**148th ANNUAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS**

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Held at:

**The Brighton Centre,**

**Brighton**

on:

**Sunday, 11th September 2016**

**Monday, 12th September 2016**

**Tuesday, 13th September 2016**

and

**Wednesday, 14th September 2016**

**……………………………………….**

**Congress President:**

**LIZ SNAPE**

**…………………………………………..**

**PROCEEDINGS – DAY TWO**

**(Monday, 12th September 2016)**

**…………………………………………..**

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 **SECOND DAY: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12**

*(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)*

**The President:** Good morning, everybody. Can I call Congress to order, please? Many thanks to the Bexley Improv Group, who have been playing for us this morning. *(Applause)*

Congress can I now call upon Linda McCullough, Chair of the GPC, to give us their report.

**Linda McCullough** *(Chair, General Purposes Committee)*: Good morning, Congress. I can report that the General Purposes Committee has approved two further emergency motions. Emergency Motion 4, Selection in education, will be moved by ATL and seconded by the NUT. Emergency Motion 5, Support for the BMA and junior doctors, will be moved by Unison and seconded by the RCN. The President will advise when it is hoped to take these emergency motions. I will report further on business and other GPC decisions where necessary throughout Congress. Thank you.

**The President:** Thank you. As Linda has reported, Congress, we now have agreement on two further emergency motions: Emergency Motion 4, Selection in education, to be moved by ATL and seconded by the NUT; and Emergency Motion 5, Support for the BMA and junior doctors, to be moved by Unison and seconded by the RCN. I will let Congress know when we are able to take them.

Delegates will also see that Composite 16, the Trade Union Act; Composite 17, Public ownership of the rail and bus industry; and Composite 18, Rights of freelance and agency workers have been circulated to you this morning, along with Emergency Motion 2 on Colombia and Emergency Motion 3 on the review of the London Underground ticket office closure programme.

Delegates, we continue this morning with Section 1 of the General Council Report, Jobs, growth and a new economy, the section on Fair pay and a living wage on page 22. I will now call Composite Motion 6, Living Wage. The General Council supports the composite. It is to be moved by USDAW, seconded by the Bakers and supported by Unison, PCS and the RMT. Thank you, John.

**Living Wage**

**John Hannett** *(Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers)* moved Composite Motion 6.

He said: Delegates, the rate of £7.20 did increase the hourly rate for some of the lowest paid workers but, Congress, we know that this alone will not end the scourge of in-work poverty, it will not restore a decade of lost wages and it will be cold comfort to workers on insecure, short-hour contracts, of which there are too many, to families who face cuts to their benefits and to the thousands of young people who will not benefit from it at all.

Congress, we should, and must, send out a clear message that the so-called national living wage is not the real living wage, that the real living wage is more than £1.00 a head of the Government’s minimum and more than £2.00 a head in London, and that the real living wage is based on the amount needed for a decent standard of living. Congress, if we do not keep pushing the message, there is a real risk that our progress in the Living Wage campaign could well be undone, particularly in the very difficult ongoing political climate.

A real living wage for all workers is our negotiating objective, but improving hourly rates alone is not enough in itself. We need to look at all aspects of the pay package and the availability of hours to get workers the best possible outcome so we must negotiate strong bargaining structures and campaign for better trade union rights, giving every worker a voice in the workplace. We must focus on organising. The very nature of our being is to organise non-union workers in the workplace into the trade union so that we can focus on a collective voice which can be heard louder and clearer on what is important.

Congress, another area where the national living wage falls short in its scope, excluding workers under the age of 25 from this most basic of statutory rights, is unjustified. Usdaw has negotiated the removal of youth rates in all our major food retail agreements because it is fundamentally unfair to pay workers less based on their age. All workers must stand together, young and old, to make it clear that we must not allow young people to be left further behind.

It was claimed, as you know, on many occasions that the introduction of the national minimum wage or the introduction of the living wage would lead to job losses on a huge scale, but the Resolution Foundation’s survey of employers’ responses to the national living wage showed no evidence of this. Congress, it showed that employers have been far more likely to make the appropriate adjustments to ensure that those staff were paid appropriately. We need to address the misinformation about the national living wage. Employers must not be allowed to blame it for every job loss, using it as an excuse for every cut in hours and every change to terms and conditions. We need to build on the excellent work of the TUC in making a positive case for a wage-led highly-productive economy to take us through these difficult times ahead.

Finally, Congress, a national living wage will be useless if it is not properly enforced. We know that there are employers who underpay and exploit workers. The very reason we exist is to challenge those bad practices, but too many workers are frightened, in a climate of insecurity of losing their jobs, to speak out and are unaware of their rights. We must give them the confidence, as a Movement, to protect them.

Even when they do manage to make a claim, more than a quarter of workers have to wait 240 days or more for the case to be resolved. Congress, even more shocking is that there were only nine prosecutions for non-compliance between 1999 and 2015. More resources are urgently needed to step up targeted enforcement, to investigate complaints promptly and to raise the awareness and confidence of workers’ rights.

Congress, the living wage is a step forward in the fight against low pay, but it is that – just a step. If we are to eradicate poverty wages then we need stronger collective bargaining agreements, every workplace organised and an enforcement regime that is focused and properly resourced. I move. *(Applause)*

**Ronnie Draper** *(Bakers, Food and Allied Workers’ Union)* seconded Composite Motion 6.

He said: Congress, the Osborne living wage was meant to reduce reliance on in-work benefits and to lift the standard of living for hundreds and thousands of low-paid workers. It has done neither. Instead, it has become a passing bandwagon for unscrupulous employers to jump on with overtime rates are cut, premium payments slashed, Bank Holiday rates abolished and paid breaks devastated, leaving many workers worse off now than they were before April and more dependent on benefits and food banks.

The biggest injustice is the disproportionate attack on young people. Groceries, housing, medicines, holidays and transport are the same cost if you are 24 as they are if you are 25, but the Government seek to undermine the under-25s and so many companies exploit this as a tap on a pool of cheap labour. I am proud that we negotiated away youth rates last year with one of the major retailers (Greggs) who employ 20,000 people. Many young people within those ranks are now paid exactly the same as their adult counterparts: real equal pay for real equal value. *(Applause)* Of course, it does demonstrate that it can be achieved if we make sure that we push it in negotiations.

Congress, low pay not only devastates families, but it sets up an economic disaster for the future. We need to bring the collective strength of the TUC to bear on companies who put profits before the welfare of the workers. Yes, we need the Government to invest resources in enforcement and awareness-building, but we also need parallel legislation to stop employers cutting payments of premiums to compensate for a meagre increase in the Osborne living wage. If we want to lift five million people out of poverty, if we want to see an end to the exploitation of youth and dependence on in-work benefits, we need a proper living wage, not the joke one we have at the moment.

Congress, we can achieve all of them if we implement the TUC policy of a £10.00 an hour minimum wage. If it is good enough for Labour to be touting it around now in election campaigns, it is good enough for the TUC to do it. I second. *(Applause)*

**Gordon McKay** *(Unison)* supported the motion.

He said: The Congress President said yesterday that this Movement has never been handed anything on a plate and she is right. I have always found that there are basically three kinds of employer. There are those who are broadly fair and forward-looking. Unison has just negotiated a £3,000 pay rise in NHS Scotland for the lowest- paid staff, which will make a real difference to those people’s lives. Do not get me wrong; we had to keep pushing and prodding them, but we got there.

Then there are those who will do what they have to do. They will obey the law and what the strength of the trade union Movement forces them to do. Then there are those who this composite covers: the thieves, the shysters and the spivs. 200,000 home care workers, one in nine of those working in that job, mainly women and young people, mostly on part-time zero-hour contracts, are receiving less than the national minimum wage. The people who care for our mums and dads and grandparents are having their pockets picked every single day by government and local authority-appointed thieves. They are employers who steal an average of £815 every year from each of the £200,000 people who are paid below the legal minimum wage. They do it by not paying travelling time. They do it by not creating training time. They do it by breaking the law.

The employers claim that it is too difficult to calculate the correct wage for homecare workers. It is adding up! These are companies who employ tax and VAT accountants and lawyers who can work out to the last penny and beyond how to avoid paying their tax, but apparently cannot add up. *(Applause)* We will give these rogues a message today: steal one penny of our members’ hard-earned wages and Unison and this Movement will find you. We will shame you, we will pursue you through the courts and we will not rest until national and local government have structured your contracts now and in the future. If you cannot be trusted to look after your staff, you cannot be trusted to care for the elderly, the ill and the vulnerable. Our message today to these employers is, “Pay up or get out.” Please support. *(Applause)*

**Kevin McHugh** *(Public and Commercial Services Union)* supported the motion.

He said: We support Composite 6 and, in particular, our amendment, which actually highlights the attempts by large multi-national companies, in particular on behalf of HMRC, to offset the costs of the minimum wage on the backs of workers, who are already some of the most low-paid.

Just recently in HMRC, we had our cleaners out on strike. HMRC contracts the large multi-national company, Salisbury, to clean its Liverpool offices. In turn, they sub-contract ISS, another large multi-national company, and the Cleaners’ Direct company to do the work. ISS intended to claw back the 50p an hour increase in pay, introduced by George Osborne then, by cutting the workers’ hours so that their overall wages stayed the same. This is a company that made something like £240 million profit last year.

Attempts to offset the costs of the new minimum wage are shameful. They are cutting hours and it has a disproportionate effect on female cleaners. They are going to push many below the 30 hour a week threshold and that entitles them to working tax credits. Cleaners, who were left £40-£50 a week worse off, were advised that they should actually claim full benefits and not work at all.

Our motion calls upon Congress to condemn the Government for failing to ensure that people working at its own offices, including cleaners, are paid fairly. It also calls upon Congress to support workers taking action against such unscrupulous employers. Following well-supported strike action in July, with a high media profile (particularly in *The Guardian*), the company backed off, it agreed to our members’ demands and it agreed to immediately reinstate the hours with no proposals to reduce hours at other HMRC sites to allow for talks on long-term pay provisions.

That agreement would not have been reached without the bravery of strike action taken by those low-paid cleaners. I pay tribute to them and I think Congress should pay tribute to them as well. *(Applause)* We hope that a lot of employers have got the message. We are not going to allow them to simply pass the buck when low-paid staff are being treated unfairly in the workplace and we call upon Congress to fully support workers who take action.

In the National Gallery, we won the living wage. In the Tate Gallery, where we had privatised workers earning £2.00 an hour less than other workers, we won the living wage. On 5th November, there is a march and a rally for museums’ and libraries’ staffs, which I hope people will support.

Lastly, the HMRC, which is supposed to enforce the national minimum wage, is actually closing hundreds of offices around the country so the expertise will actually be lost on the national minimum wage. It is actually rumoured that the HMRC (who I work for) wants to try and enforce the national minimum wage by email and telephone. Unscrupulous employers are really going to be frightened by that! We need people on the ground kicking their backsides and making them pay the rate. Support the motion. *(Applause)*

**Paul Shaw** *(National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers)* supported the motion.

He said: We support the composite and to ask you to pay particular attention to our amendment in the original resolution in paragraph 6 regarding the living wage for seafarers.

The RMT are long-time campaigners for an enforceable minimum wage for seafarers. That will mean that many shipowners cannot exploit our members. Congress should know that the RMT will continue to challenge the shipowners who exploit legislation to pay poverty pay rates, driving down wages.

We will also continue to lobby the Government to make sure that they are aware that companies like Condor Ferries, who go from the south coast to the Channel Islands, are paying £2.65 to their workers. Northlink, who go from Aberdeen to the Northern Isles, on a Government contract, are paying £3.66 to their workers per hour. Streamline, who also go to the Northern Isles, are paying £2.25 an hour to their workers. DFDS, who go from Zeebrugge to Rosyth, are paying £1.64 for hour. The list goes on and on.

The RMT are launching a campaign “Save Our Seafarers” and this we will take to through the courts, appeals and Parliament to ensure that an enforceable minimum wage is there for our seafarers. The RMT calls on Congress to support this composite and join us in our campaign to support an industry which has been devastated over the last 30 years. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:** There are no more speakers and no right of reply from Usdaw so can we move to the vote on Composite Motion 6. Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against?

 \* *Composite Motion 6 was CARRIED*

**The President:** I now call Motion 16, Fair pay for young workers. The General Council supports the motion. It is going to be moved by Craig Dawson, on behalf of the TUC Young Workers’ Conference, and seconded by the CWU.

**Fair pay for young workers**

**Craig Dawson** *(GMB)* moved the Motion 16 on behalf of the TUC Young Workers’ Conference.

He said: In 2014, the Tory Party played politics in the most insidious way. They took the language of our Movement and applied it to their divide-and-rule politics. In 2014, George Osborne had the audacity to stand in Parliament and declare his party to be the party of working people and the party of a living wage. Iain Duncan Smith cheered from the sidelines too.

They cheered a living wage which simply does not do what it says on the tin. £7.20 is not a wage that anyone can live on. I am proud that my union is committed to £10.00 an hour, the bare minimum we can expect. They also cheered for a policy that told young people that we are worth less. Anyone under the age of 25 apparently gets cheaper housing, food and transport. The age/pay differentials legalise discrimination. It does not mean equal pay for equal work. Someone under the age of 25 could work side-by-side with a 27-year old colleague, even with more experience, and earn less. Congress, this is not right, it is not fair and we cannot stand for it. *(Applause)*

This motion is about much more than pounds and pence, as important as they are. It is about building a trade union movement that is relevant to the lives of young people. Youth unemployment in regions like the North-East is not just high; it is becoming a chronic problem. EMA has been axed, tuition fees have trebled and owning a home and jobs for life are becoming things our parents’ generation knew but we will not experience. Against this backdrop, our union roles should be full to bursting. There has never been a more important time to be a member of a trade union, but too few of my peers are members and even fewer are activists.

I am delighted that Frances has showcased some of the best of our Movement. As our new TUC Young Workers’ representative, I want to work with her and the rest of our Movement to deliver a campaign based around the principles of equal pay for equal work, a campaign that is practically rooted in the lives of young workers and young working-class people like me because as much as the Tories have warm words about the wants, needs, hopes and aspirations of young workers, they often do not want practical solutions. While we are told that a rising tide will lift all boats, we all know that the only boats going anywhere are the yachts moored off the Greek coast.

As always, brothers and sisters, our job cannot simply be to curse the darkness; we must light the candle. This motion cuts to the heart of what we do, comrades. This cuts to the heart of how we renew our Movement. We are young trade unionists, we are young workers, we are not just your future; we are your present. Please support this motion. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

**Julia Upton** *(Communication Workers Union)* seconded the motion.

She said: As a young worker, I am lucky that my job pays more than the national minimum wage. In reality, I am lucky to have union-negotiated job. That is what other people may say, but that is not why I feel lucky. I feel lucky because my job led me to becoming a CWU industrial relations rep in my workplace, a role that has allowed me to be standing here today, joining the fight for fair pay for young workers.

There are many young workers who go to work every day just like others, who work the same hours and carry out the same tasks and yet, at the end of the day, they are disproportionately affected by the pay, 42% to be specific.

I was speaking to my Deputy General Secretary (Postal), Terry Pullinger. We looked at this motion and he said that when he was my age, he had had his first child and was buying his house. His son now has a decent job, but he is still living at home. Sadly, this is still the case for many young people. Buying a house is just where it starts, ridiculous tuition fees for a university education are hitting hard while decent defined benefit pension schemes are a thing of the past for young people. Luckily, the CWU are continuously fighting for our members in pay, pensions and more.

Many young people are employed on precarious, casual contracts, unsure if they are going to be able to pay their bills or not. So, next time you see a casual worker, an apprentice or even a worker, whether they are young or old, ask them that one vital question: “Would you like to join our union?” Recruit these people into unions. Organise and mobilise them. Make our voice louder and help us to fight for fair pay, for the living wage and for everything. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

**Sinead Liddy** *(Unison)* supported the motion.

She said: Who would have thought that we would be here in 2016 with a Tory Government, which is barely a year old, which has brought in the living wage. It is a shock, is it not? It is a progressive move on pay from the bully boys in the Bullingdon Club so we might as well abandon our negotiating agenda on low pay and move on. Let us thank that great champion of the people, the one and only Chancellor, George Osborne, as well. Meanwhile, back here on Planet Earth, it is a con job. Short and simple, it is a con job, but you would not know that from the fawning coverage that the media has given to Osborne’s so-called national living wage.

Let us just start with the so-called national living wage. Clearly, we do not have anyone under the age of 25 working in the UK because you do not qualify for the national living wage until you turn 25 years of age. Apparently, if you are under 25, you are just not worth it. You are actually worth less so it is not national by any stretch of the imagination.

And what about the living wage bit? First off, £7.20 an hour is not wage that you can live on. If you work 35 hours a week, that is a gross income of £252.00 a week. Living is not just about being able to scrape by: it is about being able to actually afford a holiday; it is about having a decent roof over your head; it is about heating your home when you need to; it is about being able to pay to get to work and back; it is about feeding and clothing yourself and your family.

But living is about so much more than that. It is about feeding the mind and the spirit. Living means furthering your education. It means socialising. It means broadening your experience and making plans. It means being able to enjoy your pleasures and that costs money. £7.20 an hour is not going to cut it. Of course, there already is a living wage, an independently-determined figure announced each year by the Living Wage Foundation. As of now, it stands at £8.25 per hour or £9.40 in London, still lower than we deserve, but independently-set and widely-recognised, so much so that more than 1,000 employers have signed up to it voluntarily.

The Government, with the clothes of the living wage, have dressed themselves up as saviours of the low-paid. It is a con job. Don’t fall for it, Congress. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

**Jane Setchfield** *(NASUWT, The Teachers’ Union)* supported the motion.

She said: Congress, the NASUWT deplores the attacks which, since 2010, have been visited upon vulnerable groups of workers, including those starting out on their working lives. This motion provides us with the appalling statistic that since 2009, the wages of young workers have fallen by 25% and that young people under 25 are paid 42% less than other workers.

Teachers are not immune to this trend and all the evidence indicates that discrimination against young teachers has increased as a result of the pay flexibilities which were introduced to the teachers’ pay scheme by the last Conservative-led government. Ground-breaking research commissioned by the NASUWT demonstrates the extent to which pay is being withheld from young teachers, who are caught in a spiral of high levels of debt, student loans to repay, high-cost housing and low pay.

The NASUWT’s research demonstrates that withholding performance-related pay is the mechanism by which many young teachers are being kept on the minimum of the teachers’ pay range year after year. The minimum of the teachers’ pay range is one-third lower than the mean starting pay for other graduates. The NASUWT’s Big Question survey, which surveyed hundreds of thousands of teachers across the United Kingdom, found that 32% of teachers under 30 did not have a copy of their school’s performance management policy. 44% had not had a copy of the school’s pay policy.

Congress, such policies and procedures are the means of accessing pay progression for teachers and it is scandalous that, for so many young teachers, these are being withheld. Thus, young teachers, the lifeblood of our profession, are being denied the high salaries to which they are entitled.

The Government’s own data on teachers’ pay shows that from 2011-2014, there was a reduction in the number of teachers accessing the highest salaries and an increase in those earning the lower salaries. It will come as no surprise to you, Congress, that record numbers of young teachers are opting out of the teachers’ pension scheme, particularly in areas where housing costs are high. It is a savage indictment of this Government’s policies on public sector pay and pensions that for many young teachers, the choice is often between having a roof over their heads now or having a pension in old age.

The NASUWT continues to implement national action over pay and appraisal in all schools to safeguard pay entitlements and protect young teachers. The NASUWT stands shoulder to shoulder with the TUC Young Workers’ Conference in fighting the interests of young workers. Congress, please support the motion. *(Applause)*

**Joe Lord** *(Association of Teachers and Lecturers)* supported the motion.

He said: I agree completely with this motion. A worker is a worker regardless of their age and of course should be paid the same. Previous speakers have highlighted the inequality of this unjustifiable system.

This motion also benefits our future members and students. For college students, the Educational Maintenance Allowance has been scrapped and, due to college mergers, students are travelling greater and greater distances to study. For university students, maintenance grants have been scrapped while living costs increase. These students need this wage for food, accommodation and travel, but they also need a balance between study, work and leisure. To pay their way through further or higher education, students need a living wage for the part-time jobs that they take on.

Education is becoming more and more expensive and a living wage for students is essential. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

**The President:** There is no right of reply so can we move to the vote. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against?

 \* *Motion 16 was CARRIED*

**The President:** Congress, in a few moments, I will invite the General Secretary to give her address to Congress and also to move the General Council’s statement on the TUC Campaign Plan 2016/17. Before she does so, here is a short film showing some of the highlights of our campaign work over the last 12 months.

 *(Film shown to the Congress)*

**The President:** Frances, could I ask you to address Congress. *(Applause)*

**The General Secretary’s Address to Congress**

**The General Secretary**: Thank you very much. I want to formally move the General Council Statement and Campaign Plan but, first of all, I want to put on record my thanks to you, delegates, for your loyalty to the working people we represent; to the President and to the General Council, for your good humour and camaraderie -- Liz, thanks for the loan of the dress – to Paul Nowak, my deputy, and to all the staff at the TUC and all our unions. I think that their professionalism, dedication and commitment, this year of all years, has been second to none. Thank you. *(Applause)*

I also want to send all our solidarity to workers: staff on the ferries, on the railways and in the Post Office – it is about time we had that People’s Bank, Dave – in schools and colleges and in the civil service; the junior doctors and the whole health team; Marks and Spencer and fast food workers; and airline pilots, who are balloting. I cannot list them all, but Ritzy cinema staff, still fighting for a real living wage; our members at Uber, Amazon, Asos and Sports Direct; and workers everywhere standing up for their lives. Let us send a message, delegates: we stand with you. *(Applause)*

Delegates, this time last year when I spoke to you, we were facing the biggest government attack on trade unions in a generation. They planned to slash union funding, to strip away our political voice and to threaten the democratic right to strike. I think we can be proud of our campaign against this nasty, vindictive law. Yes, they got their Trade Union Act and, yes, there will be more red tape, it will be a waste of members’ money and it will be a waste of everyone’s time.

But, Congress, let us be clear: we beat them. It was not on everything, but in the big battles, we beat them back. I am grateful to those from all sides of the House and beyond who rallied to our aid and I hope that the strength of that support in the whole country will give the Conservative Party pause for thought because if they seriously believed that attacking workers’ unions was the answer then, seriously, they were asking the wrong question. *(Applause)*

It is not over yet. We have still got our work cut out to win the democratic right for our members to vote online, to ward off any plans to use agency workers to break strikes and to stop new state powers being used and abused. But what remains of this silly, spiteful law will not stop us defending members’ jobs, it will not stop us speaking out and it will not stop us fighting for fair pay. As always, when they try to hit us, we come back stronger.

Now, throughout our campaign, we understood that success depends on unity and we are going to need that same unity now because the referendum result on Britain’s membership of the European Union heralds a whole new era of uncertainty for the working people we represent. The General Council had asked me to lead a campaign that talked about what was in the best interests of working people, about the rights that we enjoy (fought for by unions but guaranteed by the EU), about the risks to our economy and our public services (our precious NHS) and about what the single market means for jobs.

The campaign was not easy. For me personally, facing Boris and Andrea Leadsom in the BBC debate was quite an experience and not one that I would be in a hurry to repeat but, as someone told me, at least now I can say I’ve played Wembley! *(Applause)* The campaign was not clean and, in my view, it was not even honest with fake promises of more money for the NHS, dog-whistle appeals to anti-immigrant sentiment, and the bizarre spectacle of a self-styled vanguard against the Establishment, led by a former stockbroker, a serial backstabber and a member of the Bullingdon Club. While many sat it out, we stepped up and we made sure our members knew what we thought. In the end, our polls showed that a majority of trade unionists voted Remain.

But for many, it wasn’t an easy decision and I respect those who thought differently, especially those in our Movement who made the judgment that they thought was best and those in the communities that we have long-championed, who paid a high price for globalisation and who are still paying the price of the crash. In this Movement, we are democrats. We accepted what the British people have said. So what I say now is whether you voted Remain or Leave, our job is to get the best possible deal for working people and to build a Britain that is successful, prosperous and fair, a Britain of great jobs for everyone. *(Applause)*

We face a new government and a new Prime Minister too. Now, as a rule, I am all in favour of seeing more women in charge, but it is no secret that this isn’t the one I would have chosen. Nevertheless, in three weeks’ time, she will be stood in a hall like this one, giving her big speech to an audience that’s …. well, a little different from this one and, woman to woman, I’m going to take the liberty of giving some advice about what I think she should say. After all, on the steps of Downing Street, the new Prime Minister admitted that life is much harder for working people than many people in Westminster realise. She promised us social justice. She vowed to govern for the many and not for the privileged few.

So, my advice to the Prime Minster is simple: prove it. Show us that your top priority is to make sure that workers do not pay the price of Brexit and before you pull the trigger on Article 50, we want some guarantees. First, EU citizens living and working in the UK must be given the right to remain. *(Applause)* They are our friends, our neighbours and our workmates. Frankly, delegates, it is plainly immoral and inhuman to keep them in limbo. The public agrees with us: guarantee their right to stay.

Second, negotiating our exit cannot be left to the Tories. This should not be about managing the internal politics of the Conservative Party. It is about shaping the future of our whole country. We need a cross-party negotiating team, including the nations, London and the North, and it cannot be a case of cosy chats with the City and the CBI either. As the voice of working people, trade unions must be at the table too. *(Applause)*

Third, before we go for Article 50, we need proof that workers’ rights are safe. They were not gifted by Brussels, but won by trade unionists and people didn’t vote Leave to get rid of holiday pay, to lose time off to care for sick children or to junk rights for temporary and agency workers. Our European neighbours will not give Britain good access to the single market if we end up becoming an offshore haven for cheap labour. So, Prime Minister, no ifs, no buts: guarantee workers’ rights now and for the future. *(Applause)*

Of course, we have heard the mantra and we keep being told “Brexit means Brexit”. I am not sure that many union leaders would get away with saying, “A walk-out means a walk-out” or, “A strike means a strike” and that is that. At some point, we would have to spell out what we want, what we think we can get, and win a mandate from our members to negotiate.

The same goes for the Prime Minster. How can her government know what to negotiate if it doesn’t know what the country thinks or what the rest of the EU would accept? In some corners of Whitehall, there is talk about a new trade relationship between the UK and the European Union based on Canada and the CETA model. Well, let me give the Government fair warning. Britain did not vote for new trade agreements that destroy jobs, set up secret courts and open the way to privatisation. If they go for the son of CETA, we will make opposition to TTIP look like a tea party. *(Applause)* Instead, what we need is a proper plan for the economy. Just one week after the vote, the TUC published our national action plan to protect jobs, to protect investment and to make sure that ordinary people do not pay the price because, let us be clear, they cannot afford it. After all, workers in the UK have already suffered the biggest fall in wages since the crash of any developed economy except Greece.

Now, you are not going to catch me talking down industry. We know the importance of confidence. But, delegates, we remember the recession after the financial crash and we know all too well the risk of complacency too. Union reps across the country and convenors at our biggest workplaces are telling us about the worry that people are facing with reports of investment plans stalled and job hire for apprentices on hold. That means that the Government must be ready to step in and work to keep the advantages that we get from membership of the single market for all our industries – not just the City.

If Theresa May is serious about an industrial strategy then we’ve got some ideas about how we build an economy that works for working people, that creates wealth and spreads it. Over the last few years, only two OECD countries had worse capital investment rates than the UK and that was Greece and Iceland. We need immediate investment to sustain demand, to create new, good jobs and to show that Britain is open for business. That means delivering on that long-promised programme for home-building and making them affordable to working people on average wages. So, let’s have some more council homes too. *(Applause)*

It means a real commitment to high-speed rail. HS2 is ready to go. We’ve signed a framework agreement with them. That’s great jobs, on decent wages, unions on site, right there. Let Britain’s workers build us a 21st century railway.

It’s make-your-mind-up-time on Heathrow too, a vital sign that we are looking outwards to the world. Last week, Heathrow announced their pledges to unions about pay, progression, training, safety and working with unions, the best way to ensure that every single one of those 180,000 jobs is a great job.

There’s more. We need Government support for a balanced energy policy (including nuclear), an ultra-fast broadband across the UK, a thriving creative industry, green tech that helps us meet our climate targets and great new jobs too. This isn’t a wish list: they are practical projects from a practical Movement.

So, Theresa, tell us that you will go out there and find those sectors where the UK is off to a great start, where we compete on quality, where R&D shows the way, where we can export the products of workers’ hands and workers’ brains, build the roads and the railways and, yes, the airports that connect them to markets. That is how you will create well-paid, high-skilled jobs of the future.

There is one last thing. You cannot build a strong economy without a strong NHS and strong public services too. *(Applause)* The cuts have hurt so many communities so badly. It is time to start investing and make our people fit for the challenge of a post-Brexit world so that we have the best-educated workforce in the world, fit and healthy, decently-housed in neighbourhoods that thrive. So listen up, please, Government: pull an emergency break on austerity and end that public sector pay squeeze now. *(Applause)*

Also, whatever else you do, make taxpayers’ money work harder to support a British industrial strategy. You said, “We’re taking back control.” Well, where better place to start than with the jobs of steel workers. *(Applause)* Remember, it was ministers who blamed the EU for the dumping of Chinese steel when in fact we all know that it was the Conservative government blocking the tariffs that Brussels wanted. So, no more excuses. Put your money where your mouth is. Take action now and save our steel. *(Applause)*

So, that is what I want the Prime Minister to think about as she writes her first party conference speech and my offer is this: where we agree with your policy, we will support it; if you want elections to put workers on boards, we will welcome it; if you are serious about tackling greed at the top, we will work with you; and if you are going to drive an industrial strategy that brings great jobs across the UK, we will roll up our sleeves and help. I hope that the experience of the past year has taught the Tories a lesson not to underestimate the trade union Movement, to remember the breadth of our support and to give our ideas a fair hearing.

Now, I have spoken today about the big challenges facing our Movement, about the working people that we are here to represent, Brexit (which changes the whole game), and the Trade Union Act, which we still need to oppose. I will add another and this one is for us. It is to win back all those people who would once have been union members, man and boy, woman and girl, in those towns where, when the big factories left, unions went with them. Some of them are still our members now, but many are not.

Some politicians like to say that globalisation has left them behind. I would put it stronger than that. They have been abandoned, ignored and shafted by corporations that shipped out overseas, by governments that cut local services to the bone, and by an economic philosophy that treats human beings as little more than a commodity. The simple dignity of a fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work; enough to raise a family on; to live in a place that deserves to be called a home; the security of a permanent contract and predictable hours; a bit over to put aside for Christmas, birthdays, a holiday or a car are gone for too many in too many places.

Now, we were right to ask our members to vote Remain, but frankly it was a hard ask in communities where there was no prosperity to be shared, where power is in the hands of the zero hours boss, where self-employment is a sham, where people too often feel looked down on and sneered at. Also – and this is important for people outside of this hall – when our people talk about pressure on schools, about wages being undercut, about fear of change, that does not mean that working class people are racist. I want to take trade unionism back to those towns, to show that we listen and we have learned, that we understand and we care, that the hopes of people in towns across the UK are our hopes, that we want what they want, and win a better deal for communities where too many jobs are rubbish jobs, done by decent people who work hard and deserve better: men and women, Brits and Poles, black and white.

Today, I want us to commit to another big cause and that is to organise Britain’s youth workers, the new blood of the British labour force. Their life at work isn’t great either. They need the benefits of being in a union just like any other worker. Our Movement showed the spirit that inspires us in that Sports Direct campaign after months and months and months of brilliant and patient Unite union organising, sparking public outrage about the disgraceful practices at Shirebrook and solidarity in action, unions collectively using our shareholder power at that Annual General Meeting. We got a result for retail staff with an end to zero hours, no more six strikes and out, and, at long last, the chance to get agency workers on to permanent contracts, a proper win for workers. *(Applause)*

Of course, it is not over yet. Sports Direct may be in the spotlight now, but let us be clear, delegates, they are not the only ones. There are other big companies that bring shame on our country. So, delegates, I am giving fair warning. To any greedy business that treats its workers like animals, you are next. We are going to shine a light on you. If you run a big brand with a dirty little secret, a warehouse where people do not even get paid the minimum wage, a fleet of couriers who are slaves to an app, let us put you on notice. We are on our way, delegates. We are coming for you. *(Applause)*

One hundred years ago, this Movement campaigned to abolish peace work and day labour. We innovated, we organised, we won and we will do it again. It might look different. We might organise on WhatsApp or Facebook. We might use the courts. We might persuade customers. We will win over shareholders as well as recruiting workers. But there will be no hiding place. We will organise and we will win. Britain’s unions will not rest until every worker gets the fair treatment they deserve.

The watchword of our Campaign Plan is “Building Back Stronger” and that is what we must do: building a union movement in touch with the everyday lives of working people, reflecting their concerns, talking their language, alongside them in their communities, in their workplaces and, yes, on digital too. After all, we are the original social movement, the UK’s only democratic mass movement for change, the only one that puts ordinary working people first. Every shop steward knows that however tough the challenge, you cannot just walk away. You negotiate and you organise for great jobs, fair pay and strong rights.

No matter who is in government, in or out of the EU, global and local, our job is to win for working people. So, let’s get to it, delegates. I move. Thank you. *(Applause and standing ovation)*

**The President:** Thank you so much, Frances. Congress, we now move to the vote on the General Council’s Statement and the TUC Campaign Plan. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against?

 \* *General Council’s Statement and TUC Campaign Plan was CARRIED*

**The President:** Congress, we now move to a really important special feature, Reaching out to Young Workers, a key area of our campaigning work.

**Special feature – Reaching out to Young Workers**

**The General Secretary:**  Thank you. As you can see, I have been joined on the stage by a group of your workers. Each of them does a different job or comes from a different sector. They are unusual because, unlike the majority of young workers, they are in a trade union and each of them has a story to tell about why. So, welcome to you all. *(Cheers and applause)* I am delighted to invite four young workers to share their stories of why they think all young workers need a trade union.

**Sophie *(****Unite the Union)***:** Hello, my name is Sophie. I am a waitress at the Dorchester Hotel and a member of Unite’s London Hotel Workers’ Branch. *(Cheers and applause)* I think it is always important to be a member of a trade union at any age, but it is especially important for young workers as we can often be the most exploited and easily disposable to employers. That is why it is so important to know that the union has got your back.

We have got to grow the trade union Movement for the future. We all know that unionised workplaces have higher pay, better conditions and give you dignity in your job, but so many young workers do not know this. We are a very active sector-based branch. We work as a sector because many of our members work in non-unionised workplaces and will experience the same problems and injustice whoever their employer is.

We recently ran a campaign around fair tipping with another branch, lobbying Unite restaurant workers. Waiting staff often have their tips stolen by the company from payments made by card. We were sick and tired of hearing about the awful practices in the sector where it seems obvious to us what the policy should be. This time, we focused on Pizza Express. We staged protests, we got media attention and signed up restaurant staff to the union. Customers started to ask where their money was going. We got help from other unions and activists from across the UK. Pizza Express dropped their so-called “admin fee” and many others changed their practices to avoid being targeted next. In May, the Government published a new consultation document promoting fair and transparent tipping practices, but our campaign still goes on.

This showed me how much power we have. It highlighted the real benefits of being in a trade union, how it makes serious, positive changes in people’s lives and is a force for good in society. I want to be involved in the Movement and I want the Movement to actively choose to involve young people like me. Thank you. *(Cheers and applause)*

**Sean** *(GMB)*: Hi, my name is Sean. I am 19 years old and I work as a care provider. I work for Graham Care, a company which runs homes across Surrey and Sussex.

To be honest, I did not know much about unions before I joined, but care work involves a lot of rules and regulations so I knew it would be good to get some advice and help. The GMB union are active where I work and I was encouraged to get involved. They helped out with legal stuff, contracts, health and safety and pensions. I have encouraged others to join because I know that if anything goes wrong at work, the union have our back. The membership is growing and I am excited to be part of that.

Some people say that unions are out-of-date or a thing of the past. A lot of people my age do not know about unions or do not get involved, but when it comes to getting on in work, being protected and moving up in your career, joining a union is one of the best things you can do. *(Cheers and applause)*

**Nicola** *(Equity)*: I am Nicola and a member of Equity. I am primarily an actor/musician, but also an event manager, an office temp, whatever pays the bills.

For the entertainment sector, no and low pay is a huge issue so, at the beginning of last year, we launched a campaign called Professionally Made, Professionally Paid. We ran a survey which found that many young workers were earning less than £5,000 a year. As a result of the campaign, over 175 productions have signed up to our fringe contract, meaning that over 800 performance and stage managers have been paid at least the national minimum wage. This has generated over £1 million in wages since we started for people who may not have received anything before. *(Cheers and applause)*

Do support us. The entertainment unions have run courses in how to negotiate pay, how to deal with setbacks and other business skills. It is not the kind of training an employer will ever give you, especially being a freelancer, but it is exactly the sort of thing that a modern trade union can do to make sure that its workers are treated properly and it has been great for me too. I have become a lot more confident, I now no longer fear engaging with employers who refuse to pay the national minimum wage and I have met a lot of people in the same situation. We have stood together and I am proud to say that we have grown together. Thank you. *(Cheers and applause)*

**Chris:** My name is Chris. I am a Unite young member. I have been active on the Sports Direct campaign, and what a campaign that was by Steve Turner! *(Applause and Cheers)* The support we have had from the Unite team has been unwavering. We looked at that campaign a year ago and we thought “Maybe we can’t do this”, but we were thrown in at the deep end as young members. We have been pushed and supported so well by the Unite team. We have taken leading roles and gone in and organised. We have had national picket lines against Sports Direct stores. We have organised social media and just not let up. We’ve pushed, pushed and pushed. We are not stopping. We are getting more zero-hour contracts. We are pushing at the workplaces and getting into the workplaces. We are organising the workers and keeping going forward. We are getting the membership. We are not just going to stop with Sports Direct. We are going to keep pushing forward. Instead of just fighting back, we are now on the offensive. *(Cheers and applause)*

**The General Secretary:** Sophie, Sean, Nicola and Chris have highlighted that young workers need unions just as much as everyone does. Trade unions were founded to give ordinary workers a voice, to stop exploitation, to win better treatment and fair wages. Union workplaces are still the safest, fairest and best paid. We represent everyone at work, but we know that just 11% of low, middle-earning 21 to 30 year-olds — that is about 1 in 10 of young people across the board — are in a union, and young workers are the group least likely to benefit from union membership. They deserve fair treatment at work, but their voices are missing from much of our Movement. Usually, they are in workplaces where there are no other union members, let alone a rep or a recognition deal. Sometimes the language of trade unionism is one they don’t recognise or understand. Frankly, we have not always made sure that what we talk about is relevant to young workers. In my view, there can be no more urgent task than to improve life at work for Britain’s young workers. We all know that the best way to do that is by getting organised into unions that understand young workers’ lives, are geared up to win the changes they need and are ready to meet that challenge. We have got to build on the great work that we’ve heard about today and change our Movement so that we become the movement for young workers and led by young workers, too. I don’t think there is any higher priority. We must build back stronger and building a movement for young workers winning a fair deal. That is what today is about.

I want you, delegates, if you will, to join us in taking a selfie, using *this* banner as a backdrop. I understand that there are banners under your seats that you can use, too. Let this be the start of the biggest organising one-movement campaign that we have every run, and make this the Movement of young workers, too. Thank you, delegates. Good luck with the selfies. *(Applause)*  *(Pause)*

**The President:** Selfie time over. Congress, this, of course, is a vital campaign for our Movement. I really do urge every delegate and affiliate to get involved. I have to say if those young workers who we saw today are our future, I think we’re going to be okay. Thank you for that. *(Applause)*

**Section Three**

**Good Services and Decent Welfare**

**The President:** We now continue with Section 3 of the General Council Report: Good services and decent welfare from page 49 onwards. I call paragraphs 3.1, 3.2 and Motion 54. The General Council supports the motion, moved by the POA and seconded by NAPO.

**Prison Reform Announcement**

**Stephen Gillan** *(POA, The professional trade union for prison, correctional and secure psychiatric workers)* moved Motion 54: Prison Reform Announcement.

He said: Congress, you will recall that, back in February, the then Prime Minister, David Cameron, announced prison reform. It’s full of crocodile tears. It was not sincere but it fooled some of the general public into thinking that reform was on its way. It wasn’t. It was a publicity stunt that was nothing more than a Trojan Horse for further cuts and privatisation. We are a service that is deeply in crisis. All the statistics, the Government’s own statistics and the Prison Service’s own statistics, identify that. Deaths in custody are at record levels. Self-harm by prisoners is at record levels. Homocides, assaults by prisoner on prisoner and assaults by prisoner on staff are at record levels. Concerted indiscipline that points to the health and safety of staff of prisoners in danger are at record levels.

I want to pay tribute to Frances O’Grady and Liz Snape and the team for when they supported my trade union, which does not have the right to take action, when Wormwood Scrubs walked out in May, followed by Wetherby, Holme House and The Mount prisons, all to protect the health and safety of prison officers and those in our care.

Congress, we need to identify, through the *Speak up for Justice* campaign, and to ridicule, when it is finally published, the White Paper. It has been delayed since the spring. It is now due to come in the autumn, although I must say that Liz Truss, who is now the new Secretary of State, in her evidence to the Justice Select Committee, is taking backward steps in relation to that prison reform. The reason why she is doing so is because she knows that there is no foundation for it to be built on at this present time. You cannot have a platform that is built on sand. What we need is a Prison Service that we can be proud of, that justifies rehabilitation, that doesn’t lock up the mentally ill, who should be diverted away from prisons, and that is not happen at this moment in time.

We have now had our fourth Secretary of State in place since 2010. We have had Kenneth Clarke, Chris Grayling, Michael Gove and now Elizabeth Truss. The reality is that none of them have been successful. They have overseen budget cuts of £900 million from the Ministry of Justice. There has been a 35% reduction in staffing levels, when the prison population just goes up and up. We need to make sure — whether it is in the private sector of the public sector, you know my union’s views on the private sector — that all prisons should be run publicly, but the reality is that since 1994, like all public services we have seen a privatisation agenda. So together with the ‘bleating’ unions, the POA, Community and GMB, who have representation rights within the criminal justice system, we need to work together to ensure a Prison Service that we can be proud of, that doesn’t just lock people up but actually rehabilitates individuals so that we have a safer society. Thank you, Congress. Please support the motion. *(Applause)*

**The President:**  I call NAPO.

**Yvonne Pattison** *(NAPO)* seconded Motion 54.

She said: President and General Secretary, Steve has already said that all the change is really just a smokescreen for what is about to come. We have already seen the debacle of probation reform under the auspices of Chris Grayling, the worst Secretary of State for Justice that this country has even seen. Well, the worse so far, but let’s watch this space! Public services are public and should not be privatised. As soon as it is made about money there is a difference focus, and you can bet it is not for the better with job cuts, pay cuts and cuts in terms and conditions. I could go on.

One of the problems we face within the criminal justice system is that the vast majority of the public have no idea about how it works, so it is really easy for politicians to put a spin on it and report it so that it makes perfect sense. But those hardworking, committed prison and probation staff are not so easily fooled. Just imagine for a minute going to work every day, scared about your safety, not knowing whether you are going to come out at the end of the day in one piece. Just imagine that for a minute. Congress, this is the reality of the service that we are working in. I put it to you that any reform should be tried, tested, evidenced, piloted in a controlled manner and, furthermore, consulted upon with people who actually know how it works and what happens on the ground level.

Currently, we are seeing a number of newly-qualified probation officers being sent to work in prisons with little or no support, besides the staff who are already working there. That’s a staff group who are already over-stretched, under pressure and at breaking point.

I say this to Elizabeth Truss, our Secretary of State for Justice, and Sam Gyimah, Prison and Probations Minister, before you consider making any further changes, do your homework, talk to people and see it for yourself. We need a service that is adequately staffed and properly funded by trained and experienced staff, who feel safe and supported. It is not a lot to ask for, really, is it? The criminal justice system is broken. It’s not good enough, it’s not working, lives are being put at risk and it’s time you did your job — fix it! I second. *(Applause)*

**The President:** PCS has indicated that they want to speak.

**Tracy Boyce** *(PCS, Public and Commercial Services Union)* spoke in support of Motion 54.

She said: PCS can say that the Government’s prison reform proposals will lead to the breakup of the national prison service, and will have a detrimental effect on offenders, both in terms of the quality of prison life and, most crucially, rehabilitation. Since 2010 we have seen arbitrary cuts of around 25% of budgets and staff, and this, combined with the prison-closure programme, which was introduced when the prison population was rising, has led to a situation where prisons are no longer, safe, decent or secure for either the staff or the offenders. A typical week sees hundreds incidents of self harm, at least one suicide and 350 assaults, including 90 on staff. Equally alarming is the fact that in 2015 we witnessed the higher ever number of murders in prisons. On that point, I have seen firsthand how these attacks can affect not only the victim but also their families. A colleague of mine approached me for advice last year after she returned to work following a period of sickness absence due to stress, which was caused by her husband’s ill health. Her husband, prison officer, was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder after being seriously assaulted six times in five years. These attacks ranged from an observation panel being smashed into his face to be bitten by a prisoner who had hepatitis B.

My colleague, who has young children, told me how her husband’s physical and mental injuries affected not only him but his whole family. She also described the attacks which her husband had either been subjected to or witnessed, which included being threatened with blades or needles, being punched, urine being thrown into his face, self-harmers’ blood being splashed into his face and dirty protests, for which they receive just £10 a day, as this is all classed as being part of the job. If the prison was properly resourced these incidents would have been significantly reduced or even completely avoided, but with just one or two guards on a wing it sometimes got to the point where offenders would have to help the prison officers out.

The cuts to the Prison Service have put the safety and welfare of both staff and offenders at risk, and we know that these cuts aren’t necessary but are all part of the Tories’ ideologically-driven austerity programme, which is intended to destroy the public sector through cuts and privatisation. My union, PCS, has consistently advocated alternatives to austerity, which is based on investment and tax justice. We demanded that the Government cut the austerity measures, developed a fairer tax system and properly resourced HMRC in order to close the tax gap. Best estimates for the UK tax gap are £119 billion, yet HMRC is facing similar cuts with 170 offices closing across the country, to be replaced with 30 regional centres and four specialist sites. We believe that the withdrawal of local compliance and enforcement officers in HMRC’s new regional-centre model will explode the tax gap as individuals and businesses realise that HMRC are less able to scrutinise their affairs in a regional centre in another city miles away. So Government attacks are not only the Prison Service, but the NHS, the education system and the welfare state. That is why we not only support this motion but the other motions that seek to fight back against Government cuts and also look at how we can co-ordinate action and work together to highlight the impact of cuts and push forward an alternative anti-austerity agenda. Thanks. *(Applause)*

**The President:**  There is no right of reply, so we will move straight to the vote. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against? That is clearly carried.

* *Motion 54 was* CARRIED.

**Evidence-based decision making in the CJS.**

**The President:** I now call Motion 55: Evidence-based decision making in the criminal justice system.

**Yvonne Pattison** *(NAPO)* moved Motion 55. She said: ‘Transforming rehabilitation’ is what they called it. Let me give you a brief potted history. The Probation Service was an award-winning successful service with gold standard across the piece. We were not failing, we had done nothing wrong and yet huge reform was introduced, a reform based on change in the outcomes for those short-term prisoners with stubbornly high re-offending rates, a group of people who we have nothing to do with. So our award-winning service has been decimated to changed something that we have no impact on. Does it make sense? You decide.

Two years-plus on we have a service that is broken, it’s not working for the staff, it’s not working for the public and it’s not working for service users. We have a variety of employers who know little about our work, the same employers who think that our experienced and dedicated staff can be replaced by cheaper, less-qualified staff with an “Anyone can do it” attitude. The criminal justice system operates on the goodwill of those who work within in, a staff group who work excess hours, with excessive workloads, many at breaking point and sickness rates at an all-time high. So what’s the point of me going over old ground? The point is that these huge reforms were based on political ideology with no evidence base and little recourse to put things right.

Congress, we have a new Secretary of State for Justice, and we have a new Prison and Probations Minister, and they need to learn from the numerous mistakes of their predecessors. On the surface some of the ideas mooted sound sensible and well meaning. Take the autonomy for prison governors to educate those in their establishment. That all sounds great, but it takes resources and it needs trained staff. I’m sick of saying “trained” and experienced. It’s like an on-going record. We know that increasing employability through education is a protective factor and is likely to reduce re-offending, but I will let me sister from the UCU talk about education, and I am grateful for the amendment. Thank you.

So what do we need? Sadly, we can’t undo what’s been done. The previous Administration saw to that. If you want to bring the criminal justice system back to something to be proud of, start scrutinising existing contracts and putting pressure on the new owners to fulfil their contractual obligations because, believe me, it’s not happening. Criminal-justice workers are sick of services that are little better than mannequins in shop windows. In other words, presentable, even impressive, on the top, but take away the top layer and what do you see? There’s not a lot underneath. Sadly in our business the lack of underwear has serious implications. We’ve already heard about the state of the prison establishment, but it is not much better in other areas, with probation staff seeing clients out in public places, no health-and-safety checks, no protections — I could go on!

So ‘transforming rehabilitation’? If this Government truly want to rehabilitate offenders, I have a message. It can’t be done on the cheap. It requires time, money, experience, planning and needs to be based on empirical evidence and not on a whim and a prayer. Incidentally, for those contractors out there who are not fulfilling their obligations, watch your backs because NAPO is coming after you. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**Vicky Knight** *(UCU, University and College Union)* seconded Motion 55.

She said: Comrades, it was only a year ago that a ban on sending books to prisoners was floated, but we never did actually find out if Chris Grayling’s book ban was really based on a plot from a film or a cartoon, where files are hidden in cakes or books, did we? The fact that he didn’t ban bed sheets or rock hammers suggests that his research on prison breaks was somewhat underwhelming.

A UCU and Institute of Education report published in 2014 found that prisoners are not getting the help they need because of constant changes in the prison education system. The report highlighted that competitive tendering for education contracts had led to staff finding themselves with new bosses and new working systems every three to five years. Of the 278 prison educators we spoke to, 62% further attacked the fact that funding is dependent on how and if prisoners actually achieve. It also highlighted that teaching staff in prisons suffer from having a lower professional status than educators in the FE, the further-education sector, or those provided from colleges or adult-learning providers. Even when they are employed by the same people, they get paid less for delivering in prisons.

An Institute of Education study published in November 2015 based on over 120,000 assessments found that literacy, particularly, and numeracy levels in prisons are very poor compared with those outside of prison. Just 14% of prisoners had Level 2 literacy skills compared with 57% of the general population. Just 9% of prisoners have Level 2 numeracy skills compared with 22% of the population. Research shows that prisoners who do not take part in education are three times more likely to re-offend. So what do we need to do? UCU believes, in line with NAPO’s demands, that systematic screening of learners for learning disabilities is absolutely key, as is discretionary flexibility to support advance learners and advancing learning, and to support social development of the provision of arts, music and sports activities. We need greater opportunities for learning facilitated by ICT and the removal of an effective blanket ban on using the worldwide web. We need appropriate professional development to support all those involved in the delivery of prison education — that CPD for our members — and we also need to develop the teaching workforce and attract new teachers and new teaching practices within the highly-qualified professional workforce for prison establishments. We need to redress the lower levels of pay in the prison education sector.

Congress, support the motion as amended and hold decision makers in the criminal justice sector accountable. Thank you.

**Caryl Nobbs** *(Unison)* spoke in support of Motion 55.

She said: Congress, Unison welcomes this motion from NAPO, our sister union in the Probation Service. Congress, Unison, NAPO and GMB have been fighting side-by-side with Probation to defend equality and public service from unwarranted attacks by a Government committed to privatisation. In 2014 the Government split the 18,000 strong workforce which worked for the 35 local probation trusts into the National Probation Service, a directorate of the Ministry of Justice, and 21 community rehabilitation companies. The Government called this ‘transforming rehabilitation’. In 2015 the Government privatised the 21 community rehabilitation companies. Not only was probation not broken, as you have heard, but it was actually an award-winning organisation recognised for its excellence. The Government refused to put the business case for the split and the privatisation of probation into the public domain. We, like others, suspect that this was because the evidence base for the decision to break up a successful service and privatise half of it was simply not there.

Congress, Unison shares NAPO’s view that the Government should be held to account for evidence-based decision making when making such far-reaching changes to public sector institutions, which have stood the test of time for over a hundred years in the case of probation. The split and privation of the Probation Service in England & Wales has been an absolute disaster. The average cuts to workforces by the bigger owners who control more than half of the 21 companies was in the range of 20% to 40%. Unison was surprised by the size of the cuts and their impact on both staff morale and the ability of the CLCs to deliver against their contracts. None of these reforms were underpinned by any evidence base. They were ideologically driven and will probably require more public money to be thrown at them in order to make them work. The privatisation of Probation is not the answer. Evidence-based decision making has been lacking, probably because there is no evidence for these decisions, only the desire for profit for private-sector companies. Please support the motion to put pressure on the Ministry of Justice to take responsibility for underpinning its decision with empirical evidence and business cases in the future. Probation was not broken, but it is now. The safety of our communities is severely at risk. Please support the motion. Thank you.

**Hank Roberts** *(ATL, Association of Teachers and Lecturers)* spoke in support of Motion 55.

He said: Congress, I would like to extend my wholehearted support, the support of ATL and, I am sure, all the other education unions to this very important motion. It has manifold relevance not only to the criminal justice system but across many, many areas, including young people and education. Sherlock Holmes had much to say about evidence. From the *Adventure of the Second Stain*, Holmes said: “It is a capital mistake to theorise in advance of the facts.” From *A Study in Scarlet*, he said: “It is a capital mistake to theorise before you have all the evidence.” Finally, from *A Scandal in Bohemia*, he said: “It is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data. Insensibly, one begins to twist facts to theories instead of theories to facts.”

Schools and colleges face an increasing problem of students getting involved with drugs, gangs, gang-and-drug-related crime and, increasingly, drug-related deaths. Young people are put in prison or given youth custody when all the evidence shows that this compounds the situation by placing impressionable youth alongside hardened criminals. This flies in the face of evidence. The US imprisons more and has a greater problem. Norway imprisons far fewer and has less of a problem. Fifteen years after the decriminalisation of all drugs, Portugal has not been run into the ground by a national of drug addicts. In fact, it is doing better in this area than before. Drug deaths have fallen to three per million compared with 17.3 in other EU countries. HIV infections have fallen.

Professor Nutt, who is probably the leading expert in the country, has studied and marshalled the evidence, and says that alcohol is more dangerous than extacy and LSD. After he said “Absurd drug laws hinder research”, he was sacked by the Government and chief drug adviser. Regarding not introducing new policies that have no reliable, valid and statistically-significant evidence, what a turn round that would be. Sir Mark Walport, the Chief Government Scientific Advisor — why should we listen to him, then? — said: “It is not unethical to do experiments in education” (or in any other area) “but it is unethical not to.” Government policy is to put into practise experiments, but they are just experiments, without trials or pilots, without controls and, most certainly, without evidence. They are actions to fulfil and an ideological agenda, as they are with this CJS. Evidence must drive policy, not policy ignore evidence. As the motion states, Government need to get the detail right before implementation. Please support the motion.

**The President:** You have the right of reply, NAPO. *(Declined)* Thank you. In that case, I will move straight to the vote. All those in favour, please show? All those against? That is clearly carried.

* *Motion 55 was CARRIED.*

**The crisis in the Post Office**

**The President:**  I am now going to call Motion 56: The crisis in the Post Office. The General Council position is to support the motion. It is to be moved by CWU and seconded by Unite.

**Terry Pullinger** *(CWU Communication Workers Union)* moved Motion 56.

He said: Congress, I very proudly move this motion. I make no apologies if I get a little passionate about it because this is do or die time for our members in the Post Office and the future of the Great British Post Office as we know it. I was inspired yesterday when listening to our President, Liz, when she made her opening speech. I interpreted that speech, Liz, to suggest that what goes round comes around, and the trade union Movement is on its way back, and I absolutely agree with that. The post-Brexit political narrative has opened up a space, a big gap, where ordinary working people are demanding the end of the greed era and that we have a decent good deal for workers in the workplace. Congress, the trade union Movement has got to impose ourselves on that space and be louder than we have ever been, showing real solidarity and support for any trade union or set of workers who are in struggle or taking industrial action. Whether it was the recent RMT, young doctors, steel workers or the postal workers, in this instance, Frances, we’ve got to find a way for the TUC to be more visible and vocal when those disputes are taking place so that the country can see the strength of the whole trade union Movement. *(Applause)* The more success we have, Congress, the more working people will rejoin trade unions and see that they are in their best interests. The worst thing that can happen now is to allow people like Teresa May and this Tory Government to try and fill that space by saying that they are the representatives of ordinary working people. They say they understand that people want security at work, security and dignity in retirement and that communities should not be cut off, but we know that that is just rhetoric. Pigs may fly or pigs may float around in the Mediterranean in great big yachts. Ask the British Home Stores workers! *(Applause)* My point is this. Politicians talk about action; trade unions take action, and that’s what we’ve got to do now more than ever to drive up the cause of ordinary working people.

This dispute in the Post Office is a prime example. This is where we can expose the rhetoric of people like Teresa May. I listened to you, Frances, this morning on telly saying about shining the light on bad employers. Well, this employer is the Government, and this is an opportunity to shine the light on them. Sure, they’ve got a line of managers in front of us who nod and shake their heads depending on how politicians pull their strings, but make no mistake, the Government is the employer and it is making the decisions on the things that are going on in the Post Office. This dispute needs to have their intervention. They must get round the table with the trade unions involved, all the stakeholders and, genuinely, come up with a real vision of growth for the Great British Post Office, based on decent jobs. The Government and the Post Office will tell you in this dispute — our dispute starts on Thursday — that the Post Office is a success. That depends on how you measure success, Congress, because their measure of success is the same as the greed culture that we are trying to break out of.

Let me give you an insight. We call our main Post Offices “Crowns”, and you will know them as your main Post Office, the buildings in the High Streets of the cities and towns in this country. Their idea of success is to sell those buildings, often in prime locations, and put the money in the Government’s coffers. Then they outsource or franchise off that public service to someone like WH Smith, stick it in the back of a WH Smith, in the hope that people walking through for their postal services might spend a few quid in that shop, and then they replace decent, union-negotiated jobs, decent terms and conditions, with minimum wage, zero-hour contracts, minimum-of- anything jobs, providing the same service.

Let me tell you what this Government are doing. They are closing our defined-benefit scheme. There are not many of them left. They are proper, proper pension schemes. They are deferred wages in retirement, in a scheme that is fully funded and is in surplus. It is probably the best-funded scheme in this country, but they are closing it because of their conventional wisdom to get it off their balance sheet. They are using public money to bribe people to scab in this dispute. If they don’t take part in the action, they are offering them £3,000 of public money, public money to enhance redundancy terms to try and weaken the resolve of the CWU and Unite in this dispute. They will not be successful. I’ll tell you now, our members will stand they will fight but our members need to know the position. Our members are watching this debate live. We are streaming this. They need to know that they have the full support and solidarity of this trade union Movement and beyond. I ask that you carry this motion and to give it full-throated support for postal workers, to stand up, to defend our members and to defend the Great British Post Office. Thank you. *(Cheers and applause)*

**Ivor Monckton** *(Unite)* seconded Motion 56.

He said: Congress, I am seconding this motion on the crisis in the Post Office. For more than a hundred years the Post Office has proudly stood at the hearts of our communities. Everyone knew what it did and where it was, but not any more. We have seen the closure of branches, the relocation to inappropriate spaces in other shops and the loss of local services. This is privatisation by the backdoor with another 20 Crown Post Offices being franchised out. On top of all of that, we have a tax on the pensions, despite being in surplus, as you have heard, to the tune of more than £100 million. Unite is proud that Post Office managers, who are members of our union, Unite, took industrial action on pensions, job losses and the franchising of Crown Post Offices. They did so in solidarity with their CWU colleagues taking industrial action on similar issues affecting the way the organisation, ultimately owned by the Government, is run.

Ultimately, the British public will suffer as they see the services offered by a much-loved institution being eroded by neglect from the top. The Government promised that the Post Office would be the front office for Government. The reality is that it is more likely an outside dustbin area. Unite asked for a Government investigation into the Post Office but this was rejected by the Junior Business Minister, Margaret James. Unite members are angry that the Post Office is letting them down through a lack of a clear-cut strategy for the business and is adopting an approach of ill-managed decline to try to balance the books. Post Offices are essential to our communities and their closure will affect the most vulnerable in society. Support a vibrant public Post Office. Support the motion.

**The President:**  There were no speakers against, so there is no right of reply. We will move straight to the vote. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against? Carried. Thank you. From this Congress, let us offer our full support and solidarity to the CWU for their day of action on Thursday.

* *Motion 56 was CARRIED.*

**Protect our fire and rescue service**

**The President:** I am now going to move on to Motion 57: Protect our fire and rescue service. The General Council support the motion. It will be moved by the FBU and seconded by the GMB.

**Tam McFarlane** *(FBU, Fire Brigades Union)* moved Motion 57.

He said: Congress, I have to say that when the FBU delegation gathered yesterday our thoughts were clearly in New York, 15 years on from the terrible events on 9/11, specifically with the New York Fire Department, our brothers and sisters there and with their union, the IAFF, who we are very close to. We remember that terrible day when 343 firefighters, and trade union members, climbed the stairs into the fire of the World Trade Centre and lost their lives there.

Congress, at the turn of the 19th century firefighters used to wear *these*, and for all of us in the Fire Service the brass helmet has become an iconic symbol of the bravery and skill of the generations who built our service. But we also know it represents a time of immense hardship, when lack of funding produced ad hoc fire cover, when private insurance firms could refuse response to those who could not pay, when equipment was dependent upon the charity of the parish council you lived in and when lack of support meant that firefighters died in their drovers whilst trying to serve. I mention this because I want no one to be in any doubt that as firefighters we know our history, we understand the lessons of the past and we won’t be dragged back to those dangerous days.

Now, though, the service faces another crucial point in its history, but this time it is centrally driven and it is massive funding cuts. Since 2010 almost one-third of central funding to fire and rescue services has been cut. As a consequence, we have suffered some of the most savage cuts to our frontline services in living memory. Nearly 10,000 firefighter jobs have been lost, one in six of these vital public servants. Fire stations have closed and scores of appliances have been left off the run. Congress, I am sure you all drive past fire stations in your local area, and no doubt be impressed by the range of appliances behind those big red doors, but I have to tell you that in many areas across the country those appliances cannot be used because there are not enough fire-fighters left to crew them. Also the cuts have meant that 999 response times are at the slowest for 20 years, which is a disaster in a life-saving service where every second counts.

Congress, your firefighters do a magnificent job in the most difficult of circumstances. Last year they carried out over 40,000 rescues, which is over a hundred a day, but be in no doubt that Government funding cuts have stretched us beyond the limit. They have compromised the safety of the public and they have compromised the safety of firefighters alike. We have fewer firefighters, spread over a wider with less back up, dealing with increased fire growth, responding to a wider and more complex range of incidents, and yet the cuts just keep on coming.

According to the new settlement signed off in Westminster this year, we now face a further 20% cut in funding. Congress, this is a crisis for the Fire Service! We also face other threats. The Policing and Crime Bill is currently going through Parliament, a Bill that will allow police and crime commissioners to take over fire services, which is back to the brass helmet, because a century ago 40% of fire services were police fire brigades. They offered a poor service. They failed to deal with some very high-profile fires. They didn’t work. That’s why, during the Second World War, the Home Office got rid of them and they didn’t reinstate them afterwards. This Government wants to take us back a hundred years to an issue that didn’t work then and won’t work now. Crucially, in the modern-day service, this Bill would breakdown the public trust that we rely on in order to get into households for our vital community-safety work.

For all their political bluster about collaborative working achieving greater efficiency and improved outcomes, we are not fooled. This Bill is another cost-cutting exercise, where the Fire Service will be run down in order to fund the police. That’s why we oppose the Bill and we ask you to suppose us in our local campaigns if it does pass through Parliament.

Congress, I will finish by saying that I often wonder what the generations who wore the brass helmets would think of the job today. Would they recognise the service, as firefighters dressed in gas-type suits to deal with dangerous chemical incidents, the use technical equipment for scaling cliffs, entering deep floods or fast-flowing water using water-rescue equipment or engage in communities on a daily basis, offering support and advice. Yes, we fight fires, but we do so much more. As firefighters, we understand the lessons of the past. We won’t be forced back there. We are fighting for a Fire Service of the future. Please, support your firefighters. Add your weight and your voice to our campaign. Stand up for your firefighters. We rescue people, not banks. *(Applause)*

**June Brimble** *(GMB)* seconded Motion 57.

She said: President and Congress, GMB members applaud the magnificent work carried out every day but our firefighters and rescue services, and condemns this Government’s spiteful and relentless attack on jobs, pay, pensions and working arrangements, along with its dogged determination to undermine the integrity, professionalism and democracy of one of our vital public services. This Government’s austerity measures have seen a 30% cut in Fire Service budgets, which in real terms, as we have just heard, is nearly 10,000 firefighters less. That is 10,000 people less to keep us safe, and it means that our firefighters are working under intolerable pressure day in and day out. Although it is hard to monitor the full impact of these losses, we do know that there has been a rise of 15% in Fire Service deaths just in the last year. That is 39 more people than last year and 303 people in total. Those people may have had a better chance of survival if we had the right levels of resources in place. The idea of the police commissioners running the Fire Service is laughable, if it was not actually so serious. The breakneck speed at which the Policing and Crime Bill has been bulldozed through Parliament means that there has been little time for scrutiny as to how police commissioners will bring the Fire and Police Services together under one umbrella as an employer. The details on governance, public assurance and community needs, to name a few, are sadly lacking, and the FBU is right in its opposition to resist the removal of the Fire Service from local democracy and control of local authorities.

Congress, the flooding of recent years has caused widespread and totally avoidable devastation to many parts of our country, and I am proud of the role that GMB has played in helping many communities respond and rebuild after those floods. But we owe everything and so much to the quick response, professionalism and dedication of our firefighters during those floods. Yet, bizarrely, resources and responding to floods is not a statutory duty for the Fire & Rescue Service in England and Wales. Fire-fighters have the skills, knowledge, expertise and the equipment. They must also have the funding and a statutory so that they can plan, and to ensure that there is public confidence in communities that they have crucial resources at the time of emergency and crisis, such as at times of flooding.

On skills for firefighters and level of competencies, these are rigorously tested on a monthly basis against strict and high standards. It’s time this Government recognised the professionalism of firefighters that, frankly, they have taken for granted for so long. We need to have a set of formal national professional standards, and they need to be recognised and paid for that.

Congress, frankly, this Government ought to hang their head in shame at the untold damage they have done to our Fire & Rescue Service. We know that fire-fighters do a dangerous and difficult job. Yet this Government are making it more dangerous and more difficult. This Government need to stop battering the fire-fighters, start listening to the FBU and working with the professionals who know what they are doing. GMB wholeheartedly supports the FBU campaign, and I ask Congress to support the resolution. Thank you.

**The President:**  There is no right of reply, so I will move straight to the vote. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against? Clearly, that was carried.

* *Motion 57 was CARRIED.*

**The President:** Delegates, we are going to stay with section 3 of the General Council Report and now move on to the section on Housing from page 12 onwards. I call paragraphs 1.4 and Composite Motion 12. The General Council position is to support the composite. It’s going to be moved by the TSSA, seconded by UNISON, and we have supporters CWU and UCATT. The NUT and NASUWT have also indicated to speak. So please be ready. I call the TSSA.

**Housing**

**Mick Carney** *(TSSA, Transport Salaried Staffs’ Association)* moved Composite 12.

He said: Congress, we are constantly being told that the housing market is spiralling out of control. One of the greatest achievements of the 1945 Labour Government was the massive affordable social-housing programme that sprang up. Gone were the pre-war slums replaced by neat little council estates. Thatcher sold the people of this country a capitalist dream. The way to go forward was to own your own home. For many this meant the purchasing of social-housing stock, often at knock-down prices. Overnight, she created millions of Tory voters.

Many accuse the Tories of selling off the family silver. Well, the first thing they did was to sell off the bricks and mortar. Buy-to-let programmes, such as *Homes Under the Hammer*, encourage people to try their hand in the so-called housing market. They inflate prices and encourage get-rich-quick thinking. People on these shows talk about portfolios. Housing is not an investment for your future. It is a place for people to live. But this housing stock has never been replaced. Constraints were put on councils barring them from replacing the housing that had been sold on, and this has led directly to the crisis in housing that we face today. For far too many in this country, owning a home is a pipedream that will never be realised. The fact is that many do not even have secure and affordable accommodation on a rental basis. They are stuck in the nightmare of the private-landlord trap, paying exorbitant rents, often for far too shoddy accommodation. Housing benefit costs this country £9 billion a year, a figure that the Government realise is far too high. So what’s the answer? It’s not rent caps and rent tribunals that work so well in Europe and used to work so well in this country until Thatcher scrapped them. Instead we get the pernicious ‘bedroom tax’, with families forced from family homes they have lived in for generations, a scandal that continues to this day. That is £9 billion of taxpayers’ money going straight into the pockets of private landlords, many of whom were either Tory voters or even Tory MPs, and no wonder they don’t want to change anything. That sum of £9 billion, instead of going into the pockets of grasping landlords, could go into a comprehensive programme of affordable social housing. According to Shelter’s own statistics, 5.9 million homes in this country fail to meet the Government’s own decent home standard. One million children live in overcrowded housing, and 3.6 million children live in rent poverty, falling below the poverty line after rent is paid. Furthermore, 70,000 children are classed as homeless.

The effects of poor housing are many. Poor housing affects health, education, emotional well-being and life chances. So the Tories’ answer to this problem along with the bedroom tax is try to sweep it away. We have homeless spikes in and around our city buildings, people forced to move away from London and away from their families, pushed into towns such as Middlesbrough, although, personally, I see this as a step up in the world. Even those who are in rented accommodation are not secure. One-in-three families could not afford to pay more than one month’s rent or mortgage if they were made redundant. One-in-five could not even afford to pay the current month’s rent.

The UN Commissioner on Human Rights condemns the housing crisis in this country as one of the major scandals of the 21st century, and they are right. It’s a scandal that in the 21st century, in one of the richest countries on the planet, so many people live in rent poverty. It is a scandal that, in the 21st century, in one of the richest countries in the world, slum landlords are on the rise unchecked, and it is a scandal that, in the 21st century, that we will leave here tonight and, when we walk the streets of Brighton, walk past countless homeless people bedded down for the night with nowhere to sleep. *(Applause)* Is this really the sort of world we want for our children? Thank you.

**John Gray** *(Unison)* seconded Composite 12.

He said: Congress, the housing crisis and the lack of affordable homes is blighting the lives of workers and their families across the nation. More and more people, particularly the young, are at risk of rent arrears, evictions and homelessness, causing financial hardship and misery to all those affected. Yet the Government have failed to tackle the crisis. The Housing and Planning Act, which applies to England, was a missed opportunity to get to grips with the housing issues facing the nation. I work in housing in central London. The extension of the right-to-buy will deplete the housing stock for all, and under Pay to Stay, many workers who Unison represents will face their rents doubling or even tripling. Those most affected are not the well paid but caretakers, school cooks, nurses and street cleaners.

What we need, first and foremost, is political will. It used to be the case that all political parties accepted that it was the duty of the state to ensure its citizens were adequately housed. They even used to compete with each other on how many council houses they would build each year. They made sure that not only were public-housing rents capped and truly affordable but so were private rents. Without this political will, we will not get the funding needed for the radical solutions to solve the crisis across all the different housing markets. This is why we desperately need to build more homes of all types to meet the housing needs of the young, the vulnerable and those on low and middle incomes, many of whom are simply unable to afford a decent home to buy or rent. In fact, they don’t even have the hope of being able to do so.

Significantly increasing the supply of housing would widen the options of people and lower the cost of housing for everyone, in particularly private renters, who often face the worst insecurity of soaring rents and the early-morning knock by the bailiffs.

Congress, why do we spend in total £25 billion per year on Housing Benefits, when much of it is used to pay off the mortgages of private landlords? Why can’t this money be used instead to build homes? Why can’t we have a transition from benefits to bricks? But tackling the housing crisis also requires significant improves in public-housing policy to deliver a housing deal for current and future generations. This should include investment in housing, particularly social and real affordable housing provided by local authorities and housing associations. We also need a rebirth of the tenants’ and residents’ movement, effective rent controls, landlord licensing, secure tenancy agreements, long-term solutions to reform welfare and, most importantly, a better housing deal for current and future generations would ensure that housing across all markets is decent, is secure, is stable and is truly affordable for all. Please support.

**Tony Kearns** *(CWU, Communication Workers Union)* spoke in support of Composite 12.

He said: Congress, I want to address my comments mostly to the amendment that was submitted to the original motion from the CWU about the issue of Pay to Stay. As Mick said in moving, there is a housing crisis in this country mostly caused by a failure of successive governments, and particularly this Government, to invest in building council houses, and now we know why. Nick Clegg let the cat out of the bag, and surprisingly he said: “George Osborne and David Cameron fundamentally opposed the building of council houses because it creates Labour voters”. Not just satisfied with that position, George Osborne decided to extend in last year’s Budget the concept of Stay to Pay. This is how it works. Anybody outside of London earning over £30,000 and anybody inside of London earning over £40,000 will be expected to pay an extra 15 pence in the pound and declare their income to either the housing association or the council that they currently rent from. It is an absolutely pernicious law, almost as bad as the Poll Tax. It is a blatant attack on working-class, council-house tenants in this country. It is voluntary for housing associations, but they, surprisingly, have taken it up because housing associations, who will implement the new Stay to Pay rates, can keep every single penny they make. However, already under-funded councils are going to have to bear the cost, running into millions and millions of pounds, of implementing Stay to Pay, and yet any money made from Stay to Pay by councils goes to the Treasury.

So what we will have in place by this Government is the taking of wealth from working-class communities and giving it to the rich through tax breaks and tax concessions for big business. It is simple ideology that transfers wealth. Again, it is the demonization of the working class by this Tory Government and it has to stop.

There is some good news about this campaign. In April, after five days of debate, the Lords proposed and carried an amendment that the £30,000 rate outside of London will go to £40,000, that the £40,000 rate in London will go to £50,000 and the 15 pence in the pound will drop down to 10 pence in the pound. We are still waiting for the Government’s response on that. Basically, this is a tax on working-class communities. Its effect is going to be devastating. In excess of a quarter-of-a-million working-class families are going to suffer and suffer really badly under this scheme. Conservative estimates rate that somewhere above 60,000 working-class families are not going to be able to afford the new rates. Working-class families are going to be forced into the position of deciding whether they have to pay the rent, they have to feed the kids, they have to buy clothes for the kids or they have to heat their homes. What an absolutely disgraceful situation, as Mick said, in the 21st century in one of the richest economies on the planet. It is anti-working class. It is to put money into the pockets of the rich. There is nothing wrong with working-class families and working-class communities. I grew up in a council house — actually, it was a council flat — and my ma and dad had six kids in a two-bedroomed council flat, and that is what this Government are trying to take us back to. Ironically, Liz, it was just around from the Vernon, which was my dad’s local. It was one of the first pubs I had a drink in. This is an opportunity for the TUC and the trade unions to say, “We stand for working-class families in their fight against Pay to Stay, and we are going to carry that fight all the way to Government until we are successful”. *(Applause)*

**The President:** I call UCATT, please.

**Julie Phipps** *(UCATT, Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians)* spoke in support of Composite 12.

She said: Congress, we are in the worst housing crisis for 30 years, with the majority of homes being built now out of reach for most people and families, forcing them into the private-rented sector, which last year benefited private landlords to the tune of £9.3 billion in Housing Benefit payments. There are currently over one million people and families on social housing waiting lists in England, and our social housing is under attack by this Government in the form of the Housing and Planning Act, a cruel, contemptible piece of legislation which will see introduction of Pay to Stay or the “Tenant Tax”, as it is becoming known, the end of secure tenancies and the right of secure tenancies to be passed on to the children. There will be forced sell-offs of social housing at a time when the demand for social housing has never been greater. There are too many twists and turns in this Act to discuss here. I would need the time of the entire Congress. Please, comrades, look up and support *Axe the Act*, a campaign set up following *Kill the Bill*. I have attended many rallies for both *Kill the Bill* and now *Axe the Act*, along with tenant organisations, local councillors and leaseholder tenants, who could also be affected by this Act as estates are deemed “brownfield sites”, paving the way for private developers to demolish and rebuild with yet more unaffordable homes. We would like to see much more trade union participation at these events. So, please, TUC, get behind *Axe the Act* and move this as a TUC-campaigning priority. The Act comes into effect in April. Time is running out. Not only are our members’ homes in jeopardy but their jobs, too, for those working in the public sector, because as social housing is diminished so are the maintenance workers’ jobs that go with it and many others. We cannot wait for a Labour government. We need to mobilise now. There is going to be a housing summit meeting on 22nd October. I would urge every trade union here to be represented at that meeting. We need to organise and support *Axe the Act* campaigns. We must defeat this despicable Act and defend social housing. Thank you.

**The President:**  I call the NUT.

**Gerald Clarke** *(National Union of Teachers)* spoke in support of the composite.

He said: Congress, I am going to speak about the effect of the housing crisis on teachers and our children. With the cuts to funding in education and with the crisis on teacher recruitment and retention, one thing that is really important that we try and do is to keep teachers being able to live near their schools. This is a bit of a problem at the moment. A good friend of mine, who was a colleague last year, was married a couple of years ago, whose wife is also a teacher in London — an assistant head, in fact — would love to buy a small flat to live in. The reason they would like to buy is because it would save them about 30% over what they pay in rent because the rent is so huge. They scraped together a deposit by pooling together their savings and even by borrowing from their parents, there is nowhere in London that they can afford to buy. They are going to have to look like other teachers in Camden, where I am from, to buy in Ashford or in Cambridgeshire. Other teachers have moved to Luton or here to Brighton, and the effect of that is, eventually, the commute kills them and they have to leave where they are needed, where we need the teachers, for the only place that they can afford to live.

It is not just London that is the problem. The Housing Registry, in a recent report, showed that house prices rose in London by 14%, up 10% in Essex, up 16% in Luton and up 9% in Sussex. These are all fundamental problems. It is not just young teachers who have an issue. Our former branch president has lived in a housing association property for 30 years, and the Pay to Stay scheme, which we have talked about, will see her rent, potentially, doubled or tripled, and she might not be able to afford to stay there. The Pay to Stay scheme salary cap of £40,000 will affect lots of teachers as well. The figure of £40,000 in London is an important thing to think about.

Let me say that teachers are not unique to being priced out of the housing market, but we are, probably, uniquely placed to see the effects on children. Teresa May last week said, when she was defending grammar schools, that we already select, and she talked about the post-code lottery. I know that I don’t need to explain to people here that the solution to inequality is not further inequality. The problem with that is, if you look at the people who cannot afford to move — the young and the poor — that there are children who we teach in our schools who are disappearing. They are called “the disappeared”, or we can call them that. The family of a year 11 student last year in my school were moved to Bradford with no notice at all. Not being able to be fully aware of what was happening and why it was happening, they were not able to defend themselves against this move, and this child who had come in speaking no English at year 8, who had reached year 11 and was forecast to do very well in her GCSEs, suddenly had to leave and go to Bradford. More children are disappearing every day due to this Government’s housing policies. So we need to be really aware of those and we need to do what we can to try and stop the Pay to Stay and the bedroom tax, and try and keep our children in our classrooms and keep our teachers in our schools. Thank you.

**Dave Kitchen** (*NASUWT* (*The Teachers’ Union)*) spoke in support of Composite 12.

He said: As for the teachers, as you have just heard, and to everyone who works in our schools, it matters to them because of the impact that it has on their quality of life and the ability of the education system to attract and retrain and retain staff. It also matters because of the implication of poor quality and unaffordable housing on the wellbeing and life chances of many of the children and young people with whom they work.

Congress, the impact of high housing costs on the education workforce is clear. For example, a survey undertaken during the NASUWT’s Young Members Consultation Conference confirmed that two-thirds of young teachers do not feel they are able to afford to meet their housing aspirations in the next year. A third of young teachers told us that they spend more than 50% of their net monthly income on accommodation and housing costs while two-thirds report living with parents, friends, or share with other adults, even after a number of years in teaching. That certainly reflects my experience as a parent; no doubt many people in this hall.

It is therefore little wonder that fewer young people are choosing to enter the teaching profession, which has undoubtedly compounded the current teacher recruitment crisis, a crisis that impacts directly on the quality of education our schools are able to provide. But while education workers focus on their own circumstances, by far most of the concern they report about government housing and social policy relates to its implication for learners. A survey of teachers conducted by NASUWT last year included multiple reports of children coming to school exhausted from living in cramped and inadequate housing. Many respondents told us they knew of pupils who had lost their homes due to financial pressure, that they had taught pupils who were living in temporary accommodation such as bed-and-breakfast and hostels. The lives of children and young people are being blighted and degraded by poor housing conditions.

Congress, it is time the Government took action to ensure that key public servants are able to access affordable housing and critically to ensure that no child or young person has to endure housing conditions that shame any civilised society. Congress, please support this composite motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. No right of reply so we will move straight to the vote on Composite Motion 12. Will all those in favour please show? Thank you. All those against? Thank you. Clearly carried.

*\* Composite Motion 12 was CARRIED*.

**The President**: I am now going to call Motion 63, Public land and affordable housing, to be moved by ASLEF and seconded by the RMT. GMB have already indicated they want to speak so be ready. Thank you.

**Public land and affordable housing**.

**Dave Calfe** (*Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen*) moved Motion 63.

He said: Congress, Aslef is concerned about the lack of affordable housing for all workers across the United Kingdom. In many areas the lack of affordable housing is worse than ever and will only get worse with more cuts in the name of austerity. Workers from all sectors cannot afford to live in their own community, which means they live far away from their workplace and their extended family. They will have to work longer days at work because of this. They have less time with their families and their partners. This situation undermines the fabric of our communities.

Getting to grip on Britain’s housing crisis is one of the most important political issues we are facing. It is a crisis that is more than homes, it is about our communities and the people that live and work there. Home ownership is slipping out of the reach of people under 40 as the average house costs nearly seven times the average income. Nearly nine million people rent from private landlords and face instability through high rents, hidden fees, and the threat of eviction. One-third of private rented homes in England fail to meet the decent home standards. It is truly scandalous that the number of homeless households in the United Kingdom stands at more than 50,000. The Tory right-to-buy policy simply fuels the flames of this crisis. We need to provide funding for councils to build more housing, we need to change the definition of affordable home. It is currently £450,000 in London. We need changes to the planning system to stop developers sitting on land and not building.

Transport bodies such as Transport for London and Network Rail are selling off their land to raise money following cuts from government grants. It is wrong for public bodies to sell this land to private developers to build homes for speculators and the richest one percent. If public land is to be sold to raise money, it must be used to provide affordable housing that meets the needs of our key workers, and guarantees must be attached to any land sale to ensure this priority is met. Congress, we also need to retain railway land to ensure that we can develop the network in the years ahead to meet demand.

Aslef calls on the General Council to campaign with any appropriate body or organisation to safeguard public and railway land for future infrastructure and public works. Where it is used for housing, this should be genuinely affordable housing for key workers. Congress, please support the motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. RMT.

**John Reid** (*National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*) seconded Motion 63.

He said: Congress, the two-pronged attack of austerity and privatisation on the working class is resulting in rail and Tube land being hived off to private developers. The Department of Transport has had a cut in its budget of 37% whilst Transport for London has had their £700m operational budget completely removed. As part of the gradual privatisation and austerity Network Rail is planning to sell £1.8bn in assets, including land for commercial property development. The sale of assets is not only a threat to development of rail and Tube, it also creates further instability and inequality in housing provision by creating unaffordable homes and fuelling escalating house prices.

Network Rail has already engaged investment bankers City Group to advise it on whether 18 stations should be sold off while transport for London is looking for new commercial opportunities, including selling off the massive Lillie Bridge rail depot, which has been threatened by a multimillion pound development of Earls Court. This may lead to the demolition of a huge council estate in West Kensington. Our union has been heavily involved with that local campaign. Again, this has added to the social cleansing of my old homeland, west London, which will see working class people being pushed out while billionaires are moving into these areas. The rich get their hands on public assets at knock-down prices. They then make even more profit by charging mega-high rents and exerting greater control over the property market.

As well as threatening future rail development and worsening affordable housing provision, these assets sell offs also deny the railway of vital income. The *We Own It* campaign, for example, showed that a Network Rail sell off could result in the loss of income of £1.7bn. We need to demand that there should not be the building on railway land; we need to protect and expand our railway. It means only renting out railway land for affordable state-owned housing and using revenues to improve our railway. It means taxes on big business that benefit from rail investment, and windfall taxes on increased property prices. It means that we renationalise our railways to help fund more publicly-owned transport and more publicly-owned housing. I second, Congress. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call GMB.

**Brendan Duffield** (*GMB*) spoke in support of Motion 63.

He said: Congress, we have a housing crisis in our country and it is getting bigger and bigger by the month. It is not just a shortage of homes, it is not just a complete lack of affordable homes but also the lack of political will from a government that is totally out of touch. When the trade unions talk about affordability, we do not mean the Tory Government’s definition which includes those who can afford £450,000 for a starter home. For most of us you will need five Lottery numbers and the bonus ball just to meet the deposit. We are talking about the vast majority of workers with an average wage of £27,000 a year.

The housing market that the majority of workers experience is one that works against us. We have record waiting lists for council houses and an unregulated private renting sector where landlords can treat tenants like dirt, and a property market that is simply out of touch with many. What a state of affairs where there are 3.3 million young adults in the UK aged between 20 and 34 stuck living with their parents, the highest figures in 20 years. It is causing real strain and many young couples are putting off starting families of their own as a result. The unaffordable housing crisis is bad for the economy too as people struggle to live near the opportunities for work. Long commuting is expensive and a damage to the quality of life.

The Government’s vision is to plunder public land and flog it off to private gains. The land speculators are licking their lips at the prospect of quick sales of luxury departments to the wealthiest one per cent in society. We need more houses built but not like this. Congress, we need a different vision when the public sector is buying and not selling. We need clear compulsory purchase order powers to buy up empty houses stood idle for over two years and urgently to rebuild council housing stock. We need legislation to turn derelict land into homes that benefit local people and workers for years to come. We need to recognise the extraordinary price society is paying for the Tories right-to-buy; it has bled council housing dry for the current generations and now we are picking up the tab.

Many of us heard throughout the European Union Referendum campaign just how worried and angry people are at the state of housing in this country. The Tories were quite content to see immigrants receive the blame for the political failures and the failures of governments before them. This has to end now. Government need to take on the responsibility of sorting out the mess and granting the powers we know we need. Stop prioritising the rich and think of the rest of us. It is the 21st century in one of the richest countries in the world and the UK cannot emphatically own its people. Congress, we cannot afford to carry on like this. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. No right of reply so we will move straight to the vote. Will all those in favour please show? All those against? Thank you. Clearly carried.

 \* *Motion 63 was CARRIED*.

**The President**: We are doing okay for time so my hope is that we may be able to squeeze in Emergency Motion 2 on Colombia this morning, if UCU and Unison could perhaps be ready. Right, we move on continuing with Section 3 of the General Council Report, Good services and decent welfare, page 52 onwards. I call paragraph 3.3 and Composite 13, In-work benefits and Universal Basic Income. The General Council support the composite and it is to be moved by Unite and seconded by Usdaw, and Unison, GMB, and PCS have indicated they wish to speak, if you could be ready. Thanks, Steve.

**GC Report Section 3: Good services and decent welfare, cont.**

**In-Work benefits and Universal Basic Income**.

**Steve Turner** (*Unite*) moved Composite Motion 13.

He said: Sisters, brothers, comrades, we are now six years into a vicious ideological programme of austerity, deep cuts ripping the heart from our welfare state, public services and, of course, our benefit system. The impacts are heartless, heartless from a Government that are now directly responsible for rapid growth in poverty and inequality, as well as the debts of many on the receiving end of their ideological cuts.

As unions we have a great proud record of opposition to austerity and the cruellest cuts, specifically targeting, spitefully targeting some of the most vulnerable within our society. We will continue to stand up in the on-going fight against further cuts, deeper austerity, and degrading systems, such as Workfare and the disability assessment. We will also stand up against the continued use of sanctions that obscenely punish and the Tory approach of isolating, attacking, and scape-goating those that receive benefits, use a growing number of food banks, rely on charitable support, or high street lenders to make ends meet. We will also stand up against the toxic rhetoric of workshy unworthy benefit claimants defrauding an overly generous system. We do all of that, of course, whilst standing up with our members, and others, for well paid, secure, unionised work, and investment in our communities.

Composite 13, Congress, calls on the TUC to take the lead in a debate for a new universal basic income as part of a wider political strategy to end poverty and redistribute wealth alongside growing gains from automation, artificial intelligence, and the developing gig economy, a strategy that recognises the changing face of work today, that millions of jobs are being lost to automation and technological advances, from driverless cars and lorries to automated logistics and warehousing, from drone doorstep delivery to the digitalisation of clerical, processing, administrative, and professional work, a strategy that values and rewards unpaid work, such as child and family care, voluntary work and community support, as well as providing for the development of participatory democracy at all levels of our society.

Congress, this is a debate we must be at the heart of, ensuring our core values underpin it, returning universality to our benefit system alongside our continued campaigns for decent work, collective bargaining, trade union rights and public services that has to be at the heart of our fight for a decent society, an end to poverty and for greater equality. It is a debate about the redistribution and control of wealth created by millions but currently held and horded by the few. It is about changing a system that enables and supports insecure and precarious work, effectively subsidising profitable employers paying low wages, one that lets employers off the hook on their obligation to pay their workers decent wages or, indeed, their fair share of taxes. It is about developing an alternative that is fit for the future, that recognises people will go in and out of paid employment during their lives, they will return to education, they will retrain and they will upskill, a system that supports innovation and risktaking, allows us all to participate fully and have a stake in our society, that provides for a better work/life balance, a shorter working week, early retirement, greater leisure and social time, a system that will deliver security and dignity as of right and for life in a rapidly changing world.

Congress, universal basic income is part of that debate and it is a debate that the TUC needs to be leading to ensure that our ideas, our values, and our principles, are at its heart. It is a difficult task. It will be a real challenge to persuade a sceptical public but that does not mean that it cannot be done. As Victor Hugo famously said, “Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come.” Comrades, that time is now. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Usdaw.

**Paddy Lillis** (*Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers*) seconded Composite Motion 13.

He said: Colleagues, in recent years there has been a relentless attack on benefit claimants, whether it is politicians demonising people as skivers or the media attempting to convince us that claiming benefits is simply a lifestyle choice. There has been a clear strategy to dehumanise those reliant on welfare and this strategy has made it far easier for the Conservatives to cut repeatedly welfare entitlements of nearly £17bn plus from the annual welfare budget during the last parliament.

Congress, we are all aware of the need for a real living wage, a wage that ensures working people do not have to rely on welfare payments to make ends meet. However, whilst we continue to work towards this there are many workers struggling to survive. In October last year, the trades union Movement launched a magnificent campaign to protect welfare payments. Following George Osborne’s announcement to cut a further £12m from the welfare state the trades union Movement was able to convince the House of Lords to vote against Government proposals. This was an historic result brought about by focused, organised, and effective campaigning.

However, the Government has continued to sneak through a number of additional cuts and a new punitive universal health system and whilst the Conservatives may have originally claimed that the Universal Credit would encourage more people into work, it is now clear that the system is simply designed to deliver even further cuts to the welfare state. You do not have to take my word for it. Iain Duncan Smith, the former Work and Pensions Secretary, has labelled the cuts for the Universal Credit as indefensible and there to deliver a misplaced austerity agenda. Furthermore, the introduction of the in-work condition will give employers unchecked power over an employee’s finances.

As a union movement, we must condemn a situation whereby a manager choosing to reduce an employee’s hours of work will not only lead to a cut in pay but also benefit sanctions. Congress, the trades union Movement needs to launch a further campaign to defend the welfare state and ensure that working people are not forced into deeper levels of poverty. For this reason please support the composite. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call Unison. Nicky?

**Nicky Ramanandi** (*Unison*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 13.

She said: Congress, Unison was proud to lead the work against the Government’s attempts to change tax credits. This was a campaign that met with success as Osborne had to abandon his changes all together rather than merely delaying them. This shows what can be done with a targeted evidence-based campaign. Since 2010, we have witnessed relentless attacks on the welfare state, cuts in the benefit entitlements for the vulnerable and welfare reforms which were designed with one aim, to cut the amount of benefit support for working and non-working people.

Iain Duncan Smith has left a legacy where the welfare system is now one of inefficiency, division, secrecy, and cruelty. For low paid working people the introduction of Universal Credit originally offered a way to make work pay. However, with all the delays and tinkering it is no longer recognisable and, crucially, no longer offers any improvement to the current system. It has solved nothing that low paid families need addressing, not low pay, not dependency on top-up working tax credits, not a reduction in childcare costs, not a reduction in housing benefits. Today, it is ordinary low paid workers that are the largest group living in poverty because of poverty wages. One of the activists in our region described her situation as too much month at the end of her wages, which is tragic.

Congress, this Government is doing very little to tackle poverty. In fact, in the Welfare Reform and Work Act, passed in March, the Government purposely removed a lot of protection in the Child Poverty Act. The removal of child poverty targets set out in this Act has removed the duty to measure child poverty and work towards reducing it. For the first time under Universal Credit women with children over three will have an in-work condition placed on them. This means parents of pre-school children will be required to start work preparation when their child is two and fulfil all work-related assignments when their child reaches three, impacting on 220,000 parents in the first year. It will remove parental choice in caring for your children and put extra pressure on our childcare system. In addition, there is a lack of flexible part-time jobs for parents to move into.

Unison, along with our partners, in the social security consortium has been campaigning for a fair and equitable welfare state. Central to the solution is to link reforms to this campaign to increase decent working wages. This will allow the welfare state to return once more to being a crucial adequate safety net for those in need and not a subsidy for poor low wages. Please support the composite. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Well timed. Thank you. I call GMB.

**Dave Clements** (*GMB*) spoke in support of Composite 13.

He said: Congress, the global financial crisis has been ongoing since the crash of 2008. Promises made by politicians of every colour that they would be able to restore the system to stability have been broken. The enormous debts that brought the global economy to its knees, including the toxic assets on banks’ balance sheets, remain and are rising. Although this was a predictable outcome, mainstream political parties, the corporate media, economists, and even some trade unionists, remain stuck in denial by participating in a sterile debate about austerity. They argue the way to cure the problem is to cut or to expand public spending, conveniently ignoring the truth that the debt is non-payable and the only solution, ultimately, is to write it off. In their desperation to avoid such an outcome most western governments, including the UK, have resorted to printing money, a practice previously associated with bankrupt states.

The failure of our leaders to come to terms with 21st century reality is shown in the continued insistence that full employment is attainable despite the fact that millions of jobs have been automated out of existence. In this climate of hyperbole, high and rising unemployment, the established Beveridge model of social welfare funded by employer contributions is effectively collapsing. Following the subsidy for the bad employers in the shape of Working Tax Credit and other means-tested benefits, we now have the fiasco of Duncan Smith’s Universal Credit rolled out with cross-party support.

It will be apparent, then, that the only logical way forward is the introduction of a universal non means-tested basic citizens income for all adults financed out of general taxation. It should be at a level that guarantees everyone’s basic needs are covered by a weekly payment that would eradicate existing benefits and ensure that anyone who takes paid work will be better off financially because means-tested poverty traps will disappear. It would effectively raise the minimum wage and prevent people from having to accept low paid drudgery work from bad employers like Sports Direct and Amazon. It would also provide a lifeline for the millions of people caring for ageing relatives at home or those wanting to bring up their own children rather than sending them out to expensive childminders and nurseries.

Such a radical change to our broken system of social organisation will encounter stiff opposition from the vested interests of those who control the people by forcing them to seek poor paid employment to survive. Opponents of basic income will dismiss this idea as being utopian or simply unaffordable, but they are wrong. This is an idea whose time has come and it is up to us as trade unionists to give it every chance of success by campaigning to make it become a reality. Congress, we urge you to support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call PCS.

**Katrine Williams** (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) spoke in support of Composite 13.

She said: PCS welcomes the continuing discussions about what we want to see as a supportive social security system as the union that represents the workers delivering the welfare system. Congress has a clear policy against welfare cuts as we face the further £12bn worth of cuts, cuts which impact not only on those out of work but also on low paid workers. The cuts we defeated in the tax credits are being introduced into the Universal Credit, the so-called flagship replacement for numerous benefits is flagging.

PCS is about to organise protests outside our offices against the unbearable pressure and to reduce the stress on our members. One thing that is clear from the stalled rollout of Universal Credit is that it is not easy to replace the complex benefit system. The concept of a benefit that continues rather than claimants having to stop and start claiming benefits and having to keep reclaiming benefits for those on precarious and fluctuating hours is not a bad one but the main premise, as previous speakers have said, is about cutting benefits and our income. Means testing affects the take-up of benefits and creates a very labour intensive system, a system that is providing jobs for our members and very pressurised jobs for our members.

We argue that for a more straightforward supportive system we would need to retain the skills and expertise of all of our members within the DWP so that we actually have the time to concentrate on supporting the public, to help them into work, and get all the support they need instead of a harsh welfare system where benefit levels are kept low, capped, as well as benefits being reduced or sanctioned. It is good, finally, to have our politicians actually argue alongside us against welfare cuts and for the alternative social security system, and for universal benefit income. Hopefully, our politicians will soon occupy Numbers 10 and 11.

PCS wants to be fully involved in developing this policy. The detail of what we want is very complicated and will require some work but we are fully committed to supporting the TUC in doing that. We have very clear policy at Congress of what those in work should have as the minimum standard of living, £10 an hour, so a good argument that this should be the basic standard for all, for pensioners and those out of work. We do not have loaves of bread and pints of milk within the unemployment rate in supermarkets; everybody has the same costs for a decent basic standard of living. We do not have a one size fits all population which has resulted in what is a very complicated benefit system. We do need to discuss how the additional costs are to be addressed, like housing costs and the extra costs of disability to bring everyone up to a good standard of living.

As the mover said, we cannot separate the demand for a decent income for all from a fight for a decent welfare state provision, for universal free childcare, for support for carers, available and affordable public transport, affordable public housing, and decent jobs for all. Please support. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. There is no reply, Steve, so we will move straight to the vote on that. Will all those in favour please show? Thank you. And all those against? Thank you. Clearly carried.

 \* *Composite Motion 13 was CARRIED*.

**Work Capability Assessments and links to suicide**

**The President**: I am now going to call paragraph 5.8 and Motion 70, Work Capability Assessments and links to suicide. Congress, this motion obviously discusses some very difficult issues and one that may affect people in this room so I would ask speakers to be mindful of this in their contribution. The General Council position is to support the motion, to be moved by Mandy Hudson on behalf of the TUC Disabled Workers Conference and seconded by Unite. Thank you, Mandy.

**Mandy Hudson** (*Disabled Workers Conference*) moved Motion 70.

She said: Isn’t it sad that a motion needs to have a health warning in terms of how people can be affected before we can actually take it. The Disabled Workers Conference felt very strongly about this motion that was brought to that conference around Work Capability Assessments and links to suicide. As you will see, the first paragraph outlines how many suicides have been linked to Work Capability Assessments and how many more prescriptions of antidepressants there have been in the last three years as a result of people experiencing anxiety and stress during the Work Capability Assessment.

It is very important that we as a congress put our weight behind this in terms of the different affiliate unions in everything that can be done. You will see that there are personal stories in the second paragraph and Sean is going to talk more about those as he comes to second. I want particularly to address my comments to the way that this horror of people being driven to their death has continued over many years, particularly in the last six years with the coalition government and then the Conservative Government we have now. There is a line in the third paragraph: “The DWP and government have been brought into disrepute and must be held to account.” It is a shameful state of affairs.

I have just been doing some research for this and if you begin to look at the number of Freedom of Information Act requests that have been blocked, how the Government have just dragged their feet in releasing the peer reviews that show how Work Capability Assessments are linked to suicide. Our colleagues in the PCS will well understand the situation that their workers are in, in terms of the written policies there. I discovered a thing called the Vulnerability Hub, and this is the DWP’s definition of vulnerability; listen to this: “An individual who is identified as having complex needs and/or requires additional support to enable them to access DW benefits and to use our services.” There are many people who can fall within that definition and there are probably enormous amounts of pages in terms of policies as to how those people are treated but in reality those people are treated in an inhuman way. There is no value given to their lives by this Government. It is just a simple punitive system.

As to Composite 13, we just heard about the need for a good basic universal income and yet people are being denied that, people who simply cannot work are being dragged through the Work Capability Assessment process, and feeling that there is simply no way out. This is the reality. By the end of August, there was more evidence that was dragged out of government showing that people are still committing suicide as a result of the Work Capability Assessment.

You may have noticed the *Rights Not Gains* process by DPAC during this last week, they blocked Westminster Bridge at one point on Thursday to try and highlight these issues. (*Applause*) Yes, I think we should give them a round of applause. They are killing our people at the moment and we must make sure that there is an end to this. I was part of the DPAC protest in July when we visited Capita and the DWP, and we ended up on College Green on the day that Cameron resigned and Theresa May took over. We read a roll call of the names of the people who have committed suicide that are known to us. It was very poignant looking at the world’s press and the politicians, and the media, just having a bit of a love-in and yet not willing to listen to the stories of our people who had been killed by a system.

This motion does call for the TUC, and particularly the TUC Disabled Workers Committee to take all means at its disposal and we look to you as well as our TUC affiliates to support us in that battle. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you, Mandy. I call Unite.

 **Sean McGovern** (*Unite* *and a TUC General Council Member*) seconded Motion 70.

He said: Comrades, alarm bells began ringing within months of the introduction of the Work Capability Assessment. Stories began circulating of the stringency of the assessments. People with lifelong medical conditions, conditions often extremely debilitating, were being found fit for work; indeed, people with terminal illnesses were failing the assessments. One man who failed the assessment on his deathbed a few months later, with a huge dose of irony quipped, “At least I died a healthy man.”

Over the years *Disabled People Against the Cuts* and Black Triangle have taken the testimonies of thousands of ill and disabled people. They have taken testimonies of people who were found fit for work despite having life-threatening and debilitating conditions. They have exposed the way the Work Capability Assessment has failed great swathes of people with serious mental health conditions. They have also highlighted the high incidence of suicide amongst people, who, on learning they have failed the assessment, can see no future ahead of them. As a result of these failings, people are committing suicide. Others are dropping out of the benefit system as they find the system too uncompromising and punitive. They then face stark poverty, hunger, eviction, and often homelessness that go with it.

Congress, the Work Capability Assessment is underpinned by Tory ideology. It is a means to get disabled people off benefit. It is an assessment that is unfit for purpose and must be scrapped before it ruins more lives. Congress, we demand a fair and transparent assessment, an assessment carried out by not-for-profit organisations, an assessment carried out by healthcare workers whose first duty lies with ill and disabled people, not with profiteering companies. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call Unison.

**Maggie Griffin** (*Unison*) spoke in support of Motion 70.

She said: Unison thanks the TUC Congress and the Workers Congress for bringing this motion to Congress itself, a very important issue. We agree that the Work Capability Assessments need to be overhauled and replaced with a just and humane process. In May of this year, as you have heard, *The Guardian* reported that the Department of Work and Pensions has released 49 inquiry reports or peer reviews, several of which suggested that claimants who had died were vulnerable people with a mental illness or learning difficulty, who may not – may not – have received adequate support from the DWP staff handling their benefit claims. Unsurprisingly, many of these reports focused on the Work Capability Assessments. If you have ever had one of those, and I know someone who has, you know how ridiculous they are.

Congress, these reports provide evidence of what we already know, that the Work Capability Assessments are not fit for purpose and are causing unnecessary stress, exasperating illnesses, and even, as you have heard and it has been evidenced, death. Unison says that this unfair process must be scrapped as soon as possible. Just one death as a result of these assessments is one too many. The fact that several hundred suicides — imagine that, several hundred suicides! — have been linked to the Work Capability Assessments. It is unacceptable. It is unjustified. It is immoral. It is imperative that we work collaboratively to suggest an alternative solution to respect the dignity and uniqueness of each individual. Please support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I now call the NASUWT.

**Nick Trier** (*NASUWT (The Teachers’ Union)*) spoke in support of Motion 70.

He said: Not only is the Workplace Capability Assessment or fit to work test an attack on disabled people which disproportionately and adversely affects the most vulnerable in society, it is also based on a false premise, the premise that there is good well paid employment out there for disabled people. The WCA does not assess the chances that disabled people actually have of moving into paid employment and instead has led to a large number of disabled people losing benefits while at the same time their chances of actually moving into a job remain very low. This led to *The* *Guardian* to report in November last year that the fit to work tests are adversely affecting the mental health of claimants.

Once in employment, the challenges for disabled people remain daunting. Congress, the NASUWT surveyed its disabled teachers and found that 55% of them with disability have experienced discrimination in relation to pay and career progression. It is often these teachers that find themselves on capability procedures for no reason. It is Catch 22: the WCA says they are capable while their school say they are not. In joint research with Warwick University NASUWT found that not only were teachers with disability more likely to be put on capability procedures or a support programme but these same procedures are used to put pressure on disabled teachers leading to high incidences of stress. They are also significantly more likely to be denied pay progression than teachers without disabilities and despite the obligations imposed on employers under the Equality Act, NASUWT evidence shows that 72% of disabled teachers who requested reasonable adjustments said they experienced problems or were turned down.

Congress, it is a disgrace that three in five disabled teachers polled at our disabled teachers conference earlier this year reported that they had been the subject of bullying, harassment, or victimisation as a direct result of their disability, and despite the protections of the Equality Act disabled teachers continue to be amongst the groups most likely to be on the receiving end of redundancy process. Congress, the NASUWT wholeheartedly supports this motion and asks you to support its call for a replacement by a more fair and humane process. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call PCS.

**Angela Grant** (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) spoke in support of Motion 70.

She said: I will try to do justice to this motion in such a short amount of time that we have. First of all, we want to send our sincere condolences to the friends and families of all who have died as a result of the unnecessary cuts that have been foisted upon us in the name of austerity. We have royals, politicians and businessmen raking in cash from the public purse, as we have heard. Private landlords pay the mortgages from our Housing Benefit. Private companies receive contracts to assess medically the disabled. These are the people that are benefiting from our benefits while claimants are living in poverty and despair.

The social model of disability requires society to provide adjustments so that people can live independently. A big part of that independence comes from social security payments, those that help people in need with their day-to-day care and mobility. In recent years we have seen massive cuts, as we have heard, under the Tories welfare reform agenda, sanctions that are causing destitution and homelessness, but the lowest and despicable and most deplorable of acts is the removal of disability payments under the Employment Support Allowance Work Capability Assessment. This is not welfare reform, it is welfare annihilation.

The Capability Assessment measures ability to work. It is not enough to have evidence from your consultant or your GP to say that you cannot work. The Government believe that if you can breathe, then there is a job that you can do. This is the worst attack ever on the disabled community! And why? The Government say it is because the country is poverty stricken. Is it? Well, that is unless you are one of those people I mentioned earlier who have some entitlement to leech from the public purse, like Maximus, the latest private company contracted to provide capability assessments, 50% of medical practitioners in their company have never completed proper training. That is why 50% — more than 50%! — of decisions were challenged at appeal and more than a quarter of a million were overturned. Maximus is failing in its provision. It is putting lives at risk and depriving people of much needed payments and costing the Government far more than they will ever save on the welfare bill, an estimated £1.6bn over the next three years to save less than £1bn over four.

Ideology, we all know that word; ideology. PCS members in DWP do not just see the statistics, they deal with flesh and blood people, people in desperate need and despair. We are constantly under the cosh pushing back on management targets, timed telephony, “Don’t worry if she’s got cancer, get off the phone.” It is horrendous, performance measures, threat of dismissal, members prevented from doing the job that they so badly want to do in serving the public. 30% of PCS members in DWP suffering mental health conditions are dismissed and ending up on the other side of the desk as disabled claimants.

The whole system is vicious, it is vindictive and it is untenable. This Movement is the only line of defence between the Tories and the vulnerable and we must all launch a visible, strong, fight back against the vindictive attack on social security. We must push for all health assessments to be brought back in-house. Key decision-makers must be given back their decision-making powers using the evidence provided by qualified practitioners. We must ensure the social security has humanity and understanding at its core, not the profit of government-backed private investors and companies. We want a supportive publicly funded not-for-profit public service.

PCS stand with DPAC and all community campaigners as they fight to end this Work Capability Assessment and we implore the General Council of the TUC to organise the strength of the TUC to join us in that fight, to campaign for junior doctors, all of public servants, to end the war on the poor. We know that Thatcher destroyed the unions so let’s dispel that myth and let’s now prove our might, fight for our public services, fight for our vulnerable, let’s fight for our class. Congress, please support this motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: I call CWU.

**Jonathan Bellshaw** (*Communication Workers Union*) spoke in support of Motion70.

He said: Conference, I am proud of my union. I am proud we put this motion to the Disabled Workers Conference and I am proud of the unions there that chose it to come here. What the Government are doing is mismanagement. It is all about cutting public spending. What they have done is a brutal system of assessments, as we have heard. This is nothing more than an attack on the working class. Let’s not beat about the bush, the Tories want to destroy the working class.

We have heard some of the figures quoted, and some numbers, but Disability News Service recently reported that from 2010 to 2013 the reassessment process in England was associated with an extra 590 suicides, and the prescribing of a further 725,000 antidepressants. It came to light in the case of Michael O’Sullivan who died on 23rd September 2013, the coroner was the first coroner to blame the discredited WCA directly causing a death. The coroner, Mary Hassell, wrote to the Government about the case demanding action from the DWP to prevent the deaths of other disabled people. Well, we know what has happened there, they have been ignored. The Government continues to attack the working class.

Studies have been carried out and it is said that between 2010 and 2013 on top of the 590 suicides there was an additional six suicides. There were thousands of self-reported mental health problems and even more antidepressants. The DWP consistently has refused to consider an inquiry into what is a systematic and repeated failure to prevent the deaths of claimants despite the fact that we know what is out there. In our view, we know that this is a violation of disabled people’s human rights. It must be stopped.

Congress, we can send a clear message to the Tory Government. We can tell them: stop your attack on disabled people. David Cameron once said that they were the party of caring and compassionate Conservatives who care about disabled people. I will not repeat what I said but you can imagine. Congress, let’s send a clear message to them. Let’s stop the austerity cuts. Let’s continue to fight back. Let’s support the most vulnerable in society. Congress, please give your full support to this motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. There is no right of reply so we will go straight to the vote. Can all those in favour please show? Thank you. All those against? Clearly carried.

 \* *Motion 70 was CARRIED*.

**The President**: As I said, we are doing okay so I am going to take Emergency Motion 2 after Motion 71. Could the mover, UCU, and the seconder, Unison, be ready for that, please. Right, moving to Motion 71 and paragraph 5.10, the General Council’s position is to support the motion. It will be moved by Katrine Williams on behalf of the Trade Union Councils Conference and seconded by the FBU. Thank you.

**Welfare Charter**

**Katrine Williams** (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) moved Motion 71.

She said: As the TUC JCC member for Wales I have had to step in for the Trades Council Conference elected delegate to move the first motion to appear on a conference order paper. This is a great moment to see the voice of trades councils being put clearly back at centre stage of our trades union Movement. Certainly, we appreciate the support we have had from numerous trades unions who have made it possible for the Trades Councils to get our voice directly heard at Congress.

In this motion we are raising the vital issue of our Movement campaigning for a welfare charter. These leaflets are in the stalls in the conference hall and I think certainly we know what we are up against in terms of the welfare cuts that we have just been discussing. Certainly, the past three governments have been putting our welfare system in the firing line, governments that are absolutely intent on cutting benefits, reducing access to benefits, and imposing conditionality which reduces even the benefit income that is at poverty levels for working class people, penalties and sanctions that increase poverty and hardship amongst all those receiving welfare, including those in low paid work.

We have strong traditions in our Movement of not just opposing what is unfair and unjust but demanding what we want as an alternative and what we want to fight for. The Welfare Charter is a product of a lot of work between the unemployed workers centres, trades councils, with the unions representing the unemployed and out of work workers, and those delivering welfare services. We want to see all affiliates taking forward these demands too, demands which affect those who are struggling to find work or unable to work, but also crucially many of our own members in work who are struggling to make ends meet. We want to see a system where we have a living wage and decent jobs, where we can afford to live without relying on state benefits to subsidise low paying bosses, or relying on support from food banks to get food on the table for our families.

As a Movement we have a key role in uniting all working class people together, uniting and fighting and representing the 99% who demand a supportive welfare system, fighting for decent jobs on decent pay, for £10 an hour minimum wage, to end zero-hour contracts and precarious employment, real support for everyone looking for work, bosses who do not pay tax as an incentive to work harder, usually they actually get massive pay rises, so why should we have to see unemployed workers facing benefit sanctions. We need to end the culture of attacks on the unemployed and those out of work, the idea of cutting income as an incentive for our class.

We just had a full debate on the impact of the Workplace Ability Assessments and the harsh benefit regime for sick and disabled workers. This charter gives a clear summary of what we are fighting for, for a welfare system that members of my union, PCS, can be proud of delivering, so they can concentrate on supporting the public when they need our help the most. We need to make sure that everybody in society has a decent standard of living, to live in dignity and have respect for all. Please support. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call the FBU.

**Matt Wrack** (*Fire Brigades Union*) seconded Motion 71.

He said: Congress, I would like to pay tribute to our trades councils Movement in terms of this resolution. I chair the TUC JCC, the committee whereby the General Council liaises with the trades councils, the voice of our Movement at local level, and as has been explained this resolution comes from the Trades Councils Conference where our affiliated organisations meet and organise at local level, an important aspect of how our Movement engages with local communities.

This is the resolution which the Trades Councils Conference voted to bring here to Congress. It comes very much from the front line. It comes from those involved in campaigning on these issues in our communities, engaging with those on the front line of the attacks, the austerity attacks, attacks on benefits, attacks on welfare, imposed by the coalition government and now by the Tory Government. I think an important principle that lies behind this motion is the idea that we as a movement should seek to organise those in work and those out of work, to defend the welfare state, to oppose a tax on those who are unemployed, to oppose attacks on those who are on benefits. We see those as a threat to all of us. We oppose attempts to demonise those who are unemployed or who are reliant on benefits. We oppose attempts to drive people further into poverty and to humiliate people, which is an aspect we have just been discussing in the former debate.

In my own industry, most of our members are in fairly secure jobs, despite, as you heard earlier, the reduction in the number of jobs. Those who are in position are in fairly secure jobs but, nevertheless, the attacks on those who are unemployed, the attacks on those on benefits, are a threat to all of us, to those of us in work and out of work. It is a way of disciplining the labour force, of saying, “Actually, you better do as you are told otherwise you will be thrown on the scrapheap and you will be treated like those people out there.” So, it is in the interests of all of us to stand together and to unite.

As I say, this charter comes from those on the front line. It has been developed by those engaged in these campaigns at local level and we should pay tribute and thank them for that. I second the motion. Please support it. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. No right of reply. I move straight to the vote on that. All those in favour please show? All those against? Thank you.

 \* *Motion 71 was CARRIED*.

**The President**: We now move on to Emergency Motion 2 on Colombia. The General Council supports the Emergency Motion to be moved by UCU, seconded by Unison. Thank you.

**Colombia.**

**Douglas Chalmers** (*University and College Union*) moved Emergency Motion 2 on Colombia.

He said: Colleagues, Colombia is presently the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade unionist. Three thousand activists have been killed in the last 25 years. Last year alone 20 murders of trade unionists were recorded; again, the highest number in the world. It makes my blood run cold to think of the conditions our brothers and sisters have to work in. My day-to-day work ranges from taking up personal cases, looking at wages and conditions, health and safety, university and governments, and the like, it is a world away from the conditions our brothers and sisters work in. Can you imagine, as well as everything that we do as trade unionists here, to work in the knowledge that there may be a real threat to your own life in the continuing knowledge that many of your colleagues have lost theirs.

This motion records some advances and some achievements of the Colombian movement aided in solidarity by campaigns worldwide and right now is a key moment for progress for Colombia with an announcement of a peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC, the previously armed resistance, signed on 24th August. A referendum is going to take place on 2nd October to decide whether the Colombian voters will accept agreement, which I hope they do. This peace agreement is crucial for the future of the country and its democratic movement.

The agreement is not just about peace, just as the trades union Movement is not just about wages and conditions. This agreement has aspects about gender rights, about the rights of women, the rights of LGBT communities. *The* *Guardian* today has an article about disbanding this abomination of child soldiers that we find in Colombia, and so on. It is absolutely crucial for the future. Organisations like Justice for Colombia – and I would ask you to visit the stall downstairs and if your union has not affiliated please do so – have been working for peace in Colombia backed by the whole of our Movement for ten years; in fact, they have played such a central role that they are advisers to the talks. They are now trying to build up support to make sure the agreement is monitored correctly.

In our Movement we have a responsibility to keep up our work in this area. We have been in for the long haul and we have had successes. Liz Snape said yesterday in her speech, we need not just solidarity in words but also solidarity in action. We have been showing that in Colombia. On 1st September the UCU were overjoyed to receive the amazing news that Miguel Beltran was released from prison. Miguel is a trade unionist, a university lecturer, and since 2009 he has been in and out of prison because of his work criticising the violence of the Colombian state. Three years in prison. He has now been proven innocent, as we have said.

We have supported the Justice for Colombia campaign from the beginning, writing letters, organising video messages, even organising to get clean water to him in the cell. All of these things can help but there are still political prisoners there. Huber Ballesteros, a member of the Colombian TUC, who addressed us a few years ago by video-link, he is still there. He needs our help.

In spite of the peace process, colleagues, activists and trade unionists continue to be murdered. Right-wing paramilitaries have assassinated 35 human rights workers already this year. On average it is two people a week, two activists a week are murdered. The ITUC again put Colombia in the list of shame, the 10 worst countries in the world to be a worker. It is a dangerous time for them, for trade unionists, democrats, community activists in Colombia. They need our support to keep the spotlight on what is happening. So, please support this motion, affiliate to Justice for Colombia, and support our brothers and sisters. Their fight truly is our fight. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call Unison.

**Lilian Macer** (*Unison*) seconded Emergency Motion 2.

She said: President, Congress, this motion rightly recognises and welcomes the long awaited announcement by the Colombian government and the FARC that an agreement on peace has been reached by both parties. This will hopefully bring the peace and stability the people of Colombia need and deserve. Congress, I was extremely privileged to represent Unison Scotland on the Unison delegation to Colombia in December last year. We visited Bogota and took an internal flight to Formatura spending two days in Cali and the surrounding areas.

Whilst in the country our delegation met with a large number of trade union activists, lawyers, and human rights defenders, families of victims, and the Mothers of Torture from the “false positives” scandal. Our meetings at times were harrowing. We heard testimonies of violence and abuse against our sisters and brothers. However, Congress, we were inspired by a truly remarkable people with a clear focus on the peace talks with a determination to see equality and social justice at the heart of any agreement. I had not imagined the level of corruption, injustice, and poverty the Colombian people suffer. Our meeting with the Mothers of Torture had a profound effect on our delegation. Their campaign seeking justice for their murdered sons has received international support. Congress, we wrapped our arms around the Mothers of Torture in friendship, in solidarity, and in sisterhood.

Whilst the peace talks are welcome, let us be under no illusion that Colombia remains an extremely dangerous place to live for anyone who defends civil, human, or worker rights. With Justice for Colombia named as an official adviser to the peace negotiations they will, Congress, play a hugely important role in monitoring and implementation of the agreement, in particular taking delegates to monitor the human rights situation. On the Unison delegation three of us met with Fiscalia, the public prosecutor. We raised the issues that we witnessed on our visit, issues such as impunity, impunity for those perpetrators of crimes against our sisters and brothers; 98% of those crimes have never been brought to prosecution by the Colombian government. For me, Congress, that tells us that the Colombian government is complicit in these actions.

Congress, this is the start of a hugely important journey for the people of Colombia and the need for the international community to scrutinise will be crucial to ensure the guarantees for the LGBT community and women’s rights to become a reality through equality and social justice. Congress, please support. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call Unite.

**Jim Kelly** (*Unite*) spoke in support of Emergency Motion 2.

He said: Congress, how many more emergency motions on Colombia do we need before the tragedy is resolved? Perhaps the case of Cecilia Coicue explains this. Cecilia was a trade union activist in Kaka. On September 7th she was stabbed to death by right-wing paramilitaries. Cecilia was not the first and, sadly, will not be the last trade unionist murdered since the peace agreement was signed, yet despite these provocations the recent conclusion of a peace process in Havana is an enormous step forward.

Our sisters and brothers in Colombia do not want charity, they want solidarity, and our Movement needs to continue to pressure the Colombian authorities on all cases of abuse. The motion speaks of 35 trade unionists and human rights activists murdered in the last six months while the discussions were ongoing. The recent news of the release of Miguel Beltran is a welcome but long overdue development, but we all know there is nothing to celebrate until not a single trade unionist is killed and not a single one remains locked up behind bars.

As Liz said in her opening address, the TUC is not about solidarity in words but solidarity in action. So, comrades, I have to say how disappointed I was to read the follow-up actions on a similar emergency motion on Colombia from 2015. That motion called for three priorities and one was, “Campaign for the release of Miguel Beltran, Huber Ballesteros, and all of Colombia’s political prisoners.”

On page 69 of the General Council Report there is only one paragraph consisting of two sentences with only two minor concrete actions recorded and, most disappointingly, no action to support union leader Huber Ballesteros. Huber was jailed on trumped up charges in 2013 while waiting to catch a plane to address this Congress. Huber is the Vice President of Unite’s sister union, Fensuagro, and was President of the Colombian TUC. He is a diabetic but is denied insulin. He shares a wing with convicted right-wing paramilitaries. Huber is literally fighting for his life in his Bogota prison cell.

Comrades, we need to ensure that over the next 12 months the General Council resource a national campaign to release Huber with meaningful actions. We need to step up our support for Justice for Colombia. We need to ensure that we no longer need emergency motions and that in 2017 Huber can address this Congress in person as a free man, as the leader of the Colombian trade union Movement. (*Applause*) Congress, we need action not words from the General Council over the next 12 months. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: I will give a commitment that the TUC will continue its work on Colombia, particularly working with Justice for Colombia, a great campaigning organisation. So, we have finished our business this morning. Thanks for your patience. The hall will be closed – Sorry. I misspoke. I was so excited. Right, Emergency Motion 2, the General Council support the Emergency Motion. All those in favour? All those against? Clearly carried.

* *Emergency Motion 2 was CARRIED.*

**The President**: Thank you again for your patience. See you all at 2.15. The hall is going to be closed so take everything you need with you. Thanks again.

*Congress adjourned.*

**AFTERNOON SESSION**

*(Congress recommenced at2.15 p.m.)*

**The President:** Can I call Congress to order, please. Very many thanks to the Bexley Improv Group for the music this afternoon. *(Applause)*

Congress, I would like to extend a very special welcome to the steel workers who have joined us in the hall this afternoon. *(Cheers and standing ovation)* Thank you, Congress. You will see that some posters have been distributed and we will be using them later during the vote on Composite Motion 4. We are under great time pressure this afternoon with a lot to get through. I have already consulted with the Chair of the GPC on speaking times and I really want to press the point that if people could respect the time limits, we will try to get as many in as possible. It will be quite difficult to get all unions in so, again, bear with us and we will do our best.

Delegates, we start this afternoon with Section 1 of the General Council Report, Jobs, growth and a new economy from page 10. I am now going to call paragraphs 1.2, 1.5 to 1.8 and Composite Motion 3, Supporting a modern industrial strategy. The General Council supports the motion. It will be moved by the GMB and seconded by Prospect.

**Supporting a modern industrial strategy**

**Tim Roache** *(GMB)* moved Composite Motion 3.

He said: President, Congress, this motion on a need for a modern industrial strategy could not come at a more crucial time for our country and our Movement. Key sectors of the UK economy are facing huge uncertainty by the EU referendum. Orders and decisions have been put on hold and uncertainty is the order of the day. The Tories, frankly, have not got a clue. The same Cabinet ministers who campaigned so vocally on our TV screens to leave the EU have now gone missing and are silent. Meanwhile, the Government’s endless pursuit of austerity policies undermines the people, the skills and the national investment we need in order to build a stronger and sustainable industrial future for Britain. It is incredible that since 2010, the Tories have taken pride in the fact that they have no industrial strategy. Let the free market rip. The market is king. Well, we have seen exactly what the market leaves us with.

It was down to the Labour Movement and not the Government to raise the alarm to defend our steel industry. Sajid Javid shrugged his shoulders and had to be dragged kicking and screaming from his half-term jolly “down under” to face the workers his Government were prepared to write off, a government that bent over backwards to accommodate the dumping of cheap Chinese steel, but would not even bend the rules to save the jobs of those steelworkers to whom I pay a tribute today. *(Applause)*

Steel unions stood up for the industry and together with solidarity from all unions, we remade the case for industrial strategy for our entire country. However, for many places, the damage has already been done, not just to local economies and supply chains, but to workers and their families. It is against this backdrop that we should give a cautious welcome to the fact that Theresa May appears belatedly to recognise the need for an industrial strategy. She has even included it in the name of a new government department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, but beyond the changing of the departmental stationery and letterheads, let us see the real substance because we have not seen any of it yet.

Congress, developing a modern industrial strategy is far too important to be left to the Tories. A modern industrial strategy must include the experience and insight of unions and workers to meet challenges and fulfil our national potential. This motion calls for affiliated unions to develop a national plan to shape a future industrial strategy, develop procurement policies and put union and skills at the heart of the process. It is a challenge to which we must all rise.

The perspectives of workers in every region, devolved nation and sector, public as well as private, must be checking the design of a strategy to serve the whole country. Can you guess the areas where the highest non-business research and development investment is right now? They are London and Buckinghamshire. It is not exactly the rebalanced economy that we were promised, is it, comrades?

So, Congress, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to be at the forefront of the breaking down of old barriers. A UK industrial strategy that engages and employs significantly more women and people from ethnic minorities is vital, not just for opening up opportunities for all, but for giving us the best chances of success. Our TUC must take this modern industrial plan to the Government and insist that our voice is listened to, valued and understood. We must be absolutely clear that continued austerity in politics will undermine all efforts to get Britain’s industrial future back on track and Britain working again. Austerity means reduced investment in national priorities, less coordination, weaker planning and, in contrast, a successful industrial strategy grows our economy, creates decent pay and jobs with taxes that benefit the whole nation.

We urgently need to rebuild Britain from the failures of the recent past, learning the lessons from the financial crash and past government desertion. The future seems very uncertain today, but if we get it right, there is much to gain. It cannot be left to the Tories and the trade union Movement can, and must, lead the way. Our vision for industrial strategy is a positive one. We do not want to be forever defending industries; we want to be growing them. We do not want a zero-hours future for our kids, but jobs with skills, purpose and pride. We do not want the brutal, false economies of austerity, but an industrial future that powers a national recovery shared by all. Let us give workers of today and tomorrow the future they deserve. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

**Denise McGuire** *(Prospect)* seconded Composite Motion 3.

She said: We second Composite 3 and speak to the points made in our amendment.

Prospect represents members in science and research and these are international endeavours in terms of funding, people and collaboration. Almost three-quarters of our reps, from both the public and private sectors, report that their organisations employ migrant workers from the EU in STEM roles (science, technology, engineering and maths). Well over half of our reps report that their organisations employ migrant workers from outside the UK in those STEM roles.

Migrant workers are involved in all aspects of science, engineering and computing. If their organisations were no longer able to employ migrant workers, our reps said that key projects would go unsupported, excellence would rapidly reduce and reputation, skills and status as a world player would plummet. To quote one of our reps, the truth is that nobody can do serious science without an international workforce. Let us recognise that, let us fund it and provide the assurances needed to ensure stability and success for them and for the UK.

Turning to investment, there is an interdependency between public and private sector research and development. The myth of a lumbering bureaucratic state versus a dynamic, innovative private sector has been debunked. The private sector only finds the courage to invest after an entrepreneurial state has made the high-risk investments. Just look at the smartphone because the smartness in that comes from public money. The UK needs to recognise this dependency and fund it as part of a modern industrial strategy.

Moving on to the need for a diverse and inclusive workforce, science-based industries are critical to the UK. All the evidence is that diverse teams deliver the best results, but in the UK, we have the ridiculous situation that despite constituting half the workforce, women account for less than 50% of STEM workers. We need to do much more to attract women into STEM, to retain women in STEM roles and to ensure that women in STEM have the opportunities to progress to the peak of their professions. Many of us work with schools and colleges and we work with employers. My union, Prospect, partners with professional bodies such as the Institution of Engineering and Technology. Congress, let us commit to an international workforce, let us demand funding from public and private sectors and let us demand equality in STEM. I second. *(Applause)*

**Paul Cutmore** *(Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen)* supported the motion.

He said: Congress, everyone in this hall knows that the management do not know best. It has never been clearer. Just look at Mike Ashley, Philip Green and Charles Horton, just to name a few. More worker involvement in businesses and industry is long overdue. In fact, it is essential for us to dig ourselves out of the hole that we are in.

We urgently need time to build a more sustainable economy and industrial base. We need to move away from finance services, a housing bubble and credit-fuelled spending. We need a plan to rebuild our industries. We lead the world in high-tech sectors like pharmaceuticals and aerospace, but we need to reignite our manufacturing base and wider supply chain.

Our 21st century economy needs an industrial strategy rooted in the knowledge and experience of workers and their representatives. The industrial strategy which led to the historic nationalisation in 1945 was delivered through democratic workplace structures such as shop stewards, committees and combined committees, where workers were involved in making decisions and shared their deep insight and understanding of their industries. In 1977, the Bullock Report on Industrial Democracy recommended that for companies with more than 2,000 employees, there should be a representative of labour for each director that represented capital. It was a good idea which was unfortunately shelved by the Callaghan Government.

Aslef believes that it is now time to revisit these ideas and to create a new model of industrial cooperation on which to develop an industrial strategy for the 21st century.

Business leaders and managers simply do not have all the answers to solve the problems of our industries. As workers, we know our industries inside and out. We have been through the good and the bad, from public ownership to privatisation and sometimes back again, peaks and troughs, reorganisations and restructuring. We have been there, we have done that and we have got the T-shirt.

The Prime Minister’s pledge to get more employees on to boards is to be welcomed. The devil will be in the detail and the Tories have never shown an interest in social partnership. Genuine workplace democracy must give labour an equal footing with capital and ensure that any worker representative has real influence. Congress, this is about the rights of labour over capital, about the levelling up of workers’ rights. Please support the motion. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Now, Congress, I am going to call Unite as an additional speaker and that will be the end of this debate so apologies to the speakers who had indicated they wanted to speak.

**Charlotte Upton** *(Unite the Union)* supported the motion.

She said: Congress, there is a clear need for the UK to have an integrated and coherent industrial strategy to rebalance the economy and to support our manufacturing base. The last Labour government recognised this. For example, it took steps to help the automotive industry and, with the help and dedication of Unite members, we now have a world-beating automotive sector.

Unite has argued strongly for an industrial strategy. We were even able to convince the Business Minister in the Coalition Government, Vince Cable, to back an advanced manufacturing strategy and to intervene to save Vauxhall at Ellesmore Port when the company faced difficulties.

With the election of the Tory Government, we had a Business Minister, Sajid Javit, who boasted that he had a “hands-off” approach, an approach which, in my opinion, would see the decimation of manufacturing in the UK. We welcome that there is now a new minister and a new department that has “industrial strategy” in its title, but we need action, not words.

We need a long-term, integrated and interventionist approach to industry using all the tools at the Government’s disposal and we need to look and learn at what works in other countries. We need an industrial strategy that invests in skills and brings back the supply chain by encouraging, reassuring and removing barriers, including reducing energy costs. We need them to use public sector procurements to create a stable, internal market and generate social value and we need support for our foundation industries by investing in our infrastructure.

What we do not need are anti-slogans about the “march of the makers”. Neither do we need people like Liam Fox saying that British industry (and therefore British workers) has grown fat and lazy. I am an electrician at British Steel in Scunthorpe. We have had a tough year fighting a hard battle to save UK steel. If he wants, he can come and join me and put a pair of overalls on at six o’clock in the morning and then we will see who is fat and lazy. *(Applause)* Please support UK manufacturing, support decent work and support the composite. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:** There is no right of reply so we will move on. Can I see all those in favour of Composite Motion 3. All those in favour? All those against?

*\* Composite Motion 3 was CARRIED*

**The President:** We are now going to move on to Composite Motion 4 on steel. The General Council support the composite motion. It will be moved by Community, seconded by Unite and supported by Aslef. The GMB will also come in.

**Steel**

**Roy Rickhuss** *(Community)* moved Composite Motion 4.

He said: Congress, we met here last year, just as an industrial catastrophe was unfolding at our plant in Teesside. News had come through that SSI was on the brink of liquidation, a tragedy which put thousands out of work and decimated the Teeside community. There is no doubt that the Redcar steelworks closure was an act of industrial vandalism and it should never have happened. It could have been prevented had there been sufficient political will. That blast furnace could, and should, have been protected as a national strategic asset. Sadly the Tories chose to ignore the pleas of the workforce and they turned their back on Teesside. They stood by as more than a century of steelmaking on Teeside came to an end. It is unforgivable. Congress, one year on, we should send a clear message from this hall: the tragedy of SSI must never, ever be repeated. *(Applause)* Congress, that tragedy was foreseeable.

The challenges for our industry go back a lot further than 12 months. Community and the other steel unions, (Unite and GMB) have been calling for action for years. Our campaign actually started at the time that Chuka Umunna was the Shadow Business Secretary, but because we did not have a Labour government, the steel unions have had to engage with this Tory Government and we have also had to work with industry identifying the five key challenges with UK Steel.

The bedrock of our campaign has always been our members, steel families and their friends and supporters in their communities, all lifting up their voices to shout “Save Our Steel”. It gives me great pride to look out from this stage and recognise friends and colleagues from steel businesses the length and breadth of the UK, who have led the campaign in their workplaces and their communities: from Celsa, from British Steel, from Tata Steel, Port Talbot, Llanwern, Trostre, Hartlepool, Corby, Newport, Cardiff, Wolverhampton, Rotherham, Stocksbridge, Shotton, Teeside, Motherwell, Scunthorpe and almost everywhere else in between, as people should realise how wide and diverse the steel industry is.

I would also like to pay tribute to Frances O’Grady, the General Secretary of the TUC. Throughout these times, the TUC and the General Council (and Frances in particular) have stood with us. She has been with us, she has marched with us and we know that we have always had her support. I would also like to pay tribute to the steel MPs, who have led the steel campaign in Westminster. They have been with us every step of the way over the past few years, doing the diligent work in the Westminster formal debates, opposition debates and backbench debates. At times, it seemed that at every Prime Minister’s Question Time, our MPs managed to get a question in on steel. It was all designed to keep up the pressure, holding the Government to account and keeping ministers’ feet to the fire.

We have also marched. We have marched through Scunthorpe, Sheffield, Newport, Port Talbot, Westminster, even Brussels, and because of our campaign with unions, steelworkers, politicians and industry working together, we have made some achievements: compensation for the industrial energy costs; changes to procurement rules; and even getting a Tory Government to vote for some action on Chinese dumping. However, there is much, much more to be done and we will not rest until we get the level playing field we need to compete. We will not be silent until there is a long-term industrial strategy for steel. We will not the sun set on our industry or let steel communities be forgotten.

Finally, we will not let employers in the industry, like Tata Steel, use this crisis to attack our members. Tata need to honour their moral and social responsibilities to those steel communities. They need to guarantee a future for UK steelmaking. That is why the campaign to Save Our Steel must, and will, continue. We know the stakes are high. This is a battle we cannot afford to lose for this vital foundation industry, an industry which is ours and nobody else’s. We, as steelworkers, are the guardians of the industry and, with your support, we must, and we will, save our steel. Support the composite. *(Applause)*

**Mark Turner** *(Unite the Union)* seconded Composite Motion 4.

He said: I am a proud steelworker of 30 years and, as you can see, many of my colleagues are here on my right-hand side. They are all here to support the steel industry.

Congress, let us be clear. The crisis in our steel industry has not been caused by lack of demand or by some mystery market forces. It has been caused by a Tory government which lacks the courage to act. It has been the steel unions who have made all the running, demanding and setting up the Steel Council, organising the rallies and forcing the Government to promise to take a public stake in the UK steel industry if necessary. We remember when Sajid Javid had to be dragged back from a trip to Australia with his daughter before he would take our crisis seriously and again when he had to be pushed into talks in Europe.

Congress, just last week, Theresa May had the chance to tackle this crisis head-on and challenge the Chinese President on his country’s illegal steel-dumping. She should, and could, have demanded that China halt the illegal offloading of cheap, all-grey steel before the UK would ever support the country’s bid to achieve what it wants -- market status in the EU -- but she bottled it. It is clear today that China fails every one of the six tests needed to achieve this status.

China’s currency is not convertible. Wages are not determined by free collective bargaining by independent trade unions. Foreign companies and joint ventures remain banned. China’s steel industry remains controlled by a regime which actively operates to undermine its trading partners. That is their strategy. And what did she say? Nothing; absolutely nothing. So much for Tory promises of an industrial strategy. If we leave it to them, what we will get is a strategy that dare not speak its name.

It is clear to all of us here that if we want to have an industrial strategy worthy of the name, we cannot rely on the Tories. We, the unions, the collective voice of steelworkers, along with manufacturing as a whole, have to lead it. We need a strategy which is active, which is long-term, which offers genuine support for our industry and which does not include giving Russian steel companies cheap loans. This must include a firm commitment that UK steel will be at the heart of major new government-supported infrastructure and construction projects. That is what a proper industrial strategy must look like. We will not accept a crisis caused by a government’s cowardice. We will not accept the strategy of managed decline.

Congress, let us pledge ourselves to take the lead in raising our steel industry from its knees. Please save our steel, save our communities and save manufacturing. Please support. *(Applause)*

**Ian Thompson** *(Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen)* supported the motion.

He said: British Steel was nationalised in 1967. It was privatised in 1988 by none other than the Tories (and one rather infamous Tory) after being decimated by someone who was branded “the American butcher of British industry”. Prior to this hatchet job, he was involved at British Leyland and afterwards at the NCB. The NCB, which after privatisation in 1987 (only a year before British Steel), became the British Coal Corporation under the same butcher. We all know only too well what happened to British Leyland and British Coal.

Our first concern following the collapse of the UK steel industry must be for those who have lost their jobs, who are in fear of losing their jobs, for the communities that will be devastated by these job losses, and plant closures. In the same way that mining communities were, and still are, devastated by pit closures and still have not recovered, all this is affecting steel because of inferior and cheap Chinese imports. We have seen what importing cheap coal does.

But why should it happen? Congress, we must deplore the neglect by this Government which has led to this crisis in our steel industry. It is vital that we maintain and continually invigorate the campaign Save Our Steel. We must maintain and increase the pressure on the Government to level the playing field to allow UK steel to compete fairly and to provide its superior product competitively. This industry deserves the competitive disadvantages it is hampered by to be addressed: the disadvantages of high energy costs; business rates; procurement and unfair trade practices. It deserves the assistance of a strong industrial policy. It is the lack of such a policy which is wounding this industry, but it does not need to be a critical wound and we should not let it be critical.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has said that the two million tons of steel required for HS2 are not guaranteed to be British, but the steel required for this £55 billion project will not come from abroad “if the most competitive bid is British”. I say let this department actually innovate, as the title says, and make sure that our steel is the most competitive. We already know it is the best.

The damage goes far beyond the steel industry as it potentially affects my industry as well with the decline in rail infrastructure work and by a lack of freight operators’ work. If freight operators decline the increase in intermodal traffic that is forecast over the coming decades, it will not be able to be carried on rail because the capacity will no longer exist. Network Rail buys approximately 120,000 tonnes per annum of steel for rails directly from the steel plant in Scunthorpe. It is deplorable that our trains are owned and run by foreign governments, but let us ensure that they still run on British-made rails.

Congress, we call on the General Council to continue to support and raise the profile of the Save Our Steel campaign, to lobby this Government to develop, with trade union involvement, an industrial strategy for steel involving a long-term strategic focus on investment, skills, research and development. That is that department living up to its name again! We call on the General Council to campaign to ensure a place for the steel industry in an active industrial strategy, to campaign for a commitment to use UK steel for all state-funded infrastructure and construction projects (including rail), and a strategy which supports the wider steel industry supply chain, which ensures appropriate social and economic impact assessments.

**The President:** Thank you, delegate, but we have other speakers.

**Ian Thompson:** Congress, I ask you to support.

**The President:** Thank you. We got there in the end. *(Applause)*

**Ian Kemp** *(GMB)* spoke in support of the motion.

He said: I am speaking not only on behalf of the GMB, but for all proud, working steelworkers. *(Applause)*

President, brothers, sisters, friends, as someone who has worked at what is now Tata Steel from leaving school, I have seen many changes in the past 30 odd years: redundancies, plant closures, privatisation, mergers, takeovers -- I have even seen what was Hadfields turned into Meadowhall Shopping Centre -- but I have never seen the industry in such a crisis. In the past couple of years, we have seen job losses and plant closures up and down the country. At Tata, we have lost jobs, had some plants sold off, an on/off plan to sell the rest and we have had the ongoing saga about the pensions. It is no wonder that morale is so low.

There are many reasons for the steel crisis. We have got China dumping its cheap, poor-quality steel. If you want to know how poor it is, to all you golfers out there, do not buy Ping clubs any more as they are made by Chinese steel and they are actually going rusty. Then there is the issue of high energy prices and 36 years of successive governments failing to have a coherent strategy for our manufacturing. None of these absolves the bosses of their responsibilities. We have seen the disgraceful criminal treatment of workers at SSI in Redcar. At Tata, the board decided to sell, then not sell, and now it wants some sort of joint venture whilst trying to sell the speciality steels division that I work in. All the while, they are attacking our pensions, the pensions that we have paid into.

Despite doing everything and more that is asked of us, it is us, the workers, who will pay for the mistakes of the bosses and the failure of the politicians. We need the Government and the employers to work with us. Help us fulfil our aspirations and your aspirations and if it means that the shareholders and the workers are all one through nationalisation then so be it. We need to protect the steel industry and to protect British manufacturing. I have a message for Tata: you might want to dress me like a minion, but there is no way you are going to treat me like one! *(Cheers and applause)*

The Save our Steel campaign is not just about one plant or one company, but about the whole industry. Without steel, nothing gets made. It makes neither economic nor strategic sense to allow the British steel industry to disappear and rely on imports. Government policies and also their direct opposites rely on steel. Whether it is missiles with nuclear warheads or rockets with scientific equipment, whether it is fracking or renewable energy, whether it is aircraft to drop bombs or airlifting humanitarian aid, it is all impossible without steel.

It has been estimated that if the steelworks close, my home town of Rotherham will have a financial black hole of £4 billion, but there is more than just that financial impact. I can remember when the pits closed down. The first people into those mining communities were the drug dealers, damaging lives and destroying families. If the steel industry goes, places like Rotherham, Port Talbot and Scunthorpe are going to end up becoming forgotten ghost towns, falling prey to what is euphemistically called “anti-social behaviour”. We cannot let that happen. For the sake of the economy, for the sake of national security, for the sake of our children and our grandchildren’s future, save our steel, save our community. *(Cheers, applause and standing ovation)*

**The President:** Thank you. We are going to move to the vote on Composite Motion 4. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against?

 \* *Composite Motion 4 was CARRIED*

**The President:** Delegates, can I now ask you to raise the posters you have in front of you in support of our steelworkers, their families and their communities. Let us send a clear message from this Congress: Save our Steel. Thank you. *(Chants of ‘Save our Steel’)* Can I also ask our steelworkers to come on to the stage, please? Thank you.

 *(Steelworkers came on to the stage to applause and a standing ovation)*

**The President:** Thank you, delegates, and thank you to our colleagues in the steel industry. This is a really important campaign and you have our total support. *(Applause)*

I am now going to call Composite Motion 5, Working harder not smarter, to be moved by Prospect, seconded by Usdaw and supported by the ATL. The General Council supports the composite motion.

**Working harder not smarter**

**Michael Clancy** *(Prospect)* moved Composite 5.

He said: May I say, before I go into the words associated with the motion, that it is humbling to follow our colleagues from the steel industry, the authentic voice of members directly affected by what I am going to talk about now.

An enduring feature of the UK economy is that we are not very good at capitalism. That is not because we spend too much time on the golf course, as Liam Fox contends, but because our approach to capitalism is flawed, it is short-term and it is arranged to suit a financial and hereditary elite rather than building a sustainable economy for all of our citizens. At the heart of the challenge of building such an economy is that we lag badly behind on most of the productivity statistics.

 Now, Congress, this is a debate that unions should really dominate. It is a discussion that needs our narrative, informed by our members’ daily experience, our accumulated expertise, articulated through representatives who have the confidence, through their union, to take on the bosses, although not always through confrontation, by knowing more. However, have we ceded this ground for too long to employers who apply an array of business process redesign techniques, engagement theories and consultants? If improved productivity is the measure of success then all of these techniques have failed and this thinking is backwards. There is undeniable evidence that the decline in collective bargaining is directly correlated with depressed GDP performance. The absence of a collective, independent voice in the vast majority of the private sector allows the short-termism that fuels our productivity challenge.

Congress, if I may say (maybe controversially) the talk of workers on boards will be symbolic and it will be totemic unless it is backed by a constituency in the enterprise, preferably through the union, where an independent collective voice holds sway. The absence of trade union influence has allowed the deployment of employment models which makes labour a commodity, covered in a thin veneer of choice, rather than labour as a key factor to invest in.

In the employer choices of the last three decades lie the answers to why productivity lags behind many of our global competitors. The Smith Institute work is a credible evidence base of union member voice. Not all of it makes easy reading for us, though, because our visibility and willingness to engage with employers needs to be reinvigorated. We know there is a pay crisis, but how people are put to work, the impact of technology and the employment security bargain where employees drive efficiency improvements should be our issues as well.

Congress, hard as it is to contemplate sometimes, we need to show employers and our members why we are relevant to the productivity debate and to find answers, not just offer criticism. Yes, we must, and will, oppose employment exploitation, but just as there is a spectrum of unions, there is also a spectrum of employer behaviours out there. Our members want us to influence matters that make a difference to their lives. Working smarter, not harder, and solving the productivity puzzle is a union challenge. I move Composite Motion 5.

**Paddy Lillis** *(Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers)* seconded Composite Motion 5.

He said: I am pleased to second this motion and to highlight the actual work done by the Smith Institute in preparing their report on productivity. The report is groundbreaking in that it has directly sought the views of workers and productivity in the workplace and almost half the responses came from workers in retail and warehousing.

Of course, seeking workers’ views should not be groundbreaking; it should be the obvious place to start. For too long, the debate around productivity has failed to listen to the voices of workers and too many of the strategies to improve productivity have been based on cutting back jobs, cutting back hours and cutting back terms and conditions. None of this is healthy for business, workers or the economy. The Smith Institute report points out the importance of worker voices in improved productivity, further evidence that listening to workers and giving them a say in their terms and conditions is vital to employee engagement.

In the difficult times we face with Brexit on the horizon, it is more important than ever that we sustain our economy with a positive wage-led approach. Nobody can expect a worker who is not earning enough to afford a decent standard of living to perform at their best so we must campaign for every worker to earn a real living wage, in secure employment, with the hours that they need, and to do that we need stronger collective bargaining rights.

The Government talks of employee representatives on boards. It is nothing more than a smokescreen. By pushing through the Trade Union Act, a blatant attack on trade union rights, it is very clear that they are doing that to scythe through workplace democracy. We must ensure that the Government are held account for this and that we continue to push for reform of statutory union recognition. As a trade union Movement, we must play our role in giving workers a stronger voice by ensuring that every workplace is organised. Please suppose the motion.

**Louise Atkinson** *(Association of Teachers and Lecturers)* spoke regarding ATL’s amendment of the motion.

She said: Recent DFE analysis shows that teachers work around 60 hours a week and school leaders work even longer hours. In 2015, an ATL survey found that eight out of ten drivers of workload originate at workplace level. The same survey of teachers, leaders and support staff found that over 70% of respondents felt that an improved dialogue and consultation between staff and leaders on how to reduce workload in the workplace would be helpful.

So, we went about providing teachers with the tools to enable them to track their workload by launching our Make1Change campaign along with the workload tracker. This tracker is available to all teachers regardless of which union they are members of. Thousands of teachers have signed up to use this online tool which enables them to identify the classes they are doing and then to reflect on which tasks have had an impact on learners proportional to the time and effort put in by the teacher. The tracker not only provides teachers with a self-reflection tool, but also a record of working hours to facilitate conversations with leaders about what busy work is actually productive and to work together to find solutions. A further part of the campaign is the Make1Change hashtag where teachers, school leaders and support staff share ideas that they have employed in their workplace to improve the work/life balance. It has become a celebration of teachers working smarter and not harder. Please check it out: #Make1Change.

Excessive workloads are one of the most serious issues facing the teaching profession and the Smith Institute report tells us that it is not just teachers who are being asked to work harder and harder with negligible increase in productivity. This issue affects workers in a myriad of different working environments and it does nothing to stimulate an increase in economic growth. It should not be this way and it does not have to be. We need to support workers to open up discussions with managers and leaders about managing workload. We need to provide them with the tools and the confidence to lead and to make change. At every level, excessive and unmanageable workloads are unacceptable. Therefore, we welcome this motion and I ask you to support it. *(Applause)*

**Ann Gillott** *(Royal College of Midwives)* supported the motion.

She said: We are supporting the motion by Prospect today to work harder and smarter. We need to improve productivity, which is a pivotal issue in the NHS, not only because productivity is a key issue across the whole economy, but because of the significant funding challenges facing the NHS. Combine this with the increased demand for services due to the aging population and the ever-increasing birth rate and add into this a government wishing to have a seven-day-a-week service without any extra funding. Maternity is, of course, and always has been a seven-day-a-week service.

Even though the RCM members are working harder and harder and doing more with less, the RCM can see that productivity in the NHS can still be improved, but did you know that productivity in the NHS has now outpaced the private sector? That happened because of the investments of previous governments and is now under threat. The RCM has been continually campaigning for more midwives for over ten years now, but we still have a shortage of around 3,500 midwives in England. This has led to work-intensification for midwives with many reporting that they frequently miss their breaks, work extra hours a week (always unpaid) and they often have their training cancelled at short notice because of the wards’ short staffing. They are then regularly expected to learn and develop in their own time. All this is causing stress and burnout and is actually resulting in lower productivity.

In maternity across the NHS, we can see that stress and burnout have consequences. Sickness levels are high, turnover rates are high, vacancy rates are high and morale is low. It seems that Jeremy Hunt’s idea to improve productivity in the NHS involves more and more goodwill, but he still asks for more. There also seems to be a misplaced notion in the NHS that investment in staff is a waste of a valuable resource. This is false. Investment in staff is an investment in care.

We agree with Prospect that the Government and employers need to listen to our voices and make real improvements for productivity. Our reps are doing fantastic work at local level to improve this and they should be listened to. Our union learning reps work hard in the workplace to improve access to training and development, focusing particularly on improving skills for maternity support workers. Employers need to improve access to training. They need to increase the time off for training rather than expecting staff to learn in their own time. This is a challenge when 99% of the maternity workforce is female and many midwives and support workers have caring commitments.

Additionally, our health and safety reps are now working hard on our new campaign called Caring for You. This, we hope, will improve RCM members’ health, safety and wellbeing and will improve the sickness and absence rates, but this relies on the employers working with the health and safety reps, listening to them and taking positive action to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of their staff. Our workplace reps are taking the initiative and have had fantastic ideas so employers need to listen to them. That is why we are supporting Prospect’s motion to increase the influence of trade unions on the drive for better productivity and we ask Congress to support this motion. *(Applause)*

**Paul Moloney** *(Society of Radiographers)* supported the motion.

He said: Congress, the Society of Radiographers is one of the unions proud to support the research carried out by the Smith Institute and believes the findings dispel entirely the myth that the debate about improving productivity is a debate that working people see as a threat. The report shows clearly that our members and those of other unions involved have clear views about how to improve productivity and of how to share the benefits of productivity fairly. The problem is that they, and we, are shut out of that debate, meaning it is led by those who do not want their workers to work better or smarter but just faster; those who can only compete by being cheaper and are unable to compete by being better.

Congress, the report shows that it is time that we, in the trade union Movement, reclaimed the word “productivity” from those who use it as a stick with which to beat working people. We need to confront those who think that productivity is simply a numbers game, an approach that ends with people being bullied, harassed and threatened if they fail to meet arbitrary targets. We need to continue to confront those employers who act like this and confront the political ideology which has tried to justify such actions on the grounds of efficiency and improved productivity. We should say clearly that low wages, zero hours contracts and an atmosphere of intimidation and bullying do not improve productivity and should be stopped.

We also need to be clear about what we mean by productivity. In the SOR, we are very clear. Improving members’ productivity means making sure they have the skills and the opportunities to work at the very highest level, able to report on their scans and to prescribe medicines. There is demand from our members reflected in the report for this and it is a win/win for the NHS and other providers. Patients get better, cost-effective care, the NHS can save money and our members get better pay and conditions by meeting the criteria for higher grading.

But the reality is different. Imagine being a radiographer or a sonographer who needs breaks to prepare for their next list of patients, but being told that the breaks must end as the auditors have decided that this is unproductive time. It is pretty much the same as telling a footballer to play through half-time as the auditors have found that no goals were scored during this period. Congress, tempting as it is to blame auditors, the problem in the public sector goes much deeper. The NHS simply measures productivity as the number of patients seen with no allowance for the quality of the care delivered or the outcome for the patient. In fact, we have no sophisticated measure of productivity in the public sector as a whole with the Office of National Statistics only measuring input and not outcome when measuring productivity changes in the public sector.

For these reasons, colleagues, this motion is of real importance. Yes, there are challenges for us, but our members and members of all unions speaking in this debate want their unions to reclaim the word “productivity” and make sure it belongs to those who want to see the skills of working people used to create a fairer and prosperous society. Congress, support this motion, reclaim the word from our opponents and let us be the ones demanding the rights of working people to be at the heart of the productivity debate. Congress, please support. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Thank you, Paul. There is no right of reply so we are going to move straight to the vote on Composite Motion 5. Will those in favour, please show? All those against?

*\* Composite Motion 5 was CARRIED*

**The President:** I am now going to call Motion 10, The impact of automation on employment. The General Council supports the motion. It will be moved by Nautilus, seconded by Prospect and Unite have indicated that they wish to speak.

**The impact of automation on employment**

**Russell Downs** *(Nautilus International)* moved Motion 10.

He said: I am a first-time speaker *(Applause)* I would like you to meet my mate, the droid *(indicating robot)*, Andrew to his friends. I was going to give him this speech to do, but unfortunately there are not a lot of robot-talkers amongst us so unfortunately you have got me!

The fact of the matter is that a lot of your jobs are at risk from robots. The rapid advance in technology means that automation is moving from factory floor to all sorts of high-wage, high-skilled jobs. Today’s robots can cook, serve food, pick fruit, carefully distinguish between ripe and unripe, keep huge amounts of stock and stack shelves, diagnose illness, assist in surgery and write newspaper articles. You name it, they can probably do it.

In my industry, shipping, we have witnessed automation more than halving the average number of crews over the past 30 years and manufacturers like Rolls Royce are now talking seriously about crewless cargo ships running across oceans by the end of the decade. Companies claim that they can remotely use sensors fitted to equipment and machinery on board to detect and diagnose problems before the crew even know they are occurring and seafarers are not alone in facing the prospect of being displaced by droids. Research suggests that almost 50% of jobs are at risk from automation over the next 20 years and in some parts of the world, it is more like 90%.

According to the International Labour Organisation, millions of garment and footwear workers in South-East Asia are threatened by automation of assembly lines or sobots. It is science fiction fantasy and it is happening now, from self-service checkouts in supermarkets to high-volume trading programmes on Wall Street, which has cut their workforce by around a third in the past 15 years. The IT revolution is transforming not just work but also society, in the same way that the agricultural and industrial revolutions did in the 18th and 19th centuries.

So do we all become 21st century Luddites and start smashing up modern equivalents of the weaving machines? I would agree that lessons of history suggest that resistance is futile, but we should not be sitting back while drones march on. The union Movement needs to rise to the challenge posed by the rise in robots because it is not just the danger that jobs will go, but also inequality will increase as a result of redundancies and widening skill gaps.

Where there is a need to develop strategy to deal with development, proactive policies could help to make positive use of technology in the workplace, getting the robots to do all the nasty, boring, dirty, dangerous jobs, ensuring that human workers either work less, work smarter or work in more rewarding quality positions. What is clear to us in shipping is that the debate so far has focused too much on technology and the economic aspects of automation with personnel and social impacts an afterthought at best. Change is coming, like it or not, and as unions we must engage.

Last year, Congress was warned by the Bank of England of the danger that technology could act like a regressive income tax on the unskilled if we are not careful. As a result, I have been working on a “Keep calm” poster which suggests that we should relax, retrain and redistribute. Nice thinking, but as seafarers, I suggest that if you are trying to navigate from A-B, you need a chart and a navigation plan. It is time for the union Movement to put that in place for the choppy waters ahead. I move this motion and so does Andrew.

**The President:** Thank you very much to you and your robot. I call Prospect.

**Rachel Garrick** *(Prospect)* seconded Motion 10.

She said: Congress, Prospect fully supports the Nautilus International motion. This is not something out of Asimov. At a time when our population is ever increasing and the years attached to our working lives are ever extending, the prospect of losing millions of jobs fundamentally challenges the sustainability of the working market.

Trade unions like Prospect need to work within the TUC to empower our voice in policymaking and decisions on this subject. I come from the South Wales valleys. I have seen first hand what happens to communities when technology and industry leave it behind and goes away. Their impact is devastating, and it lasts for generations. We need an approach which is not Luddite in its foundations but is based on a vision of sociological and environmental sustainability.

Technological advances are increasingly targeting knowledge-based work, big data is sourced and deep learning develops electronically, whilst human skills are lost in the workforce. The OECD report *The Risk of Automation for Jobs* recognises that new technologies can generate new jobs subject to the assumption that tasks are replaced but not jobs, that workers can adjust by switching tasks, particularly when they are re-trained. We need policies which supports this.

Prospect runs a campaign for good work, which is jobs that, among other factors, are secure, interesting and fulfilling, that are based on trust, fairness, balance effort and give reward. Evidence shows that good work is good for workers and it is good for business. Workers are happier, healthier and, therefore, more productive with good work. Benefits include the security built from financial rewards, recognition, a sense of identity, the pride associated with gainful employment and a daily structure. These benefits go on into families and local communities.

Workers will always have to acquire new, creative, inter-personal and social skills to be in the best position to adapt. Society’s expectations are, however, typically around the associated technological skills and formal qualifications, but work should always provide opportunities to learn, develop, grow and build healthy workforces and communities. Congress, we need a vision to secure a sustainable working future that does not succumb to technology but better deals with it. Thank you.

**The President:** I call Unite.

**Mike Hedges** *(Unite)* spoke in support of Motion 10.

He said: Congress, the impact of automation on employment. I am particularly aware of the importance of this issue for workers in my own area, the transport sector. The motion, rightly, identifies the impact on shipping. In Unite we know all too well the potentially detrimental consequences of automation in ports, including the risk to safety. In my own sector, we are conscious of the significant impact of driverless vehicles but, of course, automation is an issue in all of the sectors that Unite organises in, including manufacturing, food, health and finance.

Concerns about the effects of technology are as old as technological change itself, but this goes further than ever before. Part of the concern this time around is the potential for machines not just to do physical work but mental tasks, too. Whole new areas of work are open to potential computerisation. An analysis by the Bank of England suggests that up to 15 million jobs in the UK could be at risk. Of course, we are not sure what the extent of the effect on jobs will be yet, which is why we welcome the motion’s call for further research and policy work. However, one thing is for sure. How technology is introduced and the effects of automation will depend on the strength of bargaining power. There is nothing inevitable about automation, and we should not be passive about its introduction. We need to shape how it is introduced and ensure that it is for the benefit of all and not the few. It cannot be the route to furthering inequality, deregulation and a lowering of standards. We need policy and strategy to help us shape its introduction.

Automation and the rise of robots is associated with terms like the “digital economy” and the “gig economy”, represented by exploitative companies like Uber. This may sound exciting and cutting edge, but someone once said that the problem with the gig economy is that there are just too many bad gigs. All too often it is associated with insecurity, poor conditions and a lack of employment rights. We need technology to improve our lives rather than for us to be slaves to it. We should determine and shape how it serves us rather than be its servants.

Congress, this is not just an issue about the world of work. It’s about the kind of society we want to live in. Please support the motion. *(Applause)*

**The President:**  There is no right of reply, so we will move straight to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Those against? That is clearly carried. Thank you.

* *Motion 10 was CARRIED.*

**The President:**  Congress, I now call paragraph 1.3 and Motion 11: After Paris: climate change, just transition and climate jobs. The General Council position is to oppose the motion. I will call Sue Ferns during the debate to explain that position. It is to be moved by the TSSA, seconded by the CWU and then I will call Sue.

**After Paris: climate change, just transition and climate jobs**

**Fliss Pereru** *(TSSA, Transport Salaried Staffs’ Association)* moved Motion 11.

She said: President and Congress, an interesting question by Bill McKibben is: “What exactly are we waiting for?” Global warming is the biggest problem we face as a civilisation, but just when is the right moment to act? Is it the moment when drought is so severe in India that armed guards are placed at dams, when post-Katrina Louisiana is under water again and our under-funded fire stations are constantly rescuing people from floods around the UK? Isn’t this the moment when we need millions of jobs to fight austerity and reclaim our future?

After the COP21 Paris Agreement there was some elation about the new commitments, especially to contain global warming for the first time to 1.5 degrees and protect those underlying coastal areas. However, Congress, the reality is that government plans will mean global warming of 2.4 degrees to 3.7 degrees, possibly more.

Our greenest Government ever has just cancelled climate change. In order to stay under that limit, we must leave at least 80% of fossil fuels in the ground and cancel all new extraction projects. If we don’t do this in the next five years, we will have runaway-climate change.

Instead, corporate lobbiests promote techno fixes and geo engineering that are not yet invented. The green-rushing multi-nationals promote dangerous biofuels, sequestering land for fuel instead of food, throwing our trade union comrades off their burning and deforested lands in Indonesia for palm oil. But, Congress, people are fighting back and we need to be a part of it. *Break Free from Fossil Fuels* was launched in Paris, and it aligned frontline communities and trade unions. The actions are too many to mention here but they include ex-miners in the valleys against coal, opposing the community blight of another open-cast coal mine with a few jobs and, Congress, what is happening with First Nation in Dakota? It is time for us to take control.

One Million Climate Jobs and a Zero-Carbon Britain was endorsed by Jeremy Corbyn in Paris. He plans to establish a £300 million Energy and Climate Agency, and this should be welcomed by the whole labour Movement.

A climate job tackles emissions and plans for a future transition, so fossil-fuel workers will not be put on the scrapheap but will be transferred to renewables, with a priority for ex-mining and industrial areas destroyed by Thatcher. We need local manufacture, including British Steel, a crucial part of climate jobs, for extending the railways, for building our infrastructure and for building wind turbines. We need to retrofit our drafting housing stock, build sustainable council housing and to train, train and re-train.

Congress, we need, urgently, to address airport expansion and have an honest conversation away from the rhetoric of business. The fastest-growing source of emissions is aviation, and it sits in a tax loophole, subsidised by taxpayers by £11.5 billion. In the UK about 15% of the population takes 70% of the flights. If we think about, most of the world never flies, yet 5% bear the brunt of change and displacement. We don’t want to stop working families from having their annual holidays, migrant workers from seeing their families or to put worker against worker. But the plethora of short-haul flights are taken by businessmen and women when their meetings could be video-conferenced, never mind the wealthy with their second homes. We need to address this situation by an affordable and publicly-owned railway across Europe.

The area around Heathrow used to have well-paid, skilled engineering jobs. Now they are replaced by badly-paid jobs in aviation. Let’s look after our members and demand more. Rather than fail to tackle air pollution or endorse the destruction of Sipson, Harmonsworth and other villages nearby with a third runway and new terminals, we can have constructive construction for much-needed houses, hospitals, schools, training centres and really good trade-union — not blacklisted — jobs.

Congress, the next five years are crucial. We need to continue this debate and create our own just transition before we have it put on or the transition won’t be just. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:**  I call CWU to second.

**Tony Kearns** *(CWU, Communication Workers Union)* seconded Motion 11.

He said: I second the motion on climate change. For those of you who are not aware, the Prime Minister, who proudly boasted that his government was going to be the greenest government ever, has just resigned as an MP, triggering a by-election in his constituency. *(Applause and cheers)* The leader of one of the two biggest polluters through carbon emissions on the planet, President Obama of the United States, said: “Just as I believe the Paris agreement will ultimately prove to be a turning point for our planet, I believe history will judge today’s efforts as pivotal.” The Chinese President, Xi Jinping, China being the second-biggest polluter on the planet, said: “China will unwaiveringly pursue sustainable development.” Two hundred countries have signed up to the Paris agreement, including the presidents of the two biggest polluters on the planet, all seem to get it! Yet, as we are told, the motion is going to be opposed by the General Council. So you can have 200 leaders around the globe agreeing on it, but the great and the good, the best brains we’ve got in the trade union Movement, can still get it wrong!

What we’ve got are two targets. We’ve got the Paris Agreement, to reach targets by 2013, and the Climate Change Act of 2008, which is to cut by 160 million tonnes a year carbon emissions in this country by 2050. Just to put that into perspective, that is an 80% reduction over 1990 levels. The Government’s response was to cut renewables. The Government’s response was to sideline clean energy, and the Government’s response was to stop funding for home insulation. So if there is going to be opposition, we have to assume where that is going to come from. As Chris pointed out, I think that that is going to come particularly around the issue of aviation.

Listen, the expansion of aviation/airports is completely incompatible with the targets that have been set for the reduction in carbon emissions. But here is the task for other unions. If we are to meet those carbon targets, but if we are to support airport expansion, you have to ask yourselves where are those carbon-emission reductions going to come from? I can tell you where they are going to come from. They are going to come from the transport industry, from the motor industry and from the agricultural industry. Disproportionately, other industries will be carrying the brunt of emissions in carbon reduction in favour of the aviation industry. That will impact upon jobs and terms and conditions for those members in those industries. We can’t favour one industry at the expense of others, which is why the motion calls for one million climate jobs. So we want proper climate jobs in the renewable sector, proper climate jobs in green transport and proper climate jobs for new energy-efficient homes to be built. Furthermore, we call for a just transition, which means protection for workers as we move to a new sustainable economy; protection for jobs, protection for hours, protection for pay and protection for pensions, as we move away from the old industries into a new just transition. The Chinese leader said: “Our response to climate change bears on the future of our people and the well-being of mankind.” It’s not often I find myself agreeing with the leader of China, but he is absolutely right.

So remember this when you vote for this motion. Remember this if you are going to oppose this composite: There are no jobs on a dead planet! Thank you.

**The President:**  I call Sue Ferns.

**Sue Ferns** *(General Council):* Congress, I am asking to oppose the motion and explaining why. There are some aspects of this composite that we can all agree with, including the need to reduce lethal air pollutants, a just transition of employment strategy, action against TTIP and a Climate Justice Fund. We can also welcome the recognition in the motion, and in the COP21 Paris Agreement, of a 1.5 degree rise in global temperatures as a safe limit. However, as has just been said, the motion opposes airport expansion, which contradicts existing Congress policy. As the General Secretary said in her address this morning, the TUC has long supported airport expansion in the south-east and supported the outcome of the Airports Commission, which examined this issue, recognising the potential of 70,000 new jobs and a boost for skills and apprenticeships.

The aviation sector also supports jobs in manufacturing, construction and tourism. Our support for aviation expansion has been conditional on tough, new environment standards to be set and applied as it goes forward.

The motion also seeks what it calls “a rapid transition from fossil fuels”. The TUC has always called for a balanced energy policy, one with a role for fossil fuels, including clean coal, renewables and nuclear power. There is no doubt that the TUC wants the UK to move to a cleaner energy mix, but we cannot move away from other sources so fast that we can’t deliver a high-skill, high-value level of sustainable jobs for people currently working in these sectors — fellow trade union members. That, Congress, is precisely the purpose of ‘just transition’. To achieve it, we must engage with the unions that have an industrial interest in these areas.

The motion also welcomes the ‘Break Free from Fossil Fuels’ movement. As has been said, this is a community-based civil disobedience movement. There is nothing wrong with that, you may say, but we also know that it has sought to disrupt fossil fuel production in at least one area organised by Unite. When a similar issue arose at the 2012 Congress, the General Council made it clear that support for community campaigns depends on them not being conducted in a way that puts employment and livelihoods at risk. Speaking today, Congress, the General Council cannot be confident that the ‘Break Free from Fossil Fuels’ movement enjoys broad union support.

Congress, the trade union Movement — our movement — has a particular strength in that it brings together unions campaigning against climate change with members across industry to combat climate change in a way that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. We need all of those three pillars. That, Congress, is why the General Council asks you to oppose this motion. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Congress, I have a list of unions that want to come in on the debate. I am going to take them in this order: BALPA, UNISON, PCS, UNITE, FBU and Prospect. Can I call BALPA.

**Brian Strutton** *(BALPA, British Air Line Pilots Association)* spoke against Motion 11.

He said: Congress, Motion 11 has many laudable intentions that we might support, but Motion 11 steps over a critical line. It seeks to force the TUC to directly oppose union members’ jobs by opposing Heathrow expansion and short-haul airline operators. As a trade union principle, that, surely, cannot be right. The TUC cannot actively argue against the jobs of its own members.

BALPA has proposed an amendment to remove that specific problem, while leaving the rest of the motion intact. It would have been helpful if that had been recognised by the supporters of the motion. Unfortunately, the amendment was not accepted, so it has been withdrawn and, instead, we are opposing Motion 11.

Congress, the TUC and affiliated unions already support Heathrow, support Heathrow expansion and support the jobs generated by short-haul airline operators. They do so for good reason. Heathrow employs nearly 80,000 people. Heathrow expansion would bring 140,000 construction, steel and manufacturing jobs around the country and another 40,000 at the airport itself, including hundreds of extra rail workers. UK short-haul operators directly and indirectly provide 60,000 jobs. In total, that is 140,000 existing jobs and 180,000 new ones. Motion 11 would mandate the TUC to actively campaign against all of those jobs. That is, surely, inconceivable. Are we seriously going to suggest that we turn our backs on those jobs and those opportunities? It’s ludicrous to try and turn the TUC against its own members. So the TUC should continue to speak up in favour of aviation and airport expansion because it will protect existing jobs, it will create new jobs and grow the economy.

For all of us, absolutely fundamentally, it must be a golden rule that the TUC is not instructed to campaign against the jobs of affiliated union members. I urge you to vote against Motion 11. *(Applause)*

**The President:**  Thank you, Brian. I call Unison.

**Paul Glover** *(Unison)* spoke in support of Motion 11.

He said: Congress, Unison, along with our European global brothers and sisters last year at COP21, campaigned with a simple message: more climate change. As our CWU colleague said, there are no jobs on a dead planet. Climate change action and a just transition is a trade union issue. We have a vital role to play to protect jobs in existing workplaces and industries by demanding and bargaining for industrial transformation to meet the low-carbon future. A just transition, Congress, will enable us, collectively, to work together to remove the tension between the drive for a low-carbon, industrial-energy economy, to protect existing jobs and urge for transformative skills for workers to build the new green economy. Yet I don’t believe the UK Government have heard us.

When Teresa May took office, she allowed the abolition of the Department of Energy and Climate Change. It is now the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Climate change has disappeared off the Government’s agenda. It is back to business as usual for them. The abolition of DECC has been viewed by all leading international climate-change campaigners and the United Nations as a major set back for the UK’s and the world’s climate change efforts. Why? Because downgrading climate change at the governmental level does not encourage leadership on climate change.

As the challenge for climate change becomes ever-more pressing, the Government have scrapped the department devoted to tackling it. This is a signal of disregard for one of the most challenging, economic, social and environmental issues humans have ever faced. Congress, we must, therefore, be the voice and leaders on climate change and explain what we mean by a “just transition”. We must argue for new-quality jobs in the emerging green economy, and fight for the just transition measures that ensure that we leave no one behind. This includes a green transport system. It means investing for the long term and investing for people. We know, colleagues, that the science is unequivocal. Without urgent and ambitious action, we will face a temperature rise of 4 degrees or more Centigrade this century resulting in irreversible changes in our climate.

Economists have spoken, saying that the financial damage caused by global warming will cost the world far more than estimated. The disruption will be socially and economically destabilising beyond anything we have witnessed to date. We must not just support expansion without a clear just transition plan. We need a minister for just transition.

Last week the Government showed their hand even further by refusing to legislate for the National Infrastructure Commission to have any real powers to plan for the future. It could have held the Government to account to meet its obligations on building the UK’s infrastructure within its climate-change obligation. That has gone. Let us demand dialogue to meet agreements that must shape the industrial transformation needed. We know that the industrial sector today will be with us tomorrow: energy, construction, transport, manufacturing and public services. However, a technology shift will be disruptive without a plan, and decent work with decent working rights will be at risk in the scramble. Support our commitment to climate change and a just transition. This is a change in transition that we can proudly give to future generations. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

**The President:** I now call PCS.

**Sarah Broad** *(PCS, Public and Commercial Services Union)* spoke in support of Motion 11.

She said: Congress, I am speaking, very proudly, in full and wholehearted support of Motion 11. Our planet is in crisis. We looked at the dictionary definition of “crisis” and there was a picture of our planet. Well, there wasn’t really. It said: “It’s a time when an important or difficult decision needs to be made.” Back in 1990 the UN Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change said that we needed to take decisive action. That is very nearly 30 years ago. In fact, since then carbon dioxide emissions have risen by 60%, so we need to take action now. The COP21 Paris Agreement provided a framework to hold governments and countries to account. This motion sets out the action which is needed to be taken by our movement.

PCS is one of a growing number of worldwide trade unions that support the Trade Union for Energy Democracy organisation. TUED calls for democratic public control and ownership for energy production and distribution. Furthermore, they promote solutions to the climate crisis, energy poverty and the degradation of both land and people.

Whilst PCS does oppose the third runway at Heathrow, we are working alongside the reps and branches in that area to provide support and ensure no job losses. At the same time, we recognise the potentially devastating environmental impact of the proposal. It’s been predicted that worldwide aviation emissions are due to have increased by a staggering 70% from 2005 to 2020, and the air pollution at Heathrow is already above recommended legal levels.

The TUC adopted and supported the One Million Climate Jobs Campaign in 2015, and this has also been supported by Jeremy Corbyn. This sets out how and why the Government should and could create one million climate jobs. One million jobs is a lot more than the proposed 70,000 at Heathrow. These jobs would be in energy efficiency, mass clean transit and renewable energy. At the same time as increasing the economy, we would be reducing our carbon dioxide emissions. Naomi Klein even describes this initiative as a fantastic tool for mapping the kind of climate-justice future that we should all be working towards.

As ever, it is those who have not created the mess who are suffering the most, whether it is those in Britain whose homes are being destroyed by flooding or those in developing countries who face extreme weather conditions. PCS wants to work with all the unions who want to put the workers’ interests at the heart of a just transition to a zero-carbon economy, based on social justice. PCS has a proud tradition of fighting back, and fighting for our planet is no different. Please support the motion. *(Applause)*

**The President:** I call Unite.

**Diana Holland** *(Unite)*spoke against Motion 11.

She said: Congress, I am speaking firmly against the motion. Like the movers of this motion, Unite wants action on climate change, but we cannot support wording that attacks workers, that attacks union members. *(Applause)*  We support the current TUC policy, which is united. Our positive approach is set out in our campaigning document on climate change. We support public ownership of rail, environmental reps and we represent workers in the renewable sector/ Our transport negotiators prioritise cutting emissions. We are part of the coalition to end fuel poverty, and part of TUC action on sustainable development and greener workplaces.

However, Congress, there are two key issues that we cannot support. The first is the attack on aviation. Air transport is vitally important to the economy. Tens of thousands of skilled jobs and apprenticeships depend on ensuring that the UK retains its airport-hub status at Heathrow, but, of course, this has to be done in an environmentally sustainable way, as they have at Copenhagen Airport, and monitored action is working. Carbon emissions are down. People arriving at the airport by public transport is rising. As Unite’s Assistant General Secretary for over a quarter-of-a-million transport workers, we are campaigning for integrated sustainable transport that is accessible to all, not one group of transport workers set against another, as this motion does.

The second issue is energy mix and security of supply. Unite supports investment in renewable energy and condemns Government cuts, but we also, as we said earlier, support a balanced energy policy that provides security of energy supply, including carbon capture and storage and nuclear power. As UK coal plants close, carbon capture and storage can contribute to having an independent energy security and create products that won’t adversely affect the atmosphere. We also cannot support the motion’s wording on the *Break Free from Fossil Fuels* movement. They targeted the Ffos-y-Fran mine in South Wales, one of the last UK workforces in open-cast mining fully organised by Unite, which supplies to our steel and power plants. Congress, we want a just transition, but that means protecting and supporting our members in the industries affected, not supporting attacks on them. Please oppose this motion, not because you are against tackling climate change or supporting renewables — we are not — but because as trade unionists, we want to represent all workers, which this motion fails to do. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:**  I call the FBU.

**Danni Armstrong** *(FBU, Fire Brigades Union)* spoke in support of Motion 11.

She said: Congress, FBU delegates attended the Paris Conference on Climate Change last year and supported the union fringe events. Our members have a vested interest in ensuring that the consequences of climate change are addressed. Protecting lives and property is what we are about. We believe that not enough is being done to tackle climate change even after the Paris Agreement, but we acknowledge that even small steps in the right direction are a step worth taking. The last few years have produced floods of massive proportions and dealing with these incidents falls to our members. I don’t need to tell comrades in the room about the human misery involved but my members continue to face it head on. Working people can lose everything in these horrendous floods, which are becoming all too commonplace. Ideally, in a decent society, the Government would prioritise flood work, but it looks like it is down to us and we must take this fight on. We must ensure that the Government hear us.

My members are at the sharp end when incidents occur, whether that be due to floods, wild fire, droughts or storms. Firefighters and Control members are dealing with and attending more and more of these incidents. At the end of last year, we saw our service stretched beyond recognition as the December deluge took a hold. The Government have, once again, turned a blind eye to the plight of the country’s emergency-service workers, and there is still no statutory duty or proper funding for these incidents in England and Wales. I spoke to firefighters who had spent hours in freezing-cold water and sometimes sewage carrying out rescued. Fatigued and chilled to the bone, they continued to perform selflessly in the face of horrendous conditions.

I promise you, there is more to come. On Thursday the Government produced its much awaited National Floods Resilience Review. Once again, Westminster politicians failed to grasp the most basic requirements of the service and no mention was made of recruiting or training firefighters to deal with these incidents. They did not need to far or hard for good ideas as both Governments in Scotland and Northern Ireland have made flood response a statutory duty, and the Welsh Government are looking to do the same. Our job as trade unionists is to put pressure on politicians to address these risks. They must provide the funding and resources to protect our people.

I want to say something in closing on the way the debate at this Congress has panned out. We think that climate change is important in its own right. We are disappointed about the way the debate has been polarised. We would have preferred to keep the BALPA amendment in so that the bulk of the TSSA resolution would have gained wider support. It is a shame that the whole of this motion is being opposed just because of a sentence on airport expansion. Comrades, the TUC should not downgrade climate change. It matters to firefighters and it matters to millions of working people in this country and across the globe. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:** I am now going to call Prospect followed by the GMB.

**Alan Grey** *(Prospect)* spoke in opposition to Motion 11.

He said: Congress, Prospect was intending to speak to support the BALP amendment on behalf of our 4,500 members working in aviation. I was going to explain our opposition to bullets 2 and 3 in the motion relating directly to aviation. I was going to justify our position based on our previous contributions to the TUC’s own work on aviation policy and on the findings of Prospect’s 2015 report *Towards a Sustainable Aviation Industry* *for the UK,* findings which led to our strategy for, among other initiatives, increased airport capacity in London and the South-East, the provisions of incentives for research and development to improve, design and control CO2 emissions, plus further exploration of carbon offset levies.

Congress, it was obvious from those strategies that we could not support Motion 11’s aviation-related instructions. But, Congress, even if that amendment had been successful, Prospect would still have had serious reservations about other elements of the motion, specifically those relating to energy supply in the defence sector, where tens of thousands of our members work, sectors in which we have also contributed to TUC debates and the development of balanced TUC policies and strategies that put members’ jobs at the forefront. Congress, that amendment being withdrawn has meant that, along with other trade unions, we can voice those reservations and ask Congress to oppose Motion 11, a motion which risks turning worker against worker, industry against industry and union against union. Please oppose. *(Applause)*

**Justice Bowden** *(GMB)* spoke against Motion 11.

He said: Colleagues, this Congress and every union which belongs to it is pro jobs, especially good unionised jobs, the sorts of jobs you find in the oil and gas industries and at airports. The general intention of this motion may be good, and there is much in Motion 11 that GMB could have supported but, as drafted, this motion would deny thousands of workers the opportunity of those good unionised jobs, and deny communities the opportunity of prosperity and economic security.

The motion calls for the TUC “to actively engage trade unionists in debate” and campaigning to stop airport expansion. Aside from the crassness of the TUC in encouraging trade unionists to campaign to deny other trade unionists the opportunities they themselves already enjoy of decent jobs, the logical conclusion of a stop on airport expansion would mean the decline of our existing hubs as they quickly lose ground to those in other countries, so putting existing jobs at risk as well.

Take Heathrow, our biggest airport, the biggest airport in Europe and the sixth busiest in the world. Heathrow brings jobs, prosperity and opportunity to thousands of people, and has a massive knock-on effect to local communities. More than 76,000 people are employed directly at Heathrow, and another 38,000 local jobs rely on it. That is 114,000 jobs. It is the economic heartbeat of west London. But Heathrow is operating at 98% capacity, and without a third runway it would quickly fall into decline. Yet expanding Heathrow would not mean more jobs once completed. Thousands of quality jobs would be created during construction with benefits reaching right back into the supply chain. Around 370,000 tonnes of steel will be needed to expand Heathrow. UK-procured steel would sustain 700 jobs related to the steel industry over the five years between 2021 and 2026. Airport expansion of just Heathrow on its own would create up to 180,000 jobs, including 10,000 apprentices, a total economic-benefits package of £200 billion. GMB cannot support a motion that is in direct opposition to GMB policy and we, as a Congress, cannot support a motion that is anti jobs. Please oppose Motion 11. Thank you.

**The President:** Thank you. I call the right of reply.

**Fliss Pereru** *(TSSA)*: President and Congress, thanks for the quality of debate. It has been a very difficult debate and we completely understand the concerns for jobs, which is what we are about. But I feel that ‘just transition’ has been misrepresented and misunderstood. PCS said how many jobs are planned for just transition. We are not opposition airports. We are not proposing to close down airports. We are just talking about not expanding. We need to get ahead to be there as a movement before we are all put at risk. Then there is the point about communities. Whose communities? Who are the besieged communities? We are those communities. It is not communities or jobs. We are those people, and we are constantly being told that we can either have a clean planet or jobs. We can have both and we can work with this.

Let’s look at our proud history. We started from one position and changed our minds with positive results. The men in the trade unions felt threatened in the early days by women in the labour force, but eventually we all stuck together for equality and equal pay. In London Transport, there was concern about the new and very, very much-needed Caribbean workforce back in the day, and that has changed because they are such a proud part of our organisation, promoting equality and promoting new workforces. The NUM took gay-rights equality to the Labour Party Conference in 1985, a very proud moment.

Thirty years ago there used to be motions, apparently, at TUC Congress about smoking in the conference hall, which were constantly overturned and opposed because of the tobacco workers. Things have changed, and sometimes we have to change our minds. Don’t believe the rhetoric that the lights will go out, as the vested interests describe. We are a wet and window island and even solar is possible from the studies which have been done. It is already happening in places like cloudy, snowbound Austria. What I fear, Congress, is that if we do not be mature about this debate and look into it, it is not about workers attacking workers. I fear that in five years’ time we probably will have a new policy but we will look back and we will wonder what we were waiting for. Congress, we do not have five years. This is the problem. We do not have five years. Let me quote from Ken Smith, from Unifor, the biggest public-service union in Canada, who I met in Paris at the ITUC Conference, an ex-miner who made a moving speech. He represents Tar Sand’s workers. He said he fears that with no plan the workers are done for. He has seen the fisheries fail and that there was no plan for workers. He has seen deforestation and the forestry workers moved to call centres, which were then closed down. He fears that if they are not headed up with Tar Sands and the fossil fuels the same will happen, that we have to plan and have an honest debate for tomorrow. That is what One Million Climate Jobs is about and global climate jobs.

**The President:**  Thank you, delegate. Can you wind up now, please?

**Fliss Pereru:**  I just want to say, again, that if we don’t take control of the just transition, it will be done for us, and it will not be just. Please support this motion.

**The President:**  We now move to the vote on Motion 11. Can I ask you to hold your hands up high so that we really can have a look at this vote. Will all those in favour of Motion 11, please show? Will all those against, please show? It is lost, colleagues. It is clearly lost. Thank you. I think that was a very respectful and decent debate, and that is what the TUC is all about.

*Motion 11 was LOST.*

**Food Poverty in the UK**

**The President:** I am now going to move on to Motion 12: Food Poverty in the UK. The General Council supports the motion. It is to be moved by the BDA and seconded by the NASUWT. I do not intend to take any more speakers on this.

**Annette Mansell Green** *(BDA, British Dietetic Association)* moved Motion 12.

She said: President and Comrades, I am still a little emotional after the steel debate. My grandfather went into the Rotherham steel mills at the age of 14 and becoming a branch secretary at the age of 17, so I have got big shoes to fill.

Congress, the UK is, at the same time, one of the richest and one of the most unequal societies in the world, so it is an outrage that the poorest in our country cannot afford to eat properly, and mothers are missing meals to feed their children. Emergency food aid is an extreme manifestation of food poverty. For the poorest in our society, 35% of disposable income will now be needed for food, compared with less than 9% for the more wealthy. This will increase the reliance on cheap, highly-processed, high-fat, high-sugar, high-salt and calorie-dense unhealthy foods. We are seeing a return to the old problems of poor public-health nutrition, such as rickets and malnutrition. Charles Dickens would have a field day, wouldn’t he? The Trussell Trust estimated that the number of people receiving help from food banks in 2015 was 500,000. So half-a-million people in the UK are facing that kind of desperation, forced to decide between rent, fuel and food. The soup-kitchen mentality of Victorian Britain was unacceptable then, and it sure as hell is unacceptable now.

Adam Smith, who has been described as the founder of free-market economics, and whose book *The Wealth of Nations* was said to be carried by Margaret Thatcher in her handbag, said: “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves not to their humanity but to their self love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages”. This is the mentality and ideology of this Tory Government today.

Comrades, benefit delays and changes remain the biggest cause of food-bank use, account for 42% of all referrals to Trussell Trust food banks. Remember, this does not take into account other providers of food aid. Low income has risen as a referral cause from 22% to 23%, with the main reasons being low wages, insecure work, high living costs and problems accessing benefits.

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Hunger reported in April this year, and I quote: “In an age when our country as a whole has never had such abundant resources, a rising number of children are starting their first and final years of primary school under weight, a rising number of infants and pregnant mothers are anaemic and a rising number of people admitted to hospital in an emergency are found to be malnourished. Comrades, the detrimental effect of this tragedy on the NHS is tangible, but the human cost is immeasurable.

Our members in the BDA, the registered dieticians, are at the sharp end, providing expert care to people who suffer from diet-related conditions. This is not, however, just a matter for our members. It is a matter for all of us to ensure that everybody has the right to proper nutritious food and a healthy life. Why should those children of the 1% who are well fed and well housed prosper over the rest of the children, some of whom are struggling to find enough food to eat every day. Please don’t just vote in favour but work with us all to make positive change for all our sakes. Thank you.

**The President:**  Thank you, Annette. I call NASUWT.

**Ngaire McCann** *(NASUWT, The Teachers’ Union)* seconded Motion 12.

She said: Congress, we hear reports that one in five parents in the UK are struggling to feed their children, skipping meals themselves or having to rely on food banks, family members and friends to help them for food. Congress, the NASUWT has, for a number of years, been examining the financial pressures faced by children, young people and their families. Our latest survey published in April this year found that 71% of teachers have pupils in their classes who are coming to school hungry, having not eaten since the night before. 78% of teachers have pupils in their classes who lack energy and concentration as a result of mal and under-nutrition, and 27% of teachers have given food to their pupils simply because those children did not have any of their own. Hunger has a huge impact on children’s ability to engage and to remain focused during their lessons, on their academic performance and on their behaviour. As one teacher responding to the survey has said: “Hunger is a massive factor. Children who do not eat breakfast have nothing until their free school meal at lunch time and cannot learn.” Food poverty is clearly an issue and must be addressed.

Furthermore, when looking at the results of the NASUWT annual survey into the cost of education for parents, we found that the cost of meals and snacks in some schools was, quite literally, pricing some students out of being able to eat. With 16% of parents paying £3 or more per day on school meals, it is a real challenge for those parents who are often just above the free school meals threshold. Even more shocking was that a small number of parents were asked to pay schools for the privilege of being allowed to send their child to school with a packed lunch. Congress, it is clear that these practices are not acceptable and have only occurred as a result of the Government’s mis-guided deregulation agenda that has allowed schools to adopt charging policies without due regard for the implications for students and their parents. We must campaign to ensure that the Government puts an end to such abuses and does more to recognise the impact that poverty can have on our children’s futures. Congress, please support the motion. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Thank you very much. We are going to move straight to the vote on this one. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against? That is clearly carried.

* *Motion 12 was CARRIED.*

**Tax relief on pension contributions**

**The President:**  I am now going to call paragraph 1.11 and Motion 13: Tax Relief on pension contributions. The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by Aegis and seconded by FDA. They will be the only speakers we will have on this debate. Thank you.

**Brian Linn** *(Aegis)* moved Motion 13.

He said: Congress, tax relief on pension contributions. Pension can be complicated and confusing things, so I am going to keep this in its simplest form, and I am going to be brief. If you have members who pay into their pensions, please support this motion. If you have members who work in the pensions industry, please support this motion. If you have members who work in the public sector, please support this motion. Why? Because George Osborne has left us something back at the Treasury, and it goes by the name of Osborne’s Pension ISA. In his last Budget, Osborne’s proposal to introduce the Pension ISA was shelved but it is still sitting there on the shelf. Following the decision to exit the European Union, Congress fears that the Government may return to this proposal to boost the Treasury’s coffers. So what is the Pension’s ISA?

Quite simply, under Osborne’s Pension ISA, when you retire payments would be tax free. However, the 20% tax relief you currently get on your pension contributions would stop. The Government would take this off you. Why would they do this? It is because it would be an immediate boost to the Chancellor’s coffers. As with all Tory initiatives, it’s cynical in its design. We have heard this all day today. It’s very good for them in the short-term, but absolutely disastrous for the UK economy and financial stability long-term. Why is it disastrous? It’s because most basic-rate taxpayers in the UK would have far less going into their pension pots. It is estimated that this action would reduce the value of pensions by around 17%. That makes saving for pensions for everyone much less attractive. It makes the pensions tax regime far more complicated and costly. Tinkering around with the rules and tax regimes like this has huge cost implications for the pensions providers. That, coupled with the fact that they will receive less income, has potentially serious consequences for workers and union members in the pensions industry. Any further reduction in income for these providers could lead to massive cuts and redundancies in the finance sector. The knock-on effect for this is frightening for the UK economy. When the UK economy suffers, where is the first place the Tories look to slash budgets? It’s the public sector.

So let’s be absolutely clear, Congress. Taking back your tax relief on your pension contributions is an attack on ordinary working people who want to save for their pension. This is also an attack on union members working in the pensions industry. It is an attack on every one of us, actually. The pensions industry itself oppose this. They say it is an attack on the long-term financial security of the UK. Congress, I am asking you to oppose any changes to the pensions tax regime that stops workers from saving for their retirement. I am asking you to oppose Government initiatives that will put thousands of union members’ jobs at risk in the finance sector. Please support this motion.

**The President:**  I call the FDA, please.

**Gareth Hills** *(FDA)* moved the Amendment and spoke in support of Motion 13.

He said: This is confession time. I work for Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs. Day in and day out me and my colleagues combat tax avoidance and evasion. We work to close the tax gap and to secure the payment of taxes owed to the country, money that is needed to build hospitals, pay teachers and fund the public services that every citizen relies on. Not paying tax goes against the very core of my being. You might think that I would have a natural aversion to tax relief, but, Congress, tax relief on pension contributions serves a far greater purpose. It demonstrates to individuals that the Government wants them to save for their retirement and it tacitly acknowledges that the state pension alone is not enough to live on. But over the last few years Government has sought to change, by which I mean reduce, the amount of tax relief that pension savers can receive. This means changing a policy designed to encourage saving for retirement to one designed to provide an income stream for the Treasury. It also means endangering retirement saving for all by hitting those who have saved for the longest with prohibitive tax bills simply because of the kind of pension scheme their employer supports.

The ever-reducing lifetime and annual allowances for pension saving penalise those who plan for their retirement and take up the opportunity that an occupational pension scheme provides. Congress, tax relief works as an incentive to save.

In a survey that the FDA and others conducted in 2015 over 60% of higher earners, that is those paying higher-rate tax, said they would reduce their saving for retirement if tax relief were cut. Cutting tax relief cuts pension saving. Pension saving is not about meeting short-term Government targets for managing the budget. It’s about providing for ourselves when we can no longer work. Given the budgetary pressure of adult social care and the costs of pensioner poverty, encouraging individuals and their employers to save for retirement should be the clear objective of all governments.

Congress, threats to pension tax relief and proposals to extend the so-called “freedom of choice” agenda are a danger to workers, to taxpayers and to our economy. Future generations simply cannot afford for working people today to stop saving for their retirement. Please support this moment with the FDA amendment and ensure that the TUC remains on the front foot in the pension debate. *(Applause)*

**The President:**  Thank you. Colleagues, we are going to move straight to the vote on this motion. All those in favour, please show? All those against? That is clearly carried.

*\* Motion 13 was CARRIED.*

**ADDRESS BY THE LABOUR PARTY’S FRATERNAL DELEGATE: PADDY LILLIS**

**The President:** Delegates, it is now my great pleasure to introduce Paddy Lillis, the Labour Party’s Fraternal Delegate. Paddy has hardly had a quiet year this year as Chair of the Labour Party NEC, but, as Paddy always does, he has risen to the challenge, using his customary good humour, his wisdom and his trade union common sense. Paddy, you are very welcome. I ask you to address Congress. *(Applause)*

**Paddy Lillis:** President and Congress, brothers and sisters, I am proud and honoured to bring fraternal greetings from the Labour Party. Let me start Congress by congratulating Frances on the tremendous job she is doing in leading the TUC. With the vote for Brexit and with the challenges posed by last year’s re-election of the Tories, these are, without doubt, difficult times, and Frances has done a great job in leading and guiding the trade union Movement. I am not just saying this to be polite and nice. Look at the TUC’s work around the Trade Union Act, a focused campaign to ensure that the public could see the Bill for what it was, a vindictive and malicious attack on the trade union Movement. But this public campaign was combined with effective lobbying to successfully remove some of the worst aspects of the Bill. So well done, Frances, for doing such a great job as General Secretary of the TUC.

Congress, 12 months ago I was proud to be elected as Chair of Labour’s National Executive. I thought, “We’ve just had a Labour leadership election, so that is settled for the foreseeable future. David Cameron’s just been re-elected as Prime Minister and looks secure with a working majority”. So I thought to myself that this may well be a relatively quiet year as Chair of the NEC. How wrong could I be! The last 12 months have turned out to be a bit more eventful than I thought they would be. Cameron has now gone and his political career is destined for the dustbin of history, and we are in the middle of another Labour leadership contest.

I am sure that Liz has her difficulties, too, on the TUC General Council, but imagine the challenges of being the Chair of Labour’s NEC over the last year. I don’t like giving people tips on how to do their job, but one tip I would give to the incoming President of the TUC is that if you turn up for a meeting and there are so many members of the press outside that it is difficult even to get into the building, then you may not be in for the easiest meeting to chair.

There were some Labour NEC meetings that I attended during the last 12 months where you would be forgiven for thinking that the National Union of Journalists had launched a wave of secondary action and had organised a mass picket of the building.

Sean O’Casey, the famous Irish playwrite, a socialist and comrade of James Connelly, once said: “The Irish people are in danger of treating every serious thing as a joke and every joke as a serious thing”. So before I live up to that cliché, I should move on. But turning every serious thing into a joke and every joke into a serious thing could sum up some of what has happened in the Labour Party in the last year. Congress, I want to thank the trade union delegates on Labour’s National Executive. Trade union reps play an important role because they don’t represent one wing of the party or another. They are there to represent the hundreds of thousands of ordinary trade unionists affiliated to the party, and that is a difficult role. I appreciate the long hours, meetings and efforts put in by the trade union colleagues on the NEC.

Congress, I also want to give credit to Iain McNicol, the General Secretary of the Labour Party. He has made a very important and constructive contribution in helping the party navigate its way through a difficult year. We should also acknowledge the work of all the staff employed by the Labour Party. As you might imagine, this has not been the easiest year for the Labour Party staff, but they have got on and done their job. So it is only right to acknowledge their work, their commitment and their dedication to the party and to the membership. *(Applause)* Thank you.

Congress, I am here to bring you the fraternal greetings of the Labour Party, but I also stand in front of you as a life-long trade unionist. I joined USDAW over 35 years ago when I was working at Abbey Meats in Newtownabbey, just north of Belfast. At that time, Northern Ireland was a very dark place. Sectarian killings were at their height, the hunger strikes in the H-blocks were heading towards their grim and tragic end, Northern Ireland was a divided society, Catholic and Protestant workers lived in separate areas, drank in different pubs, voted for different parties and, at that time, the trade union Movement stood out alone as a beacon of light. In that divided society, workers from both communities were united together in the trade union Movement. I joined my union realising that workers would only ever get a better deal if we were united together. I learnt from the trade union Movement that whatever divides us, we have more in common than separates us. That lesson that I learnt in the stark environment of Belfast in the 1970s and ‘80s is very relevant for all of us in the labour and trade union Movement throughout the United Kingdom.

Colleagues, in our debates, decisions, votes and when we choose leaders, we must remember that we have more in common than divides us. We must show respect for each other. In the last year, in the debates about the future of Labour, there has been too much abuse and not enough respect for each other’s views, too much shouting and not enough listening, too much name-calling and not enough discussion about policies and strategy. *(Applause)*  Congress, this bad behaviour is a sad reflection of the abuse that is too easily found in political debate in today’s society. The advent of Twitter, social media and on-line debate should have been a great democratic step forward. Instead, it seems to be a green light for some of the most vile abuse of political representatives and opponents, the most extreme example of this being the tragic murder of Jo Cox MP. Here was a trade union member, a member of the GMB who was murdered in the course of doing her job. We, the trade union Movement, should, more than anyone else, make it clear that the abuse, harassment and attacks on political representatives because of their views is unacceptable. *(Applause)*

Colleagues, I have been attending TUC Congress for many years as part of the USDAW delegation. In the last few years I have also been a member of the General Purposes Committee. In this room we have different views as has just been demonstrated. We have a range of approaches to fit the needs of the different workplaces we organise in, and we have serious debates over policy issues, but, Congress, we have these debates in a camaraderie way. We respect each other’s views and we strive to have those discussions in at atmosphere reflecting that we have more in common than divides us. Those are the democratic principles linked to debating issues, and taking decisions that we need to strive to get back into the Labour Party.

Congress, whatever happens in the Labour leadership election, we as a movement, as a matter of urgency, need to return to the policy agenda. In the last year, we have seen the Tories push forward with their anti-trade union agenda by passing the Trade Union Act. Working together, we were successful in getting some of the worst aspects in the Bill dropped. However, the Trade Union Act continues to present serious challenges to both Labour and the trade union Movement.

We have also seen the vote for Brexit. Britain leaving the European Union could have serious consequences for many of the employment rights that are underpinned by our membership of the EU. Just as worrying is what the referendum vote means in many traditional working-class communities, where people, our people, voted for Brexit because they feel ignored by the political process. They feel that they have been left behind and overlooked. That alienation in our communities is a challenge to Labour and it is also a challenge to the trade union Movement. In the aftermath of the Brexit vote, we have seen a rise in hate crime. Migrant workers and British ethnic minority communities are facing abuse. Congress, this hostility and harassment is unacceptable and we will not and should not allow it to take place in our society. *(Applause)*

Looking forward, we need to tackle all of these issues and there are many other issues that need to be addressed. We need a living wage that means what it says, we need a living wage that delivers a decent standard of living for workers and their families and we need radical policies to deal with the housing crisis. A shortage of housing is leading to out-of-control rents across the United Kingdom, and everyone should have the right to good quality, affordable housing. We need public services that meet the needs of our communities, public services that are adequately funded and properly staffed, and we want to defend the National Health Service, ensuring that we have a health service that is free to use and treats people on the basis of medical need and not on their ability to pay. We need schools and universities that deliver education that our young people and all of our people deserve. We need a workforce that has the skills and training to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Congress, above all, we desperately need a Labour government. We must get ourselves into shape. We can fight and win a general election. We can have the best policies in the world but if we don’t win power they are pointless, and we must have policies that will mobilise our core vote. We must also be able to convince and win back voters who have voted for other parties. We have a duty and a responsibility to the workers, to the people and the communities we represent to get ourselves into a position where we can win the next general election.

Congress, Labour and the trade unions have always had a close relationship. We stand together for social justice, we are on the side of the have-nots and the oppressed, and we want to empower ordinary people so we can make a difference. We have bold principles, we have ambitious policies and we also want to win because without winning the principles and the policies mean nothing. We are at a difficult time for the labour Movement. At this time we must all remember that we have more in common with each other than divides us. Unity is strength. Winning for our members is what matters.

Congress, on behalf of the Labour Party, I bring the fraternal greetings. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I hope you have a great Congress. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

**The President**: Thanks for that, again, Paddy. Right, we now return to Section 3 of the General Council Report, Good Services and Decent Welfare, and the section on Education, page 49. I am going to call Motion 33, The Funding Crisis. The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by the NUT, seconded by ATL, and we have the NASUWT coming in as well. Thank you.

**GC Report Section 3: Good Services and Decent Welfare: Education**

**Funding crisis**

**Kevin Courtney** (*National Union of Teachers*) moved Motion 33.

He said: President, Congress, our colleges and schools are facing a funding crisis, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies the biggest real terms fall over any period since the 1970s, and this funding crisis is impacting on the young people we teach, as well as on staff, teachers and support staff both. Congress, the Government says that it is protecting education funding but that is not true. In truth, the Government is freezing the money it gives to schools per pupil while increasing the money it takes from schools for every member of staff that is employed. So, governing bodies have to find extra pension contributions for teachers and extra National Insurance contributions for staff. It amounts for teachers to an extra 5% per teacher that governing bodies have to find so they are freezing the money they give schools and they are charging more money from the schools. For every 20 teachers a school employs it has to find a whole extra salary to give back to the Treasury. That is why class sizes are going up, 36/38 in many schools. It is why art, dance, and drama teachers are being made redundant or not replaced when they leave. It is why teaching assistants are being dismissed. It is why teaching assistants’ terms and conditions are being decimated in areas.

So, the Government is not telling the truth about the funding of our schools, and it is bad for the young people we teach as well as for the staff. If class sizes are going up it is extra workload for teachers and support staff but it is far less individual attention for the young people we teach. If art teachers are made redundant, it is bad for them but for a child it is a lost life opportunity. That art, dance, and drama, may be the subject which keeps them going in school, which allows them to access the rest of their curriculum. It is terrible for them. When TAs are sacked it is bad for them but the special needs kids who are deprived of the support of those teaching assistants, those high-level teaching assistants, it is terrible for them. These cuts are bad for children as well as bad for staff.

Academisation is making all of this worse both for pupils and for staff. Labour’s estimate of the cost of academisation alone is £1.3bn to academise the rest of the schools, £1.3bn spent on lawyers’ fees; nothing spent on children. As well as doing that, academisation breaks up the system of national and local pay and conditions that applies to teachers and to support staff. For example, maternity, adoption, ill health pay, no longer negotiated with the local council but negotiated with or perhaps just imposed by an academy trust chief executive, an academy trust chief executive who wants to pay himself more than the Prime Minister, many of them do that, and who, if the Tories get their way, may not even have any parents on the academy trust board. I can tell you, that is not a good place for us to be.

These attacks are on children and they are on the young people, and they are on the members of staff, the teachers and support staff. We have to find the way of uniting to throw this back. I tell you, in my belief, there is not a parent in the country, which ever party they voted for at the general election, which ever side they voted for in the referendum, there is not a parent who voted for their child’s class size to go up to 38 and 40. (*Applause*) There is not a parent who said that art, dance, and drama, should be cut from their child’s school. There is not a parent who said, “Sack the teaching assistants, deprive my child of the support that they have.”

We have a huge audience that we can mobilise, unions working together. We have a huge audience that we can mobilise against these cuts in our schools. We are about to see across the next few weeks an announcement on grammar schools today going very badly for them; whether that is a distraction for them I do not know. Then we are going to see an announcement about school funding. Then we are going to see an announcement about the bill that is taking academisation forward.

This motion says that the TUC should draw together the affiliates, that together we can launch a campaign against the cuts to schools, against academisation, a campaign that can protect the young people that we teach and the terms and conditions of all of our members. In the summer, the NUT struck on July 6th and we think that we put school funding on the agenda by doing that. We want to work together to build the biggest possible campaign. This is an issue we can throw back to the Government. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call the ATL.

**Kim Knappett** (*Association of Teachers and Lecturers*) seconded Motion 33.

She said: The school term in my area started last Monday. I am beginning to wonder; it is only a week ago. On Friday the real impact of the funding crisis in schools dropped into my inbox as branch secretary. Five days into the new term and not even time for the ink to dry on the front of the new exercise books or the timetable even to run a whole week through, I have the first consultation on staff restructuring and redundancies. The reasons given are simple, and Kevin has outlined them for us, the national reduction in school funding and funding increases in employer pensions and National Insurance contributions, and unfunded cost of living pay increases, just a measly 1% for us but a significant pay impact on a school budget; reduction in post-16 funding, reduction in funding for children living in poverty, reduction of special needs education funding, and an increase in charge for local authority services due to a reduction in their own funding.

The paperwork that I have for a single school will directly affect at least 20 people and we have already been warned that this is the first of three consultations for that school this academic year. Let’s be honest, the real cost of those cuts will affect the 1,366 pupils and their families at that school. The support for those individuals will not be there, not in class and not with those real issues outside of school that dramatically affect their learning. The other 159 staff members will have more to do and we know, as we were told earlier, that teachers and support staff already work extremely long hours. The simple fact is we have tightened our belts constantly over recent years and we are now at the point where it is not just difficult to breathe but the blood flow to vital organs is starting to be reduced and we know that as soon as that happens the damage to those vital organs is irreparable. Just as the cuts are biting hard, we have reckless announcements about wasting more money on establishing new grammar schools. One would think they may have learnt after so much money went down the drain on the academisation of free school programmes.

We need to stand together and to fight this attack on the future of our country. If you want to plan long term, educate children. We need to use all of the strategies that we have to campaign against this. Colleagues, we need to stand up with our members who work in the education sector but also with the millions of young people that they serve. You cannot educate a nation on a shoestring. It takes genuine investment to educate for the greater brighter future. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: I call NASUWT.

**John Hall** (*NASUWT (The Teachers’ Union*)) spoke in support of Motion 33.

He said: Congress, the NASUWT does not just condemn the Government’s slashing of school funding, it is taking effective action to resist it. The NASUWT has been taking continuous industrial action since 2011 against the impact of the Government’s austerity policies on the pay, conditions, and pensions of teachers. The NASUWT has taken strike action in numerous schools against redundancies since 2011. Industrial action has saved many jobs, not just of teachers but also support staff as it has often resulted in all kinds of redundancies being withdrawn.

Congress, whilst this motion is correct in drawing attention to the cuts in school funding perpetrated by Conservative-led governments since 2010, there is a danger that aspects of this motion become a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is right to draw attention to the dangers to the teachers’ national pay and conditions framework proposed by the academies programme, including the acceleration of academisation from 2010 onwards. However, teachers’ national terms and conditions have been largely held together by the NASUWT’s continued national action and the extent and resilience of the union organising at workplace level in schools which have become academies. The overwhelming majority of the academies therefore do employ teachers in accordance with national pay and conditions at this time.

Congress, when Michael Gove became Secretary of State for Education in 2010 he had a proud wish list of teachers’ terms and conditions to destroy. However, the school teachers’ review body has rejected the Conservative Government’s exhortation to remove key conditions of service delivered by the Labour Government from 2002 to 2010 on many occasions. These entitlements are still provided by the overwhelming majority of academy trusts. Congress, it is vital that school funding issues are not used as a justification for withholding pay from the school workforce. 95% of local authority maintained primary schools and 83% of local authority maintained secondary schools carried a surplus revenue balance in 2014-15. Many academy trusts which cry poverty give obscene levels of pay to chief executives and also filter public money out the state school system to linked system providers. These are the pay practices which need to be replaced by an alternative approach which pays teachers fully in the interests of the whole of society.

Finally, Congress, let me draw your attention to an aspect of education funding which is a real concern, that is, proposed changes to the high needs block of funding which could disadvantage many local authorities who are already struggling to fund their ever increasing referrals of students with autism, PMLD, social and emotional needs, and children with an increased complexity of needs. In Newcastle upon Tyne where I work, and many of the local authorities, there is a rising demand for specialist placements. The funding of education healthcare plans for children and young people are a post code lottery. There is a lack of contribution from health for students with medical needs, despite personal provision, and meeting the needs of pupils with extremely significant complex difficulties.

Congress, special schools and other specialist provision are experiencing enormous financial strain caused by the Health Commission failing to address the true cost of providing appropriate funding to meet health needs and education. Congress, I urge you to campaign back in your local areas to place pressure on the regional health authorities to step up to their responsibilities in relation to our vulnerable children and young people. Congress, please support this motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. Congress, we are going to move straight to the vote on that. Will all those in favour please show? All those against? Thank you. Clearly carried.

*\* Motion 33 was CARRIED*.

**The President**: I am now going to call Composite Motion 9, School assessment and examination system. The General Council position is to support the composite, to be moved by the NUT and seconded by NAHT, and they are the only speakers we will be taking. Thank you.

**School assessment and examination system**

**Anne Swift** (*National Union of Teachers*) moved Composite Motion 9.

She said: President, Congress, throughout most of my career as a teacher and head teacher, and NUT member, we have fought to have our voices heard, to have a debate about what education is for and a consensus formed between schools, businesses, industry, government, and the wider community which then shapes the curriculum, the way in which it is taught and how we assess young people. Instead, we have constant meddling by politicians of all persuasions.

Successive Secretaries of State for Education cannot resist coming up with another bright idea. I have lost count of the number of Ofsted frameworks or curriculum arrangements we have endured in the last 20 years, amongst many initiatives. Just last May Nicky Morgan announced a possible conversion of all schools to academy status. We protested and she had to retract the word “forced”. Now we have a secretary of state and a prime minister proposing all schools will be grammar schools. Since Michael Gove’s reign, an education secretary who was hell bent on a collision course with teachers, our education system has become one huge experiment and vanity project. Government bases policy on personal experience and some nostalgic memory of a so-called golden age but this is deeply damaging. They say they want an evidence-based profession and yet they ignore all the evidence. Michael Gove even rubbished experts.

The NUT commissions research and bases campaigns on evidence. We decided that we wanted to hear the child’s voice about the accountability regime which rules the English school system. The phrase “exam factories” neatly summarises the findings and this document can be found on the NUT stand. Children in primary schools recognise that testing in year six dominated their curriculum and it is only when the tests are over that they have a wider range of experiences and activities.

Our children are the most tested in the world. Last year, even our 4-year olds were subject to tests of their abilities on entry to school. The Government had to abandon those tests but the policy has not gone away and schools are still compelled to assess children on entry in order to compare their starting point with later performance in a test. If only it were so simple, but children and young people are not products on a conveyor belt starting as empty cans and gradually filled up with knowledge as they go through the factory. They are unique individuals with the talent and potential to make a fantastic contribution to our society but the exam factory system does not place value on originality or uniqueness.

This year the primary school tests were even more farcical than usual. They were harder with questions that graduates struggled to answer, covering content of dubious value in the 21st century. Teachers reported children in tears and marking which did not give children credit for what they can do. How can a system which brands 47% of children as failures at age 11 and not ready to go to secondary school, how can that be appropriate. (*Applause*) This process continues into secondary schooling with changes to exams and less and less value placed on the creative subjects, just further narrowing subject choices for young people.

The ridiculous primary tests and secondary examinations are high stakes. They are used to judge schools and individual teachers. They affect Ofsted judgments and teachers’ pay and yet they are deeply flawed and should not be used for such purposes. In an effort to get sufficient children above arbitrary flawed targets the curriculum is narrowed as teachers feel they must focus on maths and English and teach to the test. Thousands of parents recognise the impact of the tests and are actively campaigning for changes. Teachers assess children every day in order to plan the next steps in learning but the current tests are unfair. They test only that which is easily tested and cannot be a reliable measure of the quality of education a school offers. We urge the Government not to publish the 2016 results or demand re-sits in year seven. We need the Government to listen to the profession.

Please support this motion and campaign for a system which meets the needs of all pupils with a curriculum which motivates and engages young people and enables them to succeed whatever their talents. Set our children free from the tyranny of the exam factory. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**The President**: The National Association of Head Teachers.

**Tony Draper** (*National Association of Head Teachers*) seconded Composite

Motion 9.

He said: NAHT is a school leaders’ union representing members through all phases of education. Our members have seen firsthand the way in which the assessment system is failing our pupils. Congress, this year our primary assessment system has been one of chaos and confusion: SATS papers mistakenly published online ahead of the test; delayed and obscure guidance for teachers; mistakes in test papers; and a mark scheme that fails to cater for those with dyslexia, or commonsense. The list just goes on. This year the tests were poorly designed and poorly administered, put simply, assessment in schools is not fit for purpose. (*Applause*)

Congress, school leaders will not take another year of this shambolic system. We will not stand by and allow a system that fails pupils to continue but there is a better way. We urge the Government to work with the profession to design a system that works for pupils, for parents, for school leaders, and for teachers. To start that debate NAHT has established an independent assessment review group to look at the kind of system that we need for the future, a system designed around the needs of the pupils. But the Government can act now by not publishing flawed SATS data in December and to abolish the ridiculous plans to force pupils to re-sit the tests in year seven. Schools should never face intervention on flawed data but that is exactly what will happen. Tests should not be high stakes accountability measures for schools; their purpose should be to help boost learning.

We currently have an assessment system that is used to judge whether teachers are providing good quality education. The system is designed the wrong way round. It should be focused on what is best for learning, not what is best for government to determine whether a school is performing or not. What is happening is damaging the wellbeing and mental health of heads, staff, and pupils alike. Mistakes are not just confined to primary assessment. We have seen the introduction of Ebacc, a performance measure for schools based on pupils studying the five core subjects of English, Maths, History or Geography, Science, and a language, squeezing out other subjects from the curriculum. We know that religious education, music, drama, art and other creative subjects are not just being squeezed but in some cases all together disappearing from schools.

Congress, do we not want all children regardless of their background to have the opportunity to learn to play an instrument, or the chance to express themselves, to draw, to act, or to express themselves through drama; instead, we have delays, mistakes, and ill thought out short-term fixes. We have a system that is used to rate schools, not support and develop children. We have a government looking at risky and distracting structural changes, like controversial new grammar schools that will do nothing to address social inequalities or mobility rather than one striving to fix a broken assessment system.

Congress, the Government need to get the basics right. Ideology is distracting ministers from what really matters, an assessment system that develops our young people. It is time for the Government to act. Congress, we second the motion before you today and urge all unions to support this joint motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thanks, Tony. We are going to move to the vote on that. Will all those in favour please show? Will all those against please show? Clearly carried. Thank you.

 \* *Composite Motion 9 was CARRIED.*

**The President**: I am now going to call Composite Motion 10, Professional status and evidence-based education policies. The General Council’s position is to support Composite Motion, to be moved by ATL, seconded by AEP, and supported by UCU. We will take no other speakers on this. Thanks, Julia.

**Professional status and evidence-based education policies**

**Julia Neal** (*Association of Teachers and Lecturers*) moved Composite Motion 10.

She said: I am moving Composite Motion 10, which is undermining education, professionals, and hurts pupils. Congress, President, no education system can exceed the quality of its teachers. Teachers are the building block of education and without them the whole system breaks down and no one learns anything. Another reason why it is so worrying is that a recent survey of over 4,000 teachers revealed that a lack of qualified teachers is affecting pupils; 18% of the teachers who responded said that up to 20% of the teachers in their schools were temporary or supply. This flux in teacher staffing was having a negative effect on pupil behaviour and attainment and was hollowing out the teacher workforce leaving new teachers without proper support or help because their more experienced colleagues, middle managers, are leaving the profession.

Congress, however much Nick Gibb, the schools standards minister, puts his head in the sand declaring, “Crisis, what crisis,” the fact of the matter is that there is a crisis in teacher recruitment. The Government’s policies have decimated the number of applicants to teacher training courses, a truth which is undeniable when you learn that the DFE has missed targets for filling teacher training places over the last four years, in secondary schools teaching shortages have become endemic with unfilled training places in 14 out of 17 secondary subjects. The recorded rate of vacancies and temporarily filled positions in state schools has doubled between 2011 and 2014. Core subjects are particularly affected. One-in-five maths and English lessons is taught by teachers who do not have an A-level in those subjects. Head teachers are finding it increasingly impossible to fill the teaching vacancies in their schools. They have been warning the Government of a teacher recruitment crisis for some time but their warnings have, as usual, fallen on deaf ears. A recent report by the National Audit Office could have not been clearer in its damning criticism when it says that the department does not understand and shows little curiosity about the size and extent of teacher shortages in this country.

Congress, a government has two educational duties: to ensure an adequate supply of teachers and school places. Given that it is not able to do either of those at present, it would seem sensible for the Government to try to steady the ship and listen to the advice of the National Audit Office, which has concluded that the myriad of routes into teaching are confusing for applicants and it is their responsibility actually to end this confusion. What is their response, only to create more confusion through their proposal to abolish the well recognised, highly portable, respected qualified teacher status, proposing to replace QTS with a system of teacher accreditation which will put school leavers in charge of certifying new entrants to the profession.

ATL believes that an accreditation system opens the door for the recruitment of non-graduates in teaching. The White Paper does more than hint at this possibility when it talks about experts from other fields, for example, a talented musician, or coder, being put onto the pathway for full accreditation. Making reaching a non-graduate profession is one really rather desperate way to solve the teacher recruitment crisis. There can be no doubt, despite frequent ministerial denials, that a full-blown crisis is upon us and is already having a profoundly negative effect on our schools.

The Government’s proposed abolition of QTS needs to be understood in the context of an acute and lasting shortage, which is compounded by funding cuts which will plague schools throughout this parliament. School leavers, who are already struggling to cope with the real term fall of 8% in their budget may give in to the temptation to delay the accreditation, to tell the new teacher, “Well, you have a full timetable, you are working all the hours God sends, but you are not quite ready yet, perhaps another six months before you meet the standard,” in order to keep them working in their school on poverty wages. The potential for exploitation is rife because whilst they are waiting accreditation these teachers are stuck, unable to move schools, unable to mount much of a challenge to this potential abuse of power because, let’s face it, they do not have the means nor power to do so.

Congress, the threat of the Government’s proposals to an all-graduate teaching profession is real, it is present, and it is dangerous. We need to understand what is proposed and make sure that parents, employers, and other important stakeholders in our education system, know and understand just what is going to happen if we and they let it. Please support this important motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call the AEP.

**Kate Fallon** (*Association of Educational Psychologists*) seconded Composite

Motion 10.

She said: President, Congress, the Government seems hell bent on removing the link between universities and the education of our children. They do not think that teachers need to be graduates, they appear to be increasingly suspicious of research, which often takes place in universities, and what it tells us about the development of our children and how best to support and teach them.

We have heard a previous member of this Government openly and recently express a distrust of experts and maintain that we do not need them. We frequently hear the Government talk about the need for evidence and accountability in our education system. They do not seem to want evidence produced by experts, by people who have been trained in research methodology, who are painstaking in the way that they collect and analyze their data. No, the Government seem to prefer to provide their own evidence, usually anecdotal evidence, which certainly has its place in research but not when it is only based on the single case studies of individual politicians, single-case studies that end up with all children being taught reading via one particular method regardless of their teacher’s knowledge, single-case studies that mean we end up with all 10 and 11-year old children having to learn the spelling of particular words that the Secretary of State for Education thought they should know, on no research evidence other than his view, leaving many 11-year olds and their teachers, and parents, feeling they have been branded failures when the children do not know all those particular spellings, single-case studies that mean we end up with a prime minister who wants to open more grammar schools to aid social mobility based on her own experience when a range of different research bodies provide evidence to suggest the absolute opposite is true, especially for the very groups she wishes to target. This is not fair on children, our children.

Ignoring properly carried out research because of a distrust of experts, presumably because they do not tell them what they want to hear, is an abuse of government and an abuse of our children. We need to ensure that any future educational reforms are informed by good academic research so that our children’s futures are not blighted by the idiosyncrasies of individual politicians. Congress, please support this composite. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call UCU, please.

**Joana de Groot** (*University and College Union*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 10.

She said: I am speaking in support of Composite Motion 10 and agreeing very strongly with the colleagues who have already spoken, that the last thing pupils and staff in schools need is another set of ideologically driven half-baked reforms to school education - (*Applause*) - which seems to us to do little more than undermine teachers’ effectiveness and confidence and threaten good quality and standards. We are particularly angry to see further attacks on the education, training, and preparation which teachers need in order to do their jobs and to deliver an excellent education to our children. The attacks include changing the countrywide teacher supply model, which distributes PGCE places to universities round the country, thus taking account of regional differences in supply and demand. This change flies in the face of research-based evidence that, while initial teacher education providers in higher education filled 85% of their recruitment places, schools direct, the in-school version of that education, filled only 58%.

The attacks include the replacement, as we have heard, of QS status, understood and accepted across the country and based on proper evidence, whose consistency and objectivity is supported by the work of teacher educators in university education departments, replacing this with localised and individualised accreditation. How can that approach have the confidence of either parents or teachers? Above all, we are opposed to the Government’s proposals to skew initial teacher education towards in-school practice. This undermines the role of higher education in provision of that initial education, which needs, as my colleagues know, to combine school-based learning with the study, analysis, and critical thinking on child development, on the social context of teaching and learning, and on different educational methods and approaches. The PTCE is internationally recognised and respected. Why replace it with untried, unbalanced, and unverifiable qualifications.

Of course, UCU is concerned about the threat to the jobs and prospects of our members if this attack on initial teacher education in higher education succeeds, but we are also equally concerned about the serious threat to the excellent school education which all pupils deserve. School-based practice is only one part of what high quality teacher education should be about. This composite sets out the challenge from the education unions to the Government’s damaging proposals. Colleagues, we want properly managed approaches to teacher recruitment, not improvised inconsistent ones. New teachers deserve the best and fullest preparation for their careers, parents and pupils need teachers to deliver excellence. Oppose the Government’s plans. Support the composite. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. No right of reply so we are going to move straight to the vote on this. Will all those in favour please show? Thank you. All those against? Clearly carried. Thank you.

 \* *Composite Motion 10 was CARRIED*.

**The President**: I am now going to call Motion 38, Early Years education. The General Council position is to support and again I am just going to call EIS, who are moving, and Unison, who are seconding. Thank you.

**Early Years education**

**Margaret Smith** (*Educational Institute of Scotland*) moved Motion 38.

She said: I was a nursery teacher and very proud to be a nursery teacher for 30 years and therefore very passionate about the importance of delivering a high quality, supported, and fully resourced early education to our youngest learners. Whilst there is no doubt the expansion of free childcare in education is welcomed, it must not be at the expense of the quality of provision available to children and families. It is widespread knowledge, and proven, that long-term outcomes for all children are improved through input from appropriately and highly qualified staff teams. This is particularly true for children who are disadvantaged by poverty. Education is the route out of poverty and the earlier we intervene with quality early learning the better the chances we give our youngest learners.

In Scotland figures show that one-in-five children experience poverty. It is clearly recognised that poverty impacts on life’s challenges and chances, that children deserve the best start in life, and society must invest in the future. For some children there can be as much as an 18-month gap in vocabulary and language development. Well trained and well qualified Early Years staff can make a difference for these children. This work must be valued by society and seen as crucial in children’s development and provide a solid foundation for a child’s continued learning journey.

In Scotland, the curriculum for excellence is designed to be a seamless continuous learning experience for our children and for young people aged three to 18. A key recommendation in a recent Scottish government review of early learning and childcare in the out-of-school workforce reported that there should be an increase in the number of graduates in the early learning and childcare workforce. The policy is to increase the number of graduates, all well and good, but because of severe financial pressures local authorities are removing and diluting the services of a group of graduates already in the workforce, namely, teachers.

My union, the EIS, recently commissioned research led by Prof. Aline-Wendy Dunlop of Strathclyde University. The report entitled, “Sustaining the Ambition: Early Years Teachers’ Contribution,” was published in January 2016. EIS members will use key messages outlined in the report to support the campaign for the introduction of a legal entitlement to a child’s right to nursery education and the establishment of a minimum threshold to meaningful interaction with the General Teaching Council for Scotland and teachers. I am now going to share a few of the findings from the research.

Over a 10-year period, from 2005 in Scotland, there has been a 29% reduction in the number of teachers employed in the Early Years sectors and only 12 of Scotland’s 32 local authorities continue to employ full-time teachers in Early Years establishments. The current nursery teacher to child ratio is one to 94. Delegates, we must get this crucial stage of learning right for every child in every family regardless of where they live or their family circumstances. We must campaign to ensure that every child has a statutory right to a sound quality educational experience from the start of their learning. Everyone in this hall cannot deny our children and grandchildren that right. Governments cannot deny our children that right.

We call on everyone to value Early Learning and the teams working in nursery schools and classrooms across the country. Quality Early Learning cannot be a post code lottery. Let’s get it right for every child and every family now, invest in their future, invest in early education, and invest now. Please support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call Unison.

**Stephen Smellie** (*Unison*) seconded Motion 38.

He said: Trade unions will readily understand the focus on jobs and wages of our members but there are, obviously, some issues which are greater than that. This is one of those motions which are more than just about jobs and wages. This is about the future of our children. This is about the future of our grandchildren. In my own personal circumstances this is the future of George, Ivy, and Maisy, three of my grandchildren who are under the age of five. This is important to us all.

Throughout the last decade there has been an increasing political concern about understanding one of the best ways of tackling educational inequality and improving the life chances of disadvantaged children is to invest in the Early Years. Much, much more successful than any new English grammar schools or, indeed, any proposed Scottish regional education boards is the provision of that quality education in the Early Years, and the provision of a high quality education.

The greatest single factor in delivering a high quality education and care is the quality of that workforce but despite this it is the Early Years workforce that has benefited least from increased investment in Early Years over the last decade. Early Years is still blighted by a low wage low status workforce that is neither paid the money nor provided with the professional career structure that they deserve. Unison’s Early Years workers work with our teacher colleagues, as a team we provide that quality education.

We, as Unison members, contribute to the planning, assessment, and the next steps for learning. All this is about providing quality of care. We have looked for this career structure for some time in England; an Early Years workforce strategy was promised by the BFE in the spring but it is now the autumn and we are still waiting for that strategy. We believe that a workforce strategy needs to focus on the whole Early Years workforce, as the EIS motion points out, and not solely on the graduate leaders as many recent initiatives have. I have to point out that many Unison members have attained degree qualifications in recent years although many of them have not quite achieved that graduate status that should come with it.

We are looking for a strategy that provides a clear career structure, in other words, all staff for increasing their skills and qualifications. We want to see improvements in the quality and record of qualifications and access for all staff to continue in training and professional development, but, most importantly, we do want wages to reflect the professional skills and responsibility of our members. We want to see investment in that workforce to ensure that the highest quality of education can be provided so that we can recruit and retain those high quality staff, in order to ensure that our children have the future that they deserve. For George, Ivy, and Maisy, please support the motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: I am going to move straight to the vote on that. Will all those in favour please show? Thank you. And all those against? Thank you. That is carried.

 \* *Motion 38 was CARRIED*.

**The President**: I am now going to call Motion 39, Music Cooperatives. The General Council position is to support. It is going to be moved by the Musicians Union and seconded by the Bakers. Thank you. We will not be taking any more speakers on that.

**Music Cooperatives**

**Barbara White** (*Musicians’ Union*) moved Motion 39.

She said: During the early ‘90s the Musicians’ Union produced a booklet called “Are You Ready for a Brand New Beat?” This informative guide steered teachers through the process of forming their own cooperatives. These organisations are over 20 years old and still going strong today. It is to be noted that the MU is not promoting self-employment over direct employment. This has never been seen as anything more than a second choice for a centrally run service. We are not trying to replace properly employed teachers but, sadly, many are employed on zero-hours contracts today. It is frightening when you realise that there are now almost a million workers on zero-hours contracts, a rise of more than 20% on a year ago.

Cooperatives have to be better than the service which is outsourced, as it is called, but we all know it means privatisation. Cooperatives are generally not-for-profit organisations. In the early ‘90s Newcastle upon Tyne Council decided to cut its peripatetic service. The teachers wanted to stay together as a team, especially to protect borough-wide music groups such as the orchestras. The teachers decided they would become self-employed. It was not a huge leap of imagination to realise that some sort of cooperative would achieve both the council’s and teachers’ wishes. The MU engaged a cooperative consultant, Jeff Cox, who worked together with one of the then Assistant General Secretaries of the MU. They came up with a model where the teachers became self-employed but formed a cooperative to service themselves, managing invoicing, loan of instruments, etc. It was not long before NEMCO, North East Music Cooperative, was born.

Schools, by and large, bought into the service; some came directly, others by recharging parents, or a mixture of both. A hardship fund was established through a parents association for those with talent but unable to afford the charges. I love the last sentence because to me it has always been a sin to ignore talent. All members of the cooperative were expected to be MU members. It was written into the business articles that the union would arbitrate in any dispute between a member and a cooperative. This was upheld in NEMCO’s 21st year of training as a music teacher cooperative. It teaches in the majority of Newcastle schools holding firm to its goal of providing good quality, affordable, and sustainable instrumental music tuition, a true success story.

This most successful model was soon copied by Swindon and South East Lincolnshire. The list is growing with Milton Keynes joining in 2014, Salisbury in 2015, Denbyshire, and this September Bedford has joined. Gosport Music Trust was set up in 2012 and Cornwall Music Service Trust represents another alternative model.

You may be wondering why there was so much activity in the ‘90s and then an apparent gap. The answer is simple, local authorities commenced making severe cuts in the early ‘90s and, as usual, music and the arts were one of the first targets. For the last few years we have had to deal with that awful word “austerity” and music is being hit harder than ever. Musicians have had no options other than to turn to cooperatives to protect their livelihood and music for all.

At the moment, there are about 7,000 registered cooperatives in the UK involving about 15 million people. These social enterprises range from farming to retail, healthcare to housing, wine producing and, of course, music teaching. Their combined contribution to the UK economy is approximately £40bn per year. For many workers this is an alternative to austerity and certainly better than being on a zero-hours contract, a zero-hours contract built on precarious work and not knowing from one week to another if you can pay your bills plus, of course, zero-hour workers have fewer rights.

A month or so ago I heard John McDonnell speaking on cooperatives on LBC Radio. He praised all of them but gave a great deal of praise to the Musicians’ Union on the work that they have done setting up music cooperatives. I am very pleased to say it is vital to the Music Leaders Cooperatives.

Now, just a slight change of subject but I am sure that most of you know the President of the GMB, Mary Turner. Sadly, Mary is not with us today as she is very poorly but one thing I do know is that if Mary was here today she would be saying, “Those kids will be playing a lot better if they had a good free hot school dinner inside them.” (*Applause*) Best wishes to you, Mary. We love you. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Barbara, thank you. Bakers to second.

**Sarah Woolley** (*Bakers, Food and Allied Workers’ Union*) seconded Motion 39.

She said: Congress, I know you may be wondering out of all the trade unions here why we would be seconding this. I am here to talk to you about the benefits of cooperatives and why Congress should fully and actively support this motion.

We represent a group of members who work in a cooperative called Suma Foods, in Elland, near Halifax, up in Yorkshire. Suma is the biggest specialist wholesaler in vegetarian, organic, and Fairtrade products in the UK. Member employees hold monthly general meetings to decide what their business will do and there is a lengthy process to become a member employee in order to keep the ethos of the cooperative alive. All members, regardless of role, are paid the same so you can be sweeping the floor, driving a truck, checking stock, or making orders, everyone is the same, everyone contributes to the business and everyone shares the profits equally, too, and they are doing pretty well. They even provide all employees and visitors free hot meals three times a day. It is not like any other factory or workplace I have visited as it actually feels like a family; everyone feels like an equal, is treated and behaves like one too, which has a positive impact on productivity.

Music, like all the arts, has been treated appallingly by this Government. By supporting the Musicians’ Union in developing cooperatives around the country the trades union Movement help to keep music in children’s lives for years to come. Music teachers can become members in their own cooperatives, determine their own terms and conditions, wages, and approach the teaching of music consistently and not be reliant on local councils or schools. With the support of Congress music teachers around the UK will be able to watch their cooperatives thrive like we have done with our members at Suma, who are not only some of the happiest members we have but the wealthiest too. Please support this motion and let’s have proper instrument tuition by qualified and happy music teachers back into our children’s lives. I had the opportunity at a young age to learn how to play an instrument. Every child now and in the future should have the same opportunity. Please support. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. Right, we are going to move to the vote on this. Will all those in favour please show? All those against? That is carried.

 \* *Motion 39 was CARRIED.*

**The President**: Congress, I am afraid we have run out of time so I am going to propose that the outstanding business we take as early as we can, perhaps tomorrow. We will advise you of that, then. That is our business concluded for today.

I have just a few announcements. Many meetings are taking place, all of them listed on the screens and in your Congress Guide.

We want as much of the equality information from you as possible in the delegate survey.

I would also remind delegation leaders about the ballot for section C of the General Council that takes place tomorrow. Those unions eligible should collect their ballot papers from the TUC information stand situated downstairs from 9 o’clock tomorrow. Ballot papers will only be provided in exchange for the official delegate form. The ballot closes at midday tomorrow.

Congress is now adjourned till 9.30 tomorrow. Have a great evening. Thank you.

*Congress adjourned.*