

Welcome to Conference 2017

The General Election has mobilised hundreds of thousands of people who want to see real change in society. The disastrous Tory policies of austerity which were about making some of the most vulnerable people pay for an economic crisis not of their making have been exposed as not delivering for the majority of people. The Labour Party manifesto which is a vision to deliver opportunity and equality is one which UNISON absolutely supported. In the Northern Region we have felt the impact of Tory policies in our workplaces and communities acutely and have consistently campaigned for alternative policies which have been soundly supported across the Region. This gives us a real opportunity to engage with members and non-members about why trade unions are so important and the difference we make on a daily basis. We must use our strong relationship with the Labour party to ensure we get the best deal for our members and public services. We must use this to recruit to our union, and to mobilise more of our members into activity.

The Region has prioritised our political organising and campaigning strategy and this has already brought benefits with candidates across the North East endorsing and promoting our policies for workplaces and communities. Policies such as removing the public sector pay cap, ending zero hour contracts, abolishing tuition fees, protecting and extending equality legislation, and an end to the anti-trade union laws are now part of the Government's manifesto. UNISON has been critical to achieving these significant commitments.

We now have a much stronger position and the Government will need to rethink the type of Brexit negotiations which are pursued and they will need to be in the interests of the many. The North East is the only Region which sees a net trade balance from EU trade. It is correct that the Government takes forward the outcome of the EU Referendum and delivers on it, however this must be done in a way which protects jobs and services, and this position is now strengthened by the outcome of the General Election result. They will also ensure the trade union voice is at the table.

There has been a crisis in all our public services which under the Tories have been subjected to funding cuts since 2010 and this will now change. We have a real opportunity to be directly involved in developing and delivering public services for the future.

The Public Services Alliance will continue to work across the Region bringing trade unions, community groups and other campaigning organisations together to deliver a more participatory democracy where people are engaged in political activity and campaigning to deliver on our UNISON manifesto.

The Conference agenda and debates will focus on these challenges, reviewing and debating our policies about:

- Organising to strengthen our membership and also to be able to grow our membership and activity in areas such as community voluntary and private sectors
- Delivering our and Labour's alternative economic agenda
- Continuing to strengthen alliances to ensure UNISON is politically influential

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- Understanding commissioning and procurement and new models of public service delivery
- Promoting equalities in our workplaces and communities
- Campaigning for a Brexit that protects workers rights
- Continuing to challenge hate crime and racism
- A strategy for health and social care integration
- Responding to the Devolution agenda
- Strengthening our international work to build global alliances

Northern Region delegates, have a good record of making valuable and informed contributions to debates as the Region and Branches have been at the forefront of the campaign in workplaces and communities to defend public services. We are doing some innovative work via the Public Services Alliance; organising in the Community Voluntary, and private sector. We need to increase on our work to recruit and organise amongst young people so they see the union as relevant to them.

Delegates and their Branches will also have contributions to make on learning, health and safety, equalities and other debates where the experience of Branches and delegates can provide valuable information and ideas.

The Region will have a direct interest in motions outlining attacks on democracy and austerity and our local communities; and similarly international work particularly debates on Colombia and Palestine.

UNISON Northern has a good profile within the national union. Branches and delegates have an opportunity to participate in debates and bring their experiences to the floor of Conference to inform and determine UNISON policies.

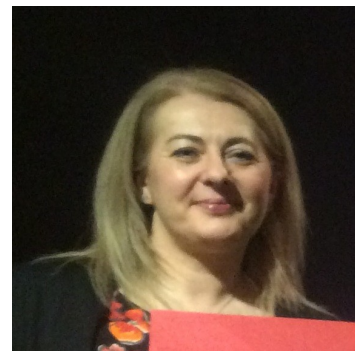
We are sure UNISON Northern delegates will play a full and active role – participating in debates, attending fringe meetings and writing for the Regional newsletter and of course enjoying the social life!

UNISON Conference is big but it does not need to be overwhelming and after a short period first time delegates will feel like old hands. The most important thing is for delegates to remember they are there to represent their fellow Branch members, put forward their views and report back on the policy decisions.

Clare Williams
Regional Secretary



Nicky Ramanandi and Linda Hobson
Regional Delegates



Motion 55—UNISON and the WASPI Campaign



For decades the state pension age (SPA) for women was 60. An increase to 65, to be phased in between 2010 and 2020, was included in the Pensions Act 1995, but five years ago the coalition government pushed through a speeding up of the process. The SPA for women is instead increasing to 65 between April 2016 and November 2018, then 66 by October 2020. Many women say they had always expected to receive their pension at 60, and then discovered their SPA had increased by perhaps four, five or even six years. Amazingly, the government did not write to any women affected by the rise in the pension ages for nearly 14 years after the law was passed in 1995. The result is that hundreds of thousands of women say they didn't have enough time to make alternative plans.

A 62 year old gave evidence to MP's and stated that her two SPA increases "represent a financial loss of approximately £30,000 from my planned old age".

The WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequality) Campaign is a grassroots campaign set up by women affected by the changes to SPA. The Northern Region has really embraced and supported the campaign. Pat Ormston, a member from Newcastle City Branch contacted Pat Heron, Chair of the Women's Network. Pat Ormston addressed the Women's Network and was then invited to address the Regional Labour Link committee. Because of the work of our Region UNISON nationally picked up and supported the campaign.

THE AIM OF THE CAMPAIGN IS: The campaign aims to achieve fair transitional SP Arrangements for all women born in the 1950's who are affected by the change to the state pension law. This should be a 'bridging' pension to provide an income until State Pension Age is met, it should not be means tested and there should be an element of compensation for those women who have already reached their SPA. The WASPI Campaign is not asking for the SPA to revert back to age 60.

A delegation of WASPI women from the Northern Region lobbied Parliament with thousands of other women on International Women's Day. Some of these women had never done anything politically before or been that involved within UNISON, this has certainly changed.

What can your branch do?

- If you haven't already, you can identify any WASPI women within your Branch and invite them to a meeting. Contact pat.heron31@gmail.com and Pat can get a WASPI speaker to attend your meeting.
- Assist women to access the information to lodge maladministration claim via www.waspi.co.uk/
- Support the WASPI Campaign

WASPI Women are not going away

Linda Hobson and Pat Heron



Motion 18 - Stepping up the campaign against bullying and harassment.

We have probably all been sat in our workplaces and heard something that just doesn't sound quite right. In fact, we've probably heard something that really isn't acceptable. This motion develops a strategy to help all of us in those situation to do something about it!

It starts of as a comment, but quickly it becomes a problem, a concern, a victim of bullying.

As the motion states, a survey of young members in 2016 revealed some horrifying facts:

- 40% of young workers have been bullied or harassed
- Nearly 10% of young workers are currently being bullied
- 1/3 of those bullied have needed to take time off of work
- One in eight needed medication as a result.

This just can't continue. The workplace should be a safe space for all people to be, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, disability or sexuality.

We, as members of this great union, a union that takes pride in self organisation and creating safe spaces to be ourselves, cannot allow this to continue.

We must develop a strategy the strategy this motion calls for, that supports, educates and negotiates to ensure we get the best for all members to feel safe where they work.



Please support this motion.

Andrew Anderson.

Reflecting on Local Government Conference

The weather is fantastic here in Brighton but the business of UNISON must go on. It would be easy to consider spending some time sunning ourselves rather than addressing the business of the Union, our primary purpose for being here again.

It is great to be able to meet and see our colleagues and friends from across the country. It is always an enlightening experience attending both Local Government and National Conference. Thus far Local Government has lived up to expectations.

We would like to express our pleasure hearing the inspiring fight and struggle of the Derby TAs and our own Durham TAs fight against the Council's decision to cut pay. Megan

Charlton representing Durham TAs spoke very well, articulating the struggle within Durham yet



acknowledging and appreciating all the support our Branch have received from across the country. Well done Megan and well done to all those involved and supporting the Durham TA's fight. Congratulations to Derby with their victory also.

A few words must be expressed about our delegate Ashleigh Downie (Branch Chair), speaking in respect of Youth Workers – Motion 2. Ashleigh was a first time speaker and I thought she spoke passionately about an issue so close to her heart.

As the lead delegate for my Branch I would also like to express my appreciation to our other first time delegates and I hope you enjoy the rest of the week.

Thanks to Northern Regional staff for your support and inclusive co-ordination. We're looking forward to our Regional Social also.

David Glew, Durham LG Branch

Motion 33 – STPs – the future of the NHS?

Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) are being produced under the direction of NHS England and there are two currently proposed covering the North East. UNISON raised concerns about the lack of public engagement and consultation, as a Region when events were finally organised we ensured there was a visible UNISON presence.

We know that there are significant funding gaps due to the Government's continued reduction in public sector funding affecting both health and social care. The current plans highlight the enormous challenges facing both the NHS and Local Authorities in our Region and Government minister David Mowat has stated that if STPs "are failing to address the needs of stakeholders...they won't go ahead".

UNISON supports initiatives which have aspirations to improve health outcomes and social care for the population in the Region, but there are serious areas of concern which need to be challenged. STPs have no formal place in law, so there are concerns about how those responsible for implementing the plans will be held to account.

At the very least - these plans should be subject to comprehensive scrutiny by council OSCs, Health and Wellbeing Boards and other governance bodies.

UNISON believes these funding cuts imposed by the Conservative Government's austerity measures as well as how the delivery of key elements of the plans such as social care can be achieved requires greater scrutiny and challenge. We need to support and co-ordinate campaigns organised by health unions in the Region to scrutinise STPs and hold the Government to account on their implementation.

In the Region we have produced a model motion which has been sent to all CLPs and we are working with Local Authorities to ensure they are properly involved in the scrutiny of the plans. If the funding gaps are not addressed the plans must not be implemented. The Labour Party's commitment to review and scrap this process is to be welcomed, we must campaign with Labour for an end to the internal market in healthcare and for a properly funded NHS. Through the PSA Coalitions are continuing to organise and build alliances and campaigns.

Clare Williams, Regional Secretary



Composite C Health & Social Care Integration

Social Care has been a key area of work within the Region as budgets are cut further, integration will be proposed and we must have the correct structures in place to be able to respond.

As part of the Government policy on integration we've seen the introduction of STPs (Sustainability and Transformation Plans) – these are 5 year plans for health and care services. These are being developed on a geographical basis and intend to bring together NHS Organisations, Care Services and Local Authorities. Early engagement sessions took place in the Region – these were well attended by UNISON and Regional responses were submitted in relation to the plans.

A model motion was sent to all MPs and Councillors who are UNISON members urging them to ensure there is full consultation on the proposals.

UNISON have long supported the principal of integration which could improve the delivery of care, however integration will not solve the funding crisis and cannot be a means to drive down terms and conditions or privatise services.

Cross sector seminars on health and social care have taken place in the Region and one of the actions from this was more regular joint meetings with Health and Local Government – as it is recognised that joint working across the sectors will be vital in responding to further integration. A number of GFF posts are working across health and social care and the Region launched a 'Social Care Charter' with Care Home Managers. We continue to work with Care Homes to provide staff training to campaign for a living wage and we continue to campaign against zero hours contracts.

If integration is not managed in the correct way there are real dangers for those working in the sector and those reliant on the services.

This Composite highlights a key issue for our union. Much work has been undertaken within the Region to ensure we are well placed to respond to the challenges these changes pose. Please be in the hall to listen to this important debate.

Nicky Ramanandi, Regional Convenor



UNISON Health and Social Care Fringe

When: Tuesday 20 June, 17:15 – 18:15


Where: The Restaurant, Brighton Centre third floor

Refreshments provided

UNISON has been at the forefront of campaigns to save our NHS and Social Care services, with branches fighting alongside communities to save services from cuts and privatisation.

Come along to hear the latest from campaigners about the threats we face and what you can do to stand up for our NHS and Social Care Services.

Speakers

			
Lillian Macer UNISON Scotland convenor (co-chair)	Owen Jones Author and Guardian Columnist	John Ashworth MP Labour Shadow Health Secretary	Jan Tomlinson UNISON Cymru/Wales convenor (co-chair)

Motion 19—Tackling Stress



Gateshead Branch have been working on this new development in tackling stress for about 4 years now.

The need for stronger evidence arose because management wouldn't really listen when we told them about very high levels of stress.

So we looked at using the Management Standards approach from HSE. This would produce evidence that management wouldn't be able to ignore.

It took quite a lot of planning and we produced a questionnaire using some questions from HSE and some arising from our concerns about the way additional hours were not always paid. Because we were able to run the survey on the basis of confidentiality, we could ask for peoples' names, jobs, teams etc, and this allowed us to build a much more detailed picture.

Previous survey run by management had always had to be anonymous. But we could do so much more, because staff had trust in the Union. For each question in the survey, we could see where the problem was worst.

The survey results were presented in comparison to the HSE's national data averages, and the use colours in the table clearly identified where the problems were worst.

It's fair to say that management were impressed and shocked at the same time, and it led to quite a lot of work to make improvements.

Adam Taylor's work on this was recognised with a National Health and Safety Rep Award in early 2016. It was this award that triggered the work in the region to share and develop what had been done at Gateshead, with the Regional Health & Safety Committee and work that has since led to surveys being undertaken or planned in six branches now.

It's also very important to acknowledge that this work on tackling stress would not have been possible without the significant support of the Region. It's also clear that work on tackling stress produces very good opportunities for recruitment of new members and of new Reps.

We hope the motion is successful, and that we hope we'll be able to continue developing this exciting and important new opportunity.

Gateshead LG Branch

Challenging Racism and Xenophobia

In the days and months following the EU Referendum there has been a notable increase in hate crime and racist incidents.

Toxic TV debates and biased media are not helping the situation. There has been an almost accepted approval amongst some in society in what can only be described as 'acceptable racism'. Remarks not challenged and behaviour not checked, the impact for any not deemed 'British enough' has been huge with many communities living in fear.

We know that without our migrant workers key services couldn't be delivered. We know that our communities are only as vibrant as they are because of a long history of immigration into the UK.

Within the Region we have a proud history of challenging racism and inequality. Our message to the BNP, UKIP and the EDL has been clear – we are a Region proud of our multiculturalism and diversity and their position of hate has no place within our communities. Through the PSAs we have ran a number of campaigns and held events, the most recent being 'Love Food Hate Racism' – a food fair bringing foods from across the world to the Monument in Newcastle – this event was a huge success.

In times of austerity some people will look to blame other and the policies of hate have used this to attempt to make inroads. However, it's not migrant workers that caused a shortage of houses, waiting lists for the NHS or high unemployment – it's Central Government policy and we have done much work in the Region to highlight this.

It is vital that we support members both in and outside the workplace. We have continued to work with Show Racism the Red Card, we have ran Ambassador training courses in the Region and continue to run workshops for members and activists. If your branch is not already affiliated to Show Racism the Red Card urge them to do so as the work they do is invaluable.

Fighting racism in all forms, opposing bigotry and discrimination will continue to be a key area of the Region's work programme.

Nicky Ramanandi,
Regional Convenor



Pay – Tackling In-Work Poverty



I'm a domestic in the NHS, a Band 2. I'm attending conference as a low paid woman member for Newcastle Hospitals Branch. This is a position I'm proud to have and a group of staff I'm immensely proud to represent, however, I along with my colleagues are finding it harder and harder every year.

Years of pay restraint in the public sector as a whole and particularly for me, the NHS has left many of us not only struggling to make ends meet, but finding that our ends are frayed and getting further and further apart.

Personally, I have gone without meals to make sure my children are fed, I have relied on friends and family to help me out when things have been particularly difficult, like when an unexpected bill turns up but this is happening more and more. I've often spoke on the issue of low pay and have said 'there's too much month at the end of my wages' and this is true for so many of our members.

To hear politicians state that nurses going to foodbanks is a complex issue or that there is no magic money tree makes me extremely angry. There's always money to pay the politicians their pay rises and expenses, money was found quickly enough to bailout the banks and money is always found to fund wars and warmongers. It is immoral to think that in 2017 our UNISON branches are now being all too frequently used to refer members to foodbanks. But let's be clear, whilst nurses going to foodbanks may sell papers, let's not forget the rest of the NHS staff, the porters, caterers, phlebotomists, ward clerks and domestics like me.

I work overtime on a weekend, my partner, also a Band 2 in the NHS works full time and overtime and still we don't have enough money coming in. We don't have weekends away (unless you count conference), nights out, fancy clothes, state of the art mod cons. We have the bare essentials, fortunate to have a roof over our heads but always knowing that this could change for the worse in an instant.

Austerity is killing people - of that there is now no doubt, we need to force the Government to change track on public sector pay immediately, our members can not afford to wait any longer. We don't need platitudes from the likes of Jeremy Hunt. We need a Government for the many not the few. I welcomed the news from Labour that they would end the public sector pay freeze within the NHS if they'd have won the General Election - well here's to another General Election soon so we can finish the job and see off these Tories once and for all.

Helen Kilpatrick
Newcastle Hospitals Branch



CONFERENCE WORDSEARCH

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W	C	I	M	H	S	M	J	R	N	P	R	Y	I	N
V	O	I	A	I	O	E	R	J	B	U	G	G	R	F
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DEVOLUTION
MANDATE
DEFENDING
MOTION
COMPOSITE
RULES
INTERNATIONAL
PUBLIC
ORGANISE
SERVICES

What's your first memory of a public service? A dinner lady dolloping out green custard? Smimming lessons in your local pool? Learning to read at the library?

We want to make a film with your personal stories, to make people remember how integral public services are to our lives. Come to the UNIZONE anytime and ask for Rachel if you've got 5 minutes to get involved.

If you need this Newssheet in any other format please let your Regional Delegates know.



This year's Regional Social will be happening on:

Thursday 22nd June

From 7.30 pm

At OHSO SOCIAL

Kings Road NE1 1NB

It's an opportunity for Northern Delegates to get together informally for a drink and a bite to eat from the buffet. With a DJ playing some tunes it will be a relaxing and enjoyable evening and we hope you can join us.

On The Fringe...

Lunchtime:

Show Racism the Red Card: Racism on the Rise. Education is the Answer
Room 1B

Exiting the EU—getting a fair deal for public service workers
Syndicate 2 Ground Floor

Turkey: democracy rights and solidarity
Syndicate 3 First Floor

Guarding against stress—a tool kit to success
Syndicate 4 First Floor

Evening:

Branch Resources Review
Auditorium 2

Cuba and Venezuela: Another world is possible
Syndicate 1 Ground Floor

What you need to know about supporting members through professional conduct cases
Syndicate 2 Ground Floor

Save our NHS!
The Restaurant

Show Racism the Card

SHOW RACISM THE RED CARD

UNISON 2017 Fringe Event

Tuesday 20 June

12:45-1.45pm

Room 1B (ground floor at the back of the foyer)

Brighton Centre, BH1 2GR

Racism on the rise, Education is the answer

Guest Speakers are:

Liam Rosenior, professional footballer for Brighton & Hove Albion

Christine Blower, Vice President, ~~SRBC~~

Harry Leslie Smith, British writer and political commentator

Margaret Greer, National Officer, Race Equality, UNISON

Clare Williams, Northern Regional Secretary, UNISON

Elizabeth Cameron, Black Members Committee, UNISON

Stephen Cavalier, Chief Executive, Thompsons Solicitors

The meeting will be chaired by ~~Ged~~ Grebby, Chief Executive, ~~SRBC~~



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STANDING UP FOR YOU

Your Newssheet Needs You!!

You're here at Conference! Is it your first time? Are you speaking in a debate? Got something to say about your time in Brighton? Let us know your thoughts, opinions and views through our Regional newsletter.

**See Allison in the Newssheet Room (3rd Floor) or e-mail her
a.jackson2@unison.co.uk**

