

## **PUBLIC SERVICES AND SOCIAL POLICY**

### **OPPOSITION TO THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE BILL**

This Conference totally opposes the Government's Health and Social Care Bill with its agenda of privatisation, and its threats to the provision of comprehensive and universal health care. Our health service should be publicly owned, publicly funded, publicly provided and accountable and free at the point of delivery, delivered on a basis of need and not ability to pay

Conference notes that the foundation of the NHS in 1948 transformed the lives of millions of ordinary working class people and their communities – and those communities will pay a high price if the NHS is dismantled.

Conference calls on all bodies of the Union, not just our Health Sector, to campaign against the Health and Social Care Bill. Our belief is that this campaign will be made stronger if it brings together public and private sector workers, unites trade unionists and community campaigns, and seeks to build the broadest possible alliance to defend the NHS. Millions of us will suffer if we lose the NHS; this opens the potential to build a massive fight to save it.

Conference further calls on the Executive Council to ensure that adequate resources are made available for this important work.

**Health Sector NISC**

### **SAVING THE NHS**

This conference calls for the Policy Conference to support the following :-

This Conference is outraged with the ideological implementation of Andrew Lansley's Health and Social Care Bill by this Con Dem Coalition Government.

Conference agrees that the Bill will destroy the NHS as we have known it.

Conference agrees that the Bill will, therefore be a disaster for those whose health depends on the NHS and also for those who work for it.

Conference agrees that the policy of Unite the Union is, "To reverse all the changes implemented by this Bill" to a "publicly funded, publicly owned, publicly accountable, delivered on the basis of need and not ability to pay".

Conference calls on the Unite Executive Council to lobby our sister unions to adopt the same policy.

Conference calls on Unite Executive Council to start a campaign immediately to urge organisations that Unite the Union is affiliated to, such as the TUC and the Labour Party, to also adopt this policy as their own.

**Coventry and Warwickshire Area Activists Committee**

### **DEFEND THE NHS**

Conference notes that the NHS, following its introduction in 1948, transformed the lives of millions of working class people. Decent healthcare – formerly the preserve of the rich - became available to all of us.

This Government is now committed to the systematic dismantling of the NHS. Rapid privatisation is already taking place, and the Health and Social Care Bill removes remaining barriers to this. The Bill will also remove the requirements for comprehensive healthcare, with the NHS reduced to a giant 'postcode lottery' system; and for universal healthcare, where all of us are entitled to high quality treatment.

This ideological assault on the NHS, combined with a savage £20 billion cuts, is now causing fundamental harm to the health services that all of us need. Our members and their families will pay with their health and ultimately with their lives for the attacks now taking place.

Conference resolves to make defence of the NHS a centrally important issue for Unite as a whole, and believes that our members have a central role to play in resisting cuts and the relentless drive towards the breakup of the NHS through social enterprise and privatisation. Conference instructs our Executive Council to progress this through any possible means, including:

- The production of campaign material not just within the Health Sector but for use across Unite
- A strategy of systematically involving Unite branches in community campaigns to defend the NHS
- Support for local and national protests in defence of the NHS
- Support for our members in Health or other public sector areas in taking action to defend services
- An approach of building links across our public sector groups to enable a united approach in defence of services; making links also with our voluntary sector groups to build a common fight

**West London Medical Branch**

## **DEFENCE OF LOCAL NHS SERVICES**

This conference congratulates the union for its lead role in the defence of the NHS and the campaign against the Health and Social care bill. This conference also recognises however that the underlying principles of the NHS go further than just free healthcare and socialisation of risk. In addition UNITE supports the presence of the NHS in local communities and seeks to improve upon our present health system as a major weapon in the fight against inequality and poverty.

To this end this conference seeks to include in its health policy:

- 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.
- That all district communities are within easy reach of a local hospital with casualty and maternity services.
- That all regions have access to a specialist hospital with cardiac and other time critical services.

This conference recognises that this addition to our policy means not just campaigning for improvements in many areas but also defending services that at present are under attack. To this end we should ensure that in defending such services we work with all active community groups and fellow unionists taking steps to organise and publicise the campaign. Further we should seek to ballot or take action including peaceful civil disobedience where our members decide upon such a course of action.

## **SE London Medical 0024M Branch**

### **HOUSING**

Due to successive governments failed housing policies there has been a burgeoning housing crisis developing in the UK over the last 30 years.

It is a stain on the last Labour government's record that despite it being Party policy for over 5 years they did not implement it as government policy and undertake a large scale council house building program.

The financial crisis and the reluctance of financial institutions to lend money has effectively put home ownership beyond the reach of many ordinary working people and the 'Right to Buy' policy allowing council tenants to purchase their council home has drastically reduced the number of council houses available for rent.

While almost 5 million people are stuck on council house waiting lists, tens of thousands of our members in the construction sector are unemployed, manufacturing is in steep decline and thousands loyal and dedicated public sector workers have seen their jobs with Local Authorities outsourced and privatised.

If we are to learn the lessons of history then we must follow the example set during the great recession of the 1930's and build our way out of the current financial crisis.

It would be both economically and morally the correct decision for this government to commence a large scale council house building program in order to kick start the economy, which in turn would create hundreds of thousands of jobs in Local Authorities, Construction and the manufacturing supply chain including providing apprenticeships for thousands of young people currently unable to find work, while providing much needed housing for many thousands of ordinary working people including our members and their families.

Research has shown that poor quality housing has a massive negative impact on quality of life but in particular for children it has a significant effect on both their education and health, it is also widely recognised as being a major contributor to family break -up. If we are to avoid a return to the 'Rackman' days of slum landlords we must step up our efforts to try and address this disgraceful situation, access to decent, affordable, secure and accountable housing should be a basic human right.

The North East Yorkshire & Humberside Local Authorities Regional Industrial Sector Committee calls on the EC to support the campaign for a large scale national council house building program and provide the necessary resources for the campaign including lobbying government and highlighting what we believe will be one of the biggest issues facing working people in the next few years.

Furthermore we call on the EC to work with the Labour Party to make it Labour Party policy to undertake a large scale council house building program when returned to government, to continue to affiliate too and work with Defend Council Housing and to use our political influence at all levels within the Party to persuade councils to support this policy and where possible bring back in-house outsourced services.

**Local Authority RISC – NEY&H**

## **COUNCIL HOUSING**

This conference agrees that the only way to solve the housing crisis is to build council housing. The private sector is unaffordable and cannot provide the homes needed. Privately rented accommodation and social housing in the form of housing associations is more costly to rent, is more expensive for the taxpayer and less accountable to democratic scrutiny and control. More and more working people and their families are living in cramped, sub-standard accommodation, which is having a severe effect on social stability and health.

We need investment in existing and new council housing. Public sector investment is needed now to rebuild our housing stock. Spending public money in this way is probably the best way to stimulate economic growth and provide jobs, not just in construction and supply of building materials but also in creating demand for fixtures and fittings, white goods, furnishing etc.

Council housing rents pay for maintenance and repair costs as well as repay building costs. Council housing is cheaper to build, manage and maintain than any alternatives and provides the secure, affordable housing millions of people are desperate for, with an accountable landlord.

Public land should be used where possible to build a new generation of first-class council housing. With five million on housing waiting lists, and homelessness rising, an increase in genuinely affordable and secure publicly owned homes for rent is vital.

The Government are threatening to remove life-time secure tenancies, force up rents, and cut access to council housing. There is no electoral mandate, or justification for these attacks on tenants, which will hit the elderly, the sick, the poorest and most vulnerable.

Conference calls for:

- Unite Area Activist Committees to organise local Housing Emergency meetings, petition and lobby of Council and MPs to defend secure tenancies, rents and access to council housing.
- Use political lobbying to demand a future Labour Government invests in Council Housing to provide homes and jobs in the construction sector.
- Use of Unite Councillors network to pressure Labour Councils not to sell off Council Housing stock
- Unite to continue to work with Defend Council Housing and pressure the Government to allow affordable homes with an accountable landlord to be built
- Demand all the money from our rents and capital receipts should be ring-fenced to manage, maintain, repair, improve and build new council housing.

**Grimsby Area Activists Committee  
SE/2048 Branch**

## **RENT CONTROL TO REPLACE BENEFIT CAPS**

This Conference deplores the attack on Benefits, via the national £26,000 Benefit Cap. This is nothing more than an attack on working, low-income families, and people who are unemployed through no fault of their own.

The bulk of the £26,000 is spent on Housing Benefit, and this goes straight into the pockets of landlords. This Conference calls on the Executive to lobby vigorously for Rent Controls to be re-introduced, so that fat cat landlords are deprived of their vast income, instead of the attacks on the livelihoods of ordinary working people being carried out by this Tory-led Government.

**South Thames Community Branch**

### **PUBLIC SERVICES JOBS & PAY; THE FIGHTBACK**

Conference acknowledges that austerity is a failure. It cannot succeed in stabilising public finances because it undermines the very means by which deficit and debt levels are brought under control: economic growth, increased employment and rising incomes and living standards. Austerity cuts growth, cut jobs, cuts incomes and increases poverty – leading to stagnation, high unemployment and high debts. Conference, therefore, calls for a new expansionary economic policy. This should be based on investment – investing in our infrastructure, education and skills and public services.

However we note the present reality is the current Tory- led government is engaged in an all assault on the UK's public services. Current estimates by the Office of Budget Responsibility are that if these policies are continued we will see the loss of 710,000 jobs by the start of 2017.

Moreover in response to those who claim there is a choice between pay increases & preserving jobs the reality is rather we face from this government both massive job loses & swingeing cuts in real pay levels throughout the UK public services.

We are to face another year of pay freeze followed by two years of a 1% cap & the the prospect of a probable extension of this policy until 2017. A veritable biblical seven years lean indeed. In addition there is the concurrent drive which is likely to accelerate of regionalisation of public service pay. We have to accept that this approach does have its attractions to the devolved administrations in Belfast, Cardiff & Edinburgh for a mixture of motives.

Unite in response must energize its membership in the public services to engage in a fightback against this appalling prospect for our pay, conditions & jobs. This means workplace, local, regional & national campaigning activity including appropriate smart industrial action.

**Education RISC Ireland**

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### **Education RISC – Northern Ireland**

#### **SHARED SERVICES/CONTRACTING OUT**

Conference notes the enormous pressures on local authorities ,and other public bodies such as Universities schools and colleges,to make efficiency savings in the current tight financial climate.Conference is concerned that many Authorities and Institutions are responding to this with "Shared Services" plans. "Shared Services" in a public-private form are often little better than outright privatisation dressed up in a new guise.They pass over essential services to control of the private sector which is motivated by profit with little regard for either the effects of moving or cutting jobs on local economies,or crucially for the conditions or right of workers

Therefore Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Give full support for employees defending the retention of in -house services.
- 2) Call for the promotion of in-house service improvement plans before any "options appraisal " process is instigated.
- 3) Produce information to help campaign for directly delivered publicly accountable services and publicise existing resources to help branches and regions tackle shared services and claimed efficiency savings.
- 4) Urge public sector employers to produce in-house bids if the procurement process is being implemented
- 5) Develop training on community campaigning to help branches work with the local community to campaign to protect and improve local jobs and services

**East London 0338 Branch**

#### **CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE CUTS**

This Conference calls on the Executive Council to build on the tremendous show of solidarity that was shown on the 30th November, not only in relation to the public sector pensions but in terms of the wider effects of the current government cuts. We clearly saw what is achievable when the trade union movement stands collectively together.

The momentum of that day will be lost if we allow the government to combat our collective strength by the age old divide and conquer trick.

The coalition of trade unions must be maintained so as to defend all public sector workers and accept nothing short of an acceptable agreement for all public sector workers.

Furthermore this Conference calls on the Executive Council to endorse a national campaign to defend our public services, NHS and the welfare state. A campaign across the entire trade union movement and campaign groups, using every conceivable method. As our general secretary said earlier this year "rule nothing out". We call for a day protest against the dismantling of the welfare state and the placing of the NHS into the hands of the private sector profiteers. A day of action on a working day where strikes are a collateral feature of political protest as protected by the International Labour Organisation Convention 87 (ILO87) and the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR).

This Conference recognises that we are the custodians of the pieces that make up the better, fairer society that our parents and grandparents built, many of whom sacrificed life and liberty in the process.

We owe it to them and the next generation to defend it with equal determination before it is too late.

**Bolton 0121 Branch**

## **PUBLIC SECTOR CUTS**

This conference congratulates the Executive Committee on its support for all action taken by members during 2011. The demonstration in London on March 26<sup>th</sup> and the two subsequent days of action, show conclusively that there is a broad support for actions to defeat the government strategy of "death from a thousand cuts."

Conference further recognises that more needs to be done if the movement is to defeat these iniquitous attacks on social welfare and social provisions.

Conference urges the Executive to support the Compass Document "PLAN B" as a thoughtful attempt to formulate an economic alternative. Conference urges the Executive to make this available on a wide a basis as possible, and campaign for its implementation within the Labour Party.

Conference applauds and endorses the General Secretaries call for Civil Disobedience to supplement and support industrial action, in opposition to the cuts.

Conference understands that this battle is key to defeating the Neo-Liberal agenda that drives the government's actions. Conference therefore calls on the Executive to continue its campaign of industrial action and Civil Disobedience.

Conference gives full unconditional support to the Executive to develop the campaign with maximum resources and working for widest possible unity to protect the British people from the attacks of this Class ridden government.

**PRESTON 0754 BRANCH**

### **WEALTH TAX**

This Conference notes that the Council Tax is a regressive form of taxation. People who live in Band A properties (valued at less than £40,000 in 1991) pay 2.2% while those who live in Band H properties (valued at £320,000 in 1991) pay 0.8%. We also note that those who live in properties valued in excess of £320,000 in 1991 (such as bankers and hedge fund managers in million pound homes) only pay the same as Band H properties. We also note that property valuations on which the Council Tax is based have not been re-valued since 1991.

This leads to excessive taxation on those with little wealth and effective subsidy for those with very high levels of wealth. This in turn means that our members, especially the lower paid, suffer financial hardship and we consider that the Government is failing to address this issue.

We call for the abolition of the Council Tax and its replacement by a Wealth Tax levied, at a common rate, on the value of all properties. This Wealth Tax should be paid by the owners of the property and the property values on which it is based should be regularly updated.

We therefore call on Unites Executive Council to lobby our MP's to raise this in Parliament with a view to bringing in these changes as soon as possible.

**Manchester and Salford Branch 0515**

### **BENEFIT CUTS**

This conference calls upon all Unite sponsored MP's, Full Time Officials and Executive Council to robustly oppose any changes to benefit payments to the disabled and less fortunate in our society. They will be the hardest hit in any benefit changes.

It is appalling what this coalition government has done and is planning to do to our benefits system where the most vulnerable in our society shoulder 25% of the cuts and the richest only 5%.

No one with a life threatening condition should be subjected to assessment and told they are fit to do some type of work.

A doctor is the only qualified person able to say what they are capable of doing.

**Bathgate Branch 0075**

### **CAMPAIGN FOR THE REFORM NATIONAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS**

Conference notes that piecemeal reform over the years has led to a vastly complicated system of tax and National Insurance, including multiple rates of N.I. contributions. Regardless of the Governments intentions, such complications can only contribute to anomalies, unfairness and tax avoidance, all of which are detrimental to members.

As a first step to sorting out this confusion, Conference calls upon the Executive to organise a campaign, including lobbying the Government, with a view to instituting a single class of National Insurance contributions and a single set of entitlements available to all contributors; to making all National Insurance contributions earnings-related; and to ensuring that all earnings, including those from any income-bearing assets, are taken into account for the purposes of calculating this tax.

Increased revenue from fair and transparent N.I. contributions towards a better and more sustainable future for all people in Britain, who deserve decent benefits and quantity pensions in which to enjoy their old age. Closing this one of many loopholes in Britain's system of taxation will help to create a fairer and better society for all workers, including Unite members

**SE/769 Branch**

### **PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVE (PFI)**

1. This conference re-affirms Unite the union's opposition to the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and similar schemes in all sectors. Importantly PFI and LIFT in the health service is a long term ruinous expense which threatens cuts in health provision, NHS jobs and staff terms and conditions in order to pay billions of pounds to parasitic finance, construction and consultancy companies.
2. We note the recent reports from the Public Accounts Committee and Treasury Select Committee have found that:
  - a. PFI often costs twice as much as conventional procurement
  - b. That distortions are used when comparing PFI costs to public provision – e.g. assuming that PFI consortia will pay corporation tax at full rate when in fact many are based in tax havens such as Guernsey or Bermuda
3. We also note that the rules on PFI procurement were written by KPMG, who then advise the PFI companies on how to avoid contributing through the tax system, which represents a clear conflict of interest.
4. PFI is not sustainable. For example, Norfolk and Norwich Hospital would have cost £229 million to build on public procurement but will cost £1.16 billion over the 35 year PFI contract.
5. It is unacceptable for these PFI consortia to loot the public purse in this fashion and to damage health care provision in the pursuit of their extortionate profits.
6. We therefore call for the union to campaign for nationalisation of all PFI schemes without compensation.

**Bristol Health Service Branch**

### **YVONNE HOSSACK CAMPAIGNER AGAINST CARE HOME CLOSURES**

This Conference calls upon the GEC to support and raise the profile of Yvonne Hossack, the Solicitor and Campaigner against Care Home Closures and support her in any practical way to continue representing the most vulnerable/disabled people in our society.

Therefore, we ask that correspondence be forwarded to all branches of the Union seeking their support, thereby making members aware of her campaigns. Also highlighting Yvonne's work and campaigns through the Unite Journals, Magazines and Website.

To support the Northampton based Campaign Group Residents 4 Residents who have set up a fighting fund to enable Yvonne Hossack to continue representing Care Home Residents when their homes are facing closure.

To assist Yvonne Hossack in any practical ways in her application for the re-instatement of Legal Aid status.

**Land Rover 909 West Midlands Branch**