

AGENDA

First Irish Policy Conference of Unite

23rd & 24th May 2011
Dublin

A Community of Working People



Jimmy Kelly
Regional Secretary

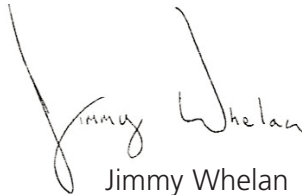
Len McCluskey
General Secretary

Dear Delegate,

At its meeting on the 20th/21st April 2011, the Irish Executive Committee agreed to recommend support for all the motions on the Policy Conference Agenda.



Jimmy Kelly
Regional Secretary



Jimmy Whelan
Chair, IEC

ECONOMY

MOTION 1 MANUFACTURING AND ECONOMIC POLICY

Conference notes that:

1. The spending review for Northern Ireland announced last October resulted in a total budget reduction of £4 billion in real terms over the four year period to 2014/15. This represents a fall of eight per cent in real terms in current spending. From April next year, these cuts will really begin to bite and will be especially hard on welfare dependents and public servants. Public capital investment programmes will fare even worse. Here, the cuts will be as deep as 40% over the period. This undermines the investment strategy which was agreed just over a year ago. These cuts, current and capital, come on top of a situation where there had already been severe cutbacks.
2. Ireland's entry into the IMF/EU Stabilisation Fund is the culmination of pursuing primarily two irrational economic policies. First, the austerity measures. The four austerity budgets (the February 2009 measures which included the public sector pension levy, the emergency April 2008 budget and the two annual budgets) slashed economic growth, driving up unemployment as it drove down demand. Instead of cutting the deficit these budgets resulted in rising deficits and rising borrowing costs.

The second irrational policy was to graft private sector banking debt (Anglo-Irish/Irish Nationwide bail-outs, payments to Bank of Ireland and AIB, and NAMA) on to public sector debt – leaving the tax payers to pick up a tab of, at last count, up to €35 billion. In all probability, this cost will rise. And after all that, the Irish private banking system still remains on life support from the ECB. Instead of contributing to economic growth, our private banks are a burden.

Conference condemns

- the failure of austerity policies to promote economic recovery and fiscal stability;
- the unemployment and emigration crisis arising from those austerity policies,
- the unsustainable levels of rising debt caused by spending cuts and tax increases on low-average income earners, combined with Government policies which are making taxpayers responsible for private banking debt.

Conference is clear that a continuation of austerity policies and current banking policies will burden the taxpayer even further and fail to promote economic recovery, employment growth, rising living standards and fiscal stability.

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Conference acknowledges the constructive role UNITE has played seeking to give leadership, working with other Unions and progressive groups, promoting an alternative economic policy, putting people before bond holders and markets, and seeking to build a campaign of resistance including strike action.

Conference is alarmed that 95% of all industrial redundancies are among skilled, craft and other manual workers in the Republic of Ireland and that over 21% of the workforce of Northern Ireland have no qualifications (almost twice the UK level), Conference believes that a new industrial strategy must implement a programme to ensure that skills are not lost due to recession and that the skills base is greatly expanded based on innovative learning. This requires both an expansion and a redesign of the training infrastructure. In this regard particular attention must be paid to developing the capacity of indigenous industries to grow, innovate and export.

The numbers in employment will only expand through investment not through cut backs. There is a need for a major re-assessment of industrial manufacturing policy for the Island of Ireland as a whole, and this to be drawn up in consultation with the Unions concerned, state enterprise agencies in the Republic of Ireland, and related bodies in Northern Ireland, including research facilities of our universities and the relevant Government Departments as appropriate.

Conference commits our Union to campaign and fight back in our workplaces, supporting our Reps and Shop Stewards, strengthening our Branches and Activists, working with other Unions within Congress and the Northern Ireland Committee of Congress – Trades Councils and Community Organisations to build the broadest possible consensus for resistance based on these Unite principles.

Irish Executive Committee

MOTION 2

Economy in the Republic of Ireland

Conference notes that as we approach the centenary of the 1916 Rising it is time that we reflect on the changing Political, Social and Economic identity that nearly 100 years of being a Republic stands for.

Mindful of the hopes and aspirations of the men and women that fought and died for Irish Freedom and of the men and women in the Trade Union Movement that took up the torch and struggled in the face of gombeenism and cronyism to forge a Nation that has become known the world over as having the fundamental principles of Independence and Social Justice for All. Our position of neutrality and being a non aligned nation, together with our agriculture being respected, became the basis for our ability to grow our economy and trade around the world and symbolised our open economy.

The previous Governments failure to manage our economy has put us in situation that could only be described as a National Emergency. Now is not the time for party politics now is the time for a cohesive and practical response to the economic crisis.

Ireland is now currently experiencing employers taking clear advantage of the current situation, in seeking to make greater profits by placing ever increasing demands on the workforce and reducing their ability to earn a decent living and thus contributing to increased stressors in both the home and the workplace. We need this to STOP.

We also need Employers, ICTU and the other Social Partners and the new Government to engage in a Social Dialogue that will lead to a National Consensus that will give hope to the Irish Nation, a sustainable level of living, increased employment opportunities, access to timely medical care and education and a nation that deals with its elderly with dignity and respect.

Aviva Ireland 0488M Branch

MOTION 3

Economy in Northern Ireland

The draft budget for 2011-15 accurately analyses the economic problems that we have. Among its shocking statistics it highlights the loss of 34,330 jobs between March 2008 and June 2010. It also acknowledges the fact that there is a deeper decline in business activity in the manufacturing sector with 8,920 job losses since March 2010. Added to that is the complete meltdown in construction work and the growing trend of those categorised as economically inactive. The budget talks about the need to rebalance the economy and move away from an over-dependence on the public sector which accounts for 32% of direct employment and contributes indirectly to 27% of private sector employment. There is recognition that the north's economy is 93% dependant on the block grant from Westminster and has lagged behind the UK and Republic for the last 30 years in economic growth.

The draft budget offers no credible solutions to our problems other than suggestions for limited tax raising through regional rates, a plastic bag charge and the old chestnut of considering reducing corporation tax which will not create one new job but will help give multi-nationals another tax loophole. The fact is that given all of the universally acknowledged economic problems that we have, £4 billion will be taken out of our economy at a time when there is a dire need for investment and far from rebalancing the economy this budget will set back any prospect of economic regeneration for another 30 years. It will send unemployment up into double figures and grow more dependence on the state instead of diminishing it.

In fact every public sector job loss and pay freeze will impact on local spending and will cause further unemployment. Every pound withdrawn from capital spend will mean less construction work. This budget will not address our urgent need for sustainable work.

We need to oppose any attempt to downsize the public sector when there is nothing to replace it.

We need to grow private sector employment by prioritising the growing of sustainable manufacturing work and looking beyond trips to America.

We need interim measures to help the unemployed and graduates to develop skills in programmes that will value them and give them decent remuneration.

North West Area Activists' Committee

MOTION 4

Why Women play an important role in the Economy

Women develop initiatives to satisfy different types of basic need, food, housing, literacy, education, relations, essential care and public expression, these needs determine the daily lives of many women and the challenges they overcome to ensure that their initiatives bear fruit and are viable.

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These challenges are invariable considerable and sometimes impossible to overcome given the present situation of politics and dominant values. Women are confronted by dominant economic policies where production, consumption and exchange are only thought of as useful if they generate financial profits for the bosses and governments.

Consequently, only a limited part of their economic activities is taken into account, whereas a large part is hidden or undervalued. Women must have a greater control of resources, the means of production and production procedures to avoid the obstacles they currently face in carrying out their economic activities.

This conference calls for:

1. The construction of a new economic ethos recognising the specific position of women and their social practices in our society
2. The development of measures that recognise the contributions and the financial value of their contributions in society
3. The highlighting of these practices and the development of social practices in the field that must be rewarded.

Conference calls on Unite to produce a policy document that concurs with these views for dissemination throughout the wider trade union movement and seek to advance within the political arena.

Dublin Area Activists' Committee

MOTION 5

Lowering of Corporation Tax

Conference we urge you to support this motion which ask this union UNITE to lobby government with a view of lowering the rate of corporation tax in N.Ireland to that of the Rep of Ireland which is currently @ 12.5% thus creating a level playing field between North and South that would encourage inward investment and in turn give something back to companies who are currently based in N.Ireland.

We believe that due to the special circumstances in relation to the geographical position and the wave off government cuts currently being implemented by the Con/Lib Coalition via Stormont that an initiative such as this would bolster the economy and help create Jobs in the private sector.

Servicing & General Industrial Regional Industrial Sector (NI) Committee

STRATEGY FOR GROWTH

MOTION 6

Regional Industrial Sector Committee Building within our Workplace/Sector

Over the last year, the RTC Sector has been carrying out a mapping exercise of its members to establish our strengths and weaknesses within our Sector.

By doing so, it has enabled us to put resources into workplaces that are under threat from aggressive management tactics and also support our shop stewards' movement.

This simple exercise has rejuvenated our stewards and brought them closer to their members and in doing so, has weakened the employers position. We have begun to rebuild our membership and take on new challenges within the Sector. The driving force behind all these initiatives has been the RISC Committee, supported by the NISC.

The RISC plays a key role in setting out goals and commitments we need to achieve as a Union and the policies agreed at the first Industrial Sector Conference in Unite. Our experience has also established that it is imperative that these Committees also have a close working relationship with their RIO and Organising Dept, to bring together all areas of Unite for the good of all our members at the workplace and in building a coordinated approach to the organising in 100% Campaign.

We would ask the delegates at the inaugural Irish Policy Conference to support the following actions:

1. That you fully endorse the commitment to mapping within the workplace and across each Sector.
2. That the RISC Committees become the focal point for establishing joint actions and initiatives with lay members and RIO's who have direct servicing responsibilities for the membership within the Sector. This should include:
 - Reports on the Actions agreed at the RISC involving organisation and recruitment.
 - Industrial reports from each RIO to the RISC for each Company and monitoring of progress or otherwise including our shop stewards and membership.
 - Establish a team ethic with those lay members on the RISC/shop stewards and branches with the RIO's to achieve our Union's industrial and organising goals.

Road Transport, Commercial, Logistics & Retail Distribution Regional Industrial Sector Committee

MOTION 7 Unite Campaigns

This Conference welcomes the emphasis on campaigning and the developing of public awareness of Unite's policies and activities. Right-wing and conservative mass media have, over the past three years launched a vicious, mendacious and well-funded campaign of disinformation against workers which is intended to disguise the near-collapse of the market-based global economy and the liberal economic policies which guide it.

These anti-trade union and anti-worker distortions of truth will continue as part of the assault on the standard of living of working people that is intended to shift the cost of the market crisis away from those who created the collapse onto that majority of the population whose primary relationship to the market economy is that of wage earnings or social benefits.

Increasing the public and campaigning activity of Unite across all its branches and committees is essential to a successful organising and recruitment strategy which is based on organising workers at their workplace into a strong, successful and committed trade union.

Conference calls on Unite in Ireland to deepen its commitment to campaigning and organising by ensuring that all branches of Unite are supported, encouraged and enabled to act locally in campaigning for Unite policies and involving the broadest participation by union members in those activities.

Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Process & Textiles Regional Industrial Sector Committee

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PENSIONS

MOTION 8

Pensions – Northern Ireland

Conference demands that the Government's pension policy be strengthened towards encouraging workers with average earnings and their employers to provide for a dignified retirement and their financial independence during retirement.

Conference contends that this can only be done through the following measures:

1. Government must underpin the Pension Protection Fund in order to meet its obligations both now and in the future.
2. Recognition that long-term pension promises made by employers through the operation of a pension scheme represent an irrevocable employer commitment. Any proposals to change future benefits should only be capable of implementation once a meaningful review process has taken place over a period of at least one year. The first phase of the review should be to explore all avenues towards the protection of existing benefits. The second phase of exploring benefit changes could only proceed if the first phase determines conclusively that changes are required.
3. Any changes to public sector pensions should ensure that the Government as the employer in future makes a meaningful contribution to the cost of public sector pensions and should also be subject to a reasonable period of meaningful consultation.
This conference cannot accept the Hutton Report's recommendations that the final salary public sector schemes be replaced with career average arrangements.
4. The Government must ensure that pension provision is expanded to those workers who have no pension provision in excess of the State pension. Conference considers that the introduction of full pension coverage and adequate income arrangements in retirement should be a right and not a privilege and should not be conditional on the prevailing economic circumstances of the time which means in effect that there may never be a right time.

Particular emphasis is required in respect of the lower paid and part-time workers to ensure that pension scheme membership is attractive for these groups.

5. Conference condemns the treatment of Unite members in Visteon and supports the fight for pension justice for all workers in Ireland.
6. Conference recognises the particular importance of pensions for women, who fare so badly in building up occupational and private pensions due to their interrupted work patterns and also their concentration in lower paid work and in jobs where occupational pensions are often not provided. These issues have been highlighted in reports by the Pensions Commission, the Pensions Board and the Department of Work and Pensions, and what is needed now is action to address them.

This conference compliments Unite in the Ireland Region on the work done to date in protecting and advancing the case for adequate pensions in retirement and commits Unite to continuing the campaign by all means at its disposal.

Irish Executive Committee

MOTION 9

Pensions – Republic of Ireland

Conference demands that the Government's pension policy be redirected towards encouraging workers with average earnings and their employers to provide for a dignified retirement and their financial independence during retirement.

Conference contends that this can only be done through the following measures:

1. A system of protection of the members of defined benefit pension schemes to ensure that they will receive the accrued benefit promised to them in the event of employer insolvency as required under the EU Insolvency Directive and hence to ensure that no future Irish worker simultaneously loses their job and their pension. This need not represent a burden on the State as for instance the UK Pension Protection Fund is funded on the basis of an industry levy of less than 0.1% of pension schemes.
2. Recognition that long-term pension promises made by employers through the operation of a pension scheme represent an irrevocable employer commitment which must be secured through legislative protection of pensions and through adequate funding of pension promises. It is not acceptable that the reaction to pension scheme deficits (which at times affected 90% of the 250,000 members of private sector defined benefit pension schemes) is to seek reductions in earned benefits.

Pension benefits which have already accrued should be fully protected.

3. The proposals to reduce tax-relief under the four year plan to 20% should not be implemented unless the taxation of retirement benefits is also reviewed. The proposal is inequitable. Retirement benefits (with the exception of the retirement gratuity) are taxed at the individual's marginal rate and there must be an alignment between the tax relief on contributions and the tax payable on benefits.
4. Any changes to public sector pensions should ensure that the Government as the employer in future makes a meaningful contribution to the cost of public sector pensions. At present, the combination of the pension levy and normal pension contributions means that many low paid public service workers will receive a lower benefit than the value of their contributions. Additionally, the proposals put forward by the Government would result in some new public servants fully funding their own pensions with no contribution from the Government as employer.
5. The Government must ensure that pension provision is expanded to the almost 50% of workers who have no pension provision in excess of the State pension. The introduction of full pension coverage and adequate income arrangements in retirement should be a right and not a privilege and should not be conditional on the prevailing economic circumstances of the time which means in effect that there may never be a right time.
6. Conference condemns the treatment of Unite members in SRT and Waterford Crystal and supports the fight for pension justice for all workers in Ireland.

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7. Conference recognises the particular importance of pensions for women, who fare so badly in building up occupational and private pensions due to their interrupted work patterns and also their concentration in lower paid work and in jobs where occupational pensions are often not provided. These issues have been highlighted in reports by the Pensions Commission, the Pensions Board and the Department of Work and Pensions, and what is needed now is action to address them.

This Conference compliments Unite in the Ireland Region on the work done to date in protecting and advancing the case for adequate pensions in retirement and commits Unite to continuing the campaign by all means at its disposal.

Irish Executive Committee

POLITICAL

MOTION 10

Need for a Left Alliance – Republic of Ireland

This conference expresses its dissatisfaction with the decision of the Irish Labour Party to enter into a coalition Government which is dominated by Fine Gael.

Conference notes that to be able to implement the policies of the Trade Union Movement, to reverse cuts in social services, health etc. to invest in a massive programme of job creation there is a necessity to create a political vehicle based on bringing about a political realignment on a left right basis. To do this the Union needs to promote maximum unity between Sinn Fein and The United Left Alliance and other like minded left independents.

The Union is therefore committed to opposing the policies of the current Government which fail to deal with the bond holders and speculators by making them totally responsible for their losses. We further intend to press the Government through the creation of a mass movement based on the communities, trade unions and all political groups on the left which are prepared to join such a campaign to repudiate the debt, to introduce a wealth tax and to renegotiate the arrangements made with the multi national corporations concerning our oil and gas reserves with a view to ensuring that these resources are used for the benefit of the Irish people.

This conference asks the incoming Irish Executive to set up a Sub Committee of interested members charged with putting this motion into practice.

3/102 Branch

MOTION 11

For all employees to be given Preferred Creditor status when their employer goes into receivership

Conference calls on the government to introduce a Redundancy Protection Fund (RPF) and to make all those workers who are made redundant because their employer has entered administration/receivership preferred creditors, for all monies they are owed.

Conference further demands that government introduce legislation to protect workers who find themselves redundant because their employer went into administration/receivership.

Conference also asks that this be treated as an important and significant issue that will be legislated in the lifetime of this Parliament.

Therefore we call on conference to adopt this motion and use all influence possible to have government introduce legislation to protect workers who find themselves in this situation.

Passenger Transport Regional Industrial Sector Committee

MOTION 12

Corporate Boards – Republic of Ireland

Given the recent experience of the ICTU and Union Employees being publicly highlighted at corporate Board of Director Level, Conference calls on Unite in ROI to pursue a policy that only non paid lay members should participate in such boards.

Waterford Area Activists' Committee

MOTION 13

Board of Directors – Banks

Conference calls on the IEC to lobby the Irish Government to amend legislation to allow for the election on to the Board of Directors of all indigenous banks of:

- Two directors, to be elected by all the employees of the bank, to represent the employee stake-holding in the bank
- Two directors, to be appointed by relevant consumer organisations, to represent the consumer stake-holding in the bank

These directors would have a responsibility to make a quarterly report to the Minister for Finance which shall be published.

Finance & Legal Regional Industrial Sector Committee

MOTION 14

EU/IMF Bank Bail Out

This Conference calls on the IEC to exert a concerted campaign, particularly through the Labour Party, to pressurise Irish Government to reverse the taxes/levies and social welfare cuts that have been imposed on workers and unemployed people in order to pay for the EU/IMF bank bail out.

Dundalk 0327 Branch

COMPOSITE No. 1

National Minimum Wage – Republic of Ireland

Conference calls on the IEC to do all in its power, in conjunction with the ICTU if necessary, to highlight to the relevant Minister in the newly elected Government in the Republic of Ireland the basic need for the full restoration of the National Minimum Wage.

Conference lends its full support to the workers from the Davenport Hotel who had their terms and conditions slashed by their employer and congratulate them on taking industrial action to defend their rights and their successful Labour Court recommendation.

Graphical, Paper & Media Regional Industrial Sector Committee

Dundalk/Drogheda/South Down Area Activists' Committee

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EQUALITIES

MOTION 15

Women and Equalities

Conference notes with deep concern, the impact that 'austerity cuts' are having on Women, Disabled people, Retired people, Young people, LGBT and BAEM people in Ireland. Both the UK and ROI governments' policy of cutting rather than growing our way out of the recession, undermines all forms of equality and divides people and communities. These cuts are having dire consequences on the economy, society and our workplaces. They will primarily hit women and families, especially those on low incomes and in particular lone parent families who stand to lose 18.5% of their net income. Women will be worse off because of benefit cuts and they will be the biggest losers in Public Sector pay freezes, levies and job cuts, as women make up 65 per cent of the public sector workforce in Ireland.

The cuts in the public sector will disproportionately affect disabled people where a higher proportion of disabled people work and use its services. Despite economic challenges, assessing the needs of people with disabilities and ensuring workplaces make reasonable adjustments to ensure they continue to work is of most importance. Employment rates for disabled people in Ireland are 33% and 1 in 3 live in poverty. Our disabled members have been targeted with cuts to both their benefits and their carers' benefits.

The public sector is a primary employer for BAEM workers and they will be particularly affected by housing benefit cuts because so many of these workers are employed in low paid work.

LGBT members will not only suffer job losses but they will lose their support services at such times fear and prejudice can grow and it becomes harder for LGBT people to come out.

Having millions of intelligent and jobless young people sparked revolts in the Middle East and it risks trouble nearer to home. In Ireland there are fears of a new brain drain with an estimated 1,000 people a week emigrating. This will not only have a profound impact on families but will also impact on the looming pension crisis. In the UK the latest trend suggests that there will be one million people under 25 without a job this Spring.

We cannot forget the age discrimination taking place against our older workers and the forced pension changes which will ruin retirement plans for many. We must ensure 'dignity and respect for all.'

Currently we are seeing an increase in complaints from members about pregnancy related discrimination, flexible working requests refused and bullying and harassment within our workplaces. We need to ensure that the progress that has been made in relation to women, fair employment and equalities, is not reversed during these challenging times.

Conference commends our workplace reps and equality reps who have proactively challenged Racism, Homophobia, Harassment and Discrimination. Without the endeavours of these reps we would not be able to promote equality and diversity within our workplaces and society.

Conference calls on the N.I Executive and the Irish Government to undertake a full and comprehensive equality impact assessment across all spending plans. We recommend that departments employ gender budgeting tools to assist in their deliberations.

Conference calls for our region to prioritise the following campaigns:

- Equal Pay
- Human Trafficking
- Women's Health
- Violence against women
- Unite Charter for Women
- Family Friendly Policies
- End Prostitution in Ireland (turn off red light campaign)
- Race Forward Campaign
- Show Racism Red Card
- Black History Month
- Disability Equality at the Workplace
- Mental Health at Work
- Hate Crime against Disabled People
- Hate Crime against LGBT People
- LGBT History Month
- Pride Events
- Promoting LGBT Awareness in Education Courses
- Retain EMA grant
- Oppose University Tuition Fee Increases
- Support Youth Workers
- Reversal of the Reduction of the Min Wage in ROI by E1 per hour

Irish Executive Committee

MOTION 16

Human trafficking

Conference is alarmed at the growth of human trafficking throughout Ireland. It believes that human trafficking is a horrific crime against millions of people especially BAEM women and children. It hurts, humiliates and is physically and mentally damaging. Using human beings as commodities and depriving them of their dignity should not be tolerated. 90 per cent of trafficking victims are women and children. Trafficking relies on poverty and lack of work opportunities and thrives on deception and violence. At least 2.5 million people are trafficked for the purpose of forced labour and sexual exploitation around the world, including in the UK and Ireland. It generates billions of pounds in profits for criminals and is the third largest growing criminal activity in the world, after arms and the drugs trade.

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Ireland needs a co-ordinated approach across the island to successfully halt this form of human slavery.

Conference urges this union to :

- Campaign to bring an end to human trafficking in Ireland and beyond
- Support the 'red light campaign'
- Support the campaign for an ILO convention on 'Decent work for Domestic Workers'
- Support Amnesty International's End Violence against Women campaign
- Campaign to keep the Gangmasters Licensing Authority to protect agricultural and extend to other workers in eg hospitality, construction and agencies offering personal care to elderly and disabled people.

Black, Asian & Ethnic Minority Regional Equality Committee

MOTION 17

Sexualisation of Children

Conference is concerned about the sexual exploitation of children in the media, sexualised goods being marketed towards children and in the advertising of children's goods.

Conference deplores the fact that increasingly younger girls are being targeted as consumers of a sex object culture. It believes that sexual imagery of children objectifies children, particularly girls and portrays them as sexual commodities. This sends worrying messages to boys and men about appropriate behaviour towards girls and women.

Conference believes that this pressure has been linked to the incidence of bullying, sexual harassment and violence against girls. International studies show that seeing particular images which imply that physical appearance and beauty are central to social and self-worth may put children at risk of depression, shame, anxiety and eating disorders.

Conference calls on the IEC to campaign as appropriate to raise public awareness of the extent of sexual imagery in the media and to support campaigns against the sexual and commercial exploitation of women and children.

Regional Women's Committee

MOTION 18

Representation for LGBT members

Conference acknowledges the work of Unite in recognising, developing and supporting the work of reps in the workplace with a specific role of progressing equalities issues.

One barrier these reps constantly have to overcome is the lack of facility time provided by our employers.

Unite the union have supported the LGBT communities for many years. In the last year Unite have actively supported Belfast, Dublin and Derry Prides.

Unfortunately homophobia and trans phobia are a key issue for the LGBT community these prejudices are evident in many of our own workplaces.

Conference calls upon us to ensure that Unite shop stewards and equality reps are pro active in stamping out homo phobia and trans phobia in the work place.

Conference notes that equalities is at the heart of Unite the Union. Conference is asked to ensure that equality rights do not suffer in the present financial and economic climate.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Equality Committee

MOTION 19

Protect the Rights of Disabled People

This Conference deplores the attack on Disabled people through reduction and removal of benefits and the insidious pressure by the Governments of the UK and RoI to create an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust regarding benefits already awarded. Research carried out by TUC and disability organisations has shown fraud and malingering to be rare among DLA claimants.

Cuts in benefits are already in place In the RoI. In the UK they are imminent.

Over 3% of people in the UK and RoI are born with disabilities and this figure will increase as medical technology advances and more infants with life threatening disabilities survive.

Over 80% of people of working age acquire a disability during their working lives and when it happens all but the best employers show us the door.

Already 50% of disabled people are not employed - potential employers are even more reluctant to take on disabled workers if they think adaptation to the workplace will cost them money. (Access to Work should cover this but most employers don't know about this nor try to find out)

Disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to face poverty and restricted life chances. The weakness in the current system is that the existing payments are not generous enough to lift disabled people out of poverty.

Disability is costly to the individual and this is why Disability Living Allowance and Incapacity Benefit is awarded in the UK and Disability and Invalidity Pensions in RoI.

The existing tests are more than sufficiently stringent and the majority of claimants are turned down at the first application. Disabled people in receipt of benefits are continuously being recalled for testing of their eligibility to the benefit. Medical evidence should be accepted and disabled people not turned over to commercial companies to undertake assessments. Their brief as we well know is to save money and TUC have documented evidence of people in the throes of cancer treatment and others in plaster being declared fit for work. It also begs the question if medical evidence from one's own GP is not to be trusted why then is the Government handing over the NHS to the GPs.

Cuts are affecting disabled members in other ways also:

- Creation of parking places for disabled workers – not being done because of costs.
- Carers will be affected by the whole family's lower income if the person they care for loses entitlement to benefit.
- Attitudes towards people with disabilities can influence many aspects of their lives, including their self-esteem, how they are treated by wider society, and public policy and service provision. Negative attitudes can present the biggest barrier to inclusion in our society

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- People in residential homes in the UK will lose their care component because the residential home now provides the care but it won't be providing their mobility support. Because of this change thousands of people will be unable to get out of their residential homes

This Conference calls upon Unite to lead the way in championing disabled people and tackling the injustices being perpetrated.

Regional Disability Committee

YOUTH

MOTION 20

Young Members

Conference notes with great concern the impact that 'austerity cuts' are having on the lives of our 16 – 25 year olds in Ireland. Having thousands of intelligent and jobless young people can lead to civil unrest, mental health problems, anti social behaviour and substance abuse.

These cuts will also impact heavily on the services which young people depend on when they are in need of help. Suicide statistics are already shocking throughout this island and there is concern that much needed funding for suicide prevention will be reduced.

In Ireland there are fears of a new brain drain with an estimated 1,000 people a week emigrating. This will not only have a profound impact on families but will also impact on the looming pension crisis.

In the UK the latest trend suggest that there will be 1 million people under 25 without a job this spring. With more than a fifth of young people out of work, we face a real danger of losing another generation of young people to unemployment and wasted ambition.

Northern Ireland, recently released shocking data on youth unemployment. According to the figures published by The Prince's Trust youth unemployment in NI costs up to £4.5 million a week. Citing research by the London School of Economics, the new figures also established that when lost productivity is included, each job seeker costs up to £16,000 a year.

Conference calls on all our RISC's and AAC's to actively engage with our young members, encourage them to become reps and encourage them to become more involved in our structures. We need to ensure that these committees have representation on our Regional Youth Committee so it can prioritise campaigns important to young members.

Regional Youth Committee

MOTION 21

Youth apprenticeships

Conference calls on Unite and ICTU to campaign for an increase in apprenticeships and training placements to alleviate youth unemployment and to provide a skills base for improving economic development in Ireland.

Conference notes that young people under 25 years of age in Ireland have been badly hit by the recession. Some 81,000 under-25s were on the Live Register in December, down 3,118 in the year, people on the Live Register which equates to one fifth of all those on the Live Register. Youth unemployment has trebled since 2008 with 1 in 3 young men under 25 being out of

work. The scale of the problem is masked by a big increase in numbers re-entering or staying in education and the numbers emigrating.

Conference also acknowledges research carried out by Yougov that one in six young people has found unemployment mentally stressful and likely to lead to self-harm, and panic attacks. Conference therefore calls on Unite and the ICTU to campaign for an increase in apprenticeships and training placements to alleviate youth unemployment and to provide a skills base for improving economic development.

For this group of people both young and old to give hope by Creating a better skilled and more flexible modern apprenticeship by:

1. Developing a national application system for apprenticeships, similar to UCAS funded by the RTC colleges and state.
2. Covering the full fee costs for first level 3 qualifications (e.g. A-levels, advanced apprenticeships and NVQ Level 3) for those over age 25 again funded by the RTC colleges and Government
3. bolishing rule relating full employment across years served for all apprentices. Due to company collapses facing small to medium size companies and company cost cutting in this financial crisis, apprentices timed served is cut short thus they cannot get necessary time to complete apprenticeship.

Belfast Area Activists' Committee

PUBLIC SECTOR

MOTION 22

Privatisation of Public Services

We call on conference, the Irish Executive Committee and the Executive Council to oppose and resist any attempts at the privatisation of our public services.

Conference notes with grave concern the Memorandum of Understanding agreed between the Irish Government and the EU/IMF which states;

"In advance of the introduction of water charges – the Government will have undertaken an independent assessment of transfer of responsibility for water services provision from local authorities to a water utility and prepare proposals for implementation, as appropriate with a view to start charging in 2012/2013".

And further states;

"Building on the forthcoming report of the Review Group on State Assets & Liabilities the Government will undertake an independent assessment of the electricity and gas sectors with a view to enhancing their efficiency. State authorities will consult with the Commission Services on the results of this assessment with a view to setting appropriate targets for the possible privatisation of state-owned assets".

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Therefore, Conference calls on Unite the Union to oppose the privatisation of State owned or commercial semi-State owned companies and to oppose all outsourcing of local authority work and to actively campaign to take back into public ownership all previously outsourced local authority contracts.

Energy & Utilities (ROI) Regional Industrial Sector Committee

MOTION 23

A Public Service for Public Needs

This Conference supports the principle that the provision of public services paid for out general taxation, to individuals, businesses and communities is the most fairest and most efficient way to ensure that public needs in respect of health, education, social support, economic , business and community development, law enforcement, public order, reseach and regulation are met within society.

Conference rejects the view that public services are a burden on a "real" economy and support the view that all social and economic activity, individual, business and community, is already inextricably intertwined and mutually supportive.

Conference rejects the demonisation of public servants and by those who wish to drive down the standard of living and quality of life of working people and their family and support the campaigning activity of Unite to defend and extend social and public services on an equitable basis and support our members and other public servants who deliver these services.

Conference also calls for an extension of transparency and accountability in the provision of public services and in particular a greater involvement in the accountability of public bodies to those who rely on their services and those working within them.

MOD & Government Departments (ROI) Regional Industrial Sector Committee

MOTION 24

Combating outsourcing in the workplace

Conference condemns outsourcing of jobs in part or full for capitalist gain or to the detriment of working conditions for those employed. State owned enterprise now contribute less than 2% of GDP and less than 1.5% of total employment Given the present financial crisis not only here in Ireland but also in Britain and the attack by governments in both jurisdictions here on public sector jobs. We call upon conference to support our members in their struggle against this tide of the global privatisation

However there is also a need for some practical steps to discourage outsourcing. It is important to seek a meeting with whichever firm or provider is thinking of taking on the responsibility and work.?? ??We should impress on the prospective employer that they will be expected to make provision for full and proper TUPE consultation including providing mirror terms and conditions as currently provided.?? ???????

We must seek to ensure they understand the cost and value of providing the existing pension scheme as this sometimes causes prospective employers to balk and think again. Where before a TUPE transfer an employee was a member of an occupational pension scheme, then the new employer after a transfer must provide one of the following:-

a defined benefit pension scheme which satisfies the standard required to contract-out of S2P on

a defined benefit (Reference Scheme Test basis) i.e a scheme providing very broadly a 1/80 pension payable at 65

a scheme which provides benefits based on an employer contribution of no less than 6% plus any member contributions a money purchase scheme in which the employer agrees to match any member contribution made up to a maximum employer contribution of 6% of basic pay ???

Crucially we also need to stress to such a prospective new provider we expect formal union recognition to be a full part of TUPE and advise if this is not acknowledged early on, Unite will also be pressing their existing staff to join the union and we will apply for recognition through the CAC if there is no confirmed voluntary agreement.?? ????

This again should make such prospective employers think again. Make sure you seek a meeting with them and try to involve your full time officer.?? ??We must ensure Unite elects strong stewards/ reps for the transferred areas to be able to take on some of the negotiation functions if the transfer proceeds.??

Education (NI) Regional Industrial Sector Committee

MOTION 25 Health Care Services

In view of the recent RTE's Prime Time programme which revealed how a lack of regulation of private contractors in home care services for HSE, has resulted in shocking abuse of vulnerable people, Conference calls on the union to actively pursue a risk based policy with the Irish Government which must include the following:

- Public protection through Licensing or Registration of qualified Health Care Attendants involved in provision of direct personal care.
- Mandatory Regulation and policing of private contractors working in health care services; this is not an option it is essential for public, patients and service users to be safe.
- Lifting of employment moratorium by HSE which is counter-productive and ignores the reality that outsourcing, privatisation and filling of vacancies through agencies are putting lives at risk.

Health (ROI) Regional Industrial Sector Committee

MOTION 26 Health provision is at Risk!

Conference notes that both British and Irish governments are intent on cutting spending in health to a degree where service levels will suffer.

This boils down to reduced numbers of beds in hospitals, fewer clinics and other services provided at local and community level.

Conference calls on Unite to campaign at all levels and in both the UK and Ireland to protect the Health Service and maintain the provision especially where cuts will seriously affect vulnerable groups.

Health (NI) Regional Industrial Sector Committee

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MOTION 27

Strategic Review of Higher Education

This Conference believes that education to the highest level attainable should be considered as a right not as a privilege and as a benefit to society in general. Conference also notes that the Report of the Strategic Review of Higher Education and the Croke Park Agreement propose significant changes in the structure and control of higher education and the employment status and conditions of those employed

While there is common interest between those working in higher education and those availing of it in ensuring the most effective and rewarding experience is available to participants in higher education this should not be confused with the neo-liberal agenda of commercialisation and commodification of education which in its attacks against workers in higher education is primarily intended to roll back the limited democratisation and expansion of higher education and to confine its activities to a conservative and unchallenging education for an elite.

Unite considers that the achievement of the highest quality of education is dependent on the widest possible democratic participation in education and specifically on the elimination of any social, economic or administrative barriers to participation. The resourcing of education must thus reflect its centrality to the social, cultural and economic life of the society rather than as a commodity for purchase and consumption.

The attacks on employment conditions of higher education workers by both Government and education institutions themselves are not just part of an offensive against the public sector but of a strategy that ultimately will be content "to do less with less" and return higher education to a narrow and elitist base.

Unite will continue to defend the working conditions of our members in higher education as the essential basis for a system of quality and high standards and will campaign for the further opening-up and democratisation of access to higher education.

Education (ROI) Regional Industrial Sector Committee

MOTION 28

Role of Higher Education in the Development of the Northern Ireland Economy

This Unite Conference recognises the significant challenges facing the Northern Ireland Economy, and the particular role of higher education in economic development.

In summary, the key issues are as follows:

- The proposed DEL budget runs contrary to the clear economic development objectives contained in the Programme for Government, the emerging Higher Education Strategy and the aims of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment;
- Direct funding to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) – Queen's University Belfast, the University of Ulster, Stranmillis and St Mary's University Colleges – will suffer a substantial budget cut of £68 million by 2014-15. This represents a reduction of 30% in the current total public investment of £230 million;
- The budget cuts will adversely impact on the ability of the NI HEI's to continue to provide high quality teaching and research, and to contribute to economic development through knowledge transfer and innovation;

- The budget assumes that tuition fees will be increased to mitigate a percentage of the cuts, but the future arrangements for fees remain unresolved. It is imperative, for the competitive position of Northern Ireland, that HEIs are not faced with funding reductions in excess of the levels anticipated in the budget proposals;
- HEIs in Northern Ireland will be disadvantaged in comparison to their competitors in England, where the funding proposals could result in a funding increase, in cash terms, of 10% by 2014-15;
- The budget proposals include the potential for short-term funding cuts that will have a long term impact on the positive role of higher education in the economy (research studentships, widening participation, knowledge transfer).

The vital role of higher education in Northern Ireland's future economic prosperity is not recognised in the Department for Employment and Learning's Draft Budget. In other regions of the UK, governments have sought to protect the levels of investment in higher education, whereas here, the current budget proposals have targeted HEIs with substantial funding cuts. These cuts will adversely impact on the ability of our HEIs to continue to provide high quality teaching and research, and to contribute to economic development through knowledge transfer and innovation.

Unite will campaign for the right model for HE in Northern Ireland – one where investment in higher education is maintained; where higher education remains free at the point of access; where repayments are income and not debt contingent; and where progressive thresholds for maintenance grants exist to support Northern Ireland's excellent record of widening participation.

Irish Executive Committee

MANUFACTURING

MOTION 29

Manufacturing Bus Procurement

This Irish Policy conference calls on the Irish Executive to highlight to all potential Bus and Coach companies in the Irish Region that when procuring new Buses and Coaches they should be using unionised companies within the Region.

Furthermore, Conference calls on the Irish Executive to highlight to both relevant ministers in the Dail and the N I Assembly the need to secure such contracts which will support our colleagues in the manufacturing industry.

Vehicle Building & Automotive Regional Industrial Sector Committee

INTERNATIONAL

IEC motion withdrawn as the contents of the motion have been overtaken by time and subsequent events.

The IEC will issue a more timely Executive Statement at Conference.

AGENDA

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ADMINISTRATION & SERVICES

MOTION 30

Annual booklet – details of all benefits

Conference calls on the Irish Executive Committee to recommend to the Executive Council, the setting up of facilities through the Education and Research Department, whereby the Union will produce annually in booklet form details of all benefit entitlements similar to what was produced by the late Jack Jones.

Today £168 million pension credits remain unclaimed; £29 million in housing benefits remain unclaimed, because of the complexity of application forms and the mistaken belief that by claiming one benefit another may be lost.

Conference further calls on the Executive Committee to ensure that these books are made available to Branches, including RMA Branches, with courses designed to facilitate pre-retirement.

3/30 Branch

MOTION 31

Conference call for a united pensioner movement with full autonomy

This Conference notes with grave concern that it is the intention of both Governments on this island to make the most vulnerable pay for the excess of the greedy rich, who gambled with our economy.

Conference further notes that most of the burden of debt will impact on women, children and the elderly.

Conference demands that all possible steps and actions are taken and supported by the Union, to defend those so affected, particularly the elderly, whose efforts created the wealth and who have no other way to defend themselves.

Conference calls for a united pensioner movement with full autonomy which will be under the control and administration of lay members supported by the Union.

RMA

MOTION 32

Workplace branches the desired norm and how to get there

This conference affirms that it is in the best interest of Unite and its membership that all members, in one workplace, normally belong to one branch. This should mean our union has more authority in its fight for equality in the workplace and would prevent any employer using divide and conquer tactics to deliberately weaken the union's objectives by playing one group off against another.

To this end the Conference instructs the IEC to ensure that all members are informed of this policy priority and further that all FTOs use their best endeavours to facilitate the transfer of groups of members or the merging of multiple branches, involving a single employer, into one branch.

Queen's University 0163 Branch



www.unitetheunion.org/ireland