

Angela Rayner MP

Angela Rayner, Labour MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Education, will be addressing conference this morning. Angela is a former care worker and UNISON member from the North West Region where she was the lead lay activist and was elected MP for Ashton-under-Lyne at the 2015 general election.



As the Shadow Secretary of State for Education, Angela is advocating a “cradle to grave” education service or a National Education Service. As part of this Angela has been touring the country and last week arrived in the Northern Region. Attendees heard of the impact of the Tory Government on our education system. A system that is increasingly fragmented and, for too many, inaccessible. The drive towards academisation since 2010 and now towards free schools; an early years and childcare system divided into a complex series of both demand and supply, and a system of both higher and adult education that is increasingly reliant on personal debt, has made it harder for learners and their families to navigate the system and to access it whenever they need to. They also heard key principles for the Labour Party policy on education.

The key principles are:

1. Education has intrinsic value in giving all people access to the common body of knowledge we share, and practical value in allowing all to participate fully in our society. These principles shall guide the National Education Service.
2. The National Education Service shall provide education that is free at the point of use, available universally and throughout life.
3. The National Education Service provides education for the public good and all providers within the National Education Service shall be bound by the principles of this charter.
4. High quality education is essential to a strong and inclusive society and economy, so the National Education Service shall work alongside the health, sustainability, and industrial policies set by democratically elected government.
5. Every child, and adult, matters, so the National Education Service will be committed to tackling all barriers to learning, and providing high-quality education for all.
6. All areas of skill and learning deserve respect; the National Education Service will provide all forms of education, integrating academic, technical and other forms of learning within and outside of educational institutions, and treating all with equal respect.
7. Educational excellence is best achieved through collaboration and the National Education Service will be structured to encourage and enhance cooperation across boundaries and sectors.

Cont'd

Angela Rayner, cont'd

8. The National Education Service shall be accountable to the public, communities, and parents and children that it serves. Schools, colleges, and other public institutions within the National Education Service should be rooted in their communities, with parents and communities empowered, via appropriate democratic means, to influence change where it is needed and ensure that the education system meets their needs. The appropriate democratic authority will set, monitor and allocate resources, ensuring that they meet the rights, roles, and responsibilities of individuals and institutions.
9. The National Education Service aspires to the highest standards of excellence and professionalism. Educators and all other staff will be valued as highly-skilled professionals, and appropriate accountability will be balanced against giving genuine freedom of judgement and innovation. The National Education Service shall draw on evidence and international best practice, and provide appropriate professional development and training.
10. The National Education Service must have the utmost regard to the well-being of learners and educators, and its policies and practices, particularly regarding workload, assessment, and inspection, will support the emotional, social and physical well-being of students and staff.

Participants had the opportunity to participate in the formulation of Labour Party policy through the National Policy Forum process and you can too, but you have to be quick, the deadline in this Sunday www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/consultation2018.

I'm looking forward to hearing from Angela today, she's a huge credit to our union and a great example of how we grow our own - she's a role model to many. From care worker to MP and from council estate to parliament.

Linda Hobson & Debbie Lydon

Motion 29 – Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships once played a vital role in training up the British workforce for our industries. In some cases they still do but as work changes in the UK, so have apprenticeships and union membership goes hand in hand with that.

There has been a big push in recent years for young people to go to university and further education and no one would ever discourage them from doing so. However, the subsequent number of graduate jobs does not match up, leaving people going into low paid jobs and wasting their newly learnt skills. It's clear we need a more diversely trained workforce for the future. However, some employers have looked to take advantage of this and offered low-skilled apprenticeships in roles formally paid at a higher rate as trainees. Realistically, we need to see a return to mass high-skilled apprenticeship schemes for industries for the future, for example in renewable energies.

In terms of increasing membership for our union, I would support the part of the motion that calls for specific membership options in trying to be flexible for our members and help the recruiting process. Apprentices often face bullying at work from their supervisors and the support of a union behind them would encourage them to speak up and organise.

Apprentice wages can often be far lower than the average and young people also face increasing rent rises and living costs, so union membership at a cost could be a hard sell. We need to speak to workers as they begin their working lives, discussing the many benefits of being in a trade union, and hopefully gain a UNISON member for life.

Luke Holliday, North Tyneside LG

Motion 69 - End Period Poverty



It's hard to believe that in 2018 we live in a country where women can't afford to buy essential sanitary products. That women are in the position of having to choose between food for the table or basic necessary sanitary products. We should be provided with these products free of charge they are not a luxury. They are ESSENTIAL ITEMS.

Women and girls do not choose to have periods it's a natural bodily function and should be treated as such, not something to be brushed away as "women's troubles", made to feel ashamed for asking for products to use. These times of the month can be embarrassing enough without having to find the funds to buy what is deemed as expensive luxury items.

We can help - ask schools, colleges and workplaces to provide free or discounted products and to speak up and out about this discrimination to women.

Low paid women will choose food for the family, homeless women don't even have that choice.

Please support Motion 69 and let's work to end period poverty.

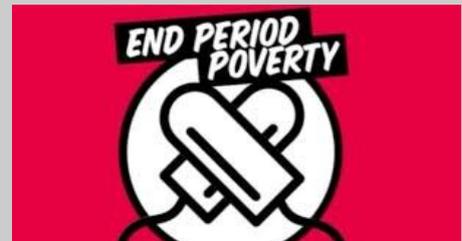
Jan Green, South Tyneside LG

This motion calls on all branches to support the call for free sanitary products for all women and girls.

Our male delegates may feel that this is a woman's issue, but it is not. It's an issue which affects whole families and especially our children.

It is estimated that 1 in 10 women aged between 14 and 21 have not been able to afford sanitary products. This has resulted in approximately 48% of young women missing school and over 60% of them avoiding sport and P.E. lessons.

Children as young as 10 felt forced to stay at home because of the shame of potentially soiling their underwear and school uniform. These same children have resorted to using socks stuffed with tissues or old torn t-shirts as sanitary towels. Other young women use tampons for longer than is safe and run the very real risk of poisoning their bodies through toxic shock.



For this situation to exist in a country with the 6th largest economy is a disgrace.

Delegates please support this motion and also remember that this is not "just a woman's issue".

Jennifer Black, North Tyneside LG

Motion 17 -Work related stress and mental health wellbeing.

The austerity cuts have had such an effect on our workforce and members that we now see, on a regular basis, the evidence in the decline in mental health and general well-being, and the effects of these.

Mental Health First Aid training has been a must for our branch officers, as more frequently we are supporting employees who are deeply affected by cuts to services and the threat of redundancy.

Our members are only just keeping their heads above water.

Those lucky enough to remain in employment are facing an increase in workload which they feel unable to achieve, but feel unable to voice this, due to the threat of redundancy.

Local Authorities are introducing differing schemes to make changes on how services are being delivered, including how to make services automated to allow the public to 'self serve', thereby removing the need for employees, and this threat in itself creates further stress and anxiety.

Whilst employers are constantly reminding us of the sickness statistics what they are not recognising, nor properly addressing are the causes of this sickness. But these causes are evident to us and we too can be affected by them, we need to be well equipped to deal with this.

Using the UNISON Stress Toolkit ensures activists are better equipped to support members through illness due to work related stress, and have the ability to access mental health first aid training to further develop a branch process to ensure the protection of our members health is a priority.

Debbie Lydon, Regional Delegate

Composite D – Universal Credit

We've all heard some of the many horror stories of what is happening to people switching to the Universal Credit benefits system. It was the former Secretary of State for Work & Pensions, Ian Duncan Smith's parting gift for the British people, unfortunately though it's the gift that keeps on taking and taking.

I'll share a very practical example of how it is affecting people in our country. I work in supported accommodation with looked after children and care leavers and in the past, we supported them in moving into their own tenancies and applying for housing benefit. Previously, this was paid straight to the landlord, leaving them to budget the rest of their money for bills and essentials. Now, we're facing a situation in which all benefits are paid in a lump sum and rent then having to be paid separately. For most, this could look like a straight forward payment, but for some who struggle with budgeting, it is leading to rent going unpaid and tenancies lost.

We are seeing this across the UK and it's leading to a rise in homelessness. The roll out of Universal Credit needs to be halted and the entire process looked at again to ensure our welfare system protects those in vulnerable positions.

Luke Holliday, North Tyneside LG

Motion 121 – Education is a Public Service

I believe education is a fundamental human right which you should be able to access at any point in your life in a fully funded education system of the highest quality.

Tory policy has caused our education system to become increasingly fragmented. How can some MPs understand what it's like for ordinary people in our education system, when so many of them attended private schools?

Beginning with top quality learning provision in early years improves social mobility. The government boasts of the 30 hours free child care for 3-4 year olds, however the funding is £4.34 per hour per child, whilst the cost for Local Authorities is £5.00 per hour or more. Parents bear the brunt of the extra cost – usually parents in deprived areas. There is not enough staff to cover the extra hours and pay doesn't reflect the work undertaken and CPD is inadequate.

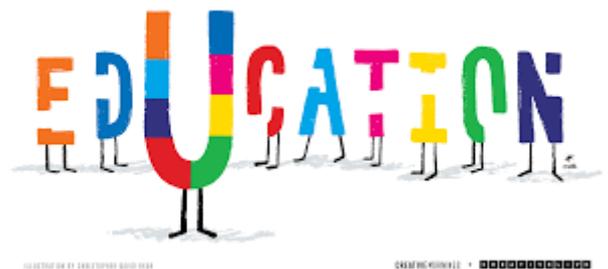
Sure Start Centres, for which the last Labour Government is to be applauded continue to close under the Tory's austerity programme. Academies prove to be no better than maintained schools. In the case of one free school in Sunderland, the Multi Academy Trust which absorbed it hasn't delivered on its promises and will pull out soon. Mice were running about dilapidated buildings and staff bought resources from their own pockets, many support staff have been made redundant due to budget cuts.

In England Careers Advice is expected to be delivered in schools without the proper funding to do so. Further Education has faced continuing change and devastating cuts, as with Higher Education, governance is weak.

I welcome the Labour Party's proposals for a National Education Service for England – but it must have proper funding and democratic accountability to succeed.

Please support this motion if it is prioritised for this afternoon.

Diane Wright, City of Sunderland



What an experience!

Well this year has certainly been an experience. My first Conference as a Northern Region NEC Rep. It's been great to see Northern Region joining in the debates which have taken place, with so many excellent speakers.

As many of you know, in the past I have been one of the Tellers for the Region and will have seen my reaction to that bell ring. Unfortunately last year there were no card votes, then this year I was a little jealous and shocked that a card vote was called on the second day of Conference. There was a moment when I exchanged looks with Emily Heron, one of this year's Tellers and I knew we were both thinking the same thing!!!!!!

I hope everyone has enjoyed this year's Conference and look forward to seeing you all in the Region or next year in Liverpool. Have a safe journey home.

Helen Firman, NEC



Well done to Cat Elliott , University of Teeside who's suggestion of the Clock Tower Homeless charity was chosen for the bucket collection

This year UNISON Northern are also supporting the Durham Women's Gala on 30th June where one of the key speakers is Clare Williams, Regional Secretary. Come along with the family and join in the celebrations.



Durham Women's Gala 2018

Help us celebrate 100 years of women's suffrage
Street Food & Refreshments, Crafts & Activities for All Ages
Special Guests, Stalls, Live Music & Speakers

Saturday 30 June 2018

12.00noon – 4.00pm (Gate open 10.30am)

Wharton Park, Durham DH1 4NQ

Limited Blue Badge Parking only on site. Free parking at County Hall

Free entry
All welcome

For more information

E womensgala@outlook.com

W www.womensgala.org

f Durham Womens Gala @womensgala



Labour Party NEC
Development Fund 2018



Motion 17—Work Related Stress and Mental Health Wellbeing



The work on Branch involvement with tackling stress is still a new development, and it's still very much about trying out new things. Inevitably some of these new things will work better than others, but there are no mistakes, just things that we can learn from.

The basic facts are:

- Stress is a very big problem for a huge number of members across all service groups
- The HSE Management Standards approach is best way for this to be tackled, but very few employers are using it well
- That full Branch involvement with this work can significantly improve the effectiveness of it, reducing stress for members and the associated costs to employers
- This provides significant opportunities for recruitment and improving Branch organisation

Since June 2017 we have: organised a half and full days training, presented workshops at the National Stress Network Conference, the NTUC Health & Safety Forum and the Regional Health & Safety Seminar. The work we have undertaken has been recognised by the TUC which resulted in winning the TUC Safety Rep of the year award.

The impact of the work should not be understated. The fundamentals are that :

- Stress is a very serious problem for a large number of members
- Stress is a very serious problem for their employers
- A UNISON-Employer partnership is the most effective solution
- For UNISON, this solution brings
 - hope for members and activists
 - more activists
 - more members
 - significantly reduced stress
 - a significantly improved employer culture

This project most definitely represents the solution to the most widespread and serious problem faced by our membership. We don't yet have all the answers, but we do have the right approach. It's important that we're not afraid to try things and learn from them, and in this sense the project takes the form of action research.

The project is ambitious, but the proposal is at least proportionate to the scale of the challenge and the opportunity it offers Branches and members, and we can take much confidence from the effects of the work in Gateshead so far.

At this stage, to develop the full potential of the Project, the priority would still be about projecting the vision, and supporting all those who want to participate.

Adam Taylor, Gateshead LG

Motion 104

Equal Marriage = Equal Widowhood

I doubt very much we will get to Motion 104 which is a real shame as it is a very important issue. There was a recent Supreme Court decision that ruled upon the death of John Walker, his husband would get the same pension rights.

However, this has a caveat. Occupational pension schemes pay benefits to surviving same sex spouses and civil partners only in respect of contributions made since the introduction of civil partnership in 2005. UNISON is fighting to bring widowers' pensions and those for surviving same sex spouses and civil partners into line with those for widows in all respects.

I have paid into my pension scheme for over 30 years and yet if we hadn't of got married the board of trustees could have decided whether to pay my wife their contributions or not.

Karen Pearson-Loughlin, Hartlepool LG

134th Durham Miners' Gala, 14th July 2018



Don't forget the Miners' Gala on Saturday 14th July. The Northern Region will be setting off with banners and the band at 8.30 am from Redhills and the next meeting point is in the Market Square at 10.00 am

Camping is also now available close to the Gala site. For more information go to www.durhamminers.org

Re-Prioritisation Result for the Northern Region

1. Motion 17 Work related stress and mental health wellbeing
2. Motion 38 Keeping public services at the top of the agenda in preparation for a snap election
3. Motion 121 Education is a Public Service
4. Motion 87 Colombia
5. Motion 69 End Period Poverty
6. Motion 29 Apprenticeships

So Long, Farewell

Once again the Northern Region has contributed to National Conference by delivering lots of speakers, and many of them new speakers. The level of participation and the cohesiveness of speakers articulating our Regional strategies and priorities has been outstanding and we have received numerous compliments on speeches that have been delivered, with particular reference made to speeches that highlighted the various events and campaigns that have been held in the Region. It shows the work we do throughout the year has an impact, and that we are well prepared for the battle ahead.

Clearly, attacks on terms and conditions, privatisation and recruitment and organising are still the priority in the months ahead. Again, our Region is well placed to support branches and to deliver for our members. Integration of services has been a feature of Conference and we will continue to meet to plan activities and work across Service Groups so we are able to build the union, and also to make key alliances with other trade unions and our communities through the PSA coalitions.

Our participation at Conference has been phenomenal and the Northern Region continues to deliver. Thanks to all who contributed to the newsletter and a special thanks to Allison for all her hard work during the week, as always the newssheets have been the high quality you would expect! Let's keep the good work going, and continue to work in a cohesive and united way to build the union in our Region, and to take our policies forward. Finally, we look forward to seeing you at the Durham Miners Gala on July 14th.

Safe journey home everyone.

Clare Williams, Linda Hobson & Debbie Lydon

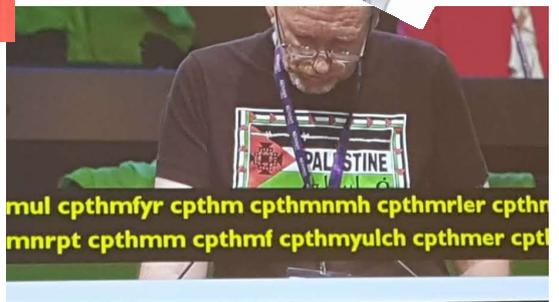
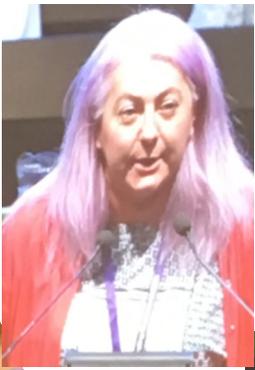
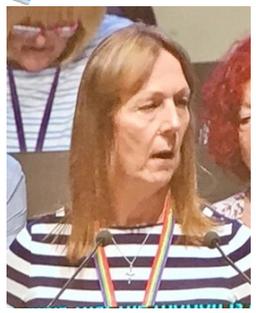


Your Newssheet Thanks You!!

Just a quick word of thanks to everyone for your articles, stories anecdotes and pictures. We hope you enjoyed reading the newssheets !!!



AT CONFERENCE THIS WEEK!...



Now that's proper Geordie speak!!!