

Trades Union Councils' Programme of Work 2016/17

Protect Jobs, Defend Living Standards





Protect Jobs, Defend Living Standards

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TRADES UNION COUNCILS 2016-2017 PROGRAMME OF WORK

Trade unions, their members and their families face a challenging period under a hostile government and with an unbalanced economic recovery that looks set to repeat the mistakes of the past. This is set against an unknown future following the EU Referendum and the rise to power of the right in the Tory Party.

The result of the EU referendum will undoubtedly have dramatic effect on the priorities of the TUC and the trades union council movement in the months ahead. It is vital that trades union councils are ready to respond to the effects of Brexit on working people, their families and the community. Trades union councils should undertake a review of their resources and identify how best they can respond and combat to the attack that will come on living standards, employment rights, the migrant community and the vulnerable in our society



The referendum debate has heightened tensions around immigration and national identity, exploited by unscrupulous politicians. It also brought to the fore once again the inequalities between the regions and nations of the UK and the harmful impact that uncontrolled globalisation and years of deregulation, cuts and underinvestment have had on less prosperous communities. Trade unions must ensure that the response of a Conservative government to the economic crisis facing the UK does not once again penalise ordinary working people.

This programme of work sets out the broad structures to which trades councils should be working bearing in mind that priorities may change in the coming months.

The programme of work

Trades union councils and their community

Trades union councils will have a unique opportunity with the approach of the 150th anniversary of the first Trades Union Congress, called by the trades union council movement, to build their organisation and strengthen its reputation as the voice of Britain at work and as a voice for equality and justice.

Trades union councils will use their unique place in their community promote a positive vision of trade unions - a democratic force for fairness and progress in the modern workplace in touch with the concerns of trade union members and the community.

The union movement must be ready to head off and respond to the threats we face.

Trades councils will need to develop innovative and imaginative campaigning, build alliances and use national, local and regional opportunities to engage workers in key campaigns and support unions and their members where they choose to take industrial action.

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work and showcase the positive role of modern trade unionism in Britain. Trades union councils will use their campaigning and lobbying expertise to shape the public debate in their area and the political agenda, influencing opinion across the spectrum. Trades union councils will continue to participate fully in supporting the global trade union movement, promoting workers' rights and labour standards worldwide. Trades Union Councils will seek to make links, including twinning links, with trades union councils and similar local bodies in Europe and further afield. Trades union councils will ensure that the commitment to equality underpins all of their work and will provide leadership at local level in campaigning for greater equality and against discrimination.

Union rights under attack

The Conservative government, under whosever leadership, is intent on implementing a divisive and anti-trade union manifesto that will hurt working families, damage our economy and make inequality even worse.

Deep cuts to welfare can only be achieved by hitting the vulnerable and slashing the help that millions of low paid workers need to make ends meet – the very blue collar hard workers Conservatives claim to champion.

Conservative changes to the law on industrial action ballots shift the balance of power even further against working people, making legal strikes much harder and undermining civil liberties into the bargain. Attacks on trade unions – the only independent democratic organisations representing working people - show this government's true colours. After the longest fall in living standards since Queen Victoria was on the throne, they are determined to weaken workers' bargaining power and strip us of our best chance of improving pay and security at work.

Trades councils must continue to advocate to retain, enhance and extend to more workers the UK's package of employment rights, protections and benefits. This will include arguing for fair wages for all, a real living wage wherever possible and calling for a lifting of the pay cap and the return of free collective bargaining in the public sector. It will include defending pension entitlements and speaking out for policies and practices to increase equality at work and build worker voice at every level, including on company boards. Trades council will also support the development locally of high quality apprenticeships.

And alongside it, as we approach our 150th year, we must set out anew our vision for how

The task that trade unions and trades union councils face is to build our strength in workplaces and reach out to communities. Trade unions need to win new allies and maximise pressure on the government to resist their worst proposals. We need to show that exploitation is to blame for low pay and lousy jobs not migrant workers.

Trades councils will promote in their communities union policies which create an economy that delivers decent jobs for everyone, including how we use new advances in technology to create better jobs and raise productivity, and to make sure working people get the skills so they can benefit.

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Trade unions need to construct a movement for a positive alternative based on an end to austerity economics. Trade unions must show how the best performing economies are built on a fair society, great public services and decent rights for all.

Trades union councils have a vital role to play in this campaign - building union strength in the community, ensuring that the real facts about unions and the contribution they make to our society is got across and understood by society at local and national level.

Trades union councils must also be there to support unions in building those new alliances in the workplace, help grow union membership and build a mass movement to put pressure on government.

This is no easy challenge but the solidarity and shared values upon which the trade union movement is built hold true and our ranks are resilient. That gives us a strong foundation on which to win - not just for our members but for our wider communities too.

2. An end to austerity economics

Trades union councils will:

- Use every opportunity to expose how austerity fails and rips the local community apart
- Press for an alternative economic model at local and national level which delivers good sustainable jobs for all

The fight against austerity is a campaign priority. We will resist cuts and wage freezes. We will fight for decent jobs, particularly for young people, and investment in skills. We will press for fair tax that stops avoidance and evasion and makes those who profited the most pay the costs of clearing-up the damage. We will defend gains made that advance equality, as women, black and minority ethnic (BME), disabled and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) citizens suffer as services are cut and the economy slows.



Cuts in public sector jobs inevitably lead to cuts in services, affecting entire communities and our quality of life. Rather than build a new, less unequal and more sustainable economy this government, under whosoever's leadership, will continue to shrink the state, reduce rights and set inequality in stone.

Cartoon by Dave Brown for *The Independent*

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Protecting the environment

Fracking, managing climate change and the promotion of greener cities through the better use of public transport were debated at the 2016 trades union councils conference. Conference resolved to tackle climate change through all channels.

Trades councils are called on to join with community groups to campaign for the expansion and development of public transport.

Similarly, trades councils will need to work with community campaigners to resist the roll out of fracking which is not only environmentally damaging but also threatens local democracy because of the draconian measures used to push through planning permission.

The TUCJCC continues to support the People's Assembly and the People's Assembly Manifesto

The TUCJCC is calling on all trades union councils to:

- To support the People's Assembly and promote it locally;
- Respond positively to approaches for Assembly activists to regularly attend trades union council meetings;
- Identify a "link person" with the Assembly, keep it on the trades council agenda and contact the People's Assembly at office@thepeoplesassembly.org.uk . Also to create an account with the People's Assembly at www.thepeoplesassembly.org.uk/.

The People's Assembly Manifesto has identified set of six major reforms to reverse the crisis and the government's austerity policy:

- A fair economy for a fairer Britain
- More and better jobs
- Decent homes for all
- Protecting and improving public services
- Social justice
- A secure and sustainable future and for urgent action against global warming.

These principles, and the programme behind them, have been endorsed by Congress as well as the trades union council conference.



Trades union councils are asked to work with the People's Assembly in their campaigning. Information about the People's Assembly and the manifesto can be found at www.thepeoplesassembly.org.uk/ .or write to:

The People's Assembly, 52 Beachy Road, London E3 2NS

Trades union councils will fight for an alternative – a future that works.

3. Making devolution and decentralisation work for people

With decentralization and devolution high up on the Government's agenda trades unions councils will support the TUC campaign to capitalise on the opportunities of devolution as agreed at the 2015 and 2016 Conferences.

Trades unions councils will support campaigns for combined authorities to look at social priorities and promote green energy within proposals for devolved economic strategies. While supporting Trade Unions in defending jobs, protecting public services and negotiating to involve workers in the decision making process, all citizens and communities should be encouraged to participate in democratic accountability.

Local Trades union councils will need to consider how they will lead the campaign for democratisation as services are devolved in their area with local trade union branches. This can be done in addition to continuing to build an anti-austerity message within local communities. As supported at the 2016 trades union councils conference they should continue to work with organisations such as the People's Assembly and to campaign for the Labour Party to adopt Socialist policies while maintaining a democratic structure and towards a people's manifesto.

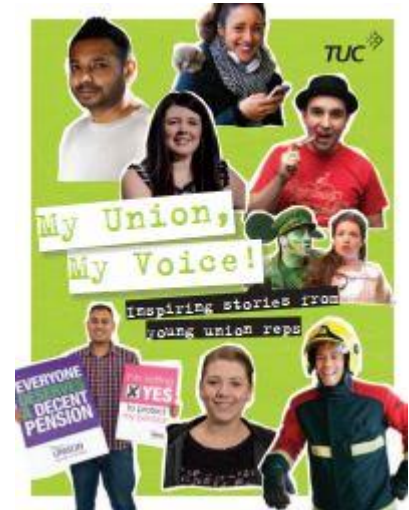
The much publicised 'Northern powerhouse' idea and the devolution of control of public services could offer opportunities for unions, but they also pose significant risks to national public service standards, pay arrangements and accountability.

Trades union councils will also:

- Campaign locally for a strong union voice in decentralised and devolved administrations, building on the social partnership model in Wales.
- Support campaigns to resist further breaking up of national bargaining and employment law, health and safety, equalities and NMW legislation - on which many collective agreements build - which could lead to a race to the bottom.
- Support unions in the public sector in campaigns to organise and bargain effectively, even in a fragmented environment.

4. Reaching out to young workers

Many young people have a poor experience of work – certainly compared to the expectations of their parents when they started out in the labour market. Young workers are more likely than older workers to be poorly-paid, work part-time or be unemployed or underemployed. This partly reflects the fact that the vast majority of young workers (88%) are employed in the private sector, and within that, primarily in hospitality and retail, as well as in smaller workplaces.



Young people are on the front line of austerity, often stuck in low paid jobs below their talent, sometimes saddled with student debt and often with little chance of saving enough for a deposit to rent - never mind buy – a home of their own. The picture for young women, black and ethnic minority, lesbian and gay, disabled and other groups facing prejudice and discrimination is even worse.

Union membership and density among young workers is low, and young people are increasingly working in industries where jobs are insecure, staff turnover is high and there is little trade union presence.

Yet all the evidence is that many more young people support trade union values and campaigns. Our challenge is to reach out to new generation of workers – and the next generation of union leaders - and convert that sympathy into strong union organisation.

The key way to improve the experience of work for young workers is to increase union influence, grow trade union membership, density and the coverage of collective bargaining. The TUC's new Reaching Young Workers initiative, launched last year and continuing in 2016-17, aims to raise the profile and appeal of trade unionism amongst young people, and make sure that trade unionism works for young people.

In the coming year, the TUC will launch a range of high-profile campaigns about workplace issues that matter to young people. It will signpost young workers to help with the problems they face at work, to show that trade unions understand young



people's concerns. The TUC will work with unions to develop and test a set of new models of collective organisation that are attractive for young workers, scaling up those which show promise. The TUC will build organising capacity amongst the next generation of union reps, enhance the

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involvement of young people in the TUC and showcase the work that unions are doing to recruit young members. And the TUC will work with member unions to deliver a step-change in unions' digital communications, to help unions meet members' expectations and be fit for the future.

Trades union councils will:

- Support the TUC public facing campaign designed to appeal to young workers
- Work with unions locally to develop ways to make it easier for young people to join and be active in trade unions.
- Support union organising campaigns with young workers in the private sector
- Develop their on-line and social media communications

5. Defending the Welfare State

Defence of the public sector was a key element of the discussions at this year's conference.

Trades union councils will:

- Oppose outsourcing and privatisation at local and national level
- Fight NHS fragmentation, defend local health services and campaign for a publicly accountable NHS
- Expose the effects of the government's cuts on services, benefits and working people at local level
- Campaign to defend welfare and oppose the stigmatisation of claimants

Public services are under huge pressure. Local councils are being hammered and will have to rely on the business rate after 2020 when all support for local authorities will be withdrawn by central government.

The Tories promised that the NHS would be protected, but waiting times are up, bed shortages common and GP services barely able to cope, with many practices closing.

The public realm is under a dangerous twin attack. Austerity economics is used to justify cuts, but the real objective is just as much to shrink the state permanently and open up vital services to private profit. This is a political choice, not an economic necessity.



The welfare state – the safety net which any of us might need – is threatened. Ministers and their media allies have used public hostility against those who cheat the system to try to undermine the whole welfare system. The unemployed are increasingly treated as if losing their job was their fault, with a six-week wait for any benefits, an

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unfair sanctions regime and workfare schemes no different from those used for offenders being punished by the courts.

The TUC and the TUCJCC are asking trades union councils to build and extend alliances with service users, PCS and Unite Community members, and the wider community, to work with every possible ally to defend the welfare state and public services realm against privatisation.

Trades union councils are asked to continue to monitor and publicise the damage to local health services through privatisation and to champion, with local health service unions, the NHS in their area. This supports the call from this year's conference for all affiliated unions and regional organisations to throw their weight behind such campaigns.

Welfare Charter

Trades union councils will campaign for the Welfare Charter which was adopted at the 2016 trades union councils conference. The Welfare Charter is the subject of this year's motion to Congress.

The Welfare Charter sets out eight key commitments

1. A political commitment to full employment achieved with decent jobs

People are entitled to decent, stable and secure jobs that provide regular, guaranteed hours that allows them to also meet any caring responsibilities; not zero hours contracts in precarious jobs.

2. A wage you can live on for all and a social security system that works to end poverty

We need a National Living Wage that people can live on, not just survive on, that applies to all.

3. No work conscription – keep volunteering voluntary

Forcing people to work for free on pain of losing benefits is simply providing free labour to organisations that should be paying workers proper wages.

4. Representation for unemployed workers

Everyone should have access to an advocate to help them navigate the social security system and appeal adverse decisions.

5. Appoint an Ombudsman for claimants

A Claimants Ombudsman should be appointed to arbitrate on unresolved complaints, to ensure claimants are treated with respect and dignity.

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6. Equality in the labour market and workplace; equality in access to benefits.

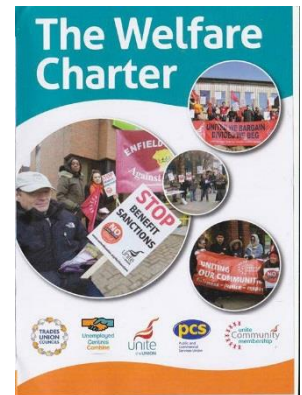
We need a labour market where structural inequalities are overturned and a benefit system that is accessible to people.

7. An end to the sanctions regime and current Work Capability Assessment - full maintenance for the unemployed and underemployed.

We need a non-means tested, non-discriminatory benefit payable to all, with housing costs met. This must be allied with the wide provision of low cost housing.

8. State provision of high quality information, advice and guidance on employment, training and careers

There must be a supportive and independent careers and job-broking service, not linked to conditionality or benefits, offering face to face advice.



Fighting service cuts, defending welfare and opposing privatisation will be key campaigns for trades union councils and communities.

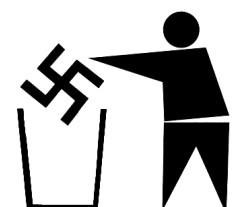
6. Anti-fascism and racism

In the days since the EU referendum result was announced there has been widespread assaults on immigrant communities and people. The leave vote has legitimised the hateful views of far right organisations as well as given expression to the xenophobia of UKIP and some union members.

This year's conference also reaffirmed its policy in promoting racial justice, engaging in anti-racist awareness promotions and sharing anti-racist materials in the workplace and in the community. This was in recognition of the rise in popularity of right wing groups in union structures. These groups could be a real threat to unity amongst workers in the fight for workplace and justice and defence of the living standards.

Prevent

The 2016 trades union council conference also passed a resolution which condemned the escalating incursions by government into professional life in the name of security and immigration controls and identified the Prevent agenda as racist. Conference called for a government anti-extremism strategy that targets all forms of domestic extremism (including white supremacism) not just that found in the Muslim community.



Trades union councils and County Associations should ensure:

- Union reps are informed of the impact of Prevent and provide advice to members
- Adequate briefings and information is highlighted on the impact of Prevent;
- Unions work together locally to ensure that members are not disciplined when they refuse to engage with Prevent;
- Adequate representation and support for members who are suspected, suspended or in anyway affected.

7. Developing a plan of work

As always the Programme of Work asks trades councils to help deliver a wide range of campaigns, develop links with local communities and groups and engage in a range of communications with unions, employers, government as well as their local community. It is a big ask.

You might find it useful therefore to develop your own programme of work. Look at the issues in this document which the trades councils finds of interest or is already working on and wants to campaign on and set out a campaign timetable. The time table is a guide not a bible.

Remember, a strategy is the overall design for building power to compel someone to give your trades council, and affiliated unions, what it wants. How you do this is through tactics which have no meaningful existence outside of the strategy.

A strategy acts as the directions to help you get from A to B.

GOALS	ORGANISATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS	CONSTITUENTS	TARGETS	TACTICS
<p>What do you want to win?</p> <p>What is a victory?</p> <p>What can you win in the short term?</p>	<p>What are your resources?</p> <p>What do you need to do to grow the organisation?</p> <p>What problems do you have, and how do you overcome them?</p>	<p>Who cares about this issue?</p> <p>Who are the opponents?</p>	<p>Primary target (who has the power to give you what you want?)</p> <p>Secondary target (who has power over the primary?)</p>	<p>These must be:</p> <p>Focused on the decision maker or secondary target</p> <p>Puts power behind a specific demand</p> <p>Meets your organisational goals as well</p> <p>Within the experience and comfort zone of trades council members</p>

An icon representing email, showing a blue envelope with a white '@' symbol and a blue telephone handset.

8. TUCJCC members

Trades union councils' joint consultative committee

Chairperson

Matt Wrack FBU

General Council Members

Steve Gillan, POA
Dave Harvey, NUT
Steve Turner, Unite
Dave Ward, CWU

Northern

Kathy Taylor
13 Westwood Gardens
Stakeford,
Northumberland NE62 5YF
Tel: 01670 858340 /
Email: kahyt2114@sky.com

Yorkshire and the Humber

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59 Meersbrook Road
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Email: tucsheffiled@gmail.com

North West

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Tel: 07831 627531
Email: alec_stuc@hotmail.com

Midlands (East)

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Brassington
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Tel: 07889274723
Email: mozgreenshields@gmail.com

Midlands (West)

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Email: heathdorothy@ymail.com

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hazelperrytu@hotmail.com

South East

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Tel: 07427151411
Email: mick_at_home@btinternet.com

Wales

Katrine Williams
38 Theodora Street
Cardiff CF24 1PD
Tel: 07877477603
Email:
katrine.williams@btinternet.com

South West

Dave Chapple
1 Blake Place
Bridgwater
Somerset TA6 5AU
Tel: 07707869144
Email: davechapple@btinternet.com

Committee members can also be contacted:

C/o Tom Mellish,
Secretary to the TUCJCC
TUC, Congress House,
Great Russell Street
London WC1B 3LS
Tel: 020 7467 1380
Email: tmellish@tuc.org.uk

Or: Debbie Cleary
Tel: 020 7467 1290
Email: dcleary@tuc.org.uk

9. Useful publications and links

The TUCJCC pamphlet '**Community**' has been especially produced for trades union councils to explain the value of union branches affiliating to their local trades union council or establishing a trades council where one does not exist.

The TUCJCC has also produced '**The Journey**' a pocket sized pamphlet that pulls out to tell the reader about the benefits to their daily lives of joining a union as well as in their workplace. This is for use by trades union councils and unions as part of their union membership recruitment campaign.

These two publications are available from the TUC's Organising and Services Department by contacting Tom Mellish on tmellish@tuc.org.uk or telephoning 020 7467 1380.

Touchstone Blog – for latest information on the economy and the effects of Brexit go to www.touchstoneblog.org.uk/about/

Green workplaces Network – For all your information on the green workplace, contacts and activist networks go to: www.tuc.org.uk/workplace/index.cfm?mins=87&minors=4&majorsubjectID=2

Black Workers - The TUC has produced a short guide on negotiating for race equality at work to help trade union stewards and activists. The guide explores a selection of issues relevant to black workers to help familiarise trade unionists with the some of the most commonly occurring concerns, many of which have been dealt with through legal proceedings. There are also checklists that provide a starting point to enable activists to start developing bargaining goals. www.tuc.org.uk/extras/collectivebargaining.pdf

LGBT Workers – The TUC has published a briefing note on the possible effects of Brexit on LGBT rights. This can be found at www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/LGBT%20Equality.pdf

The TUC has also published guidance for unions taking into account legal changes and current good practice: *LGBT Equality at Work*: - a TUC guide for union negotiators on lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans issues. This is available on-line at www.tuc.org.uk/equality/tuc-19413-f0.cfm

Trades councils may wish to start preparing for LGBT History Month in February 2017. Go to www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk/ for all the information you'll need, lots of ideas and contacts presented in a lively way as well as reports on previous events. For a wide range of information on LGBT in the union world, including the Trades Union Trans Network, go to www.tuc.org.uk/LBGT

The impact on women of recession and austerity - This report, prepared for TUC Women's Conference 2015, takes stock and looks at how women have fared through recession and austerity. It finds that while progress on some headline measures of gender equality has continued – the employment and pay gap have continued to narrow, for example – some women are facing new hardships and barriers to equality. Go to www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/WomenRecession.pdf
A range of information on women's equality and the effects of Brexit on women can be found at www.tuc.org.uk/equality-issues/gender-equality

Where to get labour movement and counter-austerity publications

For a broad range of left wing publications go to **Bookmarks** www.bookmarksbookshop.co.uk where you can order on-line or visit the shop at 1 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QE (around the corner from the TUC) - 020 7637 1848 or enquiries@bookmarks.uk.com .

Also, **The Peoples Bookshop**, Third Floor, The Attic, Saddlers Yard, 70 Saddler Street, Durham DH1 3NP <http://peoplesbookshop.co.uk/>
You email the shop through their webpage.

The Alliance of Radical Bookshops

Very useful site with the contact details of a number of left-leaning bookshops. Many offer on-line services and not all the bookshops are in London!
www.radicalbooksellers.co.uk/?page_id=2

News from Nowhere

Liverpool's Radical & Community Bookshop - not-for-profit · a worker's cooperative · committed to social change www.newsfromnowhere.org.uk/index.php

The Morning Star – for daily news and information about the labour movement. The Morning Star is available from some major supermarket chains and can be ordered through your local newsagent at no cost to the newsagent on a sale or return basis. Also available online at www.morningstaronline.co.uk

Many unions produce guidance on issues raised in this document. Check with affiliated unions to see if they have publications relevant and useful to your work. Also visit 'unionsinthecommunity' (or go to www.unionsinthecommunity.org.uk) the site set-up specifically for trades union councils

10. Other Contacts

The current directory of trades union councils can found on-line at www.tuc.org.uk/about-tuc/regions/britains-unions/union-issues/2015-directory-trades-union-councils or email Tom Mellish on tmellish@tuc.org.uk for a hard copy.

The TUC Information Services Team supports trades union councils with information and contact details on the issues raised in this document and across the full range of trade union activity. Email info@tuc.org.uk or telephone 020 7467 1262.

Disability Alliance

12 City Forum
250 City Road
London EC1V 8AF
Tel 020 7247 8776
Email office@disabilityalliance.org
Website www.disabilityalliance.org

Friends of the Earth

26-28 Underwood Street
LONDON N1 7JQ
020 7490 1555
Email through web site www.foe.co.uk/index.html for a quicker response

Hazards (Magazine) – health and safety information and networking on H&S

PO Box 4042
Sheffield S8 2DG
Tel: 0114 201 4265,
Email editor@hazards.org
Website www.hazards.org

Hope Not Hate

PO Box 67476
London NW3 9RF
Tel: 020 7681 8660
Email: www.hopenothate.org.uk

Love Music Hate Racism

PO Box 66759
London WC1A 9EQ
Tel: 020 7801 2781,
Email: info@lovemusichateracism.com
Website: <http://lovemusichateracism.com>

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Morning Star

52 Beachy Road, London E3 2NS

Tel: 020 8510 0815

Email: reception@peoples-press.com www.morningstaronline.co.uk

The People's Assembly

52 Beachy Road,

London E3 2NS

Tel: 020 8525 6988

Email: office@thepeoplesassembly.org.uk

Web site: www.thepeoplesassembly.org.uk

Trade Union Friends of Searchlight

PO Box 1576

Ilford IG5 0NG

Tel: 020 8550 1805

Web site: www.searchlightmagazine.com

Unite Against Fascism

PO Box 36871

London WC1X 9XT

Tel: 020 7801 2782.

Email only through web site <http://uaf.org.uk/>

A full range of links to TUC Web Sites dealing with politics, research, environment, employment rights and many other aspects of our work can be found at <https://www.tuc.org.uk/other-tuc-websites>



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