe in their employment and to seek redress for injuries or illness caused by the failure of employers to provide a safe working environment.

The removal of strict liability in civil health cases is part of this overall attack. The change means that employers are no longer automatically at fault if something goes wrong. This places the burden of proof onto employees to prove that the employer has been negligent.

Unite is committed to:
• Not just condemn the removal of strict liability but reaffirm its commitment to strengthen the laws protecting workers lives and our rights at work.

Lone working
Unite is committed to:
• Raising awareness and providing guidance to members of the potential dangers of lone working, especially to members who find themselves working with vulnerable service users.
Cuts in the Health and Safety Executive and Approved Codes of Practice
Unite believes that the cuts to the Health and Safety Executive are detrimental not only to our disabled members but all members within our workplaces.

Unite is committed to:
• Oppose any proposal to withdraw Approved Codes of Practice. Any diminution of these ACOPs will undermine safety legislation and play straight into the hands of unscrupulous employers.

Working Time Directive
Unite believes that a change in law would protect the public and road users from over worked HGV/Coach drivers on UK roads, and should apply to any visiting HGV/Coach driver from another non-EU country.

Unite is committed to:
• Campaign to get the European Union to change its attitude to the maximum 48 hour working week and demand that the 48 hour working rule should not have exemption clauses included in the legislation of any nature due to the abuse of the the present exemptions;
• Demand no loss of pay with these changes.

Wilful neglect
Unite believes that the proposed extension of the law on ‘wilful neglect’ to cover health service employees is both reprehensible and inadequate.

Unite is committed to:
• Campaign, should this limited proposal pass into law, for a similar extension to cover employers guilty of Health and Safety offences which lead to the deaths of workers or members of the public where there is insufficient proof for the more serious charge of corporate manslaughter to be prosecuted.

Unite Health & Safety
Health and Safety is a fundamental issue for Unite representatives across all workplaces throughout the UK.

Unite is committed to:
• Within the next 3 years review and implement necessary changes to re-structure the Health and Safety department, in line with the commitment and support offered to Shop Stewards and Equalities Reps, with Health and Safety Officers with responsibility for:

Diesel fumes
Unite is committed to:
• Run a campaign, across government, calling for urgent research, review and action around the potentially dangerous health and environmental impact on workers from diesel fumes.

Availability of public toilets
It is a disgrace that public toilets are being closed due to austerity and cost saving cuts by Local Authorities. There has been no consideration given to the thousands of mobile employees who heavily rely on public conveniences and the consequences for their health.

Unite is committed to:
• Running a campaign against the closures of public toilets which are being closed by Local Authorities;
• Lobbying and applying pressure on the Government with regard to this issue;
• Enlisting the support of all affected parties including the TUC.

Offshore helicopter safety
Unite is committed to:
• Call on the UK Government to initiate a fully independent public enquiry in respect of the off-shore helicopter service industry following recent countrywide concerns raised over helicopter safety, and specifically in relation to:
  - the regulation and management of helicopter maintenance and servicing;
  - the independent auditing of helicopter maintenance and servicing;
  - scrutiny of the supply chain in respect of parts and materials;
  - introduction of Regulations to extend regulatory obligations to the helicopter parts, servicing and maintenance supply chain;
  - comparison with UK best practice versus European and Norwegian (Scandinavian) Regulations/best practice.
• Continue to raise our members’ concerns on a UK and European level and to engage with sister unions both in Europe and Scandinavia in order to examine best practice.
o supporting and working closely with workplace Health and Safety Reps;
o building strong Health and Safety links with reps across unionised companies;
o lobbying Government, European Works Councils and MEPs on Health and Safety communicating our concerns and providing assistance with legislative changes to Health and Safety Laws and then feedback to all Health and Safety Reps through quarterly Regional Sector Committee Meetings;
o working closely, promoting Health and Safety training, matching those required within our industries.

- Regional Safety structures which offer encouragement, support and advice for safety reps;
- Form a working group to discuss how best to promote young trade unionists to take on the role of workplace Health & Safety reps;
- Set up a mentoring program to support young members who seek election to become a Health & Safety Rep;
- Work towards the formation of a Unite Youth Health & Safety Committee to discuss and campaign on issues affecting young members’ health and safety.

Aviation capacity
Unite recognises the strategic importance of Civil Air Transport to the UK economy, and the importance of its continued growth, development and interconnectivity with other modes of transport.

Unite believes that investing in Heathrow as a strategic part of UK national infrastructure would create and sustain thousands of jobs in numerous industrial sectors including aviation and construction.

**Unite is committed to:**
- Campaign for the Airports Commission to:
  - retain the hub airport at London Heathrow, with immediate expansion through a 3rd runway;
  - include a future option for an additional runway within the London and the South East;
  - ensure additional capacity for aviation growth is located in the north of the United Kingdom;
  - ensure existing and future capacity is interlinked with other modes of transport such as rail and road.
- Ensure that official Labour Party policy supports such recommendations and that they are implemented by government;
- Campaign:
  - for the expansion of Heathrow Airport including more runways;
  - against the plans of the Mayor of London for a new hub airport in the Thames estuary;
  - for the abolition Air Passenger Duty;
  - for an expansion of capacity at other existing UK airports.

Balanced energy policy
Unite is concerned that the security of electricity supply within the UK is in crisis. It is essential to have a balanced energy policy that includes a mix of renewable, nuclear, cleaner coal and gas generation.

**Unite is committed to:**
- Lobby government to enable investment in the UK energy infrastructure to ensure secure energy supply for the UK at an affordable cost to domestic and industrial consumers to avoid fuel poverty;
- Campaign for the retention of coal fired generation in the UK protected by carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology and urge the Labour Party to commit in its manifesto for 2015 to fund and support CCS technology;
Single ownership

Unite is committed to:
- Campaign against the ‘gun to the head’ approach of single ownership companies who hold government and workers to ransom and call for such industries to be taken into public ownership.

Social media policies in the workplace

Unite is committed to:
- Build an education program to instruct shop stewards on the use of all social media sites in regard to confidentiality settings and on the ‘dos’ and ‘don’ts’ regarding workplace comments and issues;
- Campaign for the Freedom of Speech Law to allow freedom of speech and to include a restriction of spying, surveillance and monitoring in line with employment and industrial relations issues;
- Insist that all employer policies on social media, communication and confidentiality be authorised officially by an independent arbitrator to ratify that each policy does not contravene the Human Rights Act 1998, which would lead to any dismissal under a non-authorised policy to be automatically unfair.

Protecting UK standards and qualifications

Unite is committed to:
- Defend all its members by opposing in principle any attempt at ‘dumbing down’ UK standards, as exemplified by the so-called ‘modernisation’ of EU Directive 2005/36/EC and other EU directives, and to apply pressure on all relevant government departments to prevent this directive becoming UK law.

Technology and work

The economic and social consequences of the accelerating development of technology and resulting insecurity will require both industrial and political answers.

Unite is committed to:
- Consider the consequences of technological development and to develop a continuing work programme. This may include working with sister unions through the TUC and using links with CLASS to develop policies to protect our members which can be urged on the Labour Party and any future Labour Government to ensure the fruits of progress are fairly divided.
Supply chain

Unite believes that government, companies and workers all have a role to play in promoting the use of the ‘local’ automotive supply chain.

Unite is committed to:
• Lobby government to:
  o ensure 50% of the content of all vehicles produced in the UK are sourced from the UK;
  o intervene if companies within the supply chain are not being utilised sufficiently as this initiative will aid the UK’s commitment to the reduction of CO2 emissions;
  o provide the economic and financial circumstances to encourage companies in the supply chain to bid for the big automotive contracts;
  o ensure the supply chain is offered the same opportunity for investment and growth as that currently being enjoyed by the auto industry.

Organising young members

Unite is committed to:
• Support a Unite young workers organising strategy that will be developed by the young members alongside the Organising Department which seeks to recruit and organise young workers, specifically in casualised workplaces;
• Look at how Unite Accredited Support Companions can assist in supporting individual young members in unorganised workplaces and promote Unite to young workers;
• Assess how the union can deploy its Community members and area activists to support campaigns around recruiting and organising young workers.

Organising & Campaigning Against Austerity

Campaigning against austerity
Unite opposes all the ConDem Government’s spending cuts and commits to fight this ideologically driven assault on our much-valued public services and welfare state. Cutting public spending when the private sector is in recession can only increase unemployment levels and reduce demand in the economy.

Unite is committed to:
- Educate and engage our lay representatives, shop stewards and activists across all sectors and equip them with the arguments and knowledge they need to engage our members and our local communities in the fight back against the cuts;
- Work with other unions and form alliances across civil society to promote the alternative to spending cuts:
  o maintain and increase public sector spending at times of recession in order to protect jobs, stimulate demand and encourage growth;
  o help reduce the deficit by tackling the massive UK tax gap resulting from tax uncollected, avoided or evaded each year by big business and the rich;
  o use the public sector to build our way out of the recession through infrastructure spending e.g. massive council housing programmes;
  o create a million “green jobs” by public investment in renewable energy, zero-emission building conversions and expansion of public transport;
  o restoring trade union freedoms and extend collective bargaining to encourage a shift in wealth from the 1% to the 99%;
  o use the two UK state owned banks, Lloyds and RBS, as state investment banks in order to break the employers’ investment strike.
- Campaign for the Labour Party to commit to:
  o reversing cuts in benefits and tax credits;
  o a social housing building programme;
  o restoring all services and jobs that have been lost;
  o bring utilities (gas, electricity, and water) back into public ownership.
- Campaign to popularise the People’s Charter:
  o press for the TUC to increase activity in support of it;
  o seek commitment of the Unite Parliamentary Group to the aims and objectives of the People’s Charter;
  o campaign for the adoption of the People’s Charter within the policy making structures of the Labour Party.

Organising against inequality and austerity
Unite notes the growing economic inequality within Britain and that such inequality is being exacerbated by government policies.

Unite is committed to:
- A comprehensive list of industrial issues where benchmark negotiating standards can reasonably be expected to apply, including agency working and facilities;
- The creation of Unite model agreements including a model Unite recognition agreement;
- The delivery of relevant benchmark negotiating standards included within the scope of all 100% campaigns;
- The collation and analysis of all workplace information related to collective bargaining, including agreements and anniversary dates, to form a core part of 100% Unite.
- Campaigns to counter the passive acceptance of Austerity and resist xenophobia and anti-migrant worker sentiments;
- Popular and accessible campaigning leaflets tailored to sector/regional needs where appropriate.

Twinning Unite industrial branches with Unite community branches
Unite - along with fighting for our membership on industrial issues - is working on a strategy to build a unified movement against austerity.

Unite is committed to:
- Encourage our industrial branches to ‘twin’ with local community branches;
- Encourage industrial branches to contribute towards training of community members in Welfare Rights;
- Encourage community members to participate in their local trades councils, and to be trained as Unite lay representatives;
- Encourage Community Branches to involve themselves in the Unemployed Workers Centres where they exist locally. Regional Committees and Branches should be encouraged to support the Unemployed Workers Centres materially and financially wherever this is possible.

Policies derived from Composite Motions C21 and Motions J3, J4 and J7 as passed at July 2014 Unite Policy Conference.
Pensions

Unite is opposed to any increase in the State Pension Age beyond age 65. In campaigning for higher state pensions and for improvements in company provision, including greater flexibility in when pension benefits can be drawn, Unite is seeking to keep open and extend members’ ability to retire at a reasonable age.

Unite believes that members should be able to decide themselves when they wish to retire and supports the legislation which has restricted the ability of employers to force retirement on grounds of age.

Unite notes the prospective introduction of the Single State Pension in 2016, which was enacted with the support of all the main political parties. We are concerned that this reduces the scope of employees to earn earnings-related state pensions to supplement private pensions which are evolving in the private sector rapidly towards a defined contribution basis offering members no guarantees.

Unite successfully campaigned to maintain the statutory protection of pension benefits for the Protected Persons in the electricity and rail sectors. The Union faces a further challenge in seeking to minimise the potential effect of the statutory over-ride on other sectors of our membership in the private sector with defined benefit pensions.

Unite opposes the closure of final salary and other forms of defined benefit pension scheme both to new employees and to further accrual by existing members.

Unite believes that company pensions should be based on all earnings and opposes, in particular, reductions in contributions and benefits related to state pensions and NI thresholds as these disproportionately disadvantage those on lower levels of pay.

**Unite is committed to:**
- Campaign against any increase in the State Pension Age beyond age 65;
- Press for the Single State Pension to be set at a higher level than currently planned;
- Support and assist Unite groups who seek to resist closures to final salary and other forms of defined benefit pension schemes.

Pensions database

**Unite is committed to:**
- The creation of a Unite pensions database to monitor the percentage rates paid by employers into DB and DC schemes.

Policy derived from Executive Council Statement ES4 and Motion K9 as passed at July 2014 Unite Policy Conference.

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Political & Labour Party

Unite and the Labour Party

The 2015 General Election is critical for the future of trade unionism, the welfare state and the economic and social well-being of millions of working people. Unite is entirely committed to helping secure a Labour victory in that election.

Unite welcomes many of the policy commitments made by the Labour Party, which represent a significant move away from the neo-liberal dogmas which so undermined the work of the last Labour government. However, Unite remains concerned at Labour’s overall commitment to “austerity”, and believes that this can only mean further cuts in public spending which will alienate many natural supporters of the Party.

Unite reiterates the importance of the collective Union-Labour Party link. While disagreeing profoundly with the way in which the review of the union-Labour link culminating in the Collins proposals was launched, Unite will endeavour to implement the changes agreed at the Special Conference in 2014; including arguing for Unite members to agree to their political levy being used to affiliate to the Labour Party, and to ensure that as many members as possible agree to become associate members of the Party.

Unite will continue to exercise control over the use of the Political Fund and will review political strategy in the light of the result of the General Election, and the prospects for the development of Labour policy in a progressive direction.

**Unite is committed to:**
- Helping secure a Labour victory in the 2015 General Election;
- Work with the Labour Party to ensure it is in a position to fight an effective election campaign in 2015;
- Work closely with those Labour MPs who share our values, and to use our Political Fund in support of our Political Strategy, including in promoting the engagement of working people in political life and the adoption of trade union-friendly candidates for parliament.

Labour party selection procedures

Unite notes the efforts that the Labour Party has made over recent years to encourage equality, diversity and breadth of class through its selection procedures. Whilst the ‘All Women Shortlist’ process has led to a welcome increase in women MPs, the number of women selected via open shortlists is still relatively low. Unite believes that the current procedures for parliamentary selection create some unintended consequences that need to be addressed.
Unite is committed to:

- Campaign for a change to the Labour Party selection rules and procedures to make them more appropriate, formalised and inclusive, with the aim of encouraging more working class men and women into Parliament;
- Urge the Labour Party NEC to review selection procedures so that they offer help to disabled candidates in the same way as women candidates are assisted presently;
- Review the support available within Unite for disabled members who may wish to stand for Parliament or for local councils.

Ending austerity and the cuts

Unite is against austerity and backs an alternative to cuts based on protecting jobs and services.

Unite is committed to:

- Contact Labour groups in councils where individuals have voted against cuts and request that any disciplinary action being taken against those councillors is dropped;
- Support any Unite members who are Labour councillors who vote to oppose austerity and cuts;
- Encourage other councillors who might consider voting against cuts to do so by pledging to publicly support them if they take this action;
- Establish a dialogue with Councillors Against the Cuts in order to determine the scope for joint campaigning activity;
- Campaign against the cuts and continue to organise the fight back by:
  - lobbying for a TUC-led anti Austerity march in 2014;
  - pushing for co-ordinated industrial action with other unions to fight against austerity culminating in a General Strike;
  - reviewing Unite’s financial support of the Labour Party especially when they are continuing with the strategy of implementing cuts.
- Demonstrate clearly the impact of the public sector pay restraints upon our members;
- Fight for a cost of living increase in pay for public sector workers;
- Fight for a real commitment by the Labour Party to early years intervention funding, local government budgets including freezing all cuts to Local Authority funding;
- Coordinate discussion with Labour affiliated unions to push this as policy through the Labour Party structures;
- Seek the Labour Party freezing all cuts in the public sector in the first year of Government.

Anti-poverty strategy

Unite is committed to:

- Organise a campaign with the objective of including within the manifesto of the next Labour Government a commitment to the restoration of funding to the community and advice sectors beset by budget cuts and to develop a proper anti-poverty strategy encompassing housing, education, health, work and social security;
- Ensure the Labour Party manifesto reflects the moral and economic argument that a truly compassionate society would prioritise the needs of the vulnerable and that the Advice Sector is at the forefront of providing assistance to those often in the most desperate economic circumstances;
- Ensure the Labour Party devises an economic strategy that reflects a truly socialist alternative.

Margaret Thatcher Day

Unite is committed to:

- Stop the introduction of a “Margaret Thatcher Day” and seek the support of the Labour Party in opposing this concept;
- In the event that government adopts this divisive legislation, asking the next Labour Government to enact legislation reversing the day back to its original name or, alternatively, calling it “Aneurin Bevan Day”.

The economy in Ireland

Since the beginning of the great recession and the austerity programmes – first implemented in the Republic, then in Northern Ireland – the sustained attacks by government and employers throughout the island have been comprehensive – targeting wages, living standards, social security and productive economic growth.

Unite has put the arguments throughout the island for indigenous enterprise growth based on maximising labour rights, expanding public enterprise, exploiting our own skills and resources - especially in the manufacturing sector - and introducing more democratic controls over grant-funding and the operation of the private sector.

Unite has also been in the forefront in fighting for social security - obtaining a verdict against the Irish Republic Government in the European Court of Justice over the failure to implement pension protection, played a leading role in the rejection of public pay cuts in the Republic under Croke Park 2, and exposed the under-handed attempts to introduce privatisation of public transport in Northern Ireland.
The key to economic prosperity is higher wages and higher employers’ contributions to public services and social security.

Unite is committed to:
- Supporting our members, activists and representatives in our workplaces and in our communities;
- Initiate a campaign among Unite MPs to lobby for the promised Peace dividend which was pledged by the Labour Government at the signing of the Good Friday Agreement and has been abandoned by the Tories.

Policies derived from Executive Statement ES5, Composite Motion C25, and Motions L1, L11, L12, L13, L14, and L15 as passed at July 2014 Unite Policy Conference.

Social Policy

Defend the NHS
Unite is outraged by the Coalition Government’s ideological assault against our NHS and incensed by the rapid increase in privatisation and contracting out of NHS services.

Unite notes that the levels of bullying and harassment in the health service are at record levels as health service managers put more pressure on NHS workers to hit government-imposed targets, and to do so with diminishing staffing levels.

Unite welcomes the pledge made by Shadow Health minister Andy Burnham that a Labour Government would quickly repeal the Health and Social Care Act (2012), but is concerned the accompanying promise to make the NHS ‘preferred bidder’ for contracts indicates no retreat from the market.

Unite also notes with concern the negotiations to agree an EU-USA free trade deal known as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and believes that these secretive negotiations pose a major risk to our NHS and other public services.

Unite is committed to:
- Co-ordinate regional campaigns against privatisation of the NHS across all TUC affiliates;
- Organise and support regional rallies, demonstrations and campaigning events about NHS privatisation in the lead up to the General Election, particularly in marginal constituencies;
- Conduct mass education initiatives amongst affiliates on privatisation and the changes to the NHS;
- Support local hospital campaigns and help to set up campaign groups in areas where hospitals are particularly vulnerable to closure and privatisation;
- Mandate the TUC to support similar initiatives nationally;
- Run a national campaign against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) to resist the inclusion of Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS), the NHS and other public services;
- Urge regions and branches to continue providing material and moral support to local and national campaigns to keep the NHS as a publicly-funded, free at the point of need, universally accessible service;
- Seek a meeting with the other health unions with a view to pressing the TUC to call a general strike to defend the health service;
- Support NHS workers taking industrial action;
- Organise a national campaign exposing profiteering and building support for a free, publicly owned, democratically run NHS. This campaign to highlight:
Unite believes that the Republic of Ireland’s Health Service Executive recruitment moratorium is a destructive and irrational tool imposing huge damage to the public health service. This flawed policy is in breach of the HSE’s own policy on person-centred care and places care at risk.

**Unite is committed to:**

- Campaign with other health sector unions to have the Republic of Ireland HSE recruitment moratorium lifted;
- Fight for safe levels of care for patients and protection of union members working in health care;
- Fight to maintain existing rates of pay, premium pay and call rates and to resist the attempts by politicians to scapegoat health sector workers.

### Northern Ireland Health Service, Transforming Your Care, and austerity

**Unite is committed to:**

- Campaign, through both industrial and political means, particularly at the NI Assembly, to oppose Transforming Your Care where it involves the sell off of health services to private bidders, and the policies of austerity which cut welfare spending;
- Call on the next Labour Government to effect a full reversal in order to protect both the NHS and the health of the nation.

### Cancer services

Unite is concerned that cuts to our health service will impact on resources for cancer prevention, its treatment and early diagnosis.

**Unite is committed to:**

- Launch a national campaign for free cancer screening for all, regardless of their age;
- Expose any attempts to reduce funding and proactively work against the cuts;
- Continue with our valuable H&S awareness for cancer prevention and early detection;
- Encourage employers to put in place screening programmes for their employees;
- Retain and improve services for the effective treatment of cancer.
Social care
Unite considers that a quality social care service can only be provided by public employers supplemented by the Not For Profit sector. Social Care must be a universal service which is publicly accountable and publicly funded, free at the point of delivery and delivered on the basis of need and not the ability to pay.

Unite is committed to:
• Calling for statutory collective bargaining arrangements in which all employees are represented by trade unions. This should set regulations of minimum standards of terms and conditions including a minimum wage equivalent to the Living Wage as well as statutory regulation of training, qualifications, and staff grading that will ensure a quality service and continuity of employment of competent and well trained staff;
• Carry out a well-resourced organising and recruitment campaign across the sector in order to build industrial strength and working towards the above aims;
• Build a broad based campaign to support these aims including lobbying the Labour Party for inclusion of the above in the manifesto for the next General Election.

Housing
Unite believes that the private sector cannot build affordable homes for working people in the number required. We need public sector investment in new council housing building on a massive scale as well as upgrading the existing council housing stock.

Unite is committed to:
• Campaign for:
  o A massive injection of public investment into a council housing building programme;
  o Requirements on Local Authorities to provide and maintain adequate levels of council housing at affordable rents;
  o An end to the right to buy scheme which only serves to remove good council homes from the overall council housing stock;
  o Rent controls and a cap on private rents to ensure they are affordable;
  o Registration/licensing of landlords in private rented sector;
  o Security of tenure for all those living in rented accommodation;
  o An end to unfair housing benefit caps and other draconian benefits cuts such as the Bedroom Tax.
• Council housing to be accessible to working people and not just the unemployed.

Defending Local Authorities
Unite condemns this Coalition Government’s cuts to Local Authorities and the unfair changes to Local Government funding.

Unite is committed to:
• organise selective action nationally;
• continue and increase our organising in Local Authorities;
• utilise all resources and campaign material;
• lobby the Labour Party to drop the 2015 spending cuts;
• engage politically with the LGA;
• draw together a coordinated campaign with all trade union affiliates;
• highlight and prioritise this campaign;
• request that Regions look to have local authorities as part of their 100% campaigns;
• put pressure on the Government to ensure “We Are All In This Together” and apply a fairer funding system.

Defend welfare benefits
Unite condemns the attack on welfare benefits by this Coalition Government.

Unite is committed to:
• Reject false divisions and stigmatisation of people who are low-paid or unpaid;
• Defend universal benefits to ensure reasonable benefits for all;
• Call upon local councillors to refuse to pass on benefit cuts to claimants and council tenants;
• Join with local and national benefits campaigns;
• Produce campaign materials that link the defence and promotion of in-work pay and in-employment benefits with campaigns to defend the benefits of those who are out of work;
Encourage branches to support and link up with local welfare benefits campaigns;

Expose the subsidies to private landlords and businesses who profit from tax and benefit subsidies at the expense of claimants and the poor;

Oppose all evictions and legal action against those hit by benefit cuts and support campaign actions taken in defence;

Work with local Trades Union Councils to ensure cross-union co-ordination of development and support for benefit campaigns;

Lobbying and campaigning for a reversal of the Government’s decision to introduce universal credit as their preferred means of paying benefits;

A campaign including:
  - councils not to pursue those who are unable to pay their council tax or rent due to cuts in Council Tax Benefit or Bedroom Tax cuts;
  - councils to challenge Housing Associations who are also implementing summons over Bedroom Tax arrears and use all their powers to stop this;
  - a fully funded Council Tax Benefit Scheme based on needs;
  - councils to refuse to pass on cuts to the local community;
  - Labour councillors and MPs to challenge these cuts and fight the cuts with the community and trade union movement.

Work with other unions and campaign groups to get our message across and gain support for our alternatives.

Youth and benefits
Unite condemns comments made by Ed Miliband on Labour proposals to abolish out of work payments for 18 – 21 year olds and replace this benefit with a youth allowance which would be dependent on undertaking training at AS level or equivalent.

Unite is committed to:

- Issue a public statement condemning these proposals;
- Write to Ed Miliband expressing our concerns over the plans;
- Call for a meeting to express those concerns face-to-face;
- Use any connections with the Labour Party to lobby against this attack on young people.

Working Tax Credits
Unite is appalled that the change in eligibility for the entitlement of Working Tax Credits rose from a minimum of 16 working hours per week to 24 hours per week in April 2012, penalising those who are either unable to persuade their employers to increase their hours or whose commitments at home prevent them from working over 23 hours per week.
Land Value Tax
Unite seeks to address the avoidance of tax and the widening gap between rich and poor in the UK by campaigning for the introduction of an annual Land Value Tax (LVT).

Unite is committed to:
• Lobby parliament and conduct a campaign for the introduction of a Land Value Tax.

Fuel Poverty
Unite is committed to:
• Actively engage with other organisations, such as ‘The End Fuel Poverty Coalition’, and expose government and devolved administrations for their failures to meet their own targets to eradicate fuel poverty.

Freedom Rides
Unite is shocked at the violence that was unleashed on Monday 23rd June by British Transport Police on a peaceful protest to win back free train travel for South Yorkshire’s older people.

Unite is committed to:
• Appeal to the trade union movement and Labour Party to get behind the Freedom Rides campaign;
• Call on the South Yorkshire Labour councils, in conjunction with Northern Rail, to reinstate immediately older people’s rights to free train travel for the remainder of the financial year, to enable proper consultation to take place.

Policies derived from Composite Motions C28, C29, C30, C31, C32, C33, Motions L10, M2, M5, M15, M21, M22, M24, M27, M28 and Emergency Motions #3, #4, #5, #8 and #9 as passed at July 2014 Unite Policy Conference.

Trade Union and Employment Rights

Right to strike
Unite condemns the current neo-liberal drive to further weaken trade union power and workers’ rights under the false claim that this is necessary to allow the economy to grow. Unite notes new neo-liberal EU legislation to privatise Europe’s railways (on the failed UK model) includes attempts to curtail the right to strike by public transport workers.

Unite wholeheartedly supports Art 6(4) of the European Social Charter which provides for the right to strike for the purpose of collective bargaining. The United Kingdom is now one of the countries most seriously in breach of its obligations under the Charter, particularly in relation to its laws on strikes.

Unite is committed to:
• Oppose any attempt to restrict the right to strike for public transport workers - any curtailment of the right to strike for one group of workers will spread if left unchallenged;
• Campaign and lobby government to repeal all anti trade union laws brought in by the Tory Governments of Thatcher and Major and not repealed by successive Labour Governments;
• Lobby Parliament, the Labour Party and other relevant bodies to ensure that there are no further restrictions on the right to take industrial action;
• Lobby Labour MPs for the UK to honour its obligations as set out in the European Social Charter, and to commit to protecting and enhancing the rights of workers and end the current sustained attack on working people;
• Commence a dialogue with the TUC aimed at the formulation of a central fund that is designated specifically for the purpose of funding potential future litigation against any public, private or government body who seeks to undermine and not honour the provisions contained within the Charter.

Employment Tribunals
Unite condemns the Government for introducing charges for Employment Tribunal claims which can amount to £1,200, and is appalled at the Government’s attacks on access to justice including extending the qualifying period for bringing an unfair dismissal claim from one year to two years, which has a disproportionate impact on women and low paid employees.

Unite is committed to:
• Campaign for employment rights from day one and for collective rights to organise and negotiate through a trade union;
Redundancy consultation
Unite is appalled by the Coalition Government’s Enterprise Reform Bill that is attacking workers’ and trade union rights and is deeply concerned by the part of the bill that has cut the consultation period for one hundred or more redundancies from ninety days to forty five days.

Unite believes that not only should the ninety day consultation period be restored but it should be a ninety day period for all redundancy programs and not just those of one hundred or more.

**Unite is committed to:**
- Run a campaign to raise awareness amongst activists to actively campaign at local and national level to reverse this government policy;
- TUC to put pressure on the Labour Party to have in its manifesto the reversal of this policy as part of a review of the Enterprise Reform Bill immediately after the 2015 General Election if elected.

European Works Councils – Article 6 Agreements
Unite notes the desire of some companies to maintain voluntary non-legally binding Article 13 Agreements and fully supports representatives who have and continue to push for EWC Agreements to be legally binding Article 6 Agreements.

**Unite is committed to:**
- Any future EWC Agreements or revised Agreements being legally binding Article 6 Agreements which provide for much greater protection, information and consultation with trade unions and workers.

Information & Consultation
Unite welcomes initiatives which have been taken to establish Information & Consultation Agreements in companies which provide legally underpinned rights for workers to be informed and consulted on a wide range of issues.

**Unite is committed to:**
- Fully support sector/industry wide initiatives and campaigns to establish legally enforceable I&C Agreements;
- Provide information and briefings to workplaces and Unite representatives on the I&C Regulations;
- Provide training for workplace representatives on how to use the I&C Regulations;
- Campaign within the Labour Party to strengthen and simplify the I&C Regulations as currently transposed into UK legislation.

Precarious employment and zero hours contracts
Unite welcomes Ed Miliband’s speech to the Labour Party Conference 2013 that set out measures to tackle issues such as zero hours contracts and low pay.

Unite is totally against the exploitation of employees by the use of zero hours contracts. Unite rejects the proposals put forward by Labour to deal with zero hour contracts, based on the Pickavance Report.

**Unite is committed to:**
- Continue to expose companies and the tax payer subsidy culture;
- Work with officers and reps to raise the issue of a living wage and an end to zero hour contracts;
- Campaign for a living wage and work with community groups to achieve this;
- Benchmark employers where Unite seeks to organise against the positive and negative indicators laid down in the Equality and Human Rights Commission’s Equality and Human Rights Framework and seek to move conditions in these companies to those commensurate with the positive indicators;
- The removal of zero hours contracts from the workplace;
- Lobby governments and campaign to introduce legislation to outlaw this unacceptable practice;
- Use its influence with MPs, TUC and like-minded groups to exert additional pressure on the Government and employers;
- Campaign to abolish zero hour contracts;
- Campaign to make zero hour contracts unlawful;
- Work with Labour to greatly strengthen its proposals to deal with zero hour contracts as part of a package to greatly improved individual and collective labour rights;
- Call for an end to state backed incentives that subsidise low pay and force zero hours contracts onto those unable to find decent paid work under the threat of having benefits removed;
- Hold Labour to their Conference pledges on the National Minimum Wage and zero hours contracts.
Collective bargaining
Unite recognises that under Article 11 of the European Council, any British Government has an obligation to promote collective bargaining.

**Unite is committed to:**
- Promote the principle of wages councils starting with re-establishing one in the Agriculture and Horticulture sector and to pursue their establishment by the next Labour Government.

Union access to work sites
Unite notes that unions can only currently access non-union workplaces in individual grievance and disciplinary processes with limited effect, but in some countries unions can gain ‘reasonable’ access to workplaces without collective agreements.

**Unite is committed to:**
- Campaign for a Trade Union Access Bill through Parliament;
- Campaign for Labour MPs and Parliamentary candidates to support the Bill, in particular by encouraging local representatives to get local MPs to sign a pledge card to support the Bill prior to the next election.

Bullying and blacklisting
Unite is committed to:
- Run a campaign to eliminate bullying, harassment and blacklisting of workers and trade unionists;
- Take this campaign forward to the highest level and into the Labour Party.

Church of England and equality legislation
Unite notes that in 2013 the General Synod of the Church of England failed to pass a motion to allow the appointment of women bishops. One of the reasons that this was allowed to happen was because the Church of England does not have to comply with equality legislation that applies to other workplaces in the UK.

**Unite is committed to:**
- Campaign for a change in the law to allow the Church of England to be covered by all aspects of equality legislation.

Policies derived from Composite Motions C34, C35, C36 and Motions N2, N3, N5, N9, N12, N13, N14, N15, N16, N22, N23, N24 as passed at July 2014 Unite Policy Conference.
Regional Officers – appointment and career development

**Unite is committed to:**
- An increase in the number of Regional Officers ensuring that there is a reasonable ratio of members to each Regional officer, in line with an increasing workload, using the option of Stand-Down Officers where there is an acute increase in workload;
- A structure which offers education, encouragement, support and opportunity for its members who wish to follow a planned career path within Unite.

Taking positions as Human Resources Managers

Unite notes the issue of elected workplace representatives and officers resigning and immediately taking up roles in HR functions and its potential to undermine the union’s bargaining capability.

**Unite is committed to:**
- Measures to minimise the situation particularly in relation to education of reps and to consider what sanctions to apply, should they be appropriate;
- Ensure that, within the law, future contracts of employment for full time officers contain a clause or clauses to ensure that such practices are not only discouraged by seeking personal assurances from prospective FTOs, but that restrictions are placed on their ability to accept such positions immediately on leaving the employ of the union.

Unite procurement

**Unite is committed to:**
- Develop a procurement policy to ensure Article 19 [European Regulations] is standard practice when procuring goods, services and products;
- Publish annual statistics on procured goods, services and products that will confirm that the Union is supporting the communities in which it works;
- Only sourcing work and services from recognised, unionised companies;
- All construction and maintenance work carried out on Unite property is carried out by trade union members and that contractors adhere to the National Working Rules relating to the trade(s) concerned;
- Rallies and campaigns using UK unionised memorabilia, ie shirts, hats;
- Mount an organising programme of the hotel sector and use unionised hotels;
- Ensure the TUC and its affiliates do likewise and uphold the principle of representing organised labour;
- Uphold outsourcing of print, packaging, graphics and media related work for the union, TUC and the Labour Party from recognised unionised Unite GPM workplaces;
- Put pressure on the Labour Party to comply to protect the livelihoods of Unite members, ensuring all party units, candidates and agents source printed and packaging matter from approved unionised companies;
- Put the policy into action with regional and national ‘Fair List’ of approved unionised companies for different trades and services;
- Procurement and tendering processes to determine employers are Living Wage employers as well as other factors such as cost of work, quality, delivery and environmental impact.

Unite in Schools programme

Unite recognises that young people are the lifeline of this organisation and activists should be welcomed and encouraged to take up participation in schools.

**Unite is committed to:**
- The Unite in Schools Programme, and campaigning for unions and collective bargaining by engaging with school leavers and students.

Salary based subscription levels

**Unite is committed to:**
- Develop a subscription structure which will allow any person the opportunity of joining Unite irrespective of their income;
- Review the cost of membership with a view to making Unite competitive;
- Adopt a subscription policy based on salary levels;
- Bring in variable subscription rates based on the members’ earnings/salary level system where low paid workers pay subscriptions at the same rate as current part-time workers.
Membership and affinity services

The Government’s destruction of Legal Aid and changes to prevent access to justice means that the importance of Union Legal & Affinity Services to our members is as never as before.

The promotion of Unite Legal Services needs to be on a regional basis, in order to have the most resonance with our members. For this reason Unite has invested in Regional Legal and Affiliate Co-ordinators.

The introduction of the general Member Helpline number allows us to ensure calls are directed to the regions concerned, to ensure we keep members aware of the various membership services we offer, and to improve response standards.

**Unite is committed to:**
- The Legal Freephone (0800) number remaining active and being heavily marketed but on legal promotional material only;
- Each region reaching the highest standards. This development must be undertaken at regional level - monitored and progressed by Head Office - and the relationship of a workplace with a solicitor practice cannot be at the expense of the industrial qualities of an officer;
- The role of the solicitor fitting within the relationship of the officer and the workplace and making the officer’s task easier to accomplish;
- Encouraging branches to contribute to the Benevolent Fund (but this should be a decision for those branches and the regions);
- Developing for the Benevolent Fund other income streams through our affiliate partners.

Support for workplace reps

**Unite is committed to:**
- Draw up, agree, publicise and uphold minimum standards of service and support for Unite lay representatives.

Area Activists meetings

**Unite is committed to:**
- Ensure that Rule 8.5 will be acted on and that up to four Area Activists Meetings shall be convened at a time and place that will allow working area activists to attend.

Reduced hours workers’ recruitment incentive

**Unite is committed to:**
- Revising the ‘Member get Member’ campaign to extend the incentive to include all new members and where that new applicant works on a part-time basis the award to the recruiter should be suitably pro-rated.

Industrial representation and accountability

Unite believes that Regions must take into account, as per rule 7.2, industrial servicing to the membership on the basis of sectors and within reason allocate work to regional industrial officers on the basis of industrial sector as well as geographical areas. Any industrial officer must have a responsibility to give written industrial reports to the appropriate Regional Industrial Sector Committee.

Policies derived from Executive Statement ES7, Composite Motions C38, C40, C41, C42, C43 and Motions P5, P40, P42 as passed at the July 2014 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

If you need to email someone at Unite the formula is firstname.lastname@unitetheunion.org

The union’s headquarters is

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

Tel: 020 7611 2500