

January 2015



# Preliminary Agenda

TUC Young Workers Conference 2015



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Section one

# Conference agenda

## Saturday 21 March

- 10.30am Registration
- 11.00am Welcome reception for women delegates and visitors
- 1.15pm Opening session of conference and guest speakers
- 3.00pm Workshops
- 5.15pm First formal session of conference
- 7.00pm Evening social

## Sunday 22 March

- 10.00am Second formal session of conference
- 4pm (no later) Conference ends

## Section two

# Motions

### P1 Housing

Conference notes that housing is becoming more of a prevalent issue. Increasingly, young people are forced to live with family for longer, in sub-standard accommodation and struggle to buy a home or cope with rent increases, which far exceed wage increases.

This is an issue that needs reforms on a variety of points. There have been many examples of successful grassroots housing campaigns over the last year such as Focus E15, started by young mothers, and by organisations like Generation Rent, dedicated to working with people to make improvements to housing, an issue which affects all of our members. By coordinating support and campaigns on housing, the TUC can support members on this issue, which is crucial to their well-being and standard of living.

Conference resolves to call on the General Council to support housing as a priority campaign by:

- i. supporting and reaching out to grassroots housing campaigns
- ii. actively promoting the building of sustainable and genuinely affordable housing (community land trusts, community housing associations, cooperatives, self-build, homesteading, social housing) and alternatives to the wholesale demolition of council estates, rent controls and private renters' rights.

### ***Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union***

### P2 Mental health

Conference agrees that the future of trade unionism lies in making ourselves as relevant to people in their communities as in their workplaces. Conference therefore agrees that the Young Workers Forum shall each year select two issues as priority campaigns with the aim of demonstrating the importance and relevance of trade unions to non-industrial issues as well as providing campaigning opportunities to engage young workers.

Conference is deeply concerned at the rising trend in recorded mental ill health amongst young people, and is not surprised that this coincides with a plague of insecure employment, increasing personal indebtedness, chronic housing shortages and cuts in support services. Conference therefore agrees to make

mental well-being of young workers a priority issue, and to commence discussions with organisations such as SANE, MIND and Samaritans about the practicalities of campaigning on this issue.

### ***Communication Workers Union***

#### P3 Organising strategy

Conference recognises that, in this time of austerity and increasing inequality, trade union organising of under-represented groups including young people has never been so important.

Conference notes that young people and other under-represented groups continue to be disproportionately impacted by public sector cuts and the squeeze on living standards, and strongly believes that the best defence is to effectively organise these groups in their collective interest.

Conference calls on all affiliates to renew their commitment to organising for equality and to commit new resources to representing the under-represented within their organisations.

Conference calls on the TUC Young Worker's Committee to lobby within the TUC to ensure that organising young workers is placed right at the top of the agenda and that affiliates have access to the support they need to develop their internal structures and young workers' priorities.

### ***Community***

#### P4 Employment journey

Conference notes that today there are over a million young people out of work. This is the true mark of the coalition government's economic strategy based on dogma, deception and designed to create an 'us and them' society.

Young people have been in the forefront of the government's economic failure. Today, one in four 18- to 24-year-olds have been unemployed for over a year, leading to historically high youth unemployment of 20 per cent.

In the last four years, we have witnessed a generation suffering from poor job prospects, low skills and repeated spells out of work – a generation lost to unemployment. A fresh perspective to youth employment is needed that gives hope to young people in Britain

GMB Scotland's Young Members Networks have developed and adopted the Employment Journey initiative that focuses on a four-step approach to addressing youth employment. These steps are 1. Seeking, 2. Securing, 3. Staying and 4. Succeeding.

## **Motions**

Conference mandates the TUC Young Workers Forum to:

- i. work with the GMB Young Members Network to adapt the Employment Journey Model for the TUC
- ii. once developed, raise profile and gain support from TUC affiliates
- iii. report back to next year's conference on progress.

## **GMB**

### P5 Housing campaigns and freelance workers

The results of the recent TUC Young Workers' Forum Housing Survey reveal a great many young people feel the current housing situation in the UK is failing them.

Extortionate rent (the average rent to salary ratio was a massive 41 per cent), poor quality accommodation, revenge evictions and insecure contracts are becoming more and more prevalent. There is an urgent need for more affordable, quality housing, and Equity's Young Members' Committee fully endorses campaigns for decent homes.

However, Conference recognises that whilst young people should have a right to secure long-term housing should they require it, the question of decent housing cannot always be tied to longevity of tenancy.

Many of Equity's members, and other freelance workers, move around the country regularly on short-term engagements and so are reliant on short tenancies in order to avoid paying rent on two properties at once. Conference therefore calls on the TUC to protect the availability of flexible, short-term housing agreements for those workers who need them, within wider campaigns on decent housing for young workers.

## **Equity**

### P6 Music education: supporting music teachers

Conference is concerned that young people are at risk of losing out on the life-changing opportunities that music education offers as job cuts, changes to terms, conditions and pay, and unreasonable room hire fees are adversely affecting the UK's music teachers.

Without a good music teacher, many young people will not even be aware that music is a career path open to them and that music is not just the preserve of those with the means to pay.



The Musicians' Union (MU) represents over 30,000 professional musicians in the UK, and it firmly believes that access to music education is a birthright and belongs to everyone.

To that end, the MU launched #SupportMyMusicTeacher to celebrate the work music teachers do, raise awareness of the issues they face, and encourage respect for the working, teaching musician.

Conference call on the TUC to support music teachers facing these challenges and the #SupportMyMusicTeacher campaign.

### ***Musicians' Union***

#### P7 Recruitment and retention of young teachers

Conference asserts that young teachers are the future of the profession.

Conference further asserts that the recruitment, retention and development of young teachers is critical to ensuring high educational standards for all children and young people.

Conference condemns those employers who exploit young teachers and fail to provide them with the support to which they are entitled.

Conference is alarmed by the growing crisis in the recruitment and retention of young teachers which is fuelled by pay cuts, pension reforms, excessive workload, attacks on professional status and the casualisation of the profession, making teaching increasingly unattractive.

Conference calls upon the TUC to support the work of affiliates in campaigning against the injustices faced by young teachers.

### ***NASUWT***

#### P8 Police surveillance

Police surveillance of journalists, trade unionists and activists has reached unprecedented heights.

London Metropolitan Police have used the Regulation of Investigatory Powers legislation (RIPA) to get access to phone records, internal emails and other sensitive data as a means of exposing sources and whistleblowers, without judicial oversight.

Congress recognises that attempts by the government to tighten up use of RIPA have been pitiful and ineffective.

Congress also recognises the increasing number of journalists and activists finding themselves registered under a police database of “domestic extremists.”

## **Motions**

Six NUJ members are currently involved in collective legal action to challenge their placement on the registry, which details intimate details about their lives, including their work, medical history and even their sexuality.

Such surveillance is not about protecting the public but about criminalising dissent and preventing scrutiny of the activities of the powerful, as well as preventing further embarrassment for the police.

Conference calls on the TUC, with the support of the Young Workers Forum, to:

- i. oppose and expose the growing use of surveillance against journalists, trade unionists, activists and others
- ii. campaign for restrictions on the use of RIPA and other similar piece of legislation
- iii. condemn the registration of campaigners and journalists as ‘extremists’ and support legal challenges to such designations
- iv. encourage trade unionists and activists to apply for subject access requests under the Data Protection Act to expose the level of state surveillance.

## ***National Union of Journalists***

### **P9 Electoral registration and voting age**

Conference notes that young people have been particularly badly impacted by the ongoing repercussions of the 2008 financial crisis.

Conference is concerned that one of the impacts of the crisis on young people has been apathy about politics and disengagement from political discourse.

Conference notes that recent research shows that almost one in four young people between the ages of 18 and 21 are not registered to vote, with the Electoral Reform Society estimating that as many as 800,000 young adults are not registered.

Conference considers that the requirement of the current government’s 2013 Electoral Registration and Administration Act that every voting age citizen has to apply individually to be registered to vote, will only increase the amount of young people who are disenfranchised in this country.

Conference agrees to conduct a campaign to encourage young members to register as voters including via the “Bite the Ballot” campaign which independently provides advice to young people on how to register to vote.

Conference is also concerned about the voting age, noting that the age at which young people can vote is currently 18 for general elections even though people from the age of 16 can work, marry and even join the army.

Conference applauds the lowering of the voting age in the recent Scottish independence referendum and calls for the same reduction in all UK elections.

### ***National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers***

#### P10 Impact of student debt

Students are leaving university with increasing debt and pay that does not match the increasing cost of living.

In 2004 it was announced that the ‘top up fees’ would be charged at a maximum of £3,000 per year; in the past ten years that fee has increased to £9,000 per year. This dramatic increase in the cost of university education has left young people with a level of debt far greater than that of previous generations.

For teachers and other young workers in addition to this debt, there have been:

- i. an increase in monthly pension contributions
- ii. effectively, frozen pay
- iii. performance-related pay.

All these factors mean that increases in take-home pay levels for young workers have been much lower than increases in the cost of living.

Teaching is a vocation. It is also a profession that is faced with a huge national shortage. The increasing financial difficulties faced by young teachers can only contribute to the numbers leaving teaching in the first five years of their career. The Teacher Support Network carried out a national survey of teachers in 2012 which showed that 80 per cent of the teachers surveyed found difficulty in managing their finances.

Conference calls upon the TUC to:

- a. carry out a national audit for all members on the impact of student debt
- b. set up a working party to act upon the findings of the audit and to report back to young workers conference 2017.

### ***National Union of Teachers***

## **Motions**

### P11 Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

Conference believes the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with America and the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with Canada will have a serious and long-term detrimental effect on the working lives of young people in Britain and throughout Europe.

Conference understands the agreement will be a ‘race to the bottom’ in terms of regulation and workers’ rights – affecting industries as diverse as transport, farming, public sector and finance – and limits national governments’ sovereignty and capacity to decide national policies and law.

These agreements represent a huge step backwards for the organised labour movement. For seafarers they remove any restrictions on nationality of crew, wages or working conditions, meaning UK seafarers will be priced off ships as companies employ the cheapest seafarers on the worst terms and conditions.

Conference believes the UK should be following the American example and should support a European-level version of the Jones Act underpinning the European maritime sector by requiring all passengers and goods transported by water between EU ports to be carried on EU registered ships crewed by European domiciled seafarers as the Jones Act protects American shipping and jobs.

Conference:

- i. supports calls for the immediate suspension of negotiations on TTIP and CETA
- ii. supports fighting against any legislation that seeks to undermine the very principals of the trade union movement
- iii. supports calls for legislation to protect seafarers and other workers from unfair competition
- iv. urges the UK government to promote the development of EU legislation based on the strategic aims of the US Jones Act.

### ***Nautilus International***

### P12 Childcare funding

There is an increasingly difficult decision which is being faced by 51 per cent of new parents who are 29 or younger, particularly mothers: Do you return to work or stay at home and raise your child? There are many factors to take into consideration; however, one of the major issues is childcare costs. The average cost for a child under two is £177 per week, equating to £708 a month. Tax credits are available if the household income is £26,000 (£32,000 if two or more children); however, this requires a minimum of working 16 hours/week

and comes to £122.50 (total of £490), leaving a gap of £218. Some employers offer childcare support, which is exempt from tax and national insurance; however, these are governed by wages as to how much individuals can apply for.

While these costs leave little for families to maintain a work/life balance, the other potential choices of flexi-time or sabbaticals can leave the parents with a lack of support for career development/advancement.

Conference calls on the TUC to support the need for reforms to the UK childcare system in order to support parents, particularly mothers, to prevent them from falling behind with development in the workplace and enable them to have a suitable work/life balance.

### ***Prospect***

#### P13 Hostile environment in union organising

PCS has been one of the biggest opponents of austerity. As a result the union has been subjected to a concerted political attack from this government, pursuing aggressive anti-trade union policies to undermine PCS's ability to defend its members and public services.

The removal of the check-off subscription payment method is a calculated attempt to stop the union functioning, whilst facility time has been cut drastically in an attempt to impede young members organising in the workplace.

If the government succeed with its own employees it will send clear encouragement to all employers to break the union movement.

To fight effectively for young members we need to fight back against any attempt to undermine our movement and the ability of workers to organise in trade unions.

Conference resolves to:

- i. call on the TUC to:
  - a. fully support the efforts PCS are making to fight union busting, including practical support from the TUC
  - b. extract from the Labour Party a statement that they are publicly committed to reversing the Tory party's anti-union policies
  - c. organise a day of action against attacks on trade unions.
- ii. support any trade union, activist or member who is targeted for their trade union affiliation

## **Motions**

- iii. produce material for young members on organising in a hostile work environment as part of the action plan
- iv. campaign for the reversal of the anti-trade union laws, including the Lobbying Bill, and to fight against any attempt to constrain union activity.

### ***Public and Commercial Services Union***

#### P14 Adoption of the minimum wage to be £10 an hour

Conference notes that under the austerity imposed by the Tory government, living standards have decreased dramatically for young people across the country, with many finding it hard to get jobs that don't pay the minimum wage or close to the minimum wage.

Conference also notes that even if Labour win the general election, Ed Miliband has only pledged to increase the minimum wage to £8 an hour by 2020, which, accounting for inflation, is what the minimum wage would be anyway.

Conference recognises that while the TUC is doing some good work in highlighting low pay, it has been very silent on the £10 minimum wage, which was made TUC policy last year at conference.

Therefore, Conference asks that the TUC does the following.

It instructs the TUC to release a statement confirming its support for the increase of the minimum wage of £10 an hour. It asks that the TUC campaigns wherever possible for this to be made law and lobbies the Labour Party to ensure that they adopt the £10 minimum wage as soon as possible.

### ***Transport Salaried Staffs Association***

#### P15 Umbrella companies

Conference notes:

- i. Under an umbrella company the worker is required to pay both the employers' and employees' national insurance contributions.
- ii. Under an umbrella company, despite pay rates being advertised at a much higher level the worker is only actually paid the national minimum wage.
- iii. In many cases holiday pay is 'rolled up' into the rate and paid weekly.

- iv. TUC official figures shows that 81 per cent of temporary agency workers aged 20–24, and 64 per cent of those aged 25–29, say they are in temporary work because they cannot find a permanent job.
- v. There are 1.4 million zero-hours contracts in the UK, most of which are workers under the age of 25.
- vi. Many umbrella companies issue zero-hours contracts.
- vii. Payslips are made so complex that it is difficult, if not impossible, to understand all the deductions being made from the pay the worker receives.
- viii. Umbrella companies charge the worker directly for their services.
- ix. Umbrella companies undermine high-quality Apprenticeship schemes.
- x. Conference resolves to support UCATT's campaign to end the umbrella company con trick which is exploiting workers.

This includes calling for:

- a. a legal obligation to be placed upon employment agencies and other employers to directly employ all workers and not via umbrella companies
- b. all forms of false self-employment to be abolished
- c. a legal duty to be placed upon employers to make payment arrangements transparent and easy for workers to understand.

### ***Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians***

#### P16 Towards a younger Congress

Conference believes it is vital that Congress not only reflects the composition of its affiliated organisations, but is also seen as an important development opportunity for young members getting involved in the trade union movement.

Conference believes that the TUC can play a part in ensuring affiliated organisations make efforts to ensure young members get the opportunity to learn through holding Congress delegate roles.

Conference therefore agrees that the following rule change in the TUC's rules and constitution is required:

In Part 2, Rule 17, 'Representation at Annual Congress', paragraph (a), delete "they have paid the fees prescribed in Rule 3" and replace with:

- "i) they have paid the fees prescribed in Rule 3

## **Motions**

- ii) affiliated organisations entitled to send between five to nine delegates inclusive must include a young member\* in their delegation, and those entitled to send 10 or more must include at least two young members\* in their delegation.

\*as defined in their organisation's rules or, in the absence of a rule, 27 years of age or under."

## **UNISON**

### P17 Action against austerity

Conference notes:

- i. The coalition government's ideological pursuit of failed neo-liberal austerity, cuts and a shrinking state has resulted in some of the most brutal attacks on working people in over a hundred years.
- ii. Young people remain at the forefront of such attacks with close to a million unemployed, millions forced into the growing community of working poor, burdened with growing debt and forced into insecure minimum wage jobs on zero- or short-hours contracts, unpaid internships or 'workfare' schemes.
- iii. The removal of the EMA and introduction of university tuition fees is leaving young students with obscene levels of debt, often exceeding £50,000, before their first day at work.
- iv. We have a housing crisis in which young people have been condemned into 'generation rent'; forced into insecure, low-quality housing and paying exploitative rents.
- v. As a consequence of these attacks our generation is destined to become the first since the industrial revolution to be worse off than our parents.

Given this, Conference calls upon the TUC and affiliates to:

- a. develop campaign themes around young people's issues and integrate them into on-going TUC strategies supporting our Britain Needs a Pay Rise and anti-austerity work
- b. engage with and positively support grass-roots organisations such as the People's Assembly, Generation Rent and Focus E15 in their efforts to secure social homes for all in need
- c. support affiliates working on strategies to organise young workers in precarious work and disparate, fragmented sectors of the economy.

## **Unite**



## P18 Short-hours contracts

Conference welcomes the focus over recent years on the scandal of zero-hours contracts. Conference, however, notes that the broader picture of workplace insecurity including short-hours contracts is often ignored.

The government's official figures claim that unemployment is falling but there is a growing problem of under-employment. There may be more people in employment but workers in these new jobs are often low paid or on short-hours contracts.

Many workers on short-hours contracts are regularly working additional hours above their basic contractual hours but face the problem that these additional hours are not guaranteed. Conference welcomes recent employment tribunal and European Court of Justice rulings that regular overtime should be included in holiday pay and that holiday pay should be based on an individual's normal remuneration.

Conference believes that if we are to tackle low pay, then as well as ending the exploitation of zero-hours contracts and promoting the living wage, we need to make sure that workers have enough contracted hours to provide a decent living without having to depend on non-guaranteed additional hours.

Conference calls on the TUC Young Workers Forum to campaign to highlight the issue of short-hours contracts and calls for workers to have contracts reflecting their regular normal hours.

Conference urges the TUC to campaign and lobby to highlight the problem of short-hours contracts and for workers on short-hours contracts to have new rights to contracts reflecting their normal working hours.

### ***Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers***



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