

## Summary of decisions of the July 2018 Unite Policy Conference

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# WINNING & GROWING

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# Introduction

In July 2018 over 500 delegates, guests and observers gathered at the Brighton Conference Centre for Unite's fifth National Policy Conference. I described it in my opening address as "the most important single week in the Unite calendar, the moment when we all come together from all parts of our union to shape policy and chart our course for the future".

We debated and made policy on a wide range of issues important to our members and their families. These included the need for an industrial strategy, employment rights, fighting austerity, defence diversification, equalities, the environment, international solidarity and, of-course, Brexit.

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

This booklet summarises the key themes and decisions of Policy Conference 2018 with particular focus on the action points agreed by delegates. I am sure it will provide an invaluable guide for members, activists and officers. It will be made available on-line as well as being circulated to members of the Executive Council, Regional and National Industrial Sector Committees, National Young Members Committee, National Retired Members Committee, and Regional and Equalities Committees.

The theme of conference was 'Winning and Growing'. We highlighted our determination to win for our members – through industrial strength, legal action, lobbying, campaigning and shaping the policy agenda. As I said in my address to conference: "If we are winning, we can keep growing. And if we are growing we will find ourselves winning still more often".

I believe that by building on our strength and unity we can open the door to a better country for all working people and lay the foundation of a more just world for the children of tomorrow. These policies will help us build that future.

**Len McCluskey,**  
Unite General Secretary

December 2018

# Economy

## Industrial Strategy

Unite recognises that in order to develop a strong manufacturing strategy that creates growth across the economy and spreads wealth, there needs to be a national plan which includes:

- positive procurement;
- defending our foundation industries, including chemicals, oil and steel;
- reshoring of jobs into the UK supply chain;
- a strategic investment bank;
- a workable skills and apprenticeship programme to address transferable skills and skills shortages;
- investment in research and development;
- investment in digital technology including the production and manufacture of electric vehicles and the necessary infrastructure;
- a Minister for Manufacturing with a seat in the Cabinet;
- sectoral collective bargaining;
- a voice for unions and workers in their companies.

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

- Campaign for an industrial strategy based on creating opportunities for investment in new infrastructure projects (including in housing, transport, energy and new industries) with such investment tied to firm commitments to create jobs, raise living standards, improve health & safety, ensure fulfilling and productive work and build a more equitable society;
- Continue to oppose off-shoring of jobs and services, and to campaign to ensure public bodies and major infrastructure projects use UK manufactured goods and services;
- Support a policy of active engagement and intervention, to campaign for the next Labour Government to immediately appoint a Minister for Manufacturing to support all manufacturing sites within the UK and introduce a positive procurement policy and off-shoring strategy that defends jobs and takes into account the social value and implications of offshoring, procurement and investment decisions as currently happens in many EU countries:

- Fully engage with the Labour Party regarding the development of a coherent strategy in terms of the future effect of automation within the manufacturing sector;
- Fully support future design/development and manufacture of green technology within the UK;
- The re-introduction of a UK based supply chain, creating the opportunity to return thousands of decent paid jobs back to UK shores;
- The development of an alternative robust policy that opposes any “buying off the shelf” for components within the UK defence industry;
- Continue Unite’s campaign to exert pressure on government both nationally and regionally for implementation of a genuine procurement policy, recognising that manufactured goods paid for by the UK tax payer and used to benefit the UK tax payer, should be in the first instance be manufactured here in the UK.
- Positive procurement: using public spending and public contracts to support manufacturing and services, and promote and advance trade union rights, equality, fairness and a sustainable environment;
- Improved skills: offering genuine high quality apprenticeships and opportunities for re-skilling and upskilling to meet technological changes;
- Positive use of automation with job protection, job creation, health & safety and reduced working hours with no loss of pay as key objectives;
- Alternative forms of ownership including forms of public, cooperative and municipal ownership;
- A strong worker voice through strong trade unions, collective bargaining (including sectoral bargaining), the establishment of sectoral and workplace forums (involving trade unions in decisions on investment and how work is performed) and the ending of exploitative practices such as zero hour contracts, blacklisting and bogus self-employment.
- The development of detailed industrial plans for each sector, to include specific proposals on skills, retraining, new job creation and job to job transition for workers affected by changes in the economy;
- Carry out an investigation in to all aspects of automation of the economy in relation to women workers;
- Ensure the Unite National Women’s Committee is consulted in relation to the gender perspective in all areas of Unite industrial policy.

## UK Steel and Manufacturing Post Brexit

Unite believes the increasing fragmentation of the UK steel industry and the UK's uncertain economic future means more than ever, that we need the Government to adopt a comprehensive industrial strategy for steel, especially if no deal is found in the Brexit negotiations.

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Continue to support and raise the profile of the Save our Steel campaign and build this into a Manufacturing Matters Campaign that recognises the struggles that the sector has;
- Continue to lobby the Government to develop an industrial strategy involving a long-term strategic focus on investment, skills and research and development in all areas of manufacturing;
- Campaign to ensure a long-term, sustainable future for the UK steel industry alongside base metals, with an active industrial strategy and a commitment to use UK manufacturing for all major infrastructure and construction projects, or any government-backed contracts, and state funded infrastructure projects including rail, and supports the wider manufacturing supply chain and ensures appropriate social and economic impact assessments are made by issuing authorities ahead of awarding any public sector contracts or projects.

## Taking Back Control of Public Services

Unite believes that the collapse of Carillion serves to reinforce the dangers of outsourcing well delivered public services to the private sector. Lessons must be learnt from this and the outsourcing programme not only halted but reversed. Privatisation of services creates a genuine threat to terms and conditions of employment, creating multi-tier workforces with increased job insecurity for employees.

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Call for a government enquiry and audit into the activities of outsourcing companies, and, where necessary, demand government take services back in-house to prevent another Carillion-type collapse;
- Make preparations for "taking back control of public services" by conducting our own enquiry into outsourced and privatised companies, working with reps across Unite to build up data on targets missed, services and jobs cut, contractors and suppliers not paid and taxpayers money wasted;

- Campaign against the Government's ongoing programme of outsourcing public sector services to the private sector and furthermore to reverse the previously outsourced services back into the public sector;
- Calling on governments in these islands to commit to bringing services back in-house and workers back into direct public employment, as and when necessary and appropriate;
- Work with the Labour Party that the next Labour government brings in immediate legislation to defend low paid workers in terms of pay and conditions and that all privatised services outsourced in the public sector are brought back 'in-house';
- Ensure that Unite delegations carry this policy through all appropriate conferences with fellow trade unionists and Labour Party organisations;
- Support our reps and members in their disputes and campaigns and ensure both financial, legal and practical support is given where necessary.

## Nationalisation and Public Ownership

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Public ownership of rail and water and calling on Labour to bring energy back into public hands, and allow councils to bring local bus services, housing, council works departments, refuse and recycling services and other privatised services back in house;
- Ensure Labour's Manifesto includes strong safeguards for all workers employed in these sectors to ensure that transfer back into the public sector fully protects wages and conditions including pensions;
- Work with key stakeholders, such as the Labour Party and other trade unions to explore how re-nationalisation of the energy market would be achieved, and the impact this may have to those who are employed across this vital sector.

## Change in UK law for companies ceasing trading

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Lobby the Government to change its policy on allowing companies to cease trading with immediate effect in the UK and move to policy similar to USA and Europe where companies can continue trading under administration (Europe) or chapter 11 (USA) giving companies the opportunity to wind down their business and all parties involved time to make alternative arrangements.

## Mergers and Acquisitions Legislation

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Campaign for a strengthening of the UK Takeover Code to make sure the interests of the workforce are put before those of shareholders, turnaround companies and hedge funds;
- Campaign for a transparent Takeover Commission with trade union representation and legislation which ensures the Government is able to intervene in the public interest and in the long term interest of the industry and workforce, along with a two thirds majority to be achieved to make an acquisition; a ban on the dealing of shares or derivatives during the takeover period and a requirement that the views of trade unions, the workforce, communities and customer are taken into account.

## Ownership and Regulation of Public Transport

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Lobby the Government to show the general public a commitment that our transport infrastructures will be brought back into public hands in line with the Labour manifesto on public transport;
- Call for the next Labour Government to reverse transport privatisation and to bring in a fully integrated publicly-owned transport network based on democratic public ownership of rail, buses, and trams.

## East Coast Rail Bailout

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Demand the immediate nationalisation of East Coast Rail without compensation.

Policies derived from Composite Motions #6, #7, #8 and Motions 30, 36, 39, 40, and 41 as passed at the July 2018 Unite Policy Conference.

## Defence and Defence Diversification

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

Unite is however a trade union, and as such the first claim on its priorities is always the protection and advancement of its members' interests at work. This includes of course the preservation of our members' jobs in a fast-changing and unstable economic environment, and the protection of the communities in which they live. Unite does not and never will advocate or support any course of public policy which will put at risk those jobs or communities. This is part of the basic promise of trade unions to its members, and it applies to all Unite members without exception or discrimination.

These principles informed our earlier decision to support the union's successful campaign for a successor programme to replace our Vanguard submarine fleet. It is also informing our political and industrial campaigning for a replacement Combat Aircraft to succeed Typhoon, support for our world class rotary, radar, weapons and control systems innovation and our demands that the scheduled procurement of naval ships, including the proposed three Fleet Support Ships, is limited to UK bids.

It is vital that the design, engineering and manufacturing - including the procurement of British Steel and other core supplies in the manufacture of these vessels is supporting UK industry, further safeguarding tens of thousands of highly skilled jobs, irreplaceable knowledge and the wider communities that support them. Unite recognises the contribution made by our defence industries to the wider UK economy, the thousands of unionised jobs across sectors of our union that rely upon them, and its strategic role in the development alongside other core sectors such as Automotive, Metals, Chemicals and Finance, in the successful implementation of a comprehensive industrial strategy.

Further, Unite recognises the on-going failure of government to recognise the central role of public procurement in supporting UK core industries. In particular, the specific refusal of the MOD and Treasury to recognise the social and economic benefits of investing tax payer's money here in the UK, nor the far-reaching costs of its current policy to support procurement of our defence equipment requirements 'off the shelf' - predominantly from the USA - where by 2020 we will see 25% of the UK's defence budget spent.

A long-term failure of government to develop a UK Defence Industrial Strategy has led to the loss of tens of thousands of highly skilled jobs over past decades. This fact presents particularly sharp difficulties for Unite and Labour more generally, in significant part because of the failure of successive governments of both parties to grapple with the issue of defence diversification in the post-Cold War world.

It is only our members in the sector who have devoted significant time and energy to develop and promote diversification initiatives. We condemn the last Labour government for having wound up the Defence Diversification Agency, and the subsequent Tory or Tory-led administrations for their inertia on the issue.

We welcome the Labour Party commitment to developing a UK Defence Strategy and, in particular, the renewed focus Jeremy Corbyn has placed on defence diversification, in the context of the priority he rightly places on world disarmament.

Given changing threats and the deployment of our armed services to tackle contemporary threats, including; cyber and terrorism while conducting global operations in support of humanitarian relief, defence diversification must be an urgent priority for the next Labour government and Unite will campaign to ensure that it is.

Nevertheless, it is a fact that defence diversification is not going to be taken seriously by the present government, and we cannot ask our members in the affected industries to buy a pig in a poke. The possibility of new jobs of similar quality tomorrow will not support workers and their families and communities today.

Unite congratulates our shop stewards who work tirelessly to mitigate the threats from redundancy and plant closure across our defence sector with thoughtful proposals for skilled alternative work when jobs can no longer be sustained through defence work alone.

We commit to building upon that work and to resource a strategic campaign, including the establishment of a cross-sectoral defence diversification combine, building an alliance of affected workers both within and outside of our union to develop an integrated approach to diversification - as part of a wider industrial strategy to defend and enhance highly skilled jobs in manufacturing and logistical support for generations to come.

There is also, of course, a compelling moral argument against the use of nuclear weapons which needs little elaboration as well as the UK's commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. But neither is there a moral case for a trade union accepting the obliteration of thousands of its members' jobs and the communities in which they live being turned into ghost towns.

The consequences would reverberate throughout the manufacturing sector and wider afield in logistical support, transport and facilities management across the economy.

For Unite to support such a proposal would inevitably divide our union at a time when its unity and strength has never been more important in both the industrial and political fields.

Unite recognises that such unity cannot be overstated as it will deliver for all our members in each of our sectors, and any fracturing of that unity will be deeply detrimental.

Unite remains opposed in principle to the possession or deployment of nuclear weapons but our first duty remains to our members, therefore until there is a government in office ready, willing and able to give cast-iron guarantees on the security of skilled defence and associated employment, our priority must and will be to defend and secure our members' jobs.

***Unite is committed to:***

- Build upon our 'Defend our Spend' strategy, pressing for the UK defence budget to be spent in domestic factories, recognising the 36% tax return on every pound invested here and the 1.35 times average multiplier effect from this spend in the supply chain and wider community.
- Provide resources for campaigning at every level, including the establishment of a cross-sectoral defence diversification combine, to secure a serious government approach to defence diversification, including the reinstatement of a Defence Diversification Agency, and urges the Labour Party to give the highest priority to this on taking office.



## Political and Labour Party

### Opposing Racism, the Football Lads Alliance and the Democratic Football Lads Alliance

Unite notes the Football Lads Alliance (FLA) is attempting to organise football supporters in demonstrations against 'extremism'. It is taking legitimate concerns around terrorism and then using Islamophobia to stir up fear, division and racism. It represents a dangerous development on the right of British politics.

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Support, publicise and mobilise attendance against far-right marches in our towns and cities and trade unions should provide stewarding instead of relying on the police to keep people safe;
- Educate our members about the rise of Islamophobia and the racism of the FLA and DFLA and other similar groups, and by distributing information to all our branches and members;
- Run a campaign to encourage all football clubs, football fans and supporters' clubs to take a stance against groups such as the FLA and the DFLA and encourage and provide resources to 'Kick Racism out of Football' and 'Show Racism the Red Card';
- Redouble our work with all appropriate anti-racist organisations to build strong local organisation capable of opposing racist mobilisations in our communities;
- Work with those monitoring the FLA's developments and respond accordingly;
- Write to the TUC to demand it launch a 'jobs, homes not racism' campaign to unite the wider trade union movement and to campaign effectively against the far right. This should include workers taking all legal steps (up to and including strike action) to disrupt all attempts to organise for the purposes of extending the rhetoric of the FLA and DFLA or any similar organisation.

### Extension of the Franchise

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Seeking the enfranchisement of all people who have worked and lived in the UK for seven or more years in local and national elections.

Policy derived from Emergency Motion 2 and Motion 105 as passed at July 2018 Unite Policy Conference.

## Improving Health & Safety

### Mental Health Training and Unite Workplace Health & Wellbeing Representatives

Unite recognises that nearly two thirds of people will suffer some kind of poor mental health episode during their life and that this has a huge impact on the work done by Unite representatives.

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Mental health awareness training for all forms of Unite workplace representatives;
- Ensure that all representatives have access to dedicated mental health courses that will help and equip them on mental health issues;
- Facilitate the eradication of stigma and discrimination and promote good practice in relation to mental health issues;
- Promote mental health awareness in the workplace and wider community;
- Develop workplace wellbeing policies/agreements with employers;
- Provide support and assistance to workers experiencing mental health problems in the workplace by collaboration between management and trade union representatives;
- Launch a union wide campaign to promote good practice in relation to mental health wellbeing.

### Classifying Stress as a Reportable Occupational Disease

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Campaign and lobby the Government and the Labour Party to have stress classified as an occupational disease and reportable under RIDDOR.

### Occupational Health in the Workplace

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Instigate a campaign for better awareness of what Occupational Health consists of;
- Call on the Government to release funding to help with Occupational Health monitoring;
- Put pressure on employers to start in-house Occupational Health monitoring;
- Work in partnership with organisations who deliver free training and monitoring on occupational health issues to deliver joint Unite branded awareness/training events across all industries.

Policies derived from Composite Motions #15 and Motions 72, 74 and 75 as passed at July 2018 Unite Policy Conference.



## Global Solidarity

### Yemen – humanitarian aid and ceasefire

Unite notes the UK's influence as an exporter to several countries involved in the conflict in Yemen.

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Lobby the UK government to use this influence to press for the immediate free passage of humanitarian aid;
- Lobby the UK government to press, through the UN, for an immediate ceasefire with the aim of brokering a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

### Refugee Rights Campaign

Unite notes that the Refugee Rights Campaign was set up by refugees and asylum seekers who came together to organise and fight for their rights. Refugee Rights sees the trade union movement – with its emphasis on defending workers' rights and its proud record of international solidarity – as a natural ally.

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Support Refugee Rights Campaign call for:
  - o the right to work;
  - o the right to join a trade union;
  - o £10/hour minimum wage;
  - o access to education, health and other public services;
  - o the closure of detention centres.
- Encourage branches to affiliate to the campaign.

### Colombia/Jesus Santrich

Unite is extremely concerned that the arrest and potential extradition of FARC congress member-elect and lead peace negotiator Jesus Santrich will further damage the peace agreement.

Unite congratulates Justice for Colombia on its work for peace with social justice, and trade union and human rights, and reiterates its absolute support for the peace process.

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Lobby the British government to encourage its Colombian counterpart to fully implement the peace agreement as it was signed;
- Campaign on the case of Jesus Santrich;
- Continue to provide JFC with political and economic support;
- Work to encourage regions and branches to affiliate to JFC.

### Mexico

Unite welcomes the decision by the Mexican Mine and Metals Workers Union, 'Los Mineros', to join with Unite and the United Steelworkers in our global union Workers Uniting. Unite welcomes the decision by the ITUC to suspend 'yellow unions' such as CTM from the international union movement.

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Support our sisters and brothers in Los Mineros and other independent unions in Mexico fighting for democratic principles and decent independent trade unionism.

### Brazil, Venezuela and Nicaragua

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Support the work of the 'No Coup in Brazil' initiative, which brings together trade unions, parliamentarians, Latin America solidarity groups and others in campaigning in defence of democracy and social progress in Brazil, including in campaigning for Lula's freedom;
- Continue to support the work of the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign and Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign Action Group in building international support for trade unions in those countries and campaigning against US intervention.

### Turkey - stop another war on the Kurds and progressive forces

Unite congratulates the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) on successfully gaining seats in the Turkish parliamentary elections on the 24th June 2018 in the face of extreme state oppression.

Unite believes that Rojava is a beacon of light in the region which must be protected. Based on the writings of imprisoned Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, the people of Rojava have constructed a society based on grassroots democracy and women's self-liberation, which represents a historic step forward for the entire Middle East.

***Unite is committed to:***

- Reaffirm solidarity with the HDP, independent trade unions and progressive forces in Turkey and the wider Kurdish liberation movement;
- Seek to foster links and provide concrete solidarity with Rojava;
- Continue to support the 'Freedom for Öcalan' trade union campaign and help build the campaign on the international stage;
- Campaign for the immediate release of all trade unionists, teachers, journalists and campaigners for peace imprisoned by the Turkish state.

## **Israeli Government Attack on Human Rights**

Unite condemns the decision of the Israeli Government to ban members and officers of 20 global human rights organisations, who have supported the campaign for boycott and disinvestment, from entering Israel or Palestine. The list includes three UK organisations - the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Friends of Al Aqsa and War on Want.

Unite categorically condemns the decision taken by President Trump to move the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

***Unite is committed to:***

- Contact the UK Foreign Secretary and demand that he condemns the Israeli attack on human rights;
- Call for support for a renewed campaign in Britain, involving all relevant solidarity bodies, including Palestine Solidarity Campaign, for a two state settlement and for the British government to give this demand full and material backing – including sanctions on Israel if the Israeli government continues its policy of constructing illegal settlements in violation of the UN Security Council resolution;

- Reaffirm its support for a boycott of all settlement goods;
- Call on the British government to follow the 150 other UN members in giving recognition to Palestine as a state.

## **Gaza - Israeli army's unlawful killing and maiming of peaceful Palestinian protesters**

***Unite is committed to:***

- Call on Unite members in the Parliamentary Labour Party to:
  - o sign Early Day Motion 1163 ('Violence Against Protestors in Gaza');
  - o call for an independent international investigation into Israel's use of force against Palestinian demonstrators;
  - o call for a freeze of UK Government arms sales to Israel pending the results of such an investigation;
  - o call for an immediate and unconditional end to the illegal blockade and closure of Gaza.

# Brexit

## Brexit

Unite policy agreed by the union's 2016 policy conference made it clear that our union accepts the result of the 2016 referendum on membership of the European Union. It also set out our union's priorities for dealing with the process of Brexit, which included protecting jobs, defending employment rights, and opposing the racist backlash that the referendum campaign unleashed. It also highlighted many potential dangers that a Tory-led Brexit could bring.

Since that time our perspective has been vindicated. Riven by internal divisions the Conservative Government lacks the political capital, the coherence of ideas or the basic competency to deliver a Brexit which answers the problems the referendum result exposed or to deal with the economic consequences.

In line with the principles identified in our 2016 policy conference Unite remains clear that any Brexit deal must:

- deliver barrier-free access to the Single Market to ensure ongoing exchange of the goods and services which thousands of our members' jobs rely on.
- secure a customs union with the European Union
- enshrine and enhance working rights, social and environmental protections which are currently based in EU law. These must be transferred into UK law through primary legislation, open and democratically.
- not undermine the Good Friday Agreement or the economic integrity of the island of Ireland. There must be no hard border between the Republic and the north.
- protect the integrity of Gibraltar and the right for Gibraltarians to determine their own future.
- grant the immediate and guaranteed right to remain for European citizens in the UK and their dependents and secure the rights of UK citizens working in other EU countries.

- retain membership of beneficial European-level institutions or regulatory bodies which are vital to our industrial sectors such as the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), ECHA (REACH) and Euratom.

The current Tory's Government's abysmal handling of the process has made the prospect of a cliff-edge, no deal, Brexit a genuine possibility.

From manufacturing to finance, services and transport, a cliff-edge Brexit would jeopardise the livelihood of millions of working people and must be avoided at all costs. Unite has lobbied for and welcomed amendments to the Withdrawal Bill which secured a meaningful vote for Parliament to avoid this outcome, and will continue to work for such a process.

However, it remains highly unlikely that the final EU-UK Brexit deal due to come to parliament in the autumn 2018 will satisfy the criteria that Unite and the wider labour movement, including the Labour front bench with its six tests which must be met, have set.

At such a moment Unite will mobilise against the deal. Our priority will be to force an early general election which can lead to the election of a Labour government which would, among other things, reach a better deal with the European Union and improved relations with Europe all round. We are also open to the possibility of a popular vote being held on any deal, depending on political circumstances. Within these principles, the Executive Council has authority to respond as it thinks best to a fast-changing political situation.

Unite acknowledges the concerns regarding the impact which freedom of movement for EU nationals has had on parts of the labour market and some communities, factors which contributed to the referendum vote.

Any post-Brexit settlement must consider freedom of movement, which will formally end when the UK is no longer covered by European treaties. Any replacement migration system should focus on comprehensive labour market regulation, addressing the abuse of agency labour and stopping the "race to the bottom" in pay and conditions.

Any UK employer wishing to recruit labour abroad should only be able to do so if those workers are covered by a genuine trade union agreement or by sectoral collective bargaining when they arrive in the UK.

Finally, both the cause and consequences of Brexit must be understood in their international context. Working people across Europe and the wider world have endured the decade-long failure of the elites and old political parties to deal with the fallout of the 2008 financial crisis, a failure in which the institutions of the European Union were often complicit.

The resulting alienation, deprivation and discontent has led to the re-emergence of nationalism as a potent political force, most recently seen in the electoral triumphs of Donald Trump in the US and neo-fascist parties in Austria, Italy and Turkey

The global trade union movement must respond to these historic challenges by renewing our fundamental principle of internationalism, while offering working people a genuine route for taking control of their own lives, in the workplace and beyond.

Unite will always reject malign and reactionary right-wing nationalism. We will resist any attempts to divide us. Instead we must recommit ourselves to this eternal truth: we are internationalists or we are nothing.

## Brexit and Ireland

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Future arrangements ensuring the retention of the Common Travel Area between these islands and being in full compliance with the terms of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, in particular the commitment to foster the all-island economy;
- Expressing our opposition to the imposition of the dangerous and economically destructive agenda either of a hard border being erected on the island of Ireland or between Ireland and the UK.

Agreement on a customs union with the EU is the best way to avoid the threat posed by a hard border to our economy and wider society;

- Post-Brexit trading arrangements guaranteeing tariff-free movement of goods and services from the UK to the EU, and between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland – safeguarding jobs and delivering economic and political security for all.

## Brexit: Inclusion of Gibraltar in any transitional arrangements/Final EU-UK Agreement

Unite notes with great alarm the motion in the Spanish Senate (May 3rd 2018) that links Brexit negotiations directly to the question of the sovereignty of Gibraltar.

It further notes the UK Government's incompetent handling of the whole Brexit process that has led to a situation where Spain now believes it has a right of veto over the application of any Brexit arrangements to Gibraltar.

The inclusion of Gibraltar in any transitional arrangements and the final EU-UK agreement is absolutely essential in order to provide certainty to thousands of workers' on both sides of the border.

Unite welcomes the commitment of the Gibraltar Government to ensure that all social and workers' rights emanating from EU legislation are enshrined in Gibraltar law with no dilution.

In addition, Unite salutes the excellent work undertaken by Unite in Gibraltar with our Spanish sister unions – CCOO and UGT – to ensure that no workers' pay the price of Brexit.

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Ensuring that the voice of all those concerned is heard loud and clear in the political arenas where the decisions will be made and to build political pressure and support for Gibraltar's inclusion in both the transitional arrangements and final deal;
- Building further on this solidarity of working people and, should the Brexit talks fail to produce an acceptable solution, demand that the UK Government and Labour movement support the right of Gibraltarians to determine their own future and that they be fully economically and politically supported in the event of a so-called 'Hard Brexit'.

## Pensions and Retirement

### The Future of State Pension

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Campaign to promote future State Pension increases to be made at the Retail Price Index figure (RPI) rather than the current measure of Consumer Price Index (CPI).

### Improving the Quality of Life for our Ageing Population

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Campaign on the issue of “How do we improve the quality of life for our ageing population?” to include the following issues with due consideration to ensure that these in no way negatively affect policy and practice in the nations with devolved responsibilities:
  - o an immediate increase in the State Pension for a single person to £200 per week and £350 for a couple, ensuring that the pension in future is kept well above the Government’s own poverty figure;
  - o a future Labour Government to look at the NHS and social care, stop back door privatisation, and look at funding requirements;
  - o the Government to look at care for the elderly and accept that this should be paid for from taxation and not the present system, which amounts to a death tax. Responsibility for overseeing care homes for the elderly must be returned to the local authorities, and they must be given adequate funding;
  - o appropriate ‘Care in the Community’ services;
  - o the winter fuel allowance maintained and upgraded in line with inflation;
  - o bus passes to be usable in any part of the UK, not be restricted to after 9.30am, and travel concessions extended to rail travel;
  - o assurance from the Labour Party that a future Labour Government will retain the pension triple lock;
  - o campaign to prevent the introduction driver-only trains;
  - o re-nationalisation of rail services;
  - o a Commissioner for Older People.

## Fuel Poverty

Unite notes that Northern Ireland was excluded from the Warm Home Discount Scheme when it was introduced in Britain in 2011. There is no justification for low-income households in NI to be treated less favourably than Britain.

Unite also notes the recent decision by the Dublin government to abolish free units of electricity and replace them with a monetary payment of 35 Euro.

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Supporting the campaign initiated by the Age Sector Platform to integrate NI into the Warm Homes Scheme and to lobby and take whatever political action is necessary to ensure that NI households in fuel poverty receive the £140 per annum they would get if they were anywhere else in the UK;
- Lobby the Dublin government to address the anomaly outlined above.

## Funeral Poverty

Unite notes that the families of many pensioners find themselves unable to meet funeral costs. We believe the Government should introduce measures to help standardise funeral costs to ensure that people can have dignity at death.

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Support the campaign to end funeral poverty by making representations to political parties and the appropriate Government Ministers.

## Challenging the Mass Media Portrayal of Older People

Unite notes with concern the negative and profoundly damaging images of older people, both as individuals and collectively, that are continually and consistently put out by the mass media in Britain.

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Raise this issue with the National Pensioners Convention seeking to ensure that positive images of older people are maintained and strengthened in our union, the wider labour movement and in society;

- Raise the awareness of working and retired members of Unite of the myths that are peddled by the media, their purposes and divisiveness and how to campaign against them;
- Encourage and support all Unite members and organisations, and particularly its Retired Members Section, in countering local and national media on ageism and misrepresentation of older people and replacing it with positive coverage.

## Carers' Allowance

Unite recognises that caring for a partner or a loved one does not cease just because a carer reaches their state pension age. However, current legislation does not allow Carers' Allowance to be paid where the level of state pension at the time state pension age is reached is more than the level of the Carers' Allowance.

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Liaise with the National Pensioners' Convention, the TUC and all appropriate organisations to campaign for the right for carers to continue to receive Carers' Allowance beyond their State Pension Age without any detriment to their payment of State Pension.

# Industrial

## Automation and the Digital Economy

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Ensure we keep members up to date with all developments and to campaign to ensure that an incoming Labour Government establishes structures which include trade unions to agree a national plan on how the UK deals with the digital revolution in the interests of working people;
- Further development of an automation strategy with a particular focus on job protection and creation and new technology agreements through collective bargaining;
- Education courses with a focus on the threats of automation and the need to adopt new technology agreements into collective bargaining agreements to protect our members' interests and jobs for the future;
- Automation strategy to be a continuous agenda item on all industrial/constitutional structures;
- The National Organising and Leverage Department, working with the union's regions and sectors, to deliver:
  - o an automation 'risk register' for stewards to assess the risks of automation in their sector;
  - o the development of a fighting fund to address the challenges of automation in high risk workplaces;
  - o the continued building of economic power in the areas of critical national infrastructure;
  - o assistance to ensure high risk workplaces are organised and can develop and execute where necessary alternative strategies using leverage and campaign skills;
  - o an assessment of new jobs by sector and build this into our organising programme;
  - o sector papers including basic information on customers/suppliers and under-cutters;
  - o analysis of the gig economy;
  - o the creation of a '21st Century Workplace Manifesto on Automation' to promote legislative responses that retain work as a central pillar to society.



## Shorter Working Week

Unite notes that a primary aim of the trade union movement has been to reduce working time, whilst maintaining the same level of pay to give a good quality of life. Over a century of struggle has seen the introduction of the weekend break, and a move from an average 12-hour day down to 8 hours.

Unite also notes that no progress has been made in the last 28 years to reduce the working week. More and more workers are working excessive hours, whilst, at the same time, millions are unemployed or under-employed.

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

- Launch a comprehensive national campaign for a shorter working week without any loss in pay alongside other British and European unions. Without being prescriptive this could involve:
  - o a move to a 4-day 28-hour week to improve work life balance;
  - o a policy of campaigning to reduce the working week, rather than reducing workers when new technology is introduced;
  - o a sector wide national strategy to ensure that bad employers cannot undercut those employers who agree to a shorter working week;
  - o pilot trials of Universal Basic Income.

## Dignity at Work

Unite notes that a substantial proportion of Unite's membership across all of our sectors work in jobs that are public facing. As a consequence, many of our members are regularly subject to verbal abuse, harassment and even physical or sexual assault when carrying out their duties.

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

- Adopt a strategy which establishes the dignity of front line and public facing workers as a key organising and bargaining objective. This should include:
  - o identifying best practice across all sectors on how the union and employers can work together to tackle these issues;
  - o using best practice as an organising and bargaining issue in sectors where employers are not effectively tackling the problem;

- o ensuring that when union reps, delegates and officers engage with public facing workers themselves they treat them with the same dignity and respect.
- Mount a campaign on behalf of all the workers in the hospitality industry in order to end the abuse of workers in the industry;
- Make resources available for Unite to run a campaign to organise workers in the hospitality industry as a matter of urgency.

## Setting an Agenda for Excellent Apprenticeships

Unite recognises the importance of excellent apprenticeships in engineering and notes that the skills development of our members in secure, well paid and structured training is strongly linked with the prospects for UK manufacturing as we face the challenges of Brexit, globalisation, automation, digitisation and the commercial difficulties related to social dumping.

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

- Closer working with Sector Skills Councils and specific input from our nominated directors to drive an agenda for real apprenticeships, resulting in industry recognised qualifications and leading to well-paid secure careers;
- A political campaign to increase the government minimum wage for apprenticeships in order to attract good candidates;
- Encouraging the inclusion of negotiating for better terms for apprentices at national and local bargaining tables;
- A political campaign to include the mandatory participation of recognised trade unions in decision making around the implementation of the apprenticeship levy in workplaces in England and in the utilisation of funding raised by the levy in other nations.

## Future Skills

Unite acknowledges the pace of change we are now experiencing due to automation and the increased long term impact this will have on jobs, skills and working patterns.



***Unite is committed to:***

- Ensure all industrial Sectors develop an action plan and work with employers to establish future non-discriminatory upskilling schemes through negotiations and collective bargaining on high quality training and apprenticeships with decent pay and conditions including health and safety that fill real skill shortages and are not used for job substitution with a guaranteed job at the end including targeting women, Black & Asian workers for opportunities;
- Provide a progress report to the National Industrial Sector Conferences.

## **Organising Young Workers**

Unite notes the explosion of low paid and casual jobs which disproportionately employ young people.

***Unite is committed to:***

- Ensuring the union plays an active part in the TUC's project to create a new model of UK trade unionism. This should include:
  - o a review of union young workers organising strategies;
  - o an emphasis on training and development of young members to take on branch roles, and to know how to organise the workplace;
  - o an emphasis on education, especially on economics and politics;
  - o encouragement of the creation of Young Members Organiser roles at branch level;
  - o developing and extending Unite's young members structures and involvement in union organising work and community campaigning.

## **Worker Co-operatives as Opposed to Workplace Closures**

Unite is concerned that so many privately owned companies which cease trading with the owners citing financial difficulties, whether real or manufactured, or are sold on in a way that is not in the best interest of the employees, the communities involved or the UK economy as a whole.

Unite applauds the ideas of Richard Leonard MSP and leader of Scottish Labour, who has called for legislation in Scotland along the lines of the Italian 'Marcora' Law which is estimated to have created over 300 new firms as worker co-operatives and is also estimated to have saved more than 14,500 jobs.

Unite notes that the principle of the proposed law is that that employees are guaranteed to have first refusal to take over and continue to run the company concerned as a worker co-operative in the event of the threat of sale or closure.

***Unite is committed to:***

- Support the implementation of such protective legislation not only in Scotland but in every country of the United Kingdom and call for a political campaign to have the Labour Party enshrine such law in policy.

## **Challenging Increasing Workloads**

Unite notes that austerity has significantly reduced staffing in many sectors, leaving those remaining with increased workloads, undermining workers health, work-life balance and job satisfaction.

***Unite is committed to:***

- Further investigate how increasing workloads are affecting members and promote any effective campaigns from Unite and sister unions;
- Pilot workload campaigns, with demands for safe staffing levels, develop tools and targeted education, and revamp 'work your hours' events to profile of excessive work;
- Expose and challenge the inequalities which are exacerbated;
- Engage political links to provide safe staffing levels, reverse social care and housing cuts, spread collective bargaining, and develop sector standards to provide safe and stable services.

## **Direct Labour Organisations**

***Unite is committed to:***

- Actively promote the reintroduction of Direct Labour Organisations with a five year campaign of education, leafleting MPs, government involvement;
- Seek a commitment from the Labour Party that when elected the government will remove any restrictions which prevent councils from creating new DLOs and expanding existing ones. Labour's commitment to carrying out a massive new house building programme must include incentives for councils to create their own new build sections within their DLOs.

## Collective Bargaining and Solidarity Action in Workplaces, Industries and Services

Unite deplores the fact that more than 30 years of anti-union legislation by successive Governments has led to the present situation where barely 25% of workers are covered by a collective bargaining agreement.

Unite re-iterates its opposition to proposals from employers to further remove collective bargaining agreements. No company unit of Unite should accept the removal of collective bargaining from any of its members prior to a vigorous campaign involving the relevant membership combined with attempts to reach out to non-unionised workers. Such a campaign should include supporting members wishing to take action for better conditions.

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

- Develop strategies to organise and unionise broader sections of our co-workers through the utilisation of Unite shop stewards and activists, our Area Activist Committees, and in cooperation with Trades Councils where they are active, in local campaigns, together with our Full Time Officers, to take the drive to unionise unorganised workers in similar workplaces.

## Equalities

### **Sexual Harassment and Domestic Abuse**

Unite notes an increased reporting of sexual harassment within the workplace from our local reps.

Unite also notes that the Equality & Human Rights Commission has estimated that one-fifth of employed women take time off because of domestic abuse and 2% lose their jobs as a direct result of this. Work is sometimes the only refuge for many women living with domestic abuse.

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

- A launch of a new sexual harassment campaign for all our workplaces and for all the regions to work closely with their respective TUC to raise awareness of the gender specific issue;
- Hold this government to account on their Strategy Framework to end violence against Women and Girls 2016-2020;
- Update Education programme on Sexual Harassment, Violence and Abuse with all future references to domestic violence in Unite campaigns and literature;
- Generate evidence based case studies on Unite women and girls affected in the workplace by unwanted harassment;
- Continue to proactively raise awareness of sexual harassment;
- Campaign for our workplaces to adopt a policy on domestic abuse;
- Ensure that adequate training is provided for workplace representatives who may be called on to support a colleague who is a victim or a perpetrator of domestic abuse;
- Campaign to raise awareness and eradicate the stigma of domestic abuse.

### **Period Poverty**

Unite is appalled that there are women and girls in the UK that cannot afford to purchase sanitary products. All women and girls should have their period with dignity and respect.

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

- Support the launch of a Unite the union Period Poverty campaign.
- Promote the campaign to our members and community including the use of social media;
- Lobby the Government to provide funding to provide sanitary products for girls and women living in poverty and who are homeless.

## Menopause at Work

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Lobby the Government and actively campaign around introducing policies across all sectors which will provide support to employees experiencing symptoms of menopause. These policies should focus on the provision of “reasonable adjustments”.

## Repeal Irish 8th Amendment

Unit welcomes the result of the referendum in the Republic of Ireland on the 25th May to repeal the 8th amendment to the constitution giving women the right to choose.

Women's right to bodily autonomy on the island of Ireland will not be over until women in Northern Ireland have the right to choose without the threat of criminalisation and without the need to travel to either England or Republic of Ireland.

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Calling for the full decriminalisation of abortion and the extension of the 1967 act in Northern Ireland;
- Calling on the Government of the ROI following repeal of the 8th amendment to fast track the legislation.

## Brexit and Equalities

Unite notes that since the vote to leave the EU there has been an increase in the numbers of hate crime incidents that have been recorded by the police, a significant increase in the number of race related incidents seen in the workplace and a 147% increase in reports of homophobic hate crime.

Unite is also concerned that LGBT rights and other equality legislation in Britain could be at risk and further under attack if our eye is taken off the ball by the right wing using Brexit as an attempt to undermine our hard-won rights.

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Continue to work with all other trade unions and equality organisations and structures to ensure that equality and human rights does not fall off the agenda during any trade union involvement in the Brexit negotiations;

- Put in place a campaign to educate the membership on:
  - o the benefits of immigration;
  - o the dangers of hate crime.

## Rights for People with Disabilities

Unite is alarmed that more and more disabled members are losing their jobs after being managed out of work through unfair sickness absence processes.

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Campaign to separate counting of disability related absences from non-disability related sickness absences;
- Campaign to discount disability related absences from absence management policies/procedures;
- Campaign for all employers to establish clear and well-managed disability leave (DL) provision within their absence policies;
- Produce guidance and model DL policies/agreements for negotiators to use when discussing these issues with employers;
- Ensure that all workplace representatives receive sufficient training to support members at risk of facing disability discrimination.

## Improving the Face of our Union by Increasing Employee Diversity

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Work closely in conjunction with the National Equality Committees to ensure that a robust advertising, recruitment and selection process is in place to address this under-representation amongst employees in Unite;
- Ensure all Equality Committees receive quarterly equality profiling data, including numbers, vacancies advertised, short-listings, selection and appointment of all officers and staff.  
This should include action taken on retention and promotion at all levels and grades including agencies or sub-contractors commissioned to carry out work on behalf of Unite;

- Set up a Positive Action Programme with specific targets and deadlines to address the under-representation of BAEM officers and staff across all regions;
- Agree a process of consultation with the National and Regional Equality Committees.

## Equality Impact Assessments

Unite notes that Equality Impact Assessments remain statutory necessities in the devolved regions but not in England.

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

- Campaign for the reintroduction of mandatory Public Sector Equality Impact Assessments in England.

## Unconscious Bias

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

- Introduce a programme of unconscious bias training for Unite reps;
- Produce materials to publicise the impact of unconscious bias on workers, including a reps' briefing and video;
- Share best practice where organisations have been successful in overcoming unconscious bias.

## Asylum Seekers

Unite notes that since the General Election of 2010, Theresa May has pursued hostile and discriminatory policies towards asylum seekers in the UK, first as Home Secretary and then as Prime Minister.

Unite fears that with the rise of far-right populism and the pursuit of a 'Hard Brexit', the intersection of anti-migrant and anti-LGBT bigotry will increase further.

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

- Work with organisations such as UKLGIG to review immigration policies which discriminate against LGBT+ asylum seekers, and to work with all sponsored Labour MPs – including the current Shadow Secretary of State for International Development – to make representations where appropriate.

## Gender Identity

Unite is firmly committed to equality for all, and the members of our union are a strong representation of the diversity within our communities. Equal and fair treatment both at work and in society is a key priority for our union, and we make it clear that we all have a duty to challenge discrimination, harassment and bullying whenever possible. Unite acts on behalf of its members and bargains with employers to achieve greater equality within the workplace.

A **key objective** of the union is:

*'To promote equality and fairness for all, including actively opposing prejudice and discrimination on grounds of gender, ethnic origin, religion, class, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, caring responsibilities; and to pursue equal pay for work of equal value'.*

We oppose the current government's agenda of division, greed, prejudice and inequality. We need investment in jobs, in real opportunities, not racist 'vans of hate' and attacks on the Equality Act.

Youth unemployment, women's poverty, pregnancy discrimination, hate crime, disabled workers access, lack of opportunities for black workers, workplace bullying and harassment, cuts to support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans people, poverty in retirement - all need action now.

We oppose and challenge those employers who refuse to deal with discrimination and to eradicate barriers to equality and fair pay. And we continue to call for statutory rights for union equality representatives - who make a real difference in the workplace.

Unite is committed to the empowerment of all working people and in tackling under representation and discrimination against our members. Unite believes that in order to tackle discrimination, it is essential to ensure those who experience that discrimination are at the forefront of our campaigns and their voices are heard.

Unite takes positive action through minimum proportional representation of women and black and Asian ethnic minority members on all constitutional committees, equality monitoring of our membership and established constitutional committees and conferences to represent and empower the interests of our Women, Black and Asian Ethnic Minority, Disabled and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans members.

Unite believes in the principle of self-determination and empowerment through collective action as the route to tackling the discrimination that working class people face. Unite believes that by working together and tackling discrimination and oppression faced by our individual members we improve the working conditions of all workers.

Respect and tolerance are crucial and we oppose all hate crime, bullying and harassment, we therefore oppose any construct of a debate which seeks to divide and set one group of workers against another and will defend our members against any homophobic, transphobic or sexist hate language or abuse. Unite also believes that our members have the right to freedom of speech and that we have the right to disagree.

Unite recognises that there are people who do not identify as either male or female whose identities are not widely recognised by society. Individuals with non-binary titles, pronouns and modes of dress as well as the issues associated with being unable to express one's gender identity within the workplace. Unite believes there is a lot of work to be done, across both workplaces and Government, to recognise additional gender identities.

Unite believes that any worker has the right to determine their gender identity without unnecessary medicalisation, and supports the review of the process of applying for gender recognition process / certificate.

All Unite members who identify as women and meet the rule 6 qualifications of being a union work place representative in employment are welcome to participate in the Women's structure of Unite.

Unite recognises that sex discrimination at work arises from deeply engrained patriarchal and systemic oppression of women and that our Women's structure empowers women through a process of democratic policy making and collective action against gender stereotyping, occupational segregation, violence, harassment and pay discrimination and recognising our diversity as black, Asian and ethnic minority women, lesbian, bisexual and trans women, disabled women, younger and older women.

Unite's Women's structure has prioritised the gender pay gap, social security and pensions, decent work and employment rights, equality monitoring and auditing, positive action to tackle under representation of women, flexible working and decent child care, pregnancy discrimination, menopause, abortion rights, gender sensitive health and safety, sexual harassment and

violence against women, a woman's right to choose a legal safe abortion on the NHS and the right to organise in a trade union. Unite recognises that some of these issues may well affect trans men, and not all of these issues affect trans women.

Unite's Women's structure supports women only spaces in addition to gender neutral spaces and is particularly concerned that our trans members should be protected from the harassment and violence they face from the lack of gender neutral space.

Unite addresses the issues of transphobia within its Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans structure. All Unite members who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans and meet the rule 6 qualifications of being a union work place representative in employment are welcome to participate in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans structure of Unite.

Unite's LGBT structure and union reps play a crucial role to ensure discrimination against our Trans members is prevented and a trans friendly environment is created in workplaces. Unite's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans structure has prioritised tackling transphobic hate crime and negotiating trans work place policies.

By working together to tackle the discrimination we all face, Unite believes that we will create a more tolerant, fairer society for all.

We recognise that many of the issues we face are intersectional and at the same time we reject the notion of hierarchy of oppression.

We oppose division between our Women's movement and our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans movement, our campaigns to tackle discrimination are inclusive and member led. Join us.

## Campaigning Against Austerity

### Universal Credit

Unite believes that Universal Credit is a draconian benefit system imposed on poorer people both in and out of work that serves as a punitive regime.

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Campaign to stop and scrap Universal Credit and to campaign for better funding for social care;
- Support the national 'Stop and Scrap' campaign called by DPAC, Mental Health Resistance Network, housing campaigns and others;
- Publicise the campaign and promote it to our members;
- Lobby the Labour Party and other organisations who currently have a 'Pause and Fix' approach to UC and urge them to adopt and work with the 'Stop and Scrap' campaign;
- Support and build for a National 'Stop and Scrap' UC day of action;
- Calling for an incoming Labour Government to carry out a far-reaching social security reform that truly makes work pay as well as protecting those unable to work.

### Austerity and Local Government Cuts

Unite is proud of its role as the leading trade union in the fight against austerity, privatisation and the assault on our local authorities and communities, and calls time on the toxic ideology of outsourcing, privatisation and deregulation.

Unite welcomes the Labour Party's election manifesto that firmly re-positions Labour as an anti-austerity party.

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Oppose the Government's continuing austerity attacks and the privatisation and outsourcing of local authority services;
- Campaign for adequate central funding for local service delivery and to safeguard local public services;
- Work with other trade unions, campaigners, community groups and the Labour party to expose the Tory's policy of devolving the blame for cuts to local authorities;

- Campaign tirelessly for a Labour government and Jeremy Corbyn as Prime Minister;
- Work with all levels of the Labour party to deliver on the Labour leaderships vision, bringing services back in house, rejecting the cuts and setting out a clear platform for how Labour can make a real difference in local government;
- Lobby councils to investigate options for mitigating the impact of the cuts to central government grants by increasing their funding through bringing services back in house, borrowing for capital investments to generate income, and creative reserves policies;
- Hold those councillors, from whichever party, to account for bad decisions that lead to, outsourcing or losses for our members and the communities that rely on them.

### Tackling the impact of austerity

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Calling on an incoming Labour Government to introduce a bold and radical programme which will not only end austerity but will invest in services which will start to reverse its impact including:
  - increased funding for the NHS and education;
  - a right to a home;
  - a right to a genuine Living Wage for workers of all ages;
  - repeal of the anti-trade union legislation and a new set of collective rights at work (eg sectoral pay bargaining);
  - strong sanctions against employers who discriminate against disabled people;
  - sufficiently funded Access to Work;
  - a social security system which provides a real safety net in case of loss of job, illness, disability and which is supportive not punitive;
  - a statutory universal youth service, with qualified staff;
  - good quality social care available to those who need it at an early stage with skilled staff;
  - access to free, independent specialist advice in areas such as housing, social security, education, employment, debt.

Policies derived from Executive Council Statement #4, Composite Motion #5 and Motion 16 as passed at July 2018 Unite Policy Conference.



## Social Action

### Defend the NHS

Unite applauds the campaigns across the country to defend the NHS. These have shown the tremendous support for the NHS that exists within local communities.

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

- Take a lead in calling for co-ordinated industrial action to defeat the Tory pay freeze and win an RPI inflation-busting pay rise with no cuts to terms and conditions;
- Move at the TUC that the unions call a national Saturday demonstration to fight Tory NHS cuts;
- Call for a future Labour Government to take outsourced workers back into the NHS, reverse all health cuts with a massive increase in funding and investment, ends and reverses privatisation, including cancelling all PFI contracts and takes pharmaceutical companies into public ownership.

### Campaigning Against NHS Privatisation

Unite notes the increasing number of NHS Trusts in England attempting to establish, or establishing, private 'wholly owned subsidiary' companies (SubCo) to deliver services such as facilities, estates and procurement ostensibly as a means of exploiting a tax loophole and are transferring large numbers of staff in to them.

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

- Call upon the Government:
  - o to compel HMRC to close this tax loophole, so NHS Trusts are not forced to consider outsourcing NHS Services to private limited companies in the form of private wholly owned subsidiaries of NHS Trusts;
  - o and in particular, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, to block the creation of any further NHS private wholly owned subsidiaries by NHS Trusts in England, including organisations that are currently going through the process;

- o to guarantee the continuation of the NHS national Agenda for Change pay system, terms and conditions and access to the NHS Pension Scheme for all healthcare staff, whether providing clinical or non-clinical services;
- o through the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, to establish a review of outsourcing, procurement and commissioning by NHS Trusts in England, seeking the views of patients, employees, local authorities, a range of health and social care stakeholders and the public to establish a fair, transparent, ethical outsourcing, procurement and commissioning framework which will avoid the mistakes of the past, highlighted recently by the collapse of Carillion.
- Urge the Labour Party to delay and when in Government to reverse privatisation of the National Health Service (NHS);
- Do all it can to compel government to place a moratorium on any new SubCos and to push for a review of all public services outsourcing;
- Support our members in public services to build joint union campaigns whenever the threat of privatisation looms;
- Prioritise publicity of these campaigns throughout the union so that all members are aware of this threat to our public services and are empowered to communicate this to the general public;
- Work with the Labour Party towards a fairer taxation system to protect our public services;
- Lobby the Government for a review of all public services outsourcing, to place a moratorium on any new privatisation schemes and to include the NHS in the list of public bodies that do not pay VAT;
- Raise this issue with the TUC to ensure the widest possible response and protection of our public services.



## NHS Pay Parity

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Campaign nationally and specifically regionally to rectify the pay anomalies between Northern Ireland, England Scotland and Wales, and reunify the rates of pay across the whole NHS.

## NHS Car Parking Costs

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Develop a national campaign and lobby government for a review and cessation of car parking charges at hospitals in England and asking the Government to:
  - o abolish all car parking charges at hospitals in England as has been achieved in both Scotland and Wales;
  - o seek as a minimum to move to a model similar to that in Northern Ireland whereby car parking charges are kept at a minimum and which are free to patients attending lifesaving treatment and for next of kin and family visitors.

## National Health & Social Care Service

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Support and promote the National Pensioners' Convention campaign for a National Health and Social Care Service to be provided entirely by the public sector which is integrated with the NHS and funded through taxation. We will seek to do this through a collaborative approach between Unite's National Retired Members' Committee, Unite Community and the industrial sectors covering health and social care.

## Housing Rights

Unite supports a mass programme of council house building, properly funded by central government grant, is committed to social rents as truly affordable rents for many workers, and opposes 'regeneration' schemes which result in the loss of social housing and the dispersal of communities.

Through Unite Community, we have already done much to campaign for the right to decent, affordable housing. At the same time, our industrial branches have fought for the rights of housing, construction and support service workers.

### *Unite is committed to:*

- A Housing Campaign Co-ordination Unit to advance:
  - o retrofitting of sprinklers and other safety measures as appropriate with full funding from central government;
  - o full updating of building regulations and restoration funding previously cut from emergency services and for conducting fire building checks;
  - o review of housing management staffing levels, management practices and job roles to ensure safety critical roles are adequately resourced;
  - o review of the Social Housing Regulator's powers, including the ability to intervene on behalf of tenants whose concerns are being ignored;
  - o support for Jeremy Corbyn's call for empty homes to be requisitioned for use by the homeless, particularly those made homeless after Grenfell;
  - o continued support for Grenfell survivors through the inquiry process including forming a parallel people's inquiry if necessary;
  - o ensuring housing associations and firms awarded public sector construction contracts are free from blacklisting and offer their workers full trade union rights including recognition of their chosen union;
  - o binding ballots of local people before regeneration schemes proceed, and a mandatory requirement for each housing associations to have an independent tenants' organisation;
  - o massive expansion of direct labour schemes;
  - o ending the freeze on Local Housing Allowance (LHA) which drives down the level of housing benefit payable, and repeal of the deeply flawed Universal Credit system which is exacerbating the housing crisis;
  - o the use of public land for council house building rather than private housing schemes;
  - o abolition of the affordable rent model towards a fully funded social rent model.

## Community Rights

Unite is concerned that local democracy has been undermined in many ways over recent years leading to a lack of community rights. This has combined with both privatisation and austerity to deny local people a real voice in issues such as housing, health care and education.

### *Unite is committed to campaign for:*

- Local authorities to be able to raise or access funding to build council housing and community facilities;
- Rent controls and improved rights for private renters ;
- Essential services to be brought under public ownership, with democratic structures for user engagement;
- A social security system which supports rather than punishes and which allows people to volunteer and engage effectively in community action;
- Effective funding for community groups and a repeal of legislation which makes it hard for them to reflect the experience of their members/service users. This should include urgent action to address the loss of European Social Fund grants following Brexit;
- Councils and other public sector bodies to be creative and radical in finding ways to engage with local trade unions, community organisations and residents to give real voice to people's needs, with a focus on empowerment and not transaction targets;
- New ways of involving trade unions and community organisations to respond to digitalisation - harnessing the power of technology to serve people, rather than rising digital exclusion.

## Homelessness and Rough Sleepers

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Lobby the Labour Party and the Government to work together to find genuine solutions to the crisis of rough sleepers, particularly local authorities buying empty properties for homeless people;
- Bring together our members who have expertise in this field at a conference to try and come up with a plan to solve this national crisis, if necessary working with external agencies;

- Work with charities to help provide basic needs such as food, drink and other essential items;
- Promote a much healthier lifestyle free from substance misuse;
- Prevent homelessness by support and signposting to relevant agencies;
- Reform of welfare system to make it fair and provide a decent level of living, including fully funding housing costs, for those who need it.

## Grenfell Tower

Unite is appalled at the national tragedy that is Grenfell Tower. Its burnt out hulk serves as a monument of shame to the appalling inequality in our society, the wilful neglect of social housing and its tenants, and the criminal irresponsibility of austerity spending cuts. We deplore the limitations of the current inquiry.

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Call for the fullest and most transparent people's inquiry into the disaster and its causes and the need to cover much wider issues relating to:
  - o social housing neglect and access to council housing;
  - o de-regulation of building regulations and practices;
  - o cuts to fire services;
  - o inadequate standards of inspection and health and safety deregulation;
  - o failure to listen to tenants and effective de-recognition of tenants organisations;
  - o sub-contracting of building works;
  - o the removal of social housing from democratic accountability via housing management companies and organisations;
  - o austerity spending cuts and consequent shortcuts taken when commissioning exterior cladding works.

## Public Scrutiny over Public Money

Unite recognises that the collapse of Carillion and the difficulties faced by Capita are disastrous not only for the workers and small businesses directly affected but also for the public sector as a whole and that the root cause of this is the model of public service delivery that encourages large companies to be involved in the delivery of public services for financial gain.

Where public money is being spent there can be no such thing as “commercial confidentiality” or “sensitivity” and that all and any organisations entering into contracts issued by public sector organisations (e.g. NHS, Local Government, National Governments, Regional Authorities, Prison Service, etc) should come under exactly the same level of public scrutiny as those public sector organisations, including Freedom of Information laws, in respect of these contracts.

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

- Do all that is possible (including lobbying and pressing politicians, councils, national and local governments and authorities, as well as media and other campaigns) to highlight this problem and effect policy and legislative changes that enable full and proper public scrutiny on any and every public contract.

## Justice in Crisis

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

- Call on the Government to:
  - reintroduce early legal advice in areas such as debt, social security, family and housing;
  - increase funding for legal aid services to a realistic level;
  - halt the court closure programme and restore probation as a public service ;
  - ensure that online systems neither exclude people nor deny them a face to face hearing, so that justice can be seen to be done, and we have genuine equality for all before the law.

## Rights for Workers and their Unions

### Trade Union Freedom

Unite reconfirms its opposition to all restrictive anti-trade union legislation, and opposes all legal attempts to restrict the fundamental right to strike, or that prevent trade unions from having a political voice by affiliating to a political party.

Unite warmly welcomes Jeremy Corbyn’s commitment to include in Labour’s Manifesto the repeal of the Tories’ Trade Union Act 2016, and for new laws to fully protect trade union freedoms and the right to strike.

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

- Produce publicity materials outlining the case for strong trade unions and the importance of the fundamental right to strike;
- Step up the campaign to repeal the Trade Union Act 2016 and previous Tory anti-union legislation in favour of new legislation guaranteeing trade union freedoms;
- Campaign for strong legal rights for workers to join, recruit to and be represented by a union; strike/take industrial action by a process, at a time and for demands of their own choosing, including in solidarity with any other workers and for broader social and political goals; and picket freely;
- Campaign to defend union facility time across all its sectors;
- Campaign for the right to reinstatement for workers found to have been sacked unfairly and defend stewards/ reps who are attacked by their employers because of their trade union work;
- Campaign for a complete ban on dismissal for industrial action, however long it lasts and for full rights from day one of a job;
- Campaign for strong rights for unions to access workplaces, win recognition, and establish collective bargaining, including sector-wide bargaining;
- Campaign for unions’ right to decide their own policies and activities, determine their own structures and rules, and spend their funds as they choose, free from state and employer interference, in line with ILO Conventions and the European Convention on Human Rights;

- Ensure this campaign remains high profile in the run up to, and during, the next General Election campaign.

## Campaign for Trade Union Rights

Unite welcomes Labour's commitment to repeal the anti-union laws and reinstate collective bargaining. We need a Labour government to go further than simply repealing existing laws and enact positive rights for trade unions. Areas for review must include:

- trade union rights at work including adequate facility time for representatives;
- trade union education to be fully funded;
- expansion of laws against victimisation;
- review of the role of the Certification Officer;
- the use of electronic and secure work-place industrial action balloting;
- placing the role of trade unions on the school curriculum.

### *Unite is committed to:*

- A well-resourced and Assistant General Secretary-led programme to work with the Regions to begin a conversation with activists in order to develop the themes around positive rights for unions;
- Commence a formal dialogue with senior people in the Labour Party.

## Banning of Sub-Contracting of work during Industrial Action

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Campaign industrially and politically to make it illegal for employers to sub – contract work to third parties to undermine workers taking part in lawful industrial action.

## Precarious Employment

Unite notes how the Carillion scandal has highlighted that outsourcing is not the answer to providing public services as well as the use of exploitative practices such as bogus self-employment.

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Raise awareness amongst Unite members of the difficulties that out-sourced workers are faced with;

- Campaign, both politically and industrially, in all our regions and sectors to highlight this issue of precarious work and to pressure government for a change in legislation to outlaw these unscrupulous practices, to remove the scourge of the 'Swedish Derogation', zero hours contracts, bogus self-employment and the 'race to the bottom' for worker's rights. If a worker is under the control, direction or supervision of a company then that worker will be deemed to be an employee and enjoy all the rights that the status infers.

## Gig Economy

Unite notes the threats posed by the 'gig economy'.

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Call for appropriate regulation of App 'platforms' such as Uber and Deliveroo;
- Campaign for these new tech companies to pay appropriate levels of tax in the countries in which they operate;
- Call for changes in labour law to outlaw bogus self-employment;
- Formulate policies and services to organise these vulnerable workers;
- Call for legal safeguards to protect citizens from illegal and intrusive monitoring and surveillance of individuals by banning the unregulated secret exchange of personal data between companies.

## Ageism and National Living Wage

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Campaign and lobby the Government to ensure that workers below the age of 25 are paid the National Living Wage.

## Strengthening TUPE Legislation

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Gain assurances from a future Labour government that TUPE legislation will be fully revised to ensure workers employment rights and benefits on any transfer of business are protected. This to include severe penalties for any company found to have breached the law or sought to avoid their obligations. This should be contained in the next Labour manifesto with a commitment to implement in the first period of parliament following a General Election.

- Produce research which will publicise the abuses of workers even if considered 'legal' under current laws.

This to be used as part of the campaign to influence Labour politicians but also to form part of the argument for all political parties including those outside of the UK that influence laws covering UK workers.

## Direct Action

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Direct action training for committed activists and workplace reps;
- Consider the use of direct action techniques during high profile industrial disputes or recognition campaigns where appropriate.

# Energy and Environment

## Atmospheric Pollution and Air Quality

Unite recognises the ever-increasing threat of global warming caused by pollution from carbon fuels and the detrimental effect that this has on health.

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Call on local authorities to exercise their powers to reduce the pollution in urban areas within their control;
- Make representations to the Labour Party, TUC, and the Government in support of the Paris Agreement and reduce carbon emissions by vigorously driving towards the use of low carbon and renewable energy in line with Unite's balanced energy policy to ensure security of supply;
- Work with the Labour Party and environmental groups to secure just action on air quality and unionise those working in these expanding green industries;
- Continue and expand high-profile campaigning to defend and extend clean, green public transport that will help improve air quality;
- Welcome the expansion of ultra-low and zero-emission capable vehicles as part of the solution to the UK's air quality crisis and call for further investment in electric vehicle charging infrastructure;
- Campaign to support the development and installation of tidal turbines as an effective green energy source.

## Clean Energy

Unite will press for the development of sustainable clean energy across the UK.

### *Unite is committed to:*

- Work with the TUC and other unions collaboratively;
- Work with the Labour Party and others that advocate bringing the UK's energy system back into public ownership and democratic control;

- Work for a Labour Manifesto commitment to a mass programme of retrofit and insulation of Britain's homes and public buildings;
- Work for effective rights for workplace environmental reps
- Work for the establishment of a 'Just Transition' strategy and practical steps needed to achieve this as integral to industrial strategy.
- Developing educational material aimed at reps in each sector to raise the awareness about the need for a 'Just Transition' and the opportunities for transitioning existing skills;
- Engaging with RISCs and NISCs to develop an analysis of the existing skills of members to assess potential opportunities for skills transition.

### Backing UK Coal Industry

Unite believes in a low carbon economy, but sees coal is a crucial bridge to that low carbon economy with commercially deployable Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage (CCUS).

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Urge the Government to ensure that in its forthcoming review about coal it considers how it can best support the UK coal industry with significant CCUS research and development funding measures by moderating the carbon floor price and encouraging UK coal fired power stations to buy UK produced coal over imported coal.

### Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon Project

Unite condemns the decision of the UK Tory Government to ditch the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon energy construction project. This project would have been the first green energy tidal project in the UK and also had cross party support. This decision will deprive the Welsh economy of a £500 million boost and around 2,200 direct jobs.

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Mount a campaign to ensure that the UK Government reverse the decision and instead support renewable energies by supporting the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon project.

### Solidarity with USW Members Locked Out at National Grid

Unite notes that more than 1200 members of United Steelworkers (USW) Locals 12003 and 12012-4 in the United States were locked out of their jobs on June 25th by National Grid, a UK-based utility company. This lockout is reckless and irresponsible.

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Call on National Grid to immediately end the lockout and return the highly-skilled USW members to their jobs while negotiations for a fair contract continue. The company must stop all efforts to intimidate union members and drive down living and safety standards.
- Present this demand to the management of National Grid in the UK and work with the USW on solidarity actions, including a presence at the company's Annual General Meeting in the United Kingdom on July 30th 2018.

## Union Administration & Membership Services

### Sustainable Learning Opportunities for all Unite Members

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Ensure that the 'Learn with Unite' offer, and support given nationally, becomes an integral part of Unite's organising strategy.

### Unite Branches - Access to Unite Resources and Support

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Branch standards that include policies of support provided by Unite to its branches.

### Helping Unite Activists' Communication with Members

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Relevant departments of Unite to collaborate in establishing such mechanisms to assist the contact with and to produce guidelines to the activists on using them.

### Strike Funds

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Provide all activists with a guide to setting up a strike fund for their workplace or employer, with mechanisms flexible enough to work for all members.

### Review of the Unite Carers' Policy

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Review Unite's carers' policy.

### Safeguarding the Union's Heritage

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Implement a national procedure for the permanent safe keeping of heritage items/archives of any union merging with Unite with storage to be 'in-house' or with relevant museum facilities.

## Administration

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Make it possible that if any or all of a branch is transferred from one region/branch to another, the receiving region/branch should be informed directly. Also the branch should be notified via the National Office, Regional and District offices immediately of such occurrences.

### Lone Worker Policy

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Develop a 'Lone Worker' policy;
- Establish interim guidelines regarding the possible dangers linked to lone working.

### Environment

#### *Unite is committed to:*

- Set up procedures to deal with recycling waste and the energy used in our offices to reduce negative impact on the environment.



## Where to get help

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

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

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

The union's headquarters is

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