



TUC

Changing the world
of work for good

TUC Campaign Plan 2018–19

The situation we face as a movement

For over a decade, working people have seen their pay packets hammered and public services cut, and now there is growing uncertainty about the UK's post-Brexit future.

A year on from the snap general election that delivered a hung parliament, Theresa May's government endures, but all government focus is on Brexit alone, with almost all domestic policy priorities crowded out. The rhetoric of concern for the "just about managing" that characterised the start of her premiership has all but disappeared – and the disastrous policy of austerity continues to decimate our public services and welfare state. In contrast, the Labour party continues to set out a bold policy agenda, often rooted in trade union concerns.



Photo: Jess Hurd/reportdigital.co.uk

Amid this upheaval, trade unionists have won some important political battles – not least the end of the pay cap for many (though not all) public servants, following determined union campaigning after the general election.

Unions also won a landmark case at the Supreme Court, which ended fees for employment tribunals. And our movement continues to challenge companies that break employment law, winning important cases about bogus self-employment at Hermes and in the building trade, amongst others. The collapse of Carillion highlighted the failures of outsourcing – and unions were closely involved in ensuring that workers and apprentices were treated fairly in the aftermath. We are still waiting to see whether the government will implement any measures from the disappointing Taylor Review on modern employment practices.

But the major public priority preoccupation of the government is Brexit, with less than six months before we leave the EU. The prime minister's red lines that the UK should leave both the customs union and the single market have prevented her coming up with a Brexit that works for working people. There is no majority in parliament for plunging over a cliff, but her control over her party, and her unstable majority might lead to another Conservative party leadership election to determine the course of Brexit – or even another general election, if the government falls.

“More than three million workers face extreme insecurity at work, in a labour market that has shifted the risks of work (but none of the rewards) from employers to workers.”



Photo: Jess Hurd/reportdigital.co.uk



Photo: Lorne Campbell / Guzelian

Amid the political upheaval, workers still bear the burden of government indifference. We are in the longest wages squeeze since Napoleonic times. More than three million workers face extreme insecurity at work, in a labour market that has shifted the risks of work (but none of the rewards) from employers to workers.

The UK remains profoundly unequal – with the differences between regions and nations, towns and cities, showing the impact of uncontrolled globalisation and years of deregulation, cuts and

underinvestment on poorer and middle-income communities. BME workers and migrant workers continue to bear the brunt of longstanding racist and anti-immigration sentiments, and the far right has gained confidence from the rise of nationalist and populist politicians in other countries.

The world of work continues to change fast, as new technologies become commonplace and customer expectations of speed and convenience continue to rise. Digital could be used

to create more productive and satisfying work, but too often it serves the interests of business owners rather than workers.

In the face of these challenges, the UK trade union movement has responded, stepping up organising in multiple sectors and scoring some notable victories such as winning recognition at Ryanair for both pilots and cabin crew. The strike of university staff over pensions led to huge numbers of young lecturers joining their union, and exciting new campaigns have launched to organise McDonald's and TGI Fridays workers.

But still, the union movement is shrinking – and aging. The most recent annual figures show that despite a small increase in membership to 6.23m members, union density has fallen to 23 per cent. Just 16 per cent of young workers aged 21–30 are members of a trade union. Over the last two decades the proportion of union members aged 50 and over has almost doubled.

Extending collective bargaining is the best pay policy there is: yet on current trends the union movement will represent just one in five workers by 2030. To deliver for working people, the union movement needs to change.



Photo: Jess Hurd/reportdigital.co.uk

The TUC's unique role in the trade union movement

The TUC is the national centre for the UK's trade union movement. Our job is to bring the movement together on issues of common concern – and to represent trade unions, trade union concerns and working people to the wider world.

We combine excellent policy analysis with real insights into what is going on in factories, shops, offices and other workplaces across the UK – and through our international links, around the world.

We are the experts in what's going on in the world of work. And we are at our most authoritative and credible when we talk about the workplace, and what matters to working people.

We complement the work of our member trade unions by:

- › promoting trade union priorities in the modern workplace and the wider economy
- › pushing for wider coverage of collective bargaining to improve pay and conditions, in the UK and through global supply chains
- › helping unions to adapt to the changing world of work, so that our movement grows.

A number of cross-cutting themes run through all our work. In everything we do, we promote equality, and we stand against racism, sexism and discrimination. We use the best technology available to reach more workers and achieve big changes. We always show off the diversity of our movement. And we are internationalists, acting with trade unionists around the world to promote working people's interests.

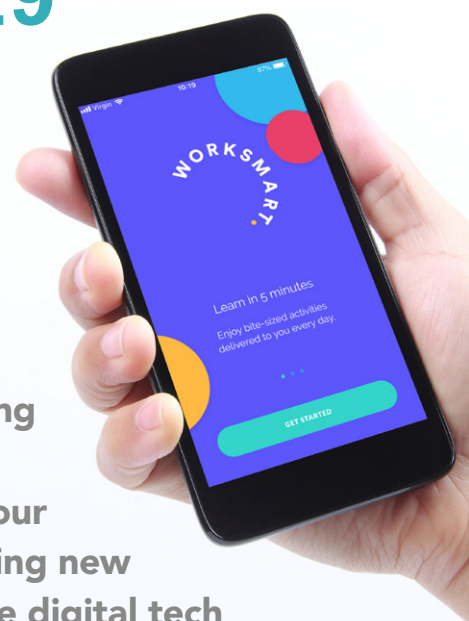
“In everything we do, we promote equality, and we stand against racism, sexism and discrimination.”



The trade union movement's campaign priorities, 2018–19

1. Winning for more workers

The only way to reverse extreme inequality and to get wages rising again is to get more working people into trade unions – and get them the benefit of collective bargaining. So the top priority for our movement in 2018–19 is growing the movement. That means finding new ways to recruit and retain members. It means catching up with the digital tech that is standard in other sectors. And it means finding new ways to organise young workers in the private sector, building on our WorkSmart pilot.



In 2018–19, the TUC and our member unions will:

- › complete the pilot of WorkSmart, our job progression app, and WorkSmart Extra, our programme to get young workers into unions, and decide whether to roll them out
- › set out what a new government needs to do to help unions organise and bring about a resurgence in collective bargaining
- › explore how unions can co-ordinate our campaigns and demands to maximise our collective power
- › use digital campaigning tools on Going to Work to support union campaigns to reach new audiences and enlist customers to support our actions



Photo: Darren O'Brien/Guzelian

- › help unions get better at reaching new audiences – like younger workers – and organising them
- › champion the use of digital to transform how unions engage with our members
- › campaign for online balloting and for the repeal of the 2016 Trade Union Act
- › build the skills of union reps to advocate for their members in a changing world of work
- › help grow the trade union movement worldwide.

2. A new deal for working people

For too many workers, it's too hard to find a decent job. Zero-hours contracts, temporary and agency work and bogus self-employment are used by employers to cut costs and cut working people's rights and pay. Too many working people are stuck in jobs that don't offer a chance at a better life.

Rather than new technology being used to deliver better jobs, too often it is being used to concentrate power and wealth in the hands of employers. In the trade union movement, we believe that every job should be a great job – and everyone should be able to work with dignity and fairness.

In 2018–19, the TUC and our member unions will:

- advocate for working people at the sharp end of new workplace technology, helping unions bargain on how technology is used at work, how we reskill workers and create new good jobs for those at risk from automation and AI, and how ensure a just transition where the gains are fairly shared
- campaign for good jobs and against insecure work – for a ban on zero-hours contracts, an end to the Swedish derogation, and to enforce the rules that protect working people from bogus self-employment and other abuses
- fight for a national minimum wage of £10 per hour as soon as possible, for decent pensions and for fair pay settlements for public sector workers
- stand up for equality and fair treatment at work for women, BME workers, LGBT workers and disabled workers, and help unions use collective bargaining to fight discrimination at work
- work with regional and local political leaders to push for more great jobs in their areas
- help more than 250,000 workers access basic skills training and further education through unionlearn.



3. Rebuilding a UK that works for working people after Brexit

The British economy is rigged against the interests of ordinary working people. A “no deal” Brexit will only make that worse, risking good jobs and hard-won rights at work. We need an economy that works for working people – now, and into the future.

That means that companies should prioritise long-term greener growth that benefits everybody, not short-term shareholder returns. We need good jobs in all regions and nations of the UK. We need high-quality, decently funded public services. And we need to work together to combat the resurgent far right, which preys on people’s fears and exploits inequality and disadvantage.

In 2018–19, the TUC and our member unions will:

- › advocate for a Brexit deal that puts jobs and rights first and protects the Good Friday Agreement, with the UK a member of the single market and customs union, and a meaningful national debate on the final deal
- › campaign for an industrial strategy that delivers sustainable jobs with decent pay, in all parts of the country
- › set out the case for how reforms to how businesses are run can deliver higher productivity and better jobs

- › bring together campaigners and unions to present a united opposition to the far right
- › argue for an investment-first economy in the UK and internationally, where the ability to deliver great jobs and decent pay is the test of economic success
- › campaign for proper funding and investment in our public services
- › promote public ownership where it is the best way to provide high quality public services for users, protect employment standards and provide value for taxpayers.



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What the TUC campaign plan means for you

The TUC's campaign plan sets out what our movement will do together, over the coming year. It's our manifesto for working people. It complements the campaigns and industrial priorities of individual unions, and offers a platform for members of different unions to work together on campaigns locally, through trades councils, regionally and nationally.

As you plan for the coming year, think about the practical actions your branch, trades council or region can take to promote our common priorities, show practical solidarity to workers in dispute and lend our support to wider campaigns that share our values. Whether it be at Workers' Memorial Day, May Day, heartunions week, Durham Miners' Gala, International Women's Day, Black History Month or Tolpuddle, trade unionists stand up for equality, justice and working people all year round. And throughout the year to come, there will be tools and resources to support you at tuc.org.uk.



Photo: Lorne Campbell / Guzelian

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