Decisions of the June 2012 UNITE Policy Conference
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Introduction

In June 2012 around 900 UNITE delegates, guests and observers gathered at the Brighton Conference Centre for our 2nd Policy Conference. At the beginning of that conference I said that I truly believed UNITE was now a union at ease with itself, and that I was proud to be the General Secretary of such a strong, vibrant and progressive organisation. The events of that week only served to underline that view.

After a week of intensive debates in which we heard from seasoned activists, first time speakers and many of our 100 young member delegates, the union emerged energised, inspired, and ready to take up the fight for justice, fairness and equality – whether in the workplace, the wider society or internationally.

The range of motions and statements debated covered the full spectrum of issues that affect our members, and all of us in UNITE are now armed with a set of policies that will give the union its overall direction for the coming two years.

This policy manual summarises the key themes under a number of broad headings and gives particular emphases to the action points that were agreed upon by the delegates. I am sure it will prove an invaluable guide for members, activists and offices alike, and we will make sure it is available on line and is circulated to all members of the Executive Council, Regional and National Sector Industrial Committees, and the Regional and Equalities Committees.

As the biggest union in the country UNITE has a huge responsibility and role to play within the wider trade union and Labour Movement, and I sincerely hope that all members do their very best to help implement the decisions we have taken, for they constitute the basis on which a better and fairer society can be built and your efforts are essential if we are to realise that goal.

We will undoubtedly face many challenges in the coming years, not least of which will be to fight this government’s crazy and destructive austerity policies, while at the same time working to get the Labour Party on a more progressive line for when it does return to power. But I am as convinced as ever that if working people join forces then anything is possible and that another world is possible.

Len McCluskey,
UNITE General Secretary
August 2012
Alternative Economic Strategy

UNITE deplores the Tory led Government’s austerity policies and believes the neo-liberal policies it is pursuing have been disastrous for British people. UNITE firmly believes the solution to the crisis lies in strategic government investment, fair taxation and rebalancing the economy away from reliance on the finance sector and towards manufacturing excellence.

Such an alternative economic strategy will provide improved living standards and a more equal society, and should include a living minimum wage, decent social housing, a fully funded publicly owned health service, an affordable and efficient transport system, a free at the point of use universal education and vocational training system, and comprehensive welfare benefits.

UNITE strongly supports the People’s Charter (http://www.thepeoplescharter.org/) as the basis for an Alternative Economic Strategy.

Fighting public sector cuts

UNITE is committed to fighting the public sector cuts and believes the Government’s economic strategy is having a disproportionate impact on working class women through the cuts to benefits, services and public sector jobs. UNITE also believes the ‘Plan B’ document (http://www.compassonline.org.uk/publications/item.asp?d=6284) produced by the think tank Compass is a thoughtful attempt to formulate an economic alternative and will make the document available on a wide basis and campaign for its implementation in the Labour Party.
UNITE is committed to:

- Campaign for strengthened financial regulation and changes to corporate governance which will ensure the banking sector adheres to the terms and spirit of the Vickers Review and Project Merlin (http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Pages/other/monetary/additionaldata.aspx). This must include appropriate penalties, up to and including custodial sentences to deter behaviours likely to put companies or the economy at risk;

- Campaign for state-owned and private banks to increase lending to viable businesses; lend to local councils to fund a mass council house building programme; lend for significant investment in green infrastructure such as rail and green energy; stop compulsory redundancies of low paid bank workers; stop payment of irresponsible bonuses and disproportionate pay awards to ‘casino’ bankers; separate their retail and investment businesses;

- The introduction of a “two strikes” rule similar to that introduced in Australia where shareholders in publically listed companies can remove directors if a company’s remuneration report has received a ‘no’ vote of 25% or more at two consecutive AGMs;

- Identify, publish and expose the names and culpability of the executives responsible for the financial collapse;

- Work with the Labour Party and others to gain support for the introduction of a Robin Hood Tax domestically and argue for its introduction at EU and global level;

- Educate UNITE members on the merits of a Robin Hood Tax, encouraging them to be more involved, and urging branches to offer financial and other support.

- Campaign in the Republic of Ireland to amend and reinstate normal protections to the Credit Institutions (Stabilisation) Act 2010 which undermines the employment rights of workers employed in the covering institutions and their ability to have issues resolved with independent third parties and dispute resolutions mechanisms.

Hold the banking and finance sector to account and introduce a Robin Hood tax

UNITE supports the democratic control of banks and financial institutions and is convinced that deregulation, over reliance on free markets and the obscene bonuses paid to ‘casino’ bankers, led to the unprecedented financial crisis of 2008. The financial crisis in turn led to huge job losses for bank employees and a lending strike that has wrought havoc on the wider economy.

UNITE wants a finance sector that is restructured to support the real economy rather than speculation, and UNITE supports the levying of a Financial Transactions Tax (or Robin Hood Tax http://robinhoodtax.org.uk/) that would generate funds to fight poverty at home and abroad, help tackle climate change and save public services from cuts. It would also redistribute wealth, constrain excesses in the City and provide an incentive for long-term investment in our economy.
A central role for public ownership

UNITE supports the nationalisation of key industries. The utilities and transport systems should be the first to be brought back to public ownership, but this must also be extended to include public ownership of the banking sector. UNITE is committed to campaign for a policy of renationalisation of key industries to be adopted by TUC and for the Labour Party to include it in its manifesto as a priority.

Fairness and solidarity – reduce inequality, end poverty wages and cap executive pay

Large differences in income are damaging our economy and society. Societies with a narrower gap between rich and poor are more cohesive, healthier, suffer fewer social problems and are more environmentally sustainable. The widening gap between rich and poor needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency, but the issue will not be resolved simply by empowering shareholders to tackle excessive remuneration.

UNITE is committed to:
- The recovery of the missing tax billions that corporations and the rich and wealthy have evaded and avoided paying;
- The reintroduction of a progressive tax system with higher tax rates of at least 75% for the most wealthy in society;
- Campaign for legislation to introduce limits on boardroom pay so that no executive director can earn more than 10 times the salary of the lowest paid employee;
- Campaign for legislation to compel companies to report on pay ratios and votes on remuneration in the Company Annual Reports;
- Campaign for an end to the disgraceful situation where over 6 million workers in the UK earn less than the Living Wage;
- The restoration of trade union rights and freedoms and strive to ensure that all workers are covered by collective bargaining agreements as the best means of ensuring wealth is fairly distributed.

Improve our skills base – support apprenticeships and training and end the off-shoring of jobs

A high level skills base amongst the workforce is essential if the economy is to recover and be placed on a stable and sustainable footing. The UK’s record on training and developing skills is very poor and this must be addressed. UNITE wants better recognition of practical skills training and supports properly resourced apprenticeship schemes. UNITE also believes that all internships should be paid the National Minimum Wage, and preferably a Living Wage.

UNITE is committed to:
- Campaign to bring pressure on government for increased recognition of Practical Skills Training - up to the equivalent of academic qualifications, and to fund secondary schools to develop practical skills in to their syllabus;
- Lobby the government to bring about a scaled levy/grant system on companies’ to fund the training of apprentices (unless such companies already have apprentices in place and continue to do so);
- Lobby the government to enforce National Minimum Wage legislation effectively;
- Draw up a strategy to challenge the outsourcing of skilled UK jobs to overseas contractors;
- Engage in a dialogue with relevant government agencies to ensure that the employment rights of workers in the UK and overseas are being complied with;
- Campaign to retain the skills and experience of UK workers to the benefit of the UK economy.

Policies derived from motions 1, 2, 3, 8, 13, 14, 15, and Composites 1 and 2 as passed at the June 2012 UNITE Policy Conference.
Defence sector and BAe Systems

UNITE is concerned with the current direction of defence spending in the UK as a result of the Defence Spending Review and continuing cuts, which has led to the loss of over 5,000 highly skilled manufacturing jobs since the Coalition Government came to power.

UNITE is committed to:

- Work with Political Department and relevant National Officers to look at the Defence Spending Review, to oppose the cuts that have a detrimental impact on employment, and to propose alternatives;
- Develop an alternative policy which is totally opposed to buying ‘off the shelf’ defence components and form a strategy to take the policy forward within government;
- Work with the TUC and other unions to lobby government for increased financial support across the defence industry and wider manufacturing sector;
- Report actions and progress to the Aerospace and Shipbuilding Regional Industrial Sector Committees.

Policies derived from Composite 10 and Motion 62 passed at the June 2012 UNITE Policy Conference.

Manufacturing

UNITE believes it is imperative to actively support and promote manufacturing and to re-balance the UK economy away from an over reliance on financial services. To this end UNITE supports the creation of a National Investment Bank to help manufacturing companies invest in new equipment and innovation, and the implementation of a skills strategy to attract young people and apprentices into real jobs with real skills. UNITE also believes the government must do more to make banks support small and medium sized enterprises and should support investment in the development of ‘green technology.

UNITE is committed to:
- Press with all available means for the economic regeneration of industrial regions and the promotion of manufacturing;
- Support a policy of active engagement and intervention and campaign for the next Labour Government to introduce policies including the appointment of a Minister for Manufacturing.
Fair and effective procurement

UNITE wants a fair and effective transport procurement strategy. Following the award of the Thameslink contract and the threat to Britain’s last rail manufacturer – Bombardier in Derby, UNITE has called for specifications to reflect industrial strategy, to include the full cost of bids including social impact, and to ensure contracts are constructed so that the ability to manufacture, rather than company credit-rating, is the deciding factor. European procurement directives should reflect these priorities.

UNITE is committed to:
- Co-ordinated action at all levels to support and strengthen UNITE as the union for transport workers, including a UNITE Transport Workers Charter and a UNITE Transport Strategy;
- A strong bargaining agenda for transport workers including: decent employment standards, health and safety, skills and training, trade union rights and facilities, fair grievance and disciplinary procedures, and equalities;
- Ensuring transport members are supported to build strong workplace and branch organisation, to further develop combines and to extend membership to unorganised transport workers;
- Reaffirm importance of encouraging union education, including specific education courses for transport representatives and specialist training support for Regional Officers with transport membership;
- Support international solidarity and global organising with the relevant International and European Workers Federations.

Policies derived from Executive Statement 5 as passed at the June 2012 UNITE Policy Conference.

Transport

UNITE believes that transport is vital to our lives. It is a public service, an economic driver, essential for work, family life, independence, access, opportunity, and to thriving communities locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Just as transport links up our country and our world, so transport workers keep everything and everyone on the move.

Opposing transport sector cuts

Transport policy is currently dominated by the impact of global economic pressure and public sector cuts, by the legacy of privatisation and deregulation, and by the ‘race to the bottom’ in the use of contracting, sub-contracting and outsourcing, agency working and bogus self-employment.

Profit-led cost cutting, under cutting and insecurity is eroding safety, training and standards with downward pressure on pay, pensions and decent working practices.

UNITE is firmly opposed to cuts to transport, such as to the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) and to concessionary fares to old and young people, and UNITE calls for increased funding for public transport and the whole transport infrastructure.

Promoting public ownership and sustainable transport

UNITE opposes further privatisation and deregulation in the transport sector and promotes more public ownership, including our railways and our municipal bus services. Campaigning for re-regulation of the bus industry via Quality Contracts is a first step in this direction. UNITE also opposes the privatisation of Dover Port and supports it as a People’s Port, and is against deregulation of the taxi industry.

UNITE recognises the need for a integrated and sustainable strategy for transport that puts transport back at the centre of public policy, responds to the challenges of climate change, recognises that transport policy is too important to be left to the insecurity and instability of the market, and supports transport workers as trained professionals.
Public Services and Social Policy

Defend the NHS

UNITE is fully opposed to the Government’s Health and Social Care Act with its agenda of privatisation and threats to the provision of comprehensive and universal health care. Our health service should be publicly owned, publicly funded, publicly provided and accountable, free at the point of delivery, and delivered on the basis of need and not the ability to pay.

UNITE supports the presence of the NHS in local communities and seeks to improve the health system as a major weapon in the fight against inequality and poverty, such that:

- Where possible all distinct geographic areas include access to well supported local health centres with primary services, a health promotion role and minor treatment;
- All district communities are within easy reach of a local hospital with casualty and emergency services;
- All regions have access to a specialist hospital with cardiac and other time critical services.

UNITE is committed to:

- Defend the NHS through any possible means including:
  - Producing campaign material not just within the health sector but for use across the union;
  - Building links across our public sector and voluntary sector groups to enable a united approach in defence of services;
  - Work with other unions and a broad range of community, anti-cuts and campaign groups against the privatisation and cuts damaging the NHS;
  - Support local and national protests in defence of the NHS and ask the TUC to organise a national demonstration;
  - Support members in health and public sector areas in taking action to defend services;
  - Seek to ballot or take action including peaceful civil disobedience where our members decide upon such a course of action;

Campaign to reverse all the changes implemented by the Health and Social Care Act and press for a publicly funded, publicly owned, publicly accountable NHS delivered on the basis of need and not ability to pay http://www.keepournhspublic.com/index.php;

- Work with the Labour Party to go beyond a simple repeal of the Act and develop a vision for restoring a publicly owned and publicly accountable NHS;
- Ensure adequate resources are made available for this important work.

Campaign against government cuts

As part of UNITE’s campaign to defend the NHS and public services generally, UNITE will build on the show of solidarity shown on 30th November on public sector pensions and campaign against the wider effects of the Government’s cuts.

UNITE is committed to:

- Endorse a national campaign to defend our public services, NHS and welfare state. A campaign across the trade union movement and campaign groups using every conceivable method;
- Call for and support a day of action on a working day where strikes are a collateral feature.

Shared Services, Contracting Out and Private Finance Initiatives

UNITE notes the enormous pressures on public bodies to make efficiency savings and is concerned that many are responding with ‘Shared Services’ plans which are often little better than outright privatisation. In addition UNITE opposes Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs) and similar schemes such as LIFT in the health service which threaten cuts in service provision, jobs and staff terms and conditions in order to pay profits to private sector.
Resist the move to regionalised pay;

Develop and deliver a strategy to defend national collective bargaining committees (NJC, JNCs) in local government;

Campaign to protect national bargaining, reject regional pay proposals and protect workers’ terms and conditions;

Campaign for a decent pension for all by holding immediate talks with the TUC and other Health Sector unions to demand full negotiations recommence with all recognised union.

Localism Act

UNITE opposes the privatisation agenda associated with the Localism Act and the ‘Community Right to Challenge’.

UNITE is committed to:

- Mount a national campaign challenging the privatisation agenda of Local Authorities;
- Adapt political weekend schools to include the Localism Act and its privatisation subtext so that UNITE CLP delegates use the National Political Strategy Framework and demand from their elected members that they protect UNITE members and keep services public.

Council housing, housing benefit and rent control

UNITE believes that access to decent, affordable, secure and accountable housing should be a basic human right. However, due to successive governments failed housing policies’ there has been a burgeoning housing crisis developing in the UK over the last 30 years. The ‘Right to Buy’ has drastically reduced the number of council houses available for rent. The financial crisis and the reluctance of banks to lend money have effectively put home ownership beyond the reach of many working people. The private sector is unaffordable and cannot provide the homes needed. An increase in genuinely affordable and secure publicly owned homes for rent is vital.

Investment in existing and new council housing is needed to meet the housing crisis. It would also help stimulate the economic growth and provide jobs and apprenticeships. UNITE opposes any threats against secure tenancies, the forcing up of rents, and cuts that make it more difficult to access council housing, and UNITE deprecates the attack on benefits via the national £26,000...
UNITE is committed to:

Support disabled people in campaigning against cuts in benefits and changes to benefit legislation that will worsen the position of disabled people;

Endorse and offer funding to the activities of Disabled People Against the Cuts (DPAC) http://www.dpac.uk.net/.

Legal Aid Act

UNITE believes that Legal Aid Act will adversely affect the poor seeking access to justice. Cuts will fall heavily on the Citizens Advice Bureaux, community based legal advice and benefits advice.

The union is dismayed to learn that the proposals for benefit advice will mean that monies allocated will be for cases referred to the Upper Tribunal only.

UNITE is committed to:

Campaign to highlight the adverse effects of the Legal Aid Act with representations made by national officers and MPs to the Justice Secretary to demand justice for all and to have a distribution of monies available to all types of benefit advice.

Wealth Tax

UNITE believes that the Council Tax is a regressive form of taxation and calls for its replacement by a Wealth Tax levied at a common rate on the value of all properties. This should be paid by the owners of the property and the property values on which it is based should be regularly updated. UNITE is committed to lobby MPs to bring about the introduction of a Wealth Tax to replace the Council Tax.

Benefit Cuts

UNITE opposes cuts in benefit payments to the disabled and most vulnerable in society. Only a qualified doctor not contracted or employed by DWP, or companies such as ATOS, should carry out medical assessments of benefit claimants’ capability to find and sustain work.

Policies derived from Motions 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 118, Composite motions 19 & 20, and Emergency Motions 3, 8, 10, 11 and 14, as passed at the June 2012 UNITE Policy Conference.
Energy and the Environment

UNITE supports sustainable economic development in the UK and is committed to a balanced energy policy which includes coal (featuring Carbon Capture and Storage), renewable energy and nuclear. Maintaining a diverse range of energy generating facilities is important to ensuring energy security and reducing carbon emissions, and the stark reality is that renewable energy forms alone will not be able to meet our energy needs.

UNITE therefore supports a nuclear new build programme and recognises the potential for economic growth that it represents. However, UNITE is aware of the concerns surrounding nuclear energy and takes them extremely seriously. UNITE gives paramount importance to the health and safety of workers and the population as a whole. Our support for a nuclear new build programme is on the basis of demanding full union recognition and organisation at the new sites – organised workplaces are safer workplaces.

UNITE also recognises the potential for employment in ‘green jobs’ in key areas such as transport, housing and energy and notes the campaign for investment in ‘1 million Climate Jobs’ http://www.climate-change-jobs.org/. However, UNITE notes that the campaign does not include nuclear energy, which UNITE has a clear policy on, and calls for the phasing out of domestic flights, which UNITE is opposed too. On the basis of the huge potential environmental damage UNITE is opposed to ‘hydraulic fracture’ or ‘fracking’ and is opposed to the Coalition Government’s relaxing of planning regulations.

UNITE is committed to:

- Campaign and lobby for sustainable economic development in the UK - including investment to lower the UK’s carbon emissions, an expansion of public transport and support for 1 million climate jobs;
- Campaign against the use of ‘fracking’ due to the environmental damage caused;
- Ensure commitment in Labour Party manifesto to introduce integrated planning regulation that takes into account the need for affordable housing, to create urban environments that meet the needs of local communities, to grow our economy and infrastructure, and to protect environmentally sensitive areas from unsuitable development.

Policies derived from Executive Statement 1, Composite 4, and Motions 22 and 25 passed at the June 2012 UNITE Policy Conference.

Politics and the Labour Party

UNITE Political Strategy

UNITE resolutely rejects arguments that unions should disaffiliate from the Labour Party, but UNITE is renewing its efforts to reconnect Labour with our members and the working class generally, will oppose the right wing forces locked into ‘New Labour’ agenda that endorses neo-liberalism.

UNITE’s Political Strategy is about:

- Winning Labour for working people;
- Winning working people for Labour;
- Building a broad alliance to defeat the Tories and their policies;
- Winning a Labour government which will govern in the interests of working people and work towards a socialism for the 21st century.

UNITE believes the Labour Party Policy Forum and Conference needs to be made far more democratic, and UNITE is seeking to increase the number of UNITE members in the Labour Party and the number of UNITE delegates to Constituency Labour Parties (CLP). CLP activity and involvement by UNITE members will be audited and monitored.

UNITE aims to end discrimination against working class candidates for office and will encourage BAEM, women, LGBT and disabled candidates, including those people who have taken part in UNITE’s own Candidate Development Programme (which links with the Labour Party Future Candidates’ Programme).

The union supports the retention of a Political Fund to ensure members have a political voice and is committed to the implement the UNITE Political Strategy as adopted by Executive Council in March 2012.

TULO and Trade Union Liaison Officers

UNITE supports the work of the Trade Union and Labour Party Liaison Committee (TULO http://www.unionstogether.org.uk/) and its success in resisting moves to reduce the trade union share of the vote on the Labour National Executive, Conference Arrangements Committee, and at the Party Conference itself.
UNITE is committed to:

- Continue developing a political strategy that supports the involvement of active trade union members within the Labour Party’s official ranks;
- Support and endorse UNITE members who want to become politically active at all levels;
- Develop a training schedule for trade unionists who wish to become council and parliamentary candidates in the future;
- Introduce mechanisms for better direct involvement of UNITE lay members within the TULO structures at all levels.

UNITE fully supports TULO recommendations to:

- Remove the restrictive “Contemporary” criteria which currently result in many motions of genuine concern being ruled out of order;
- Support and reinforce the work of our union’s delegates to CLP and Regional Labour Parties by ensuring that constituency parties are able to select 4 topics for debate at Conference in addition to the 4 topics selected by the unions;
- Ensure any motions carried at Labour Party Conference are duly inserted into the Party’s Rolling Programme of Policies.

In respect of labour party policy making, affiliates and Constituency Parties must be able to move amendments to the Party’s policy documents. If carried, amendments should be incorporated within the Party’s rolling programme.

UNITE political levy payers must retain their right to vote in elections for the Labour leadership. To ensure a balance of representation for individual party members UNITE supports the TULO proposal to increase the number of nationally elected constituency seats on the Labour National Executive Committee – including the proposal to reserve two seats for election by members in Scotland and Wales respectively.

In respect of Parliamentary Selections, UNITE supports the TULO proposal that sitting MPs should in future need at least 66% of the nominations from the constituency’s wards and affiliated trade union branches to achieve automatic reselection, noting that sitting MPs are automatically guaranteed a place on the shortlist.

In respect of changes to Labour Party rules, proposed changes should be circulated well in advance of conference. At conference, rule changes should be debated and voted upon by one by one.

UNITE also has many lay-members and union reps who have been elected or intend to stand for election in the position of ‘trade union liaison officers’ (TULOs) in their local constituency labour parties. UNITE will continue to actively encourage members and reps to join the Labour Party and put themselves forward as trade union liaison officers (TULOs), and is committed to develop and fund its own trade union liaison officers (TULO) training programme.

Scottish Parliament and Referendum on Scottish Independence

UNITE believes its Scottish Region is best placed to take decisions and organise campaigns on Scottish specific issues. This is of particular relevance with the ongoing debate surrounding a possible referendum on Scottish independence. In relation to this UNITE is committed to commission a report advising on the full implications of an independent Scotland and an alternative of further devolution of powers.

Centre for Labour and Social Studies (CLASS)

UNITE with other unions, MPs and academics, has initiated a new think tank – the Centre for Labour and Social Studies (CLASS http://classonline.org.uk/), to develop and popularise the new ideas needed to shape a renewed socialist agenda for the 21st Century. UNITE will support a process whereby CLASS ideas can be communicated in the regions with regional meetings to take place by no later than April 2013.

Policies derived from Executive Statement 3, and Motions 93, 94, and 100, and Composite Motion 18, as passed at the June 2012 UNITE Policy Conference.
Trade Union and Employment Rights

UNITE has no doubt that the anti-union legislation brought in under the Thatcher and Major governments has had an extremely negative effect on the UK trade union movement. Collective bargaining coverage has declined from 80% in 1979 to less than 30% in 2012, while at the same time there has been a huge shift in the distribution of wealth towards those who were already well off. In addition to this the CON-DEM Government has announced a series of proposals that would constitute a ‘bonfire of employment rights’.

The restrictions in trade union activity in the UK are amongst the most severe in the developed world and stand in breach of ILO and European Conventions, in addition to which the actions of the judiciary have made legal and lawful strike action virtually impossible to undertake, as witnessed in the BA dispute and the injunctions granted against the London Bus Drivers actions shortly before the Olympic games.

UNITE is utterly opposed to a situation where UK workers have less protections than most of their European counterparts and is committed to bringing about a change in that situation. UNITE will not cease in its campaigning and lobbying activities until a fundamental change is brought about.

UNITE is committed to:

- Use all means at its disposal to ensure that the Labour Party both adopts as policy, and is committed to legislate, to restore trade union rights covering the right to strike – including so called political, solidarity and sympathy strikes;
- Actively campaign for the simplification of the industrial action ballot procedures;
- Campaign for the right of trade unions to act politically including funding political parties;
- Campaign for the right to legally protected facilities time for reps in all workplaces;
- Campaign for the right to effectively picket workplaces and related establishments;
- Push for improved rights in terms of recognition;
- Use all Labour Party structures including the Parliamentary Group to ensure these freedoms are official Labour Party policy and put pressure on to ensure implementation as law by the next Labour Government;
- Go on the offensive industrially and politcally and work with the TUC and other unions to instigate a national campaign against any attacks on our rights by the current Government;
- Oppose any insertion of fees to bring Employment Tribunal cases, which only serve to limit access to justice to those people who have the financial status and ability to pay;
- Work with the Employment Tribunal National Members Association to determine areas where UNITE can work with them to fight these changes;
- Engage the UNITE Political Department to hold a series of events in the UK Parliament to oppose these changes;
- Be at the forefront of a campaign for the repeal of the anti-union laws and their replacement by a framework of positive employment and trade union rights;
- Identify all potential CAC cases across the industrial sectors that could assist in taking a class action approach to all legal challenges to the European Court Human Rights in the following four areas:
  - the ban on statutory collective bargaining rights for workers in companies employing less than 21;
  - the opportunity for employers to enter into voluntary recognition agreements with a non-independent trade union thereby preventing an independent trade union from using the statutory procedure as exemplified by the News International Staff Association’s agreement with Murdoch;
  - the requirement that a trade union must have majority support in the bargaining unit as determined by an external agency before it can secure recognition;
  - the limited scope of the protection against unfair labour practices during the period of when workers are organising themselves for recognition as exampled that they are only applicable during the balloting process.
- Commission research to further support our aspiration to expand the coverage of collective bargaining and include within this study the economic and social impact of sector bargaining of UK working people.
Agency Workers

UNITE recognises that agency workers are often exploited, and that they are used by employers’ to sow divisions in the workplace, and to undermine the social and employment conditions of all workers. Although UNITE welcomes the Agency Workers Regulations on to the statute books and sees this as a positive step, UNITE is becoming increasingly concerned at the number of employers who are using the so-called ‘Swedish Derogation’ to avoid giving agency workers parity of pay and terms of conditions of their full time counterparts.

This circumventing of the legislation is in addition to the fact that agency workers do not qualify for equal treatment until they have worked at least 12 weeks in the user enterprise – already a considerable obstacle to exercising the right to equal treatment. UNITE believes that the Swedish Derogation is contrary to the spirit and intent of the European Directive and will seek to bring about changes.

UNITE is committed to:

- Continue to campaign for equal rights for agency workers from day one of employment;
- Fight for all workers employed by signatory companies to national agreements, to be employed under the relevant agreements’ terms and conditions with no exceptions;
- Work for the organisation of all agency workers in every UNITE workplace;
- Engage the Political and Legal departments to lobby government with a view to amending the regulations, in particular the repeal of regulation 10 relating to permanent contracts providing pay between assignments;
- Engage the International and Political departments to lobby at a European level to close legislative loopholes that are not compatible with the intended objectives of the overriding European Legislation;
- Campaign for effective regulation of Gangmasters and other labour providers;
- Educate our members on the principles of Solidarity and Internationalism.

Parental Leave

UNITE is opposed to the Government’s plans to reduce the period of maternity leave to 18 weeks. UNITE believes this would lead to an attack on contractual maternity pay and result in women being forced to return to work early for financial reasons. In addition UNITE believes pressure may be exerted to view ‘flexible parental leave’ as more optional with families being discouraged from taking the leave. UNITE is committed to making the gender impact of stripping away employment rights a main feature of our campaign to defend employment rights as a whole.

Facility time

UNITE views the CON-DEM Government’s attacks on union reps facility time in the public sector as part of a wider attack on the collective and employment rights of workers. Right wing think tanks and campaigning groups – such as the Taxpayers Alliance and the Trade Union Reform Campaign – are leading an ideological attack against the movement in an attempt to deflect attention away from the savage cuts agenda that they are supporting. UNITE has pointed out that the unfounded criticism fail to acknowledge the facts provided by the Government’s Business, Innovation and Skills Ministry (http://www.bis.gov.uk/files/file51155.pdf): which indicate that reps on facility time bring:

- Savings to employers and exchequer of between £22m - £43m as a result of reducing the number of Employment Tribunal cases;
- Benefits to society worth between £136m - £371m as a result of reducing working days lost due to workplace injury and;
- Benefits to society worth between £45m - £207m as a result of reducing work related illness.
UNITE supports the call made by John McDonnell MP and Michael Meacher MP for a full Public Inquiry into the police and security services collusion with the Consulting Association, and supported the 2011 Blacklist Support Group AGM (http://www.hazards.org/blacklistblog/2011/10/04/blacklist-support-group-agm-29-october-london/) and the Blacklist Report of September 2011.

UNITE is committed to:

- Put in place a properly resourced strategy to fight against companies who attack union activists, Shop Stewards and other workplace representatives who volunteer to stand up in the fight to advance the interest of members;
- Publicise a full list of companies that victimise trade unionists;
- Campaign politically and industrially for clear contract procurement and tendering policies that prohibit work being placed with companies found guilty of blacklisting workers or victimisation on the grounds of trade union activities;
- Initiate training throughout the union involving Shop Stewards, National and Regional Committees and Officers of the union, aimed at identifying and defeating employer strategies to attack union activists and effective union organisation at work;
- Promote and organise industrial action(s) supported by our members in the workplace to defend those blacklisted or victimised for their trade union activities, including a day of action campaigning against the worst blacklisting companies.
- Raising the issue of a Public Inquiry, with our sponsored MPs and the TUC, into the police and security services collusion with the Consulting Association.

Redundancies

UNITE recognises that employment protection is more robust in most continental countries than in the UK and that redundancy protections and procedures are more rigorous and more comprehensive.

UNITE is committed to:

- Initiate a major debate within the TUC to develop improvements to members’ severance payments upon redundancy;
- Campaign for UK based companies to provide on-going social responsibility towards its employees even after the date of redundancy;
- Campaign for legislation to be enacted as soon as possible to give UK workers the same benefits received by workers in other European countries, namely that a percentage of the previous salary would continue to be paid to the employee for an agreed period after their redundancy.

Blacklisting

UNITE is fully aware of the March 2009 revelation that the Consulting Association was operating a blacklist in the construction industry, and of the report in the Observer newspaper (4th March 2012) that the police and security services supplied information for the blacklist. UNITE is also aware that over 40 companies were using the blacklist, which contained the names of some 3000 construction workers, and that workers in other sectors have also experienced the destructive effects of victimisation and blacklisting.

UNITE is committed to:

- Work with the TUC and other trade unions at all levels to actively promote the many positives that trade union representatives bring to the economy and wider workplace and where attacks are being made to campaign politically, industrially and legally to resist such attacks;
- Ensure that regionally and nationally the seriousness of the threat to trade union facility time is recognised by all and the steps everyone must take to defend trade union reps are known and clear;
- Ensure that we work with the Councillors’ Network and UNITE MPs to take forward the battle on this issue politically and make sure they understand that attacking trade union reps in this way is unacceptable.

Home Working

Home working is a widespread phenomenon in the Finance Sector but is also prevalent in many other sectors of the economy. While UNITE recognises that there are environmental gains to home working – i.e. fewer cars on the roads, less congestion and less pollution, UNITE is also concerned to make sure that any Home Working is undertaken in a responsible and safe manner, that workers are not pushed into it against their will and then adequate compensation is provided.
UNITE recognises that the rights contained within the Information and Consultation Regulations and the European Works Councils Regulations derive from European legislation which, unlike domestic legislation on Employment Tribunals, unfair dismissals and strike action, etc. are much more difficult to dilute or discard. However, UNITE also recognises that until now maximum use of the rights and opportunities that these pieces of legislation create, including:

- Accessing information regarding employment numbers and locations in a company;
- Gaining access to non-organised workplaces;
- Gaining access to in-depth information on the financial and economic situation of companies via independent experts;
- Gaining information concerning the proposed changes to production and employment;
- Insisting on consultation with a view to reaching an agreement, prior to any decisions affecting employment being made.

UNITE is committed to:
- Establish a steering committee to look at all aspects of home-working and the effects that this can have on the individual and their family;
- Ensure adequate safeguards are in place with regard to equipment provided and proper consideration given to individuals before requesting people work from home;
- Formulate a best practice home-working policy to form the basis of discussions that may arise when home-working is being considered. This policy should include the Display Screen Regulations (DSE) and the Portable Appliance Testing Regulations (PAT) together with any other relevant regulations that would apply to working in the home. This should be accompanied by a proper risk based assessment as to the suitability of home-working within the home environment;
- Ensure employers have a proper home-working policy in place before any employees are subject to it;
- Ensure employees are able to seek financial compensation for working from home in order to cover the loss of amenity space in providing employers with free office space, together with the associated heating and lighting costs.

Works Councils

UNITE believes that many works councils operate under a cloud of secrecy and that, given the employer’s control of the communications routes, they are often not able to gauge workers support for any of the decisions that they make. UNITE also believes that the works councils can have a detrimental impact on UNITE’s strategy for growth and exist to undermine real trade unions and their ability to act.

UNITE is committed to:
- Challenge the legal basis that allows works councils to operate in the way they do, including arguing for works councils to be subject to the same stringent legal regulation that unions are, such as secret ballots and accountability procedures.
Life Long Learning
UNITE is committed to campaign for all employees to be given reasonable time off work in pursuit of lifelong learning courses in addition to courses for continuous professional development.

Protecting UK standards and qualifications
UNITE notes the EU Commission, at the behest of employers, has proposed a new version of the Professional Qualifications Directive 2005/36/EC, on the grounds that there has been insufficient take-up of opportunities for working abroad offered by the mutual recognition of qualifications contained in the Directive. New proposals to encourage and speed up mobility include:

- Introducing a European Professional Card;
- Online recognition procedures;
- Partial access to a profession;
- Changes to minimum training requirements;
- Facilitating temporary mobility for professionals accompanying consumers;
- Requiring member states to justify existing regulation of professions.

UNITE opposes the new Directive on the basis that:

- By the Commission’s own admission, workers have successfully defended their standards, and therefore no further action is needed;
- The European Card and online recognition procedures are open to abuse;
- The balance of control is shifted away from the host country, including monitoring language qualifications;
- Partial access to a profession, trade, or industry may override national standards, and refusing access can be justified if there are ‘overriding reasons based on the general interest’;
- Minimum training requirements are to be reduced even further as ‘disproportionate or unnecessary’ (see p.7 paragraph 2.4 EC Green Paper);
- ‘Accompanying’ professionals would no longer have to demonstrate 2 years of professional experience or regulated education and training;
- Area-specific qualifications (pertaining to a particular country, region, city) are treated as non-existent;
- Requiring member states to better justify regulation, including language and other aptitude tests, is a prelude to sweeping away such controls.

Withdrawal of Working Tax Credits for Striking Workers
UNITE is utterly opposed to the Government’s stated intention to withdraw Working Tax Credits from workers engaged in strike action. UNITE believes this is a direct attack on the ability of workers to carry out their right to withdraw their labour without falling below the minimum standard of living, and UNITE will mount an immediate campaign, together with other unions, to oppose this plan in the strongest way possible.

Policies derived from Motions 146, 147, 148, 151, 154, 155, 158, Composite Motions 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26, and Emergency Motions 5, 4, and 14, as passed at the June 2012 UNITE Policy Conference.
The European Union

UNITE was deeply concerned at the outcome of the November 2011 EU Council which left the UK totally isolated in the European Union. David Cameron’s position was clearly driven by his desire to placate his Party’s xenophobes and to pander to the City of London, rather than trying to work with the EU to control the forces that caused the global economic crisis.

UNITE, along with the European TUC and other trade unions across the continent, is fully against the proposed EU Treaty changes that will have the effect of locking EU member states into austerity, cause further social and economic damage and hinder recovery. The solution to the current crisis lies in a European led investment strategy to produce growth, including the European Central bank issuing Eurobonds, a Financial Transactions Tax and a fair and effective system of tax collection.

However, while UNITE is against the proposed EU Treaty changes, UNITE is also fully opposed to any attempt to leave the European Union. The UK economy is intrinsically linked to the wider EU economy which accounts for 60% of our export market. Leaving the EU would not only be economically disastrous, it would also mean breaking away from an entity that has helped ensure peace on the European continent for the last 60 years and which has ushered in many important social and economic rights for UK workers.

UNITE is committed to:

- Oppose any attempts to leave the European Union and work for a vote for continued EU membership should a referendum be called;
- Continue to work with sister unions in other countries, as well as the European Trade Union Federations, the ETUC, and allies in the European Commission and Parliament, to bring about a fundamental change in European economic policy and the development of a new Social Dimension;
- Launch a series of regional seminars to inform and educate UNITE activists about the value of EU membership and the dangers of withdrawal.

Policy derived from Motion 100, as passed at the June 2012 UNITE Policy Conference.

Global Solidarity, Peace and Disarmament

Workers Uniting and European & International Federations

UNITE reaffirms its commitment to developing and strengthening our international activities, which is one of the fundamental three main pillars of UNITE’s work. UNITE welcomes the work that has been carried out in the Workers Uniting (http://www.workersuniting.org/) project between UNITE and the USW (http://www.usw.org/), and, under the guidance of the Executive Council and Workers Uniting Steering Committee will make necessary resources available to progress this project.

UNITE is also active in an array of the European and Global Trade Union Federations, such as the metal, transport, food, services, public services, and construction workers organisations, which are the focal point of many industrial initiatives to hold multinational companies to account, to develop global organising initiatives, to develop social dialogues, to lobby the European institutions, and to develop coordinated collective bargaining. As such they have a critical role to play and UNITE will continue to play its role in these organisations.

UNITE is committed to:

- Continue to be affiliated to all the relevant organisations where it has membership;
- Continue to play its full role in making sure these important organisations have the right political priorities and function properly;
- Ensure, through the international committee, that we have a coherent and coordinated input across the organisations.

Palestine

UNITE restates its commitment to its existing policy on Palestine and the continuation of the active involvement of the union and its members’ in raising this issues at regional, national and international level aimed at ending the Israeli occupation and bringing about a just and lasting peace.
UNITE believes that the continuing arrest, detaining 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 also condemns the Israeli government for its action on the aid ship MV Mavi Marmara and its system of apartheid being enforced on the population in the occupied territories and Gaza.

**UNITE is committed to:**
- Fight against the apartheid policy being enforced on the population of the occupied territories and Gaza;
- Educate UNITE members on the real situation in Gaza and occupied territories;
- Work with the TUC /STUC to continue the boycott of Israeli products;
- Strengthen UNITES ties with the Palestinian Trade Union Movement (P.G.F.T.U);
- Meet with bodies from Palestine & Israel concerned for the welfare of Palestinian child prisoners;
- Work with other unions in the UK and around the world concerned with the welfare of young people, to develop an international campaigning strategy in order to co-ordinate a global campaign for the rights of young Palestinians;
- Establish a national campaign to facilitate the active involvement of UNITE members to be involved in campaigning including the setting up of ‘Urgent Case’ actions, e-lobbies & petitions etc;
- Organise and fund, with other union bodies and campaigning groups as necessary, a national speaking tour to include lawyers and child prisoners/families in the next 12 months;
- Send an investigation committee of Executive and non-Executive representatives to see Palestinian child prisoners in court;
- Work with the TUC to build this as a national trade union campaign alongside existent campaigning on ending the occupation;
- Establish the issue as a standing item on the agenda for the Union’s International Committee with a commitment to progress the above actions with a report on progress to be made at Conference 2014.

**Middle East and North Africa**

UNITE recognises the continuing wave of strikes and workers’ protests across the Middle East in support of demands for social justice, democracy, for a living wage, for permanent jobs, for an end to cuts and privatization, for real democracy, against political corruption, and for the right to organise in the streets and workplaces.

UNITE welcomes the huge strides taken by the Egyptian working class in establishing hundreds of independent unions and the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions. However UNITE deplores recent moves by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces in Egypt which concentrate power in the hands of unelected generals. Including the dissolution of parliament, the removal of the powers of the presidency and giving the military police the authority to arrest civilians for joining peaceful protests and strikes. Whether power lies with the generals, at the ballot box or in the streets is now an even more urgent issue with the election of Mohammed Morsi and the defeat of Admad Shafiq, the candidate of the counter-revolution.

**UNITE is committed to:**
- Support workers fighting for, and defending, social justice and democracy in the Middle East and North Africa;
- Support, in particular, Egyptian workers in their struggles to build independent trade unions;
- Organise a union delegation to Egypt, primarily of lay members, and in cooperation with other British and Irish trade unions, which can report back to meetings organised in every Region;
- Support twinning between the different sectors of UNITE and the unions emerging in Egypt including promoting speaking tours of Britain and Ireland by Egyptian union activists;
- Work in conjunction with the Global and European Trade Union Federations to which UNITE is affiliated, together with the Workers Uniting structures and other national trade unions to develop real solidarity with the emerging trade unions in the Middle East and North African Region;
- Build solidarity with the emerging independent trade unions in the region, by inviting speakers to our conferences and having articles in our publications about the struggles of workers in the region;
**Venezuela**

UNITE recognises that Venezuela is showing that there are real alternatives to austerity that have led to tremendous advances for working people, including record amounts of investment in public services, enshrining of trade union rights, free education and health for all. UNITE is concerned with the financial support the opposition right wing are getting from Washington through pressure from the republican right and attempts to overthrow this progressive government are likely to intensify now OPEC has announced Venezuela has the largest oil reserves in the world. UNITE also recognises how critical the 2012 Presidential election will be in determining whether Venezuela will continue on its path to greater social justice.

**UNITE is committed to:**
- Support the right of the Venezuelan people to determine their own future free from external interference and campaign for the British government and European governments to support constructive engagement with Venezuela;
- Work with the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign (http://www.venezuelasolidarity.org.uk/vsc/) to encourage trade union delegations to and from Venezuela to encourage understanding of the new Labour law in particular and to support initiatives aimed at raising awareness of the positive example of Venezuela’s labour law;
- Continue to support the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign, and encourage branches and regions to affiliate to the VSC and support the ‘Venezuela: Defending the Majority, Not Punishing the Poorest’ campaign.

**Latin America**

**Colombia**

UNITE recognises that Colombia is the most dangerous country in the world to be a trade unionist, and utterly condemns the murder, imprisonment and intimidation of Trade Unionists in Colombia. UNITE believes that although current President Santos has made comments about being open to a peace process, the militaristic approach continues and the war has intensified allowing the violations to continue.

UNITE congratulates the good work of organisations like Justice for Colombia (http://www.justiceforcolombia.org/) who seek to give voice to the citizens of Colombia, and to bring about positive change by amplifying the difficulties faced by our Trade Union Colleagues on the International stage. UNITE supports the Colombian trade union movement, including our sister union FENSUAGRO (http://fensuagro.org/), in calling for a peace process to stop the abuses.

**UNITE is committed to:**
- Continue to promote and strengthen the Workers Uniting/FENSUAGRO partnership agreement and provide specific support to our sister union;
- Support Justice for Colombia campaign on peace in the region, and the JFC led work in Colombia in an effort to bring about political change, and use our political influence to exert pressure on the Colombian, UK, Irish and other relevant governments to work towards peace through a negotiated settlement;
- Write to all branches encouraging them to affiliate to Justice for Colombia;
- Affiliate all regions to Justice for Colombia and consider making an additional donation;
- Continue to strengthen Industrial sector to sector links and promote grass root solidarity by encouraging our branches to become engaged through affiliation to NGOs as well as providing activists with up to date information on the conflict;
- Support the Justice for Colombia campaign to help free political prisoners and campaign for the immediate release of those wrongly imprisoned for their Trade Union activity and demand protection from persecution and violence for our colleagues.
Cuba
UNITE recognises that despite the suffering the USA's illegal 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 - especially in Haiti and UNITE supports the right of Cuba to choose its own economic, social and political path. UNITE opposes the blockade and policies which isolate and interfere in the internal affairs of Cuba.

UNITE deplores the continued imprisonment of the Miami Five in the USA and acknowledges the work of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign (CSC http://www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/) against the blockade of Cuba and in its defence of the Miami Five.

UNITE is committed to:
- Support financially or as appropriate, publicise and participate in END IT NOW! campaigns and events organised by CSC in 2012 to mark the fifty years of the blockade;
- Urge regions, branches and individual members to affiliate to the Cuba Solidarity Campaign;
- Support the campaign for Justice for the Miami Five including the spring exhibition featuring the artwork of two of the prisoners and the annual vigil outside the US Embassy to mark the anniversary of their arrests.

Paraguay
UNITE totally condemns the removal of the elected President Lugo in Paraguay, in a process that has been described widely as a “political coup”. His removal is a blow against the progressive government in Paraguay and is viewed as illegal and unconstitutional by the Union of South American nations (UNASUR) and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA). Thousands of Paraguayans have protested outside the Parliament for the return of Lugo and have established a Front for the Defence of Democracy. UNITE is concerned about reports of human rights abused for the new regime, including activists killed.

UNITE is committed to:
- Supporting progressive democratic forces in Paraguay;
- Supporting the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign in its co-ordination of solidarity work in Paraguay.

Turkey
UNITE supports workers in Turkey and their trade unions and support the right of the Kurdish people in Turkey to self-determination. The AKP party and its government is promoting a neo liberal policy of ‘flexibility’ exploiting working people, many (mainly Kurdish) journalists are imprisoned along with thousands of Kurdish youths, intellectuals and national and local politicians under the government’s anti-terrors laws. Many union leaders have also been jailed for leading actions for better working conditions and the Turkish government are aiming for further limitations of union rights, including the right to a decent work place working conditions with health and safety protection.

UNITE is committed to:
- Support workers in Turkey by sending a delegation to make contact with the Trade Unions Federations in Turkey and report its findings to the Executive Council;
- Encourage Industrial sector to sector links with Trade Unions in Turkey on a national, regional and local basis;
- Urge the Regions and the Branches to develop links with similar sectors, be they regions, branches or organised workplaces;
- Affiliate the union at national level to the Peace in Kurdistan Campaign to promote a political solution to the right of the Kurdish people in Turkey for self-determination and autonomy;
- Promote grass root solidarity by encouraging regions and branches to affiliate to the Peace in Kurdistan Campaign by providing up to date information on the level of repression carried out by the Turkish government against Kurdish people in Turkey.

Trident
The trade union movement has always been in the forefront of the struggle for peace and international disarmament. UNITE is proud to stand in that tradition. Our vision is of a world where wealth and labour are devoted to exclusively peaceful purposes, and where war is superseded by the control of disputes through international law and the United Nations.
This progressive outlook is more relevant than ever when Britain faces an acute budget crisis and public spending cuts are high on the political agenda of the Tory-Liberal coalition government. The moral and internationalist case for peace and disarmament is reinforced by economic necessities. It cannot be right to spend large sums on weapons of mass destruction when essential services are facing cuts.

This makes the question of diversifying British manufacturing industry away from its over-reliance on defence spending urgent. We recognise that many thousands of UNITE members rely on the civil and naval nuclear programmes for their jobs and for retention and development of skill across many sectors. These include shipbuilding, aerospace, transport, mechanical and electrical design, project management and IT, as well as many more in the supporting supply chains. Furthermore the successful renaissance of the civil nuclear industry depends heavily on the retention and development of the skills of these UNITE members.

**UNITE is committed to:**
- Press the Government to ensure that Britain’s legitimate defence equipment needs are met from domestic producers and that proper forward planning of the defence budget is used to protect jobs and to promote the smooth transition of manufacturing to non-military production wherever possible;
- Continue to support our members and their employment until we have firm commitments to a policy that would see the jobs and skills of UNITE members preserved.

Policies derived from Executive Statement 2, Composite 7 and 8, and motions 44, 45, 49, 50, 53, 54 and emergency motion 2 and 6 passed at the June 2012 UNITE Policy Conference.

**Media Plurity and Accountability**

UNITE and its forerunner unions have always campaigned hard for greater press freedoms and a more accountable media, and UNITE was proud to support the travelling exhibition to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Wapping dispute in which 6000 workers staged a courageous struggle against their sacking by Media Baron Rupert Murdoch. UNITE believes that the power of large media groups to shape public opinion in their interests and to undermine the real functioning of democracy, has now been laid bare for all to see in the recent phone hacking scandal that engulfed the Murdoch empire.

Along with many other organisations and individuals UNITE was appalled at the revelations detailing the deep corruption of the Metropolitan Police, and was equally appalled at the weakness and timidity of politicians in holding Murdoch to account. UNITE salutes the efforts of Tom Watson MP and numerous others who have fought to break the strangle hold of News International over the UK political system, and, as per the submission to the Leveson enquiry (http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/), UNITE will continue to push for far reaching reform of the UK’s press and media.

**UNITE is committed to:**
- Campaign for a more inclusive democratically controlled media;
- Enter into discussions with the National Union of Journalists to explain the need for more support in ensuring journalistic balance;
- Ensure all full time and lay representatives are aware of how to influence media reportage by providing comprehensive media training;
- To recognise in all the work we do that the ideological struggle is as least as important as, and linked to all other forms of activity;
- Through political education via publications and specific educational events such as weekend schools raise the political consciousness of our members at all levels;
- Make full use of the social media and ensure as wide a section of members as possible are aware of the potential and possibilities
Equalities

Disabled Workers

UNITE believes that all disabled workers have a right to a life free from discrimination with all necessary support to maximise their ability to play a full and equal role in society, condemns the cuts to vital government factories, such as Remploy and other support services, and calls for better employment opportunities for disabled people.

UNITE believes that paid disability leave, which can be negotiated as a “reasonable adjustment where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010, is a progressive measure that assists disabled workers. UNITE also recognises the issues faced by many workers with dyslexia, and seeks to ensure that employers do not avoid their obligations under the Equality Act by introducing technology without fully assessing the impact upon employees with dyslexia.

UNITE is committed to:

- Lobby the government to be pro-active in helping to transform the lives of disabled people, provide where possible positive opportunities for sustainable employment, and reintroduce an employment quota system;
- Encourage Branches and Area Activist Committees to support activities and campaigns defending disabled people both locally and nationally;
- Encourage workplace reps to ensure all agreements with employers include any necessary provisions to defend the rights of disabled workers and ensure compliance with, and extension of, their legal rights;
- Ensure campaigning material and resource is available as necessary and that all officials of the union recognise that defending disabled people is a priority;
- Pursue a suitable paid disability leave policy as a matter of urgency;
- Campaign on ‘Dyslexia – the hidden disability’, lobbying government and tackling employers who avoid compliance with the Equality Act.

Policies derived from Motions 67 and 68 passed at the June 2012 UNITE Policy Conference.

To work vigorously with the TUC, Labour Party, other unions and any other groups campaigning for press freedom and diversity

- Give full support to the Morning Star and Tribune by encouraging readership, and by providing financial and advertising support;
- Branches, chapels and workplaces to take out shares in the Peoples Press Printing Society, the co-operative which publishes the Morning Star, and to purchase copies of the paper on a daily basis.
Disability Hate Crime

UNITE is concerned at the portrayal of disabled people in much of the press and media and the often negative language surrounding disability. Disability hate crime and the discrimination faced by disabled people must be addressed seriously.

UNITE is committed to:
- Challenge the media attacks against disabled people;
- Campaign for more protection for disabled people in relation to their portrayal in the media;
- Promote the positive benefits of employing disabled workers;
- Campaign for a properly funded hate crime programme provided by the public sector;
- Introduce appropriately accredited disability awareness training for all staff;
- Lobby the Government to honour its hate crime commitment and not force disabled people to face unsafe circumstances;
- Lobby the Government to improve the protection of hate crime to include social media and how police forces deal with hate crime complaints originating from all forms of social media;
- Campaign for improved funding and publicity;
- Push the UK and Scottish Governments to work in partnership with all providers to increase awareness of all disability issues;
- Fight for a statutory right to treat everyone fairly who has extra needs;
- Lobby the Scottish Government to extend its Hate Crime Act to cover disabled employees in Scottish workplaces, and on journeys to and from work.

Job Equality

UNITE condemns the government’s handling of the economy and the threat to jobs in all sectors, particularly effecting women, and UNITE is committed to lobby the Government and Labour Party Members of Parliament to ensure that employers adhere to the Equalities Act 2010 when deciding any job losses in the next three years.

Adherence to Article 19 of the European Union Procurement Directive

UNITE believes that Article 19 of the European Union Procurement Directive concerning public sector contracts and supported employment, is an important measure in supporting disabled workers in the workplace but that it is not always being adhered to. In order to address this UNITE is committed to develop an awareness programme to ensure that Article 19 of the EU Procurement Directive to support disabled workers is raised at all levels, including Government, devolved administration and political structures.

Young Workers – Underpaid or Unpaid

UNITE believes that young people are being hit particularly hard by unemployment. The Coalition Government’s policies are failing to tackle endemic youth unemployment and its enthusiasm for internships and work experience is damaging young workers’ rights. Without guarantees of decent minimum standards, such practices are a route to exploitation or the preserve of those from wealthy backgrounds. UNITE is a champion for young people in the workplace and strives to be a union attractive and inclusive for young people.

UNITE is committed to:
- Campaign, including lobbying government, for job creation targeted specifically at school, college and university leavers;
- Campaign for fully paid internship and work experience initiatives that are rewarding and effective;
- Campaign for high quality apprenticeships paid at the National Minimum Wage to be made available to all young people;
- Develop cohorts of union reps equipped to mentor and support young apprentices, work experience placements and other new entrants;
- Organisation and recruitment campaign targeting vulnerable young workers.
Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform
UNITE believes that the establishment (and demolition) of unauthorised encampments such as Dale Farm stems ultimately from the failure of local council planning committees to provide a sufficient number of authorised sites.

The disadvantage experienced by Roma and Traveller people extends beyond housing to cover almost every area of life, especially education and health provision. UNITE welcomes the rise of self-organised and broader solidarity campaigns to oppose the racism and discrimination experienced by these communities.

**UNITE is committed to:**
- Campaign for the introduction of an amendment to the Housing Act 2004 which would reinstate the duty to ensure adequate pitch provision, along the lines of the Caravan Sites Act 1968 and seek the support of the UNITE Parliamentary Group in the pursuance of this objective;
- Support self-organised and broader solidarity campaigns, such as the Traveller Solidarity Network;
- Publicise events such as Roma Nation Day and meetings and protests organised by the solidarity campaigns.

Moroccan Workers in Gibraltar
UNITE has been at the forefront of trying to end the unfair system of discrimination in Gibraltar against non-EC nationals and Moroccan workers in particular, and acknowledges recent improvements to the naturalization process that has taken place with the change of Government.

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- Publicise events such as Roma Nation Day and meetings and protests organised by the solidarity campaigns.

Asylum Seekers
UNITE is appalled at successive governments’ treatment of those seeking asylum in the UK and, working with other organisations, supports the right of people from any country to flee persecution and seek a safe haven. UNITE recognises the positive contribution that asylum seekers and their descendents have made to our society.

**UNITE is committed to:**
- Oppose the ‘culture of disbelief’ that pervades the UK Boarder Agency (UKBA) and especially case workers and decision makers and to ensure asylum seekers get a fair hearing;
- Oppose tactics used by UKBA to harass asylum claimants;
- Demand the Government reverse cuts in legal aid;
- End detention – asylum seekers are not criminals but seeking sanctuary and exercising their international rights under the Geneva Convention and Human Rights legislation;
- End destitution – those who can work should be allowed to and those not able to given decent support whilst waiting for their claim to be heard;
- Ensure all work carried out by the union includes all sections of our wider communities including LGBT asylum seekers.

Votes at 16
UNITE supports lowering the voting age to 16 which, combined with strong citizenship education, would empower young people to better engage in society and influence decisions that will define their future.

**UNITE is committed to:**
- Join the ‘Votes at 16’ coalition (http://www.votesat16.org/) and promote this policy through the union’s structures and communications;
- Lobby MPs to support the campaign.

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**UNITE is committed to:**
- Oppose the ‘culture of disbelief’ that pervades the UK Boarder Agency (UKBA) and especially case workers and decision makers and to ensure asylum seekers get a fair hearing;
- Oppose tactics used by UKBA to harass asylum claimants;
- Demand the Government reverse cuts in legal aid;
- End detention – asylum seekers are not criminals but seeking sanctuary and exercising their international rights under the Geneva Convention and Human Rights legislation;
- End destitution – those who can work should be allowed to and those not able to given decent support whilst waiting for their claim to be heard;
- Ensure all work carried out by the union includes all sections of our wider communities including LGBT asylum seekers.

Votes at 16
UNITE supports lowering the voting age to 16 which, combined with strong citizenship education, would empower young people to better engage in society and influence decisions that will define their future.

**UNITE is committed to:**
- Join the ‘Votes at 16’ coalition (http://www.votesat16.org/) and promote this policy through the union’s structures and communications;
- Lobby MPs to support the campaign.
UNITE’S INTERNAL EQUALITY PROVISIONS

Equality Monitoring of Appointments

UNITE is committed to:

■ An annual review to monitor all appointments within the union, especially in relation to women and equality applicants, and to monitor the women and equality applicants shortlisted and the percentage of successful female and equality appointments;
■ Establish and publish equality proofed criteria for determination of stand down officers;
■ Produce (via consultation with regions) a candidate development programme aimed at giving women and other equality activists the necessary skills and experience to become successful in applying for employment with the union.

Getting involved – women, black, Asian and ethnic minorities, disabled, LGBT, young and retired members

UNITE is committed to roll out a weekend educational summer school initiative (as originally undertaken by the West Midlands Women’s Committee) to all regions of the union, with the aim of giving women an understanding of UNITE structures.

BAEM Members at the heart of UNITE Community Section

UNITE believes that the regional BAEM committees should work within their communities to help encourage and build membership within the UNITE community membership scheme.

UNITE is committed to:

■ Ensure Regional BAEM Committees are an integral part of the community membership scheme, that they are visible and supported in their work in the community, and that they are involved in the issues around the riots in London and the UK;
■ Work with other community groups and unions that are campaigning against deaths in police custody.

Reasonable Adjustments and Disabled Members

UNITE believes that all disabled members should have the right to support from the union in order to enable them to participate in all aspects of the union’s activities.

UNITE is committed to:

■ Establish union policy to support reasonable adjustments and the use of personal assistants for disabled members, ensuring personal assistants will not be out of pocket, to improve disabled members’ participation in the union;
■ Raise and inform all branches and industry committees of reasonable adjustments for disabled members and their importance to improve participation.

LGBT Education and Zero Tolerance to Discrimination

UNITE recognises that education is key to preventing and dealing with discrimination and prejudice against LGBT members.

UNITE is committed to:

■ Review UNITE education and training courses to ensure LGBT issues are mainstreamed;
■ Train all officers and reps on LGBT equality;
■ Ensure involvement of regional LGBT committees, Regional Women’s & Equalities Organisers, and regional education tutors;
■ Monitor all workplace/branch/regional and national complaints that are LGBT related for review by the regional and national LGBT committees;
■ Produce a zero tolerance policy to homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia within the union;
■ Ensure that all cases related to discrimination and prejudice within the union, are dealt with seriously and effectively.
Health and Safety at Work

UNITE deplores the attacks of the Coalition Government upon workplace health and safety including the dismantling of health and safety law, the slashing of funding of the Health and Safety Executive, reductions to health and safety inspections, abolition of the health and safety helpline and changes to RIDDO reporting. UNITE believes this will lead to increased deaths, injuries and sickness arising from work.

UNITE also believes that health and safety standards will be further detrimentally affected if the Government progresses with plans to reduce trade union facility time, affecting the ability to organise on health and safety through trade union health and safety representatives.

The Government’s actions on health and safety are part of a wider agenda of public sector cuts, privatisation and attacks on trade union and employment rights.

UNITE is committed to:
- Ensure health and safety remains a key priority throughout the union;
- Mount a vigorous campaign to oppose cuts in public spending in the agencies responsible for the enforcement of health and safety within the workplace;
- Oppose government moves to reduce health and safety standards in the workplace;
- Organise campaigning events including protest actions and demonstrations against the Government’s anti-health and safety at work agenda, and argue the case that health and safety rights must be an integral part of the movement’s wider campaigns against government cuts;
- Continue the campaign for effective corporate manslaughter laws including imprisonment of directors;
- Campaign with other sectors, trade unions and the TUC for a maximum working temperature that covers all workplaces;
- Continue to press for greater rights for union safety representatives;
- Challenge the use by employers of “blame the worker” initiatives and other so-called “Behavioural Safety” programmes in the workplace;
- Establish a union policy on a Health & Safety Unit.

Organising and Young People

Organising is one of UNITE’s most fundamental and important aims and nowhere is this more important that in organising and recruiting young people.

UNITE is committed to:
- Engage with local higher and further education establishments, utilising links with NUS and being involved in Freshers’ Weeks;
- Strategically map where and when schools could be targets for trade union education programmes;
- Ensure appropriately dedicated UNITE personnel or activists are able to approach schools;
- Roll out use of ‘Schools Packs’ developed by young members and education department;
- Deliver more young members’ courses;
- Use the skills and expertise within the Community, Youth Workers and Not for Profit sector to develop training and campaigns that can be delivered to young people;
- Identify workplaces with younger age profiles and deliver 100% campaigns in those workplaces.

Policies derived from Motions 27, 29, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43 and 104, and Composite Motion 6, as passed at the June 2012 UNITE Policy Conference.
Pensions

Defending Pensions

UNITE thoroughly condemns the attacks on pensions in the private and public sectors and is pledged to actively oppose them. UNITE does not accept there is an economic need to increase the pension age and supports a lowering of the pension age over time to 60 for both men and women to increase quality of life and as part of a programme of job creation. UNITE further condemned the Government’s threats in relation to union participation in respect of NHS pensions and demanded full negotiation takes place with all recognised trade unions.

UNITE is committed to:

- Campaign in support of members pensions in the public and private sector;
- Campaign for the pension age to be lowered over time to 60 for both men and women;
- Broaden links and activities across different industrial sectors to encourage unity as well as common understanding of the issues and a cohesive approach to defending pensions jointly across the private and public sectors;
- Develop a dedicated programme of cross private/public sector activist education to assist in defending pensions.

Occupational Pensions

UNITE supports legislation to compel employers to auto-enrol employees into pension schemes which meet a minimum standard, but UNITE believes employers’ contributions should be set at a more generous rate than that proposed by the Government. Pensions’ policy also needs tightening in relation to issues arising from outsourcing, company takeovers and mergers and TUPE transfers.

UNITE is committed to:

- Provide guidance to representatives on appropriate contractual wording in respect of contractual rights and TUPE;
- Fight against any attacks on members’ pensions;
- Press for mergers and takeovers to include access to company pension schemes;
- Support members who are prepared to take action to retain their pension scheme in a merger or takeover situation.

Working Time and Long Hours Culture

Working excessively long hours has a major impact on the physical and mental health of workers. It is also inefficient, worsens unemployment, prevents workers playing a full role in family, community and wider society, and places major costs on state and semi-state agencies. UNITE believes that a reduction in working hours with no loss in pay, benefits or conditions is an essential part of both the union’s industrial and political strategy, and is an important part of the fight to reduce unemployment. UNITE challenges employers’ attacks on existing industrial agreements and the lack of proper enforcement of legislation which are driving a long hours’ culture.

UNITE is committed to:

- Train lay and full-time officials in ‘long hours’ issues and not enter into agreements that undermine the union’s national policies or members’ statutory rights;
- Mobilise resources of the legal and political departments to defend members when necessary;
- Make working time legislation a key issue in dealings with the Labour Party;
- Establish a check list or kite-mark as to what should clearly constitute a family-friendly policy to give an acceptable work-life balance.
- Revive the “Drive for 35” campaign as part of the union’s industrial strategy, to be developed through sector campaigns and company level bargaining;
- Continue the fight for the release of the funds from the previous 35 hour week campaign to be re-invested in the new campaign.

Carcinogenic Diesel Engine Exhaust

UNITE, as the largest transport union in the UK and Ireland, is extremely concerned that the recent upgrading of the classification of diesel engine exhausts emissions from probable human carcinogen to definite human carcinogen, appears to have been totally discounted by the relevant authorities.

UNITE is committed to:

- Campaign together with other interested organisations, on the issue of carcinogenic diesel engine exhaust to highlight and expose the real dangers faced by workers in the transport sector and the potential hazards for the wider public.
State Pensions and Dignity for Pensioners

UNITE believes that people are entitled to a decent standard of living in retirement and rejects the view that the current economic difficulties and longer life expectancy provide any justification for lower pensions.

In this respect the State Retirement Pension should be the foundation of retirement income without having to rely on means-tested Pension Credit. The State Second Pension should be maintained as an earnings related element based on lifetime contributions from both employers and employees.

Employers’ should be obliged to enrol employees in an employer sponsored scheme with a minimum level of contributions or, failing that, to the new National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) provision. However, the proposals should be introduced more quickly and employer’s contributions should be twice that of employees.

In general pensions’ rights should include making changes within contractual provisions with trade unions having full negotiating rights. UNITE believes the proportion of member trustees in trust-based companies should be increased to 50% and there should be similar member representation on joint management committees for contract based (non-trustees) employer schemes. UNITE also believes the Government should set an example to private sector employers by maintaining good quality defined benefit pension provision for its employees.

UNITE welcomes the introduction of the minimum increase of 2.5% to the State Basic Pension if inflation is lower, and the changes to National Insurance Contribution conditions which will increase the proportion of women receiving the full amount.

UNITE also supports a reduction of the Lower Earnings Limit and allowing part-time earnings from more than one job to be combined for National Insurance purposes and expanding the right of carers to build up an additional state pension for those looking after children up to the age of 18.

UNITE is committed to:

- Campaign for:
  - A Basic State Pension above the officially recognised poverty level and indexed annually to average earnings or prices whichever is greater;
  - An end to means testing and for universal benefits;
  - Beneficial changes in taxation, regulatory oversight and actuarial and accounting practices to force employers to bear pension risk rather than pass it on to employees;
  - Strong public services delivered by public employees;
  - An end to fuel poverty;
  - Free travel, TV licenses and a winter fuel allowance;
  - Free health and care service that will guarantee pensioners dignity in retirement.
- Work with sympathetic organisations such as the National Pensioners’ Convention for the unions’ pensions aims;
- Negotiators vigorously opposing auto-enrolment proposals where the employer contributes less than the employee, and challenging the employer to contribute at least double what is expected of employees;
- Lobby the Government for the introduction of a national second tier pension that:
  - Is clear and transparent;
  - Covers all employers and employees;
  - Is based on a fair accrual rate for each contributing year;
  - Has a death in service benefit;
  - Has a facility for increased contributions by employers and employees to buy additional benefits;
  - Has all contributions paid to a National Savings Bank with the instruction to invest in British industry and infrastructure wherever possible.

Dignity for Pensioners

UNITE believes that pensions are but one aspect of the social rights of Senior Citizens and that other areas need to be addressed to ensure proper dignity for pensioners.
UNITE is committed to:
- Campaign for a Charter for Senior Citizens that includes:
  - Adequate housing, warm and well insulated at affordable rents and an end to fuel poverty;
  - Free at the point of access health care provisions, including dignified care homes provision;
  - Income generating opportunities that are Senior Citizen friendly for those who voluntarily wish to continue participating in working environment;
  - Recreational and family care facilities that are community based and that promote physical and emotional wellbeing;
  - Educational facilities and lifelong learning opportunities that promote social and mental wellbeing;
  - Inter-generational initiatives that blend the experience of the older citizen with the talents of the younger citizen;
  - The ability of Senior Citizens to integrate with society in a stress free manner through free travel, free TV licences and use of modern communications technology;
  - Pension provisions, both state and private that enable an income level sufficient for a life of independent choice. State pensions to be set at no less that 50% of average income and indexed annually to average earnings or prices whichever is greater;
  - An end to means testing and for universal benefits;
  - Strong public services delivered by public employees;
  - A more progressive tax system to fund the above benefits.
- Adopt the National Pensioners Convention’s ‘Dignity Code’ and encourage all areas of our organisation to affiliate to the NPC and campaign in support of it.

Policies derived from Composites 11, 12, 13 and 14 as passed at the June 2012 Policy Conference.

Union Administration & Membership Services

UNITE will protect and ensure that members money is used correctly, to this end the Executive Council will put in place standard and transparent severance provisions that will apply to all employees of the union, up to and including the General Secretary. The Executive Council will implement these points as soon as possible and no later than October 1st 2012.

The contents of these provisions will clearly state:
- No ex gratis payments will be made to any employee up to and including the General Secretary over and above the standard severance terms;
- No severance terms to be available for ‘known leavers’ - i.e. those staff/officers giving notice of retirement or resignation up to and including the General Secretary;
- ‘Known leavers’ information to be provided to the Executive Council on a quarterly basis;
- The Executive Council will monitor severance packages on a quarterly basis in line with the Executive Council budgetary process;
- No employee of the union up to and including the General Secretary, after receiving a severance package, will be employed on a ‘consultative’ basis unless approved by the Executive Council;
- All ‘compromise agreements’ are to be negotiated within agreed guidelines produced by the Executive Council; in addition a sub-committee of the Executive Council (recognising the confidentiality of such agreements and data protection) shall oversee and regulate all compromise agreements before payment to ensure they are within the agreed guidelines.
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: 0330 123 3003 (UK) or 1890 946 241 (RoI)

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Ireland
Belfast Regional Office
26-34 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 2AA
tel 02890 200418 or 02890 232361
(04890 when calling from the ROI)

Dublin Office
15 Merrion Square, Dublin 2
tel 01 661 1063

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North East, Yorkshire and Humberside
John Smith House, 145/165 West Regent Street
Glasgow G2 4RZ
tel 0141 404 5424 or 0845 604 4384

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

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

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London and Eastern
Ruscombe Business Park,
Tayford, Reading
Berks RG10 9JQ
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South West
Tony Benn House, Victoria Street,
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55 Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BW
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Unit 2, Pride Point Drive, Pride Park, Derby DE24 8BX
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