

## **POLITICAL**

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This Policy Conference resolves that until the Labour Party adopts and actively pursues policies in support of trade union freedom, at least 10% of members' Political Fund contributions that would historically have been spent on the Labour Party shall be used by Unite to directly campaign for trade union freedoms instead of being used for contributions to, or support for, the Labour Party.

This Policy Conference resolves that until the leadership of the Labour Party publicly supports Unite members taking industrial action against austerity and in defence of public services, at least 10% of members' Political Fund contributions that would historically have been spent on the Labour Party shall be paid into Unite's National Dispute Fund.

To ensure transparency, this Policy Conference resolves that Unite's accounts will show contributions, expenditure, assets and liabilities relating to the Political Fund separately from its general funds.

**IT & COMMUNICATIONS NISC  
IT & COMMUNICATIONS RISC – North West**

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**Manchester Area Activists Committee**

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## **CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

Within Unite today the policy for deciding which Labour Constituencies have a development plan is led by the Regional Political Officer making a recommendation to the National Political Committee.

This Conference demands that the Lay Members of the Regional Political Committees should be the body to make recommendations on which Labour Constituencies should be considered for development plans.

This Conference calls upon the EC to revise the policy to ensure that the Regional Lay Members make recommendations for development plans.

## **AEROSPACE & SHIPBUILDING RISC EAST MIDLANDS**

### **TRADE UNION LINKS TO THE LABOUR PARTY**

Both the RISC for the R&A and the F,D&T South West urges the Conference to call on the General Executive Council to regularly monitor the Policies of the Labour Party so that they reflect the principles, policies, aspirations of our Union and our members. If necessary to re-examine our relationship and links with the Labour Party if it is felt that the party is not speaking up and campaigning for Union Policies, and supporting members, working people and their families.

## **SW/R&A AND Food, Drink and Tobacco RISC**

### **TULO AND LABOUR PARTY**

Conference notes that the historical relationship between the trade union movement and the Labour party is being challenged by those who wish to sever this alliance.

The trade union movement must do everything in its power to support the Labour party and defend this link. However, conference is concerned that for too long too many within the labour party, including current and aspiring MP's, play lip service to the Trade Union movement. Unite must have a clear policy aimed at addressing the issue of tokenism towards the trade union movement, and Unite must strive to ensure that going forwards the Labour Party has good credible trade unionists at all levels of its' organisation.

This conference therefore calls upon the EC to

- Ensure Unite develops 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, including those members wanting to stand as councillors or MP's;
- 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;

Conference call upon the EC to implement the above proposals as a matter of urgency and no later than 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012.

## Derby and Derbyshire Area Activists Committee - East Midlands

### TULO and the Labour Party

Conference notes that the historical relationship which the trade union movement has with the Labour party is being challenged by those that wish to remove this link.

It is right that the trade union movement does everything in its power to support the Labour party and defend this link. However conference is concerned that for too long too many within the labour party which includes current and aspiring MP's play lip service to the Trade union movement. Unite must have a clear policy which addresses the issue of tokenism towards the trade union movement at the root cause. Unite must ensure that any future Labour party has good credible trade unionists at all levels of the Labour party.

This conference therefore calls upon the EC to

- Ensure Unite develops a political policy that supports the involvement of active trade union members within the Labour party officials ranks.
- Support and endorses active Unite members who want to become politically active at all levels, including those members wanting to stand as councillors or MP's
- Develop a training schedule for future trade union council and parliamentary candidates
- Introduce mechanisms for better direct hands on involvement of Unite lay members within the TULO structures at all levels.

Conference call upon the EC to implement the above proposals as a matter of urgency and no later than 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012.

Chesapeake Nottingham EM37F Branch

### LABOUR LEADERSHIP

#### This branch notes:

1. The statement by Labour leader Ed Miliband and shadow chancellor Ed Balls that Labour cannot pledge to reverse any Tory cuts. Balls said the 'starting point' is 'we're going to have to keep all these cuts'.
2. Balls and Miliband have endorsed the public sector pay freeze that is slashing living standards for millions of workers.
3. That Unite General Secretary Len McCluskey has denounced the statements as 'discredited Blairism' and said 'The real points of differentiation between Labour and the government on the economy are now very hard to identify.'

#### This branch believes:

1. That the statements from Len McCluskey and others attacking Balls and Miliband are welcome.

2. That it is more than ever clear that we cannot 'wait for Labour' to deliver change and that we will have to fight ourselves against the Tories.
3. That the millions of pounds shoveled to Labour by some unions have been wasted.
4. That workers should not pay for the bosses and bankers' crisis. We could defend and improve public services by such measures as taxing the rich, collecting the £120 billion of tax that is avoided and evaded by the rich and corporations, imposing a tax on financial transactions ('Robin Hood tax'), getting rid of Trident nuclear weapons and withdrawing the troops from Afghanistan.
5. That we need socialist policies – public ownership and control of the banks for example – not more pandering to the rich.

### **THIS BRANCH RESOLVES:**

1. That we are totally opposed to the Tories, their austerity drive and all cuts and that this union should continue to seek unity in action between the trade unions and the general anti-cuts movements – including UK uncut, the occupy movement, the Right to Work campaign and Unite the Resistance.
2. To encourage a major debate throughout the labour and trade union movement on the question of working class political representation, affiliation to Labour and the alternatives and as part of this debate to engage with any move by trade union leaders to call for a left alternative to Labour.

**Leicester Branch 0168M**

### **A STRONG VOICE FOR OUR UNION IN THE LABOUR PARTY**

This Conference recognises that the living standards of our members are under increasing attack. Our union must therefore strengthen our political voice and must, in particular, work to ensure that the Labour Party is properly responsive to the needs of our members.

Conference notes the valuable work done by our representatives in the recent "Refounding Labour" debate through the Trade Union and Labour Party Liaison Committee (TULO) and its success in resisting moves to reduce the trade union share of the vote on the Labour National Executive, Conference Arrangements Committee and within Party Conference itself.

However, further work is still needed to ensure needed changes advocated by TULO are achieved and Conference strongly supports TULO recommendations to:

1. Remove the restrictive "Contemporary" criteria which currently result in many motions of genuine concern being ruled out of order.
2. 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 additional to the 4 topics selected by the unions.

3. 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 (such as ourselves) 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.

This Conference further affirms that our Union's levy payers must retain their right to vote in elections for the Labour leadership. Additionally to ensure a balance of representation for individual party members, Conference supports the TULO proposal to increase the number of nationally elected constituency seats on the Labour National Executive Committee including 2 seats reserved for election by members in Scotland and Wales respectively.

In respect of Parliamentary Selections, Conference 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 this Conference wishes proposed changes to be circulated well in advance of Conference. At Conference, rule changes should be debated and voted on one by one.

This Conference calls on our Union's representatives to press the above recommendations as forcefully as possible in order to make the Labour Party more properly and effectively responsive to the legitimate and vital interests of our members and to demonstrate clearly both the Labour Party's commitment and its ability to respond to the needs of hard pressed working people whose living standards are under the most serious attack for a generation at this time of great economic difficulty.

**LE/128 Branch**

### **CUTS AND THE LABOUR PARTY**

This conference notes with deep concern comments made by both Ed Miliband and Ed Balls about Labour not reversing the depth or speed of recent cuts, or the capping of a 1% pay rise over the next two years to Local Authority workers.

Is this union going to stand by and allow this to happen? Are we not going to send a clear message to the Labour leadership which we helped get elected?

There are so many jobs at stake and so many of our members suffering financial hardship, and pensions being eroded across the board.

This conference believes that this union's senior officers should, at the earliest opportunity, meet with the Labour leader to seek a commitment to restore the value of salaries which have been held for the last two years, restore the RPI link to pensions, and reverse the recent adverse changes to pensions.

Please support this motion.

**LE/9710M Branch**

## **TRADE UNION LIAISON OFFICERS (CLP's)**

This branch notes and applauds UNITE'S policy to win back the Labour Party from the right-wing neo-liberals who have infested the party over the past 20 years, and return it to where it belongs: as a voice and political vehicle for the working-class people of this nation.

It has come to this branch's attention from the excellent 2011 political school held at Durham that UNITE has many lay-members and union reps who have been elected or intend to stand for election (mainly due to the good work done at Durham) in the position of 'trade union liaison officer'(TULO'S) in their local constituency Labour Party branches.

However, it became apparent from discussions held with the TULO'S and those wishing to stand for this position that they were unclear of what the position entails and what is expected of them. This is a golden opportunity for the union to have in position across many CLPs UNITE members and reps in what is an important position within the Labour Party and therefore ask conference to pass the following motion:

- That UNITE actively encourages members and reps to join the Labour Party and put themselves forward as trade union liaison officers
- That the union develop and fund a TULO training programme so we can fully educate our TULO officers in how to carry out this position successfully and help take forward into the local CLP's the ethos of our union & the wider trade union movement to the grass-roots members of the party as yet another weapon in our armoury to win back the Labour Party to once again be the voice for the working-class of this nation.

### **UNITE NE 302/25 (formerly NE 8/9-10) Branch Sheffield Bus Workers**

## **RELATIONS WITHIN THE LABOUR PARTY**

This conference believes that the working people of this country have been let down by the Labour Party over the last 15 years. None of the conservative anti trade union laws were repealed. It is obvious to most trade unionists that the Labour Party is prepared to take our subscriptions but nor give anything back. So it is time for a serious review of our position.

**SW/401 Branch**

## **REFERENDUM ON SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE**

This Conference calls on the General Executive Committee to commission a report which will advise on the full implications of an independent Scotland and of an alternative known as 'devolution max'.

The report, amongst other matters, shall consider the implications:

- of these options for UNITE and its membership;
- for the trade union movement in general;
- for personal taxation in Scotland;
- for the achievement of full employment in Scotland;
- for the maintenance of appropriate social services including the NHS;
- for a Scottish energy policy;
- for Scottish membership of the European Union;
- for the creation of 'green jobs' an a sustainable economy.

The report shall be published in sufficient time to inform UNITE and the wider trade union and labour movement before the independence debate starts in earnest.

## **CYWNFP RISC – Scotland**

### **SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT**

Conference notes that the trade union movement in Scotland was at the forefront of the campaign for the creation of a Scottish Parliament. Since the creation of that Parliament, our union has successfully influenced many of its decisions, winning positive moves for members in Scotland in areas such as:

- The fast tracking of asbestos-related industrial negligence cases in the Scottish courts and the successful retention of the right to compensation in Scotland for pleural plague cases
- Payments to members of the former Scottish Transport Group from the surpluses in pension schemes
- Positive reform of industrial injury compensation in Scotland
- Financial support for the production of environmentally friendly buses at Alexander Dennis, securing jobs and ending short-term working
- The non-imposition of increased employee contributions in local government pension schemes in Scotland
- The ending of PFI and PPP projects in Scotland, preceded by the elimination of two-tier terms and conditions for workers affected by such contracts
- The retention of ferry services in Scotland in public ownership
- The placing of Quality Contracts and Quality Partnerships in bus transport on a legal footing through the Transport (Scotland) Act
- The extension of free concessionary travel for pensioners and disabled people across Scotland
- The retention of the Agricultural Wages Board in Scotland

Conference supports the efforts of Unite Scotland to:

- Resist any further attempts to abolish the AWB or privatise ferry services
- Oppose the break up of the single Scotrail franchise while presenting the case for public ownership and regulation of rail and bus services
- Advance the case for sectoral bargaining forums to establish minimum standards of wages and terms and conditions in key areas of the Scottish economy
- Campaign for the inclusion of obligations to adhere to a Scottish Living Wage and Article 19 providing protection for disabled workers in public sector procurement contracts

- Use devolved powers over the operation of Employment Tribunals in Scotland to ensure fair access and fair processes at no cost to claimants
- Establish a standing committee of the Scottish Parliament to address the specific Scottish dimension in health & safety
- Ensure that moves on public sector reform in Scotland are based on protection of service provision and delivery and greater democracy and accountability in areas such as local government
- Oppose reductions in Corporation Tax and promote the case for measures that the Scottish Parliament can take to positively advance tax justice
- Secure a stable funding regime for the voluntary sector in Scotland to protect jobs and terms and conditions
- Develop a comprehensive manufacturing strategy in Scotland with full employment as its goal and extend and support co-operative ownership with trade union involvement in a Scottish Co-operative Development Agency.
- Engage with the SNP government in Scotland whilst building the activities of the Unite Labour MSPs Group and playing a role in the re-building of the Scottish Labour Party.
- Engage with the debate on the constitutional future of Scotland on the basis of a consideration of what structure and powers are required to extend democracy and accountability, progress the Scottish economy, build social justice and equality and advance the position of our members.

Conference recognises that the Scottish Region of Unite is best placed to take decisions and organise campaigns on Scottish specific issues and believes that resources in the union should be devolved to the Scottish Region to enable them to do so.

Conference also recognises that communications produced by the union centrally need to consider their applicability to Scotland before distribution and calls upon the General Executive to ensure that the Scottish Region is consulted on the content of such communications prior to production and distribution.

#### **LOCAL AUTHORITY RISC (Scotland)**

#### **THE POSSIBLE SEPARATION OF SCOTLAND FROM THE UK**

We call upon this union to initiate at the next conference a debate on the future of Great Britain, considering the consequences of the possible separation of Scotland from the United Kingdom.

Following this debate organise a vote that will clearly show and mandate the unions position for or against Scotland remaining within the UK. And publicise these results in union publications.

**Luton and Dunstable Branch 0336**

#### **THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Conference notes with grave concern the December 2011 EU summit, its imposition of deflationary budgetary controls across 26 states and the resulting loss of economic democracy. Franco-German big business used the financial crisis to eliminate what remains of the already limited democratic powers of EU member states by seeking to enforce new treaty regulations that will impose austerity on all economies and drastically reduce workers rights.

At the same time the British government, representing only the financial interests of the City of London, defended the EU Single Market which prohibits both state aid to industry and public ownership of utilities or retail banking.

Conference therefore recognises that it is now crucial to put forward a progressive counter agenda to protect and advance the interests of working people by regaining powers enabling government investment in the productive economy and allowing state provision of public services.

Conference notes the opposition of organised labour across Europe to these developments and believes that the time has come to fundamentally redraw the character of international economic cooperation across Europe and beyond.

Conference resolves that Unite should strengthen existing and develop new direct organising links across the European Trade Union Movement.

Conference further resolves to campaign for Britain's withdrawal from the EU and to oppose both the Con-Dem Government's Single Market agenda and the new EU treaty that will finally end the sovereign right of member states to control their economies.

Conference believes that Britain's withdrawal from the EU will strengthen the struggles of working people across Europe to protect and regain hard-won trade union and democratic rights and therefore urges on the Executive to take this motion forward to this year's TUC Congress.

## **CYWU&NFP RISC - London and Eastern**

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Conference therefore resolves to campaign for Britain's withdrawal from the EU and to oppose both the Con-Dem Government's Single Market agenda and the new EU treaty that will finally end the sovereign right of member states to control their economies.

Conference believes that Britain's withdrawal from the EU will strengthen the struggles of working people across Europe to protect and regain hard-won trade union and democratic rights and therefore calls on the Unite executive council to take this motion forward to this years (2012) TUC congress.

**LONDON UNITED CRAFT BRANCH  
SE/Weybridge Branch**

## **GET US OUT OF EUROPE**

This Conference believes Unite will strive to furthering the cause of those who believe Britain is better off out of European Union. The struggle to repatriate British sovereignty from a political project that has comprehensively failed people right across Europe.

As the victim of Brussels larceny, bullying over – regulation and all round interference, the time has come to win back our country and restore legitimacy and accountability to the political process. As those on board the European gravy train have mounted one power grab after another, pushing Britain's disproportionate contributions even higher.

Despite unemployment across Europe averaging more than 10%, Brussels continues to propose new job destroying regulations and conspire to turn the whole EU into a zone of high taxation. The institution has been stealing our rights to self-determination. Almost nothing the EU proposed or enacted has benefited Britain. We were told staying out of the Euro Zone would be a financial disaster yet it is clear beyond doubt that the opposite is true.

The past two decades of European integration have turned mainland Europe's economies from some of the world's industrial powerhouses into also-rans, stuck in the global slow lane. Only Germany has prospered in the euro. Yet Norway and Switzerland have stayed on as the lynch pins of the European Free Trade Area – able to import iron and export to the EU freely without being subjected to federalist ambitions.

Taking Britain out of the EU should not be seen as a move to be "little Englanders". On the contrary ours is a great trading nation with markets all over the world. The time has come to develop our neglected trading links.

Unite will take this argument to the TUC and the Labour Party.

**Long Eaton Branch EM/1824**

## **EUROPEAN UNION REFERENDUM**

This Conference calls on Unite the Union to support the ever increasing calls for a referendum of the British people to decide their future membership or otherwise of the European Union. Since 1975 no referendum has been held in this country on the EU, and nobody under the age of 54 has ever been allowed a say on this contentious issue. Labour and the Lib Dems have both broken their manifesto pledge given at the last general election to hold a referendum over the Lisbon treaty, and the Tory parties Cast Iron Guarantee statement has been shown to be little more than worthless. All three parties have over the years since 1975, shown continued support for the failed European federal dream, and at various times even supported the joining of the disastrous Euro currency, both of which are not in the best interest of the British people. Conference therefore believes it is high time that the people of Britain be allowed their say through a referendum on this vitally important issue, and calls on the Union to act with other like-minded organisations to achieve this end.

**Wigan Branch 6/1400**

## **EUROPEAN UNION**

Conference is deeply concerned at the outcome of the November 2011 EU Council which left the UK totally isolated in the EU, and has reopened the debate about whether the UK should now leave the EU completely.

Conference believes the UK Prime Minister's only concern is pandering to his Party's xenophobes and protecting the interests of his friends in the City of London, rather than trying to work with the EU to control the forces that caused the global economic crisis. The opposition to the Financial Transaction Tax proposal demonstrated this clearly.

Conference fully supports the European TUC's opposition to the proposed Treaty changes and agrees that:

- Locking EU Member States into austerity by Treaty changes will 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 Transaction Tax, a fair and effective tax collection system, measures against tax evasion and the end of tax havens.

While opposing the current proposed EU Treaty changes however, Conference also fully opposes any attempts to leave the European Union. Despite its many flaws and the problems that it currently faces, Conference recognises that the EU:

- Has helped to ensure peace on the European continent for more than 50 years;
- Is over 50% of the UK's export market and that the UK's economy and future prosperity is intrinsically linked with the EU's economy;
- Has brought many social and economic rights to UK workers – including the Part-Time Work, Parental Leave, European Works Councils, Information and Consultation, Equal Treatment and Anti-Discrimination, Working Time, Directives, amongst others.

Conference therefore commits UNITE to:

- Oppose any attempts to leave the European Union and to 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, for 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.

**Southampton 0854 Branch**

### **CLASS ACTION**

This UNITE Policy Conference welcomes the announcement by the General Secretary last November of the establishment of CLASS, UNITE's think tank for progressive ideas to further workers' and unions' rights in the UK.

The EC is to be congratulated for its ongoing support of the Institute of Employment Rights and their crucial work in the field of ideas generation for workers and UK unions.

We call upon the EC to support a process whereby CLASS ideas can be communicated in the regions through presentations to allow for debate and input by activists and officers. Such regional meetings to be held no later than April 2013.

The constant attack upon UK workers, their legal rights and their unions by this Government is the true agenda concerning the EU, European Court of Human Rights and so-called 'employment opportunity' initiatives.

Cuts in services and benefits go hand-in-hand with 'cuts' to workers abilities to organise and promote their interests.

UNITE must lead the debate – as it did with the General Secretary's article in the Guardian in January - to not only rebuff these attacks but also create the blueprint for laws and collective bargaining arrangements to radically change the employment relations agenda for the Labour Party and the Movement.

**IT & Communications RISC – London & Eastern**

### **UNITE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYERS**

This Conference believes that people and organisations with whom Unite works should set high standards of employment for their own staff and further believes that in this respect Unite should develop a Code of Conduct for employers. This should include Unite members who are MPs and particularly the Unite Parliamentary Group in relation to their staff. The Code of Conduct should be negotiated and include sanctions for lack of compliance including sanctions written in to the Constituency Development Plans between CLPs and Unite where the MP is a Unite member.

This Conference calls on the Executive Committee and the National Political Committee to implement this proposal and report to the next Policy Conference on progress.

**LE/427 Branch**

### **NATIONAL SHOP STEWARDS NETWORK**

This Conference recognises that since its inception in 2006, the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) has played an important role in supporting trade unions and their members in struggle as well as helping those in the union movement that have suffered victimisation

This Conference particularly applauds the NSSN in its solidarity work with Unite members. Amongst the many instances, this has included the Visteon workers and pensioners, the successful reinstatement of Rob Williams in Linamar and Paddy Brennan in Honda and the construction workers defending the JIB and NAECI agreements.

This Conference resolves to support the NSSN in its campaigning work and form a close working relationship with it.

**LE/2116 BRANCH**

### **MORNING STAR**

This conference commends the continued support UNITE gives to the Morning Star, the only socialist daily newspaper in the UK.

Conference calls on all branches, chapels and workplaces to take out shares in the Peoples Press Printing Society, the co-operative which publishes the paper, and calls upon the branches, chapels and workplaces to purchase copies of the Morning Star on a daily basis in order to support a daily newspaper that supports the Trade Unions, Labour movement and out members.

**GPM RISC – West Midlands**

### **MEDIA**

This conference recognises that the Media is either privately owned or state controlled. This means that diversity and debate is at the best limited and at the worse non existent. This means that alternative opinion is either ignored, misrepresented or in many cases simply ridiculed.

Conference recognises that social progress is impossible in a situation where misinformation leads to ignorance and sometimes hostility to Trade Union objectives.

All attempts historically to control the mass media has led to failure. The only alternative is to support and build upon the resources already available within the Labour Movement. Conference recognises that any such programme requires investment and adequate resourcing.

With this in mind the Executive Committee is instructed to put in place the following programme of action to ensure that our policies are understood and acted upon within the broadest sections of society possible.

1. Despite the difficulties, maintain vigilance and continue to campaign for a more inclusive democratically controlled media.
2. To enter into discussions with the NUJ to explain the need for more support in ensuring journalistic balance.
3. To ensure all full time and lay representatives are aware of how to influence media reportage by providing comprehensive media training.
4. Continue to give full support to the Morning Star and Tribune by encouraging readership, and by providing financial and advertising support.
5. 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.
6. Through political education via publications and specific educational events such as weekend schools raise the political consciousness of our members at all levels.
7. Make full use of the social media and ensure as wide a section of members as possible are aware of the potential and possibilities
8. To work vigorously with the TUC, Labour Party, other unions and any other groups campaigning for press freedom and diversity.
9. To facilitate and encourage all forms of networking and local propaganda initiatives that explain and promote union policies.

**Blackpool Branch**

#### **VOTES AT 16**

##### **Unite the Union notes;**

1. That currently 1.5 million 16 and 17 year olds are denied the vote in public elections in the UK.
2. That the campaign to lower the voting age is supported by thousands of young people across the UK and that the Votes at 16 Coalition consists of a wide range of youth and democracy organisations.
3. That you can vote at 15 within political party elections and at 16 in trade union elections.

##### **This union believes;**

1. 16 and 17 year olds are knowledgeable and passionate about the world in which they live and are as capable of engaging in the democratic system as any other citizen;
2. It is impossible to justify the automatic and blanket exclusion of 16 and 17 year olds from the right to vote because, at 16, the law allows a person to:
  - give full consent to medical treatment
  - leave school and enter work or training
  - pay income tax and National Insurance
  - obtain tax credits and welfare benefits in their own right
  - consent to sexual relationships
  - get married or enter a civil partnership
  - change their name by deed poll
  - become a director of a company
  - join the armed forces
  - become a member of a trade union or a co-operative society.

3. Lowering the voting age to 16, combined with strong citizenship education, would empower young people to better engage in society and influence decisions that will define their future.
4. Participation in free elections is a fundamental human right (protected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UK's Human Rights Act). Because of these laws the reasons for excluding people from the vote have to be fair and balanced.

**This union resolves;**

1. To join the Votes at 16 Coalition;
2. To lobby MPs and inform our members of this decision and ask them to support the campaign;
3. To promote this policy through its structures and communications; and to run activities to raise awareness of and support for Votes at 16.

**CYW&NFP RISC – West Midlands**